

vol. {23}

REFLECTIONS

EL SHA'RAWY
الشعر اوان

فواطـر

المجلد {23}



*In the Name of God,
the Most Merciful,
the Dispenser of Mercy.*

vol. {23}

REFLECTIONS

EL SHA'RAWY
الشعراوى

فواطـر

المجلد {23}

REFLECTIONS

EL SHA'RAWY
الشعر اوان

فواطـر

Published by :



AL HOŞN RESEARCH & STUDIES CENTRE

Tel +97126265151

info@alhosnuae.ae

Printing & Binding:

Printing Group

info@printinggroup.com

ISBN: 978-9948-36-806-9

First edition 1441 H. - 2020

©All rights reserved to Al Hosn Research & Studies Centre
No part of this book maybe reproduced or transmitted
including printing, publishing, photocopying, or storing
by any electronic or mechanical means without written
permission from the publisher.

the chapter of

Muhammad

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Dispenser of Mercy

The chapter *Muhammad*⁽¹⁾. Allah *Glorified is He* said:

الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَضَلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿١﴾

**God will bring to nothing the deeds of those who
disbelieve and bar others from the way of God [1]
(The Quran, *Muhammad*: 1)**

Take notice that the end of the preceding chapter *al-Ahqaf* corresponds beautifully with the beginning of this chapter. In the final verse of the chapter of *al-Ahqaf*, Allah *Glorified is He* said: ‘Will, then, any people be (really) destroyed except the iniquitous folk?’ (*al-Ahqaf*: 35) Then, the first verse of our current chapter said: ‘As for those who disbelieved (*kafaru*) and barred (others) from the path of Allah, He (Allah) will misguide (or nullify) all their deeds’ (*Muhammad*: 1). It is as if the iniquitous folk mentioned in the final verse of the last chapter were accurately defined in the first verse of this chapter. These iniquitous folks are those who deny the truth and bar others from the path of Allah *Glorified is He*.

We have previously defined *kufir* (disbelief) as being a veil that hides reality or that prevents the effects of reality from being manifested properly.

(1) The chapter of *Muhammad* is the 47th chapter in the ordering of the noble *mushaf* and it consists of 38 verses. It is a Medinan chapter and it was revealed after chapter *al-Hadid* and before the chapter of *ar-Ra’d*, and thus it is the 94th chapter to be revealed. It is also called the chapter of *Qital* (Fighting) (*Al-Itqan fi ‘Ulum Al-Qur’an* (1/27)) and it was given that name because of verses 4 and 20.

Thus, the word *kufir* indicates that there must be something that is veiled, so what does the disbelievers' *kufir* hide? It covers its opposite, which is faith. This is because the reality of faith was present before the concept of *kufir* was invented by the disbelievers to hide the truth.

Therefore, the word *kufir* is the first pointer to the truth of faith because faith is part of the natural dispositions and inclinations of the human soul. Allah *Glorified is He* installed this inclination in the primordial world of *Dharr*, when Allah *Glorified is He* took the covenant from the souls: 'Am I not your Lord?' (*al-A'raf*: 172)

Sometimes, *kufir* may not cover the truth itself, but seeks to cover its effects and implications, as in Allah's statement: 'And Allah propounded (to you) a parable: (Imagine) a town which was (once) secure and at ease, with its sustenance coming to it abundantly from all quarters, and which thereupon blasphemously showed ingratitude (*kafarat*) towards Allah's blessings' (*an-Nahl*: 112).

Therefore, *kufir* (disbelief) in Allah's existence is one form of misguidance, and *kufir* in Allah's blessings is another form of misguidance. *Kufir* in Allah's blessings can occur in a number of aspects. These include heedlessness and disregard to these blessings, as well as the failure to search for their sources or failing to extract them from the universe along with some of their means: the water, the air and the earth.

Read, for example, what Allah *Glorified is He* said: 'Say (to them), 'Would you indeed disbelieve in Him who has created the earth in two aeons? Do you claim that there is any power that could rival Him, The Lord of all the worlds? For He it is (after creating the earth), who placed firm mountains on it, (towering) above its surface, and bestowed blessings on it, and equitably apportioned its means of subsistence to all who would seek it' (*Fussilat*: 9-10).

Therefore, our Lord has given us the means of sustenance and commanded us to look for them and extract them from their burial grounds. Therefore, we should not be lazy in searching for the treasures that exist in nature. After Allah *Glorified is He* has given you these blessings, you should not be negligent concerning them, choosing to live like a beggar who is dependent on others.

Another form of misguidance is when man extracts these blessings, but then veils them or holds them away from other people who deserve a share in

them. Allah *Glorified is He* said about these people who unjustly gather such riches: ‘...But as for all who lay up treasures of gold and silver and do not spend them for the sake of Allah – give them the tiding of a grievous suffering (in the life to come), on the Day when that (hoarded wealth) shall be heated in the fire of hell and their foreheads and their sides and their backs (will be) branded therewith, (those sinners shall be told) ‘These are the treasures which you have gathered for yourselves! Taste, then, (the evil of) your hoarded treasures!’ (*at-Tawba*: 34-35) Therefore, *kufr* (disbelief) can either be through denying the existence of Allah *Glorified is He* by neglecting His blessings and favours or by holding the shares of other people who deserve part of them.

Allah *Glorified is He* said that the disbelievers were those who are: ‘...barring (others) from the path of Allah’ (*Muhammad*: 1). This is because they directly prohibited people from believing in Allah *Glorified is He* or prevented the people’s ears from hearing the call to the truth. They may have also covered the people’s eyes from seeing Allah’s signs in the universe, or prevented these signs from being considered as proofs for the existence of the Creator. Additionally, they may have barred their hearts from having faith and certainty in Allah’s existence. Therefore, these people did not just disbelieve in Allah *Glorified is He*, but they were not satisfied with their own disbelief. So, they attempted to misguide other people with them.

Some orientalists said, ‘If the Quranic verses were clear and decisive, we find a contradiction between the verse: ‘And no bearer of burdens shall be made to bear another’s burden,’ (*az-Zumar*: 7) and the verse: ‘They shall bear the full weight of their own burdens, as well as some of the burdens of those ignorant ones whom they have led astray’ (*an-Nahl*: 25). In actual fact, there is no contradiction between these two verses and the orientalists’ claim is false. This is because the event illustrated in each verse is different. When the disbelievers lead themselves astray and commit sins, they will bear their own burdens, but when they lead others astray, they will bear the burden of misguiding others in addition to their own personal sins.

The meaning of the words: ‘He (Allah) will misguide (or nullify) (*adalla*) all their deeds,’ (*Muhammad*: 1) is that Allah *Glorified is He* will nullify their

actions and make them of no benefit. This is because the literal meaning of the word *adalla* (lead them astray) is 'not guiding them to the path that leads to their objective'. Indeed, these disbelieving people committed actions that brought no benefit to them, as there is no benefit from *kufir* and barring others from Allah's path.

There are people who perform acts of goodness, but are still outside the realm of faith. This goodness will not be accepted from them and it will not intercede for them in the Hereafter because these acts did not emanate from true belief. Rather, their actions may have emanated from a desire towards fame and reputation, civilization, serving humanity or other slogans. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* said: 'We shall turn towards all the (supposedly good) deeds they ever wrought, and shall transform them into scattered dust' (*al-Furqan*: 23).

Allah *Glorified is He* also said: 'But as for those who are bent on denying the truth, their (good) deeds are like a mirage in the desert, which the thirsty (person) supposes to be water – until, when he approaches it, he finds that it was nothing: instead, he finds (that) Allah (has always been present) with him, and (that) He will pay him his account in full – for Allah is swift in reckoning' (*an-Nur*: 39).

These are the people to whom it will be said on the Day of Resurrection: 'You have exhausted your (share of) good things in your worldly life, having enjoyed them (without any thought of the hereafter)' (*al-Ahqaf*: 20).

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* said regarding the believers:

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَءَامَنُوا بِمَا نُزِّلَ عَلَىٰ مُحَمَّدٍ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ
مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ كَفَّرَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَأَصْلَحَ بَالَهُمْ ﴿٢﴾

**but He will overlook the bad deeds of those who have faith,
do good deeds, and believe in what has been sent down to
Muhammad — the truth from their Lord — and He will put
them into a good state [2] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 2)**

We previously said that contrasting images make each other more manifest. One of the Quranic styles is illustrating contrasting pictures so that there can be a comparison between the two images and a depiction of a clearer

meaning. This can be seen in Allah's statement: 'Behold, (in the life to come) the truly virtuous will indeed be in bliss, whereas, behold, the wicked will indeed be in a blazing fire' (*al-Infitar*: 13-14).

In this verse, Allah *Glorified is He* mentioned the group of people who opposed disbelief. He said: 'And those who have believed,' (*Muhammad*: 2). He did not mention what they believed in because faith is a natural disposition, and when the word 'belief' is used, it generally refers to faith in Allah *Glorified is He* because it is the first faith.

The verb *amana* (to believe) can be used as a transitive verb when the letter '*bi*' is used, as in the saying *amana bi-hi* which means, 'He believed in His existence.' It can also be used as a transitive verb when the letter '*la*' is used, as in the saying, *amana la-hu* which means 'He believed Him.' Furthermore, it can be made transitive without any preposition, as in the verse: '...And made them safe (*amana-hum*) from danger' (*Quraysh*: 4). These modifications of the verb convey the meaning of safety, tranquillity and peace.

Allah *Glorified is He* then described the believers as those who '...did righteous deeds' (*Muhammad*: 2). The Noble Quran frequently mentions faith and righteous deeds together because faith is a deed of the heart alone, whereas righteous deeds are the deeds of the outward form and the limbs. Thus, compliance must be provided from the heart through the affirmation of creed, and from the outward form through obeying the commands of the One God, Allah, in which the heart believes.

The master of all the limbs is the heart. It is the instrument that pumps blood, which is the fluid of life, to all the parts of the body. If the heart is filled with faith, it will pump it to all the limbs as well, and thus they will become upright. This is why Prophet Muhammad *may the peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him* said: 'Indeed in the body there is a morsel of flesh, that, if healthy, the whole body is sound, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. Indeed, it is the heart.'⁽¹⁾

(1) *This narration is agreed on. It was narrated by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (50) and by Muslim in his Sahih (2996) from the Hadith of Nu'man ibn Basheer, and it is part of the Hadith: "Indeed the lawful and the unlawful is clear, and between them are doubtful matters that most people do not know. Whoever is cautious with doubtful matters has preserved his religion and his honour," as well as the rest of the Hadith.*

The deed of the heart is to believe in Allah *Glorified is He* and in the unseen things of which Allah *Glorified is He* has informed us. Therefore, we need to believe in Allah, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, The Last Day, and to believe in divine predestination or fate, whether it seems good or is apparently detrimental.

Then, there are the deeds of the limbs. For instance, the eye must not look at the unmarriageable kin of others while the tongue must not bear false witness, backbite people, slander chaste women, or swear false oaths. The belly must only be filled with that which is permissible and the hand must not be used to steal or kill a soul that Allah *Glorified is He* has made sacred unless it is out of justice. The feet must not move towards the impermissible actions. Therefore, every limb has a righteous deed, and they must avoid the impermissible deeds.

There is also a righteous deed that includes all the limbs, which is filial piety, where a person is benevolent and charitable towards their parents. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* connected this deed to worshipping Him, when He said: ‘And worship Allah (alone), and do not ascribe divinity, in any way, to aught beside Him. And do the good unto your parents’ (*an-Nisa*: 36).

In the chapter of *al-‘Asr*, the importance of righteous deeds after faith is made clear, as Allah *Glorified is He* said: ‘Consider the flight of time! Verily, man is bound to lose himself, unless he be of those who believed and did righteous deeds’ (*at-Takathur*: 1-3).

Allah *Glorified is He* then said in our verse: ‘...and have come to believe in what has been revealed to Muhammad – for it is the truth from their Lord’ (*Muhammad*: 2). He mentioned this after His statement: ‘And those who have believed and did righteous deeds’ (*Muhammad*: 2). This is proof that we are obliged to believe in the previous messengers. This is also why Allah *Glorified is He* said: ‘In matters of religion, He has ordained for you that which He had enjoined upon Nuh (Noah) – and into which We gave you (O Muhammad) insight through revelation – as well as that which We had enjoined upon Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses) and ‘Isa (Jesus): Steadfastly uphold the (true) faith, and do not break up your unity therein’ (*ash-Shura*: 13).

This is because there is one foundation of religion which is the worship of Allah *Glorified is He* alone, and the issue of faith is the same with all of Allah’s

Messengers. Faith in Allah *Glorified is He* leads to faith in His Books and Messengers, as well as faith in the Hereafter and the Reckoning. Thus, believing in all of these concepts emanates from our faith in Allah *Glorified is He*.

However, is Allah *Glorified is He* addressing you alone when He orders you with certain commands and prohibits you from certain actions? No. Rather, He chooses messengers to convey His Message: ‘Allah chooses message-bearers from among the angels as well as from among men’ (*al-Hajj*: 75). He chose Jibril (Gabriel) *peace be upon him* to be the one entrusted with His revelation from among the angels, and He chose certain people to be the messengers and prophets of mankind. Thus, faith in Allah *Glorified is He* causes us to having faith in all of Allah’s Messengers in which we regard all of them highly and equally.

I remember that one of the orientalists in San Francisco once asked me, ‘How is it that you allow a Muslim man to marry a woman from the people of the Book, but you forbid a man from the people of the Book to marry a Muslim woman? Why did you not make all marriages lawful to the people of the Book just as you made their food and drink lawful for yourselves?’⁽¹⁾ I said to him, ‘It is because the Muslim man believes in the Messenger who the woman (from the people of the Book) believes in, while the man from the people of the Book does not believe in the Messenger of the Muslim woman he wants to marry.’

Allah’s statement: ‘...for it is the truth from their Lord,’ (*Muhammad*: 2) means that the message that has been revealed to Prophet Muhammad *may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him* is the firm and established truth that never changes or alters. Then, Allah *Glorified is He* mentioned the fruit of this faith in His words: ‘He will efface their (past) bad deeds, and will set their hearts at rest’ (*Muhammad*: 2).

It is from Allah’s mercy that He has allowed people to repent, and opened the door of forgiveness for them. He is their Creator and He knows best what is good for them. He also knows that it is part of man’s nature to be temporarily

(1) Allah said regarding the permissibility of the food of the people of the Book: “...And the food of those who have been given revelation aforetime is lawful to you” (*al-Ma’ida*: 5).

unmindful. This is why He said: ‘...and to pardon many (of their actions)’ (*al-Ma’ida*: 15). He legislated expiations for us, from one prayer to the next, from one Friday to the next and from one *Ramadan* to the next. All of these times are expiations for our sins and occasions for forgiveness so that we do not despair from Allah’s Mercy. They are meant to encourage us to stop our wrongdoing. Therefore, the forgiveness of sins is a mercy that Allah *Glorified is He* shows to His servants so that despair and disobedience do not spread amongst mankind.

Allah *Glorified is He* said: ‘...and will set their hearts (*baal*) at rest’ (*Muhammad*: 2). All the Quranic commentators⁽¹⁾ said that the meaning of these words is that Allah *Glorified is He* will establish the soundness of their psychological, spiritual and material state (*haal*). However, there is a difference between the Arabic words *baal* and *haal*. The word *baal* refers to the ideas that occupy a person’s mind. When you say that a particular thing is in your *baal*, this means that it is concerning your mind. Usually, a man’s *baal* is occupied with the concerns of his current state. For example, a student’s *baal* is concerned with success in an exam, a university admission, or working after graduation. If Allah *Glorified is He* rectified the student’s *baal*, then his *haal* (state) will also be put in order, Allah *Glorified is He* said:

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ أَتَّبَعُوا۟ ٱلْبَاطِلَ وَأَنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ أَتَّبَعُوا۟
ٱلْحَقَّ مِن رَّبِّهِمْ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ يَضْرِبُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلنَّاسَ أَمْثَلَهُمْ

This is because the disbelievers follow falsehood, while the believers follow the truth from their Lord. In this way God shows people their true type [3] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 3)

Allah’s word: ‘This,’ (*Muhammad*: 3) at the beginning of this verse is an indication that this verse is going to be an explanation of the preceding verse.

(1) The commentators say the following regarding “...and will set their hearts at rest.” (*Muhammad*: 2):

- It means that He will rectify their affairs, and this is the opinion of Mujahid and others.
- It means that He will rectify their state, and this is the opinion of Qatada.
- It means that He will rectify their matters, and this is the statement of Ibn ‘Abbas.

Al-Qurtubi said in his *Tafsir* (9/6275): ‘The three opinions are close to each other and they interpret rectification with regards to their lives in this world. An-Naqqash interprets the meaning to be that He rectifies their intentions, and based on this interpretation, the verse means that their religiosity will be rectified.’

Therefore, the preceding reward mentioned for the believers and the preceding punishment mentioned for the disbelievers has a particular rationale and reasoning which will be explained in this verse. The rationale for the punishment of the disbelievers is that they intentionally followed falsehood, while the rationale for Allah's grace towards the believers is that they strived to follow the truth. Falsehood is an illusion, while the truth is manifest and established. Therefore, whoever follows that which is non-existent loses all goodness, while following the truth leads to established and true integrity.

However, why do the people of falsehood follow falsehood? They follow it because it does not have any commandments that restrict their desires. It does not warn them from any punishment, but rather, gives their souls the freedom to indulge in their wants, desires, and passions. Falsehood can steal and live off the efforts and even the blood of others. With falsehood, people may loathe, envy, or even kill one another.

On the other hand, the truth forbids and restricts us from doing things that go against the requirements of our faith. Indeed, the people who worshipped idols, the sun, the moon, or the stars knew that these false deities cannot harm or bring about benefit. However, these false deities did not have any commandments that restricted their worshippers, and this is why they worshipped them.

Allah *Glorified is He* then said: 'In this way does Allah set forth unto people the parables of their true state' (*Muhammad*: 3). Setting forth parables is a method by which the meanings are explained in the Noble Quran. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* clarified matters, in which people's understanding may come to a stop, by using parables. These parables made complex concepts easier to understand.

For instance, in another chapter, Allah *Glorified is He* sets forth a parable of those who associate partners with Allah. Allah said: '(To this end,) Allah set forth a parable: (Compare) a man who has several masters, (all of them) at variance (quarrelling) with one another, (compared) with a man who depends wholly on one master: can the conditions of these two servants be deemed equal?' (*az-Zumar*: 29) When you read this parable, the absurdity of idolatry and the soundness of monotheism become clear to you. These two concepts are not equal because a servant cannot be equally obedient to a number of

masters. Their mastery is not agreed upon but rather disagreed over such that the servant cannot possibly please any one of them completely. On the other hand, in monotheism, the servant only obeys one master.

Likewise, Allah *Glorified is He* set forth parables for us in the chapter of *an-Nur*, to illustrate His Light that illuminates the universe. Allah *Glorified is He* said: ‘Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His light is, as it were, that of a niche containing a lamp; the lamp is (enclosed) in glass, the glass is (shining) like a radiant star: (a lamp) lit from a blessed tree – an olive-tree that is neither of the east nor of the west – the oil whereof (is so bright that it) would well-nigh give light (of itself) even though fire had not touched it: light upon light!’ (*an-Nur*: 35)

An example of a clarifying parable is the following verse, in which Allah *Glorified is He* said: ‘The parable of those who worship (beings or forces) other than Allah as their protectors is that of a spider which makes for itself a house: for, behold, the frailest of all houses is the spider’s house. Could they but understand this?’ (*al-’Ankabut*: 41) Allah *Glorified is He* said:

فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَضَرْبَ الرِّقَابِ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَخْتَمُوهُمْ فَشُدُّوا الْوُكُوفَ فِيمَا مَثَا بَعْدُ
وَمَا فِدَاءٌ حَتَّىٰ تَضَعَ الْحَرْبُ أَوْزَارَهَا ذَٰلِكَ وَلَوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ لَآنصَرْنَا مِنْهُمْ وَلَٰكِنْ لِّيَبْلُوَا
بَعْضَكُمْ بِبَعْضٍ وَالَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَلَن يُضِلَّ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٤١﴾

When you meet the disbelievers in battle, strike them in the neck, and once they are defeated, bind any captives firmly — later you can release them by grace or by ransom — until the toils of war have ended. That [is the way]. God could have defeated them Himself if He had willed, but His purpose is to test some of you by means of others. He will not let the deeds of those who are killed for His cause come to nothing [4] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 4)

Allah’s statement: ‘Now when you meet (in war) those who are bent on denying the truth,’ (*Muhammad*: 4) refers to meeting the enemies in the field of battle when war breaks out between the two groups. ‘Strike their necks,’ (*Muhammad*: 4) refers to killing them, whether by striking the necks or other

actions, but striking the necks is mentioned because it is the most swift and certain way of killing. Then, Allah *Glorified is He* said: ‘...until you overcome them fully’ (*Muhammad*: 4). The Arabic word used is *athkhantum*, which refers to taking away the enemy’s ability to move. This Arabic word is derived from the word *thakheen* which is a substance that has become thick that it clings together due to a viscosity that slows its movement.

This can be seen when rice is cooked in milk or soup, or when honey is boiled in order to make jam. The boiling water forms steam and the remaining substance becomes dense and heavy. This is why it does not move when boiled and we say that the remaining liquid is *thakheen* which means that it is thick and solid-like.

The words: ‘...then, tighten their bonds,’ (*Muhammad*: 4) means that proper shackles should be placed and that they should be tied properly with chains and ropes, so that they remain as prisoners who cannot escape easily. Then, Allah *Glorified is He* said: ‘...but thereafter (set them free,) either by an act of grace or in exchange for ransom’ (*Muhammad*: 4).

Now, when do we release them and let them go by an act of grace, without asking for anything in return, and when do we do that in exchange for ransom? You should let them go without asking for anything in return in situations in which their army releases our prisoners without asking us for anything in return. Likewise, you should take a ransom if they ask for a ransom in order to release our prisoners. This is what is called a like-for-a-like treatment, and this is what the United Nations have now concluded with regards to these kinds of situations.

Allah *Glorified is He* then said: ‘...so that war can lift its burdens (*awzaraha*)’ (*Muhammad*: 4). The word ‘war’ here is metaphorically used to refer to the soldiers who are partaking in it. Therefore, the meaning of this phrase is that we should follow the verse’s commands until the fighting stops. The word: ‘...burdens (*awzaraha*),’ (*Muhammad*: 4) indicates the heavy weights of war, as war is a hardship and a difficulty upon all the people participating in it. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* said about war: ‘Fighting is ordained for you, even though it is despised by you’ (*al-Baqara*: 216). This is because, in war, you are liable to lose wealth, family, or even your entire life, in addition to the

difficulties and hardships of attacking and retreating, striking, being wounded and so forth.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* said in the verse we are studying: ‘...And (know that) had Allah so willed, He could indeed defeat them (Himself),’ (*Muhammad*: 4) which means that, indeed, Allah *Glorified is He* can exact revenge upon them with His power, without the believers having to fight. This is a simple matter for Allah *Glorified is He*. In fact, this is what Allah *Glorified is He* decreed upon many previous nations when He destroyed them with punishments that they could not repel. This is something to which history bears witness. Read, for instance, Allah’s words: ‘For every one of them did We take to task for his sin: and so, upon some of them We let loose a deadly storm-wind; and some of them were overtaken by a (sudden) blast; and some of them We caused to be swallowed by the earth; and some of them We caused to drown’ (*al-’Ankabut*: 40).

Then, why was this fighting legislated upon the believers, when it is detested by them and contains such hardships and difficulty? Allah *Glorified is He* said: ‘Fight against them! Allah will chastise them by your hands, and will bring disgrace upon them, and will succour you against them; and He will soothe the hearts of those who believe,’ (*at-Tawba*: 14). Thus, fighting was legislated to manifest the strength of the believers, test the firmness of their faith and to distinguish the believers from the hypocrites. Allah *Glorified is He* said: ‘...but (Allah wills you to struggle) so as to test you (all) by means of one another’ (*Muhammad*: 4). Therefore, the believers are tested by the disbelievers and the disbelievers are tested by the believers. This was to purify the faith of the believers, who were going to be the bearers of the message, and the people responsible for conveying Allah’s call. They will travel with this call all over the earth, and thus, they had to be purified in order to distinguish the valuable people from the ineffective individuals.

The person who will be patient with the pains of wars will not flee and will sacrifice his wealth and himself for Allah *Glorified is He*. Indeed, Allah does not test human beings to know facts about them because He already knows everything about His creation. These tests are made for us to realize our own strengths or weaknesses.

Allah *Glorified is He* ordained these tests to allow people to distinguish the nature of this community and the nature of this message. Through them, they will get to recognize the greatness of Prophet Muhammad *may the peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him* who was sent as the Seal of all the Prophets, to convey Allah's message to all of mankind in every time and every place. Therefore, his followers must be suitable to hold this responsibility and must be worthy of bearing the burdens of the message following Prophet Muhammad *may the peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him*.

It was narrated⁽¹⁾ that Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr⁽²⁾ *may Allah be pleased with him* had been a proud Qurayshi young man before embracing Islam. For instance, before he became a Muslim, he used to leave his home several times a day, each time wearing new clothes that would give off various scents of musk.

His state transformed when he became a Muslim, and Prophet Muhammad *may the peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him* sent him to Medina to teach the people about Islam. He put on rough clothes and did without the life of ease that he used to have before he became a Muslim.

When his mother learned of his state, she grieved over him, went on a hunger strike, and sat in the heat of the sun in order to turn her son away from Islam. She wanted to make him go back to the religion of his parents and grandparents. When Mus'ab *may Allah be pleased with him* learned of what his mother did to herself, he said to them, 'Tell my mother, that by Allah *Glorified is He* if she had a hundred souls and one came out after the other so that I left this religion for her, I would not leave Islam. Leave her and when her hunger becomes severe, she will eat, and when the heat of the sun starts to afflict her, she will seek shade.'⁽³⁾

(1) *The story of Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr's conversion to Islam and the reaction of his mother*

(2) *He is Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr ibn Hashim ibn 'Abd Al-Manaf Al-Qurashi from the clan of Bani 'Abd Ad-Dar, who was a Companion and amongst the earliest people to embrace Islam. He became a Muslim in Mecca and initially hid his Islam. His family then found out, and thus, they tied him up and detained him. He emigrated to Medina and was the first person to gather people for the Friday prayer there. Usayd ibn Hudayr became a Muslim at Mus'ab's hands, as well as Sa'd ibn Mu'adh. In the Age of Ignorance (Jahaliyyah) he was a young, handsome man, who had lived a life of ease and luxury. His nickname was Mus'ab Al-Khayr (Mus'ab, the Person of Good), and he died in the year 3 A.H. (Al-'Alam by Az-Zirikli).*

(3) *Mentioned by As-Shami in Subul Al-Huda wa Ar-Rashad (11/315), Adh-Dhababi in Siyar 'Alam An-Nubala' (1/109), Ibn 'Asakir in Tarikh Dimashq (20/331), Ibn Al-Athir=*

Mus'ab *may Allah be pleased with him* then lived in Medina until Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* migrated to it. Prophet Muhammad saw Mus'ab wearing the hide of a ram and said: 'Look at what faith has done to your companion.'

Therefore, war was legislated in Islam for wisdom, as it is like the fire that removes dirt from metals and is therefore used to purify gold and iron. War was the way through which Allah *Glorified is He* prepared the nation of the Arabs to be a nation of courage, even before Prophet Muhammad *may the peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him* was sent. When Prophet Muhammad was later compelled to fight, he did not need to train any soldiers or open a military academy. Rather, he found men who were experienced in the arts of war because the wars that broke out between the tribes lasted for forty years before Islam was revealed⁽¹⁾ had made a fully prepared army out of the Arabs. Whenever they heard a cry of transgression, they would rush towards it fearlessly.

Furthermore, the Arabs were a Bedouin community that lived a nomadic life. They used to carry their tents on the backs of camels while following the rainfall and the lands of pasture. It was as if Allah *Glorified is He* was preparing them to carry His message to great distances.

Allah *Glorified is He* said: '...And as for those who are killed in Allah's Cause, never will He let their deeds go to waste' (*Muhammad*: 4). Those who were killed in Allah's path are martyrs and Allah *Glorified is He* will never invalidate their deeds. In fact, He will compensate them and reward them fully for their righteous efforts. This is because the martyrs have given their lives for Allah *Glorified is He* and sacrificed the most valuable things they owned in Allah's cause. Allah *Glorified is He* will reward them generously with favours they could not have imagined. Indeed, this reward will be according to the rule announced in His verse: 'But when you are greeted with a greeting (of peace), answer with an even better greeting' (*an-Nisa*': 86).

= in *Usd Al-Ghaba* (1/469) and *Ibn Kathir in Al-Bidaya wa An-Nihaya* (8/81), but it is actually regarding Sa'd ibn Malik ibn Abu Waqas and not Mus'ab ibn 'Umayr.

(1) An example of these wars was the war of *Da'is* and *Al-Ghabra*', which happened fifty years before Islam, and was between the two tribes of 'Abas and Fazara.

These martyrs have provided their own self in Allah's Cause, and therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* will free them from having to die another time. Therefore, the martyr's worldly life will be connected to the life of the Hereafter. An Arab poet drew his listeners' attention to this meaning when he praised Hamza *may Allah be pleased with him* Prophet Muhammad's uncle and the master of the martyrs. The poet said⁽¹⁾:

'Is Hamza not the uncle of The Chosen One and the master
Of the martyrs, all of them without exception
It suffices you from this martyrdom, immunity
From death, while joining the two lives together.'

Some people objected to the concept that martyrs remains alive, saying that if we dig up a martyr's grave, we would only find a dead body. However, this is a restricted view of the matter of life and death. In order to put yourself at ease, read Allah's words: 'But do not think of those that have been killed in Allah's Cause as dead. Nay, they are alive, with their Lord, receiving their sustenance' (*Al-'Imran*: 169). Reflect upon the words: '...with their Lord' (*Al-'Imran*: 169). Allah *Glorified is He* did not say that they are alive with us, but rather, they are alive with their Lord, in a life that only Allah *Glorified is He* knows. This is from the unseen matters that we must submit to. The martyr is alive with His Lord even though he appears dead in your eyes.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* said regarding these martyrs: '...receiving their sustenance' (*Al-'Imran*: 169). This is another indication that they are alive because sustenance is from the means of maintaining life, Then, Allah *Glorified is He* said:

سَيِّدِيهِمْ وَيُصْلِحُ بَالَهُمْ ۖ وَيُدْخِلُهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ عَرَفَهَا هُمْ ۖ

**He will guide them and put them into a good state [5]
He will admit them into the Garden He has already
made known to them [6] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 5 - 6)**

How can Allah *Glorified is He* guide them when they are already guided? Did they attain martyrdom without being guided? This is as the guidance

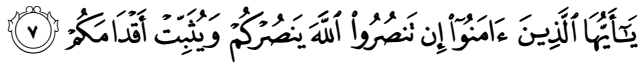
(1) From the poetry of the Sheikh

mentioned in Allah's words: '...just as for those who are (willing to be) guided, He increases their (ability to follow His) guidance' (*Muhammad*: 17). This means that He will guide them to paradise or to acknowledge His blessings and favours with gratitude. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* told us that the people of paradise will exclaim: 'All praise is due to Allah who has made His promise to us come true' (*az-Zumar*: 74). Allah *Glorified is He* also said regarding the people of the fire, and we seek refuge in Allah from their destiny: '(And Allah will thus command :) 'Assemble all those who were bent on evildoing, together with others of their ilk and (with) all that they were wont to worship instead of Allah, and lead them all onto the way to the blazing fire' (*as-Saffat*: 22-23). Therefore, the believers and martyrs will be guided to a life of ease, while the disbelievers will be guided to the blazing fire.

Part of this guidance is that the martyr will know his palace in paradise without knowing the address and without anyone showing it to him.⁽¹⁾ This is why Allah *Glorified is He* said afterwards: '...and will set their hearts at rest, and will admit them to the paradise which He has promised⁽²⁾ them' (*Muhammad*: 5-6). Therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* will establish them in the best state, Then, Allah *Glorified is He* said:

(1) *It was narrated by Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri may Allah be pleased with him that Prophet Muhammad said: "The believers are rescued from the fire and are detained on a bridge between paradise and the fire. Then, certain injustices that occurred between them in the life of this world will be settled, until they are purified and cleansed so they can enter paradise. By The One Who has Muhammad's soul in His hand, each one you will know the way to his home better than he did in the life of this world."* (Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih* (6054), Ahmad in his *Musnad* (10673, 11123, 11175, 11281), Al-Bayhaqi in *Shu'ab Al-Iman* (350) and 'Abd ibn Hamid in his *Musnad* (938)). Al-Qurtubi (9/6281) said: "When they enter paradise it is said to them, 'Disperse to your homes,' and they will know their homes better than they did when they went to their homes after a Friday prayer." This meaning is the opinion of Mujahid and most Quranic commentators.

(2) 'arrafaha lahum ("He has made it (paradise) known to them,") means that He has made it so clear to them that they know it without having to be shown their places in it. Al-Hasan said: "Allah described paradise for them in the life of this world, so when they enter it, they will know it according to its description." Ibn 'Abbas said: "The words 'arrafaha lahum ("...He has made it (paradise) known to them,") means that He has added a scent to it to make it pleasant with all kinds of pleasures, and it is taken from the word 'arf which is a pleasant scent. Mu'arraf food is food that has been scented. (Al-Qurtubi 9/6282)



You who believe! If you help God, He will help you and make you stand firm [7] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 7)

This is a matter of military combat for the Muslims. The principal outlined in this verse does not change because it is one of Allah's standard rules. As long as the Muslim army is fighting for Allah's Cause and to support His religion, they will be granted victory. Allah will give victory to the righteous army if they are fighting for His true cause. This is why we said that if you ever see Muslims being defeated in a battle, you must know that they were not fulfilling the conditions of being Allah's soldiers. You have to examine their intentions closely to find the reasons for their defeat.

Allah *Glorified is He* said: 'For, long ago, has Our word gone forth unto Our servants, the message-bearers, that, verily, they indeed, would be succoured, and that, verily, Our hosts would (in the end) be victorious!' (*as-Saffat*: 171-173) This is why we saw what happened in the Battle of Uhud when the archers went against the commands of Prophet Muhammad *may the peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him* and abandoned their obedience to Allah's Commands.⁽¹⁾

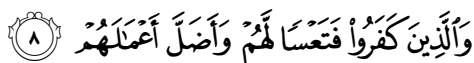
Similar conditions occurred in the Battle of Hunayn, of which Allah *Glorified is He* said: 'And on the Day of Hunayn, when you took pride in your great numbers and they proved of no avail to you – for the earth, despite all its vastness, became (too) narrow for you and you turned back, retreating,' (*at-Tawba*: 25). Even Abu Bakr As-Siddiq *may Allah be pleased with him* himself felt proud regarding the Muslims' strength over the enemy. It is narrated that

(1) Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih* (3737) from Al-Bara' who said: 'We met the polytheists on that day and The Prophet made a group of archers sit down and he put them under the command of 'Abdullah. Prophet Muhammad said to the archers: "Do not leave your posts, even if you see us overwhelming them do not leave. If you see them overwhelming us do not come down to help us." Then, the disbelievers were defeated and I saw the women fleeing, lifting up their clothes, and revealing their leg-bangles and their legs. Thus, the companions of 'Abdullah said, "The war-spoils! The war-spoils!" 'Abdullah said, "Allah's Messenger told me that you must not leave." They refused to obey, and when they refused, they were forced to turn back, they were defeated and seventy Muslims were killed." The Hadith then continued. It is also narrated by Abu Dawud in his *Sunnan* (3288) and Ahmad in his *Musnad* (17854 and 17859).

he said, 'We will not be defeated today because, indeed, we are numbered.' When the Muslims became filled with delusion and pride because of their numbers, they were afflicted with defeat at the very beginning of the battle.

However, Allah's Mercy allowed them to re-organize their lines and they were victorious towards the end of the battle. Thus, this was a disciplinary practical lesson from Allah *Glorified is He* to His believing servants so that when they enter a war, their only thoughts should be connected to Allah Alone and fighting for His Cause without fail.

Allah *Glorified is He* said: '...and (Allah) will make your feet firm' (*Muhammad: 7*). Making the feet firm is a reference to being determined and withstanding in the battlefield because feet are what is used to flee from war. Therefore, with Allah's support, the feet will not flee during combats, Then, Allah *Glorified is He* said:



**As for the disbelievers, how wretched will be
their state! God has brought their deeds to
nothing [8] (The Quran, *Muhammad: 8*)**

After mentioning the believers and their promise of victory, Allah *Glorified is He* then mentioned the disbelievers and the ill fortune (*ta's*) that will befall them. *Ta's* is an Arabic word that refers to a person falling down on their face, and the face is the noblest part of a person's body. This is why, when expressing ignominy and dejection to a person, some people say, 'The person's nose was rubbed in the dirt.'

Therefore, the words: '...ill fortune awaits them,' (*Muhammad: 8*) mean that they will experience shame and ruin, and their faces will be humiliated with the worst kind of humiliation that a person can suffer. Allah *Glorified is He* said in another chapter, regarding the children of Israel: '...And so, when the prediction of the second (period of your iniquity) came true, (We raised new enemies against you, and allowed them) to disgrace your faces utterly (*yasu'u wujuhakum*)' (*al-Isra': 7*).

Allah's statement: '...since He will let all their (good) deeds go to waste,' (*Muhammad*: 8) means that He will nullify their good deeds and make them worthless such that they will be of no benefit. This is because they did not do these deeds for Allah's sake. Therefore, their good deeds will dissolve and they will not benefit from them in any degree.

Allah *Glorified is He* said in another chapter: 'But as for those who are bent on denying the truth, their (good) deeds are like a mirage in the desert, which the thirsty (person) supposes to be water – until, when he approaches it, he finds that it was nothing: instead, he finds (that) Allah (has always been present) with him, and (that) He will pay him his account in full – for Allah is swift in reckoning!' (*an-Nur*: 39) Then, Allah *Glorified is He* said:

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَرِهُوا مَا أُنْزِلَ اللَّهُ فَأَحْبَطَ أَعْمَلَهُمْ ﴿٩﴾

**It is because they hate what God has sent down
that He has caused their deeds to go to waste[9]
(The Quran, *Muhammad*: 9)**

The word: 'It' (*Muhammad*: 9) is referring to the ill fortune and nullification of deeds that has been mentioned as part of the punishment of the disbelievers. The reason for this punishment is that 'they hated (the very thought of) what Allah has revealed' (*Muhammad*: 9). This is the reason for the nullification of their good deeds.

These disbelievers hated what Allah *Glorified is He* has revealed and sent down because they saw that Allah's commands will strip them of their authority, leadership, and power. Allah's way made them equal to their servants after they had become accustomed to leadership, rank, and dominance over all the other creatures. This is why they hated the truth that Prophet Muhammad *peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him* conveyed to them.

While Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was going to Medina, they were preparing 'Abdullah ibn Ubay to be crowned a king of Medina.⁽¹⁾ When the Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*

(1) It is mentioned by As-Suhayli in *Ar-Rawd Al-Anf* 3/18 that the Helpers were arranging pearls from Abdullah ibn Ubay ibn Sahul in order to crown him and make him their king.

arrived, the people dispersed from around him and became preoccupied with the advent of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. 'Abdullah held a grudge deep in his soul against the Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and he persisted in his enmity towards the Messenger such that when he declared his Islam he was not sincere but rather a hypocrite, and his hypocrisy was well-known

Despite that, he had a son who became Muslim and whose Islam was sincere and he was a companion of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. When his son learned that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had commanded that this hypocrite be killed, he came to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and asked him for exclusive permission to kill him so that no other man would do it from amongst the Companions. He wanted to avoid the feeling of resentment against any one of them. When he said this to the Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* the Messenger refused and chose to show 'Abdullah ibn Ubay mercy and pardon him. He said: 'Do not kill him. Let his punishment be postponed to be carried out by Allah.'⁽¹⁾

His statement: '...caused their deeds to go to waste,' (*Muhammad: 9*) means, as we have said, that He invalidates their deeds, be it their actions, planning or plotting against the Muslims. This was achieved by the Muslims' victory over them. Thus Allah *Glorified is He* made their plotting fall back on them. The meaning of this part of the verse might also be that Allah *Glorified is He*

(1) Mentioned by Ibn Kathir in *Al-Bid'ah wa an-Nihayah* 4/181 in which he said that Ibn Ishaq said: 'Asim ibn 'Umar ibn Qatada related to me that 'Abdullah ibn 'Abdullah ibn Ubay ibn Salul came to The Messenger of Allah *Glorified is He*, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and said: 'O Messenger of Allah *Glorified is He*! It has reached me that you want to kill 'Abdullah ibn Ubay because of what has reached you concerning him. If that is the case, then leave it to me and I will bring you his head, for by Allah *Glorified is He*, I know that amongst Al- Khazraj there is no one more dutiful to his father than me and I fear that you will command someone else to kill him. Do not leave me to look at the killer of 'Abdullah ibn Ubay walking amongst the people because I will kill him and killing a believing man because of a disbeliever will cause me to enter the fire.' Thus, The Messenger of Allah *Glorified is He*, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'We shall be gentle with him and treat him well as long as he is with us.'

caused their deeds to go to waste because they did not do them for the sake of Allah *Glorified is He* or seeking His pleasure.

It is known that amongst these people there were those who had righteous deeds that carried weight in their society. It is related that Ibn Jud'an and Al-Mat'am ibn 'Adiyy had pots of food under which a man could seek shade. They had great deeds in generosity, courage, and helping those in trouble, but they did not do this to seek Allah's pleasure, and thus these deeds go to waste.

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ
 مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ دَمَّرَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ أَمْثَلُهَا

Have they not travelled the earth and seen how those before them met their end? God destroyed them utterly: a similar fate awaits the disbelievers [10] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 10)

His statement: 'Have they not travelled the earth...' (*Muhammad*: 10) is a question whose purpose is to show astonishment at what the disbelievers did. How could they disbelieve in Allah *Glorified is He* when they were a nation of nomads who travelled regularly, and in their journeys they passed by the ruins of houses that belonged to the previous disbelieving nations, seeing the punishment that befell them and how Allah *Glorified is He* took them to task. Did they not take a lesson from this?

He says in another verse: 'You [people] pass by their ruins morning* and night: will you not take heed?' (*as-Saffat*: 137-138) He also says: 'Do they not see how We come to [their] land and shrink its borders? Allah decides—no one can reverse His decision—and He is swift in reckoning' (*ar-Ra'd*: 41). He says in another verse: '...We have allowed these sinners and their fore-fathers to enjoy life for a long time. But do they not see how We are shrinking their borders? Is it they who will prevail?' (*al-Anbiya*: 44) That is take a lesson from the facts of life. Have you ever seen a Messenger being defeated by his enemies? Therefore, let them take a lesson from the previous nations: '...and seen how those before them met their end' (*Muhammad*: 10). What did Allah *Glorified is He* do to them? '...Allah destroyed them utterly...' (*Muhammad*: 10). The meaning of *dammara* (destroyed) is that Allah *Glorified is He* ruined them within

themselves, while *dammara alayhim*, as mentioned in this verse, mean that He surrounded them with torture and devastation. Thus, He destroyed them, their property, and their families so that nothing was left of them.

‘A similar fate awaits the disbelievers’ (*Muhammad*: 10), i.e. this outcome is not far from you, Oh disbelievers of Mecca; so beware! In the same vein, the True Lord says in another verse: ‘...It is not far from the evildoers.’ (*Hud*: 83)

Then, the True Lord says:⁽¹⁾

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ مَوْلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَأَنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ لَا مَوْلَى لَهُمْ ﴿١١﴾

That is because God protects the believers while the disbelievers have no one to protect them [11] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 11)

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘That...’ (*Muhammad*: 11) referring to Allah’s exacting revenge from the disbelievers, as well as His saving the believers and granting them victory: ‘...because Allah is the protector of the believers,’ (*Muhammad*: 11). *Mawla* (Protector) is the One Who gives them victory and takes charge of their affairs; He is the Mighty who is never overcome. ‘While the disbelievers have no one to protect them’ (*Muhammad*: 11). They will have no helper and no one to grant them victory because they worshiped gods that cannot harm nor benefit them. Then, the True Lord says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَسْمَعُونَ وَايَّا كُفْرًا كَمَا تَأْكُلُ الْأَنْعَامُ وَالنَّارُ مَطْوًى لَهُمْ ﴿١٢﴾

God will admit those who believe and do good deeds to Gardens graced with flowing streams; the disbelievers may take their fill of pleasure in this world, and eat as cattle do, but the Fire will be their home [12] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 12)

Here, The True Lord is telling us about the deeds of the people of faith and their consequences, and the deeds of the people of disbelief and their

(1) *Qatada said: ‘It was sent down on the Day of Uhud on the mountain path. When the polytheists cried out: ‘A day for a day. We have ‘Uzza and you have no ‘Uzza’ The Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said: ‘No. Say: ‘Allah Glorified is He is our Protector and you have no protector.’ (The Quran, Mentioned by Al-Qurtubi in his Tafsir 9/6285)*

consequences. The believer has maintained his heart with faith, and thus his limbs were maintained with righteous actions. The consequence is: ‘...Gardens graced with flowing streams...’ (*Muhammad*: 12), where the life of ease is eternal and never-ending.

The meaning of *min tahtiha* (literally: under which), ‘...graced with...’ (*Muhammad*: 12) is that its water is inherent and constantly provided. It does not come from far away and there is no fear of it being cut off.

As for the disbelievers, they eat and enjoy food and drink, and they fill their bellies and their bodies. As for their hearts, they are empty and desolate with no meaning and no faith. Therefore, they live a life that is similar to the life of animals and beasts. They have material glut but in terms of values and spirituality they are impoverished. This is their state in the life of this world. Then, the consequence and normal reward will come as mentioned in the verse: ‘...but the Fire will be their home’ (*Muhammad*: 12), i.e., the fire will be their end, their place of return, their place of settlement and their final destination.

وَكَايْنٍ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ هِيَ أَشَدُّ قُوَّةً مِّنْ قَرْيَتِكَ الَّتِي أَخْرَجْنَاكَ أَهْلَكْنَاهُمْ فَلَا نَاصِرَ لَهُمْ

**We have destroyed many a town stronger than your own
[Prophet] – the town which [chose to] expel you – and they
had no one to help them [13] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 13)**

His statement: ‘Many a town...’ (*Muhammad*: 13), i.e. many towns ‘...stronger than your own [Prophet]—the town which [chose to] expel you—we have destroyed, and they had no one to help them’ (*Muhammad*: 13). The town referred to here is Mecca, as it is the city that drove out Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and how does it compare to the towns that Allah *Glorified is He* destroyed—which were of greater power, had greater numbers of people, and were more advanced in terms of civilization and development.

The True Lord says about them: ‘Have they not travelled through the land and seen how their predecessors met their end? They were mightier than them: they cultivated the earth more and built more upon it...’ (*ar-Rum*: 9).

How do they compare to ‘Ad, the like of which were not created in the land, with the tribe of Thamud, who hewed out the rocks in the valley or with

Pharaoh, the lord of hosts? How do they compare to these people who were eventually destroyed? 'We have destroyed, and they had no one to help them' (*Muhammad: 13*). They had no one to defend them and repel the punishment from them.

Then, the True Lord says:

﴿۱۴﴾ أَفَمَن كَانَ عَلَىٰ يَدَيْهِ مِّن رَّبِّهِ كَمَن زُيِّنَ لَهُ سُوٓءُ عَمَلِهِۦ وَأَتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ

Can those who follow clear proof from their Lord be compared to those whose foul deeds are made to seem alluring to them, those who follow their own desires? [14]
(The Quran, Muhammad: 14)

The True Lord *Glorified is He* wants to affirm this fact, but He does it in the form of a question: 'Is this equal to this?' 'Can those who follow clear proof from their Lord...' (*Muhammad: 14*)? *Ala bayyinah* means: on guidance, clear evidence and light from His Lord.

The Lord is The Creator and He is The Nurturer. What do you think of nurturing if it is from Allah *Glorified is He*? This is why Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said in the context of stating a favour done to him by his Lord: 'My Lord refined me and He perfected my refinement.'⁽¹⁾

The meaning of *ala bayyinah* '...who follow clear proof from their Lord...' (*Muhammad: 14*) is to be on clear evidence, unshakeable certainty and an upright way that secures goodness in the life of this world and well-being in the Hereafter. Is this person equal to someone whose evil deed is made fair to him so much so that he considers it good and he follows his vain passions and desires? You must say that they are not equal.

(1) Mentioned by As-Sakhawi in *Al-Maqasid Al-Hasana* and he attributed it to Al-Askari in *Al-Amthal*, and he said: 'Its chain of transmission is very weak and our Sheikh (The Quran, i.e. Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani) restricted its judgement to being *gharib* (The Quran, having one narrator absolutely, or only one person adding to the text or to the chain of transmission) in some of his legal verdicts *fatawa*. Ibn Taymiyyah said: 'It is not known to have an established chain of transmission.' Ibn Al-Jawzi mentioned it in *Al-Ahadith Al-Wahiyya* from the Hadith (Prophetic tradition) of 'Ali and he said: 'It is not authentic.'

One of the most severe tribulations that man falls into is when his passions make his evil deeds seem goodly to him. Desires are the inclinations and passions that make you deviate from the straight path. This is why they said⁽¹⁾: ‘The bane of opinion are desires; and this is why Allah *Glorified is He* praised His Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* by saying: ‘Nor does he speak out of desire’ (*an-Najm*: 3).

Then, the context goes back to striking parables one more time, as the True Lord says:

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي وُعدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ فِيهَا أَنْهَارٌ مِنْ مَّاءٍ غَيْرِ آسِنٍ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ لَبَنٍ لَمْ يَتَغَيَّرَ طَعْمُهُ، وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ خَمْرٍ لَذَّةٍ لِلشَّارِبِينَ وَأَنْهَارٌ مِنْ عَسَلٍ مُصَفًّى وَهُمْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ كَمَنْ هُوَ خَالِدٌ فِي النَّارِ وَسُقُوا مَاءً حَمِيمًا فَقَطَّعَ أَمْعَاءَهُمْ ﴿١٥﴾

Here is a picture of the Garden promised to the pious: rivers of water forever pure, rivers of milk forever fresh, rivers of wine, a delight for those who drink, rivers of honey clarified and pure, [all] flow in it; there they will find fruit of every kind; and they will find forgiveness from their Lord. How can this be compared to the fate of those stuck in the Fire, given boiling water to drink that tears their bowels? [15]

(The Quran, *Muhammad*: 15)

The word *mathal* ‘...parable...’ is pronounced *mithl* with a *kasra* below the *mim* when likening a singular object to another singular object that is similar. Thus, you say: ‘*Hadha mithl hadha*’ (this is like this). You say it with a *fat’ha* when you want to liken an image that has parts to another image that has parts. This is why He says here: ‘*Mathalu al-jannati allati wu’ida al-muttaqun*,’ ‘Here is a parable of the Garden promised to the pious...’ (*Muhammad*: 15), with a *fat’ha* above the *mim* because it represents an aggregation and a comprehensive image that has various parts and elements.

Read His statement: ‘...parable of the life of this world...’ (*al-Kahf*: 45), i.e. this indicates life including what it contains from birth to death, ‘... like

(1) This was said by Aktham ibn Sayfi in a speech that he gave as part of the delegations to Khosrau, and it was mentioned by Ibn ‘Abd Rabbuh in *Al-Iqd Al-Farid* 1/97.

water which We send down from the cloud so the herbage of the earth becomes tangled on account of it, then it becomes dry broken into pieces which the winds scatter; and Allah is the holder of power over all things' (*al-Kahf*: 45).

A parable *mathal* is a comparison in which you link something unknown to you with something known to you, and this is why, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was asked about the descriptions of Musa (Moses) 'Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon them* he compared them to what was known of the Companions. Thus, he said: 'As for Musa (Moses), he was a tall man as if he were from the men of Azd Shanu'a⁽¹⁾'; who were known to them, 'As for 'Isa (Jesus) his face has many beautiful features, and water drips from his face as if he had just come out of the bathroom; from amongst my Companions, he is most similar to 'Urwa ibn Mas'ud Ath-Thaqafi'. So, he likened something unknown to something known.

Likewise, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* has given us parables in order to clarify matters of religion for us, as he said in a Hadith: 'My parable and that of yours is like a man who kindled a fire. When it has illuminated all around him, the moths and grasshoppers began to fall therein. He tried to push them away, but they overcame him and jumped into it. I am catching hold of your waists ties (to save you) from fire, but you slip away from my hands.'⁽²⁾ He said: '*Mathali wa mathalukum...*' (My parable and that of yours...)'.

The word *janna* '...paradise...' originally means something that is veiled, and from it we have *jann* (cover); for example, we say: '*jann al-layl*' (it became dark because it is night time). The word *janna*—which also means garden—has

-
- (1) Azd Shanu'a: they are the descendants of Ka'b ibn 'Abd Al-Malik ibn Nasr ibn Al-Azd, and they are currently the tribes of Ghamid and their cousins from Zhahran. Shanu'a, with the letter *hamza*, is taken from *shanan*, which means 'mutual' hatred'. Ibn Darid said: 'The father of this tribal community from the Azd was called this.' Al-Khafaji said: 'They were called this because of their noble lineage and the excellence of their actions.' One of the things they say is 'a man of Shanu'a', which means that he has pure lineage and manly virtues. They originate from Yemen.
- (2) *Agreed upon Hadith, narrated by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih 6002 and Muslim in his Sahih 4224, 4225 from the Hadith of Abu Hurayra peace be upon him. As for the Hadith of Jabir ibn 'Abdullah, it is narrated by Muslim in his Sahih 4226 and At-Tirmidhi in his Sunnan 2799.*

this same meaning because a garden is a piece of land that is filled with trees that have overlapping branches such that they cover and hide what they contain. Another meaning is that a garden covers and veils its owner and prevents him from leaving because it provides him with everything that he needs for living.

The True Lord strikes a parable of it when He says: ‘...is as the parable of a garden on an elevated ground, upon which heavy rain falls so it brings forth its fruit twofold, but if heavy rain does not fall upon it, then light rain (is sufficient)...’ (*al-Baqara*: 265). He also says: ‘And set forth to them a parable of two men; for one of them We made two gardens...’ (*al-Kahf*: 32).

The difference between the *jannatayn* (two gardens)—the *janna* in these verses and the *janna* in the verse we are studying—is that the *janna* in the life of this world is man-made and is physically brought about by the means of tilling and cultivating. As for the *janna* of the Hereafter that Allah *Glorified is He* has promised the pious, it exists without any means. It exists according to the power of The Original Creator. This is why there has been a difference of opinion regarding the *janna* that Adam *peace be upon him* entered. Was it a garden in the life of this world or was it the garden of the Hereafter?

When we read this story in Allah’s Book, we learn that it is Allah’s *janna*, the *janna* of the Hereafter, and the proof is that there is no tilling or cultivating therein, and no means are applied. Rather, Adam *peace be upon him* ate from what Allah *Glorified is He* had prepared for him, and he enjoyed inherent security as long as he adhered to obeying Allah’s Commands with regards to eating.

When Satan had deceived him into eating from the tree that Allah *Glorified is He* had forbidden him from, he underwent a transformation in his natural state and came to experience the process of excretion, which he had not known before. He and his wife became aware of their nakedness and they rushed to cover it with leaves.

This experience was a practical training for Adam *peace be upon him* to respect Allah’s way and not deviate from it. We also understand from this that nakedness does not appear in Muslim society unless there is deviation from the way. Adam *peace be upon him* was not a normal man. He was a Prophet and a Messenger and The True Lord wanted to teach him the lesson in a practical way.

The True Lord's statement: '...promised to the pious...' (*Muhammad*: 15) means that Allah *Glorified is He* promised them; and Allah's Promise is true and is certain to happen because He is One and has no partner to oppose him. There is no force that can come between Him and the implementation of what He has promised, as is the case, for example, when human beings make promises to one another. Moreover, there is no force that can prevent Him from accomplishing His promise, like what happens with humans, who are subject to change and none of them ever escapes death.

As for The True Lord, He is The Eternal and the Ever-Abiding, and He is the True Lord.

The *janna* (garden) that Allah *Glorified is He* has promised has not been promised by anyone else. To whom has it been promised? It has been promised to the pious who are mindful of Allah. The pious are those who live in accordance with Allah's way, and place a protective barrier between themselves and Allah's punishment. This can only be done by following His Way and not following Satan and one's vain desires.

The True Lord says: 'Satan threatens you with the prospect of poverty and commands you to do foul deeds; Allah promises you His forgiveness and His abundance: Allah is limitless and all knowing' (*al-Baqara*: 268). Allah's promise is the promise of veracity and truth. He says: '...Who speaks more truly than Allah?' (*an-Nisa*': 122)

His statement: 'Here is a parable of the Garden...' (*Muhammad*: 15) means that this description is not a description of paradise, but rather, a parable that illustrates it to make it easier to perceive because if He had wanted to give us a literal description of paradise, He would have been able to do so only by way of terms that express meanings.

In language, it is known that the meaning exists first, and then we give it a term that refers to it. When Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* described paradise for us He said: 'It contains what no eye has seen, what no ear has heard and what has not occurred to the heart or mind of any man.'⁽¹⁾

(1) *Agreed upon Hadith, narrated by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih 3005, 4406, 4407, 6944 and Muslim in his Sahih 5050, 5051, 5052 from the Hadith of Abu Hurayra may Allah be pleased with him.*

First of all, reflect on the progressive development with regards to senses and conceptions that we have in this Hadith. The eye sees that which is within the scope of vision. As for the ear, it hears what you can see and what others can see, while that which occurs to the mind or heart is more expansive.

If our conceptions cannot arrive at what paradise contains, and not even that which occurs to our minds, then how can we describe it? How can we give it terms that express it? Therefore, there is no literal description of paradise. There is only a parable that makes it easier for us to understand. This is why the True Lord says about paradise: ‘No soul knows what joy is kept hidden in store for them...’ (*as-Sajda*: 17).

Therefore, it contains things that we do not know, so how can we give names to such things? This is why we make such things easier to perceive by using parables of that which we know in the life of this world.

Paradise contains, as in the life of this world, water, milk, wine, and honey, but they are bettered and purified from anything that could spoil them. Thus, they do not resemble the blessings of the life of this world except in their names: ‘...Therein are rivers of water that does not alter...’ (*Muhammad*: 15).

The water in the life of this world alters and corrupts and its smell changes. As for the water of paradise, it does not corrupt. The True Lord begins with water because it is the basis for quenching one’s thirst, and with it food ripens and man’s cleanliness is completed. Indeed, it is the fundamental element in the creation of every living thing. He said: ‘...and We have made of water everything living...’ (*al-Anbiya*: 30).

We know that the source of freshwater in the life of this world is the sea and that by the process of evaporation and cloud formation that water is purified of its salinity and becomes proper freshwater, yet, we do not know the source of the water in paradise.

Allah *Glorified is He* says about it: ‘...pure water...’ (*al-Furqan*: 48) nothing spoils, sullies or corrupts it. Therefore, it is a blessing that is not disturbed by anything and is not spoiled by anything because you live in this world according to your means. These means are the ones that Allah *Glorified is He* has created for you.

Amongst us are those who disturb the order of these means. As for the Hereafter, you live directly according to The Original Cause. In the life of this world, you seek light from the sun in the daytime and from the moon and stars at night, whereas, in the Hereafter, there is no sun, moon, or stars. Rather, you live with the light of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'And the earth shall beam with the light of its Lord...' (*az-Zumar*: 69), i.e. without the need of any means

Moreover, in the life of this world you have water via means, while in paradise there are no means to have water. Read His statement about water in the life of this world: 'We send the winds to fertilize, and We bring down water from the sky for you to drink...' (*al-Hijr*: 22). He says about the water of paradise: '...their Lord will give them a pure drink.' (*al-Insan*: 21)

There is a difference in meaning between *asqa* and *sqa*. *Asqa* means that the water which we obtain for drinking is brought into existence. Thus, water is sent down from the clouds and we store it in reservoirs until we need it. *Sqa* indicates that giving the water has already been started.

What is amazing about the rivers of paradise is that they do not have shores, and that they merge with one another without mixing. Do not ask about how this is done because these blessings do not exist via means which we know, but rather by the Causer (the Original Cause). So, do not impose upon such blessings your worldly standards. His word: '...Therein...' (*Muhammad*: 15) means that these rivers are contained here (in the Garden).

He says: '...rivers of milk forever fresh...' (*Muhammad*: 15). By contrast, the taste of milk in the life of this world changes with time and it corrupts. 'Rivers of wine, a delight for those who drink...' (*Muhammad*: 15). Yes, rivers of wine that are prepared and ready. There are no grapes that are pressed. It is simply a matter of 'Be!' and it is.

If the wine in the life of this world is impermissible, and it clouds the intellect and has a repulsive smell, the wine in the Hereafter is delightful to drink and does not cloud the intellect, so the only thing it shares with the wine in the life of this world is its name.

In our worldly life there are no rivers of wine because wine, here, comes about via means. Only small quantities of wine are made, according to the

quantity of grapes, or other fruits, pressed. When the True Lord speaks about the wine of this world, He says: 'They ask you [Prophet] about intoxicants and gambling: say, 'There is great sin in both and some benefit for people: the sin is greater than the benefit.' (*al-Baqara*: 219) Its benefits have no worth when compared to its harms as well as its being forbidden; and though it makes you feel drunk and happy that you laugh, rejoice and forget your worries, yet, after that it clouds your intellect and strips you of your dignity.

If you add to that the fact that it is forbidden, and that it is one of the worst enormities, the harm it can do to you becomes evident. It is true that there is profit for whoever trades in it, but it is unlawful profit. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* made the wine in the life of this world to be a small amount. As for the wine in the Hereafter, it flows in rivers because in the Hereafter it is a joy for those who drink it. 'There shall be no trouble in it, nor shall they be exhausted therewith' (*as-Saffat*: 47). This means that it does not cloud the intellect, and there is no harm as a result of drinking it. *An-nazf* means to extract something from something such as someone who vomits after drinking it or is afflicted with dizziness or a headache.

'Rivers of honey clarified and pure...' (*Muhammad*: 15). Therefore, He mentioned water first because of its first-rank importance, and then milk because it takes the place of water until water is found, and it is a fundamental element of nourishment. Then He mentioned wine because after man eats and drinks he needs to complete his happiness with a cup of this wine.

As for honey, it is mentioned last because Allah *Glorified is He* says about it: '...wherein there is cure for man...' (*an-Nahl*: 69). Therefore, that which distinguishes honey is not its taste or its sweetness, but rather the fact that it is a cure, and in paradise there is no sickness. So, it is drunk in paradise in order to be enjoyed and because of its beautiful taste.

The use of '...clarified and pure...' (*Muhammad*: 15) is to distinguish between it and the honey in the life of this world which is not free of impurities. Man gathers it from mountains which are the bee's first pastures: 'And your Lord inspired the bee, saying, 'Build yourselves houses in the mountains and trees and what people construct...' (*an-Nahl*: 68).

The American scientist who researched the history of the bee found that the most ancient kind of bee are those that live in mountains, and as long as it comes from mountains it will not be free of impurities. As for the honey of paradise, it is cleansed with the power of the One Who prepared it.

Then He says: ‘...there they will find fruit of every kind...’ (*Muhammad*: 15). After mentioning the fluids that are in paradise the True Lord then mentions the fruits it contains without naming them because we do not know them.

This is why He says in another verse: ‘...because they were provided with something like it...’ (*al-Baqara*: 25), i.e. fruits that resemble what they had before, but taste different; thus, even if He gives us examples of grapes and fruits generally known, in paradise they will be other than what we know in this world.

If the fruits that we know of have environments that suit them and seasons that they grow in, the fruits in paradise are available at all times. The environments in the life of this world are among the means, whereas in the Hereafter there are no means, but in the Hereafter there is only the Causer.

He then says: ‘...and they will find forgiveness from their Lord...’ (*Muhammad*: 15). After our Lord has given material, outward delight in paradise, He gives us a higher delight, which is the delight of obtaining from Allah out of His Generosity and favour because people do not enter paradise except through forgiveness. However, one of them may mention his sin and He will say to him: ‘You are forgiven.’

It is related in the Qudsi Hadith that after the people of paradise have entered paradise, the Lord of Might will ask them: “Are you pleased, my servants?” They will say: ‘How could we not be pleased, O Lord? You have given us such-and-such and such-and-such.’ Then He will say: ‘Now, I bestow upon you My Pleasure, and I will never be angry with you after this.’⁽¹⁾

(1) *Agreed upon Hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih 6067, 6964 and Muslim in his Sahih 5057 from the Hadith of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudari may Allah be pleased with him... Its wording according to Muslim is that The Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said: 'Indeed Allah Glorified is He says to the people of paradise: 'O people of paradise!' And they say: 'Here we are, at your pleasure! Goodness is in Your hands.' Then He says: 'Are you pleased?' They reply: 'How can we not be pleased, O Lord,=*

Then, The True Lord asks us to compare between the people of paradise and the people of the fire. He says: ‘...How can this be compared to the fate of those stuck in the fire, given boiling water to drink that tears their bowels?’ (*Muhammad*: 15) That is to say, which is better? Judge for yourselves and we will accept your judgement.

This is paradise or a likeness of it: is it equal to its counterpart the fire as an eternal abode? ‘Given boiling water to drink that tears their bowels?’ (*Muhammad*: 15) Just as water is mentioned first in Paradise it is also mentioned first in the Fire—and we seek refuge in Allah *Glorified is He*.

His word: ‘*suqu*’, ‘...given waters of burning despair to drink...’ (*Muhammad*: 15), does not simply mean ‘drink’ because drinking is a voluntary act. Rather, ‘*suqu*’, ‘...given boiling water to drink...’ (*Muhammad*: 15) means that they drink it reluctantly and against their will, just like when you give a small child medicine. You force him to drink it because he does not like it.

‘Boiling water...’ (*Muhammad*: 15): water is known to be drunk in order to quench thirst and it is drunk cold. As for the water of hellfire—and we seek refuge in Allah *Glorified is He*—it will be boiling, i.e. of the maximum temperature. How will they be in the fire when they will want to cool the heat in their throats and they will be given boiling water that will increase the heat and make it hotter than the fire? This is why Allah *Glorified is He* says in another verse: ‘...If they call for relief, they will be relieved with water like molten metal, scalding their faces...’ (*al-Kahf*: 29).

Then, He explains the effect of this boiling water: ‘...that tears their bowels’ (*Muhammad*: 15). If only it would turn and that would be the end of the matter, but instead it is an everlasting punishment that will never be mitigated for them.

When their skins have been burned away, We shall replace them with new ones so that they may continue to feel the pain...’ (*an-Nisa*: 56). *Al-am’a* ‘...bowels...’ is the plural of *mi’i*, and in the Noble Hadith we have the statement

= when You have given us what You have not given any of Your creation?’ He then says: ‘Shall I give you something better than this?’ They reply: ‘O Lord! What could be better than this?’ He then says: ‘I bestow upon you My Pleasure, and I will never be angry with you after this.’

of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: ‘The Muslim eats in one intestine, and the disbeliever eats in seven.’⁽¹⁾ That is, the believer eats according to his need or in his food there are blessings. As for the disbeliever, he eats until he fills his stomach.

Then, the True Lord says:

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَسْتَمِعُ إِلَيْكَ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا خَرَجُوا مِنْ عِنْدِكَ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ
مَاذَا قَالَ أَنفَاءً أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ طَبَعَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاتَّبَعُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ ﴿١٦﴾

Some of these people listen to you [Prophet], but, once they leave your presence, they sneer at those who have been given knowledge, saying, ‘What was that he just said?’ These are the ones whose hearts God has sealed, those who follow their own desires [16] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 16)

In His statement: ‘Some of these people...’ (*Muhammad*: 16), Who are these people? You will know after you have read their description: ‘...listen to you...’ (*Muhammad*: 16), i.e. they listen to the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* reading the Quran: ‘...but once they leave your presence...’ (*Muhammad*: 16), Oh Muhammad ‘...they sneer at those who have been given knowledge...’ (*Muhammad*: 16), like Ibn Mas’ud and Ibn Abbas ‘...saying, ‘What is it that he has said just now?’...’ (*Muhammad*: 16) That is what is new about what Muhammad has said? It is as if they despise what they have heard from Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Therefore, these are not the attributes of disbelievers because the disbelievers would not listen to the Noble Quran. Rather, these are the attributes of the hypocrites who would participate with the Muslims in their prayers and their gatherings and mingle with them subtly and cynically. However, the Quran was being sent down to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and it would expose them.

(1) Authentic Hadith narrated by Malik in his *Muwatta’* 1442, Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih* 4977, 4978, Ibn Majah in his *Sunnan* 3247 and Ahmad in his *Musnad* 7184, 9008, 9248, 9496 and all of them from the Hadith of Abu Hurayra *peace be upon him* and in the chapter regarding Ibn ‘Umar and Abu Musa Al-Ash’ari.

This is why hypocrisy was worse and more harmful for the Muslims than disbelief because disbelievers are known and they manifest their enmity so one can be on guard against them whereas a hypocrite belongs to the Muslim society and openly declares Islam while concealing his disbelief and thus his enmity is not manifest and his danger is immense.

When one follows the history of hypocrisy in Islam, he will find that it did not emerge in Mecca but rather in Medina. Thus, despite the severe enmity that existed between Islam and disbelief in Mecca, it was still open, declared enmity that could be confronted. There was no hypocrisy there. It did not emerge in Mecca, but it did in Medina, why? It is because hypocrisy only exists in the presence of those who are strong. A weak person will not be hypocritical with another weak person. He would openly declare his enmity, whereas a strong person is dealt with hypocritically in order to avoid any harm of his power.

Therefore, there was no need for hypocrisy in Mecca while the Muslims therein were a weak minority. This means that hypocrisy is a phenomenon that indicates the strength of faith and that it now had a force that was receiving hypocritical treatment. This is what happened in Medina. This is why the True Lord says about them: ‘...as are some of the people of Medina— they are obstinate in their hypocrisy...’ (*at-Tawba*: 101).

Regarding the word *yastami’u* ‘...listen...’ (*Muhammad*: 16), the root letters are found in the Noble Quran as *sami’a*, *istama’* and *tasamma’*. *Sami’a* means to hear, i.e. without any desire to do so. *Istama’* means to listen, i.e. to hear something that you love to hear. As for *tasamma’*, it indicates assuming and being burdened by listening.

Therefore, He says: ‘Some of these people listen to you...’ (*Muhammad*: 16), i.e. by choice, and it is something to which they love to listen. This is how the hypocrites were. They would sit in the front rows and show such interest, unlike anyone else, and they would not miss a word or a prayer in order to contrive their plan and hide their hypocrisy.

‘These are the ones whose hearts Allah has sealed...’ (*Muhammad*: 16) because they heard the speech and did not believe in it or act according to its requirements, thus, the reward is that Allah *Glorified is He* seals and stamps their hearts. It is as if Allah *Glorified is He* is saying to them: ‘As long as you

chose hypocrisy, then I will increase you in it and I will seal your hearts so that hypocrisy never exits from them and faith never enters.'

In 'Those who follow their own desires' (*Muhammad*: 16): *al-hawa* (desires) means that your heart inclines towards something that you believe will make you happy and delighted, but it is an immediate delight and temporary pleasure without considering the consequences of this pleasure. Therefore, you must place controls over your desires and choose the desires that have a lasting effect and longer lasting benefit. Make your desires be for that which benefits you and not that which harms you like the person who eats chilli powder because he enjoys eating it as well as its taste. He likes it whilst eating it, but he is heedless of how he will excrete this food because it will bring about pain that will surpass the pleasure of eating.

The intelligent person must contemplate the consequences of his desires and be on guard against inclining towards them. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'but if the truth were in accordance with their desires, the heavens, the earth, and everyone in them would disintegrate...' (*al-Mu'minun*: 71).

The True Lord has brought us a way in order to protect us from vain desires because desires of different individuals contradict and conflict with one another. Thus, it is a device of differing and disagreement, and Allah *Glorified is He* wants us to agree and to support one another, not oppose one another.

In the Noble Hadith, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* says: 'None of you truly believes until his desires are subservient to that which I have brought.'⁽¹⁾

Some people stop at this statement: 'These are the ones whose hearts Allah has sealed...' (*Muhammad*: 16), and say that as long as Allah *Glorified is He* has sealed their hearts and willed misguidance for them, why does He punish them? We say: Allah *Glorified is He* guides his servants and does not misguide them. They are the ones who choose misguidance and are not guided to faith.

(1) Narrated by Ibn Batta in his book *Al-Ibana al-kubra* 291 from the Hadith of 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn Al-'As and mentioned by As-Suyuti in *Ad-Durr Al-Manthur* 2/307 and he attributed it to Al-Asbahani in *At-Targhib* with the wording: 'No believer has completed his faith until his lusts are in accordance with what I have brought to you.' Also narrated by Al-Faswi in *Al-Arba'in* 8 and Ibn Abi 'Asim in *As-Sunna* 14.

This is why we read: ‘...Allah does not guide the disbelievers,’ (*al-Baqara*: 264) and ‘...and Allah does not guide the transgressing people,’ (*al-Ma’ida*: 108) and ‘...and Allah does not guide aright the unjust people’ (*al-Baqara*: 258).

Misguidance and going astray is therefore the lack of guidance that comes from them and is a result of them following other than the straight path. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* did not guide them because they were disbelieving, transgressing, or unjust people.

Indeed, the True Lord, in fact, has guided everyone, the believer, and the disbeliever because He called on all of them in His statement: ‘O Mankind...’ (*al-Baqara*: 21), and He indicated and showed all of them His way and the consequences of following His way, and He warned them of the consequences of not doing so.

He made it clear to them that the way has been laid down for their benefit by setting right their affairs in the life of this world and ensuring their well-being in the Hereafter. Indeed He does not benefit from His servant’s obedience and He is not harmed by their disobedience. He is no need of them and has no need of their worship because He has had the attributes of perfection before He created them. This is why He says to His servants: ‘O My servant, come near to Me and I will give you my goodness.’

Read His statement regarding the people of Thamud: ‘And as for Thamud, We guided them, but they preferred blindness over guidance...’ (*Fussilat*: 17), i.e. we indicated and showed them the way of goodness ‘...but they preferred blindness to guidance...’ (*Fussilat*: 17), and when they preferred blindness, Allah *Glorified is He* blinded them.

Furthermore, regarding those who say: ‘Why does Allah punish them when He is the One Who misguided them?’ Why do they not mention the other side and say: ‘As long as He has written obedience for them, then why does He reward them?’

This is why it is mentioned in the Qudsi Hadith: ‘the sky said: ‘O Lord! Allow me to send down an eclipse upon the children of Adam because they enjoy your goodness and they refrain from thanking you.’ The earth said: ‘O Lord! Allow me to swallow up the children of Adam because they enjoy your

goodness and they refrain from thanking you.’ And the mountains said: ‘O Lord! Allow me to fall upon the children of Adam because they enjoy your goodness and they refrain from thanking you.’ Allah *Glorified is He* then said to them: ‘Leave Me and My creation. If you had created them you would have shown them mercy. If they repent to me then I am their beloved, and if they do not repent then I am their doctor. I test them with afflictions in order to purify them of vices.’⁽¹⁾

We gave an example of guidance before – and to Allah *Glorified is He* belongs the highest similitude – of a traffic officer when you go to him and you ask about the road and then he tells you that the road is from here. If you obey him he gives you more and says: ‘In the road there is an obstacle in such-and-such place so be careful’ or he takes you himself until you reach where you want to go.

Likewise, The True Lord has indicated and shown everyone where to go, so whoever hears and obeys He increases in guidance and whoever rejects and rebels He increases in misguidance by sealing their hearts.

This is why the scholars have divided guidance into two types; the guidance of showing which is for both the believer and the disbeliever, and the guidance of enabling success and support which is exclusive to the believer. This is why He says in the following verse

وَالَّذِينَ أَهْتَدَوْا زَادَهُمْ هُدًى وَءَانَّهُمْ يَقُولُهُمْ

**God has increased the guidance of those who follow the
right path, and given them their awareness [of Him] [17]
(The Quran, *Muhammad*: 17)**

His statement: ‘...‘Allah has increased the guidance...’ (*Muhammad*: 17) means He increased their success, His help to them and their obedience to his commands

(1) Mentioned by Al-Ghazali in *Ihya’ ‘Ulum Ad-Din* 4/52 from a statement of some of the first three generations, the wording of which is: ‘There is no slave who disobeys except that his place on earth asks for permission to swallow him and the place above him in the sky asks for permission to send down an eclipse, Then Allah *Glorified is He* says to the earth and the sky: ‘Hold back from My slave and give him respite, for indeed you two did not create, and had you created him, you would show him mercy. Maybe he will repent to Me and I will forgive him. Maybe he will become righteous and I will turn his bad deeds into good deeds.’

‘And given them their awareness [of Him]’ (*Muhammad*: 17). It is as if *taqwa* (piety and being mindful of Allah) comes to them instead of them going to it (seeking it). He makes it easy and desirable to them, while some find religious responsibility arduous, considering it a chain that shackles them constantly.

When we reflect on religious responsibility, we find that it provides the soul with relief and reassurance. Religious responsibility protects and safeguards the soul against perils. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Such people are following their Lord’s Guidance...’ (*al-Baqara*: 5). The meaning of ‘...following their Lord’s Guidance...’ (*al-Baqara*: 5) is that the guidance is their means towards the objective that they seek, as it is not a burden upon the slave because The Creator never burdens us with what we are incapable of, and He has not enslaved us except for our benefit so that we can have uprightness in the life of this world and well-being in the Hereafter.

This is why we said that servitude to any other than Allah *Glorified is He* is humiliation and a disgrace while servitude to Allah *Glorified is He* is glory and an honour. This is because servitude to a human being gives the goodness of the servants to the master, but servitude to Allah *Glorified is He* is rewarded by being granted goodness from Allah *Glorified is He*.

When the servant understands worship in this way he loves it and yearns for it. Moreover, he finds pleasure therein to which no other pleasure comes close. This is why Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said to Bilal, his caller to prayer: ‘Give us comfort with it, O Bilal!’⁽¹⁾ This is because prayer is easy and light to the believing heart, but burdensome to the heart of the hypocrite.

Therefore, it is from guidance that you pray as the generality of people pray, and it is an increase in guidance that you yearn for the prayer and you wait for it and you find your comfort therein; for in prayer you are in the presence of your Lord. Allah *Glorified is He* is unseen and He also makes His

(1) Narrated by Ahmad in his *Musnad* 5/364 and Abu Dawud in his *Sunnan* 4985 from a man from amongst the Companions which is that the man from Khuza'a said: ‘If only I had prayed, I would have felt rested’... It is as if they found fault with him for this, so he said: ‘I heard The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* say: ‘O Bilal! Establish the prayer and give us rest with it.’

servant righteous through the unseen because prayer makes you righteous it rectifies your state from whither you know not.

Among the benefits of piety and being mindful of Allah is what He states in the verse: 'Believers, if you remain mindful of Allah, He will give you a criterion [to tell right from wrong] and wipe out your bad deeds, and forgive you: Allah's favour is great indeed' (*al-Anfal*: 29).

Thus, whoever is conscious of Allah *Glorified is He* in accordance with the standard that has come from Allah *Glorified is He* which is the Noble Quran, He increases him by giving him another standard that is exclusive to him, a standard that guides him, illuminates the path for him and with it he is able to distinguish between good and evil.

Therefore, with regards to being mindful of Allah *Glorified is He* all you have to do is to seek it with the intention of acting and obeying. Then, you will find it, itself, pursuing you and seeking you.

Then, the True Lord says:

فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا السَّاعَةَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً فَقَدْ جَاءَ
أَشْرَاطُهَا فَأَنَّى لَهُمْ إِذَا جَاءَتْهُمْ ذِكْرُهُمْ

What are the disbelievers waiting for, other than the Hour which will come upon them unawares? Its signs are already here, but once the Hour has actually arrived, what use will it be then to take heed? [18] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 18)

The discussion is about the disbelievers who do not pay heed to the proofs of Allah's existence in the universe, or to the miracles of the Messengers *peace be upon them* and thus do not believe in them and affirm them, nor to Allah's rulings and thus do not act according to them. What are these people waiting for?

'What are the disbelievers waiting for...' (*Muhammad*: 18)? *Yanzhuroon* means waiting '...for the Last Hour...' (*Muhammad*: 18). The Last Hour, with regards to them, is death because a man's lifetime comes to an end at death. Once someone dies, his resurrection is established. No one knows his

appointed time and when he will die because Allah *Glorified is He* has hidden it and kept it to Himself and not revealed it to anyone.

Thus, we have no say regarding how long and how short a life is, and we have no control over it. This is because it has been left to the One Who holds all actions and appointed times in His hand to decide. However, it is in your hands to occupy your lifespan with good works and to expand the sphere of goodness in your life and benefit others, just as it is possible for you to add another dimension to your life by doing good deeds that you will be remembered for after you die and will be stored up for you with your Lord.

If you know that your lifetime is subject to a breath that one inhales and may not be able to exhale, or a blink of an eye that does not return, then you must be wary of dying, while in a state of disobedience to Allah *Glorified is He* and be wary of delaying your repentance or postponing it because you cannot guarantee when death will overtake you.

When you hear the call to prayer rise and respond to the call, and do not say that there is plenty of time and that you will pray later. If you have wealth and you are able to perform the pilgrimage, do not say that you will perform it next year. This is because you cannot guarantee that you will be alive in the next moment, so how can you guarantee it after a year. It is true that there is no punishment attached to delaying these works but by delaying you lose out on the bounty of praying on time and praying in congregation. This is why it is mentioned in a saying of one of the Companions: ‘Work for your life in this world as if you are going to live forever, and work for the Hereafter as if you are going to die tomorrow.’

Some people understand the statement: ‘Work for your life in this world...’ to mean that which will suffice you for however long your life is, but the purport here is to work: work in the life of this world but take it easy and do not drown yourself therein. If you miss out on something today you will get it tomorrow, i.e. leisurely. Do not base the matter on the first deal.

That which is blameworthy with regards to striving for the sake of the life of this world is when the life of this world takes precedence over all your other concerns and takes up all your time and you want it immediately. What is even more dangerous than that is for us to seek help from blessings and

wealth in order to disobey or we sell a commodity for something that is legally impermissible, and thus the blessing in our hands turns into adversity.

This is why Allah says: 'do you not see those who, in exchange for Allah's favour, offer only ingratitude...' (*Ibrahim*: 28) such as so many of our girls nowadays whom we see clothed yet naked, manifesting the beauty that Allah *Glorified is He* has given them and instead of showing gratitude for such a blessing by safeguarding it, they show ingratitude by displaying it.

If only the misguided person would only misguide himself! What is worse than misguidance is that one becomes an example for others and thus tribulation spreads throughout society. This is why He says at the end of the verse: '...and make their people end up in the home of ruin' (*Ibrahim*: 28). What is the home of ruin? 'Hell, where they burn. What an evil place to stay!' (*Ibrahim*: 29)

These tribulations carry away the youth especially in the phases of adolescence and when there are no job opportunities and they are still dependent on their families. This is why we say to our daughters: Be conscious of Allah *Glorified is He* for youth is a time that is excused and overcome and it suffices one to resist the voracity of adolescence. Thus, do not provoke any new voracity by doing things like displaying yourself in public, unveiling and having no modesty.

I remember a time when they wanted to honour one of their prominent figures, so they arranged a party for him and they brought female dancers and so forth. I said: 'Glory be to Allah *Glorified is He*! Is this how we honour our prominent figures?' Then I grabbed my companion and said to him: 'Oh dear! Dancing at nighttime used to be delightful, as the girl was dancing with piety, praising Allah with piety! What are you really doing?'

Yes, indeed. 'Make their people end up in the home of ruin,' (*Ibrahim*: 28). His statement: '...will come upon them unawares?...' (*Muhammad*: 18), i.e., will come upon them by surprise. His words: '...Its signs are already here...' (*Muhammad*: 18), i.e. its signs and distinguishing characteristics that give warning of its proximity are already here. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* mentioned some of these signs to us. He said: '...and the women who will be dressed but appear to be naked, who will be inclined to evil and make others incline towards it. Their heads will be like the humps of

long-necked camels inclined to one side. They will not enter paradise and they will not smell its odour, whereas its odour will be smelt from such and such distance.⁽¹⁾ True, their hair is made in unknown way, their lips are coloured with red, their eyebrows are thinned...etc. They change Allah's Creation and they use Allah's Blessings to disobey Him. This is one of the signs of the Last Hour.

This is why we ask Allah *Glorified is He* to guide our daughters and to protect the beauty of each of them and that there be praise of Allah *Glorified is He* for His blessings and obedience to Him, and that Allah's Blessings are not poisoned by disobeying him. I say to guardians of women: be conscious of Allah *Glorified is He* regarding your daughters and do not force them to work in morally depraved advertisements because it is impermissible, and the money that comes of it is impermissible.

Likewise, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* informed us of other signs of the Last Hour such as: '...when you see stinginess obeyed, passions followed, and everyone who has an opinion being amazed with their own opinion, wait for the Last Hour.'⁽²⁾ He also said: 'When power and authority come into the hands of those who are unfit, wait for the Last Hour'⁽³⁾...etc.

(1) Narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih* 3971, 5098 and Imam Malik in his *Muwatta'* 1421 from the Hadith of Abu Hurayra (may Allah be pleased with) and also Ahmad in his *Musnad* 8311, 9203.

(2) Narrated by Abu Dawud in his *Sunnan* 3778 from the Hadith of Abu Tha'laba Al-Khashni in which The Messenger of Allah Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'Rather, enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong until when you see stinginess being obeyed, passions followed, worldly interests being preferred, and everyone who has an opinion being amazed with their own opinion, then you must take care of yourself and leave the common people for indeed there are coming days of patience in which it will be like holding on to hot coal. The one who acts rightly during that period will have the reward of fifty men who act as he does.' The same has been narrated by At-Tirmidhi in his *Sunnan* 2984 and Ibn Majah in his *Sunnan* 4004.

(3) Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih* 57 from Abu Hurayra *peace be upon him* who said: While The Prophet, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was saying something in a gathering, a Bedouin came and asked him, 'When will the Last Hour take place?' Allah's Messenger continued his talk, so some people said that Allah's Messenger had heard the question but did not like what he had said. Some of them said that Allah's =

His statement: ‘...but once the Hour has actually arrived, what use will it be then to take heed?’ (*Muhammad*: 18), i.e. how will they take heed when it is too late and the Resurrection will be upon them? What will their remembrance avail them? How will good deeds be of any benefit to them?

Then, He seals it with the peak of all matters which, if it is sound, everything for man is sound. He says:

فَاعْلَمْ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مُتَقَلَّبَكُمْ وَمَثْوَاكُمْ

So [Prophet], bear in mind that there is no god but God, and ask forgiveness for your sins and for the sins of believing men and women. God knows whenever any of you move, and whenever any of you stay still [19] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 19)

The meaning of ‘So [Prophet], ‘know bear in mind that there is no Allah but Allah...’ (*Muhammad*: 19) is: do not, by any means, think that there is a cause besides Allah, and it is not permissible for you to seek refuge in other than Allah because seeking refuge in other than Allah *Glorified is He* is of no benefit. Regarding His statement: ‘*fa’alam*’, ‘know bear in mind...’ (*Muhammad*: 19), *al-ilm* (knowledge) is either certain knowledge when you are informed of it by someone whose veracity you trust, or it is the essence of certainty when you see it with your own eyes and you see its effects, or it is the truth of certainty when you experience it directly.

When The True Lord says to His Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* ‘know that there is no Allah but Allah...’ (*Muhammad*: 19), does this mean that he does not know it? No. Rather, the objective is to remain upon it. As you knew it in the past, make sure you know it in the present and

= Messenger had not heard it. When the Prophet finished his speech, he said, ‘Where is the questioner, who enquired about the Last Hour?’ The Bedouin said, ‘I am here, O Allah’s Messenger.’ Then the Prophet said, ‘When trustworthiness is lost, then wait for the Last Hour.’ The Bedouin said, ‘How will that be lost?’ The Prophet said, ‘When power and authority come into the hands of those who are unfit, wait for the Last Hour.’

in the future. This is similar to His statement: ‘You, who believe, believe...’ (*an-Nisa*: 136). Thus, He commands them to believe when He has already called believers.

They said: when Allah *Glorified is He* commands something that is already taking place then what is meant is persistence in that thing. You are a believer, but you are required to persist with your faith into the future.

When The True Lord gives His Prophet this command it is only to reassure him that if he is rejected or shown hostility or harmed with all kinds of harm and ridicule he must not grieve or be concerned, because Allah *Glorified is He* is by his side, helping him and supporting him. Whatever humanity may do, they will never prevent his call from being implemented.

It is Allah’s standard practice with regards to the Messengers *peace be upon them* that He give them victory: ‘Our word has already been given to Our servants the messengers: * it is they who will be helped,* and the ones who support* Our cause will be the winners’ (*as-Saffat*: 171-173). This is why we said before that if you see an Islamic army being defeated, know that the conditions for being an army were not being fulfilled. Otherwise it would not have been defeated.

We provided an example of this from what happened to the Muslims on the day of Uhud when the command of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was contravened and they were defeated even though he was amongst them. This is Allah’s standard practice, and you will never find any change in Allah’s standard practice. If they had been given victory after contravening, the commands of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* would have been taken lightly by them and they would have said to themselves: ‘We disobeyed him and we were still victorious.’

Thus, the defeat came to make them return to the right path and wake them up from their heedlessness with regards to obeying the command of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

He says: ‘...and ask forgiveness for your sins and for the sins of believing men and women...’ (*Muhammad*: 19). Does this mean that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* has sins for which he must seek forgiveness?

This is a matter over which there has been much discussion. The meaning here: if your soul is inattentive, then you have sinned, so seek forgiveness, but not because it is an actual sin. His Lord is saying to him: 'If there is any sin from you, seek forgiveness for it, and likewise seek forgiveness for the believing men and women.'

In another verse He says: 'Truly We have opened up a path to clear triumph for you [Prophet], *so that Allah may forgive you your past and future sins...' (*al-Fath*: 1-2). He mentioned sin with regards to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* even though he is infallible. When the scholars looked into these kinds of verses they said: it is from the category of the good deeds of the pious *al-abrar* and is considered the evil deeds of those who draw near to Allah *Glorified is He*: *al-muqarrabin*.⁽¹⁾ It is known that those who draw near to Allah *Glorified is He* are at a degree of obedience and compliance to Allah *Glorified is He* which is higher than the degree of the pious because the pious are those who obey Allah *Glorified is He*, do good deeds and carry out His Commands.

As for those who draw near to Him, they are the ones who do more than that in order to draw near to Allah *Glorified is He*. Even in the customs of people the person who is close to you is the one who is truthful and sincere and stays with you and never leaves you, and they love you and fear for you.

The same goes for those who draw near to Allah *Glorified is He*. They are treated according to a law that is different to the law of the pious, and they have a different scale for good deeds and bad deeds that suits their degree of nearness to their Lord.

Imagine, for example, that you were sick and someone you knew came to visit you while you were sick, even if it was just once. What would you do? You would thank him and you would feel that he had performed his duty.

(1) Mentioned by *Al-Qurtubi* in his *Tafsir* in a number of places 1/309 11/255 and attributed to *Al-Junayd* may Allah rest his soul. *As-Sakhawi* mentioned in *Al-Maqasid Al-Hasana* 1/103 that it is from the speech of *Abu Sa'id Al-Kharaz* and he said: 'It was related by *Ibn Asakir* in his biography.' *Al-'Ajluni* mentioned something similar in *Kashf al-Khafa* and similarly *Al-Fitni* in *Tadhkira Al-Mawdu* at 1/188.

As for your close friend, if he visited you only once, like the other person, what would you do? You would rebuke him and censure him because you expect more than just one visit. This is what is meant by the good deeds of the pious and are considered the evil deeds of those who draw near to Allah *Glorified is He*.

Therefore, a good deed done by a normal person could be considered an evil deed if done by Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is someone who draws near to Allah *Glorified is He* and the one who draws near has a different estimation. There is also a price for this nearness. It is as if Allah *Glorified is He* is saying to you: 'Maintain this degree of nearness to Me and beware of doing certain things, even if they are simple matters with regards to someone else.' This also may mean what Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'My community is excused for what they do by mistake, out of forgetfulness, or what they are forced to do.'⁽¹⁾ When he said: 'My community' it means that he is not included under this ruling. It is not permissible for him to forget as it is permissible for others, so forgetfulness with regards to him is considered a sin.

This is why, when Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was praying a four-unit prayer and he concluded it after two units, one of his Companions, Dhu Al-Yadayn, said to him: 'Did you shorten the prayer or did you forget, O Messenger of Allah?' He said: 'That is not entirely what happened.' The Companion responded: 'But that is some of what happened.'⁽²⁾ Look

(1) *The wording of the Hadith is: 'Indeed Allah Glorified is He overlooks what my community does by mistake, out of forgetfulness or what they are forced to do.'* Narrated by Ibn Majah in his *Sunnan* 2033, the Hadith of Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari, 2035, the Hadith (Prophetic tradition) of Ibn Abbas, and also narrated by Al-Bayhaqi in his *Sunnan Al-Kubra* 6/84 from the Hadith of Ibn 'Umar with the wording 'my community is unburdened' and the rest of the Hadith is the same.

(2) *Narrated by Malik in Al-Muwatta'* 196,197, Abu Dawud in his *Sunnan* 585, An-Nasa'i in his *Sunnan* 1211 and 'Abd Ar-Razzaq in his *Musannaf* 3448 from Abu Hurayra *peace be upon him* who said: 'The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* prayed 'Asr and after two units, he concluded the prayer with the greetings of peace, so Dhu Al-Yadayn stood up and said: 'Did you shorten the prayer or did you forget, O Messenger of Allah Glorified is He?' The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad=

at the augustness of the Companion in asking, the augustness of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in responding, and the greatness of the faith of the one who nurtured these people.

Therefore, it is possible for Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to forget and forgetfulness to be considered a sin. Why? It is because he is a Messenger and the possessor of a message, and he is responsible for conveying it and the radiance of prophethood never leave him, so how can he forget? This is why, when one⁽¹⁾ of the common people asked a devout scholar who had secluded himself to be with Allah *Glorified is He*: 'What is the ruling for someone who forgets in prayer?' he said: 'For us or for you?' The man said: 'For us.' He said: 'Do a forgetfulness prostration.' The man said: 'and what about for you?' He replied: 'We kill such a person.'

We go far when the story of Adam's disobedience is known to everyone. The True Lord says regarding Adam *peace be upon him*: '... Adam disobeyed his Lord and was led astray...' (*Ta Ha*: 121). Adam's forgetfulness is called disobedience. Why?

Scholars said: it is because Allah *Glorified is He* created Adam *peace be upon him* directly by His hands and breathed into him from His spirit. Thus, Adam *peace be upon him* is distinguished amongst all other creatures by the advantage of the way of his creation that no one else has. As well, he was only given one commandment which was not to eat from the tree. So, the orders were not so many that he might forget some of them; indeed there was none but one command.

This is why forgetfulness in his case was a matter of disobedience because he is both a prophet and messenger and he is the father of mankind. Therefore, Adam's disobedience took place for a reason. He is the father of all people. There are two categories of people: infallible and the fallible. The infallible

= *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'That is not entirely what happened.' The Companion responded: 'But some of that happened, O Messenger of Allah *Glorified is He*?' The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* thus faced the people and said: 'Is Dhu Al-Yadayn speaking the truth?' They said: 'Yes.' So, The Messenger of Allah *Glorified is He* stood and completed what was left of the prayer and then, after the greeting of peace, did two prostrations while sitting.

(1) The story of the layman who asked the worshiper about he who gets distracted in his prayer

are the Messengers, and the fallible are the rest of creation. Thus, it is necessary for both categories to be embodied in Adam *peace be upon him*

When the True Lord *Glorified is He* addresses His Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessing be upon him* He says to him: '...ask forgiveness for thy sins...' (*Muhammad*: 19), i.e. from the forgetfulness that I have overlooked when anyone of your community does it, you must seek forgiveness for it because Allah *Glorified is He* does not forgive you in the same way that He forgives your community.

Then, we should examine the occurrences in the Noble Quran in which Allah *Glorified is He* blamed Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Read, for example: 'O Prophet! Why dost thou, out of a desire to please [one or another of] thy wives, impose [on thyself] a prohibition of something that Allah has made lawful to you?'⁽¹⁾ But Allah is much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace' (*at-Tahrim*: 1). It is as though Allah *Glorified is He* says: it is not acceptable that you forbid for yourself something Allah had permitted for you just because one of your wives became angry about it; this was considered a sin.

Likewise, when he permitted some of the Companions to stay behind at their houses instead of fight, Allah *Glorified is He* blamed him: 'May Allah pardon thee [O Prophet]! Why didst thou grant them permission [to stay at home] ere it had become obvious to thee as to who was speaking the truth,

(1) *There are different positions regarding the reason for revelation behind the beginning of this chapter. It has been said that it was revealed regarding Mariya and The Messenger of God had made her forbidden for himself. Ibn Jarir At-Tabari narrates that The Messenger of God slept with Mariya (the mother of his son Ibrahim) in the house of one of his wives (one narration states that it was Hafsa's house) and she said: 'What O Messenger of God? In my house and on my bed? Thus, he made her impermissible for himself, so she said: 'O Messenger of God, How can you make the permissible impermissible for yourself?' Then, he swore to God that he would not sleep with her and so God sent down: 'O Prophet! Why dost thou, out of a desire to please [one or another of] thy wives, impose [on thyself] a prohibition of something that God has made lawful to thee?...' (at-Tahrim: 1) Ibn Kathir said in his Tafsir (4/387): The correct opinion is that he forbade honey for himself. He was drinking honey with Zaynab bint Jahsh and then 'A'isha and Hafsa Allah be pleased with them agreed to say to him: 'You have eaten maghafir (i.e. honey)' and he replied: 'I will never go back to it' and then the verse was sent down.*

and [ere] thou came to know [who were] the liars?' (*at-Tawba*: 43) Therefore, His Lord blamed him for this, but He began by pardoning him.

Then, there is the fact that a messenger represents two aspects: the aspect of humanity and the aspect of the Prophet's Mission. Adam *peace be upon him* disobeyed out of his humanity; the proof is the Quran verse: '...And [thus] did Adam disobey his Lord, and thus did he fall into grievous error [121] thereafter, [however,] his Lord elected him [for His grace], and accepted his repentance, and bestowed His guidance upon him [122]' (*Ta Ha*: 121-122). Thus, the Prophet's Mission was not granted to him until after he had gone through this experience, and had behaved humanly. Then, Allah *Glorified is He* chose him to be a Messenger.

When we reflect on the issues for which Allah blamed Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* we find that they are general matters for which there were no divine orders or religious rulings that the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* contravened. He exercised his own judgement using his independent reasoning as a human being, and according to the situation at hand.

For example, in the story of 'Abdullah ibn Umm Maktum⁽¹⁾ *may Allah be pleased with him* in which Allah *Glorified is He* blamed Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* because of this Companion. Allah *Glorified is He* said: 'He frowned and turned away [1] because the blind man approached him! [2]' (*Abasa*: 1-2) This blame is not an objection to what Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* did, but rather a show of mercy and compassion towards him.

It is because the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* left 'Abdullah, who was a believer and had come to him to ask about a religious

(1) He is 'Amr ibn Qays ibn Za'ida ibn Al-Asam, a courageous Companion who was blind. He embraced Islam in Mecca and immigrated to Medina after the battle of Badr. He would give the call to prayer on behalf of God's Messenger *peace and blessing be upon him* in Medina along with Bilal. Also, The Prophet would appoint him, in general, as his deputy in charge of Medina and he would lead the people in prayer while the Prophet was engaged in raids. He was present at the war of Al-Qadisiyya and he fought while being blind. Afterwards, he returned to Medina and died there in the year of 23, just before the death of 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab. (*Al-'Alam*, *Az-Zirkili* (5/83)

ruling, turning away from him in order to focus on the notables from amongst the disbelievers. Humanly thinking, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was very keen to guide these people. As for ‘Abdullah *may Allah be pleased with him* he was of course a believer then.

Therefore, the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was hard on himself for the sake of his mission. Then, read until the end of the story: 'Yet for all thou didst know, [O Muhammad,] he might perhaps have grown in “purity,” [3] or have been reminded [of the truth], and helped by this reminder. [4] Now as for him who believes himself to be self-sufficient [5] to him didst thou give thy whole attention, [6] although thou art not accountable for his failure to attain to purity; [7] “but as for him who came unto thee full of eagerness [8] and in awe [of Allah] – [9] him didst thou disregard! [10]’ (*Abasa*: 3-10)

It is as if the True Lord *Glorified is He* is saying to His Prophet: ‘O Muhammad! It is not your task to make these people believe. Your job is only to indicate and to show them; ‘...thy duty is no more than to deliver the message...’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 20). Also, Allah *Glorified is He* addressed him in another verse, saying: 'Wouldst thou, perhaps, torment thyself to death [with grief] because they [who live around thee] refuse to believe [in it]?' (*ash-Shu'ara*: 3)

As well, in the chapter of *al-Kahf*: 'But wouldst thou, perhaps, torment thyself to death with grief over them if they are not willing to believe in this message?' (*al-Kahf*: 6) That is, you only have to convey the message. As for the matter of faith, I want them to be believers fully convinced in their own minds, not their outward forms; that is to enter into faith voluntarily and not by force.

In this regard, Allah *Glorified is He* said: 'had We so willed, We could have sent down unto them a message from the skies, so that their necks would [be forced to] bow down before it in humility,' (*ash-Shu'ara*: 4); i.e. We could force them to have faith.

'For Allah knows all your comings and goings as well as your abiding [at rest]. (*Muhammad*: 19) The meaning of '...your comings and goings...' (*Muhammad*: 19) is your going out to work and striving all over the vast earth, seeking sustenance. The meaning of '...as well as your abiding [at rest]' (*Muhammad*: 19), is your return to your homes and seeking rest in your beds at night.

The meaning is that Allah *Glorified is He* knows all of your states and nothing about you is hidden from him. Previously, we talked about the virtue of striving throughout the earth and extracting its treasures; when you stay in your own environment, you only take the treasures that are there. But, when you travel throughout the earth, you find other kinds of treasures.

The Creator *Glorified is He* has distributed treasures all over the earth, and every land has a share of wealth and resources. The desert has certain resource and farmland has other kind of resources. There is no land that is poor while another is rich. If you were to take a longitudinal segment of the earth's sphere, you would find that it contains just as many treasures as all the other segments.

We used to think that the bleak desert has no goodness in it. Now, it is a source of abundant sustenance for its owners who had lived a long life of hardship previously.

This is why, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Say: "Go all over the earth and behold..." (an-Naml: 69), and He said: 'Say: "Go all over the earth, and behold..." (al-An'am: 11); i.e. reflect on the signs and lessons therein. Man travels and moves either as a tourist or to seek sustenance. In both cases, he should not be heedless of considering and examining the signs of the universe. In another verse, Allah *Glorified is He* said: '... "Was, then, Allah's earth not wide enough for you to forsake the domain of evil?"' (an-Nisa': 97)

The word *At-taqallub* ('...your comings and goings...') can be understood as to leave the place that you normally reside in and go to a place that you do not normally reside in. This requires financial capacity, companionship, and strength. Therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* said: 'Or that He will not take them to task [suddenly] in the midst of their comings and goings, without their being able to elude, [Him]' (an-Nahl: 46).

Therefore, coming and going is an evidence of strength; a rich man is the one who travels every day to different places and he comes and goes throughout the earth. As for the poor person, he stays in his place and never leaves it

وَيَقُولُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَتْ سُورَةٌ فَإِذَا أُنزِلَتْ سُورَةٌ مُحْكَمَةٌ
وَذُكِرَ فِيهَا الْقِتَالُ رَأَيْتَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ يَمْرَضُونَ إِلَيْكَ
نَظَرَ الْمَغْشَى عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ فَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمُ

Those who believe ask why no sura [about fighting] has been sent down. Yet when a decisive sura [that mentions fighting] is sent down, you can see the sick at heart looking at you [Prophet] and visibly fainting at the prospect of death – better for them [20] (The Quran, *Muhammad: 20*)

Regarding the phrase: 'Would that a revelation [allowing us to fight] was bestowed from on high,' (*Muhammad: 20*) when you hear the conditional particle '*law*' (*if, would that, etc.*), it is as if it is a wish that something would happen. They wish that the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* would receive a revelation from on high commanding them to fight. A revelation had already been sent down but it commanded them to be patient and to bear with adversity and not to stand up to their enemies.

However, everything has its proper time. This means that the believers' activity and movement have become regulated with the commands of the True Lord. The stubbornness of the disbelievers and their standing in the way of the Prophetic Message does not mean that we will automatically attack them and fight them. Rather, we wait for the higher command.

'...But now that a revelation clear in and by itself, mentioning war, has been bestowed from on high...' (*Muhammad: 20*) which you want, '...thou canst see those in whose hearts is disease...' (*Muhammad: 20*); i.e. the hypocrites '...looking at thee, [O Muhammad,] with the look of one who is about to faint for fear of death!' (*Muhammad: 20*) This simile of someone who looks like they are about to faint out of fear of death means that they are unconscious out of fear and alarm.

It is easy for the hypocrite to go to the mosque and pray with the congregation, and indeed stand in the front row. However, when it comes to fighting, the matter is different, and the hypocrisy that was hidden is now exposed.

'...But now that a revelation clear in and by itself...' (*Muhammad: 20*); i.e. clearly showing the intended meaning; '...thou canst see those in whose hearts

is disease looking at thee, [O Muhammad,] with the look of one who is about to faint for fear of death' (*Muhammad*: 20). Censuring himself, a hypocrite person says to himself: 'Death is approaching, O you who has left off prayer! Shall I go out to fight and waste myself?'

'...And yet, far better for them would be,' (*Muhammad*: 20) to obey the command and go out to fight. The scholars have explained this verse and said that, '...And yet, far better for them would be' (*Muhammad*: 20) means ruin for them; and this is a threat if they do not abandon their hypocrisy.

طَاعَةٌ وَقَوْلٌ مَّعْرُوفٌ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ الْأَمْرُ فَلَوْ صَدَقُوا اللَّهَ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ ﴿٢١﴾

**would be obedience and fitting words; it would also be better
for them to be true to God when the decision to fight has
been made [21] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 21)**

The word: 'obedience...' (*Muhammad*: 21) coming after '...And yet, far better for them would be,' (*Muhammad*: 20) makes us turn away from affirming ruin for them and instead we say: their obedience to Allah's Command and their saying a word that could win His approval is better than their current position and better than their hypocrisy.

'For, since the matter has been resolved [by His revelation]...' (*Muhammad*: 21), i.e. has been determined and set to action, as Allah *Glorified is He* said: '...then, when thou hast decided upon a course of action, place thy trust in Allah...' (*Al-Imran*: 159). The Arabic verse is in active voice making the word 'matter' the subject of the sentence, literally saying 'since the matter resolved itself.' Therefore the Sheikh asked the following question. However, is it the matter that makes the resolution or a person?

Therefore, there is hyperbole which personifies the matter and makes it resolve, determine, and set itself to action. This is because the discussion here is about fighting, and fighting is the most difficult thing that a person can bear because it means that either one will be martyred or one will be given victory over the enemy.

'Say: "Are you, perchance, hopefully waiting for something [bad] to happen to us – [the while nothing can happen to us] save one of the two best things?

But as far as you are concerned, we are hopefully waiting for Allah to inflict chastisement upon you, [either] from Himself or by our hands! Wait, then, hopefully; behold, we shall hopefully wait with you!" (*at-Tawba*: 52)

Therefore, saying: '...for, since the matter has been resolved [by His revelation]...' (*Muhammad*: 21), is a more eloquent way of expressing the meaning than saying: you were resolved upon the matter. Thus, it is as if the matter itself urges you, and the matter only urges you because there is much goodness in it for you. Is there anything better than being martyred for Allah's sake?

The story of Mukhayriq ⁽¹⁾ the Jew *may Allah be pleased with him* is well known. After declaring his conversion to Islam, he was called to fight and so he went out and fought until he was killed. He entered paradise without even praying a single unit of prayer.

This is why Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessing be upon him* said about him: 'Mukhayriq is the best of the Jews.'⁽²⁾ Thus, it is true that if you are eager for death, you will be given the life, the eternal life with Allah *Glorified is He* in paradise.

Allah's statement: '...it would be but for their own good to remain true to Allah' (*Muhammad*: 21) means if they believed Allah *Glorified is He* with regards to His commands and His system, it would be better for them. The Good in this context is the freedom of fire after death. When a believer sacrifices himself for Allah's sake, Allah *Glorified is He* grants him the eternal life in the paradise.

(1) He is Mukhayriq An-Nadir from Bani An-Nadir, a Companion, a wealthy Jew and one of their scholars. He embraced Islam and bequeathed his wealth to the Prophet *peace and blessing be upon him*. He was martyred at Uhud and died in the year 3 A.H. [*Al-'Alam Az-Zirikli* (7/194)]. He said: 'If I die then my wealth is for Muhammad and he can do with it whatever God shows him.' He had seven gardens in the neighborhood of Banu An-Nadir and they were the first endowment property in Islam.

(2) Mentioned by *Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi* in *Kanz Al-'Amal* (46154), which is that God's Messenger said it after Mukhayriq had been martyred in the Battle of Uhud, and this was also mentioned by *As-Suhayli* in *Ar-Rawd Al-Anf* (2/375), *Ibn Hisham* in *As-Sira An-Nabawiyya* (2/88), *Ibn Sa'd* in *At-Tabaqat Al-kubra* (1/501) and *Ibn Kathir* in *Al-Bidaya wa An-Nihaya* (3/291)

فَهَلْ عَسَيْتُمْ إِنْ تَوَلَّيْتُمْ أَنْ تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَتَقَطَّعُوا أَرْحَامَكُمْ
 أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَعَنَهُمُ اللَّهُ فَأَصَمَّهُمْ وَأَعَمَّى أَبْصَرَهُمْ

**‘If you turn away now, could it be that you will go on to spread corruption all over the land and break your ties of kinship?’ [22]
 These are the ones God has rejected, making their ears deaf and their eyes blind [23] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 22-23)**

This is a yes/no question from Allah *Glorified is He* using the particle 'hal' (would), and there is also an expression of hope from Allah *Glorified is He* using the word 'asa' ('...perchance...'). Allah *Glorified is He* does not ask a question in order to know something, but rather, He asks in order to affirm an actual fact.

The word 'asa' is a verb that indicates hope and it is followed by the thing for which is hoped. Possible hope is for something that is loved and expected to happen. It is different from the impossible wish which is for something loved but impossible to be realised such as the statement of the poet:

If only youth would return one day

For I would inform it of what old age has done

As for hope, you say: 'Perchance, if you study, you will pass.', but hope differs according to who is speaking and to who is being spoken. When I say to you: 'Go to so-and-so and he will perchance fulfil your need', or 'Perchance I will do something for you,' this hope is dependent on human beings. When a hope is attributed to Allah *Glorified is He* it is more possible; for example, you say: 'Perchance Allah will forgive me.'

His statement: '[Ask them:] "Would you, perchance, after having turned away [from Allah's Commandment, prefer to revert to your old ways, and] spread corruption on earth, and [once again] cut asunder your ties of kinship?"' (*Muhammad*: 22) means perhaps if you abandon faith, you will do such and such. Therefore, keep clinging to faith and obedience and do not approach sins and disobedience.

'After having turned away [from Allah's Commandment, prefer to revert to your old ways, and]...' (*Muhammad*: 22), i.e. turned away from faith, or (if we considered the meaning according to another form of the Arabic verb

'*Tawalaikum*') it can mean that if you take on some of the positions of leadership, for example presidency, they may cause you some troubles.

'Spread corruption on earth...' (*Muhammad*: 22), i.e. cause harm to the entire creation, '...and [once again] cut asunder your ties of kinship' (*Muhammad*: 22). Even your relatives and ties of kinship will be affected which means that your corruption transgresses against all people, including relatives and family members.

Or we say that, '[Ask them:] "Would you, perchance..."' (*Muhammad*: 22) means: what is it that made you turn away from the truth that Muhammad has brought? Why do you put obstacles in his path? The first of these obstacles is that you mock him, and you falsely describe him as being sorcerer, soothsayer, poet, and liar.

Then, you caused him harm by insulting him personally, as well as his family and Companions. Indeed, you plotted to kill him. What made you do such a thing? Did you think and hope that if you did that, you would be free to corrupt in the earth and cut ties of kinship?

The True Lord *Glorified is He* wants to teach us that the Messengers do not interfere and the heavens do not bring a new system unless corruption has spread throughout the entire society. Corruption has stages. The first of them is the corruption of the soul. This type of corruption has a deterrent in the form of the reproachful self (*an-nafs al-lawama*) which is a power of resistance within the human soul that takes it back to righteousness and makes its behaviour upright.

If the soul has become corrupt and the role of the reproachful self has vanished, the role of deterring then comes from the society by enjoining that which is right and forbidding that which is wrong. When there is no deterrent from society and corruption has spread amongst everyone, it is at this point that the heavens intervene with a new Messenger who brings a miracle in order to convince mankind so that they believe in what he has brought.

When you avoid and turn away from the Prophetic Message and place barriers in its way, it seems that you expect to remain in the corruption that you caused to grow in the earth generally, or keep cutting the ties of kinship!

On the contrary, you are destroying yourselves. Have you not seen what happened to your ancestors? Where did they go? Indeed your outcome is like their outcome, so be warned. 'Are they [who are lost in sin] but waiting for the Last Hour – [waiting] that it come upon them of a sudden, without their being aware [of its approach]?' (*az-Zukhruf*: 66)

And He said: 'And ere that suffering comes upon you of a sudden, without your being aware [of its approach “follow the most goodly [teaching] that has been revealed unto you by your Lord,” [55] lest any human being should say [on Judgment Day], "Alas for me for having been remiss in what is due to Allah, and for having been indeed one of those who scoffed [at the truth]! [56] or lest he should say, “If Allah had but guided me, I would surely have been among those who are conscious of Him!” [57] or lest he should say, when he becomes aware of the suffering [that awaits him], “Would that I had a second chance [in life] so that I could be among the doers of good!” [58]' (*az-Zumar*: 55-58) Therefore, why do you not act in consideration of this day?

Those who spread corruption think that it will benefit them, but spreading corruption in the world harms everyone. Those who plunder the wealth of people will eventually encounter someone who will be stronger than them and will plunder their wealth. Therefore, you are not safe from being affected by corruption and being burned by its fire because society is one vessel that comprises everyone.

Furthermore, established values are not disagreed over. Goodness is goodness, even according to the people of evil. The proof for this is that when there is a group of bad people, and one of them wants to marry the sister of the other, the latter says to the former: ‘No, I will not marry my sister to you (anyone but you, you sinful person.) Therefore, values are values. The liar respects the truthful person, and the deviant respects the upright, etc.

Therefore, The True Lord *Glorified is He* is telling them: ‘Do not sow corruption in the earth, and be keen to put an end to corruption in your society. If you have the power with which to impose corruption now upon people, then there will come someone more powerful than you, and they will impose the same or even worse case on you.’

The phrase: '...after having turned away...' (*Muhammad*: 22) means being heedless which indicates that they heard some speech that did not please them, If it had pleased them, they would have been attentive to it would not have avoided it. However, how can this be the case while they want corruption that fulfils their desires? Thus, corruption is preceded by turning away from and neglecting the good.

This is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Hast thou considered whether he may [not] be giving the lie to the truth and turning his back [upon it]?' (*al-'Alaq*: 13) You (the disbeliever) 'gave the lie to the truth' because the speech did not correspond with your passions not because it did not correspond with reality. Therefore, you are mistaken in this matter and in your denial. Then another mistake emerged from this mistake; it is that you turned away and you thought and expected that you would continue to sow corruption in the earth and cut off the ties of kinship.

Sowing corruption in the earth means to make that which is proper improper. The Creator *Glorified is He* created the universe in a state of absolute properness before He created man. Therefore, you should increase usability of the universe through your ambition for advancement. Or, you should facilitate usability of the universe for other people. If you will not increase usability of the universe, then the least you can do is to leave it as usable as it is and do not corrupt it.

This is why we have seen that the imperfections of society have emerged with the emergence of corruption in the earth, along with pollutants in the environment that corrupt the water, air, food and everything else; '[Since they have become oblivious of Allah,] corruption has appeared on land and in the sea as an outcome of what men's hands have wrought...' (*ar-Rum*: 41).

When The True Lord *Glorified is He* warns us against sowing corruption in the earth, He only wants us to have a balance of goodness throughout society and for everyone to share in it.

Afterwards, He said: '...and [once again] cut asunder your ties of kinship' (*Muhammad*: 22) because sowing corruption in the universe afflicts all mankind, relatives and non-relatives; He mentioned relatives in particular because they take priority when it comes to doing goodness and charity, not

cutting off ties and abandoning. Relatives are either males or females; males have stamina while women are weak and need help. This is why cutting ties of kinship with them is more severe and oppressive in Allah's sight. Therefore; society reaches the peak of corruption when corruption reaches the stage of neglecting and insulting women even though they are from your family. When you see a woman who is helpless, or she is being oppressed or she has been made to fend for herself and earn her livelihood, then know that there are imbalances in the family, and that the man in the family is not doing his job, or say that he does not have any chivalry or sense of honour because he has left his wife to suffer and he has not satisfied her basic needs. But when does a woman go out to work, and how does she go out?

We find the answer in the story of Musa (Moses) with the two daughters of Shu'aib (Jethro) *peace be upon them*. Read: 'Now when he arrived at the wells of Midyan, he found there a large group of men who were watering [their herds and flocks]; and at some distance from them he came upon two women who were keeping back their flock. He asked [them]: "What is the matter with you?" They answered: "We cannot water [our animals] until the herdsmen drive [theirs] home – for [we are weak and] our father is a very old man' (*al-Qasas*: 23).

Therefore, the rationale behind them going out was that their father, Shu'aib (Jethro) *peace be upon him* was an old man who was incapable of carrying out this task. Then when circumstances had compelled them to go out, they did not abandon dignity and decency, and they did not mix with men. 'We cannot water [our animals] until the herdsmen drive [theirs] home...' (*al-Qasas*: 23). That is when the men have left.

Then the practical role of faith takes place into society: 'So he watered [their flock] for them...' (*al-Qasas*: 24). There must be this model of gallantry in society, and manliness must also play a part. I have mentioned⁽¹⁾ to you the incident when I travelled to Saudi Arabia in the year 1950 and I took a car to get to the college. Suddenly, the driver got out and he took a wooden board that had dough on it from in front of one of the houses. So, I asked him: 'Why did you take it when the door is closed?' He said: 'this dough means that the

(1) The story of the friend of Sheikh Ash-Sh'rawi with the dough board in Mecca

owner of the house is not in, and whoever sees it has to take it, bake it and then put it back.'

His statement 'It is such as these...' (*Muhammad*: 23) means those who are pleased with turning away from and avoiding the call of truth and denying the caller in order to sow corruption in the earth and cut off the ties of kinship 'Whom Allah curses...' (*Muhammad*: 23), i.e. whom He banishes them from His mercy and places them far away from his pleasure. Those whom Allah *Glorified is He* curses are also cursed by the angels, and the cursers curse them in every time and place, and they are cursed by everyone who suffers from their corruption 'And whom He makes deaf [to the voice of truth], and whose eyes He blinds [to its sight]!' (*Muhammad*: 23) This is the normal consequence for whomever Allah *Glorified is He* has cursed. He deafens their ears blocking them from hearing the truth and he blinds their eyes from seeing the signs, and thus they do not ponder over them.

Therefore, they can hear and see, but they only hear evil and they only see falsehood. Allah *Glorified is He* has indeed veiled them from goodness and opened upon them the door of every evil as a meet requital because they closed their hearts against the truth and they preferred falsehood; indeed, Allah *Glorified is He* helped them with it and facilitated it for them!

أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْرٌ عَلَى قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

**Will they not contemplate the Quran? Do they have
locks on their hearts? [24] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 24)**

His statement 'Will they not, then...' (*Muhammad*: 24) is a question that encourages and urges pondering; '...ponder over...' (*Muhammad*: 24), i.e. reflect on and consider the meaning, signs and miracles of '...this Quran' (*Muhammad*: 24). It is Allah's Speech that was sent down to the heart of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and which presents Allah's System to mankind. It is also a miracle that proves the veracity of the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

To ponder over it, means to reflect deeply on it such that we do not stop at the outside of the verses and only look at them superficially. Rather, we must

plunge into their depths, reflect on their data, and search for their secrets, as the Noble Quran contains treasures and every day we discover a new one.

It contains a clarification of everything, and from it

I take everything, as much as my mind can take

His question '...or are there locks upon their hearts?' (*Muhammad*: 24) means they do not ponder over the Noble Quran but instead their hearts are locked and thus they do not understand or reflect it. There are padlocks on their hearts that prevent them from interacting with and being affected by Allah's Speech. Allah *Glorified is He* has no need of the believers' faith and He has no need of the obedience of the obedient, as Allah *Glorified is He* is not benefitted by obedience and He is not harmed by disobedience. Indeed, He had the attributes of absolute perfection before He created this creation.

It is with His attributes of perfection that He created the creatures, and with His attributes of perfection He nurtured and provided sustenance to them. With His self-sustainment, He made His blessings towards His creation endless, even towards the disbelievers amongst them.

You remember the story⁽¹⁾ of Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* when a guest came and knocked on his door because he needed something. Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* went and asked him, first of all, about his religion. The man said: 'I am a Magian', so he closed the door against his face.

When the man had left, Allah *Glorified is He* blamed His Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* for what he had done to the man and he said to him: 'Do you want, for the sake of some comfort at night, this man to change his religion while I accommodate him throughout his life even though He does not believe in Me?' Thus, Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* went out and followed the man until he caught up with him and then said to him: 'Come, for my Lord has blamed me for how I treated you.' The man responded: 'It is a good Lord who censures His Prophets with regards to His enemies', and then he testified that there is no God but Allah.

Therefore, the general mercy in this life and blessings of the True Lord *Glorified is He* being the Lord of all beings, accommodates the whole creation.

(1) The story of Abraham *peace be upon him* and his guest, the fire worshiper

But the specific major mercy and the special divine gifts are designated for those who believe in Him.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ ارْتَدُّوا عَلَىٰ أَدْبَارِهِمْ مِّنْ بَعْدِ مَا بَيَّنَّ لَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ ۖ الشَّيْطَانُ سَوَّلَ
لَهُمْ وَأَمَلَىٰ لَهُمْ ﴿٢٥﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لِلَّذِينَ كَرِهُوا مَا نَزَّلَ اللَّهُ
سَنُطِيعُكُمْ فِي بَعْضِ الْأُمْرِ ۖ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ إِسْرَارَهُمْ ﴿٢٦﴾

Those who turn on their heels after being shown guidance are duped and tempted by Satan [25] they say to those who hate what God has sent down, ‘We will obey you in some matters’ — God knows their secret schemes [26]
(The Quran, *Muhammad: 25 - 26*)

These verses are speaking about the hypocrites. We have explained that hypocrisy did not emerge in Mecca despite its hostility to the religion. However, it emerged in Medina which embraced Islam and spread it throughout the entire world. The reason for this is that no one acts hypocritically towards a weak person. People only act hypocritically towards a strong person. So, when the Muslims became strong in Medina, some disbelievers concealed themselves in hypocrisy amongst the Muslim community.

Allah *Glorified is He* says about them: 'Verily, those who turn their backs [on this message]...' (*Muhammad: 25*); that is they were only believers by their tongues, but their hearts did not believe. '...after guidance has been vouchsafed to them...' (*Muhammad: 25*). Indeed, the truth, guidance and straight path that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had brought were clearly seen in front of them.

'Do it because] Satan has embellished their fancies...' (*Muhammad: 25*) means that Satan has influenced them and made their view of deviating away from the truth seem goodly; the meaning of the verb '*sawwala*' ('...embellished...') is to whisper, as Allah *Glorified is He* quotes him: '[Whereupon Iblis] said: "Now that Thou hast thwarted me I shall most certainly lie in ambush for them all along Thy straight way' (*al-A'raf: 16*). He also said: '[Whereupon Iblis] said: "Then [I swear] by Thy very might: I shall most certainly beguile them all into grievous error' (*Sad: 82*). Then, he sticks to his limits, saying: '[all] save

such of them as are truly Thy servants!' (*Sad*: 83) This is so he has no control over these people and he has no means of getting through to them.

It is amazing that Iblis (Satan) reveals his plans to lead people astray; he says: '...I shall most certainly lie in ambush for them all along Thy straight way' (*al-A'raf*: 16), i.e. on the path of obedience in order to corrupt it for you. This is why we said that Satan attends the mosque and he does not attend the tavern.

As well, He said: 'and shall most certainly fall upon them openly as well as in a manner beyond their ken, and from their right and from their left...' (*al-A'raf*: 17), from every direction, in any form and from any point in which he finds some weakness of yours, Thus, he will attack you through the gate of wealth and love of possession, or through the gate of women, or the gate of fame and love of being seen, and so forth. This is because every human being has a 'key', a vulnerability through which Satan attacks him.

It is from Allah's mercy that He has taught us how to protect ourselves against Satan. Allah *Glorified is He* has said: 'And if it should happen that a prompting from Satan stirs thee up [to blind anger], seek refuge with Allah...' (*al-A'raf*: 200) because you are not able to ward him off yourself, so seek help from the One Who created him. If you seek refuge in Allah *Glorified is He* against Satan, he withdraws and shrinks. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* called him the whispering, elusive tempter.

If you try to ward him off by yourself, then the battle between the two of you will be a long one because he is stronger than you are and he has a lot of experience in misguiding and leading astray using various means against you. He wraps the ropes around you in such a way that you do not realise until he makes you fall into one of his traps.

However, it is from Satan's stupidity that he discloses to us his plans to lead people astray because a one who makes a trap for you does not disclose it. However, Satan does so in order for the proof to be established against everyone who obeys him and listens to him. This is why he will say afterwards: '...Yet I had no power at all over you: I but called you – and you responded unto me. Hence, blame not me, but blame yourselves. It is not for me to respond to your cries, nor for you to respond to mine...' (*Ibrahim*: 22).

Man is able to identify the source of the whispering whether it is from his soul or from Satan? Satan wants you to be disobedient in any way, shape or form. Thus, if he is unsuccessful with you when using the gate of wealth he will attack to you from the gate of fame; if he still is not successful, he will come to you from the gate of women, and so on until he traps you. As for the soul, it has its own specific desire that it concentrates on and urges you to fulfil.

Then, you notice that Satan, as he said, comes to you from every direction except for two; above and below. Why? Scholars said that is because these two directions represent the relationship between the slave and his Lord. The loftiness of Divinity appears when a believer looks upwards and the humility of slavery to Allah *Glorified is He* appears when he prostrates and places his forehead on the ground, acknowledging his slavery to his Lord. This is why Satan does not come from these two directions.

Allah's statement: '...and filled them with false hopes,' (*Muhammad*: 25) means that Allah *Glorified is He* gives them time and prolongs their hopes for them so that they would persist in their misguidance and stick to their desires. '[They do turn their backs on it] inasmuch as they are wont to say unto those who abhor all that Allah has revealed...' (*Muhammad*: 26). These are the two Jew tribes: Banu An-Nadir and Banu Qurayzha. '...“We will comply with your views on some points.”...' (*Muhammad*: 26), i.e. we will assist you and support you in some matters which place obstacles in the path of Muhammad's Message.

In another verse, the True Lord *Glorified is He* explained the meaning of the phrase ('...some points...'); He said: 'Art thou not aware of how those who would always dissemble [their real feelings] speak to their truth-denying brethren from among the followers of earlier revelation: "If you are driven away, we shall most certainly go forth with you, and shall never pay heed to anyone against you; and if war is waged against you, we shall most certainly come to your succour." But Allah bears witness that they are most flagrantly lying: [11] [for] if those [to whom they have pledged themselves] are indeed driven away, they will not go forth with them; and if war is waged against them, they will not come to their succour; and even if they [try to] succour them, they will most certainly turn their backs [in flight], and in the end will [themselves] find no succour [12]' (*al-Hashr*: 11-12).

'But Allah knows their secret thoughts' (*Muhammad*: 26), i.e. their secret and hidden plotting against Islam; but as long as Allah *Glorified is He* knows about it, He will make it come to nothing.

فَكَيْفَ إِذَا تَوَفَّتْهُمُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَضْرِبُونَ وُجُوهَهُمْ وَأَدْبَارَهُمْ ﴿٢٧﴾

How will they feel when the angels take them in death and beat their faces and their backs [27]
(The Quran, *Muhammad*: 27)

This means: what will their state be when they are doing this? What will they do when the angels come to gather them in death striking their faces and their backs? What will they do in this situation? Are they able to defend themselves? Therefore, why do they stubbornly resist? Why do they stand in the way of the Prophetic Message and conspire against it? It would have been better for them to support it

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ اتَّبَعُوا مَا أَصْحَبَ اللَّهُ وَكَرِهُوا رِضْوَانَهُ، فَأَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالَهُمْ ﴿٢٨﴾

because they practised things that incurred God's wrath, and disdained to please Him? He makes their deeds go to waste [28] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 28)

His statement: 'This...' (*Muhammad*: 28) is a demonstrative pronoun that refers to their evil end, which includes the angels striking their faces and backs. Why? '...because they were wont to pursue what Allah condemns...' (*Muhammad*: 28); they followed falsehood which befalls Allah's Wrath upon them, and more besides '...and to hate [whatever would meet with] His goodly acceptance...' (*Muhammad*: 28); they hated the truth that leads to Allah's Goodly Acceptance '...and so He has caused all their [good] deeds to come to nought' (*Muhammad*: 28); He makes them come to nothing and to be of no benefit.

Did they have deeds that merited reward and Allah *Glorified is He* made them come to nothing? Scholars said: yes. They would honour guests and

help those in trouble, and other, similar good deeds. However, they did acts of goodness seeking results other than the pleasure of Allah *Glorified is He*. They did it for fame and reputation, and so that people would talk about them. So, let them take their reward from those whom they acted for their sake since they have no share in the reward of the Hereafter.

Allah *Glorified is He* said: 'for We shall have turned towards all the [supposedly good] deeds they ever wrought, and shall have transformed them into scattered dust' (*al-Furqan*: 23) and He said: '[This, then, is] the parable of those who are bent on denying their Lord: all their works are as ashes which the wind blows about fiercely on a stormy day: [in the life to come,] they cannot achieve any benefit whatever from all [the good] that they may have wrought...' (*Ibrahim*: 18).

﴿٢٩﴾ أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ أَنْ لَنْ يُخْرِجَ اللَّهُ أَضْغَثَهُمْ

Do the corrupt at heart assume that God will not expose their malice? [29] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 29)

That is, do these people who have '...disease...' (*Muhammad*: 29), i.e. hypocrisy think '...that Allah would never bring their moral failings to light' (*Muhammad*: 29) that is manifesting their resentment and exposes their secrets? Indeed, Allah *Glorified is He* is able to do such a thing as He exposed them to His Messenger and showed them to him and He laid bare their hidden resentment. This is why He said in the following verse:

وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ لَأَرَيْنَاكَهُمْ فَلَعَرَفْتَهُمْ بِسِيمَاهُمْ وَلَتَعْرِفَنَّهُمْ فِي لَحْنِ الْقَوْلِ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ أَعْمَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٠﴾

We could even point them out to you [Prophet] if We wished, and then you could identify them by their marks, but you will know them anyway by the tone of their speech. God knows everything you [people] do [30] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 30)

Deeds include statements and actions. It is not difficult for an intelligent person to identify a hypocrite from the looks of his face and outward appearance. A liar has characteristics that distinguish him and the truthful person has a shining face that indicates his veracity, and so forth.

His statement: '...by the tone of their voice...' (*Muhammad: 30*) means: in the slips of the tongue, or in twisting expressions and playing with them. For example, the Jews said to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessing be upon him*: 'As-sam 'alaykum (death be upon you) twisting the greeting: As-salam 'alaykum, Oh Muhammad!' Then 'A'isha *may Allah be pleased with her* became aware of this and responded to them with what they deserve.⁽¹⁾ Therefore, the poet from the pre-Islamic era said:

Whenever someone has some trait

And they think of hiding it from people, it becomes known

Indeed Allah *Glorified is He* exposed them in His statement: 'And among those [enemies of the truth] there are such as malign the Prophet by saying, "He is all ear." Say: "[Yes,] he is all ear, [listening] to what is good for you! He believes in Allah, and trusts the believers, and is [a manifestation of Allah's] grace towards such of you as have [truly] attained to faith. And as for those who malign Allah's Apostle – grievous suffering awaits them [in the life to come]!"' (*at-Tawba: 61*)

Their statement about Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: '...“He is all ear.”...' (*at-Tawba: 61*) is similar to what is commonly said about someone that is 'widani', that is listening too much to others speaking. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* responded to them: '...Say: “[Yes,] he is all ear, [listening] to what is good for you!”...' (*at-Tawba: 61*) Yes, he is all ear, but a good ear hearing goodness and points it out to you.

His statement: '...by a visible mark...' (*Muhammad: 30*) means clear signs on their faces. By '... the tone of their voice...' (*Muhammad: 30*) means their changing of expressions from their recognized meanings.

(1) Narrated by Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih* (5575) that 'A'isha Allah be pleased with her said: 'A group of Jews entered upon God's Messenger peace and blessing be upon him and they said: 'Death be upon you (as-sam 'alaykum)' (instead of saying the greeting: As-salam 'alaykum) 'A'isha responded, as she understood what they had said: 'And upon you be death and curses (wa 'alaykum as-sam wa al-la'na)'. Then The Messenger of God said: {Take it easy, 'A'isha. Indeed God loves gentleness in every matter.} She responded: 'O Messenger of God, did you not hear what they said?' The Messenger of God said: {You could have said 'and upon you'.} It is also narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih* (4027).

وَلَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ حَتَّىٰ نَعْلَمَ الْمُجْتَهِدِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَنَبْلُوَنَّكُمْ أَخْبَارَكُمْ

We shall test you to see which of you strive your hardest and are steadfast; We shall test the sincerity of your assertions [31] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 31)

The speech here is addressed to the believers who have believed in Allah *Glorified is He* and have affirmed Allah's Messenger. Allah *Glorified is He* says to them: 'and most certainly We shall try you all...' (*Muhammad*: 31), i.e. We will test you and examine you with hardships and difficulties. '...so that We might mark out those of you who strive hard [in Our cause] and are patient in adversity: for We shall put to a test [the truth of] all your assertions,' (*Muhammad*: 31), i.e. in order to know those who are firm with the trial from those who are in doubt and hesitancy, Allah *Glorified is He* wants to purify the believers and test the strength of their faith, patience and capacity to bear with difficulty; this is because they will bear the burdens of the divine message on their shoulders. It is a global mission. No one applies themselves to it except someone who is firm in their faith and established in their creed, and unshakeable, as the poet defined:

I am not concerned when I am killed as a Muslim

Either way, my death is according to Allah

These are the people who were eager for death just as much as others were eager for life. Therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* gave them the rank of martyrdom and freed them from death after they had sacrificed their lives in His cause, and He connected their life in this world to their life in the Hereafter.

His statement '...patient in adversity...' (*Muhammad*: 31), i.e. the difficulty of conveying Allah's Message (*Da'awah*) and the difficulty of religious obligations. When you reflect on the state of this nation before Islam, you find that it is as if Allah *Glorified is He* was preparing it to bear the message of Islam. It is a nation of war and fighting. It knows the arts of war and it has mastered attack and retreat. It is a Bedouin nation that does not settle in any place. Rather, their houses were on the backs of their riding beasts. It was also a nation that does not have a system or law or way of life.

All of this made it suited to carry and convey the message of truth to the entire world, fight falsehood and make people understand Allah's Religion. Allah *Glorified is He* said: '...From within every group in their midst, some shall refrain from going forth to war, and shall devote themselves [instead] to acquiring a deeper knowledge of the Faith, and [thus be able to] teach their homecoming brethren...' (*at-Tawba*: 122).

Therefore, in its struggle with its enemies, Islam needs two forces of struggle (*jihad*); a force that strives to preserve the word and a force that strives to affirm the veracity of the word. This is why trials and tribulations were necessary. A test, 'and most certainly We shall try you all...' (*Muhammad*: 31) is not praised or blamed for its own sake, but rather according to its result. If someone does a test and passes we praise him, and if he fails we blame him.

In 'So that We might mark out...' (*Muhammad*: 31), the literal translation of the Arabic word corresponding 'mark out' is 'know'. Allah *Glorified is He* says 'So that We might know' even though He already knows. Therefore, the meaning is to match the abstract knowledge with the actual fact so that the fact can be a proof against the one who practices the action. Thus, he cannot say: 'If I had taken the test, I would have passed'.

The words '...patient in adversity...' (*Muhammad*: 31) show that there is difficulty in the religious commandments and the human soul might feel some tightness in them. This is why some people bear with it and are patient, while others feel restricted by it and are anxious.

Allah *Glorified is He* said: 'Endure, then, with patience [all that they who deny the truth may say] – always remembering that it is none but Allah who gives thee the strength to endure adversity...' (*an-Nahl*: 127); Allah is The One Who helps you have patience by explaining to you its good consequences.

Allah *Glorified is He* said: '...and enjoin upon one another the keeping to truth, and enjoin upon one another patience in adversity' (*al-Asr*: 3). Enjoining upon one another means that each one of you advises the other because sometimes man is patient and he endures, and sometimes he is weak and unhappy. Sometimes, you advise me and sometimes I advise you. The word *wasiyyah* (advice), as an exact term, is only used with regards to something that is valuable and precious, something that we should be concerned with and vigilant over.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَشَاقُّوا الرَّسُولَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الْهُدَىٰ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَسَيُحِطُّ أَعْمَالُهُمْ ﴿٣٢﴾

Those who disbelieve, bar others from God's path, and oppose the Messenger when they have been shown guidance, do not harm God in any way. He will make their deeds go to waste [32] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 32)

Then, these people did not stop at disbelief. Rather, they went even beyond that: '...and on barring [others] from the path of Allah...' (*Muhammad*: 32), i.e. they prevented people from believing in Allah *Glorified is He* and they stood up in the face of the Message and fought it. Then '...and [who thus] cut themselves off from The Apostle...' (*Muhammad*: 32), i.e. they went against him and opposed him such that they were on one side and he was on another side. '...after guidance has been vouchsafed to them...' (*Muhammad*: 32), i.e. the clear truth; the consequence is that they: '...can in no wise harm Allah...' (*Muhammad*: 32).

These are all futile attempts that will not benefit them in the slightest and will not affect the progress of the Message. Why? It is because The True Lord *Glorified is He* has never sent a messenger to the creation and then surrendered him to his enemies so that they could kill him. This is a Divine Rule in the universe. A messenger is never killed. Yes, The True Lord *Glorified is He* has informed us that the children of Israel used to kill prophets, but he did not say messengers; '...Say: "Why, then, did you slay Allah's prophets aforetime, if you were [truly] believers?"' (*al-Baqara*: 91) Reflect on the word '...aforetime...'; it means that no one from the Jews or even the Muslims can say it is possible for the Jews to kill Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* just as they killed their prophets because this killing was before Muhammad. Therefore, be reassured that they will never kill Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessing be upon him* as this verse brought reassurance to the Muslims and despair to the disbelievers with regards to this issue. The disbelievers certainly did try but how impossible it was for them.

Furthermore, a disbeliever assumes the bad consequences of his own denial of faith as well as they will be subjected for another punishment for barring others from having faith because they have gone astray on their own and

misguided others too. We understand from the words '...and on barring [others] from the path of Allah...' (*Muhammad*: 32), that the path of Allah *Glorified is He* is a straight and even road that attracts people to it with straightforward logic, sweet speech and a beautiful, splendid style that softens hearts towards it, even if they are hard.

It is natural for the disbelievers to stand up in this way and prevent people from having faith and from hearing the Noble Quran. This is why the Noble Quran related their statement: 'Now those who are bent on denying the truth say [unto one another]: "Do not listen to this Quran, but rather talk frivolously about it so that you might gain the upper hand!"' (*Fussilat*: 26) They are thus certain that hearing the Noble Quran will affect them and incline their hearts towards it. They did not stop at preventing themselves and other people from listening to the Noble Quran. Rather, they went beyond it: '...but rather talk frivolously about it...' (*Fussilat*: 26); they spread confusion about it so that it does not reach the ears of others. This is because they are native speakers of the Arabic language having its sense and eloquence. They thoroughly enjoy expressions and styles and they are affected by them.

His statement '...but He will cause all their deeds to come to nought,' (*Muhammad*: 32) means that He will invalidate their deeds and make them futile. The meaning of ('...their deeds...') is that deed of barring others from Allah's Path or it is their good deeds that they did in the life of this world. Their deeds included spending wealth in order to bar people from the truth.

Regarding this, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Behold, those who are bent on denying the truth are spending their riches in order to turn others away from the path of Allah; and they will go on spending them until they become [a source of] intense regret for them; and then they will be overcome! ...' (*al-Anfal*: 36) They spent their wealth and they got nothing in return. The people took it from them and laughed at them, as in the case nowadays with elections. They use their wealth to buy votes and then people take the wealth and do not vote for them because they do not deserve it.

The second category of their actions, after wealth, is fighting; fighting is a reality in their struggle against the truth. Allah *Glorified is He* is calling on

them: 'O you who carry weapons in opposition to the Messenger, you should consider the reality before you: 'Have, then, they [who deny the truth] never yet seen how We visit the earth [with Our punishment], gradually depriving it of all that is best thereon?... ' (*ar-Ra'd*: 41) Have they not noticed that the territory of Islam is growing every day, and the territory of disbelief is decreasing and shrinking every day?

Regarding the Battle of Badr, Allah says: 'and, lo, Allah gave you the promise that one of the two [enemy] hosts would fall to you:...' (*al-Anfal*: 7), i.e. the group of the caravan that was carrying goods and wealth and only had a few guards, and the group that went out to protect the caravan and was led by Abu Sufyan. The Muslims wanted the caravan that had the wealth, but Allah *Glorified is He* decided another matter. They want wealth while Allah *Glorified is He* wants truth to prevail, His word to be uppermost, and for disbelief to be banished so that there is no doubt that could be attached to the Muslims on the basis that they only went out for the wealth and spoils that would compensate for their loss in Mecca.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...and you would have liked to seize the less powerful one...' (*al-Anfal*: 7), i.e. the caravan '...whereas it was Allah's will to prove the truth to be true in accordance with His words, and to wipe out the last remnant of those who denied the truth, [7] so that He might prove the truth to be true and the false to be false, however hateful this might be to those who were lost in sin. [8] Lo! You were praying unto your Lord for aid, whereupon He thus responded to you: "I shall, verily, aid you with a thousand angels following one upon another!" (*al-Anfal*: 7-9)

Yes, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon you* sought refuge in his Lord and asked Him for help: 'Oh Allah, grant me your victory that You promised me. O Allah, if this small group is destroyed, you will not be worshipped on the earth.'⁽¹⁾ The Companion Abu Bakr *may Allah be pleased with him*

(1) Narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih* (3309) and also At-Tirmidhi in his *Sunnan* (3006) and Ahmad in his *Musnad* (216,203) from the Hadith of 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab Allah be please with him... It is also narrated by 'Abd ibn Hamid in his *Musnad* (31) and the wording of Muslim is that God's Messenger called out on the Day of Badr: {O God, fulfil what you have promised me! O God, bring about what you have promised me! O God, if this small group of Muslims is destroyed, you will not be worshipped on the earth.}

said to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: 'O Messenger of Allah, have mercy upon yourself, you did prayer for your Lord enough.'

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessing be upon him* was looking forward to victory over the group that had power because he did not want wealth. Instead, he wanted to make the truth prevail and to obliterate falsehood. According to how much patience a believer has, Allah *Glorified is He* supplies them with support and power. If you want more support, then have more patience, have more contentment and have greater resolve.

If Allah *Glorified is He* willed, He would afflict the disbelievers with defeat without fighting, but He wanted you to fight them in order to show your strength and your superiority over them. 'Fight against them! Allah will chastise them by your hands, and will bring disgrace upon them, and will succour you against them; and He will soothe the bosoms of those who believe' (*at-Tawba*: 14). If Allah *Glorified is He* defeated them with a natural disaster, they would say: 'This is a natural phenomenon, and we have no power over it.'

Likewise, on the Day (Battle) of Hunayn: 'Indeed, Allah has succoured you on many battlefields, [when you were few;] and [He did so, too,] on the Day of Hunayn, when you took pride in your great numbers and they proved of no avail whatever to you – for the earth, despite all its vastness, became [too] narrow for you and you turned back, retreating' (*at-Tawba*: 25).

When the Muslims were deluded by their greater number, Allah *Glorified is He* taught them a lesson in order to discipline them and gave their enemies the upper hand in the beginning of the battle. Then, out of His mercy, He corrected them and decreed victory for them in the end. Thus, on the same occasion, He disciplined both those who believe in Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and those who denied and opposed him.

This teaches us a lesson which is that when the believers are defeated, it is not because Allah *Glorified is He* is disgracing them. Rather, He is refining them, correcting their understandings, and revising their course of action. This lesson is clear in the Battle of Uhud, as you know. When they disobeyed the orders of the commander, they were defeated. If they had been given victory in this battle, they would have then attached little importance to the commands

of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. They would have said: 'We disobeyed his orders at Uhud and we were still victorious.'

This is why scholars say regarding this battle: 'The Muslims were defeated but Islam was given victory.' Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* made the disbelievers deeds come to naught with regards to two things; wealth and fighting.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا اطِيعُوْا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيعُوْا الرَّسُوْلَ وَلَا تَبْطُلُوْا اَعْمَالَكُمْ

believers, obey God and the Messenger: do not let your deeds go to waste [33] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 33)

The call here is directed to the believers, as faith is the basis for giving them the command in '...Pay heed unto Allah, and pay heed unto The Apostle...' (*Muhammad*: 33) and in the prohibition '...and let not your [good] deeds come to nought!' (*Muhammad*: 33)

The believer is the one who hears the address and obey the commands because he knows that they are from a wise Lord who is The Creator, The All-Provider and The All-Sustaining.

Goodness is in obeying Him, and loss is in contravening His command. This is why, when the believer is afflicted with some test or adversity, he says to himself: 'What have I done? I must have contravened my Lord's way.' And thus he rectifies his action.

It is also worth noting the repetition of the imperative verb '...pay heed...' (*Muhammad*: 33) once with Allah *Glorified is He* and once with Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. There must be a reason for this. Yes, scholars said: 'It is because Allah *Glorified is He* legislates the general principle in a comprehensive way, while Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* legislates the detailed rulings of the general principle; an example of this is the prayer. Allah *Glorified is He* has obligated us to perform prayer in a general sense, while Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* has explained the times of each prayer, how many units each prayer consists of and everything that is connected to it.

Therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* is to be obeyed with regards to the general principle, while Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is to be

obeyed with regards to the details. If the verb is not repeated, as in 'And pay heed unto Allah and the Apostle,' (*Al-'Imran*: 132) then the command is one and it refers to both the speech of Allah *Glorified is He* and the speech of the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. The command also comes in another form: '...Pay heed unto Allah, and pay heed unto The Apostle and unto those from among you who have been entrusted with authority...' (*an-Nisa'*: 59). He did not say: 'obey those in authority over you', but rather, He made obedience to them to be included within obedience to Allah *Glorified is He* and obedience to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Thus, they are owed no exclusive obedience or obedience that is separate from obedience to Allah *Glorified is He* and obedience to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. This is because, as you know, there is no obedience to a creation in disobedience to The Creator, and this is a religious legislative maxim. His statement: 'and do not invalidate your deeds' because you do good deeds, so preserve them and do not nullify them with sins, as the poet said:

I have not seen amongst the faults of mankind a fault so great

Like the inability of those able to be complete, to initiate

Imam Ash-Shafi'i⁽¹⁾ says:

If you are in a blessing, take care of it

For indeed disobedience removes blessings

It is a fault for the Muslim to relapse and commit evil deeds after being given success to do good deeds. He *Glorified is He* says: 'Indeed, good deeds do away with misdeeds. That is a reminder for those who remember' (*Hud*: 114).

In a Qudsi Hadith: 'Follow up an evil deed with a good deed and it will wipe it out.'⁽²⁾ It is from Allah's Mercy towards us that good deeds wipe out

(1) He is Imam Muhammad ibn Idris Ash-Shafi'i, who died 203 A.H., and one if the four Imams of Muslim Orthodoxy (*As-Sunna*) and all Shafi'is are affiliated to him. He was born in Gaza in the year 150 A.H., visited Baghdad twice, and headed to Egypt in the year 199 A.H. He died there. He was the most poetic and cultured of people and the most knowledgeable of them in jurisprudence and Quranic recitations. [*Al-'Alam* by Az-Zirikli 6/26]

(2) *Related by At-Tirmidhi in his Sunnan (1910), Ahmad in his Musnad (20556, 20512, 20435, 20392), Al-Hakim in his Mustadrak (165), Al-Bayhaqi in Shu'ab Al-Iman (7795) and Al-Qada'i in Ash-Shihab (611), and all of them from Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari and in the chapter on Mu'adh ibn Jabal.*

evil deeds. However, a bad deed does not wipe out a good deed, but it does necessitate that one seeks forgiveness. One of the most dangerous diseases that nullify righteous action is when a desire for ostentation, reputation, or hypocrisy intervenes, or a suspicion of idolatry. We seek refuge in Allah *Glorified is He*.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوا عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ مَاتُوا وَهُمْ كُفَّارٌ فَلَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ ﴿٣٤﴾

**God will not forgive those who disbelieve, bar others
from God's path, and die as disbelievers [34]
(The Quran, *Muhammad*: 34)**

His statement 'then died while they were disbelievers,' (*Muhammad*: 34) means that they died on disbelief and they did not amend the matter by repenting before death befell them. 'Never will Allah forgive them' (*Muhammad*: 34). This means that if they had repented before the death rattle, while still in this life, He would have forgiven them.

In another verse Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills.' (*an-Nisa*': 48). Dying upon disbelief after guidance had been clarified and shown to mankind is a proof of stubbornness, so how can such a person be the recipient Allah's Mercy?

فَلَا تَهِنُوا وَتَدْعُوا إِلَى السَّلَامِ وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ وَاللَّهُ مَعَكُمْ وَلَنْ يَتَرَكَكُمْ أَعْمَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٥﴾

**So [believers] do not lose heart and cry out for peace. It is
you who have the upper hand: God is with you. He will not
begrudge you the reward for your [good] deeds [35]
(The Quran, *Muhammad*: 35)**

The meaning of 'So do not weaken,' (*Muhammad*: 35) is: do not be weak when confronting your enemies because they are standing before you in battle, even if they try to make you feel weak by intimidating you or enticing you. One of the manifestations of weakness is that it calls them to reconciliation and a parting of ways. 'While you are superior,' (*Muhammad*: 35) means to act on the basis of this perspective.

Why would it not be so as 'Allah is with you,' (*Muhammad*: 35) to strengthen you and guard your backs, as He is the One Who never forsakes the one who

seeks refuge in Him. It is His way that you are fighting for, so how can He abandon you or allow you to surrender to your enemies? Therefore, when there is fierce fighting and the battle becomes harsh, be firm, and do not let them frighten you with their equipment, or numbers, or their stratagems and scheming because Allah *Glorified is He* is with you.

This is why, in the story of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* when Pharaoh and his army almost caught up with him, one of Musa's (Moses's) soldiers said: 'Behold, we shall certainly be overtaken' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 61). What did Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* say: 'He replied: 'No indeed! My Lord is with me, (and) He will guide me!' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 62) He said it with a ring of deep conviction and he was certain of Allah's victory.

We understand from His statement 'So do not weaken and call for peace,' (*Muhammad*: 35) that He has forbidden us from seeking peace. He has forbidden us from raising the white flag. Rather, we leave them to seek it. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* says in another verse: 'But if they incline to peace, incline to it as well' (*al-Anfal*: 61). This is because they understand that peace coming from you would be weakness and submission. You also would not call for peace because you are bound to rise above them and you are mightier and stronger.

'And Allah is with you' (*Muhammad*: 35). If someone is in Allah's company, Allah *Glorified is He* bestows upon him some of His attributes. Have you seen in the Story of the People of the Cave how they stood at the opening of the cave, and even As-Siddiq *may Allah be pleased with him* said: 'O Messenger of Allah! If one of them were to look at his feet, he would see us.' So, the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said to him: 'Oh Abu Bakr! What do you think of two and Allah is the third of them?'⁽¹⁾ As long as Allah *Glorified is He* is the third of them, then they are in His company, and as long as Allah is not encompassed by human vision, then whoever is in His company will also not be encompassed by human vision.

The meaning of 'and will never deprive you of [the reward of] your deeds,' (*Muhammad*: 35) is that He will not let you lose the reward of your deeds in the slightest. Rather, He will give you the full extent and then more.

(1) *Agreed upon, authentic Hadith, related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (4295), Muslim in his Sahih (4389), At-Tirmidhi in his Sunnan (3021) and Ahmad in his Musnad (11), and all of them from the Hadith of Abu Bakr As-Siddiq may Allah be pleased with him.*

إِنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُوَ وَإِنْ تَوَمَّنُوا وَتَنَقَّوْا يُؤْتِكُمْ أَجُورَكُمْ وَلَا يَسْأَلَكُمْ
أَمْوَالَكُمْ ﴿٣٦﴾ إِنْ يَسْأَلْكُمْ فَيُخَفِّفْكُمْ بَبْخُلُوا وَيُخْرِجْ أَضْفَنَكُمْ ﴿٣٧﴾

The life of this world is only a game, a pastime, but if you believe and are mindful of God, He will recompense you. He does not ask you to give up [all] your possessions [36] you would be grudging if He were to ask you and press you for them, and He would bring your ill-will to light [37] (The Quran, *Muhammad*: 36 - 37)

The Noble Quran gives us various illustrations of this life which overall show that it is a short, insignificant life that deludes and deceives mankind. One of these illustrations is His statement ‘And present to them the example of the life of this world, [its being] like rain which We send down from the sky, and the vegetation of the earth mingles with it and [then] it becomes dry remnants, scattered by the winds’ (*al-Kahf*: 45). And here: ‘[This] worldly life is only play and diversion’ (*Muhammad*: 36). This is a style of restriction which affirms that this life is nothing but a play and a passing delight, so let the intelligent person be wary of it and not deluded by it.

Amusement means to be preoccupied with something that does not harm you, but it does not benefit you either, and this is why some advanced societies made practical the amusement of children such that they fulfil the purpose of entertaining children and also teaching them something for the future. This is why the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: ‘Teach your children swimming, archery and horseback riding.’⁽¹⁾

Play, for children, is before the age of legal responsibility. As for ‘diversion’, it is to preoccupy yourself by doing something that does not benefit and it distracts you from doing something that does benefit, like the person who sits

(1) On the authority of Abu Bakr ibn ‘Abdullah ibn Rabi‘ Al-Ansari who said: ‘The Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* said: “Teach your children swimming and archery. The spinning mill is a good passing delight for the believing woman in her house. If your parents call on you then answer your mother.” Related by Abu Na‘im in *Ma‘rifat As-Sahaba* (the chapter on whoever is named Bistr) and mentioned by Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi in *Kanz Al-Ummal* (45343) and he attributed it to Ibn Mundih in *Al-Ma‘rifat*, Abu Musa in *Adh-Dhayl* and Ad-Daylami in *Al-Firdaws*.

in the café, for example, playing chess, and he hears the call to the noon prayer, but he does not pray.

In the chapter of *al-Jumu'a*: 'But when they saw a transaction or a diversion, [O Muhammad], they rushed to it and left you standing. Say, 'What is with Allah is better than diversion and then a transaction, and Allah is the best of providers' (*al-Jumu'a*: 11).

The one who follows the verses of the Noble Quran will find that they describe the life of the world in more than one place with this description; a play and diversion, in that order because play is for children and a diversion is for adults. The only exception is in the chapter of *al-Ankabut*: 'And this worldly life is not but diversion and play. And indeed, the home of the Hereafter - that is the [eternal] life, if only they knew,' (*al-Ankabut*: 64) because the speech here is about the tribulations that have dire consequences in the Hereafter and make one lose out on its reward, so diversion is mentioned before play.

Furthermore, the name of this life (*ad-dunya; low*) is enough to show how contemptible and insignificant it is: '...this life is only play and diversion...' (*Muhammad*: 36), as there is nothing less than this description. When you say the word *ad-dunya* you remember its counterpart which is *al-akhira* (the Hereafter). If this is the most inferior, then that is the most superior, and if this is fleeting, then that is everlasting.

Despite this, this life is not generally blameworthy. It is only blameworthy if something happens in it that is blameworthy, and it is praiseworthy if something happens in it that is praiseworthy. It is a place of cultivation for the Hereafter, as you only enter paradise with action from this life. Thus, this life is the subject of the religion, while the Hereafter is the reward, and the reward for something is not the thing itself.

We said previously that for the believer, this life is too important to be forgotten about because it leads you to the Hereafter, but it is too insignificant to be an objective because the objective of something is its end; and this life is not your end. Rather, behind it there is another objective which is the Hereafter. It is the true objective after which there is no other dimension.

Allah's statement 'And if you believe and fear Allah' (*Muhammad*: 36), i.e. you believe in Allah *Glorified is He* and you apply His way with regards to

‘Do!’ and ‘Do not do!’ ‘He will give you your rewards and not ask you for your properties,’ (*Muhammad*: 36), i.e. He will give you the complete reward of your deeds without any decrease, and He will not take your possessions from you, which He favoured you with.

The proof is that when Allah *Glorified is He* commands you to give in charity, He considers this charity to be a loan which He will give back to you, and more. ‘Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance’ (*al-Baqara*: 245).

His statement ‘If He should ask you for them and press you, you would withhold, and He would expose your unwillingness’ (*Muhammad*: 37). The True Lord *Glorified is He* does not ask us for our possessions because man has been moulded to love possessions and long for them if they are taken away from him. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘If I were to ask you for possessions, the question would require an earnest request.’ ‘And press you,’ (*Muhammad*: 37) He earnestly requests when asking and you hate this because it exposes whatever stinginess you have and it exposes your moral failings and your resentment.

When the moral failings of people are exposed, you ruin the relations between the individuals of society and you have seen an example of this in the issue of nationalization that has taken place because possessions are something that you normally acquire with toil and sweat and it is hard for you to see it taken from you and given to someone else. Here a moral failing is exposed.

And they said regarding: ‘and not ask you for your properties,’ (*Muhammad*: 36) that it indicates the generality of negation and not the negation of generality. How? It is similar to us saying: ‘Not all the students passed.’ This means that some of them passed. Thus, the negation here is for generality, as opposed to saying: ‘All the students did not pass.’ This is the generality of negation such that not a single one of them passed.

He asks you for some of it, as is what happens with alms, charity, ransom and expiation.

هَآأَنْتُمْ هَآؤُلَآءِ تُدْعَوْنَ أَنْفِقُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يَبْخُلُ
وَمَنْ يَبْخُلْ فَإِنَّمَا يَبْخُلْ عَن نَّفْسِهِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ الْغَنِيُّ وَأَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَاءُ وَإِن
تَتَوَلَّوْا يَسْتَبْدِلْ قَوْمًا غَيْرَكُمْ ثُمَّ لَا يَكُونُوا أَمْثَلَكُمْ

Though now you are called upon to give [a little] for the sake of God, some of you are grudging. Whoever is grudging is so only towards himself: God is the source of wealth and you are the needy ones. He will substitute other people for you if you turn away, and they will not be like you [38]

(The Quran, *Muhammad*: 38)

His statement ‘Here you are,’ (*Muhammad*: 38) is to draw attention in order for the person to be ready and not miss anything that is being said. The True Lord *Glorified is He* is addressing them with all of these tools in order to emphasise His call to them, which is to spend out: ‘those invited to spend in the cause of Allah’ (*Muhammad*: 38). Who is the one inviting? Allah *Glorified is He* is inviting them to spend freely.

Reflect here on how the True Lord *Glorified is He* respects and appreciates the efforts of human beings. Even though Allah *Glorified is He* is the Creator, the All-Provider, the Original Cause of causes, Who granted you the strength that you work with, the intellect that you think with, the material that you use despite that He respects your part in directing the energy that Allah *Glorified is He* has created towards beneficial things, and He says to you: ‘Spend freely as if the wealth is your wealth’ and He is borrowing it from you as a goodly loan.

It is similar to you giving your child a daily allowance and he saves it, for example, in a collection box. Then, you fall into difficult circumstances and you need what is in your child’s collection box, so you say to him: ‘Give me what is in the collection box as a loan and I will return it to you when I am able to.’

He *Glorified is He* says: ‘Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over?’ (*al-Baqara*: 245) The True Lord *Glorified is He* has forbidden usury in transactions between human beings, but He has permitted it for Himself when He borrows from you. This is a favour and generosity from Allah *Glorified is He* towards the creation, in the beginning and in the end.

His statement ‘to spend in the cause of Allah’ (*Muhammad*: 38), i.e. in all the ways that Allah loves. Allah *Glorified is He* is fully capable of enriching everyone such that no one would need anyone else, but instead Allah *Glorified is He* wanted hearts to be interconnected and interests to be interwoven, and for the creation to be joined in the feelings of faith such that the rich are compassionate towards the poor and the poor do not despise the rich, and the strong are merciful towards the weak.

However, when Allah *Glorified is He* calls upon them to spend freely, some of them are miserly: ‘but among you are those who withhold [out of greed]’ (*Muhammad*: 38). They are the ones who understand the philosophy of trade with Allah *Glorified is He* but not the consequences of spending freely. They do not know that spending in this way increases wealth and does not decrease it. Read: ‘Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan so He may multiply it for him many times over? And it is Allah who withholds and grants abundance, and to Him you will be returned’ (*al-Baqara*: 245).

Spending freely in Allah’s cause is like a man who harvests wheat and puts it in storage. He has a certain amount of it, for example, and he takes some of it in order to cultivate the earth again. Would one say that the wheat has decreased by that some taken out? No, because he will take a manifold increase from it.

Therefore, do not just look at what is departing but also look at what is coming in order to complete the illustration and make your calculation sound. Even usury in transactions between people only gives you five or ten per cent more.

As for your Lord *Glorified is He* He gives you seventy or seven hundred times more, or even more than that. Read: ‘The example of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is like a seed [of grain] which grows seven spikes; in each spike is a hundred grains. And Allah multiplies [His reward] for whom He wills. And Allah is all-Encompassing and knowing’ (*al-Baqara*: 261).

This is why the orientalisists had issue with the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: ‘It is written on the door of paradise that charity is rewarded ten times over, and a loan is rewarded eighteen times over.’⁽¹⁾

(1) Mentioned by *Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi* in *Kanz Al-‘Ummal* (10382) and he attributed it to *At-Tabarani* in *Al-Kabir* and *Al-Hakim* in *Nawadir Al-Usul* from *Abu Umama*: “I saw=

They said: 'This contradicts the Noble Quran which states that a good deed is rewarded ten times over.' The fact of the matter is that there is never a contradiction between the two because when I give one dirham as a loan, He gives me ten *dirhams* which means that He has actually given me nine. When it is multiplied it becomes eighteen.

When the True Lord *Glorified is He* encouraged us to give loans, He taught us how to deal with the debtor. He said: '...and if someone is in hardship, then [let there be] postponement until [a time of] ease. But if you give [from your right as] charity, then it is better for you, if you only knew' (*al-Baqara*: 280).

The first stage is that you wait and give him time to pay it back. Then, after that, you can complete your excellence and show good will with this loan, or at least some of it, by way of charity. This is the goodness of the one whose soul aspires to noble things.

Then, in His statement '...but among you are those who withhold [out of greed],' (*Muhammad*: 38) there is equity for the community of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and a clarification of its honour, as it is the majority that spend freely and the minority that is miserly. Amongst the community are those who spend all their wealth in Allah's Cause and there are those who spend half their wealth in Allah's Cause.

The spending and giving of this community has reached such an extent that there is none like it in all of history. There is the *Ansari* who said to his brother, the *Muhajir*: 'Look at my wives. If one of them pleases you I will divorce her so that you can marry her.' It is known that the woman has a special rank with the man, but this is magnanimity and sacrifice.

At the opposite end, you find the *Muhajir* Companion, 'Abd Ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf⁽¹⁾ may Allah be pleased with him who refused this generous offer and

= written on the door of paradise that a loan is rewarded eighteen times over and charity is rewarded ten times over.} Related by At-Tabarani in *Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat* from the Hadith of Anas who said that Allah's Messenger said: "On my Night Journey, I saw written on the door of Paradise: 'Charity is rewarded ten times over, and a loan is rewarded eighteen times over.' I said: 'O Gabriel, how is a loan better than charity?' He said: 'Indeed the asker asks and he has it, while the one who asks for a loan only asks because he has a need.'"

(1) He is 'Abd Ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf Abu Muhammad Az-Zuhri Al-Qurashi, a Companion and one of them promised direct entrance into paradise. He is also one of the six =

instead called on his brother⁽¹⁾ and said to him: 'No, Oh brother. May Allah bless you with regards to your women, but show me where the market is.'⁽²⁾

'Abd Ar-Rahman *may Allah be pleased with him* went to the market and engaged in trade until he was the wealthiest companion of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. They used to say: 'If he traded in dirt, he would be successful.'

He had a thousand slaves and a man came and asked one of them: 'How is Ibn 'Awf with you?' The slave said: 'By Allah, if you were to come across us while he was with us, you would not distinguish him among us because he lets us wear what he wears, and he lets us eat what he eats.'

Despite the love of wealth that is seated in the human soul, and the love of ownership, there are still some people who are like a mountain of generosity and benevolence, who give without limit and give as if they do not fear poverty. Look at the example of generosity in Hatim At-Ta'i⁽³⁾ who said to his slave:

Light a fire, for indeed the night is a night of coldness

The wind, o boy, is violent and cold

= Companions who were appointed to hold counsel by 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab and appoint a Caliph from amongst themselves and one of the first people to enter Islam. He was born forty-four years before the Emigration and he died in the year 32 A.H at the age of 76. His profession was trade and selling. [Al-'Alam by Az-Zirikli 3/321]

- (1) The one meant by brother here is Sa'd ibn Rabi' Al-Khazraji Al-Ansari, and not his brother in the literal sense. The Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* established brotherhood between them after the Emigration to Medina. [Look in the Sira of Ibn Hisham 1/504]
- (2) Mentioned by Ibn Kathir in As-Sira An-Nabawiyya (2/327) from Anas who said: 'Abd Ar-Rahman ibn 'Awf came and Allah's Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* made him and Sa'd ibn Rabi' Al-Ansari brothers, so the latter offered him half his family and wealth, to which 'Abd Ar-Rahman replied: 'May Allah bless you with regards to your family and wealth. Show me where the market is.' So he showed him and he went, and he bought and sold and made a profit and then brought some cottage cheese and clarified butter.
- (3) Hatim At-Ta'i is Hatim ibn 'Abdullah ibn Sa'd ibn Al-Hashraj At-Ta'i Al-Qahtani Abu 'Uday is a horseman, poet and generous man from the age of ignorance. Examples are given of his generosity. He was from the people of Najd and he visited Sham and married Mawiya bint Hajr Al-Ghasaniyyah in 'Iwarad (a mountain in the land of Tay'). He had a lot of poetry, but most of it is lost. All that remains is a small, printed collection. He died in the year 46 A.H. [Al-'Alam by Az-Zarkali 2/151]

Perhaps someone passing by sees your fire

If you attract a guest then you are free

It is related⁽¹⁾ that a group of people sat in an open space in Mecca and they were talking about the generous person of their time, and they were differing over this. One of them said: 'The most generous is Sa'id ibn Sa'd ibn 'Ubada. Another said: 'No, it is 'Abdullah ibn Ja'far.' Another said: 'No, 'Uraba Al-Awsi⁽²⁾ is more generous than both of them.' They were about to fight with one another when an intelligent man amongst them said: 'Send a man to each of these people who approaches them as a wayfarer and is in need. Look at how they receive him.'

So, they sent a man to 'Abdullah ibn Ja'far *may Allah be pleased with him* and he found him mounted in order to hunt, so he placed one leg on the mount and the other on the ground. The man said to him: 'Oh son of the daughter of Allah's Messenger, I am a wayfarer and possessor of need.' Then 'Abdullah *may Allah be pleased with him* took his leg down from his riding beast and said to him: 'Ride, and in this bag, there are four thousand *dinars*, such-and-such clothes and the sword of 'Ali ibn Abu Taleb, so take care of it.'

Another man went to Sa'id ibn Sa'd ibn 'Ubada *may Allah be pleased with him* knocked on his door, and his female slave replied: 'Who is it?' He said: 'A wayfarer and a possessor of need.' She said: 'the lord of the house is sleeping so what do you want?' He said: 'I am a possessor of need.' She said: 'Your need is not important enough for me to wake him up. By Allah, all he has is seven hundred *dinars*. Take it and go to where his camels are tied up. Choose a female riding camel for yourself and a servant to take care of it. When Sa'id *may Allah be pleased with him* woke up, she told him what had happened, so he said: 'Did you really do that?' She said: 'Yes.' He said: 'Consider yourself free.'

(1) *The story of the most generous of the people of Mecca*

(2) 'Uraba Al-Awsi: He is 'Uraba ibn Aws ibn Qayzi Al-Awsi Al-Harathi Al-Ansari, one of the chiefs of Medina who were known for their generosity. He was alive at the time of The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him and he embraced Islam as a youth. He travelled to the Levant in the days of Mu'awiya and he had news with him. He died in Medina in the year 60 A.H. [Al-'Alam by Az-Zirikli 4/222]

Then you notice that the command to spend freely here is for whom? It is specific to the believers, who are being called. ‘O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger’ (*Muhammad*: 33). This is due to the honour and rank of spending out and the manifold increase of its reward. The believer does not want to deny himself this goodness.

Even the word *nafaqa* (spending out) is taken from a market that is *nafiq* (selling well), i.e. in demand and profitable because it is trade with Allah *Glorified is He*. Thus, you must not think that it is a losing trade that has little demand. Yes. It is a market that the True Lord *Glorified is He* has set up between His servants for a reason that He wanted, so He made some of them rich, some of them poor, some of them strong, some of them weak, and each one of them is tested by the other so that there can be this complementary activity in a society of faith.

This is why we said that Allah *Glorified is He* wants the believer to act according to his capacity and not according to his need because if he acted according to his need and the need of those who are dependent on him, there would be nothing left for the weak person who is incapable of doing anything. Then there is the fact that circumstances change. The strong person could become weak and thus has need, or the rich person could become poor, and then he finds someone who gives to him. Man is the child of change.

Therefore, we are able to say that the spending out that Allah *Glorified is He* has commanded is like insurance for the believer’s future. Thus, he does not fear for himself or for his children if his circumstances put him in a state of need, and he is certain that the believing society will give him a helping hand.

The amazing thing about the command to spend out is that the True Lord *Glorified is He* has not excused anyone from it. Whoever is not able to spend out in wealth must spend out in speech. Read Allah’s statement: ‘There is not upon the weak or upon the ill or upon those who do not find anything to spend any discomfort when they are sincere to Allah and His Messenger. There is not upon the doers of good any cause [for blame]. And Allah is Forgiving and Merciful’ (*at-Tawba*: 91).

If someone is stingy, then others must wake him up, and if they do not they are in sin, even if they do not have this and that.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* explained this in his statement: 'Nor [is there blame] upon those who, when they came to you that you might give them mounts,⁽¹⁾ you said, 'I can find nothing for you to ride upon,' (*at-Tawba*: 92). What did they do, then? 'They turned back while their eyes overflowed with tears out of grief that they could not find something to spend [for the cause of Allah]' (*at-Tawba*: 92).

This is the person who does not own anything but tears and impassioned feelings that express his desire and longing to spend out, but he does not have anything so these feelings suffice, and for him actions are reckoned according to intentions. This stance may encourage him to strive in order to do something so that he can give anything.

Let the rich person be warned that he can be a tribulation for the poor person when he denies him his right, as he may be ruined and object to the fact that Allah *Glorified is He* has decreed poverty for him and wealth for someone else. Do not let him be poor as well as displeased with Allah's Decree.

Read: 'And those who hoard gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah - give them tidings of a painful punishment. The Day when it will be heated in the fire of hell and seared therewith will be their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs, [it will be said], 'This is what you hoarded for yourselves, so taste what you used to hoard' (*at-Tawba*: 34-35).

The intelligent person is the one who lightens his load when the loads become burdensome for their bearers, and no one else will carry for them. Whoever wants to lighten his soul, and then there is nothing less than giving what he does not need to someone who deserves it.

Regarding the words '...but among you are those who withhold [out of greed],' (*Muhammad*: 38) withholding to spend out is an active process that

(1) *This verse was sent down regarding the weepers, and there are six of them: 'Abdullah ibn Mughaffal, Sakhar ibn Salman, 'Abdullah ibn Ka'b Al-Ansari, 'Ulba ibn Zayd Al-Ansari, Salim ibn 'Umayr and Tha'laba ibn 'Atama. They came to the Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him and asked for mounts and equipment for battle and he said to them: 'I cannot find any mounts for you.' Then they left in tears, and they had wanted one of three things: riding beasts, victuals, or footwear. [Zad Al-Masir by Ibn Al-Jawzi, commenting on the chapter of at-Tawba, verse 9]*

emerges as a result of deep-rooted feelings in the human soul. They are the feelings of stinginess that call on the person not to give out. This is why He *Glorified is He* said: 'And whoever is protected from the stinginess of his soul - it is those who will be the successful' (*al-Hashr*: 9). The one who overcomes this natural inclination within himself and he inhibits the reins of his soul, and thus he spends out willingly.

Then the True Lord *Glorified is He* explains the consequence of stinginess: 'And whoever withholds only withholds [benefit] from himself' (*Muhammad*: 38), i.e. he is stingy with himself because he denies himself the reward of charity and spending out and he denies himself the reward that is multiplied many times over.

The insightful scholars understood this meaning, as Imam 'Ali was once asked: 'I want to know if I am from the people of this life or the people of the Hereafter.' He said to him: 'The answer is with you.' He said: 'How?' He replied: 'If someone comes to you with a gift and another comes to you asking for something, which of them makes you happy and joyous?' If you are happy with the one who brings a gift, then you are from the people of this life, and if you are happy with the one who asks for something then you are from the people of the Hereafter.

This is why some of the righteous would welcome someone when they asked for something, and they would say: 'Welcome to the one who comes carrying my provision to the Hereafter without a fee.'

His statement 'Allah is the Free of need, while you are the needy' (*Muhammad*: 38) was because the Jews said: 'Indeed Allah is in need and we are self-sufficient because He borrows from us.' Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* responds to them. Rather, it is Allah Who is Self-sufficient. Self-sufficient in His essence with no need of His creation, He gives abundantly from His wealth and He enriches the creation by cultivating love and mercy between them and making them love spending out. Thus, the wealthy do not become proud of their wealth, and the poor do not hate the wealthy because they are poor. Everyone is pleased and says: 'Praise be to Allah.' It is as if the source of all wealth is the True Lord *Glorified is He*.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And if you turn away' (*Muhammad*: 38), i.e. you avoid and refrain from spending that Allah *Glorified is He* has commanded you, and you do not affirm the increase that Allah has promised you, then know that Allah will not leave the weak, the poor and the powerless without acquisition. Rather, He will replace you with those who are better than you and they will respond to Allah's Command; they will spend out on Allah's Creation.

'He will replace you with another people; then they will not be the likes of you' (*Muhammad*: 38). They will not be like you in stinginess and withholding from giving out because you are My slave and I own you. If you disobey Me I will bring someone else who will be better than you. If there is no goodness in a people, it will be found in others, and if it not found in a land, it will be found in another land.

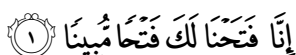
It is known that when Islam spread to the East and the West, the people of generosity increased in all the lands of Islam, and there are stories and narrations about their generosity.

the chapter of

al-Fath

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Dispenser of Mercy

The chapter of *al-Fath* ⁽¹⁾:



**Truly We have opened up a path to clear triumph
for you [Prophet] [1] (The Quran, *al-Fath*: 1)**

The True Lord *Glorified is He* speaks here in the plural, ‘We’, called the ‘plural of majesty’; for Allah *Glorified is He* does not sustain His dominion with only one single attribute, but with many attributes and numerous perfections of power, knowledge, wisdom, and other attributes of His. But when He speaks about Allah’s own Essence, He uses the singular form, saying for example: ‘Verily, I – I alone – am Allah; there is no deity save Me’ (*Ta Ha*: 14); this is in order to affirm His Oneness. And when He speaks about one of His actions, He says: ‘Indeed, it is We who sent down the Quran and indeed, We will be its guardian’ (*al-Hijr*: 9).

We can observe here that Allah *Glorified is He* puts emphasis on the pronoun ‘We’ by saying ‘indeed’. The purpose of this is to emphasise for us the importance of the guidance which the Noble Quran brought, and that it is a heavenly way of guidance from Allah Himself, and that it is a miracle for mankind; this clearly shows the merit of The Noble Quran.

(1) *The chapter of al-Fath was revealed in the Medinan period according to all the scholars, and contains 29 verses. It was revealed at night in between Mecca and Medina. From the beginning to the end, it speaks about the events of Hudaibiyya. The Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him said about it: “This night there has been revealed unto me a chapter more beloved to me than all that over which the sun rises.” It is the 48th chapter in the written order of the Quran, and was revealed between the chapters of as-Saff and al-Ma’ida. (Tafsir Al-Qurtubi).*

The meaning of 'give' is 'victory' which is what it means in the verse we are currently examining which is borne out by how Allah *Glorified is He* says shortly after it: 'And [that] Allah may aid you with a mighty victory' (*al-Fath*: 3). For when the call was first made, and the disbelievers of Mecca opposed it, and turned deaf ears to it, and stubbornly resisted it mocking Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and harming him and those who believed in his call. It was as though a door had been closed in the face of the call. So Allah *Glorified is He* said to him: 'Indeed, We have given you, [O Muhammad], a clear conquest,' (*al-Fath*: 1). That is, a plain and clear victory, and an opening of the door for the call to be spread and strengthened so that it would have power, influence and protection. After Quraysh had stifled the call and attempted to destroy it, Allah *Glorified is He* opened the door for it so that it spread throughout the whole of Arabia; and after Quraysh had put a stranglehold on the call, all the Arabs came to protect it and defend it.

And in another verse, Allah *Glorified is He* explained this 'victory' to us, saying: 'Have they not seen that We set upon the land, reducing it from its borders? And Allah decides; there is no adjuster of His decision' (*ar-Ra'd*: 41). He judges that Islam shall be victorious, and spread over the world; and when Allah judges, nothing can annul His verdict or repel His judgement. 'Whatever grace Allah opens up to man, none can withhold it' (*Fatir*: 2). And as long as Allah *Glorified is He* has opened it, do not worry that any human being could close it.

Allah *Glorified is He* then says:

لِيَغْفِرَ لَكَ اللَّهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِكَ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ وَيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكَ
وَيَهْدِيكَ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا ۝٢ وَيَنْصُرَكَ اللَّهُ نَصْرًا عَظِيمًا ۝٣

**So that God may forgive you your past and future sins,
complete His grace upon you, guide you to a straight path [2]
and help you mightily [3] (The Quran, *al-Fath*: 2-3)**

In the chapter of *Muhammad*, we explained the meaning of a 'sin' where the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is concerned since he is divinely protected from sin. We said that it is a case of 'The good deeds of the

pious are the sins of the great saints'⁽¹⁾; therefore even forgetfulness on his part was considered a fault because he was a divinely-inspired prophet, trusted to convey Allah's way of guidance, so it is unimaginable that he could forget in the same way that the rest of his community do.

Therefore Allah *Glorified is He* excuses them their forgetfulness, but does not excuse it of His Messenger. To illustrate this, we gave the example of the forgetfulness of Adam *peace be upon him*: 'And We had already taken a promise from Adam before, but he forgot; and We found not in him determination,' (*Ta Ha*: 115) and this forgetfulness was called a sin.

So, the forgiveness given here to the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was for these matters, such as the times Allah *Glorified is He* upbraided him: 'Oh Prophet, why do you prohibit [yourself from] what Allah has made lawful for you, seeking the approval of your wives?' (*at-Tahrim*: 1) And 'We know that you, [O Muhammad], are saddened by what they say. And indeed, they do not call you untruthful, but it is the verses of Allah that the wrongdoers reject' (*al-An'am*: 33), and 'Then perhaps you would kill yourself through grief over them, [O Muhammad] if they do not believe in this message, [and] out of sorrow' (*al-Kahf*: 6).

So Allah *Glorified is He* admonished Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* out of pity and compassion for him, as though He were saying to him: 'O Muhammad, do not grieve, and do not take on more burdens that you can bear, for Allah will come to your aid.' So when the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* sought forgiveness of Allah, it was for these kinds of things, not for any kind of sin against Allah's way of guidance – far be it for him to do any such thing!

'That Allah may forgive for' (*al-Fath*: 2) a fault might either be covered after it has been committed by excusing its punishment, or else it might be covered before it even happens so that it does not happen at all – and this is the meaning of 'what preceded of your sin and what will follow' (*al-Fath*: 2). In other words, what has passed shall not be punished, and the faults which might have occurred in the future shall not occur at all.

(1) Related by Al-Qurtubi as a saying of Al-Junayd; As-Sakhawi said it was a saying of Abu Sa'id Al-Kharraz

‘And complete His favour upon you’ (*al-Fath*: 2). The full measure of Allah’s Blessing upon the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was that He sent him to all people in all times and places, whilst before him each messenger was sent to a specific people at a specific time. As Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* he came forth at a time when the civilisations of the world all began to meet and connect from East to West, and thus he came as a universal messenger and a seal upon all the divine messages, and thus we call him the Master of Messengers and the Seal of Prophets.

The full measure of Allah’s Blessings was also that Allah *Glorified is He* opened the way to victory for him, and removed from his way the obstacles which had stood in the way of the call, so that all of Arabia yielded to him and Islam spread throughout it; and through Him, Allah guided this community which bore his message after him and took it to the rest of the inhabited world.

Allah *Glorified is He* brought to him the two greatest civilisations of the time, the Persians in the East and the Byzantines in the West; and because of this, they say that one of the wonders of this religion is that it spread through half the planet Earth in half a century, and this had never happened before.

The True Lord *Glorified is He* explains to us the meaning of the full measure of His blessings when He says: ‘This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion’ (*al-Ma’ida*: 3).

Therefore when Abu Bakr *may Allah be pleased with him* heard this verse, he said, ‘Muhammad has announced his own death by reciting this verse, for when something is completed, it must then decline.’⁽¹⁾ So they understood this verse to be a sign that the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* would soon die and pass away to the Supreme Companion, to attain to his reward.

Therefore, when the Angel of Death came to Him and bade him to choose, he said, ‘I choose the Supreme Companion.’⁽²⁾ He chose to be with his Lord, not to evade any responsibility, but because he knew that his mission had

(1) A similar statement is Related from ‘Umar *may Allah be pleased with him* not Abu Bakr in the exegeses of Al-Baghawi, Al- Alusi, Al-Baqa’i, Ibn ‘Adil and Abu As-Sa’ud.

(2) Related by Ahmad (25142) on the authority of ‘A’isha *may Allah be pleased with her*.

been completed and fulfilled, and that he had nothing more to do after having fulfilled his trust, conveyed his message, counselled his community, seen the religion become ascendant, and firmly established its foundations.

He then says: ‘guide you to a straight path’ (*al-Fath*: 2). So after he saw that the blessing was completed, and nothing was any longer closed upon him, he was reassured that Allah *Glorified is He* would never forsake him. He then says: ‘Allah may aid you with a mighty victory’ (*al-Fath*: 3). Is the victory mighty, or the victorious? The victorious is mighty, but He described the victory as mighty because it is as though Allah’s victory is pleasing to the victory itself and makes it feel proud and mighty, and also in order to say to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: ‘With this victory, you have been given something that no one has ever been given before.’

Elsewhere in the Noble Quran, the True Lord *Glorified is He* explains that He granted Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* with victory at times of ease, such as was the case at the conquest of Mecca, and He also did at times of hardship, such as was the case at Hunayn: ‘Allah has already given you victory in many regions and [even] on the day of Hunayn, when your great number pleased you, but it did not avail you at all, and the earth was confining for you with its vastness; then you turned back, fleeing. Then Allah sent down His tranquillity upon His Messenger and upon the believers and sent down soldiers angels whom you did not see and punished those who disbelieved. And that is the recompense of the disbelievers’ (*at-Tawba*: 25-26).

So, when they were deluded by their own great numbers, He corrected them, and then granted them His mercy and victory; and Allah *Glorified is He* would not have granted it to them at Badr and then forsaken them at Hunayn. It is as though Allah *Glorified is He* were saying to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: ‘Know that Allah is behind you, and will grant you victory and aid you; but you and your community must not be deluded by victory, power, or numbers, for: ‘How often has a small host overcome a great host by Allah’s leave!’ (*al-Baqara*: 249)

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِيمَانًا مَعَ إِيمَانِهِمْ
 وَلِلَّهِ جُنُودُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا

It was He who made His tranquillity descend into the hearts of the believers, to add faith to their faith — the forces of the heavens and earth belong to God; He is all knowing and all wise [4] (The Quran, *al-Fath*: 4)

‘Tranquillity’ is assurance after a time of severe difficulty, when they had been humbled: ‘and when eyes shifted [in fear], and hearts reached the throats and you assumed about Allah [various] assumptions. There the believers were tested and shaken with a severe shaking’ (*al-Ahzab*: 10-11).

Indeed, when things became intense, Allah *Glorified is He* granted ease; and despite the difficulty, deliverance came and Heaven intervened, and Allah’s victory came, ‘that they would increase in faith along with their [present] faith,’ (*al-Fath*: 4) and to remove from them the delusions they had entertained about their large numbers, therefore contravening the basic conditions of those who wish to fight as Allah’s hosts.

‘And to Allah belong the soldiers of the heavens and the earth’ (*al-Fath*: 4), that is, do not think that you are the only forces Allah *Glorified is He* possesses, for He has many forces: ‘And none can comprehend your Lord’s forces save Him alone’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 31). Among Allah’s soldiers are the angels who manage the affairs of the universe by Allah’s Command: ‘For each one is successive [angels] before and behind him who protect him by the decree of Allah’ (*ar-Ra’d*: 11). And Allah *Glorified is He* swore by these angels, saying: ‘And those who arrange [each] matter’ (*an-Nazi’at*: 5). These are the forces of Allah *Glorified is He* in the heavens.

Indeed, Allah *Glorified is He* has forces in the heavens and forces on earth, by which He destroyed those communities who denied His message: ‘So each We seized for his sin; and among them were those upon whom We sent a storm of stones, and among them were those who were seized by the blast [from the sky], and among them were those whom We caused the earth to swallow, and among them were those whom We drowned’ (*al-Ankabut*: 40).

These are all forces of Allah: the storm-wind, the blast, the swallowing of the earth, drowning, and more besides. Only Allah *Glorified is He* has knowledge of these forces, how they attain their knowledge, and how they manage to fight Allah's enemies; for they operate mysteriously.

Despite all this, when the True Lord *Glorified is He* wanted to aid His Messenger, He did not do so with any of these natural phenomena, but rather with the strong faith of the believers, and their steadfast position against their enemies; for otherwise, they would have said, 'Were it not for these natural phenomena, they would not have been able to defeat us!' But the True Lord *Glorified is He* did attribute victory to these subtle forces in fact, although on the surface it was attributed to these believers so that they would continue to strike dread in the hearts of their enemies.

Allah *Glorified is He* says about the Emigration: 'If you do not aid the Prophet Allah has already aided him when those who disbelieved had driven him out [of Mecca] as one of two, when they were in the cave and he said to his Companion, 'Do not grieve; indeed Allah is with us.' And Allah sent down his tranquillity upon him and supported him with angels you did not see' (*at-Tawba*: 40).

Allah's forces were in effect at his time, for Abu Bakr *may Allah be pleased with him* said to the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: 'If one of them looks beneath his very feet, he will see us!'⁽¹⁾ So there were forces which prevented them from seeing: the dove which built her nest, and the spider which spun its web, were nothing but forces of Allah *Glorified is He*.

And when the horse of Suraqa ibn Malik got its feet stuck in the sand, the sand was a force of Allah *Glorified is He*. Even more incredible than this, Allah *Glorified is He* subdued one of the disbelievers themselves to aid the Emigration, the road guide 'Abdullah ibn 'Urayqit, who was a disbeliever who did not know Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.⁽²⁾ This is because Allah *Glorified is He* has full power to execute His will, and thus destined that the spiritual guide be guided by the material guide!

(1) Related by Al-Bukhari (4295) and Muslim (4389) on the authority of Anas *may Allah be pleased with him*

(2) Abu Bakr *may Allah be pleased with him* hired him to guide them, and they trusted him to do so even though he was a disbeliever

Allah said: ‘...and know that Allah intervenes between man and his heart’ (*al-Anfal*: 24). We said that this is because the notion Allah *Glorified is He* inspires cannot be deposed by the notions which Satan inspires, and we saw this in the story of the mother of Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* when Allah *Glorified is He* inspired her to cast him into the sea. Even though she was a mother, and feared for her child, she indeed did cast him. We also saw this principle in the story of Pharaoh, who was killing the male children of the Israelites, yet when Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* came to him in this way he did not suspect him, and raised him in his household. So Allah is the Lord of all hearts and their Creator, and He can turn them whichever way He pleases, and make them accept His decree without debate.

He then says: ‘...and ever is Allah Knowing and Wise’ (*al-Fath*: 4). He knows His forces well, and directs them with wisdom at specific times towards specific people; it is not a matter of unbridled force, tyranny, or injustice – far be it indeed for Allah to do such a thing. The True Lord says :⁽¹⁾

لِيَدْخُلَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا
وَيُكَفِّرُ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَكَانَ ذَلِكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ فَوْزًا عَظِيمًا

**So as to admit believing men and women into Gardens graced
with flowing streams, there to remain, absolving their bad deeds
a great triumph in God’s eyes [5] (The Quran, *al-Fath*: 5)**

It is related that when the beginning of this chapter was revealed, the Companions said: ‘Congratulations to you, Oh Messenger of Allah! This is what Allah has in store for you, but what does He have in store for us?’ Then the verse was revealed: ‘[And] that He may admit the believing men and the

(1) *Anas may Allah be pleased with him said: The verse “Verily, [O Muhammad,] We have given you a clear conquest” was revealed to The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him when he returned from Hudaybiyya, the Companions were saddened because they had not been able to make their offerings at the Ka’ba, offering them instead at Hudaybiyya. When the verse was revealed, He peace and blessings be upon him said to them, “A verse has been revealed to me which is better than the entire world,” and when he recited it to them, they said, ‘Great joy and congratulations to you, O Messenger of Allah, for your Lord has made clear what He will do with you – but what will He do with us?’ So Allah revealed: “[And] that He may admit the believing men and the believing women to gardens” (al-Fath: 5).*

believing women to gardens beneath which rivers flow to abide therein eternally,' (*al-Fath*: 5). This is what was in store for them.

The orientalisists have objected to Allah's Words '...and remove from them their sins,' (*al-Fath*: 5) saying: 'Why would He remove their bad deeds, when He has already admitted them into paradise? They do not enter paradise until after He removes their bad deeds.'

We say: The meaning is that He will conceal these bad deeds so that they do not overshadow their lives in paradise, nor their position in the sight of their Lord; or He will conceal their bad deeds so that they forget them and do not feel ashamed of them – for the more you treat well the one who was bad to you, the more he reproaches himself; therefore Allah *Glorified is He* will conceal their bad deeds so they cannot remember them so that the joy of paradise is not diminished for them in any way.

The purpose of the creation was worship. As for the opinion which states that Allah's actions have no purpose, we say that they do not have the purpose of giving benefit to Him, but rather, they give benefit to others – and therefore they do have purpose.

Also, He mentions the believing women here after the believing men – why did He single them out for mention when usually in the Noble Quran men and women are included in the same plural, such as when He says: 'O you who believe,' (*al-Baqara*: 104), and not 'O you men and women who believe'; for the woman is concealed and included with the man, and she does not need to be specifically mentioned unless something concerns her specifically – so why does He mention her here?

They say it is because the context here is that of armed struggle, since Allah has just said 'And [that] Allah may aid you with a mighty victory' (*al-Fath*: 3). Women do not participate in armed struggle, and therefore the True Lord *Glorified is He* mentions women here to affirm that they also share in the reward of the struggle, and to dispel any doubt about this.

He says: '...gardens beneath which rivers flow,' (*al-Fath*: 5), and we explained before that elsewhere Allah says: '...gardens, through which running waters

flow' (*at-Tawba*: 100). The two verses do not mean exactly the same thing, for when water springs forth from right underneath you, you are assured that it will continue to do so, and no one can withhold it from you because it flows from your own property.

As for 'gardens, through which running waters flow,' (*at-Tawba*: 100), this means that it flows from somewhere else and passes you by, and therefore might be cut off from you. He says 'to abide therein eternally,' (*al-Fath*: 5) in order to dispel any fears you might have that this bliss will ever come to an end; for no matter how great the bliss of this world might be, it is spoiled for you by your fear that it might leave you or you might leave it. Allah *Glorified is He* therefore reassures you that the bliss of paradise is constant and uninterrupted, eternal and unending; it will never leave you by going away from you, and you will never leave it by dying.

Therefore, He calls it a supreme triumph: '...and ever is that, in the sight of Allah, a triumph supreme!' (*al-Fath*: 5) What do you think of a triumph which is described as supreme? And what do you think when all of this comes from Allah *Glorified is He*? A gift is commensurate with the power of the giver: you are happy and delighted when a person of importance is pleased with you, and you are happy when you do someone a favour so he gives you a present or a reward – so what about if Allah *Glorified is He* rewards you?

I always remember the day I went with some ministers to San Francisco and we went to a grand hotel, and everyone admired its design, its beautiful appearance and its facilities; and when I saw the admiration in their eyes, I said to them: 'Take this as a proof of faith, and say: This is what human beings have made for other human beings, so imagine what the Lord of mankind has in store for mankind!'

وَيُعَذِّبُ الْمُنَافِقِينَ وَالْمُنَافِقَاتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِينَ وَالْمُشْرِكَاتِ
الظَّالِمَاتِ بِاللَّهِ ظَنُّ السَّوْءِ عَلَيْهِمْ دَائِرَةُ السَّوْءِ وَغَضِبَ اللَّهُ
عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَعَنَهُمْ وَأَعَدَّ لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَتْ مَصِيرًا ﴿٦﴾

And to torment the hypo- critical and idolatrous men and women who harbour evil thoughts about God — it is they

**who will be encircled by evil! — who carry the burden of
God's anger, whom God has rejected and for whom He has
prepared Hell, an evil destination! [6] (The Quran, *al-Fath*: 6)**

Reflect on this contrast, which clearly shows the difference, and invites you to compare the reward Allah *Glorified is He* has prepared for the believers, and the end He has in store for the hypocrites and disbelievers. Mentioning contrasting things side by side is a rhetorical style employed by the Noble Quran to show the difference between them; and the Arab poet said, describing his beloved:

A face as white as the dawn,

Hair as black as night:

Two opposites which are beautiful when combined,

For each opposite shows the beauty of the other.

We may observe here that Allah *Glorified is He* mentions the hypocrites before the polytheists when speaking of the suffering that awaits them. The hypocrite is indeed worse than the polytheist, for he conceals his disbelief and acts as though he has faith so that he can infiltrate the ranks of the believers and conceal himself behind their banner, yet in reality, he is a stubborn polytheist who secretly plots against the believers.

As for the ordinary polytheist, his outward appearance is the same as his inward reality, his enmity is apparent and thus it is easy to guard oneself against him. Therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* said of the hypocrites: 'Indeed, the hypocrites will be in the lowest depths of the fire - and never will you find for them a helper' (*an-Nisa*': 145). That is, they shall be below the polytheists, on a lower level than them.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'those who assume about Allah a thought of evil nature,' (*al-Fath*: 6). A 'thought' means an unproven opinion about something, and when you say, 'I think so', you mean that you are not certain about it. Whim is lower than a thought. But what was the thought they had, which Allah *Glorified is He* describes as being evil? They said, 'Muhammad shall never gain victory over us'; and The True Lord *Glorified is He* made this concept clear

when He said: 'Whoever should think that Allah will not support [Prophet Muhammad] in this world and the Hereafter - let him extend a rope to the ceiling, then cut off [his breath], and let him see: will his effort remove that which enrages [him]?' (*al-Hajj*: 15) That is, the one who thinks this thought has nothing left to do but attach a rope to the ceiling and hang from it like a hanged man, and then cut it down, and see if this has removed his anguish.

As for these thoughts, they had about Allah *Glorified is He* the first thing they thought about Him is that He does not exist; others say that He does exist, but has associates; others say that the Noble Quran is not from Allah *Glorified is He* but from Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*; and others deny that the dead will be resurrected.

These are all evil thoughts about Allah *Glorified is He* and therefore the True Lord *Glorified is He* meets them with an evil punishment, saying: 'Upon them is a misfortune of evil nature' (*al-Fath*: 6). They cannot escape from it because it surrounds them. And elsewhere, He *Glorified is He* says: 'While Allah encompasses them from behind' (*al-Buruj*: 20). Not only this, but also: 'and Allah has become angry with them and has cursed them and prepared for them hell, and evil it is as a destination' (*al-Fath*: 6). Glory be to Allah! Look at the abundance of punishment, suffering, wrath, and curse which He has in store for them!

'Anger' (*al-Fath*: 6) is an emotion which causes the angry person to seek revenge on the one who has angered him. Now the True Lord *Glorified is He* is far above any emotional reaction, but He is speaking to us according to the limits of our own understanding and the modes of expression which our language possesses.

In His words 'And has cursed them' (*al-Fath*: 6), He has expelled them from His vast mercy and exiled them from it; and after this, the angels also reject them, and so does everyone else; 'and prepared for them Hell,' (*al-Fath*: 6) meaning that He has already made it, and it exists even now; so, 'and evil it is as a destination' (*al-Fath*: 6), tell us the natural consequence of the evil thoughts they entertain about Allah.

وَاللَّهُ جُنُودَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٧﴾

The forces of heaven and earth belong to God; He is almighty and all wise[7] (The Quran, *al-Fath*: 7)

The True Lord also speaks of His forces here, for His forces come forth in two ways: there are the forces of mercy which descend bearing goodness such as the angels who bring inspiration and revelation, or the sending down of rain; and then there are forces which bring down destruction, chastisement, and humiliation. ‘And ever is Allah Exalted in Might and Wise’ (*al-Fath*: 7). We understand from these words that the forces of chastisement are meant here, which complement the attribute of Almightyness. The Almighty is the One Who always overcomes and cannot be overcome, and this might is directed by wisdom and free of any tyranny or wrongdoing – far be it for Allah *Glorified is He* to indulge in such things!

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ شَهِيدًا وَمُبَشِّرًا وَنَذِيرًا ﴿٨﴾ لِّتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ، وَتُعَزِّرُوهُ وَتُوَقِّرُوهُ وَتُسَبِّحُوهُ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ﴿٩﴾

We have sent you [Prophet] to bring good news and to give warning [8] so that you [people] may believe in God and His Messenger, support Him, honour Him, and praise Him morning and evening [9] (The Quran, *al-Fath*: 8 - 9)

These words are addressed to the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: ‘We have sent you as a witness,’ (*al-Fath*: 8), that is, a witness over your community and over those messengers who came before you, that they delivered the message. Indeed, he is a witness over them because of what Allah *Glorified is He* told him in the Noble Quran.

And in another verse, He says: ‘And thus we have made you a just community that you will be witnesses over the people and the Messenger will be a witness over you’ (*al-Baqara*: 143). That is, so that you might bear witness before mankind that you have conveyed the message to them, for this community inherited the call from the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and continued to bear it after him. Therefore, it is related that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: ‘Allah shall give

radiance to anyone who hears what I say and understands it, and then passes it on to he who heard it not; for many a one who is told (of it) understands better than the one who heard (it).⁽¹⁾

Allah says: 'and a bringer of good tidings and a warner' (*al-Fath*: 8). We said before that tidings and warnings are given before the event actually happens. But why is he a bringer of good tidings and a warner? Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'That you [people] may believe in Allah and His Messenger and honour him and respect the Prophet and exalt Allah morning and afternoon' (*al-Fath*: 9). So, the reason He *peace and blessings be upon him* was sent is that you believe in Allah and His Messenger 'and honour Him,' (*al-Fath*: 9), extolling Him, succouring His religion and upholding His Word; 'and respect the Prophet' (*al-Fath*: 9), i.e. extol Him and give Him all the praise that is due to Him, for He *Glorified is He* provided His creatures a way of guidance to guard the motions of their lives from imbalance.

When Allah *Glorified is He* created Adam *peace be upon him* formed him and breathed of His spirit into him. Life came into him and he became a complete being. He did not start off as a child and then grow into a man, but rather, life came into him when he was a full-grown man.

Adam *peace be upon him* was brought into a universe in which Allah *Glorified is He* had prepared for him all the constituents of his life such as air, water, the earth, the sun and the moon; and after giving him his material nourishment, He gave him the moral values which nourish the spirit.

Therefore, after giving him the material spirit, Allah *Glorified is He* gave him another spirit of moral values: 'And thus We have revealed to you an inspiration of Our command' (*ash-Shura*: 52). Therefore, the Noble Quran is called an inspiration, and the angel who brought it down is a 'spirit': 'the Trustworthy Spirit has brought it down' (*ash-Shu'ara*: 193). Allah *Glorified is He* addressed the living people by saying to them: 'Oh you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you the life' (*al-Anfal*: 24). This shows us that there are two lives: the material life, and the spiritual life of Allah's way of guidance.

(1) *The like of it was related by Abu Dawud (3175), At-Tirmidhi (2580), Ibn Majah (226) and Ahmad (20608).*

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُبَايِعُونَكَ إِنَّمَا يُبَايِعُونَ اللَّهَ يَدُ اللَّهِ فَوْقَ أَيْدِيهِمْ فَمَنْ نَكَثَ فَإِنَّمَا يَنْكُثُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَوْفَى بِمَا عَاهَدَ عَلَيْهِ اللَّهُ فَمِىْزَتِهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿١٠﴾

Those who pledge loyalty to you [Prophet] are actually pledging loyalty to God Himself – God’s hand is placed on theirs — and anyone who breaks his pledge does so to his own detriment: God will give a great reward to the one who fulfils his pledge to Him [10] (The Quran, *al-Fath*: 10)

These words refer to the Pledge of Hudaibiyya which took place underneath a tree, of which Allah *Glorified is He* says in this very chapter: ‘Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [O Muhammad], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquillity upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest’ (*al-Fath*: 18).

The victory which we are currently examining was heralded by this pledge which was the beginning of the most supreme victory. Therefore, when ‘Umar *may Allah be pleased with him* objected, and said to the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*, ‘Why do we yield in such a lowly way against the honour of our religion?’ Abu Bakr *may Allah be pleased with him* rebuked him and said, ‘Cleave to your stirrup, ‘Umar!’⁽¹⁾, that is, do not go too far, and know your place. Abu Bakr *may Allah be pleased with him* would say, ‘By Allah, there was no victory in Islam’s history greater than the victory of Hudaibiyya.’ Why? That was because it paved the way to the conquest of Mecca. But at the time, the people did not know the truth of what was between Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and his Lord and it is the nature of man to be hasty.

As for the True Lord *Glorified is He* He does not hasten as His servants do until things turn out as He wills. You know the story of Umm Salama *may Allah be pleased with her* when the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* came to her in a vexed state, and she said to him, ‘What vexes you, O Messenger of Allah?’ He said, ‘The Muslims are ruined, Umm Salama! I commanded them, but they did not obey.’ She said, ‘O Messenger of Allah,

(1) The like of it is related by Muslim (1785) and Al-Bukhari (4844), on the authority of Sahl ibn Hanif *may Allah be pleased with him*.

they are disappointed, for they came longing to see the *Ka'ba*, but then were prevented from doing so when they were so close. Pardon them, O Messenger of Allah, and see to what Allah has commanded you, and do it without speaking to anyone, for when they see you do it, they shall do it.'⁽¹⁾ The plan of Umm Salama *may Allah be pleased with her* succeeded and the Muslims were saved from a trial which could have destroyed them. It is true that their stubbornness was born of faith, and it, on the surface, might have been pleasing to the Prophet Muhammad *peace be upon him*; but if a commandment comes from Allah on high, then it is essential to hear and obey.

Therefore, they say that part of bravery is to know when to be cowardly. Suppose that we are sitting somewhere and there are great and important men among us, and then a criminal comes in with a gun and tells us to stand up, and threatens us. What should we do? We must obey what he says in such a situation so that we do not endanger ourselves.

So sometimes bravery is displayed towards others, and sometimes one must be brave towards one's own self, and this is a matter of wisdom and strategy. This is what the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* did, and he arrived at this opinion by means of the illumination which the True Lord *Glorified is He* gave him.

This treaty was a way of raising the status of Islam and unfurling its banner even though they went back home without entering Mecca. This is because Quraysh had declared their enmity towards Islam, and had not allowed it to express itself, but now the door of negotiation and discussion was opened. Islam became an established reality, a word to be heard and was lifted above the humiliation and lowliness of the past.

Moreover, the treaty was a way of calming Quraysh and lessening the hatred they felt towards the Muslims; for by making a treaty with them, we were safe from them and could go about spreading the call to the rest of Arabia. And even before the Muslims had got back to Medina, the True Lord *Glorified is He* explained the matter to His Messenger saying: 'Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you, [O Muhammad] - they are actually pledging allegiance to Allah' (*al-Fath*: 10).

(1) Related by Ahmad (18102)

A pledge of allegiance is an agreement made between two parties. ‘They made this deal with Allah, for you, Oh Muhammad, are not taking anything for yourself, you are only taking it for the sake of Allah’s way of guidance which He sent you to convey.’

So, to pledge allegiance to the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is really to pledge allegiance to Allah *Glorified is He* and therefore He says: ‘The hand of Allah is over their hands’ (*al-Fath*: 10). That is, over the hands which stretched out to pledge allegiance to the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*; so Allah’s hand was above all their hands because the favour here was from Allah *Glorified is He*. Do not think that the favour is from you because you have pledged allegiance; rather, the favour is from Allah *Glorified is He* to you, and His hand is above your hands, and He is the One Who sent this goodness to you which will give you happiness in this life and the next. The hand here is not like our own hands, but rather, it is the hand of favour and grace such as when you say, ‘He gave me a hand’, meaning that he helped you or did you a favour.

He then says: ‘So he who breaks his word only breaks it to the detriment of himself,’ (*al-Fath*: 10) because Allah *Glorified is He* cannot be harmed by any of His servants’ actions; obedience does not benefit Him, and disobedience does not harm Him.

On the other hand: ‘he who fulfils that which he has promised Allah’ (*al-Fath*: 10), that is, he faithfully keeps to the covenant to which he has bound himself, ‘He will give him a great reward’ (*al-Fath*: 10).

Al-Bukhari and Muslim both mention this story, and say that Hudaybiyya was a place around 22 kilometres from Mecca, at a spot where a bent tree stood; or there may have been a spring there where they used to collect water. There were one thousand, four hundred people there, and Salam ibn Al-Akwa’ stated that they pledged allegiance to the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to the death;⁽¹⁾ Muslim also mentions that they pledged to him that they would never flee from battle.⁽²⁾

(1) Related by Al-Bukhari (2851) and Muslim (3462)

(2) This was also related by Ahmad (13600).

سَيَقُولُ لَكَ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ شَغَلَتْنَا أَمْوَالُنَا وَأَهْلُونَا فَاسْتَغْفِرْ
 لَنَا يَقُولُونَ بِأَلْسِنَتِهِمْ مَا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ قُلْ فَمَنْ يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ
 شَيْئًا إِنْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ ضَرًّا أَوْ أَرَادَ بِكُمْ نَفْعًا بَلْ كَانَ اللَّهُ يَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا ﴿١١﴾
 بَلْ ظَنَنْتُمْ أَنْ لَنْ يَنْقَلِبَ الرَّسُولُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِيهِمْ أَبَدًا وَزُيِّنَ ذَٰلِكَ
 فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَظَنَّتُمْ ظَنًّا سَوًّا وَكُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا بُورًا ﴿١٢﴾

The desert Arabs who stayed behind will say to you, ‘We were busy with our property and our families: ask forgiveness for us,’ but they say with their tongues what is not in their hearts. Say, ‘Whether it is God’s will to do you harm or good, who can intervene for you?’ No! God is fully aware of everything you [people] do [11] No! You thought that the Messenger and the believers would never return to their families and this thought warmed your hearts. Your thoughts are evil, for you are corrupt people [12] (The Quran, *al-Fath*: 11-12)

Allah *Glorified is He* here informs Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* of a matter of the unseen, telling him what these people will do. ‘Those who remained behind,’ (*al-Fath*: 11) were the ones who were asked to set out with the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to make the minor pilgrimage (*umrah*), but did not set out and then tried to explain their actions with these excuses which the Noble Quran reveals here as false, exposing their intentions and the thoughts that were in their minds. The ‘Bedouin’ (*al-Fath*: 11) are the nomads who live in the wilderness, and they said ‘Our properties and our families occupied us’ (*al-Fath*: 11). ‘They busied us from setting out with you.’ And their words ‘so ask forgiveness for us,’ (*al-Fath*: 11) indicate that they had sinned and erred, for otherwise, they would not have asked the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to pray for their forgiveness.

The reality is that they were lying about this, for it was not their chattels or families that kept them busy, but rather, they feared to set out because they thought in their hearts that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* would not return from this pilgrimage and that he would never come home because Quraysh were plotting against him with groups of their confederate

allies from Ahabish, Thaqf, Kinana, and elsewhere. They thought to themselves what Allah *Glorified is He* here reveals: ‘But you thought that the Messenger and the believers would never return to their families, ever’ (*al-Fath*: 12). And therefore, those who had thought this were dumbfounded when they heard Allah reveal it, exposing what their hearts concealed.

What is incredible is that this statement ‘Those who remained behind of the Bedouins will say,’ (*al-Fath*: 11) was issued in the chapter which was recited publicly, heard by those who stayed behind themselves, and they had the ability to refrain from making these excuses. Yet, Allah *Glorified is He* spoke the truth, and indeed they did say what the Noble Quran had predicted they would.

This is just like what happened when Allah *Glorified is He* said about the changing of the prayer-direction: ‘foolish among the people will say, ‘What has turned them away from their *qibla* which they used to face?’ (*al-Baqara*: 142)

The Jews heard these words and this description, yet they still went ahead and said what Allah *Glorified is He* had predicted they would, thereby proving themselves to be weak-minded. These kinds of occurrences are a sign of the truth of the Noble Quran, for the One Who is speaking knows all that will occur in the future. He states that it will happen before it happens, and then things unfold just as He said they would.

They say that those who stayed behind were the members of six tribes, namely Ghifar, Mazina, Jahina, Ashja, Ad-Dayl, and Aslam,⁽¹⁾ and they said, ‘Muhammad has cast himself into ruin, and he will never return from this pilgrimage’ because of the forces they knew would oppose him there, so they stayed behind. Yet they were keen enough to go out to Khaybar because of the untold riches and spoils that were to be found there.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘They say with their tongues what is not within their hearts,’ (*al-Fath*: 11) referring to their words ‘so ask forgiveness for us,’ (*al-Fath*: 11) for they only spoke these words with their tongues, but they were not really concerned with being forgiven. The True Lord *Glorified is He* then makes it clear to them the truth of the matter: ‘Say’ to them, Oh Muhammad:

(1) As stated by Ibn ‘Abbas may Allah be pleased with him (*Ash-Shawkani, Fath Al-Qadir*)

‘Then who could prevent Allah at all if He intended for you harm or intended for you benefit?’ (*al-Fath*: 11) This is a rhetorical question meant to express incredulity and rebuke. He was saying to them: Who can hold back Allah’s decree from you, and who can keep you from harm if it afflicts your wealth or your families? Who? No one can.

Likewise, no one can keep benefit from you if Allah *Glorified is He* wills it for you. So, these are false excuses and useless lies. ‘Rather, ever is Allah, with what you do, Acquainted’ (*al-Fath*: 11), that is, none of your affairs escape His attention.

He then rebukes them by revealing the speech which they concealed amongst themselves, saying: ‘But you thought that the Messenger and the believers would never return to ‘their families,’ (*al-Fath*: 12) and they were completely convinced of this thought of theirs, due to ‘and that was made pleasing in your hearts’ (*al-Fath*: 12).

‘And you assumed an assumption of evil,’ (*al-Fath*: 12) meaning the thought that the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* would not return to his kin, and nor would the believers who set out with him; and this would have meant the end for the call of Islam. ‘And became a people ruined’ (*al-Fath*: 12). You are like a barren land, a people of corruption, bereft of all good.

وَمَنْ لَّمْ يُؤْمِنْ بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ فَإِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَعِيرًا ﴿١٣﴾

**We have prepared a blazing Fire for those who do not believe
in God and His Messenger [13] (The Quran, *al-Fath*: 13)**

There is a clear allusion in these words to the aforementioned people; and when He says ‘We have prepared,’ (*al-Fath*: 13) this means that He has actually readied it, so it exists even now. The blazing fire will not be readied for them after they are brought forth to enter it, but rather, it has already been prepared, and it awaits them and longs for them even now.

We have already explained how the True Lord *Glorified is He* readied paradise with enough space to accommodate all humanity if they were all believers, and readied hell with enough space to accommodate all humanity if they were all disbelievers. So when the dwellers of paradise enter it, and the

dweller of hell enter it, there will remain empty spaces in paradise, and Allah *Glorified is He* will cause the dwellers of paradise to inherit them, as He says: ‘Those are the inheritors. Who will inherit *al-Firdaus*. They will abide therein eternally.’ (*al-Mu’minun*: 10-11)

وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يَعْفِرُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ
مَن يَشَاءُ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ غَفُورًا رَحِيمًا ﴿١٤﴾

Control of the heavens and earth belongs to God and He forgives whoever He will and punishes whoever He will: God is most forgiving and merciful [14] (The Quran, *al-Fath*: 14)

The scholars of rhetoric say that the reason the word ‘Allah’ comes first before ‘the dominion of the heavens and the earth,’ (*al-Fath*: 14) is to emphasise that it belongs to Allah Alone and exclusively without any associate. So ‘to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth,’ (*al-Fath*: 14) is a signal for us to reflect on the wonders of the heavens and the earth in themselves.

And He then says: ‘He forgives whom He wills and punishes whom He wills’ (*al-Fath*: 14). Some people understand this verse incorrectly, saying ‘Then what is the point of free will?’ But the meaning is that Allah *Glorified is He* forgives the believer who follows His guidance, and He does not forgive the disbeliever who rejects His guidance. So, when He says ‘Allah does not guide those who disbelieve,’ this means that He declines to guide them because of their disbelief because the heart of the disbeliever is filled with disbelief and there is no room in it for faith as two things cannot be in the same place at once. He must therefore first remove the disbelief from his heart before considering the matter of faith.

If he removes the desire from his heart and discusses the matter with himself, comparing faith to disbelief and then accepting whichever of them seems best to him, he will inevitably choose faith. Therefore, we say that the disbeliever does not give himself any chance to engage in proper rational enquiry.

And read what He says: ‘Say, ‘I only advise you of one [thing] - that you stand for Allah, [seeking truth] in pairs and individually, and then give thought.’ There is not in your companion any madness,’ (*Saba*: 46).

The True Lord *Glorified is He* does not want us to engage in chaotic thought or fruitless debate, so He tells us that the proper way to reflect, meditate and examine is to discuss the matter alone with yourself, or with one other person at the most, each speaking and responding to the other, far from any argument or partisan bickering, both close to reaching the truth.

Although the verse speaks about both forgiveness and suffering, it ends with mention of forgiveness and grace, since they are dominant: ‘And ever is Allah Forgiving and Merciful’ (*al-Fath*: 14).

سَيَقُولُ الْمُخَلَّفُونَ إِذَا انْطَلَقْتُمْ إِلَى مَغَانِمَ لِتَأْخُذُوهَا ذَرُونَا نَتَّبِعْكُمْ
يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُبَدِّلُوا كَلِمَ اللَّهِ قُلْ لَنْ تَتَّبِعُونَا كَذَلِكُمْ قَالَ اللَّهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ
فَسَيَقُولُونَ بَلْ تَحْسُدُونَنَا بَلْ كَانُوا لَا يَفْقَهُونَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٥﴾

When you [believers] set off for somewhere that promises war gains, those who [previously] stayed behind will say, ‘Let us come with you.’ They want to change God’s words, but tell them [Prophet], ‘You may not come with us: God has said this before.’ They will reply, ‘You begrudge us out of jealousy.’ How little they understand! [15] (The Quran, *al-Fath*: 15)

Again, the True Lord *Glorified is He* predicts what those who stayed behind will say; and the booty they desired was the booty of Khaybar, saying: ‘Let us follow you’ (*al-Fath*: 15), that is, so that we can take the spoils just as you will take them. ‘They wish to change the words of Allah,’ (*al-Fath*: 15) meaning they wish to change His ruling forbidding them to go. The True Lord *Glorified is He* made this clear when He said: ‘And if they had intended to go forth, they would have prepared for it [some] preparation. But Allah disliked their being sent, so He kept them back, and they were told, ‘Remain [behind] with those who remain. Had they gone forth with you, they would not have increased you except in confusion, and they would have been active among you, seeking [to cause] you fitnah. And among you are avid listeners to them. And Allah is knowing of the wrongdoers.’ (*at-Tawba*: 46-47)

The meaning of ‘the Word of Allah,’ (*al-Fath*: 15) here is His ruling that they would not be permitted to go out to Khaybar; and Allah’s Ruling cannot

be annulled, and His Word cannot be rebuffed. Allah *Glorified is He* gave them another chance later on, permitting them to fight in the Wars of Apostasy.

The response to them then comes: ‘Never will you follow us. Thus, did Allah say before’ (*al-Fath*: 15), that is, before we returned. So, they will say, ‘Rather, you envy us’ (*al-Fath*: 15). Indeed, they understand only a little, for it is not an issue of war-booty.

قُلْ لِلْمُخَلَّفِينَ مِنَ الْأَعْرَابِ سَتُدْعُونَ إِلَى قَوْمٍ أُولَىٰ بِأَمْرِ شَدِيدٍ
تَقْنَلُونَهُمْ أَوْ يُسَلِّمُونَ فَإِنْ تَطِيعُوا يُؤْتِكُمُ اللَّهُ أَجْرًا حَسَنًا وَإِنْ
تَتَوَلَّوْا كَمَا تَوَلَّيْتُمْ مِنْ قَبْلُ يُعَذِّبْكُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٦﴾

Tell the desert Arabs who stayed behind, ‘You will be called to face a people of great might in war and to fight them, unless they surrender: if you obey, God will reward you well, but if you turn away, as you have done before, He will punish you heavily [16]’
(The Quran, *al-Fath*: 16)

That is, ‘Oh you who did not set out alongside the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to perform the pilgrimage of Hudaibiyya, Allah has forbidden you from going to Khaybar because there are other people who deserve to go ahead of you, namely those who obeyed the Prophet Muhammad in going out to Hudaibiyya.

As for you, your opportunity will come in the Wars of Apostasy, wherein you will fight people ‘[face] a people of great military might,’ (*al-Fath*: 16) men of strength and skill in warfare, ‘but if you turn away as you turned away before,’ (*al-Fath*: 16) at Hudaibiyya, ‘He will punish you with a painful punishment’ (*al-Fath*: 16).

لَيْسَ عَلَى الْأَعْمَى حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْأَعْرَجِ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرِيضِ حَرَجٌ وَمَنْ يُطِيعِ اللَّهَ
 وَرَسُولَهُ يُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ يُعَذِّبْهُ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٧﴾

The blind, the lame, and the sick will not be blamed.' God will admit anyone who obeys Him and His Messenger to Gardens graced with flowing streams; He will painfully punish anyone who turns away [17] (The Quran, *al-Fath*: 17)

That is, these people are not guilty of any sin or fault for not going out to fight, for they have legitimate excuses, ⁽¹⁾ and do not have the means to fight. The discourse then presents us with a comparison between the act and the reward of the act: 'And whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger' (*al-Fath*: 17) in going out to fight, 'He will admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow,' (*al-Fath*: 17) but whoever refuses to go out, 'He will punish him with a painful punishment' (*al-Fath*: 17).

لَقَدْ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ يُبَايِعُونَكَ تَحْتَ الشَّجَرَةِ
 فَعَلِمَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ فَأَنْزَلَ السَّكِينَةَ عَلَيْهِمْ وَأَثَبَهُمْ فَتْحًا قَرِيبًا ﴿١٨﴾
 وَمَغَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً يَأْخُذُونَهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَزِيزًا حَكِيمًا ﴿١٩﴾

God was pleased with the believers when they swore allegiance to you [Prophet] under the tree: He knew what was in their hearts and so He sent tranquillity down to them and rewarded them with a speedy triumph [18] And with many future gains. God is mighty and wise [19] (The Quran, *al-Fath*: 18 - 19)

This is the Pledge of Ar-Ridwan, or the Pledge of Hudaybiyya. 'He knew what was in their hearts,' (*al-Fath*: 18) the longing they had to see the *Ka 'ba* and perform the pilgrimage. 'So He sent down tranquillity upon them' (*al-Fath*: 18), i.e. stillness and tranquillity because they obeyed the command of the Prophet

(1) Ibn 'Abbas may Allah be pleased with him said that when "but if you turn away as you turned away this time, He will chastise you with grievous chastisement" (*al-Fath*: 16) was revealed, the infirm said, 'What about us, O Messenger of Allah?', and shortly afterwards "No blame attaches to the blind, nor does blame attach to the lame, nor does blame attach to the sick" (*al-Fath*: 17) was revealed. (*Al-Qurtubi, Tafsir*)

Muhammad *peace be upon him*, ‘and rewarded them with an imminent conquest,’ (*al-Fath*: 18) namely the Treaty of Hudaibiyya, which paved the way for the greatest conquest, the Conquest of Mecca. ‘And much war booty which they will take’ (*al-Fath*: 19) namely the spoils of Khaybar.

وَعَدَكُمْ اللَّهُ مَغَانِمَ كَثِيرَةً تَأْخُذُونَهَا فَعَجَّلَ لَكُمْ هَذِهِ وَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَ
النَّاسِ عَنْكُمْ وَلِتَكُونَ آيَةً لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَيَهْدِيَكُمْ صِرَاطًا مُسْتَقِيمًا ﴿٢٠﴾

He has promised you [people] many future gains: He has hastened this gain for you. He has held back the hands of hostile people from you as a sign for the faithful and He will guide you to a straight path [20] (The Quran, *al-Fath*: 20)

His words ‘and has hastened for you this,’ (*al-Fath*: 20) refer to the spoils of Khaybar. ‘And withheld the hands of people from you’ (*al-Fath*: 20), that is, He has prevented your enemies such as the Jews and others who were in the regions of Medina, by casting dread into their hearts.

وَأُخْرَى لَمْ تَقْدِرُوا عَلَيْهَا قَدْ أَحَاطَ اللَّهُ بِهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرًا ﴿٢١﴾

There are many other gains [to come], over which you have no power. God has full control over them: God has power over all things [21] (The Quran, *al-Fath*: 21)

That is, other battle-spoils, meaning the spoils of the Battle of Hunayn; Allah *Glorified is He* gave them tidings of this future event, and indeed it took place after the Conquest.

وَلَوْ قَاتَلَكُمْ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوَلَّوْا الْأَدْبَرَ ثُمَّ لَا يَجِدُونَ وَلِيًّا وَلَا نَصِيرًا ﴿٢٢﴾
سُنَّةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَنْ يَجْدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللَّهِ بُدِيلًا ﴿٢٣﴾

If the disbelievers had fought against you, they would have taken flight and found no one to protect or support them [22] such was God’s practice in the past and you will find no change in God’s practices [23] (The Quran, *al-Fath*: 22-23)

When He says ‘they would have turned their backs,’ (*al-Fath*: 22) this means that they will flee and capitulate. And this is ‘the established way of

Allah' (*al-Fath*: 23), i.e. the usual way He deals with His creatures. Allah *Glorified is He* succours the people of truth and brings the people of falsehood to ruin. 'Which has occurred before,' (*al-Fath*: 23) meaning it came to pass for all the previous communities.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي كَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ بِبَطْنِ مَكَّةَ مِنْ
بَعْدِ أَنْ أَظْفَرَكُمْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرًا ﴿٢٤﴾

In the valley of Mecca it was He who held their hands back from you and your hands back from them after He gave you the advantage over them — God sees all that you do [24]
(The Quran, *al-Fath*: 24)

'After He caused you to overcome them,' (*al-Fath*: 24) means that He succoured you against them and gave you the upper hand over them, This is the power which forced the disbelievers of Mecca to sit and negotiate with the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* for the Muslims had secured an acknowledgeable and respectable presence, and so Quraysh came to make a treaty with them.

هُمْ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَصَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ وَالْهَدَىٰ مَعْكُوفًا أَنْ
يَبْلُغَ حِمْلَهُ وَلَوْلَا رِجَالُ مُؤْمِنُونَ وَنِسَاءُ مُؤْمِنَاتٌ لَّمْ تَعْلَمُوهُمْ أَنْ تَطَؤُوهُمْ
فَتُصِيبَكُمْ مِنْهُمْ مَعَرَّةٌ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ لِيُدْخِلَ اللَّهُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ لَوْ
تَزَيَّلُوا لَعَذَّبْنَا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿٢٥﴾

They were the ones who disbelieved, who barred you from the Sacred Mosque, and who prevented the offering from reaching its place of sacrifice. If there had not been among them, unknown to you, believing men and women whom you would have trampled underfoot, inadvertently incurring guilt on their account – God brings whoever He will into His mercy – if the [believers] had been clearly separated, We would have inflicted a painful punishment on the disbelievers [25] (The Quran, *al-Fath*: 25)

The True Lord *Glorified is He* makes clear to them here the wisdom of the Treaty and the reason why they did not engage the disbelievers in fighting at

that time; ‘It is true that they barred you from the *Ka’ba* and prevented you from entering Mecca, although you were filled with longing for the House, and you had brought offerings for it with you – and the offerings proved that you had come in peace and were not seeking war, but rather had come to perform religious observances.’ ‘While the offering was prevented from reaching its place of sacrifice’ (*al-Fath*: 25). The offerings were cattle traditionally given to the poor people in the House, yet on this occasion they were ‘prevented,’ (*al-Fath*: 25) and restrained from this purpose.

Allah *Glorified is He* then reveals to us the true situation of the Meccans at that time: ‘For some of the folk of Mecca are your fellow Muslims, but they are concealing their Islam; amongst the disbelievers there are believing men and women who you do not know, and if you engage in war against the Meccans, you will kill these believers without knowing it.’ ‘And there would befall you because of them dishonour without [your] knowledge’ (*al-Fath*: 25). A grievous wrong means a serious harm; ‘And it would have been a great blemish against your names for you to kill your own brethren.’ ‘If they had been apart [from them], We would have punished those who disbelieved among them with painful punishment’ (*al-Fath*: 25). ‘Were the believers clearly distinguishable from the disbelievers, We would have punished them by your hands, and allowed you to fight them.’

إِذْ جَعَلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي قُلُوبِهِمُ الْحَمِيَّةَ حَمِيَّةَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ سَكِينَتَهُ عَلَى رَسُولِهِ وَعَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَأَلْزَمَهُمْ كَلِمَةَ التَّقْوَى وَكَانُوا أَحَقَّ بِهَا وَأَهْلَهَا وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٢٦﴾

While the disbelievers had fury in their hearts – the fury of ignorance – God sent His tranquillity down on to His Messenger and the believers and made binding on them [their] promise to obey God, for that was more appropriate and fitting for them. God has full knowledge of all things[26]
(The Quran, *al-Fath*: 26)

The True Lord *Glorified is He* makes clear to His Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* the reason why they barred him from entering Mecca

that year. It was purely a matter of rancour and the stubbornness of pagan ignorance which had taken root in the hearts of these people so that it seemed a grave thing for Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and his Companions to enter Mecca, and for them to have entered that year would have been a disgrace for the disbelievers.⁽¹⁾

‘Chauvinism,’ (*al-Fath*: 26) means rashness, delusion and haughtiness, and power is only praised or blamed according to the effect it has on a person: power is praised if it brings goodness to the one who possesses it, and it is blamed if it draws him into evil and destruction.

‘But Allah sent down His tranquillity upon His Messenger,’ (*al-Fath*: 26) meaning confidence in Allah’s succour, and acceptance of the Treaty and of the return home without entering Mecca that year. ‘And imposed upon them the word of righteousness,’ (*al-Fath*: 26) namely the tenet of monotheism; ‘and they were more deserving of it and worthy of it,’ (*al-Fath*: 26) because of their obedience of Allah *Glorified is He* and His Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*

لَقَدْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ رَسُولَهُ الرُّؤْيَا بِالْحَقِّ لَتَدْخُلَنَّ الْمَسْجِدَ الْحَرَامَ إِنْ
شَاءَ اللَّهُ ءَامِنِينَ مُحَلِّقِينَ رُءُوسَكُمْ وَمُقَصِّرِينَ لَا تَخَافُونَ فَعَلِمَ مَا لَكُمْ
تَعْلَمُوا فَبَجَلٍ مِنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ فَتَحًا قَرِيبًا ﴿٢٧﴾

God has truly fulfilled His Messenger’s vision: ‘God willing, you will most certainly enter the Sacred Mosque in safety, shaven-headed or with cropped hair, without fear!’ – God knew what you did not – and He has granted you a speedy triumph [27] (The Quran, *al-Fath*: 27)

The True Lord *Glorified is He* tells us of the yearning the Muslims had for the House, after they had been away from Mecca for such a long time, and their yearning to perform the rites of the pilgrimage and walk around the *Ka’ba*, but the stubborn disdain of pagan ignorance, together with its false

(1) This is because they said, ‘They have killed our sons and our brothers, and now they will enter our very houses! By Lat and by ‘Uzza, they shall never enter them!’ (*Al-Qurtubi, Tafsir*)

delusion in its own power, came between them and what they wanted. When the True Lord *Glorified is He* speaks about this matter, He speaks about it as though it was a vision which occurred before the events actually came to pass; and as you know, a vision is what a sleeping person sees – and it might be true, or it might not.

The Noble Quran also speaks about visions in the story of Yusuf (Joseph) *peace be upon him*: '[Of these stories mention] when Joseph said to his Father, 'O my Father, indeed I have seen [in a dream] eleven stars and the sun and the moon; I saw them prostrating to me' (*Yusuf*: 4).

The orientalist have objected to this verse and the rhetorical style of the Noble Quran because it repeats the words: 'I saw them prostrate themselves before me!' (*Yusuf*: 4)

But the one who reflects on the story and its details will find that this is not repetition because each verb has its own meaning and purpose. In the first, he said: 'I have seen [in a dream] eleven stars and the sun and the moon,' (*Yusuf*: 4), but did not say 'prostrate themselves'; and then the second time, he says: 'I saw them prostrating to me' (*Yusuf*: 4). This means that there were two separate visions. In the first vision, he saw them in their usual form, not prostrating, and then after that he saw them prostrating. You could not tell if the sun was prostrating, for example, unless you first of all saw it in its usual form, and then it prostrated.

So, the vision must have been repeated once without the prostration and once with it, which means that they prostrated all of a sudden before him. If he had said, 'I saw them prostrate themselves' right from the start, we would say, 'How?' Because prostration starts from a position of stillness and then takes form. The True Lord *Glorified is He* does not use a word unless it has a specific purpose meaning to convey and a necessary reason for being there.

When Yusuf (Joseph) *peace be upon him* told his Father of this vision: 'He said, 'O my son, do not relate your vision to your brothers or they will contrive against you a plan' (*Yusuf*: 5). Ya'qub (Jacob) *peace be upon him* knew that this vision meant that Yusuf (Joseph) *peace be upon him* would be raised above his brothers; and if they resented him because his Father cared for him, or showed more affection to him, then what would they do if he told them of

this vision? What would they do if they knew that the celestial bodies had prostrated before him?

And here, too, there is mention of a vision: 'Certainly has Allah showed to His Messenger the vision in truth' (*al-Fath: 27*). This implies that the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had seen a vision, which was: 'You will surely enter *Al-Masjid Al-Haram*, if Allah wills, in safety, with your heads shaved and [hair] shortened, not fearing [anyone]' (*al-Fath: 27*).

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* told his Companions about this vision of his, and so they felt assured that they indeed would enter Mecca and perform the pilgrimage. When the fools of Quraysh forbade them from entering Mecca, they were amazed, and objected to being barred from entering.

And 'Umar said to the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*, 'Are we not in the right? Are they not in the wrong?' He said, 'Indeed yes,' and so 'Umar said: 'Then why do we yield in such a lowly way against the honour of our religion?'

It is true that they were in the right, and they came filled with longing for the House of Worship; but had they entered Mecca by force without the sanction of its inhabitants, there would have been a battle, and this would mean that those living secretly as Muslims in Mecca would have been hurt, as the previous verse explained.

Therefore, the True Lord *Glorified is He* then says: 'He knew what you did not know' (*al-Fath: 27*). The True Lord *Glorified is He* showed His Prophet the vision, and He showed the truth of it; but it has not yet happened, for Allah *Glorified is He* knows the truth of the matter even if you do not know it, and therefore He has postponed the minor pilgrimage this year, and made the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* agree to a treaty with the disbelievers of Mecca that the Muslims shall be allowed to perform the minor pilgrimage next year.

And read what He says: 'You will surely enter *Al-Masjid Al-Haram*, if Allah wills' (*al-Fath: 27*). He did not specify when this would be, so if anyone says, 'Did you not say that we would perform the minor pilgrimage and enter the Sacred Mosque?' He may say to them, 'Not necessarily this year.'

The one who reflects on the wording of the verse will find that this is what it implies, and that the minor pilgrimage would not be performed that year. We can infer this from the words: ‘with your heads shaved and [hair] shortened, not fearing [anyone]’ (*al-Fath*: 27). For had you entered Mecca without the permission and consent of Quraysh, this security would not have been given you, for they would have fought you and aggressed against you; and even if they had let you enter, they would not have been able to bear seeing you walking around the *Ka’ba*, and they would inevitably have fallen under the spell of the stubborn disdain of pagan ignorance.

He then says: ‘not fearing [anyone]’ (*al-Fath*: 27). This is another assurance of security, referring to the time after the rites of the pilgrimage are finished; for once someone entered the Sanctuary to perform the rites, Quraysh would not touch them, but they would attack them as soon as they finish their rites.

His Words ‘without any fear,’ (*al-Fath*: 27) indicate that they would be safe both at the start of the pilgrimage and the end of it, and this could only be the case if they entered with the consent and permission of Quraysh.

Concerning the words ‘vision in truth,’ (*al-Fath*: 27) as long as Allah *Glorified is He* showed him the vision, it would inevitably be borne out in reality because the visions of the prophets are always true. The prophethood of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* began with true visions, and for six months he continued to receive these visions.

And if we compare this with the 23 years his mission lasted, we find that it is one 46th; and this explains why the Noble Ḥadīth says that true visions are one forty-sixth of prophethood.⁽¹⁾ Prophethood begins with true visions because they come when the person is asleep, having no particular thoughts or desires.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘and has arranged before that a conquest near [at hand]’ (*al-Fath*: 27). He ordained, after the Truce of Hudaibiyya and their return home without having performed the pilgrimage, a victory soon to come for Islam and the Muslims. It was a victory for several reasons: Firstly, it resulted in an armistice and truce with Quraysh which gave an opportunity for

(1) Related by Al-Bukhari (6474) and Muslim (4203) on the authority of Abu Hurayra may Allah be pleased with him

the call to be spread outside Mecca, for the Muslims could do this freely without worrying about attacks from Quraysh.

This also means that they acknowledged Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and his call, and respected the covenant made with him; so, Islam had become notable after having been an object of persecution.

Moreover, this treaty gave dignity to the Muslims, and do not think that when Quraysh bar you from entering the Sacred Mosque, this is an honour for them. Never, for in Allah's sight all honour and dignity are found in being conscious of Allah *Glorified is He* not in tyranny or false delusions of strength.

In this treaty, the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* gave us a lesson in good polity; for he accepted to make this treaty with the disbelievers, and to return home with his companions without entering Mecca that year despite how close they were to it because this was good for the Muslims and for Islam. In the course of making the pact, He *peace and blessings be upon him* agreed to things which no one could have guessed he would agree to.

For when they came to write the treaty down, the Prophet dictated to 'Ali *may Allah be pleased with him* who served as the scribe: 'This is what has been agreed by Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah.' Suhayl ibn 'Amr said, 'If we believed you were the Messenger of Allah, we would not have fought you, and we would not be here now.' So the Messenger of Allah said to 'Ali, 'Write instead, 'Muhammad ibn 'Abdullah,' deferring to Suhayl's opinion, but 'Ali *may Allah be pleased with him* objected to this and insisted on writing 'The Messenger of Allah', so the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* said to him, 'Write it, for you shall have to endure it one day, too.'

Indeed, the years passed and the dispute arose between 'Ali and Mu'awiya *may Allah be pleased with them*. When they came to make a treaty, 'Ali said, 'Write: This is what has been agreed by 'Ali ibn Abu Taleb, the Commander of the Faithful,' but they objected to the title 'Commander of the Faithful', and said, 'If we believed you were that, we would not have fought you.' So he accepted this, and wrote only his name.⁽¹⁾ And this was a miraculous sign of prophethood.

(1) *At-Tabari, Ar-Riyad An-Nadira*

In addition, when the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings upon him* dictated the word ‘In the Name of Allah, The Most Merciful, The Bestower of Mercy’ at the start of the document, they refused to write it because they did not know this formula, and they insisted it be phrased: ‘In Your Name, O Allah’; and the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings upon him* assented to this as well.

These were all concessions which the Messenger of Allah made, and he did so for the good of Islam and the Muslims, in light of Allah’s words: ‘He knew what you did not know,’ (*al-Fath*: 27). And the outcome was: ‘and has arranged before that a conquest near [at hand]’ (*al-Fath*: 27). And indeed, after this treaty, the conquests came one after another, for they were safe from the Quraysh’s harm for ten years.

هُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ الْحَقِّ
لِيُظْهِرَهُ عَلَى الدِّينِ كُلِّهِ وَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ شَهِيدًا

**It was He who sent His Messenger, with guidance and
the religion of Truth, for him to show that it is above
all [false] religion. God suffices as a witness [28]
(The Quran, *al-Fath*: 28)**

‘Guidance’ (*al-Fath*: 28) means directions along the path of goodness which leads to the destination that pleases the one who reaches it in this life and the next. The Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was sent with guidance to all mankind, and he showed them all the way; and those who follow his guidance will be given aid and extra guidance by Allah: ‘And those who are guided - He increases them in guidance and gives them their righteousness,’ (*Muhammad*: 17). And those who decline to follow his guidance and choose error instead will be increased in error by Allah *Glorified is He* who will set a seal on their hearts.

We gave the example to illustrate this before of the traffic policeman who gives you directions: if you listen to him and follow his directions, he might do even more for you and accompany you until you get to your destination; but if you reject his advice, he will leave you to the difficulties of the road, and he might even see you go the wrong way but not tell you so because you would not listen to him if he did.

And when The Noble Quran speaks about guidance; it says: 'Those are upon [right] guidance from their Lord' (*al-Baqara*: 5). This concept corrects the mistaken understanding which some have, thinking that guidance is a burden for the one who follows it to bear, giving him difficult responsibilities and restraining his freedom.

But this is not what guidance is, as it is a vehicle which transports you to your goal. Although the religion appears to restrict your movement, it restricts it for your own good, and it stands in the way of your passions for your own good.

The religion might hold your hand back from stealing, but it holds back everyone else's hands from stealing from you and when it commands you to lower your gaze from people's womenfolk, He commands everyone else to lower their gazes from your womenfolk. So, you are the one who wins. The religion restricts your motions towards a fleeting passion in this life so that it can give you lasting bliss in the Hereafter.

His words 'and the religion of truth,' (*al-Fath*: 28) means Islam, and the truth is the constant thing which never changes. 'To prevail it over all religion,' (*al-Fath*: 28) means to make His religion and His word ascendant over all the religions which came before it because the Noble Quran came to encompass and determine the truth of all other scriptures, as Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], the Book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture and as a criterion over it' (*al-Ma'ida*: 48).

The prevailing here is one of proofs, arguments and the perfect teachings of the religion. This does not prevent the existence of other religions which still exist even today, fourteen centuries after the coming of Islam.

We were asked this question on one of our travels, and we said that it does not mean that everyone will be Muslim because this prevailing will be a prevailing of teachings; and this has indeed happened by your own admission, for the issues of life have driven you to adopt Islam's teachings whenever your problems could not be solved in any other way.

We see that they adopted, for example, the Islamic attitude towards divorce; and this was a victory for the religion because they adopted its teachings even

without believing in it; and likewise in the matter of polygamy; they used to attack it and criticise it, but now they are adopting it. What is strange is that they accept for a man to have several girlfriends, but not several wives; and this is a corruption of nature and behaviour which no sound law tolerates.

Likewise when it comes to economic matters, their great economist Keynes stated that money cannot perform its proper social function unless interest rates are at zero, and this is just what Islam says which is why it prohibits usury; for usury is a transaction between rich and poor. A rich person who has enough excess wealth to lend it, and a poor person who has nothing at all and so has to borrow – so how could we ask the poor person, who does not even possess the basic amount loaned, to give the rich person this amount and then even more?

Suppose that the poor person takes the money to invest it in a business venture, but this venture fails. He will then be required to pay back the capital, plus the interest, in addition to all the effort he put into this venture which has all gone to waste.

So how many misfortunes have beset him? Forbidding usury, therefore, firstly considers what is best for the poor person. It also does what is best for the rich person when all things are considered because while he is wealthy and able to loan, he is only giving consideration to his present state of wealth – but things might change, and the rich man might become poor and in need of a loan himself. So, it is not in his interest to deal in usury.

And His words ‘...and none can bear witness [to the truth] as Allah does’ (*al-Fath*: 28) mean that His testimony is sufficient, for when a witness testifies, he only testifies as to what he has seen, and his vision is limited; but when Allah testifies, this is a testimony of complete and all-encompassing knowledge which cannot be changed by anyone. But what is it that He ‘bears witness’ to? They say that He bears witness that the one who follows His guidance will go to paradise, the abode of constant bliss without end, and favour without cease.

مُحَمَّدٌ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ أَشِدَّاءُ عَلَى الْكُفَّارِ رُحَمَاءُ بَيْنَهُمْ تَرَاهُمْ رُكَّعًا سُجَّدًا يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا
 مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانًا سِيمَاهُمْ فِي وُجُوهِهِمْ مِمَّنْ أَثَرُ السُّجُودِ ذَلِكَ مَثَلُهُمْ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَمَثَلُهُمْ فِي
 الْإِنْجِيلِ كَزَرْعٍ أَخْرَجَ شَطْأَهُ فَفَازَرَهُ فَاسْتَغْلَظَ فَاسْتَوَى عَلَى سُوقِهِ يُعْجِبُ الزُّرَّاعَ لِيُغَيِّظَ بِهِمُ
 الْكُفَّارَ وَعَدَ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٢٩﴾

Muhammad is the Messenger of God. Those who follow him are harsh towards the disbelievers and compassionate towards each other. You see them kneeling and prostrating, seeking God's bounty and His good pleasure: on their faces they bear the marks of their prostrations. This is how they are pictured in the Torah and the Gospel: like a seed that puts forth its shoot, becomes strong, grows thick, and rises on its stem to the delight of its sowers. So God infuriates the disbelievers through them; God promises forgiveness and a great reward to those who believe and do righteous deeds [29] (The Quran, *al-Fath*: 29)

'Muhammad' *peace be upon him* is his name, and 'Allah's Apostle' is his new title, for we knew Muhammad before he was the Messenger of Allah. And the name *Muhammad* is derived from the word *hamd*, which means 'praise' meaning that people praise him, and his people praised him right from his childhood, and called him 'The Truthful, Honest One' because his life story and past amongst them had shown these to be his attributes, and shown that he was a special person amongst his peers, and no ordinary man.

And they all agreed on this even before the Message came to him, and in his childhood, they saw that he was never tainted by any of the weakness and foolishness of infancy. They saw that he tended sheep, and whilst other young shepherds like him would walk down from the hills into Mecca by night to attend late-night parties, he did not; and he once thought about going with them, but as he was going, sleep overcame him, and he did not wake up until the entertainment had finished.⁽¹⁾ It is as though Allah protected him and preserved his hearing and sight from being exposed to any of these things. And his friends were amazed because they saw that he did not join them in these

(1) Narrated in *Al-Kamil fi At-Tarikh*

activities, so they began to consider him as honest; and when they found that he never lied, it made sense for them to name him ‘The Truthful, Honest One.’

And one day, all the boys gathered to carry a heavy stone to play with it, and when it proved too heavy for them, they lifted up their garments to use them to carry it. The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* was with them, and he began to lift up his garment as they had, but he heard a voice say, ‘Your privacy, Muhammad!’ So, he was the only one of them not to expose his private parts.⁽¹⁾

And they noticed this before he reached adulthood, and they inferred from this that he was being prepared for something. And they then came to know his sound intellect and wise opinion, which was revealed when the Black Stone was moved, and the tribes of Quraysh argued about which of them would have the honour of putting the Stone back in its place, and fighting almost broke out, so they said: ‘We shall follow the judgement of the very next person who comes in.’

And it happened that the next person to come in was Muhammad, the Trustworthy, and Honest One, whose honesty no one doubted. He took off his cloak and placed the Stone on top of it, and told the representative of each tribe to take hold of a part of it and carry it, and when they reached the place in the *Ka’ba* meant for it, he picked it up himself and put it in its place. In this way, the dispute which had so riled the people was settled.⁽²⁾

So, when Allah says ‘Muhammad...’, He means: ‘This man you know, and whose honesty, trustworthiness and good character are known to you; this man who lived openly amongst you for forty years, is the Messenger of Allah whom He has chosen for His Message. So, you attested to him before I sent him to you, and as long as you attested to his good character and wise opinion before, you must believe him now.’

And The True Lord *Glorified is He* did not only purify Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in his person, He also purified his roots and kept them unblemished by any idol-worship, despite its prevalence at that time; and the scholars are agreed that none of His ancestors ever worshipped idols.

(1) *Ibn Kathir, Sira*

(2) *Ibn Kathir, Sira*

Therefore, a Qudsi Hadith states: {I continued to be passed from the loins of pure men to the wombs of pure women.}⁽¹⁾ That is, he *peace be upon him* came from a pure lineage uncontaminated by any of the wickedness of pagan ignorance.

And the story⁽²⁾ of what happened between his Father 'Abdullah and Zaynab Al-Khath 'amiyya was known all over Arabia, especially in Mecca. She saw in him beauty and radiance, and desired him to the point that she offered herself to him, whereupon he said the famous lines:

I would rather die than commit sin,

And it is clear enough what is allowed;

The honourable man preserves his dignity and religion,

And how could I do this if I yielded to your desire?

And when 'Abdullah married Amina bint-Wahb and The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* was conceived, the light which had been in his Father's face passed on to him, and when Zaynab Al-Khath 'amiyya saw him after that, she said: 'What would I want with him now, when the light which was in his face has departed?'⁽³⁾ This means that The True Lord *Glorified is He* looked after Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* personally, and protected him from the depravity of pagan ignorance, and guarded him through every stage of his life.

And then after that his Father died and he was sent to be nursed with the tribe of Banu Sa'd, and his wet-nurse witnessed the many wonders and miracles which would come to him. When she said to his fellow nurselings, 'Protect Muhammad from the sun's heat', they said: 'By Allah, mother, we never see him in its heat, for wherever he goes a cloud comes to shade him.'⁽⁴⁾ So, He attested to his person, and to his forbears, and everyone knew that he was being aided from on high.

So, His words 'Muhammad is Allah's Apostle' mean that His choice of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* as His Messenger was in accord

(1) This is narrated by many exegetes such as Al-Alusi, Ar-Razi and An-Nisapuri, without any chain of narration. It is ascribed to Ibn 'Abbas in *Fatawi Al-Azhar*.

(2) The story of 'Abdullah ibn 'Abd Al-Muttalib with Zaynab Al-Khath 'amiyya

(3) The like of it is narrated by As-Suhayli in *Ar-Rawd Al-Anaf*.

(4) Ibn Kathir, *Sira*

with your opinions, so do not then give the lie to him. And ‘Muhammad’ here is the subject of the sentence, and the predicate is ‘is Allah’s Apostle’; that is, the Muhammad who is known to you all is Allah’s Apostle, and Allah knows best where to send His Message; and so, when he was sent to you, you should have believed in him and trusted him.

And when The True Lord *Glorified is He* aided Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* with miracles, He aided him with a rational miracle, and made a distinction between a rational miracle and a cosmological miracle; for the cosmological miracle only occurs once, as we saw in the story of Prophet ‘Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* and how he spoke to the people when still in the cradle, and no one saw this miracle except for those who present when it occurred and witnessed it first-hand.

As for our case, it is information which we trust and believe because The Quran informed us of it.

But when it comes to Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* his message was universal, and set a seal on all revealed messages until the Last Hour, and therefore his miracle had to befit the universality of his message, and had to be an eternal, lasting miracle which did not end in the instant it came.

Therefore, The Quran came as a miracle which would last as long as The Message lasted even until the Last Hour and since The Message was sent down, we have recited ‘Muhammad is Allah’s Apostle’, and it will continue to be recited until the Last Hour; Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is Allah’s Apostle, by the proof of this miraculous Quran.

And therefore, Allah says: ‘Behold, it is We Ourselves who have bestowed from on high, step by step, this reminder: and, behold, it is We Who shall truly guard it [from all corruption].’ (*al-Hijr*: 9) The True Lord *Glorified is He* took it upon Himself to guard The Quran, unlike the scriptures which came before it, where He assigned the role of guarding them to their followers and those who believed in them, as He says: ‘...and so did the [early] men of Allah and the rabbis, inasmuch as some of Allah’s book had been entrusted to their care...’ (*al-Ma’ida*: 44). The meaning of ‘entrusted to their care’ is that they were asked to guard them as a religious responsibility from Allah, and responsibilities

can be obeyed or disobeyed, and we have seen that they did not guard them, but rather, they altered them, changed them, and forgot much of them.

As for The Quran, it is still the same now as it was when Allah revealed it to the heart of His Messenger *peace be upon him* because Allah guarded it Himself, and did not trust mankind to guard it.

And a clear example of how Allah guarded the Quran is that He subdued men to guard it who do not even believe in it, for many of those who print the Quran and decorate it nowadays are not Muslims; we saw how a German man printed the whole Quran on a single page, and did not even do this with the Gospel, his own scripture.

So, we say that The Messenger's past history showed his people how worthy he was to bear a divine message, and therefore many of those who heard that he *peace be upon him* had been sent as a prophet were quick to believe in him even before they heard a single verse of the Quran. Why? Because they took their past experiences of him as proof that he was telling the truth for they had never known him to lie even once, and the one who does not lie about other people will certainly not lie about Allah, the Lord of all people.

And we saw Abu Bakr As-Siddiq *may Allah be pleased with him* take this same stance after the events of the Night Journey and Ascension, for when he heard that The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* claimed he had been taken to Jerusalem, he said, 'If he said it, he spoke the truth.'⁽¹⁾

As for the miracle, it came for those who denied his message, to those who did not believe, and to those who accused the Quran of being a lie and an invention. So the Quran said to them: '...Produce, then, a chapter of similar merit...' (*Yunus*: 38), that is, invent it yourself.

'...And those who are [truly] with him...' (*al-Fath*: 29), that is, those who believe in him and are truly with him both personally and religiously, and He says that those people are '...firm and unyielding towards all deniers of the truth, [yet] full of mercy towards one another...' (*al-Fath*: 29); so they combine one thing and its opposite: firmness and mercy.

(1) Narrated by Al-Hakim (4381) on the authority of 'A'isha *may Allah be pleased with her*

This is proof that the believer does not have a single nature which rules him, but rather, he changes in conformity with the responsibilities that come to him from his Lord *the Most High*: with enemies, you find that he is strong and firm towards them, showing him that the believer never yields, and with his fellow believers, he is merciful and compassionate towards them. And the Quran expresses this differently elsewhere, saying: ‘...humble towards the believers, proud towards all who deny the truth...’ (*al-Ma‘ida*: 54). The way of faith is what determines the believer’s conduct and directs it; and this is what we saw in fact in the actions of both Abu Bakr and ‘Umar *may Allah be pleased with them*.

Despite the kindness and mildness for which Abu Bakr *may Allah be pleased with him* was known, when the Apostasy occurred after The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* passed away, we saw that he cast off this mild disposition and was as firm as can be. And he said to ‘Umar *may Allah be pleased with him*: ‘By Allah, if they deny me a single penny (of poor-due) which they used to give to The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* I shall fight them for it.’ And he chided ‘Umar, saying: ‘After being a tyrant in the pagan days, have you become a weakling in Islam?’⁽¹⁾

And the one who reflects on the story of the Apostasy will see that the situation demanded harshness and firm resolve, for otherwise it would have spread, especially among those whose faith was weak and those who were new to Islam; and this is why Abu-Bakr *may Allah be pleased with him* changed from his usual mild disposition to a firm one.

Allah then says: ‘...You can see them bowing down, prostrating themselves [in prayer], seeking favour with Allah and [His] goodly acceptance...’ (*al-Fath*: 29). So despite this firmness they show to the disbelievers, you can see them bowing down and prostrating themselves. Bowing and prostrating are successive stages by which total servitude to Allah is proclaimed, for when you bow you move from a standing position to one in which you incline towards Allah, and then prostrating is greater than bowing because you fall right down to the ground and press your forehead against it, placing the most noble feature of your body against the floor in humility, submission and subservience to Allah *Glorified is He*.

(1) Narrated by As-Suyuti, A-Bayhaqi, Al-Hindi and Adh-Dhahabi

Therefore, we said that bowing and prostration express total servitude to Allah and this is what we can infer from Iblis's words, of which The Quran tells us: 'And shall most certainly fall upon them openly as well as in a manner beyond their ken, and from their right and from their left...' (*al-A'raf*: 17). He did not mention the other two directions here, i.e. from above and from below. Why not? Because 'above' implies the loftiness of divinity and we raise our hands when we supplicate Allah; and 'below' implies the humility of servitude when we prostrate on our foreheads, and humble ourselves before Allah; therefore, Satan cannot come from these two directions.

And when He says, '...seeking favour with Allah and [His] goodly acceptance...' (*al-Fath*: 29), this is the reason why they are firm and unyielding towards the disbelievers and merciful towards one another, and why they are keen to bow down and prostrate themselves; that is, they do all of this out of desire for Allah's favour, and hope for His goodly acceptance.

And this is the peak of sincerity in action, for they act solely for Allah's sake, and they seek nothing else. Why? Because they always bear in the mind the Day when they will stand before Allah, and when no one but Allah will judge them and requite them.

Therefore, we said that the scientists and inventors who served mankind with their good deeds will receive no share of the good of the Hereafter because they did not work for Allah, but only for humanity and civilisation.

Therefore, Allah said about them: 'But as for those who are bent on denying the truth, their [good] deeds are like a mirage in the desert which the thirsty supposes to be water – until when he approaches it, he finds that it was nothing: instead, he finds [that] Allah [has always been present] with him, and [that] He will pay him his account in full – for Allah is swift in reckoning!' (*an-Nur*: 39) He will be shocked to find The True God, who was never on his mind, will be The One Who judges him, and who requites him.

And another of the signs of these believers is that '...their marks are on their faces, traced by prostration...' (*al-Fath*: 29). Their distinctive sign is the mark which prostration leaves on a man's face, which we call in Arabic *zabibat as-salat*, (the prayer's raisin).

The Creator *Glorified is He* did not create all mankind in a single mould, but rather, every person has his own mould, which is not identical to any other mould, despite how many people there are. This shows His omnipotent power of creation. People all have different heights, breadths, colours, features, and so on.

But the distinctive feature of all the believers Allah describes here is that ‘...their marks are on their faces, traced by prostration...’ (*al-Fath*: 29), and this sign is accompanied by light and perceptible radiance in the face of the believer – and {the nearest a servant ever is to his Lord is when he prostrates.}⁽¹⁾

And many of us experience pleasure when we prostrate, and feel the warmth of Allah’s company, and become used to it so that the mark appears on their foreheads in addition to the light and illumination which shows on their faces.

And you can observe this if you compare a man who spends the night engaged in drinking, depravity, and wantonness, and another who spends the night worshipping Allah and praising Him.

And these faces will come forth like this: ‘Some faces will on that Day be bright with happiness, [38] laughing, rejoicing at glad tidings. [39] And some faces will on that Day with dust be covered, [40] with darkness overspread: [41] these, these will be the ones who denied the truth and were immersed in iniquity! [42]’ (*Abasa*: 38-42)

And we can observe this image, and see it beginning in this worldly life even before the Hereafter. Allah then says: ‘...This’, i.e. the attributes of those who believe alongside Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* which have just been mentioned, namely: ‘...firm and unyielding towards all deniers of the truth, [yet] full of mercy towards one another. You can see them bowing down, prostrating themselves [in prayer], seeking favour with Allah and [His] goodly acceptance: their marks are on their faces, traced by prostration...’ (*al-Fath*: 29) these attributes are ‘their parable in the Torah.’ (*al-Fath*: 29) This is how the Torah describes them, as though the Torah contained a mention and a parable of those believers who would believe in Muhammad, The Final Messenger *peace be upon him* because the Torah gave the glad tidings of his coming.

(1) Narrated by Muslim (744), Abu -Dawud (741), An-Nasa’i (1125) and Ahmad (9083), on the authority of Abu-Hurayra may Allah be pleased with him

As for The Gospel, it described them with other attributes as well as these: '...as well as their parable in the Gospel: [they are] like a seed that brings forth its shoot, and then He strengthens it so that it grows stout, and [in the end] stands firm upon its stem, delighting the sowers...' (*al-Fath*: 29).

So, The Gospel described these believers with a parable of the seed which brings forth 'its shoot', i.e. its branches, and the shoot is the highest part of the stem or the ear; 'so that it grows stout', i.e. the stem becomes strong and full, 'and [in the end] stands firm upon its stem' meaning that it becomes full-grown, 'delighting the sowers' with its firmness and straightness, '...so that through them He might confound the deniers of the truth...' (*al-Fath*: 29).

And if you compare these two parables, you will see that the first parable in the Torah is concerned with the spiritual element, mentioning attributes which are all connected with moral and spiritual values; the followers of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* are firm and unyielding towards the disbelievers and merciful towards one other, and they bow down and prostrate themselves seeking their Lord's favour and goodly acceptance, and their marks are on their faces, traced by prostration. These are all moral and spiritual values, with no connection to any material concepts at all.

As for their parable in The Gospel, it is material in form, and contains no spiritual or moral concepts at all. Why is this? They say it is because the Jews were a people of extreme materialism, and could not be convinced by anything besides it.

And whilst they were wandering in the wilderness and Allah ordained that their food would be manna and quails, a sweet and delicious food which came to them without any effort on their part, descending upon them without the need for them to work, yet they were not satisfied with it because it was mysterious and they did not know where it came from, so they asked Allah to provide them with the things which grow from the earth, such as its herbs, its cucumbers, its garlic, its lentils and its onions; that is, things they could plant with their own hands and produce themselves.

And they even wanted their relationship to Allah *Glorified is He* to be material in nature, for they said to Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*: '...O Musa,

indeed we shall not believe thee until we see Allah face to face...' (*al-Baqara*: 55) yet, The True Lord *Glorified is He* is Unseen: 'No human vision can encompass Him, whereas He encompasses all human vision...' (*al-An'am*: 103).

And we will see Him *Glorified is He* in the Hereafter because we shall be created in a different way there which will allow us to experience this honour so that we will be able to see Him. In this world, however, we cannot do so; for Allah has not refused to manifest Himself before His creation, but in this worldly life we do not have the power to bear this manifestation.

This concept is clearly shown in the story of Prophet Musa *peace be upon him* when he said to his Lord *the Most High*: 'O my Lord! Show [Yourself] unto me so that I might behold You!' (*al-A'raf*: 143) And the reply was: '...Said [Allah]: 'Never can you see Me. However, behold this mountain: if it remains firm in its place, then – only then – will you see Me...' (*al-A'raf*: 143). And this means that another being could possibly have seen Him. '...And as soon as his Lord revealed His glory to the mountain, He caused it to crumble to dust; and Moses fell down in a swoon...' (*al-A'raf*: 143). So, when our Lord showed Himself to the mountain, the mountain crumbled; so how would it be if He showed Himself to man? And Musa *peace be upon him* saw the mountain crumbling, so he fell down and swooned in dread at what he saw happen to the object of the manifestation.

We say that because of how materialistic they were, Allah gave them a parable which was concerned solely with moral and spiritual values, as though the Torah mentioned the attributes that Muhammad's followers would have which the followers of the Torah lacked, saying to them: 'You are too materialistic, and I will send forth a prophet whose community shall establish the spiritual and moral values which you lack.'

As for the Christians, they were overly spiritual, and the Gospel is entirely composed of spiritual and moral concepts; and therefore, when Prophet 'Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* was asked about the issue of inheritance, he said, 'I was not sent to distribute inheritance.'

And this difference between the Torah and the Gospel made the Jews and Christians agree on one book, a mixture of the Torah and The Gospel so that they would have both the material and the spiritual side, and they call this

'The Bible', agreeing on it despite the enmity and difference which exist between them.

And because The Gospel is this way, the parable of the believers there was given in an entirely materialistic form, for this is something which The Gospel lacks, and it does not contain any discourse about social interactions and the motions of life. So, each of these parables came to compensate for something which was missing: the Jews lacked spirituality, and the Christians lacked the material values required by the motions of life.

Let us now stop to consider Allah's words '...so that through them He might confound the deniers of the truth...' (*al-Fath*: 29). This indicates that our material advances, and our attaining to firmness and self-sufficiency, are something which confounds the disbelievers; so, do not let them get ahead of you in this regard. If they get ahead of you in this regard, they will humiliate you, and hold sway over you, and use the advantage they have over you to dominate you.

And unfortunately, this is just what happened, for we have come to need them for most of the products we use, even the food we live on, and they have done all kinds of things to us; there is no strength nor power except with Allah. It is as though The True Lord *Glorified is He* were saying to us: 'O you who believe in Muhammad and have accepted Allah as your Lord, Islam as your religion, and Muhammad as your prophet, you must take both sides into consideration: the material side that which gives you prominence and aids you in life's motions, and the spiritual side that which protects you from error and rectifies your religious and worldly life; for your parable in the Torah was based on spiritual and moral values, and your parable in The Gospel was based on material values.'

Therefore, Islam came to compliment material science, not to oppose it, and The Quran is full of discourse about natural phenomena. If you like, read these verses and reflect on them: 'Are you not aware that Allah sends down water from the skies whereby We bring forth fruits of many hues – just as in the mountains there are streaks of white and red of various shades, as well as [others] raven-black, [27] and [as] there are in men, and in crawling beasts, and in cattle, too, many hues? Of all His servants, only such as are endowed with

[innate] knowledge stand [truly] in awe of Allah: [for they alone comprehend that,] verily, Allah is Almighty, Most Forgiving. [28]' (*Fatir*: 27-28).

All the genera of existence are mentioned here: man, animals, plants, and minerals. And the words 'such as are endowed with [innate] knowledge' do not mean religious scholars only; they mean all those people who have knowledge, whether religious or worldly.

It is as though The True Lord wanted to give us a religion which combined the interests of this worldly life and the Hereafter, and combined worship and the motions of life; so, do not take the religion and leave this worldly life to your enemies, lest they use it to humiliate you.

And as we said before, if a man wants his words to be heard, he must work for his own living. So, do not let your enemies outdo you in this field, for Allah's lordly bestowal is given to both the believer and the disbeliever alike, so do not leave it aside and rely only on His divine bestowal. You cannot worship Allah properly unless you partake of His lordly bestowal, and work to develop the motions of life, benefit from them, and participate in them.

We illustrated this before by giving the example of covering one's nakedness, which is obligatory and essential for worship: look at how many actions we must perform to cover our nakedness with clothes. Follow the piece of cotton from the point where the earth gives it forth to the point where it becomes clothes. So, the motions of life are what allow you to perform the motions of religion.

Allah then says: '...[But] unto such of them as may [yet] attain to faith and do righteous deeds, Allah has promised forgiveness and a reward supreme.' (*al-Fath*: 29) The words 'attain to faith' refer to the side of religion, and then 'and do righteous deeds' refer to the side of this world and the motions of life it requires.

So, beware of neglecting one side for the sake of the other; for your religion is a religion which combines spirit and material; and those who attain to faith are those who combine all these attributes, and those to whom Allah has made this promise.

Faith means belief which is firmly rooted in the soul, and which accepts no discussion because the heart is at peace with this belief and is certain that it

will bring happiness in this life and the next. The basis of faith is that you believe that Allah is Lord and Creator of the universe, and that you believe in His Names and Attributes.

And if you believe in these Attributes, your heart will be at peace with the fate and decree He sends to you, for He tests you with good things that you might give thanks, and tests you with bad things that you might have patience. Therefore you are rewarded either way.

The Arabic word for faith is *iman* which is derived from the root *amn* which means 'security' and 'peace of mind.' You say, 'I have faith in such-and-such' meaning that you believe in it with certainty that leaves no room for doubt. And when the verb is used with the proposition *li*, it means 'to trust' or 'to believe.' And the verb *ammaana* means 'to give an assurance' to someone about the future of his life. So, the meaning of this root word revolves around the notions of stability, firmness, and unshakeable constancy.

And the fruit of faith is 'righteous deeds' which means here the things He spoke of when He said: '...firm and unyielding towards all deniers of the truth, [yet] full of mercy towards one another. You can see them bowing down, prostrating themselves [in prayer], seeking favour with Allah, and [His] goodly acceptance: their marks are on their faces, traced by prostration...' (*al-Fath*: 29). And in material matters and the motions of life, they are like the plant which stands up straight on its stem, pleasing the sowers so that through them He might confound the disbelievers.

And what was promised to the believers? 'Forgiveness and a reward supreme' were promised to them. (*al-Fath*: 29) We said before that this is a cleansing before an adorning: He first forgives, and then rewards; and the legal principle says that preventing harm comes before seeking benefit.

Therefore Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...he that shall be drawn away from the fire and brought into paradise will indeed have gained a triumph...' (*Al-Imran*: 185). And to be drawn away from the fire is itself a blessing which is why the bridge to paradise crosses over the pit of hell, and everyone who crosses over it must see hell with his own eyes: 'In the end you will indeed, most surely, behold it with the eye of certainty.' (*at-Takathur*: 7)

This makes you aware of the magnificence of faith, and what a great blessing it is because it saves us from this hellfire and causes us to enter paradise; and your righteous deeds take you by the hand and guide you past this peril.

And read what Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Consider the flight of time! [1] Verily, man is bound to lose himself [2] unless he be of those who attain to faith, and do good works, and enjoin upon one another the keeping to truth, and enjoin upon one another patience in adversity. [3]’ (*al-’Asr*: 1-3) So, all mankind is in a state of loss, and not one of them is exempt from this, and none of them will be saved except those who have faith and do righteous deeds.

And the mutual enjoining of the truth mentioned here indicates the obligation of commanding what is right and forbidding what is wrong, whilst the mutual enjoining of patience indicates that this road is fraught with perils, and requires you to patiently bear the harm of those who oppose it; and advice is a heavy burden to bear.

The words ‘enjoin upon one another’ mean that every individual enjoins, and this implies the notion of constancy, determination and the lack of despair; for the opponent whom you advise might also have patience as he persists in his denial, and therefore you must have even more patience than him; and this is the meaning of Allah’s words: ‘O you who have attained to faith! Be patient in adversity, and vie in patience with one another...’ (*Al-’Imran*: 200).

And Allah’s promise is the promise which is truly constant and unchanging. Why? Because it is a promise from One Who possesses all the means of fulfilment, and nothing can prevent Him from fulfilling His promise, or get in His way, and because He *Glorified is He* is The Truth which never changes or alters – so who could come between Him and the fulfilment of His promise?

He *Glorified is He* is The One Unique God who has no partner in His dominion, and no competitor in His authority, and He is The All-Powerful, and there is no other power which can restrain him. As for the promises which human beings make, they might not be kept because no man possesses all the means to fulfil his promise, and he is subject to vicissitudes and changes.

Therefore Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...Verily, Allah does not change men’s condition unless they change their inner selves...’ (*ar-Ra’d*: 11). So we

say that The True Lord *Glorified is He* is constant and does not change for us, but we must change ourselves for Him.

And the word ‘...forgiveness...’ (*al-Fath*: 29) means that The Creator *Glorified is He* who knows His creatures best, knows that we are sinners, guilty of much forgetfulness and much ignorance, but this is all to be expected from us, and it should not make us despair of Allah’s mercy because He is The One Who created us this way, and He has pledged to forgive us, and all we have to do is ask for His forgiveness: ‘Yet withal, behold, I forgive all sins unto any who repents and attains to faith and does righteous deeds, and thereafter keeps to the right path.’ (*Ta Ha*: 82)

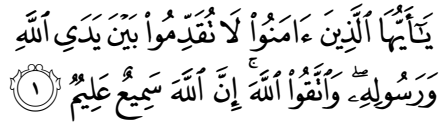
the chapter of

al-Hujurat

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Dispenser of Mercy

The chapter of *al-Hujurat* ⁽¹⁾:

The True Lord *Glorified* is He says: ⁽²⁾



**Believers, do not push yourselves forward in the
presence of God and His Messenger — be
mindful of God: He hears and knows all [1]
(The Quran, *al-Hujurat*: 1)**

You can notice the relation between these verses in the opening of the chapter of *al-Hujurat* and those at the end of the chapter of *al-Fath*. In the

-
- (1) The chapter of *al-Hujurat* is chapter 49 in the arrangement of the Noble Quran. It is a chapter revealed in Medina by consensus of the scholars of Islam, as related by Al-Qurtubi in his Quranic commentary (9/6351). It was revealed after the chapter of *al-Mujadala* and before the chapter of *at-Tahrim*. Thus, chronologically, it is the 102nd to be revealed. See “*Al-Itqan fi ‘Ulum Al-Quran*” of As-Suyuti (1/27).
- (2) The occasion for the revelation of this verse: it is related from ‘Abdullah ibn Az- Zubayr may Allah be pleased with them that a group of riders from the tribe of Banu-Tamim advanced forward to The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him upon which Abu Bakr may Allah be pleased with him stated, “Appoint Al-Qa‘qa‘ ibn-Ma‘bad their leader.” To this, ‘Umar may Allah be pleased with him stated, “No, appoint Al-Aqra‘ ibn-Habis their leader.” Abu Bakr may Allah be pleased with him responded, “You wished merely to oppose what I said,” to which ‘Umar may Allah be pleased with him replied, “I had no wish to oppose you.” They continued to dispute with each other until their voices started rising, at which point the following statement of Allah was revealed the Exalted beginning the verse: “O you who have attained to faith! Do not put yourselves forward in the presence of [what] Allah and His Apostle [may have ordained],...” (*al-Hujurat*: 1) to the verse: “for if they had the patience [to wait] until you come forth to them [of your own accord]....” (*al-Hujurat*: 5) This is related by Al-Bukhari (See “*Asbab An-Nuzul*” of Al-Wahidi, p. 218).

final verses of the chapter of *al-Fath*, The True Lord *Glorified is He* spoke to us about what took place at Hudaibiyya: how the Muslims concluded a treaty with their enemies and how the conclusion of this treaty caused a difference of opinion between The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* and those who believed in him.

In this situation, The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* alone accepted to conclude a treaty with the enemy, and accept all of their conditions, so much so that he even waived many conditions which indicated his great wisdom in handling worldly affairs demonstrating the depth of his long-term vision; whereas the believers opposed him and protested the conclusion of this treaty, as we have seen.

At the time, this opposition on the part of the believers was so acute that even 'Umar *may Allah be pleased with him* was saying to The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*: 'O Messenger of Allah, are we not upon the Truth?' 'Yes,' he replied. He then asked, 'Are they not upon falsehood?' 'Yes,' he replied. He then asked, 'Then why are we yielding in such a lowly manner against the honour of our religion?' ⁽¹⁾

We have stated previously that before they reached Medina on their way back, The True Lord *Glorified is He* informed them of the wisdom behind their returning without having performed the Lesser Pilgrimage that year. Thus, the believers were of an opinion, but The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*

(1) *This Hadith is agreed upon (related by both Imam Al-Bukhari and Imam Muslim). It is related by Al-Bukhari in his "Sahih" (Hadith 2529, 2945, and 4466), and also by Muslim in his "Sahih" (Hadith 3338) and Ahmad in his "Musnad" (Hadith 15408, 18166) from the Hadith of Al-Miswar ibn Makhrama and Marwan ibn Al-Hakam, where each narration confirms the other. Within the Hadith, it is related that 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab may Allah be pleased with him stated, "[So] I came to The Prophet of Allah peace be upon him and said, "Are you not The Prophet of Allah, in truth?" He said, "Yes, I am." Then I said, "Are we not upon the truth, and our enemies upon falsehood?" to which he replied, "Yes, it is so." I said, "Then why are we concluding an agreement with them on terms that humiliate us in our faith?" In the Hadith, it is also related that Abu Bakr may Allah be pleased with him said to him, "O You addressing The Prophet, Verily he is The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him and he is not one to disobey his Lord, Who helps and aids him to victory. So hold on to your stirrup, for by Allah, he is upon the Truth. This is the entirety of the Hadith.*

was of another view; this is because the believers were zealously interested in following their own wishes; as for The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* he was fervent first and foremost in considering the interests of Islam.

So, when this opposition to The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* took place, the chapter of *al-Hujurat* was revealed in order to deal with the matter, and the first verse that was revealed from it was: ‘O you who have attained to faith! Do not put yourselves forward in the presence of [what] Allah and His Apostle [may have ordained]...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 1).

The vocative is used here specifically for those who have believed in Allah as their Lord and have taken Islam as their religion and Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* as their Prophet and Messenger.

‘...Do not put yourselves forward in the presence of [what] Allah and His Apostle [may have ordained]...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 1) In other words, ‘Beware of putting forward an opinion or deciding upon a matter before having the permission of Allah, and before gaining the permission of His Messenger *peace be upon him* and before he decides in favour of it, for The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* does not issue an order except that it is based upon Revelation from Allah.’

Thus, when you stand in opposition to a command from The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* you are, in actual fact, opposing the command of Allah, Whom you have accepted to take as your Lord and Allah, and believed in His Attributes; thus, what is required from such faith is not to advance your opinion over and above his opinion, nor your judgement over his. If Allah or The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* commands something, do not advance a point of view in lieu of it that is from your own selves.

Furthermore, in the phrase: ‘...in the presence of [what] Allah and His Apostle [may have ordained]...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 1) the expression ‘in your presence’ means ‘in front of you.’ In other words, do not precede him in deciding upon an affair without his assent, and remember that you are in the presence of Allah, standing in front of Him. He does not oblige you with an action in order for you to swerve away from it in some other direction.

In His statement ‘...but remain conscious of Allah...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 1), He means, ‘If you wish not to put yourselves forward in the presence of what

Allah and His Messenger *peace be upon him* may have ordained, have consciousness of Allah regarding this matter.' In other words, do not be deniers of what has been commanded, and do not revert to such action again in opposition to what has been commanded, for such action is inappropriate and incorrect.

'...for, verily, Allah is All Hearing, All Knowing!' (*al-Hujurat: 1*) In other words, He means: 'Have God-Consciousness of The One to Whom these attributes belong; for He is All-Hearing, and hears everything that is said, and All Knowing, and knows of everything that stirs in your souls. Thus, nothing about any of your affairs is hidden from Him, and so long as you have believed in Him, it is incumbent upon you to obey Him and His Messenger *peace be upon him*.

The True Lord states:⁽¹⁾

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا لَا تَرْفَعُوْا اَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوْا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ
كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ اَنْ يَّحْبَطَ اَعْمَالُكُمْ وَاَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٢﴾

Believers, do not raise your voices above the Prophet's, do not raise your voice when speaking to him as you do to one another, or your [good] deeds may be cancelled out without you knowing [2] (The Quran, *al-Hujurat: 2*)

Here as well, the summon is directed towards those who have attained to faith, that they should not raise their voices above The Prophet's voice when in his presence, nor should they advance their opinions before his. Furthermore, from the proper manners of speech in general is that one should not raise one's voice at all, for there is something of a sense of superiority betrayed by the one who raises his voice in speech, or at least there is a sense of equal standing; what, then, do you think of such a situation if the person who is speaking to you is The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*?

(1) *An-Naysaburi has stated (p. 218) that this verse was revealed concerning Thabit ibn-Qays ibn-Shammas, who suffered from a hearing deficiency, and was overly loud in speech: when he would speak to anybody, he would raise his voice. Thus, perhaps he used to address The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him with his raised voice, thereby harming him, and thereafter, Allah the Exalted revealed this verse.*

Thus, it is incumbent upon you not to raise your voice above his, but rather, to keep your voice below his and lower than it, and to address him with decorum and humility, just as you would if you truly believed in him as the Prophet and Messenger of Allah, bearing the message of truth, and advanced his opinion before your own point of view.

Likewise, when you address The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* do not raise your voice over his, for it is more proper that his voice and opinion be the most prominent, for he is more deserving of being heard, and worthier of concern. Nowadays, we live in an age in our history when the popular saying ‘There is no voice to be raised above the call of war’ has become widespread, for in our times, battle and dispute is considered to be the solution to all of our problems. The meaning, then, is: no voice should be raised over his. ‘...and neither speak loudly to him, as you would speak loudly to one another...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 2). Furthermore, do not call out to The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* in the same manner that you call out to each other. Thus, we do not say, ‘Come here, O Ahmad,’ or ‘Come here, O Muhammad.’ Rather, we say, ‘O Prophet’, ‘O Messenger’ or ‘O Messenger of Allah’. For your Lord, who created you and created him and sent him to you as a messenger, addressed him in this manner

This is in contrast with the manner in which He *the Exalted* addressed all of the other messengers by their individual names: ‘O Adam’, ‘O Noah (Nuh)’, ‘O Abraham (Ibrahim)’, ‘O Moses (Musa)’ and ‘O Jesus (‘Isa)’ However, He made an exception of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and did not address him by his individual name, but rather, by his titles: ‘O Prophet’ and ‘O Messenger.’ Thus, if his Creator did not address him by his individual name, it is an obligation upon you to address him by these titles, unless you consider yourself to be occupying a higher station than The One Who Created you, May Allah save us from that!

Thereafter, in His statement ‘...lest all your [good] deeds come to nought...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 2), He means: for fear that your good deeds come to nothing, or in other words, become worthless and corrupted. Why? Because calling out to him in this manner, or raising your voice in his presence, is something that must be considered as opposing the prophetic mandate with which he came.

For The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* did not come with a method or a way that was of his own; rather, he is a bearer of a message from Allah. Thus, whoever opposes him in this message has opposed the mandate that Allah has set out for humanity, and such a person deserves to have his deeds come to nothing. Furthermore, by affronting The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* in this manner, one affront The One Who sent him as well.

In His statement ‘...without your perceiving it’ (*al-Hujurat*: 2), He means: your deeds may well come to nothing and become worthless without you realizing it. This is a matter that is amongst the subtle points of faith which one must be mindful of, for despite his being The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* with respect to the believers and benevolent and merciful towards them, when it comes to your manner of addressing him, you should never be deluded by these attributes of his such that you place him on an equal footing with anyone else; rather, you must preserve his standing, his dignity, and his esteem, and not make him out to be like yourself by addressing him in such a manner. This is like the man who spoils his servant, who thereby becomes deluded and misled by such behaviour and does not maintain the dignity and standing of his master until the matter reaches such a critical point that the master calls out to him, but he neglects to respond.

It is for this reason that we hear of the story of the Arab man who entered the area of a people whom he did not know, nor did they know him, and said, ‘Peace be upon you, O People of good manners!’ They responded, ‘And how is it that you came to know of our good manners?’ He replied, ‘I learned of your good manners from observing the bad manners of your slaves.’ In other words, they spoiled their slaves and did not punish them for their misbehaviour.

It is related by Companion Anas ibn-Malik *may Allah be pleased with him* that he said: ‘I served The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* and he never said about anything I had done, ‘Why did you do it?’ nor did he ever say about anything I had not done, ‘Why did you not do it?’⁽¹⁾

(1) *This Hadith is agreed upon by Al-Bukhari and Muslim. Al-Bukhari relates it in his “Sahih” (Hadith 5578). Muslim also relates it in his “Sahih” (Hadith 4269, 4271), as does Abu-Dawud in his “Sunnan” (Hadith 4144) and At-Tirmidhi in his “Sunnan” (Hadith 1938) where he states: “It is a Hadith that is good and sound.” It was narrated by Anas ibn-Malik may Allah be pleased with him.*

Then The True Lord *Glorified is He* states :⁽¹⁾

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَغُضُّونَ أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ امْتَحَنَ
 اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

**It is those who lower their voices in the presence of God's
 Messenger whose hearts God has proved to be aware — they
 will have forgiveness, and a great reward [3]
 (The Quran, *al-Hujurat*: 3)**



In the verse: ‘...lower their voices in the presence of Allah’s Apostle...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 3), the meaning is that they lower their voices in his presence *peace and blessings be upon him* out of reverence and esteem for him, and to honour him.

It ‘...is they whose hearts Allah has tested [and opened] to consciousness of Himself...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 3). In other words, He has purified their hearts and made them clear in order for them to serve as abodes of piety and obedience and carry the burden of the Prophetic way of The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* and take it to all of humanity; for they have been made fit and suitable for bearing this message after having their hearts cleansed and purified by Allah of all extraneous impure character traits, and cleansed from the diseases of ostentation, hypocrisy, and weakness of faith.

For the events, they have faced have smelt their hearts in the crucible of calamitous hardships such that nothing has remained in the ranks of faith except those who are strong of faith, capable of bearing the trust of this mission. For this reason, He *the Most High* has stated: ‘...Thus We have appointed you a middle nation, that you may be witnesses against mankind, and that the messenger may be a witness against you...’ (*al-Baqara*: 143).

Thus, The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* bears witness that he has conveyed the message to us, and we bear witness that we have conveyed the message to humanity.

(1) *Ibn-‘Abbas may Allah be pleased with them narrated that when His statement was revealed: “Behold, they who lower their voices in the presence of Allah’s Apostle...” (al-Hujurat: 3) Abu Bakr may Allah be pleased with him took an oath never to speak to The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him except in the manner of someone telling a secret, in an extremely low voice. (See “Asbab An-Nuzul” of Al-Wahidi, p. 219).*


 إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَنَادُونَكَ مِنَ الْهُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

 وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوا حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ إِلَيْهِمْ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

**But most of those who shout to you [Prophet] from outside
 your private rooms lack understanding [4] It would have
 been better for them if they had waited patiently for you to
 come out to them but God is all forgiving and merciful [5]
 (The Quran, *al-Hujurat*: 4 - 5)**

This verse was revealed concerning a group of people⁽¹⁾ that had had some prisoners taken; they came to consult The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* about the matter, in order to have him set free those who had been taken prisoners, but they acted mistakenly in many ways.

Firstly, they came to the house of The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* from behind, and did not approach it from the front doors. This is because they did not know which of the private apartments The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* was residing in: was he at 'A'isha's place? Or was he at Hafsa's place? Or was he at Umm Salama's place? They knew that the Messenger of Allah had many varied important duties to fulfil: he had a duty towards the people at large, a duty towards his family, and a duty, before everything else, towards his Lord.

Thus, if the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* had not appeared before them in the mosque, they should have waited until he had come out, and they should not have disturbed him, for he was most certainly fulfilling one of his many duties, and perhaps he was busy in spiritual retreat with his Lord *Glorified is He* or otherwise occupied with his family.

Secondly, they called out to the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* just as they would call out to each other, and they did not respect the sanctity of

(1) Zayd ibn Arqam may Allah be pleased with him related: "Some people came to The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* and started to call out to him while he was residing in his residence, 'O Muhammad! O Muhammad!' So Allah the Exalted revealed the verse: "Verily, [O Prophet,] as for those who call you from without thy private apartments – most of them do not use their reason: (al-Hujurat: 4). Muhammad ibn-Ishaq and others have stated: "The verse was revealed concerning some brutish men of Banu Tamim...and amongst them was Al-Aqra' ibn-Habis and 'Uyayna ibn-Hasan and Az-Zabraqan ibn-Badr and Qays ibn-'Asim (See "Asbab An-Nuzul" of Al-Wahidi, p. 219).

the person of The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* nor his standing and rank. For this reason, most of them were described as ‘those who do not use their reason,’ for utilizing one’s intellect requires behaving in a manner that is different from such conduct.

‘For if they had the patience [to wait] until you come forth to them [of your own accord], it would be for their own good...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 5). Yes, it would be for their own good, for after they had called out to him in such a disrespectful manner, and compelled him to come out, The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* released half of the prisoners, and stated: ‘By Allah, had they been patient until I had come out to meet them, I would have released all of the captives.’⁽¹⁾ He did this as a means of disciplining them for their transgressing the bounds of propriety and decorum and proper manners in their treatment of Him. ‘...Still, Allah is Most-Forgiving, Most-Merciful.’ (*al-Hujurat*: 5)

Allah did not take them to task and punish them, and The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* punished them in a manner that was commensurate with what they had done, as his anger would never be strictly for himself.

Then The True Lord *Glorified is He* says :⁽²⁾

-
- (1) This is related by Al-Qurtubi in his *Quranic commentary* (9/6361) where he states: “They had come as intercessors on behalf of the captives of Banu ‘Anbar, and The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* set free half of the captives and ransomed the other half.”
- (2) Al-Wahidi an-Naysaburi states in “*Asbab An-Nuzul*” (p. 222): “This verse was revealed concerning Al-Walid ibn- ‘Uqba ibn-Abumu ‘it, whom The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* had sent to the people of Banu Al-Mustaliq, and had considered reliable and trustworthy, but previously, there had been enmity between Al-Walid and Banu Mustaliq in the pre-Islamic Age of Ignorance. Thus, when the people of Banu Al-Mustaliq heard of his coming, and then went out to receive him, glorifying Allah and His Messenger *peace be upon him* Satan then insinuated to him that they wished to kill him, and he became afraid of them and returned upon the path that he came by, back to The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* and said to him: ‘The people of Banu Al-Mustaliq refused to pay the poor-due and wished to kill me.’ The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* became angry and made preparations to go to war with them. The news of Al-Walid’s return reached the people of Banu Al-Mustaliq, who then came to The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* and said: ‘We heard of your envoy, and thereupon we went out to receive him, honour him and to grant him our portion of the right of Allah the Exalted over us. However, he decided to return, and we feared that his turning back upon the path was due to a message that had come from you expressing your anger against us, and we seek refuge in Allah from His anger and from the anger of His messenger.’ Thereupon Allah revealed this verse.”

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَن تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا
بِجَهْلَةٍ فَتُصْحَبُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ ﴿٦﴾

Believers, if a troublemaker brings you news, check it first, in case you wrong others unwittingly and later regret what you have done [6] (The Quran, *al-Hujurat*: 6)

Again, the summons is directed towards those who have attained to faith. This is the third summons after: ‘O you who have attained to faith! Do not put yourselves forward in the presence of [what] Allah and His Apostle [may have ordained]...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 1) and after: ‘O you who have attained to faith! Do not raise your voices above the voice of The Prophet...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 2).

In this instance, the verse is as follows: ‘O You who have attained to faith! If any iniquitous person comes to you with a [slandorous] tale, use your discernment...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 6).

We note that the arrangement of these verses in the Quran is such that it did not join all these three matters together in one summons, nor did it employ particles of conjunction to link them together; rather, it specified each matter with a separate, special summons in order to express an exceeding degree of emphasis and importance.

Thus, in the counsel of Luqman to his son, he stated: ‘...“O my dear son! Do not ascribe divine powers to aught beside Allah: for, behold, such [a false] ascribing of divinity is indeed an awesome wrong!”’ (*Luqman*: 13)

He also stated: “O my dear son! Be constant in prayer, and enjoin the doing of what is right and forbid the doing of what is wrong, and bear in patience whatever [ill] may befall you: this, behold, is something to set one’s heart upon! [17] “And turn not your cheek away from people in [false] pride, and walk not haughtily on earth: for, behold, Allah does not love anyone who, out of self-conceit, acts in a boastful manner.” [18] “Hence, be modest in your bearing, and lower thy voice: for, behold, the ugliest of all voices is the [loud] voice of donkeys...’[19]’ (*Luqman*: 17-19).

Thus, he specified each matter that was related to an aspect of faith with a distinct summons in order to emphasize its importance, and he joined the acts

of the limbs together in one summons, for they all occupy the same level of importance in the Islamic religion.

Therefore, we are able to understand from the repetition of the vocative expression ‘O you who have attained faith’ that He is giving special importance to each summons. Furthermore, in the verse: ‘...If any iniquitous person (*fasiq*) comes to you with a [slandorous] tale...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 6), the term ‘iniquitous person’ (*fasiq*) is taken from our saying, ‘the dates have gone bad (*fasaqat*)’: in other words, the flesh of the fruit has protruded from its skin. Now when the flesh of fresh dates comes out from its protective skin, this exposes them to harmful insects and diseases.

Similarly, faith envelops the believer and shields him from being harmed by diseases of the heart. For if he becomes corrupt, or in other words, if he violates the bounds of belief and separates himself from it, he is attacked by devastating diseases of the heart. For this reason, it is said about the iniquitous person that he is a perpetrator of a grave sin or unaware of the seriousness of what he is doing.

Thus, if any news such as this reaches you from such an iniquitous person, do not trust it and consider what he has said to be sound; rather: ‘...use your discernment...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 6). In other words, ascertain the veracity and credibility of both the news and those who have believed in it.

Stop and wait until the truth of the matter that you have heard has been distinguished and made clear to you in its full aspect in order that your judgement of matters be in line with the true state of affairs, and do not be taken by haste or fervour such that you fall into the ambit of what is forbidden: ‘...use your discernment, lest you hurt people unwittingly and afterwards be filled with remorse for what you have done.’ (*al-Hujurat*: 6)

Here, The True Lord *Glorified is He* commands us to ascertain the veracity of what we hear because man is of a constantly changing temperament: it may be that he is known to be truthful, yet he lies in this one instance, or conversely, that he is known to be a liar, but tells the truth in this one instance. Thus, ascertaining the credibility of what we hear is a cautionary measure that must be taken, so that the judgement we make about a particular situation, and the manner in which we deal with it afterwards, is objective, and thus, we do not fall into the compass of committing oppression and transgression against others.

Use your discernment to check the veracity of the report of the iniquitous person, for it may be that it is an instance of a matter in which he has disobeyed Allah, for disobedience and defiance of Allah's Commandments is something that comes easily to him. Thus, if you were to affirm what he reports, you may hurt people who have committed no offense or sin '...unwittingly...' (*al-Hujurat*: 6). You may well be ignorant of the reality of the affair concerned, and thus, the one wronged may in fact be in the right, and you may be the one who is committing wrongful aggression, and thereafter, you will be the one who regrets your transgression and your passing by that which is right. You will regret your actions, for by means of them, you have made the one you have harmed and injured someone who has a right to take recourse against you.

Now there is a difference between someone who commits a sin unwittingly, out of ignorance, and someone who does so intentionally, and in accordance with the state of the human soul, committing a sinful offense is an occasion for the possibility of the acceptance of true repentance. I recall one time, when we were in France, that one of our colleagues was nominated to be the envoy to France; he went on to proceed there for the purposes of gaining knowledge alone, and there was no hint of thought in his mind of any other objectives. Along the way there, he stayed over at the house of one of the families, in the manner of strangers and visitors to the land.

At night, the daughter of the family whom he was staying with entered his room. Now perhaps he would have perpetrated a grievous sin with her in such a situation, but this occurred to him without his being aware that such a thing might happen, and nor had he planned for anything like this to take place.

This is in contrast with some other ill-intentioned person who decides to travel to this country: he may go with these evil intentions in mind, and he may even get in touch with someone who can give him the contact information of those who regularly commit such grievous sins.

It is for this reason that The True Lord *Glorified is He* delimits the conditions of a repentance that is accepted by Him, and thus, He states: 'Forgiveness is only incumbent on Allah toward those who do evil in ignorance (and) then turn quickly (in repentance) to Allah. These are they toward whom Allah relents.

Allah is ever Knower, Wise. [17] The forgiveness is not for those who do ill deeds until, when death attends upon one of them, he says: Lo! I repent now; and nor yet for those who die while they are disbelievers. For such We have prepared a painful doom [18] (*an-Nisa'*: 17-18)

Now remorse over the sin committed is the first of the phases of true repentance. However, there is another matter here: is the command of ascertaining the truthfulness of the report of an iniquitous person an admonition first and foremost without a preceding cause, or was there an event that occasioned the revelation of the Quran for it in particular? Numerous scholars have said: 'No, there was an occasion for its revelation, and it was the episode of Al-Walid⁽¹⁾ ibn-'Uqba ibn Abu Mu'it⁽²⁾, when The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* placed him in charge of raising the funds of the poor-due from the people of Banu Mustaliq.'

Thus when he went to them, they came out altogether in order to meet him and welcome him upon learning that he was the envoy of The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*. However, he became afraid when they gathered together in this manner, and feared that they would harm him, as he had previously owed them blood money in the pre-Islamic era of Ignorance. So, he fled, returning to The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, they refused to pay the poor-due.' So, The Messenger of Allah looked into the matter to ascertain its veracity, and asked them about it, to which they replied: 'Nay, we came out to meet him rejoicing over his

(1) *Al-Walid ibn 'Uqba ibn Abu Mu'it Abu-Wahb Al-Umawi Al-Qurashi was a governor from amongst the young men of Quraysh, and one of their poets and men renowned for their generosity. He was known for his elegance and his propensity for joking and merriment. He is the brother of 'Uthman ibn-'Affan may Allah be pleased with him through his mother. He became Muslim on the day of the Conquest of Mecca. The Prophet peace and blessings be upon him sent him as his envoy to collect the poor-due from the people of Banu Mustaliq. 'Uthman may Allah be pleased with him made him governor of Kufa after Sa'd ibn-'Abu Waqqas may Allah be pleased with him (in the year 25 of the Hijri calendar), so he left for Kufa and resided there until the year 29 of the Hijri Calendar. He stayed away from the sedition that took place between 'Ali and Mu'awiya may Allah be pleased with them, but he bewailed the murder of 'Uthman may Allah be pleased with him and eulogized him, and spurred Mu'awiya may Allah be pleased with him on to take his revenge. He died in Ar-Raqqah in the year 61 Hijri/280 AD (See "Al-A'lam" of Az-Zirikli, (8/122)).*

(2) *The story of Al-Walid ibn 'Uqba Ibn-Abumu'it with the people of Banu Mustaliq*

presence, O Messenger of Allah.' If The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* had believed the news that he had heard, he would have considered them apostates for their refusal to pay the poor-due, and it is possible that something could have happened whose end result would have been regrettable.

It is also related that The Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* received word that Maria, mother of the Prophet's son Ibrahim *may Allah be pleased with her*⁽¹⁾ had a paternal cousin that was in the habit of visiting her and entering her residence. This angered him, and so he told 'Ali *may Allah honour him*: 'Take this sword and go to him, and if you find him, kill him.' 'Ali *may Allah honour him* responded: 'O Messenger of Allah, I am at your service. But do you really want me to kill him? Or is it possible that what is actually the case is not like what has been reported?' Look at 'Ali's cautiousness and circumspection concerning the matter. So, when 'Ali *may Allah be pleased with him* went to him, he found him with Maria *may Allah be pleased with her* and was about to kill him with his sword, but the man dashed towards a date palm tree and climbed up so that 'Ali's sword could not reach him. Then, he threw himself on to the ground and opened his legs wide so that 'Ali *may Allah honour him* could witness that there was nothing at all where his private parts should have been. Thus, he desisted from doing anything to him.

When he went to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and informed him of the news, he responded, 'You have spoken the truth, 'Ali: The absent cannot see what the witness sees.' Thus, we understand from this story that the one who had initially informed Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* of the matter was a troublemaker who wanted to make a scandalous incident out of it and defame Umm Ibrahim.⁽²⁾

(1) *The story of the cousin of Lady Maria, mother of the Prophet's son Ibrahim may Allah be pleased with her*

(2) *This is narrated by Al-Hakim in his Mustadrak (6922). Al-Haythami mentions it in Majma' Az-Zawa'id, chapter on jealousy and honour (2/225), ascribing it to Al-Bazzar, saying, 'In the chain of narrators of this Hadith is Ibn Ishaq, who is known as mudallis (apt to leave out the direct narrator from whom he heard the Hadith), but he is trustworthy, and so are the other transmitters of this Hadith.' Ad-Diya narrated it too in his Al-Ahadith Al-Mukhtara. Al-Albani graded the chain of narrators of the Hadith, narrated on the authority of 'Ali ibn Abu Taleb Allah be pleased him as good and maintain its origin to be sound (See: As-Silsilat As-Sahiha [1904]).*

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُمْ
وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ
الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاشِدُونَ ﴿٧﴾

And be aware that it is God's Messenger who is among you: in many matters you would certainly suffer if he were to follow your wishes. God has endeared faith to you and made it beautiful to your hearts; He has made disbelief, mischief, and disobedience hateful to you. It is people like this who are rightly guided [7] (The Quran, *al-Hujurat*: 7)

The discourse here is related to the opposition of the Muslims to the position of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* at Hudaybiyya. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* says to them: 'And be aware that it is Allah's Messenger who is among you...' (*al-Hujurat*: 7). This is as if Allah *Glorified is He* were telling them to revere and honour the presence of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* among them. This is because he is the Messenger of Allah and nothing is hidden from him, being aided directly by Allah *Glorified is He* Himself, Who informs him of the reality of matters, and thus, his knowledge of affairs is not like the knowledge of others.

In the phrase: '...is among you (*fikum*)...' (*al-Hujurat*: 7) the word (*fikum*) indicates adverbial qualification of place, as one says, 'the water is in the glass,' or 'the money is in the vault.' Now it is known that what is contained inside is more expensive and valuable than the thing containing it. Furthermore, the word 'you,' stated in the verse, represents a receptacle or a vessel for the Messenger of Allah and his Prophetic Guidance. For this reason, some Quran reciters read the following verse differently:⁽¹⁾ 'Indeed, there has come to you

(1) *Quran reciters that read (anfusikum) with a fatha vowel marking on the letter 'faa' (anfasiikum) include: Ibn Abbas Allah be pleased with him Abu Al-Aliya, Ad-Dahhak, Ibn Muhaysin, and Mahbub on the authority of Abu 'Amr, as related by Ibn Al-Jawzi in his Zad Al-Masir, in commenting on verse 128 of the chapter of at-Tawba. He, then, states regarding this particular mode of recitation, that there are three opinions regarding the meaning of the verse: first, Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him is=*

[O mankind] a Messenger from among yourselves' (*at-Tawba*: 128). They recite (*anfusikum*) with a *fatha* vowel marking on the Arabic letter 'faa', thus pronouncing it (*anfasikum*) which could be translated literally as 'the most precious of you' or 'the most valuable of you.'

Thus, the presence of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* amongst Muslims is a distinguishing mark for them and a means of safeguarding and protecting them, for he is connected and bound to his Lord. This was known to the disbelievers of Mecca, their leaders and notables, but they were overcome by obduracy and haughtiness, which prevented them from accepting faith.

For this reason, one day, when Abu Sufyan, Al-Harith ibn Hisham, and Thabit Ibn Qays had gathered together at a time when Bilal *Allah be pleased with him* was giving the call to prayer, Thabit said, 'Allah is indeed pleased with my father, for He took his life before he ever had to see such a sight.' In other words, he would have been very upset at seeing Bilal, the black Ethiopian, being the one to give the call to prayer for Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. To this, Al-Harith said, 'could not the Messenger of Allah find anyone other than this black crow to give the call to prayer?!' Abu Sufyan replied, 'By Allah, I would very much like to say what you have in mind, just as you have stated, but I fear that Allah will inform His Prophet of what I say.'⁽¹⁾

Therefore, those people were aware of the truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* but their propensity for violent disputation, obdurate opposition, and ostentation prevented them from accepting the truth.

It is also known that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* gave his two daughters Ruqayya and Umm Kulthum *Allah be pleased with them* in marriage to two of Abu Lahab's sons before his mission. Thus, when hostilities between Abu Lahab and Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* intensified, Abu Lahab forced his two sons to divorce them.

= *the best of you in character and manners; second, he is the most noble of you in lineage; third, he is the most obedient to Allah Glorified is He.*

(1) *This is narrated by Al-Qurtubi in his tafsir, on the authority of Ibn Abbas, and a similar narration from Muqatil is narrated in tafsir of Al-Baghawi (7/347), in Zad Al-Masir (5/405) by Ibn Al-Jawzi, and in Tafsir of Al-Khazin (5/467).*

Then, one day, one of the two sons encountered Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* on the road, and seeing him, spat at him. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* realized what he had done and prayed against him and said, ‘May one of the dogs of Allah devour you!’⁽¹⁾ News of this prayer reached Abu Lahab, who then began to fear for his son. Thus, when he departed with his trade caravan for Syria, he gathered together its men and said to them, ‘If you strike camp late at night’. In other words, retire for the night – ‘then place my son so-and-so between you, for I fear for him concerning Muhammad’s prayer against him.’

Thus, he was aware that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was truthful and that his prayers would surely be answered. As a matter of fact, that is exactly what happened: his men placed Abu Lahab’s son amongst them when they went to sleep, but Allah *Glorified is He* set upon him a lion that actually seized him from amongst them.

Thus, the truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was known to these people and their very tongues would slip and articulate their belief in his truthfulness, even against their will. From amongst such

(1) This is related to an incident where, when Allah *Glorified is He* revealed: ‘Doomed are the hands of Abu Lahab, and doomed is he!’ (*al-Masad*: 1) Abu Lahab said to his two sons ‘Utba and ‘Utayba, ‘My life and your two lives are forfeit unless you divorce Muhammad’s two daughters.’ So ‘Utayba divorced Umm Kulthum Allah be pleased with her and came to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* when he separated from her and said, ‘I have disbelieved in your religion and left your daughter; you do not love me, nor do I love you.’ Then he violently grabbed hold of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and tore his robe. To this, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘As for myself, I will ask Allah to set one of His dogs upon you.’ [See: *Dalai’l An-Nubuwwa of Al-Bayhaqi* (3/338-339)]. Al-Haythami relates this as well in his *Majm’a Az-Zawa’id* (6/19) and ascribes it to At-Tabarani classifying it as ‘mursal’ (literally: “hurried” – a classification that is assigned to Hadith where the narrator is from the generation after the first generation of Companions of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* but narrates the Hadith without any intermediary, directly from Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* omitting to mention the specific Companion from whom he heard the Hadith) and states, ‘Within the chain of transmitters of this Hadith is Zuhayr ibn Al-‘Ala, who is considered a weak narrator.’ Al-Hakim also narrated this narration in his *Mustadrak* (2/539) on the authority of Abu ‘Aqrab and graded it as authentic. However, Ibn Hajar graded it as good in his *Fath Al-Bari* (4/39).

slips of the tongue is the following inadvertent reference to him, where they are mentioned saying: '...“Do not spend anything on those who are with Allah’s Messenger...”’ (*al-Munafiqun*: 7).

Furthermore, Allah *Glorified is He* describes them saying: ‘and in their wickedness and self-exaltation they rejected them, although their minds were convinced of their truth...’ (*an-Naml*: 14). There is also His statement *Glorified is He*: ‘...in many matters you would certainly suffer if he were to follow your wishes...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 7).

An example of this is what happened amongst you at Hudaybiyya, for had he followed you in not concluding a treaty with the disbelievers, ‘...you would certainly suffer...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 7). You would have been stricken by affliction, hardship, and errant misdeeds. Likewise is His statement *Glorified is He*: ‘...heavily weighs upon him [the thought] that you might suffer [in the life to come]...’ (*at-Tawba*: 128). It weighs upon him heavily to see you in hardship for he is full of compassion and mercy towards the believers. If he sees you committing sin, he prays for your forgiveness, and if he sees you upon obedience to Allah, he praises Him. This is so even after he passes away from this earthly life. ‘...Allah has endeared faith to you and made it beautiful to your hearts; He has made disbelief, mischief, and disobedience hateful to you...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 7).

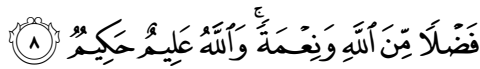
The word *laken* (but) in the verse is a disjunctive expressing emendation to what has preceded; in other words, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* did not follow you concerning the position you had taken in planning to enter Mecca and perform the Lesser Pilgrimage. However, Allah *Glorified is He* endeared faith to you, and made it beautiful in your hearts, so you turned back from your position and went along with the opinion of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and did not make a decision that was different from his command, but rather accepted what he had decided.

This is the result of Allah’s guidance to you, endearing faith to you, and making it beautiful in your hearts. For if it were not the case, you would have been insubordinate and left aside what he had commanded, and you would have been destroyed because of your disobedience to him. Furthermore, at the same time: ‘...He has made disbelief, mischief, and disobedience hateful to

you...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 7). This is from the greatest gifts Allah has bestowed upon you.

‘...It is people like this...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 7). In other words, those who have been described by these attributes and thus have come to love faith and detest disbelief, mischief, and disobedience, it is those people: ‘...who are rightly guided (*rashidun*)’ (*al-Hujurat*: 7). The word *rashidun* (rightly guided), the plural of *rashid* refers to someone that holds fast to the way of truth and guidance and does not swerve from it at all. It is from this idea that we use the word (*tarshid*) which is making something follow the right course, in the expression in Arabic, ‘sagacious management (*tarshid*) of expenses and consumption’: in other words, we allot just the right amount of funds for each purpose in the right manner.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:



Through God’s favour and blessing: God is all knowing and all wise [8] (The Quran, *al-Hujurat*: 8)

‘Favour and blessing’ here means superfluous Abundance. What is intended here is that Allah *Glorified is He* granted them super Abundance of His blessings and His munificence.

Some people once said to one of the pious (concerning a dispute they were having): ‘Judge between us.’ The man responded, ‘With justice or what is better than justice?’ They replied, ‘Is there anything better than justice?’ He responded, ‘What is better than justice is favour; justice is that you take back what is rightfully due to you, but favour is that you forgot what is due to you out of complaisance and favour for the other.’

Similarly, the blessings of Allah *Glorified is He* bestowed upon us are from the realm of his bounty and favour. This is because the responsibilities with which Allah *Glorified is He* has entrusted us are all for our benefit and work in our favour, and do not benefit Allah *Glorified is He* one iota, being the One Free of all needs from His creation. Acts of obedience do not benefit Him, nor do

acts of disobedience harm Him in any way. He *Glorified is He* by His Attributes of Perfection, created us. Thus, blessings are not equivalent recompense for obedience: rather, they are purely bounteous grace from Allah *Glorified is He*.

However, in the Quranic verse: ‘...verily, they who are patient in adversity will be given their reward in full, beyond all reckoning’ (*az-Zumar*: 10), Allah *Glorified is He* calls it ‘reward’ in order that they may know their acts of worship to have been accepted, and that they will be rewarded with a full and the best reward.

Allah *Glorified is He* states: ‘...Allah is All Knowing and All-Wise.’ (*al-Hujurat*: 8) He is All Knowing, and His Knowledge is all-encompassing: nothing at all of one’s affairs is hidden from Him, and what is secret is open and public for Him: ‘[for] He is aware of the [most] stealthy glance, and of all that the hearts would conceal.’ (*Ghafir*: 19) Thus, beware of any hypocrisy, ostentation, vanity, or haughtiness polluting your actions. Allah *Glorified is He* as previously stated, wants hearts that are sincere, not merely actions of the limbs. Then, furthermore, He *Glorified is He* is: ‘...All-Wise.’ (*al-Hujurat*: 8) He *Glorified is He* manages the affairs of His dominion in accordance with His wisdom. Furthermore, wisdom entails placing everything in its proper place.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَأِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ بَغَتْ
إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَىٰ فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّىٰ تَفِيءَ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ
فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ﴿٩﴾

If two groups of the believers fight, you [believers] should try to reconcile them; if one of them is [clearly] oppressing the other, fight the oppressors until they submit to God’s command, then make a just and even-handed reconciliation between the two of them: God loves those who are even-handed [9] (The Quran, *al-Hujurat*: 9)

The word *ta’ifatan* ‘two groups of the believers’ is the dual form of *ta’ifa* ‘group’ or ‘party’ which is a singular noun even if it indicates a plural meaning in

reality such as the word *qawm* 'nation.' The plural of *ta'ifa* (party) is *tawa'if* (parties). Now this verse provides rulings related to warfare and the need for reconciliation and truce between the hostile parties of the believers until there is no more warfare.

It can be observed in the verse: '...two groups of the believers (*ta'ifatan*)...' (*al-Hujurat*: 9) that the word *ta'ifatan* is in the dual. By analogy, however, it would seem more appropriate to say, therefore, '(the two parties) fight' (*iqtatalata*), thereby using the dual form of the verb as well; however, the Quran employs the plural, stating: '...fight (*iqtatalu*)...' (*al-Hujurat*: 9). Why is this so? Some of the Quranic commentators stated that this is because a party, as an organized group, can be represented by a single person; i.e. the leader of that party. Nonetheless, if fighting takes place, the various individuals of both groups all face each other in battle, and thus the fighting takes place amongst all of the individuals involved.

This is proven by the fact that when Allah *Glorified is He* speaks of the need for a treaty and reconciliation, He returns to the usage of the dual in reference to the belligerent groups and states: '...you [believers] should try to reconcile them (*baynahuma*)...' (*al-Hujurat*: 9). This is because the council that concludes the peace treaty need not have all the individuals of the two parties attend; rather, each party can have one person to represent it in order to conclude the treaty.

If '...one of them is [clearly] oppressing the other...' (*al-Hujurat*: 9)! The meaning here is, 'after you have concluded the treaty and one of the sides goes on acting wrongfully against the other,' or in other words, has violated and crossed the limits in an open show of hostility, showing no respect to the treaty: '...fight the oppressors until they submit to Allah's command...' (*al-Hujurat*: 9). That is to say, fight them in order to prevent and deter them from transgression: '...until they submit to Allah's Command...' (*al-Hujurat*: 9), i.e. return to what is true and just.

In this manner, there are three parties: two parties that are at war with each other and a third party seeking to bring about reconciliation. This is so because the community of believers in its totality is entrusted with carrying out the duty of judging between two antagonistic groups, has been qualified for this purpose

with the qualities of justice, non-partisanship, and the absence of desires in the process of negotiating a settlement. However, if these conditions are not present in such judgement, then no viable treaty will be concluded; rather, matters will become further and further complicated and aggravated.

It is enough of an indication of low standing that the party that is driven by its own interests and partisanship in judging between two sides drops in the awrongly and in falsehood loathes the adjudicating party. It is for this reason that the saying goes of such adjudicating groups, with respect to the party in whose favour judgement is passed in falsehood, 'the heads are held high in their dispute by its testimony, yet the feet trample down upon its honour.'

The Quranic verse: '...then make a just and even-handed reconciliation between the two of them...' (*al-Hujurat*: 9) indicates that after the fighting has taken place and the transgressing party has returned upon what is right, and then all of you should return to conciliation. The intended meaning is: do not leave the party that returns upon the truth without settling the affairs between the two sides. It is true that the transgressing party has returned to what is right, but that does not mean lack of dispute and dissension, and so there must be reconciliation until there is no chance of another war sprouting, in order to uproot dispute that burns inside in the hearts of the two parties inciting them into war once again.

In this way, war is first of all prevented from taking place; rights taken unduly from the oppressed party are turned to the rightful owner; and the tension and sources of dispute leading to war are defused.

Furthermore, in the verse '...make a just and even-handed reconciliation...' (*al-Hujurat*: 9), the word *aqsatu* (be just and equitable) is derived from the verb *aqсата* (to deal equitably), whose derivatives indicates dealing equitably with others.

Allah *Glorified is He* states: '...Allah loves those who are even-handed' (*al-Hujurat*: 9), i.e. He loves those who deal justly with each other.

Another word is *qasata* which means 'to commit an outrage, to wrong, or to oppress.' Derivatives of the verb *qasata* include *yaqsitu*— he wrongs someone, and thus, he is *qasit* (a wrongdoer and oppressor). Related to this is the Quranic

verse: ‘but as for those who abandon themselves to wrongdoing (*al-qasitun*) – they are indeed but fuel for [the fires of] hell!’ (*al-Jinn*: 15)

Thus, the additional letter *hamza* in the beginning of the term *aqsata* ‘to deal equitably,’ when added to the trilateral root of *qasata* ‘to wrong or oppress,’ is called *hamzat al-izala* ‘the *hamza* that divests the term of its original meaning,’ i.e., it divests the word of the denotation of wrongdoing and oppression.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

**The believers are brothers, so make peace
between your two brothers and be mindful of
God, so that you may be given mercy [10]
(The Quran, *al-Hujurat*: 10)**

Now, this verse has a specific occasion for its revelation. In the battle of Hunayn, the believers disagreed with each other upon a matter, and it went too far such that a minor quarrel took place amongst the fools of the group, and started using light objects as weapons in their dispute, such as sticks, date-palm leaves, and stripped palm branches. Before it reached a true state of civil war, the matter reached Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* who said, ‘Make reconciliation between your two brothers.’⁽¹⁾

(1) *Anas ibn Malik Allah be pleased with him* narrated, ‘I said to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* “Shall you go to’ Abdullah ibn Ubayy?” So, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* set off towards him, and rode upon a donkey, whereas the Muslims set off on foot, upon some marshy ground. Approaching him, he said to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* “Get away from me, for by Allah, the stench of your donkey offends me.” One of the men from the Ansar responded, “The donkey of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* certainly has a better smell than you do.” To this, one of the ‘Abdullah’s people got angry and all people in support of both sides became angry at each other as well. Thereupon, some of them started striking each other with stripped palm branches, with their hands, and with their sandals. It was then narrated that Allah *Glorified is He* revealed concerning them: ‘If two groups of the believers fight, you [believers] should try to reconcile them...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 9)”. This was narrated by *Al-Wahidi*; *An-Naysaburi* in his *Asbab An-Nuzul* (p. 223), who ascribed it to *Al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*, both on the authority of *Al-Mutamir ibn Sulaiman*.

This is because the believers are brothers in terms of their lineage back to Adam *peace be upon him* and brothers in terms of faith, while the kinship of lineage is antecedent to the kinship of faith, the latter being established after the former. Thus, this means that the disbeliever has the right of brotherhood by lineage, even if he has no rights in terms of brotherhood by faith. For this reason, kinship by lineage is called 'brotherhood,' and with regards to faith, it is stated: '...[and they shall rest] as brethren, facing one another [in love] upon thrones of happiness.' (*al-Hijr*: 47)

Accordingly, true kinship bonds of brotherhood are made complete and integrally whole when people become brothers in faith. It is related⁽¹⁾ that the chamberlain of Mu'awiya entered his presence and said, 'O Commander of the Faithful, there is a man at the door asking for permission to enter, claiming that he is your brother.' To this, Mu'awiya laughed and said, you have served me for so many years, and you do not even know who my brothers are!' The chamberlain responded, saying, 'That is how he introduced himself to me.' Mu'awiya said, 'Bring him inside.' So when the man entered, Mu'awiya asked him, 'Which of my brothers are you?' The man responded, 'I am your brother by Adam.' Mu'awiya laughed and replied, 'If kinship bonds were ever to be broken, by Allah, I would most certainly be the first to restore them.' He then fulfilled the request of the man.⁽²⁾

The term 'brethren' here brings the hearts closer together, and removes any sense of class pride or zealous partisanship that might exist in the hearts of believers. For this reason, we note the Quranic mode of expression, even when it comes to the issue of retribution for murder, Allah *Glorified is He* states: '...And for him

(1) *The story of the man who claimed to be Muawiya's brother*

(2) *Al-Yusi narrates in his Al-Muhadarat fi Al-Adab wa Al-Lugha that someone came to Mu'awiya and said to him, 'I ask you by the shared bonds of kinship between you and me, to grant me my request.' He said, 'Are you of the line of 'Abd Manaf?' to which he replied, 'No.' He said, 'Are you one of the Arabs?' to which he replied, 'No.' He said, 'Then which bonds of kinship exist between us?' to which he replied, 'The bonds of kinship from Adam.' Thereupon, Mu'awiya said, 'If there were to be any bonds of kinship that were uprooted, I would most certainly be the first to restore them.' He then granted the man his request. A similar narration is related by Al-Abshihi in his Al-Mustatraf fi Kulli Fann Mustazhraf.*

who is payment to him in kindness forgiven somewhat by his (injured) brother, prosecution according to usage and ...' (*al-Baqara*: 178). This is to remind us that the criminal is still his brother despite whatever enmity and hatred existing between them. Allah softens the hearts of believers, in the desire to maintain the welfare of the Muslim polity. Regarding the status of brotherhood in human relations, some of the wise have noted in their aphorisms: 'It may be that your brother is one that your mother did not give birth to.'

Some have even noted that when someone stumbles in the street and some mishap befalls him, in asking for assistance, he calls out, 'My brother!' – as if he were appealing for help from his own brother, or in other words, a brother that is close to him, who can assist him in such circumstances.

The Quranic verse: '...and be mindful of God so that you may be given mercy' (*al-Hujurat*: 10) means, 'Fear Allah in executing your duties of making peace between the two sides.' Further, what is it from which mercy is given, as stated in the Quranic verse: '...so that you may be given mercy' (*al-Hujurat*: 10)?

The meaning here is, 'that you may be given mercy from the continuance of hostilities between the believers.' This indicates the importance of putting an end to all differences before they get out of control and go on the rampage through the Muslim community. Should it happen, then great harm would afflict all of the believers: starting with the two disputing parties, and then it extends to the entire community until you see every single group outside of the two taking sides as well and exacerbating the conflict. Therefore, it is in the best interests of the society as a whole to put an end to all hostilities and to avoid bloodshed between the believers.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ
 مِّنْ نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهُمْ وَلَا نَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ
 بِئْسَ الْإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿١١﴾

Believers, no one group of men should jeer at another, who may after all be better than them; no one group of women should jeer at another, who may after all be better than them; do not speak ill of one another; do not use offensive nicknames for one another. How bad it is to be called a mischief-maker after accepting faith! Those who do not repent of this behaviour are evildoers [11] (The Quran, *al-Hujurat*: 11)

In this verse, it can be noted that prohibition is directed towards men as a whole firstly, then towards women as a whole, and specifies an order of prohibition for each. This is because the word *qawm* ‘group of men’ in Arabic is not employed except in reference to men, being the ones responsible for maintaining their families. As for women, they are not responsible for anything except the maintenance of the house, as the poet puts it:

I know not, nor could I possibly know,

Is the people of *Hisn*, *qawm* (men) or women?

Therefore, the word *qawm* ‘group of men’ is not used for women. Furthermore, in another verse, Allah *Glorified is He* states: ‘Men are in charge of women...’ (*an-Nisa*: 34).

Some people incorrectly assume that the word *qawwamun* ‘in charge of’ denotes forcible coercion and beating – never; rather, men are the protectors and maintainers of women – in other words, they attend to their care and carry out what is necessary to serve their needs.

For this reason, we term the woman, ‘lady of the house,’ as if to say that the man is the servant and caretaker for her. Furthermore, we say, ‘so-and-so is *qaaim* [(undertaking) which is derived from the same stem word as *qawwamun*] this affair;’ in other words, he is taking upon himself work that involves difficulty and hardship.

In the story of Adam *peace be upon him* when Allah *Glorified is He* placed him in paradise to reside therein with his wife, there took place the incident where Adam *peace be upon him* disobeyed the command of Allah, and thus Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘and thereupon We said: “O Adam! Indeed, this is a foe to you and your wife: so let him not drive the two of you out of this garden and render you unhappy.”’ (*Ta Ha*: 117)

This is an address to Adam *peace be upon him* and Eve. However, following the general rule of grammatical consistency, it would seem proper to state, ‘the two of you shall fall into distress’ (*fatashqiya*), in the dual form of the verb. However, Allah *Glorified is He* employs the singular (*fatashqa*) stating, ‘...and render you unhappy (*fatashqa*).’ (*Ta Ha*: 117)

In other words, Adam *peace be upon him* alone will fall into distress because the duty of exertion, undergoing hardship and bearing the responsibility of maintaining the family lies upon the man alone. As for the woman, her responsibility is the management of the home in which she plays an important role indeed, one that fills up every moment of her life; but what are we to do today when women wish to suffer distress with the men?

Moreover, the prohibition against mockery in this verse has two causal incidents behind it, one related to men and another related to women. It is narrated⁽¹⁾ that Thabit ibn Qays⁽²⁾ entered upon the gathering of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and found that the first row was full. Hard of hearing, Thabit wanted to sit in that first row. Hence, he approached one of the weaker members in the gathering and told him to move over, but the man did not move aside. Thereupon, he said to him, ‘Who are you?’ The man

(1) *The story of Thabit ibn Qays with the assembly of Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him.*

(2) *Thabit ibn Qays ibn Shammas Al-Khazraji Al-Ansari Allah be pleased with him was a Companion and preacher of Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him. He took part in Uhud and many of the other campaigns thereafter. It was narrated that Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said, ‘What an excellent man Thabit is!’ Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him visited him, once, in an ailing state, and said, ‘Remove his ailment, Sustainer of men, from Thabit ibn Qays.’ He was killed in the battle of Al-Yamama during the caliphate of Abu Bakr Allah be pleased with him in the year 12 AH/ 633 C.E. See Al-‘Alam by Az-Zirikli (2/98).*

replied, 'So-and-so.' He said, 'Son of that woman so-and-so?' This woman was known to have a bad reputation amongst people. Upon hearing that, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* asked, 'Who said, 'Son of that woman so-and-so?' He replied, 'I did.' At that point, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said to him, 'Look around our gathering,' which the man did. Then, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said to him, 'What have you seen?' He replied, 'I have seen some black people, some white people, and some red people.' Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* responded, 'The best of you are the ones who are most deeply mindful of Allah.'⁽¹⁾

Furthermore, Allah *Glorified is He* did not forget about the man who did not move aside to make more space when asked to do so. In this regard, the following verse was revealed: '...When you are told to make room for one another in assemblies, do make room: [and in return,] Allah will make room for you [in His grace]...' (*al-Mujadala*: 11).

It is also narrated ⁽²⁾ that Umm Salama *Allah be pleased with her* was short in stature, and at one point was stricken with pain in her leg. To treat it, she bound it with a piece of cloth, the remainder of which dangled and reached the ground, and was dragged along behind her. 'Aisha and Hafsa *Allah be pleased with them* saw her in this condition, and one of them said to the other, 'She

(1) *Al-Qurtubi* mentions this incident in his commentary of the verse and states, 'The verse was revealed concerning Thabit ibn Qays and his statement to the man who did not move aside for him when he said, "the son of that woman So-and-so," upon which the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, "Who was the one mentioning that woman So-and-so?" Thabit replied, "I was, O Messenger of Allah." Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, "Take a look upon the faces of the people in our gathering," which he did. Then he said, "What did you see?" to which he replied, "I saw some white people, some black people, and some red people." He responded, "You are not to give preference to anyone except in respect of their level of piety." Then this verse was revealed concerning Thabit ibn Qays.' *Al-Baghawi* mentions this narration in his *tafsir* (7/343), in which he states that Thabit ibn Qays said, 'Who is this?' to which a man replied, 'I am So-and-so.' So Thabit said, 'The son of So-and-so?' mentioning a mother whom he used to be reproached and censured for her behaviour during the Pre-Islamic Period of Ignorance.

(2) The story of 'Aisha and Hafsa *Allah be pleased with them* with Umm Salama *Allah be pleased with her* while she was bandaging her wound

walks with a tail like the tail of a dog.’ This reached Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and then the verse was revealed.⁽¹⁾

For this reason, Allah *Glorified is He* will declare on the Day of Judgement: ‘I established lineage, and you established lineage; I established that ‘The noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most deeply mindful of Him,’ but you refused and said, ‘The most noble of us is so-and-so, the son of so-and-so.’ So today – (i.e. the Day of Judgement) – I uphold my establishment of lineage and put aside the lines of kinship that you established for yourselves.’⁽²⁾

A lame man once entered the presence of one of the others, who began looking at him scornfully due to his lameness. The lame man understood his intent, and said to him, ‘Do you take offence at what is created, or at the Fashioner of creation?’ The other man was rendered speechless and dumbfounded, until he repented of the behaviour towards the lame man, and stated, ‘By Allah, I would have loved to have been in his place, and for him to have been in mine.’

Allah *Glorified is He* forbids us from mocking each other only because He wishes for equality amongst all of His creation. All creation belongs to Allah,

(1) This is narrated by *Al-Wahidi An-Naysaburi* in his *Asbab An-Nuzul* (p. 224), where he states, ‘The verse was revealed concerning two women from amongst the wives of The Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* who were ridiculing Umm Salama Allah be pleased with her. They did this because she had bound her waist with a white garment, letting the end of it hang down and dragging it along behind her. So ‘Aisha Allah be pleased with her said to Hafsa Allah be pleased with her “Look at what she drags behind her, as if it were the tongue of a dog.” This was mockery of Umm Salama Allah be pleased with her.’

(2) This is narrated by *Al-Hakim* in his *Mustadrak* (3684, 3685), and by *At-Tabarani* in *Al-Mu’jam As-Saghir* (643), and a similar narration is narrated by *Al-Bayhaqi* in *Shu’ab Al-Iman* (4922), on the authority of *Abu Hurayra* Allah be pleased with him who narrated that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘Surely, Allah *Glorified is He* will say on the Day of Judgment, “I commanded you, but you neglected what I had covenanted with you, and exalted your own lineages above those of others. So today, I raise My lineage, and put aside the lines of lineage you established for yourselves. Where are the pious? Where are the pious? Indeed, the noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the one who is most deeply conscious of Him.”’ *Al-Hakim* states, ‘This Hadith has some questionable issues in its chain of narrators and in its text, and the two authorities of Hadith (*Al-Bukhari* and *Muslim*) did not relate it.’

and is His specially fashioned work. All people are His slaves, none of whom is a son of Him, and nor is there any relationship of kin with Him; so why, then, do we mock each other? Beware of mocking people, whatever their particular lack may be compared to yourself. If you see a fault in someone's religion or behaviour, it is incumbent upon you to try to rectify him and set right his affair as best as possible.

If the fault is one of bodily form, which human beings have no say in whatsoever, you must show respect and proper manners with The Creator. By Allah, if you were to know what He has prepared of reward for the physically stricken – that is to say, the handicapped – you would all wish to be similarly stricken with such defects. Indeed, Allah *Glorified is He* has no son, but rather, has distributed the causes of His favour upon all of His servants. If He takes a favour away from one of them, He replaces it with something else much better.

Thus, mockery and ridicule only appear in a person who prides himself in some quality lacked in the mocked one, just as a rich person mocks a poor, or a strong person mocks a weak, or a person of sound body or intellect mocks a physically or mentally handicapped. Furthermore, this mode of behaviour is the result of heedlessness of the criteria of superiority between all of creation which is piety and fear of Allah.

As previously stated, if you contemplate the entirety of the cosmos, you will find a principle of just balance at work within it. That is to say, for every human being, the entirety of the favours placed in him or in her is equal to the entirety of favours bestowed upon anyone else. This is because the Creator *Glorified is He* has distributed His bounty upon His slaves so that everyone gets his share in full but in a particular facility; for instance, one is endowed with intelligence, whereas another is gifted with health; but in the end, all people are granted favours equally.

This is so because Allah *Glorified is He* does not want human beings to be identical; rather, they should be dissimilar to each other in terms of the gifts bestowed upon them. In this way, the activity of everyday life runs smoothly and becomes complete and integral, in addition to establishing relations between people of different classes to serve their mutual needs; thus even those of the highest ranks cannot do without the services of the sewage worker.

Thus is His statement *Glorified is He*: ‘...and has raised some of you by degrees above others...’ (*al-An‘am*: 165). This means that everyone one of us is above someone else in some human quality or attribute and is superseded in something else. You are aware that Beethoven, the famous musician, was deaf, and that Tamerlane, the man who laid waste to the world with his conquests, was lame.

Accordingly, one should not mock others whatsoever, nor should one bear any malice towards anyone, deeming him inferior in some respects. All people are equal in the balance of Allah *Glorified is He*; thereby giving us a lesson and a reminder that He *Glorified is He* has no son, and neither does He have any partner.

Hence, the Jinn showed better understanding where they are mentioned saying: ‘for [we know] that sublimely exalted is our Sustainer’s majesty: no consort has He ever taken to Himself, nor a son!’ (*al-Jinn*: 3)

For all of us are dependants on Allah. Further, this equal standing is of such importance that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* commands us to treat our children equally, even in the simplest matters such as giving a kiss to a child.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* instructs us in how we should behave when experiencing any incident of mockery or derision, and how to respond to it. It is narrated that the occasion of revelation of this verse was the incident of Safiyya *Allah be pleased with her* the daughter of Huyayy ibn Akhtab, the leader of the tribe of Banu Mustaliq. When Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* fought them, she was among the prisoners taken captive. To honour her, being the daughter of their king, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* married her. As a result, the wives of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* became jealous of her, and jealousy, as they say, is the outbursts of one’s love. Furthermore, ‘Aisha *Allah be pleased with her* was the most jealous of all the wives of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and so she addressed Safiyya *Allah be pleased with her* as ‘O Jewess, daughter of the Jews!’ So Safiyya went to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* weeping and told him what ‘Aisha *Allah be pleased with her* had said, upon which Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* laughed, for he knew of ‘Aisha’s jealousy.

For this reason, he did not censure 'Aisha *Allah be pleased with her*, but rendered Safiyya *Allah be pleased with her* happy and put her mind at ease saying to her 'If she ever says it again, then say to her, 'But my father is Harun (Aaron), my uncle is Musa (Moses), and my husband is Muhammad.'⁽¹⁾

Notice how Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* handled this situation, enhancing the prestige of Safiyya *Allah be pleased with her* the offspring of Messengers and Prophets, and above all the wife of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. He *peace and blessings be upon him* responded in a manner that would leave anybody dumbfounded which would never have occurred to anyone. It is no surprise, however, since Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was given the faculty of articulating the most eloquent of expressions.⁽²⁾

A similar incident occurred between 'Aisha and Fatima Az-Zahra', the daughter of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. 'Aisha *Allah be pleased with her* used to be jealous of Khadija *Allah be pleased with her* especially that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* used to praise her in various situations. Once, she said to him, 'What is it that impresses you about an old woman with grey-streaked hair and red-tinted lips, when Allah has replaced her with a better wife?' How did Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* respond? He said to her, 'No, by Allah, I was not replaced with a better wife, for she believed in me when all others disbelieved; confirmed the truth of my Message when others denied it; supported me with

(1) It is narrated by Al-Qurtubi in his commentary on the verse, on the authority of Ibn Abbas *Allah be pleased with him* that Safiyya Bint Huyayy ibn Akhtab came to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, the women censure me, saying scornfully, "O Jewess, daughter of the Jews!"' Thereupon, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* responded, 'Why did you not reply by saying, "Surely, my father is Aaron, my uncle is Moses, and my husband is Muhammad?"' Afterwards, Allah Glorified is He revealed this verse. A similar narration is narrated in Tafsir Al-Bahr Al-Muhit (10/111) and in Zad Al-Masir (5/401) by Ibn Al-Jawzi.

(2) This is narrated by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (6496) on the authority of Abu Hurayra, who said, 'I heard Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying, "I was sent with the concise, yet comprehensive word." A similar narration is narrated by Muslim in his Sahih (812, 814) and by At-Tirmidhi in his Sunan (1474), who graded the Hadith as good and sound.

her wealth when others prevented me; Allah *Glorified is He* granted me children by her while depriving me of children from other women.’⁽¹⁾

Afterwards, she met Fatima *Allah be pleased with her* and said to her, ‘Do not be deluded by the praise of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* for your mother; for she had been previously married before he married her unlike me who was a virgin.’ Upon hearing it, Fatima *Allah be pleased with her* complained to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* who responded, ‘If she ever says it again, then say to her, ‘But my mother married Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* while he was a virgin, and you married him as a man married previously.’⁽²⁾

It may be wondered as to how could such incidents occur in the house of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*? In response, we maintain that this jealousy, in addition to being a sign of love for Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* indicates that ‘Aisha *Allah be pleased with her* who married Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* at the age of nine, felt jealous of him, despite his much older age. This signifies that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was not someone who did not have active marital relations with his wives.

In the Quranic verse: ‘...do not speak ill of one another; do not use offensive nicknames for one another...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 11). This verse conveys another prohibition of a different blameworthy character trait that does not befit the people of faith, which is the trait of defaming others and speaking ill of them.

(1) This is narrated by Ahmad in his *Musnad* (23719) and At-Tabarani in his *Al-Mua'jam Al-Kabir* (18556) on the authority of ‘Aisha *Allah be pleased with her* who related that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* used to praise Khadija *Allah be pleased with her* in the best manner whenever he mentioned her. ‘Aisha said, ‘So one day, I became jealous and said, “Why do you keep mentioning her, the woman of red-tinted lips, when Allah *Glorified is He* has replaced you with a better wife?”’

(2) This is indicated by Al-Alusi in his *Ruh Al-Ma'ani*, in his commentary on the verse: ‘[O wives of The Prophet!] Were he to divorce [any of] you, his Sustainer might well give him in your place spouses better than you – women who surrender themselves to Allah, who truly believe, devoutly obey His will, turn [to Him] in repentance [whenever they have sinned], worship [Him alone], and go on and on [seeking His goodly acceptance] – be they women previously married or virgins.’ (*at-Tahrim*: 5)

Contemplate here the subtlety of the Quranic expression in the verse: ‘...do not speak ill of one another (talmizu anfusakum)...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 11).

The expression (talmizu anfusakum) literally means ‘speak ill of yourselves.’ Now a human being does not speak ill of oneself, but rather, he speaks ill of others. However, The Quran regards others as oneself and since one avoids speaking ill of oneself, such should be the case with others. Furthermore, speaking ill of others encourages them to do the same, just as the poet puts it:

Your tongue – do not let it recall the faults of others

For you are replete with faults, and others have tongues as well;

And your eye – should an evil trait be revealed to it

Then guard it well and say, ‘O eye, others have eyes as well;

In the same way, the word *anfusakum* (yourselves) is used in the following verse when others are intended: ‘...But whenever you enter [any of these] houses, greet one another (anfusakum) with a blessed, goodly greeting...’ (*an-Nur*: 61).

Literally, (*anfusakum*) means to send greetings of peace ‘upon yourselves.’ This is because when you give greetings of peace upon other people, they respond with the same greetings, and thus it is as if you have given greetings of peace to oneself.

In the Quranic verse: ‘...do not use offensive nicknames for one another...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 11), there is another prohibition, against insulting one another using offensive nicknames. In other words, none of the believers should call his brother by a name that he detests. The word (*tanabudh*) is derived from the verb *nabadha* ‘to find fault with something’, which means to remove something and leave it aside. Likewise, when you call somebody by a nickname that he detests, it is as if to remove him from your presence, widening the breach between him and you.

Names in Arabic fall under three categories: *Alam* (a proper name), *Laqab* (a nickname), and *kunya* (surname). *Alam* (proper name) refers to the name designating the specifically meant or named such that it becomes known with it, such as the name ‘Muhammad.’ *Laqab* (nickname), on the other hand, is a description used to indicate praise or blame, such as As-Siddiq ‘The Truly Honest,’ or when calling a weak person ‘So-and-so *Al-Batta* (the Duck).’ As for

kunya (surname), it is the word introduced with ‘Father of’ (*Abu*) or ‘Mother of’ (*Umm*), such as ‘Abu Bakr’ or ‘*Umm al-Muminin*’ ‘Mother of the Believers.’

It is not permissible to call out to a person by a detestable word that he does not like to be called by. An example of this is ‘Aisha’s calling to Safiyya, ‘O Jewess.’⁽¹⁾ Furthermore, using offensive nicknames sows the seeds of hatred and malice and stirs up one’s natural impulses of anger against others. Why not call one by the names he loves instead, so as to bring him closer to you?

Some jurists argue that if someone commits a sin and then repents, one should not remind or censure him for it, otherwise it would be considered a slanderous act, apart from the fact that one would thereby be assisting Satan against him. For instance, when someone repents of drinking wine, we should not then call him, ‘winebibber,’ or someone else repenting of gambling; we should not call him ‘ludomaniac’ and so on. For this reason, Allah *Glorified is He* states thereafter: ‘...How bad it is to be called a mischief-maker after accepting faith...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 11).

In other words, ‘What an evil thing it is to remind your brother of a past that he wishes to forget, and how ugly it is to censure him after he has repented, it is utterly ugly to commit such bad actions after attaining to faith.’ ‘...Those who do not repent of this behaviour...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 11), i.e., those who do not repent from insulting others with offensive nicknames: ‘...are evildoers.’ (*al-Hujurat*: 11).

Surely, they are evildoers who wrong their own souls, as a result of neglecting this prohibition, and transgress the rights of others when they call them by such detested epithets. After all, it is the right of the one who has repented not to be reminded of his fault, and not to be censured and blamed for it.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

(1) Translator’s note: Clearly, using offensive nicknames should be seen in the wider context of the situation, whereby ‘Aisha was effectively giving voice to her jealousy – for which she was reprimanded – and love for Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and the honour that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* accorded to both Safiyya *Allah be pleased with her* and her ancestors, the Jews, as a whole, as noted by the Sheikh previously.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا
 تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبَ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ
 أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوهُ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١٢﴾

Believers, avoid making too many assumptions – some assumptions are sinful – and do not spy on one another or speak ill of people behind their backs: would any of you like to eat the flesh of your dead brother? No, you would hate it. So be mindful of God: God is ever relenting, most merciful [12]
(The Quran, *al-Hujurat*: 12)

Allah *Glorified is He* commands us here to avoid most suspicions that we harbour of one another. Suspicion is a notion that occurs to the mind, and is of two types: having a reasonable suspicion of something plausible and worth taking precautions against, and an unwarranted suspicion of something evil or wrong. As for a reasonable suspicion that leads to avoiding harm, there is nothing wrong or sinful with it; in fact, it is required by the Divine Law, as we shall see. What is forbidden, however, is the unwarranted suspicion of evil that leads to corruption in human relations, which in turn results in a punishment.

For this reason, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* instructs us to avoid any kind of suspicion of evil. Once He *peace and blessings be upon him* was in a state of '*itikaf*' (staying in the mosque), and Safiyya *Allah be pleased with her* who was fully veiled, came to him asking for something, so he came out to see her. Abu Bakr and 'Umar *Allah be pleased with them*, saw the two of them, and they went away, fearing that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* would see them while he was in this situation. However, he called out to them and said, 'Take it easy!' In other words, he meant, 'Stop, for it is Safiyya.' They knew what Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* intended, and said to him, 'You are far away from any suspicion, O Messenger of Allah!' He replied, 'Indeed, Satan flows through the son of Adam as does his blood.'⁽¹⁾

(1) Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim... Al-Bukhari narrates it in his *Sahih* (1897, 1898, 3039, 6636), and Muslim in his *Sahih* (4040, 4041) on the authority of Safiyya *Allah be pleased with her* daughter of Huyayy ibn Akhtab, and one of the Mothers of the Believers.

Thus, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* directs us to close the door on any type of evil suspicions, to cut off its very roots and to keep ourselves free of falling into such perilous situations.

Further, through the story of the slander levelled against ‘Aisha *Allah be pleased with her* referred to in the chapter of *an-Nur*, Allah *Glorified is He* teaches and urges us to think well of the believers, and to avoid harbouring evil suspicion about them. Thus, concerning their false statements against ‘Aisha *Allah be pleased with her* Allah *Glorified is He* states: ‘Why do the believing men and women, whenever such [a rumour] is heard, not think the best of one another and say, “This is an obvious falsehood”?’ (*an-Nur*: 12)

A reasonable suspicion signifies being on one’s guard against harmful situations, without leaving a negative impression in your heart. For example, if someone tells you that some gangsters are lying in ambush, intending to harm you, then it is necessary to take the utmost precautionary measures. In such occasion, one ought to consider what he says to be true, and be cautious and wary of his warning, for it is most likely that he wishes for you safety and security, rather than harm or loss. In case such a suspicion involves an affair that relates to a ruling of the Divine Law, it is obligatory to verify the truthfulness of the matter.

Contemplate the subtlety and prudence of the Quranic style of rendering in the verse: ‘...too many assumptions...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 12). In other words, many harboured assumptions are in fact unwarranted and evil, and should be completely avoided. Nonetheless, it is reasonable and permissible to have suspicions in some cases. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* states thereafter: ‘...some assumptions are sinful...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 12). In other words, not all suspicion is sinful, yet be wary of falling into sin when you harbour evil suspicion of the believers without clear proof or evidence.

Allah *Glorified is He* states: ‘...and do not spy on one another...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 12). This indicates the prohibition of following up, tracking the faults of people, or snooping into their private affairs, as Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* stated, ‘Whoever searches for the faults of other Muslims, Allah will search for his faults and disgrace him in his very own home.’⁽¹⁾

(1) ‘Abd Ar-Razzaq relates in his *Musannaf* (20251) on the authority of ‘Abban and others, that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* stood up after ‘Asr Prayer and =

It is worth mentioning here one of the subtleties of the Divine Names of Allah. It can be noticed that many Divine Names have opposite meanings, as is the case with His Honourable Names: *Al-Muhyi* 'The One Who Grants life' and *Al-Mumit* 'The One Who Causes Death;' *Al-Mu'izz* 'The Exalter' and *Al-Mudhill* 'The Humiliator;' and *Al-Qabid* 'The Restrainer' and *Al-Basit* 'The Outspreader.'

However, the Divine Name *As-Sattar* 'The Veiler,' does not have a name with opposite meaning, such as *Al-Faddah* 'The Exposer.' Glorified and Exalted is Allah above having such an attribute! For His veil that covers the faults of his servants is left suspended. Whatever they may have committed in secret, He does not expose them. Furthermore, the name (*As-Sattar*) takes a morphological form that indicates hyperbole, from the base verb of *satara* 'to veil.'

In a Qudsi Hadith, Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'I loathe the sinner, but I detest the one who searches for his faults.' This is because searching for the faults and errors of others results in circulating immorality in the Muslim community.

Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* protects the community of believers from such an act, and it is enough of an indication that the one who commits sins in secrecy still has within him the modesty that is the natural outcome of true faith. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* stated, 'If you are tried – that is, with committing some sins – then conceal them.'⁽¹⁾

= *raised his voice that he could be heard by women in seclusion in their private rooms, saying, 'O you who have professed Islam with their tongues, but in whose hearts faith has yet to enter! Do not harm the believers, and do not search for their faults, for indeed, whoever searches for the faults of believers, Allah will search for his faults, and if Allah searches for the fault of anyone, He will disgrace him in his own home.'* This is also narrated in the Musnad of Abu Yaala Al-Mawsili (7257), on the authority of Abu Barza Al-Aslami, with the wording 'in his very own home,' not 'in the middle of his house,' which is narrated by At-Tabarani in his *Al-Mu'jam Al-kabir* (11281), on the authority of Ibn Abbas Allah be pleased with him and by Al-Bayhaqi in his *Shu'ab Al-Iman* (9331, 10748), on the authority of Al-Bara ibn Azib Allah be pleased with him.

- (1) Narrated by Malik in his *Muwatta* (1299) with the following wording, 'whoever is stricken by any of these moral defilements should veil them with the veil of Allah, Whoever reveals to us his wrong action, we inflict upon him [the punishment according to] what is in the Book of Allah.' It is similarly narrated by Al-Bayhaqi in his *As-Sunnan As-Sughra* (2747).

This is similar to the case where one is unable to fast in the month of *Ramadan*, for example, and has a legitimate excuse, and thus is allowed to eat during the day. Despite his excuse, he is not allowed to eat publicly in front of people such that he serves as an immoral example to the young, who may not be aware of these excuses.

For when they see him, it allows an idea to ferment in their subconscious that it is permissible for them to break their fast and eat during the daytime in *Ramadan*. Thus, it is incumbent upon him to conceal himself whenever he eats during such days, in order not to serve as an example for others to follow.

Explaining the gravity of spying, the jurists have stated⁽¹⁾: ‘If a man were to live in a hut made of reed and sticks, and another person came and stole a look into his house through an eyehole, thereby getting his eye gouged out with a stick by the owner of the hut, he would not be subject to retaliatory punishment by the law, nor would he have to pay any compensatory indemnity, for the other man effectively invaded the privacy of his house and stole a glance at what was going on inside without his permission.’

A similar incident occurred to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*⁽²⁾ as he was informed that a man was looking at him through one of the eyeholes of his door. It was also narrated⁽³⁾ that ‘Umar Allah *be pleased with him* used to investigate the state of affairs of his people by carrying out night patrols, and he received word of a man that was drinking wine with his

(1) This is based on the Hadith narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah *be pleased with him* that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said ‘If someone snoops into your house, without your permission, and you then throw a pebble at him, and thereby gouge his eye out, there is no sin upon you.’ This is narrated by Ibn Hibban in his *Sahih* (6109).

(2) Abu Dharr Allah *be pleased with him* narrated that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘If anyone uncovers a veil placed to protect one’s privacy, and then steals a glance without permission to do so, he has transgressed a boundary that he is not permitted, and if a man were to gouge out his eye, it would be shed with impunity (without compensation). However, if a man were to pass by a door without a covering, and see the people inside, there would be no fault upon him; rather, the fault would be upon the people of the house.’ This is narrated by Ahmad in his *Musnad* (20591).

(3) The story of ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab Allah *be pleased with him* entering on a man narrated to have been drinking liquor.

companions in his house. Hence, he scaled the walls of the man's house and found him sitting with one of his companions, with no alcohol present in their midst, or anything similar to it whatsoever. When the man saw him, he said, 'You suspected me of such-and-such a deed; yet you neglected several religious aspects that are more important to pay heed to. Firstly, you entered the house by way of scaling the walls, whereas Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...So go to houses by the gates thereof...' (*al-Baqara*: 189). Secondly, you entered my house without my permission.' Thereupon, 'Umar *Allah be pleased with him* went away, without saying anything to him.⁽¹⁾

Now there is a difference between *tajassus* 'spying' and *tahassus* 'making inquiries.' *Tahassus* is to follow up and look into the matters of other people without the intention of following up on their faults. This is clear in the Quranic verse: '[Hence,] O my sons go forth and try to obtain some tidings of Joseph and his brother...' (*Yusuf*: 87), i.e., look for him until you find him, just as detectives might do.

In the Quranic verse: '...or speak ill of people behind their backs...' (*al-Hujurat*: 12), there is a prohibition from backbiting in general, for the Quran does not specify the one who backbites, or the one who is backbitten. When Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was asked about backbiting, he responded, 'It is to mention something of your brother in his absence which he would dislike.' It was asked, 'What if what I say is actually

(1) *Al-Askari relates in Al-Awa'il (1/43) that 'Umar Allah be pleased with him used to make night patrols in Midyan, and once he heard the sound of a man singing in his house, so he entered it from the back and found a woman with him and some wine. He said, 'What is this, enemy of Allah?' He responded, 'Do not mark this against me, Commander of the Faithful! For if I have disobeyed Allah in one matter, you have indeed disobeyed Him in three: Allah Glorified is He says: '...and do not spy upon one another...' (al-Hujurat: 12) yet, you have spied on me. He Glorified is He says: '...So go to houses by the gates thereof...' (al-Baqara: 189), but you scaled the walls of my house. He Glorified is He says: '...But whenever you enter [any of these] houses, greet one another...' (an-Nur: 61), but you entered my house without any greetings of peace.' At that point, 'Umar Allah be pleased with him said, 'So do you have something of goodness in you such that you will turn towards what is good and right if I forgive you?' 'Yes, Commander of the Faithful! By Allah, I make it incumbent on myself that if you forgive me, I will not return to such deeds.' Thus, 'Umar Allah be pleased with him forgave him.*

true of my brother?’ He responded, ‘If it is actually true of him, then you have backbitten him. If he has nothing of what you claim to be in him, then you have calumniated him.’⁽¹⁾ In other words, you have fabricated a lie and have spoken falsely against him.

Then, the Quran gives a physical example of the nature of backbiting; as stated in the verse: ‘...Would any of you like to eat the flesh of your dead brother? No, you would hate it...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 12).

Ponder over how many repulsive characteristics there are in this portrayal that expresses the hideousness of such a deed. The one that speaks ill of his brother behind his back in his absence is like the one who eats his flesh when he is dead; in other words, when he is absent from life and is unable to defend himself. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* has likened backbiting with a repugnant portrayal of the deed, from which any sound human being would flee.

Commentators of the Quran stated that the occasion for the revelation of this verse is related to Al-Walid ibn ‘Uqba ibn Abu Mu’it⁽²⁾. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* sent him as an envoy to collect the alms that were due from the tribe of Banu Mustaliq to whom he owed an indemnity for killing one of them during the pre-Islamic Age of Ignorance. When he encountered them and saw them coming out to meet him, he feared that they would exact revenge, and returned to Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and said, ‘They have withheld payment of the alms that are due.’

It was also narrated⁽³⁾ that Usama ibn Zayd *Allah be pleased with him* was managing the supply and distribution of food in the house of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Two men wished him to provide them with food, so they sent Salman Al-Farisi *Allah be pleased with him* to request food from him, and when he asked him, Usama *Allah be pleased with him* replied, ‘We have no more food.’ Thereupon, Salman *Allah be pleased with him* returned to them and said, ‘Usama said that they have no more food.’ They responded,

(1) Narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih* (4690), Abu Dawud in his *Sunnan* (4231), At-Tirmidhi in his *Sunnan* (1857), and Ahmad in his *Musnad* (6849, 8625, 8648, 9522). All of them narrated it on the authority of Ibn Abbas *Allah be pleased with him*.

(2) The story of Al-Walid ibn ‘Uqba ibn Abu Mu’it with the people of Banu Mustaliq

(3) The story of the two men who accused Usama ibn Zayd of being a miser

‘No, he has food, but he was being stingy with you.’ Then they said to Salman, ‘You have a face that portends misfortune, and if you were to go to a well of generous provision – i.e., an ebullient, bubbling well – all of its water would disappear.’

In this manner, they spoke ill of Usama and Salman *Allah be pleased with them* behind their backs. Upon seeing those two men, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘Indeed, I can smell the odour of stinking meat from your mouths.’ They replied, ‘O Messenger of Allah! By Allah, we have not eaten any meat!’ He responded, ‘You have indeed backbitten Usama and Salman: go to them and conciliate them,’⁽¹⁾ for if you do not conciliate the person you have backbitten, you will be viler and fouler than the adulterer in the sight of Allah.

Moreover, when a man once spoke ill of Ibn Sirin⁽²⁾ behind his back, the man thereafter came to him and said, ‘O Imam! I came to free myself of sin from what I have done to you.’ He responded, ‘Why is that?’ The man said, ‘Because I have backbitten you.’ He replied, ‘I do not make lawful what Allah has forbidden.’

(1) *Ibn Abu Hatim renarrated from As-Suddi that Salman Al-Farisi Allah be pleased with him was with two men on a trip serving them and taking a share of their food. Salman Allah be pleased with him fell asleep one day, and his companion called out for him, but did not find him, and so they pitched their tent saying: ‘Salman wishes for nothing other than coming across limited food and a pitched tent.’ Then, when Salman came, they sent him to Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him to request for food for them. He set off and came to Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him saying, ‘O Messenger of Allah! My friends have sent me to have you provision them with food, if you have any.’ He replied, ‘Do your companions not have food? They have already consumed food.’ Accordingly, Salman returned and apprised them of the situation. They set off and came to Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him and said, ‘By the One Who Sent you with The Truth, we have not encountered any food since we arrived.’ He responded, ‘Indeed, the two of you have supplied yourselves with food by partaking of the consumption of Salman’s flesh with what you have said,’ and then the verse was revealed: ‘...Would any of you like to eat the flesh of your dead brother...’ (al-Hujurat: 12). This is mentioned by As-Suyuti in Ad-Durr Al-Manthur (while commenting on the verse 12 of al-Hujurat).*

(2) *Muhammad ibn Sirin Al-Basri, of the Ansar by clientage, whose agnomen is Abu Bakr, was the prominent scholar of his age in Basra in the religious sciences, one of the Followers, the generation that came right after the time of Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him and from amongst the elite writers. He was born, and passed way, in Basra (33-111 AH). He was raised as a trader of cloth, and suffered from deafness. He was famous for his scrupulousness in matters of religion and for his knowledge of the interpretation of dreams [See: Al-Alam by Az-Zirikli (6/154)].*

Al-Hasan Al-Basri once found out that a man had spoken ill of him behind his back. Consequently, he sent his servant to the man with a dish of fresh dates, and told him to say to the man, 'This is a gift from my master, for he found out that you gave him a gift of your good deeds yesterday.'⁽¹⁾

This indicates that you must pay for violating the right of the one whom you have backbitten from your store of good deeds. In case you have no good deeds, the wronged man's evil deeds are taken from him and thrown upon you. This was already indicated in the Noble Hadith of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in this regard.⁽²⁾

Allah *Glorified is He* states: '...So be mindful of Allah: Allah is ever Relenting, Most Merciful' (*al-Hujurat*: 12). This verse means that one should be conscious of Allah in His ordinances with respect to what He has forbidden, and stay away from those matters that bring about His punishment.

'...Allah is ever Relenting, Most Merciful' (*al-Hujurat*: 12). In other words, Allah *Glorified is He* is ever Relenting to the one who repents, and full of Mercy to the one who turns to Him in penitence.

The conclusion of the verse inspires the sinner with hope in the Mercy of Allah. The one who backbites should not despair of the His Mercy *Glorified is He*. If someone's tongue runs away with him and slips in error, falling into backbiting, he should rush to repent without delay. Furthermore, knowing that His Sustainer is Oft Returning and Merciful, one should return to Him as soon as possible, and not savour his evil deed, nor persist in them.

(1) Imam Al-Ghazali writes in his *Ihya'* 'Ulum Ad-Din (2/347) that a man said to Al-Hasan Al-Basri, 'So-and-so has spoken ill of you behind your back.' Subsequently, he sent this person fresh dates in a dish and said, 'It has reached me that you granted me a gift of your good deeds. Thus I wished to recompense you with something equivalent; so please forgive me, for I really cannot recompense you to quite the same degree.'

(2) *This is the case with any misdeed committed against one's Muslim brother. Anas ibn Malik Allah be pleased with him narrated that Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said, 'May Allah have mercy upon the slave who has oppressed his brother, then comes to him begging for his forgiveness before the Day of Judgment when no dirham or dinar will compensate him for wrong deeds, but rather, only his own good deeds will serve as compensation.'* It was asked, 'O Messenger of Allah, what if he has no good deeds?' He responded, 'The sins of the oppressed person will be loaded upon his own sins.' This is narrated by At-Tabarani in his *Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat* (5312).

One of the greatest blessings Allah *Glorified is He* bestowed upon us as previously mentioned is that He has allowed for repentance, and opened the doors of its acceptance for us. For if it were not the case, sinners would persist in their deeds, and all life would be corrupted and destroyed.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* states: ⁽¹⁾

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ
لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾

People, We created you all from a single man and a single woman, and made you into races and tribes so that you should recognize one another. In God's eyes, the most honoured of you are the ones most mindful of Him: God is all knowing, all aware [13] (The Quran, *al-Hujurat*: 13)

It can be noticed that the previous uses of the vocative were directed at the believers because the verses with such calling convey directives and legislative rules pertaining to the believers particularly. This is because Allah *Glorified is He* does not impose legal responsibility except upon those who believe in Him.

In the verse under discussion, the vocative addresses the generality of humankind – all of humanity – drawing our attention to the Miracle of creation, and to the Sublimity of the Creator *Glorified is He*. This verse encompasses one and all since the Creator *Glorified is He* created the believer and the disbeliever, the male and the female which are the source of all creation, for the male does not procreate by himself, neither does the female.

(1) Regarding the occasion for the revelation of the verse, Ibn 'Abbas Allah be pleased with him stated, 'This verse was revealed concerning Thabit ibn Qays, and his calling the man who did not move aside to make space for him "son of So-and-so." Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him responded, "Who was the one mentioning 'So-and-so'?" Thabit stood up and said, "It was me, O Messenger of Allah." So he said, "Take a look upon the faces of the people in our gathering," which he did. Then he peace and blessings be upon him said, "What did you see?" to which he replied, "I saw some white people, some black people, and some red people." He responded, "You are not to give preference to anyone except with respect to their level of religious practice and piety.' Then, Allah *Glorified is He* revealed this verse.' This is narrated by Al-Wahidi An-Naysaburi in his *Asbab An-Nuzul* (p. 224).

However, the verse in the chapter of *as-Sajda* in which Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘Who made good everything that He has created and He began the creation of man from dust. [8] Then He made his progeny of an extract, of water held in light estimation.’ (*as-Sajda*: 7-8) refers to the first creature of mankind, Adam *peace be upon him*. Allah created and fashioned him with His Hands. Here, we should know that He *the Almighty* made everything in the universe subject to His Command, ‘Be!’ and it is.’

Hence, Allah says to the Satan: ‘He said: O Iblis! What prevented you that you should do obeisance to him whom I created with My Two Hands?’ (*Sad*: 75) He *the Almighty* wonders how it is that the Satan refuses to prostrate to something that He has created with His Hands. Thus, Iblis was not actually prostrating to Adam *peace be upon him* but rather bowing down in obedience to the One Who commanded him to prostrate.

After creating Adam, Allah brought forth his offspring to come after him; He *the Almighty* says: ‘Of an extract, of water held in light estimation.’ (*as-Sajda*: 8) This requires matrimony between the male and the female. In the chapter of *an-Nisa*, Allah says: ‘O people! Be careful of [your duty to] your Lord, Who created you from a single being.’ (*an-Nisa*: 1) That single being is Adam *peace be upon him*. He *the Almighty* then says: ‘And from it created its mate.’ (*an-Nisa*: 1) This part of the verse refers to Eve.

Thus, when Allah says in the verse we are studying that He created us all from a single man and a single woman, He does not mean the beginning of human creation, but rather, He means the offspring that have been brought forth after the first of human creation. That is why He *the Almighty* says in the last verse of the chapter of *an-Nisa*: ‘And spread from these two, many men and women.’ (*an-Nisa*: 1) These men and women dispersed across the earth and became: ‘tribes and families.’ (*al-Hujurat*: 13) The Arabs constitute a nation, so are the Romans and so are the Persians. Thereafter, the peoples were divided into tribes which consequently divided into clans and the clans into family lines and so forth.

Furthermore, the members of a single family have different names, for we do not leave individuals without names to refer to, in order that we get to know one another. Thus, this one is named Mohamed, that one is named

Ahmad, while another is Fatima and so on. The wisdom behind this is: 'that you may know each other...' (*al-Hujurat*: 13). This is with regards to individuals and with regards to peoples and nations.

Becoming mutually acquainted and familiar with one another is something that is necessary for human beings, for their interests are maintained by getting to know one another. Furthermore, the vagaries of life will compel them to become so acquainted. They will need one another because, as we have previously stated, Allah *Glorified is He* has distributed the sources of His bounty amongst all of His creation. What might be available with you may not be present in another person. Thus, we see Europe, which has attained such a high level of civilization and progress, in need of the residents of the deserts- the shepherds of sheep, goats, and camels-due to the petroleum and the valuable natural resources that are present in their lands.

This difference that exists between the bounties that have been bestowed upon various peoples leads human beings to assist and rely on one another. They complete what is lacking in each other. Therefore, this difference leads to integration and not to mutual opposition and stubborn resistance.

We observe this process of integration in the matter of the creation of the man and the woman. The man and the woman are not contrary and opposed to each other, but rather, they are two complementary elements that make each other integral and whole. Each one of them has a function to carry out and this function cannot be fulfilled by the other.

Allah *Glorified is He* has clarified this matter to us with His statement 'I swear by the night when it draws a veil and the day when it shines in brightness.' (*al-Layl*: 1-2) Does any sane person claim that the night is contrary and opposed to the day? Just like the day and the night are the man and the woman. Thus, Allah swears by creating them, i.e. the male and the female afterwards: 'And the creating of the male and the female.' (*al-Layl*: 3) Thus, the man was created for taking upon the burdens of the hardships of life, toil and work, whilst the woman was created for manifesting her affection and compassion. Everyone is assisted to carry out what they were created for.

This is why we are amazed at those who call out for equality between the man and the woman. How is this possible when each of them has a special

role and duty for which they were created? Furthermore, some oppress women and say, 'They are weak and lacking in intelligence and in religion.' In spite of the fact that the role of the intellect is to arrange and evaluate various options and choose one of these alternatives from amongst the others, this is not the duty of the woman, but rather, the duty of the man, who lead the family through the voyage of life.

As for the woman, her duty is one of showing and manifesting compassion. She feels compassion for the young and the old; she opens her heart to embrace everyone and gives comfort to the tired and the sick of her family. In addition, we witness that when she becomes a widow, she takes on both the duties of the man and the woman, that is, she takes over the role of her husband as well, and it may well be that she is even more successful in raising her children and protecting them.

Allah *Glorified is He* created Adam *peace be upon him* from clay; He *the Almighty* then fashioned him and breathed into him of His Spirit. However, He did not create Eve in the same manner. Rather, He took part of one of the ribs of Adam and created Eve from that. Why did He not create her in the manner of His creation of Adam *peace be upon him*? Some of the Quranic commentators have said that He created her from the man in order that he may have guardianship over her.

Similarly, in the case of childbearing, she takes a seed, i.e. the sperm from a man and she herself completes the entire process of producing forth the offspring. Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...and created its mate of the same [kind].' (*an-Nisa*': 1) Further, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* says: 'Women have been created from a rib and the most curved portion of the rib is the upper portion.'⁽¹⁾ Furthermore, just as Adam is distinguished and noble due to his being created by Allah and fashioned by His Hands, similarly, Eve is distinguished and noble due to her being created from something that Allah created with His Hands.

Now the world today is preoccupied with the matter of cloning or the biological replication, which is to make an exact copy of a plant or animal by taking a cell from it and replicate it, exactly just as when we copy a book and

(1) Narrated by *Al-Bukhari and Muslim*

come with a copy of it. However, we observe this process with rocks, for instance. We see some of different sizes, but do we observe any individual rock, for example, growing in size? We never do! Why is this so? Some experts said that is so because they have deep deposits within the earth, in which the process of replication takes place. Once they arise out of the earth and are exposed to the atmospheric conditions, they solidify into the forms that they have assumed at that particular instant in time.

Likewise, we observe this process with plants. Have you seen, for example, the seeds of sugar cane or figs? No, they do not have seeds. Rather, we merely take a small shoot of cane and plant it in the ground or we take one of the twigs of the fig tree and plant it in the ground, and thereafter it gives us a new fig tree. Is this not a replication? It is also conceivable that we find something similar with animate life. Indeed, they have cloned animals as happened with the sheep Dolly.

As for the human beings, no one can possibly genetically clone him, for he is distinct from the rest of the species that exist in the universe. Humans are the vicegerent of Allah upon the earth. They are honoured creatures that the rest of the species of the universe are at their service. Thus, if the replication of solids and plants and animals is conceivable, it is impossible to ever conceive of such a process of cloning with human beings, for their propagation requires certain conditions to be in place and general rules to be followed. In addition, it should not result merely from deriving an exact copy through some process of replication of the original.

Therefore, the propagation of the human species does not take place except through the meeting of the two sexes, the male and the female, a matter which only takes place within a family that embraces the child, gives it love and affection, raises it up and takes care of it and looks after it. It is not seemly for the human being to be born from an incubator like young chicks.

It is for this reason that the childhood of a human being is the longest of all created species. Some children amongst us remain in a state of childhood until the age of fourteen, while birds and animals take care of and attend to their young until they are able to move and eat on their own. Then they leave them to their own devices, as if they never even knew them. It may well happen that an animal is killed in front of its mother and she is wholly unaware of it.

So how is it possible for us to conceive of cloning a human being when the human is the ennobled vicegerent of Allah on earth? Indeed, all religions reject fornication, refuse to accept that a child be born illegally and reject the idea of throwing a new-born out in the street or even being raised in an orphanage. So what would be the case if genetic replication were actually to take place?

It is from this point of departure that we say that the process of genetic replication will never take place with respect to the human being, and that no-one is capable of it except Allah, the Creator of the human being, Who wishes goodness for him and wants that he be raised in the arms of the father who will guard and protect it and the mother who will show love and affection to it. Furthermore, from the two of them, it will imbibe virtues of moral excellence and learn its system of values.

Nevertheless, their success in cloning an animal does not impugn in any way the Divine Power of Allah. Rather, it is a novel proof from amongst the various signs that prove one's faith in His Power. For those that carried out the genetic replication of the sheep did not produce it from nothing. Rather, they produced it from another sheep which was the creation of Allah. Furthermore, the intellect which enabled them to make this in the first place is also one of Allah's creations.

Next in the verse we are discussing, Allah *Glorified is He* lays down a general principle by which some of these peoples and tribes are preferred above others; He *the Almighty* says: '...surely the most honorable of you with Allah is the one among you most careful [of his duty].' (*al-Hujurat*: 13) This means that the real measure of preference of individuals is their level of fearing Allah. Thus, Allah says in a Qudsi Hadith that He established lineage for us and we established lineage for ourselves. He established that 'The noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the One Who is most deeply conscious of Him', but we refused and said, 'The most noble of us is so-and-so a person who is the son of so-and-so a person.' Thus, Allah says that today, i.e. the Day of Judgement, He will uphold His Establishment of lineage and put aside the lines of kinship that we established for ourselves.⁽¹⁾

(1) Narrated by *Al-Hakim*

Then He *the Almighty* concludes the verse, saying that He is All Knowing, All-Aware. He is All Knowing of His creation; He gives to everything from amongst them what is appropriate for them in terms of their duties and roles for life, just as He says elsewhere: ‘Does He not know, Who created, and He is the Knower of the subtleties, the All-Aware?’ (*al-Mulk*: 14)

Allah is the Most Knowledgeable of His creation and the Most Knowledge of their various capacities and their measures. For every one of them, He facilitates the activities that are most appropriate. Thus, we see various classes amongst humanity: a university professor; a blacksmith, a smelter, a carpenter, a shoe-shiner, craftsman, a farmer, etc. If it were not the case and if all of humankind were university professors, how could life operate and move forward?!

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ ءَامَنَّا قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ
وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

The desert Arabs say, ‘We have faith.’ [Prophet], tell them, ‘You do not have faith. What you should say instead is, “We have submitted,” for faith has not yet entered your hearts.’ If you obey God and His Messenger, He will not diminish any of your deeds: He is most forgiving and most merciful [14]

(The Quran, *al-Hujurat*: 14)

The desert Arabs are the Bedouins. They are the dwellers of the desert who have not settled in civilised regions of towns and cities. Therefore, their personality has become dominated with the characteristics of roughness and harshness. Allah *Glorified is He* informs us about them, noting that they have said that they have faith. But He is More Knowledgeable of their true state and that they have not truly attained to the rank of those who have faith, for faith is not merely words that are proclaimed, but rather, it is something firmly embedded within the heart.

However, Islam is something of outward appearance including the actions of the limbs such as fasting, praying, and other similar acts of worship. That is why Allah corrected their statement and said: ‘...Tell them, ‘You do not have

faith. What you should say instead is, “We have submitted” (*al-Hujurat*: 14). This means that they carry out the obligations of Islam with the limbs, but their hearts are devoid of faith. Furthermore, the moment Allah tells them that they do not have faith is an indication of something they determined in their hearts and there is no secret of His servants that is hidden from Him, something of which they are well aware.

Thus, Allah informs them of the reality of what is in their hearts and tells them to be honest with their own selves and to submit outwardly, for He *the Almighty* knows what is hidden and concealed in their hearts. In this situation, they actually resemble hypocrites as they were eager to perform the prayers in the very first row and to listen to the Quran being recited. All of these are outward indications of faith, yet Allah is fully aware of what is in their hearts and minds, that is, He *the Almighty* knows best that their utterance is not in accordance with what they uttered by their tongues.

Allah *Glorified is He* says that faith has not yet entered their hearts. He uses a particle of negation that negates the occurrence of an event in the past, but gives an additional meaning of the possibility of the occurrence of this action afterwards, just as when, upon entering a garden, for example, you say, ‘The garden has not produced any fruit as of yet.’ In other words, there is a possibility that it might produce fruit sometime in the future.

That is why scholars have said regarding this verse that it does mean that the door of faith has not been closed to them. Rather, it brings glad tidings of the fact that they will attain to faith sometime in the future. Furthermore, the Quran unveils that which is hidden in their hearts, meanwhile notifying Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* of their actual state that will make them think over the matter, thus become convinced, and enter the realm of true faith.

Further, Allah *Glorified is He* says that if they obey Him and His Messenger, He will not diminish any of their deeds. He reassures them that fruits of their deeds performed sincerely for His sake are preserved and accounted. Such deeds will not disappear, nor will He diminish any of them from their account.

Allah concludes the verse saying that He is the Most Forgiving and the Most Merciful; He says elsewhere that ‘He is Most Forgiving and Most

Merciful.' (*Saba'*: 2) Thus, He *the Almighty* sometimes mentions the attribute of mercy before that of forgiveness and vice versa; He *the Almighty* does so according to the circumstances and conditions of that event. For example, when a criminal stands in front of the judge confessing his crime, but the judge notices that he is poor and needy with shabby clothes and has a pale face, he takes pity on him, thus orders that he be given food and clothing, and thereafter forgives him. In this case, he has preceded forgiveness with mercy or it can be the other way round where the judge forgives him first and then before the man leaves his assembly, the judge orders his men to give him such-and-such favours.

The root of the verb *Yalitu* (to diminish) has been mentioned in another place wherein Allah says: 'And [as for] those who believe and their offspring follow them in faith, We will unite with them their offspring and We will not diminish to them aught of their work.' (*at-Tur*: 21) We notice that the discourse here is about the assembly of believers and their offspring. The offspring that come after the believers are also believers, so why will Allah unite and make them follow each other thereafter?

Some of the Quranic commentators have said that they have been mentioned afterwards due to their respective levels of reward, for each of the two groups has good deeds in their favour, but the deeds of the fathers are more and their station is higher, and thus their standing is followed by that of their descendants and they are placed together in one general realm. Thus those of a lower rank follow upon those of the higher rank.

Allah stipulates that they have to obey Him and His Messenger. Someone might ask, 'In what aspects should they obey Him and His Messenger?' It is to obey them in terms of attaining to faith, as they were already Muslims but Allah wished to urge and encourage them to attain true faith and remove any hint of lying or false allegations from them.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا
بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصّٰدِقُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

The true believers are the ones who have faith in God and His Messenger and leave all doubt behind, the ones who have struggled with their possessions and their persons in God's way: they are the ones who are true [15]
(The Quran, *al-Hujurat*: 15)

Allah *Glorified is He* wishes to clarify to them what true faith is. It is not merely a matter of words that are professed by the tongue. Rather, it is a firm belief that is not seized by any doubt or misgiving. The true believers are the ones who have faith in Allah and His Messenger and leave all doubt behind. They believed in Allah and His Oneness, and that He Alone is the Creator, the Provider, and the Governor of all of the affairs in this universe. They believed in His Divine Names and Attributes. Likewise, they believed in Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and that he was trustworthy and truthful in conveying the Message of faith from Allah to them. They had no misgivings, nor did they have any doubt in any of these matters whatsoever.

Furthermore, among the attributes of those who believe is that they struggled with their possessions and their persons in Allah's Way. Is there any greater proof of the reality of faith and sincerity therein than your sacrificing yourself for the sake of this faith? Thus, Allah says that those are actually the true believers. They are only the believers who really and truly believe and have faith. They have these distinguishing attributes. In addition, at the end of the verse, He describes them with truthfulness in their faith, saying: 'they are the ones who are true.' (*al-Hujurat*: 15)

Yes, they are those who are truthful in their faith, for they sacrificed with the most precious and noble objects any human being possesses including wealth and soul. The martyr does not sacrifice himself nor give out his wealth unless he is certain that what he will find is better than what he left behind in this worldly life with Allah. That is why Allah will grant him everlasting life such that he will not experience any death afterwards. In this regard, He *Glorified is He* says: 'And

reckon not those who are killed in Allah's Way as dead; nay, they are alive [and] are provided sustenance from their Lord.' (*Al- 'Imran*: 169)

Allah says that He will deal with them in the manner of the people of paradise. They will eat, drink, and enjoy themselves. Note here that He *Glorified is He* describes this life and even attributes it to Himself. In other words, they are not alive with respect to humans, but rather, they are alive in the presence and knowledge of their Lord. This means that if you were to go to the gravesite of a martyr and open his tomb, you would not find him alive, for he is not alive in a way that you can perceive; rather, he is alive in a way that Allah perceives.

When Allah says that such people with such characters are the true believers, there is an intimation of those who have lied against Him and falsely alleged faith. It is as if He were saying to them, 'Indeed, these people have attained to faith and were truthful and sincere in their profession of faith, while you denied the true faith and overstepped the boundaries of the truth.

He says:

قُلْ أَتَعْلَمُونَ اللَّهَ بِدِينِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾

**Say, 'Do you presume to teach God about your religion,
when God knows every- thing in the heavens and earth,
and He has full knowledge of all things?' [16]
(The Quran, *al-Hujurat*: 16)**

Allah *Glorified is He* tells them, i.e. the (Bedouin) Arabs to pay attention to this point of truth: for He is their Creator and He knows well what is within their hearts, for no secret is hidden from Him. So beware of saying, 'We have faith!' thinking that you can mask the truth and cover for your lies, for He *the Almighty* knows which of you is a believer and which of you is not. In addition, He knows which of you is truthful in his belief and which of you is hypocrite.

He *the Almighty* wonders that they, i.e. the (Bedouin Arabs) presume to teach Him about their religion. In other words, do you think that you are informing

Him of your real level of faith? How is this so while He *Glorified is He* knows all that is in the heavens and all that is in earth?! Nothing from either of these two realms is hidden from Him, but rather, He has full knowledge of all things. His Knowledge *Glorified is He* does not only encompass the Heavens and the earth, but rather crosses those bounds into the very depths of all of creation.

This is because the Heavens and the earth are part of the vast universe of Allah. That is why He *the Almighty* describes them both and all what is contained within ‘like a ring that you have cast upon wide open space of desert.’⁽¹⁾ Thus, what we know of the Heavens and the earth is very little in comparison to all the vastness of the universe.

He *the Almighty* then says:

يَمُنُونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قُلْ لَا تَمُنُوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَمَكُمْ بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُ
عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

They think they have done you [Prophet] a favour by submitting. Say, ‘Do not consider your submission a favour to me; it is God who has done you a favour, by guiding you to faith, if you are truly sincere’ [17] (The Quran, *al-Hujurat*: 17)

It is related that this verse was revealed when a group of the desert Arabs, likely from the tribe of Banu Asad, came to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* while he was in the mosque and said, ‘We came to you in order to profess that there is no deity worthy of worship besides Allah and that you are the Messenger of Allah; we do so despite that you did not send us any envoy, nor did we ever fight you as did the tribe of so-and-so.’ Thus, Allah revealed this verse in question.

Therefore, who is bestowing a favour upon whom, for real? It is not necessary for you to make an outward show of your Islam to Messenger Muhammad because your Islam is for your own good and you are the ones who benefit from it. It is Islam that has safeguarded you from fighting and from being taken captive. You have assumed those aspects and duties that distinguish a

(1) Narrated by Ibn Battal and Ibn Hibban

Muslim from others, such as almsgiving and protection. Further, no act of obedience benefits Allah *Glorified is He* nor does any act of disobedience harm Him in any way.

Therefore, do not think that you are bestowing a favour upon anyone with your outward show of submission. Rather, it is Allah Who bestows a favour upon you. It is He Who guided you upon the path of rightness and guidance. If there were any grace of favour to be acknowledged, it would be the grace that Allah has bestowed upon you, for obedience to Allah and travelling along His Way is what safeguards the activities of your lives and organises them for you, not to contradict or go against what is actually in your own interests.

That is all if you are truly sincere. This conclusion means if you are truly sincere in your claims to having attained faith. That is because the particle 'if' here indicates doubt. Thus, it is as if they are showing off Islam which they actually deny in their own hearts; despite all of this, even if they were truly sincere in what they claim for themselves, it was not for them to consider their Islam to be a favour upon anyone in any case.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

**God knows the secrets of the heavens and
earth: He sees everything you do [18]
(The Quran, *al-Hujurat*: 18)**

We have already previously mentioned that the Heavens and the earth serve as a coffer within which are wonders and marvels from the creation of Allah that are much greater than the coffer itself. The general case is that whatever is contained within the coffer is higher in value and greater than that in which the contents are contained.

Thus, Allah says: 'And Allah's is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth.' (*Al-Imran*: 189) In addition, He *the Almighty* says in another verse: 'And Allah's is what is in the heavens and what is in the earth.' (*an-Najm*: 31) The Heavens and the earth despite whatever they contain of wonders of creation,

originality, and fine-tuned engineering, actually encompass what is even more wondrous than all of this.

Here, Allah *Glorified is He* speaks to us of what is in the heavens and the earth from the realm of the unseen world. Now the unseen realm of existence refers to everything that is absent from your awareness and consciousness. It may also be something that you are not aware of today but may yet manifest itself for you tomorrow. For example, electricity, before it was discovered, was absent from our awareness and we had no knowledge of it at all. But today, it has become a phenomenon that is witnessed every day, and we all experience and work with it.

If you were to consider the electromagnetic waves that carry voice and video through the atmosphere, you would find something that is truly astonishing. If you were to come with 100 radios and 100 television sets, place them altogether in one place and tuned each one to a different frequency, you would find different programs for each one, be they radio or TV programs. How did all of these waves cross paths in the same space of air and arrive with such precision and clarity, even if they were transmitted from the furthest countries of the earth?

All of these are secrets of the unseen realm of the Heavens and the earth that call us towards belief. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘We will soon show them Our signs in the universe and in their own souls, until it will become quite clear to them that it is the truth.’ (*Fussilat*: 53)

Despite the exaltedness of creation of the Heavens and the earth, the unseen realm of the Heavens and the earth is even greater. This unseen realm will continue to serve as a means of unexhausted support and assistance and an endless gift. It discloses something new to us from time to time, in order that the Quran continues to manifest its miraculous nature until the coming of the Last Hour.

It is out of the Wisdom of Allah *Glorified is He* that He has distributed the gifts of the Quran across all the various epochs of history in order that no age passes by the Quran, without it giving something of its gifts. Furthermore, these gifts come in accordance with the capacity of people’s intelligence and ability to understand and in accordance with the degree to which people

examine and ponder over the celestial Realm of Allah. It is from this that we understand the meaning of the statement of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* 'Its wonders never cease and it does not become exhausted of its meanings with continued reflection'.⁽¹⁾

You may read, for example, the greatest of odes. Eventually, you will certainly become weary of them after reading them over once or many times. However, whenever you read the Quran, you never become weary of it. In fact, your love for it increases every time you examine it closely and study carefully its meanings. This is because it is the Divine Speech of Allah that has a secret that is manifested with everyone who recites it; it is a gift to grant to everyone who ponders over it. Thus, the gifts of the Quran are copious and everyone who recites it takes something from them according to his capacity.

Allah concludes the chapter with this verse, indicating that the Dominion of Allah is vast and that its wonders do not come to an end, that is, they are unbounded and limitless. It indicates that whatever level of progress humanity attains to, the Quran will always have something new to give, as the verses of Allah contain what dazzles and overwhelms the intelligence.

In the past, we used to speak of the age of coal, then came the age of steam and after that came the age of electricity. Now, we speak of the age of nuclear and atomic power. So the question to be asked here is: 'Where were these new forms of power in the past?' The answer is that they were hidden within the Knowledge of Allah. He unveiled them to His servants until their thought progressed and advanced. All of these are in fact discoveries which no single person created or brought about on his own. Rather, all of it is from Allah and a bountiful inundation of His Gifts that had been stored up for a period of time up to our present day.

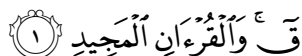
(1) *Narrated by Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi and Al-Hakim Al-Bayhaqi*

the chapter of

Qaf

In the Name of God,⁽¹⁾ the Most Merciful, the Dispenser of Mercy

The chapter of *Qaf*. Allah *the Almighty* says:



***Qaf*, by the glorious Quran! [1]
(The Quran, *Qaf*: 1)**

We have spoken before about the discrete letters that occur at the beginning of certain chapters of the Quran. So it is enough to say that these letters, like the letter *Qaf*, represent the unseen aspect of the Quran and as we have said, ‘the unseen is the pillar of faith. The illiterate farmer, for example, uses the television and switches from one channel to another without having any idea of how it works and how it is possible to flip through channels. He benefits from it without knowing how it works. Likewise, he uses a pump to draw water without knowing the mechanics of how it works. Similarly, when it comes to our standpoint with the discrete letters, we believe in them and we consign their meaning to the One Who said them.

Religion is composed of three things, which are doctrines that fill the heart; acts of worship and responsibilities that busy the body; the speech that conveys all these things through the work of the tongue. All the doctrines, responsibilities, and expressions have mysterious and unseen elements. Allah is unseen, but the effects of His Power in the universe can be perceived. It is as though

(1) The Islamic conception of 'Allah' is not the same as the Christian and Jewish conception of 'God'. However, the word 'Allah' does not refer to a tribal god or God of only Muslims; it refers to the Creator of the whole world, the One God (who has no son). We prefer, however, to use 'Allah' rather than 'God' as it has a unique character: it cannot be used to refer to any false gods and does not have any derivatives like goddess, gods, etc. It is a unique word used solely to describe the One God of this universe.

Allah *Glorified is He* gives us a mysterious unseen element in these things in order to test our faith, for what you know is proof of the truthfulness of what you do not know.

The same is the case of the discrete letters in the Noble Quran. We generally understand the Quran and know what it means, but the discrete letters are unseen to the sense that we must believe in them even if we do not know their real meanings. These letters remain as an indication of the miraculous nature of the Quran.

Thus, the verse we are discussing combines the two things, i.e. the unseen in the letter *Qaf* and the plain and perceptible aspect in the rest of the verse. These are the two elements of the Quran. The letter *Qaf* indicates the miraculous nature of the Quran followed by the words of Allah, 'By the glorious Quran' (*Qaf*: 1); so the verse combines the proof and the object of the proof.

The letter *Qaf* bears the meaning of a vow. It is a vow made on a single letter just as Allah swore a vow by single things as in: 'By the flight of time! Verily, man is bound to lose himself.' (*al-'Asr*: 1-2) Allah also says: 'I swear by the star when it goes down. Your companion does not err, nor does he go astray.' (*an-Najm*: 1-2)

Further, He *the Almighty* also swears vows by two letters, such as *Ya Sin*, *Ta Ha* and *Ha Mim*, just as He *the Almighty* swears by two of His creations as in the verses: 'I swear by the early hours of the day and the night when it covers with darkness.' (*ad-Duha*: 1-2) In addition, He *the Almighty* swears by three letters like *Alif Lam Mim*, as He *the Almighty* swears by three things in His saying, 'I swear by those who draw themselves out in ranks. Then those who drive away with reproof. Then those who recite, being mindful.' (*as-Saffat*: 1-3)

Moreover, Allah swears by four letters, a matter which is clear in His saying, '*Alif Lam Mim Sad*' (*al-A'raf*: 1); just as He swears by four things; Allah says: 'I swear by the fig and the olive and mount Sinai and this city made secure, Certainly We created man in the best make.' (*at-Tin*: 1-3) He also swears by five letters when He says: '*Kaf Ha Ya 'Ayn Sad*' (*Maryam*: 1) and swears by five things when He says: 'I swear by the Mountain, And the

Book written. In an outstretched fine parchment, And the House [*Ka'ba*] that is visited, And the elevated canopy, And the swollen sea.' (*at-Tur*:1-6)

Therefore, there were five kinds of vow, starting from those with one letter to those with five letters. However, no vow in the Quran goes any further than this, lest it be difficult to say. In addition, there is no root word in Arabic which has more than five letters. However, when Allah swears with His cosmological signs, He sometimes goes further than five objects such as when He says: 'I swear by the sun and its brilliance and the moon when it follows the sun and the day when it shows it and the night when it draws a veil over it and the heaven and Him Who made it and the earth and Him Who extended it and the soul and Him Who made it perfect.' (*ash-Shams*: 1-7) Had He *the Almighty* done the same with the vows He made with the discrete letters, He would have gone beyond the bounds of how a single Arabic word is constructed.

We may also observe that Allah only swears with the discrete letters at the beginnings of the chapters of the Quran, unlike vows by cosmological signs that can be made in the middle of them such as when Allah says: 'Nay; I swear by the moon and the night when it departs and the daybreak when it shines.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 32-34) Moreover, the vows which are made by the discrete letters are not preceded by the Arabic letter *wa* (by) but is used in those vows which we understand. Allah did not say 'Consider *Qaf*' because the Arabic letter *wa* is a particle or a letter like *Qaf*, so they would be confusing if placed together. This is one of the miracles of the Quran which we must take some time over which to ponder.

Believing in the unseen is what proves the sincerity of faith; otherwise, what distinction would there be if every verse of the Quran was plain and obvious in its meaning? What distinction would be there if everything about the religion was known to us and subject to logical reasoning and proof? We have explained before that belief in perceptible things is something normal which everyone does. What is important is that you believe in what you cannot see, out of trust for the one who tells you of them.

Suppose you go to the doctor and he, after examining you, prescribes medicine for you. Tell me, do you argue with him as to why he prescribes

this particular medicine or that one? You do not argue with him because you went to him willingly and trusted him, and you are ready to follow his instructions and take the medicine he prescribes even though you do not know anything about it. Thus, if you trust the doctor, who is a man like you and me and who is subject to error, then what about Allah? Will you not trust His Word?

Therefore, due to the importance of faith in the unseen, Allah praises those who believe in it, saying: 'Those who believe in the unseen.' (*al-Baqara*: 3) Just as we believe in the verses whose meanings are clear, we also must believe in the discrete letters whose meanings may be unclear; the former is the perceptible Quran and while the latter is the unseen aspect of the Quran. Just as we believe in the perceptible cosmological signs, we also believe in Allah Who created and made them, though He cannot be seen.

Allah says: 'By the glorious Quran.' (*Qaf*: 1) The Quran is the name for what came down from Allah upon the heart of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* which proves that the Message he delivered was true. It was called 'Quran' to indicate that it is 'recited', and it is called 'The Book' to indicate that it is written, for it is written down on pages and memorised in hearts.

In addition, the Quran has a special distinction which no other Scripture before it had. It contains both the teachings of the religion and the miracle which proves it at the same time, while the other heavenly revealed Scriptures which came before the Quran, had the teachings in the book, whilst the miracle was separate. For example, the Scripture of Prophet 'Isa (Jesus) was the Gospel and his miracles included curing the blind and the leprous and raising the dead by Allah's Permission. The book of Prophet Musa (Moses) was the Torah, whilst his miracle was the staff. However, the miracle of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was the Message itself. Why is that? That is because his Message was destined to remain until the end of time and to spread throughout all places and thereby gave it universality of time and place. Thus, we say, 'That is Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah and that is his miracle.' But we cannot say this about Musa or 'Isa because their miracles ended when their time on earth ended.

The meaning of the word ‘glorious’ is great, noble, high and lofty. It is in a morphological form that indicates hyperbole and can sometimes have the meaning of an active participle, like *Rahim/Raheem* (one who gives mercy); other times it gives the meaning of a passive participle, like *qateel* (one who has been killed). Thus, the meaning of the Arabic word for ‘glorious’ indicates both that it is inherently sublime and that it has been made inherently sublime. It is both active and passive at the same time because it is the highest and loftiest of speech and the noblest and the most precious of books, that is, it is sublime in its very nature.

Moreover, it came from *the Most High* and Glorious Who is the True Lord; it was conveyed by a sublime angel to a sublime Messenger as well as it was entrusted to a sublime community.

Since the first verse in the chapter in question is a vow, what is the content of this vow? The scholars said that Allah is swearing here that the Resurrection is true. That is to say, ‘*Qaf* and By the Glorious Quran, you shall certainly be raised from the dead.’ But a more satisfying answer than this is that we simply take the content of the vow from the words which Allah *Glorified is He* says next:

بَلْ عَجَبُوا أَنْ جَاءَهُمْ مُنْذِرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَقَالَ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا شَيْءٌ عَجِيبٌ ﴿٢﴾

**But the disbelievers are amazed that a warner has come
from among them and they say, ‘How strange! [2]
(The Quran, *Qaf*: 2)**

People only deem something to be strange if it is unusual and the soul cannot explain it or rationalise it, such as magic, we find it strange because we do not understand how it is done. The discourse here is about the disbelievers who lived at the time of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

The Quran has clarified this matter and explained it elsewhere, when Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘And they say, too, ‘And they say: Why was not this Quran revealed to a man of importance in the two towns?’ (*az-Zukhruf*: 31) He also says: ‘And they say: Why has not an angel been sent down to him? And had We sent down an angel, the matter would have certainly been

decided and then they would not have been respited. And if We had made him angel, We would certainly have made him a man and We would certainly have made confused to them what they make confused.' (*al-An'am*: 8-9)

Therefore, their objection was not directed at the Quran itself, but rather at Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and how the Quran could have been revealed to him when he was one of the ordinary people and why it was not revealed unto a great man of the people of the two cities. They brought forth another objection which was to ask why it had not been revealed unto an angel.

However, the Quran answered them and refuted this objection. Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is a Messenger and a role model, thus must be from the same species as those to whom he is sent. For otherwise, how could we follow the example of an angel when his nature is different from ours, and his powers are different from ours?! And if he commanded us something, we would have the right to say that we cannot do what you can do because you can do things we cannot do. Thus, he could not be our role model.

As a matter of fact, part of the greatness of Prophet Muhammad is that he is one of us and thereby Allah reminded us of this blessing when He says: 'Certainly a Messenger has come to you from among yourselves.' (*at-Tawba*: 128) That is from your species, your nation and from the closet people to you. He was known with his sincerity and his trustworthiness since before the Message came to him, and you have attested to these yourselves.

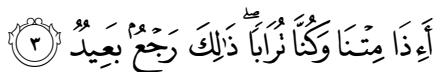
Thus, this means that the disbelievers are the ones who find it strange that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was chosen to convey the Message. Those who are not disbelievers do not find this strange. Since the Quran was revealed over twenty-three years, there were some people who believed in him *peace and blessings be upon him* from the moment the very first verse was revealed to him. Indeed, Abu Bakr *may Allah be pleased with him* believed in him from the very first moment he told him that, 'I am he Messenger of Allah' without even asking him any questions or doubting him. That is because his past history among his people made him worthy of such a position. Why would they not believe him when he was known as the honest one who had never been known to lie? If someone never lies about

creatures, he will certainly never lie about the Creator. Likewise, Abu Bakr believed him about the Night Journey and Ascension and did not argue as others did. He said about that ‘If he indeed did say it, then he spoke the truth.’ He considered the matter rationally based on what he knew about the life of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

It is worth noting that the name Muhammad itself is a proof of his truthfulness. When Allah says: ‘Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah’ (*al-Fath*: 29), the word ‘Muhammad’ is the subject of this sentence and the predicate is that he is the Messenger of Allah. Muhammad means a person praised and lauded by the people. Thus, at his very beginnings and childhood he was being prepared for this mission and therefore they never experienced a single lie from him, nor any of those things which his contemporaries used to do in the time of the pre-Islamic period. It is as though He were saying to them, ‘This is Muhammad whom you know and whose past history among you is known to you. This is the Messenger of Allah.’ It is as though the very reason for believing in him is that he is Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. We explained before how Allah protected him *peace and blessings be upon him* from errors and from having his private parts exposed. Therefore, He *the Almighty* instructed Him to say to those who debated with him: ‘Indeed I have lived a lifetime among you before it; do you not then understand?’ (*Yunus*: 16) This means, ‘You know everything about me and you know that I do not lie and that I have never given a speech or recited poetry to you. So why would you give the lie to me now?’

The words ‘how strange’ at the end of the verse are not a repetition of the aforementioned words ‘But the disbelievers are amazed.’ Rather, it means that they find strange what has been claimed and they also find strange what the disbelievers themselves said. The Quran explained this when it says: ‘And nothing prevented people from believing when the guidance came to them except that they said: What! Has Allah raised up a mortal to be a messenger?’ (*al-Isra*: 94) He replied to them, ‘what do you want?’ They said, ‘We want an angel.’ He said to them, ‘Even if he was an angel, he would come to you in the form of a man.’ So, the doubt would still remain.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:



**To come back [to life] after we have died and become dust?
That is too far-fetched' [3] (The Quran, *Qaf*: 3)**

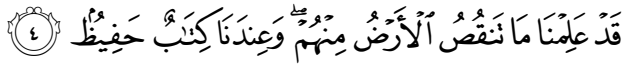
Here they move the objection away from the human nature of the Prophet Muhammad *peace be upon him* and turn to doubts the matter of resurrection. Thus, we have two distinct contents of the vow. The first content is that 'You indeed are a warner' and the second content is 'Indeed you shall all be resurrected.' We derive these two from the second and the third verse.

The meaning of their words that is too far-fetched refers to the return to life after death and becoming dust. This seems far-fetched to them. Why is that when you have the remnants of the teachings of our Prophets Ibrahim (Abraham) and Ismail (Ishmael) and the rest of the previous religions and you know about Allah and that He is your Creator and the Creator of the heavens and the earth?

The Quran tells us that Prophet Ibrahim said: 'and when Ibrahim said: My Lord! Show me how You give life to the dead, He said: What! And do you not believe? He said: Yes, but that my heart may be at ease.' (*al-Baqara*: 260) We said that this question was not asked out of any doubt on the part of Ibrahim in the power of Allah to raise the dead to life. Rather, his question was about the methodology of it.

Thus, Allah showed him the mode with a practical example so as to make him witness and participate in it. It is as though Allah was saying to him and to us: 'Raising the dead to life is not difficult or miraculous for Me and indeed if I will I can lend My power to an of My servants and he shall do it by My Leave.' 'He said: Then take four of the birds, then train them to follow you, then place on every mountain a part of them, then call them, they will come to you flying; and know that Allah is Mighty, Wise.' (*al-Baqara*: 260) This is how Allah may lend some of His Power to one of His servants.

Further, in the story of 'Isa (Jesus), Allah says: 'that I determine for you out of dust like the form of a bird.' (*Al-Imran*: 49) Therefore, the Quran responds to those who deny the Resurrection and says:



**We know very well what the earth takes away from them:
We keep a comprehensive record [4] (The Quran, *Qaf*: 4)**

This means ‘why do you deem Resurrection strange, when Allah is well aware of the constituents and the parts of the body and the quantities of each part?’ He is well aware of what the earth takes away from you and well able to reassemble it exactly as it was when He created it in the first place even if the parts which belonged to it have been removed from it. So we differ in respect to the constituents of our makeup, not in the way in which these constituents are assembled.

Allah says that this process is based on knowledge and awareness, not on mere words as well as it has another attestation, i.e. the comprehensive record. So this knowledge is backed up by a written record wherein all things are documented. If you say, ‘What is the purpose of the record since Allah already knows it?’ We respond that Allah’s knowledge is vast and is one of His Attributes and He does not forget; but He inscribes it in a record so that this record may be an argument against those who deny, just as is the case with good and bad deeds. Allah knows them well and knows their number. He does not need anything to remind Him of them, but He records them for the servant to be a proof against him on the Day when Allah will say to him: ‘Read your book; your own self is sufficient as a reckoner against you this day.’ (*al-Isra*: 14)

The Arabic for the word comprehensive is an intensive adjective and a hyperbole in the morphological form *fa’il*. It has the active meaning of protector or guardian. It means that it securely records all things great and small and it is also protected. No hand can remove anything from it and change anything in it. Therefore, Allah says: ‘Most surely it is an honored Quran, in a book that is protected. None shall touch it save the purified ones.’ (*al-Waqi’a*: 77-79) He also says: ‘And with Him are the keys of the unseen treasures—none knows them but He, and He knows what is in the land and the sea and there falls not a leaf but He knows it, nor a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything green nor dry but [it is all] in a clear book.’ (*al-An’am*: 59)

Those who seek to raise doubts about the Resurrection or deny it outright are those who mock religion and squander their own souls. If the Resurrection or the Reckoning were really true, this would be a disaster for them as they simply doubt the Resurrection and deny it and indeed all of religion is a lie in their view.

Reflect, for example, on the futility of their argument when they say, by way of denying the Resurrection, that if a man dies and then an apple-tree is planted on his grave, for example, that his elements will be absorbed by this tree and it will consume him, and then people will eat its fruits. Thereby, some elements from the first person will thus constitute the body of the second person, and when the second person dies, will this element be resurrected in the body of the first person, or the second?

Now this is a feeble objection, and we may respond to it by saying: 'If a man's weight is one hundred kilos and he becomes so ill that he loses half his weight and becomes emaciated, and then Allah *the Almighty* grants him a cure so that he regains his health and his previous weight, does this mean that the same matter has returned to him?

No, it has not, but rather, he has consumed other matter than that which left him; yet his form and its individual characteristics remain, and when they return, they are just the same as they were before.

So it is not the very same physical matter which is restored, but rather, the very same person is restored. As long as Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Well do We know how the earth consumes their bodies...' (*Qaf*: 4), this means that He *the Almighty* is fully able to gather them and remake them, simply by saying 'Be!' so that it comes into being.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

بَلْ كَذَّبُوا بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ فَهُمْ فِي أَمْرٍ مَّرِيعٍ

**But the disbelievers deny the truth when it comes to them;
they are in a state of confusion [5] (The Quran, *Qaf*: 5)**

We understand from their words 'Why – [how could we be resurrected] after we have died and become mere dust? Such a return seems far-fetched indeed!' (*Qaf*: 3) that they deny the Resurrection and do not believe that

they will be resurrected after death. This denial does not change anything in reality, for the Resurrection is real and it will happen, yet they deny it because it will not be to their benefit.

Therefore, Allah says here: ‘But the disbelievers deny the truth when it comes to them’ (*Qaf*: 5); the ‘truth’ is that which is stable and never changes, no matter what happens; for all the events and incidents will pass by, and the truth will remain as it is.

Allah *the Almighty* gave us a tangible parable of truth and falsehood when He *the Almighty* says: ‘[Whenever] He sends down water from the sky, and [once-dry] river-beds are running high according to their measure, the stream carries scum on its surface; and, likewise, from that [metal] which they smelt in the fire in order to make ornaments or utensils, [there rises] scum. In this way does Allah set forth the parable of truth and falsehood: for, as far as the scum is concerned, it passes away as [does all] dross; but that which is of benefit to man abides on earth. In this way does Allah set forth the parables?’ (*ar-Ra’d*: 17)

In the same way, their denial and disbelief will pass away, and the fact will remain, and the truth will remain stable and unchanged. In the same connection, there are many verses in the Quran which convey this notion, such as: ‘...and [He] brought utterly low the cause of those who were bent on denying the truth, whereas Allah’s Cause remained supreme...’ (*at-Tawba*: 40). Now the first instance of the word ‘cause’ here is the object of the verb, whilst the second is the subject of a new clause which is independent of the other.

So, the first is the object of another action, whilst the second is eternally stable beyond the count of time: He brought the cause of the disbelievers utterly low, whilst Allah’s Cause was supreme from the very beginning; it was not low and then He *the Almighty* brought it high. This means that the truth is something pre-eternally firm and unchangeable.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: ‘...and so they are in a state of confusion.’ (*Qaf*: 5) Now the word *marij* literally means ‘confusing’. So, they are confused and wavering: sometimes they are incredulous, thus say: ‘...A strange thing is this’ (*Qaf*: 2), while other times they deny it; so, their state is confusing.

The word *marij* is derived from the word *maraja* which describes how a ring slides onto a finger if it is wide and easy to move.

The proof that they are in a state of confusion is that they levelled a series of accusations against Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and every time they failed to uphold one, they moved on to another because the Quran was ready to answer every plot they made against him *peace and blessings be upon him*. Therefore, we heard them accusing him *peace and blessings be upon him* of being a 'sorcerer', 'poet', 'madman' and 'soothsayer.' So '...they are in a state of confusion' (*Qaf*: 5), and they do not know what to say, for every time they make an accusation, the Quran refutes it; for the truth is one, and therefore we see it to be constant, whilst falsehood is multiple and therefore inconstant.

This matter is crystal clear when people testify before a judge: the truthful witness does not say one thing and then another because he is describing a factual event, whilst the deceitful witness changes his story and does not stand up to the judge's questioning, and his deceit is quickly discovered and exposed. This is because he is not describing a factual event, but is inventing his own story.

Allah *the Almighty* then turns His Discourse to the cosmological signs which prove His Omnipotent Power and support doctrinal matters; for once we correct the doctrine of these people and help them attain to faith in Allah *the Almighty* they will then think about having faith in the Message of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* thus allow themselves to be guided to the Truth.

Therefore, He *the Almighty* leaves the subject of their denial of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and the Resurrection to speak about the cosmological signs of the heavens and the earth.

He *the Almighty* says:

أَفَلَمْ يَنْظُرُوا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَوْقَهُمْ كَيْفَ بَنَيْنَاهَا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا وَمَا هِيَ مِنْ فُرُوجٍ ﴿٦﴾
وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَأَلْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيجٍ ﴿٧﴾
تَبَصَّرَةٌ وَذِكْرَىٰ لِكُلِّ عَبْدٍ مُّنِيبٍ ﴿٨﴾

Do they not see the sky above them — how We have built and adorned it, with no rifts in it [6] how We spread out the earth and put solid mountains on it, and caused every kind of joyous plant to grow in it [7] as a lesson and reminder for every servant who turns to God [8] (The Quran, *Qaf*: 6 - 8)

The purpose of the question ‘Do they not see...’ (*Qaf*: 6) is to encourage them to look and reflect on the creation of the heavens, the signs and miracles they contain because these signs are proof of Allah’s Omnipotence. The saying of Allah, ‘...We have built...’ (*Qaf*: 7) indicates that despite its vastness, the sky has been built; and despite the hugeness of this building, we do not find any supports holding it up.

Therefore, He *the Almighty* says in another verse: ‘It is Allah Who has raised the heavens without any supports that you could see...’ (*ar-Ra’d*: 2). So, as long as it has no support holding it up, this means it must be held up from above, and nothing holds up it, except the Infinite Power of Allah *the Almighty* a fact which is clear in the Quran: ‘Verily, it is Allah *the Almighty* [alone] Who upholds the celestial bodies and the earth, lest they deviate [from their orbits]...’ (*Fatir*: 41).

We see this concept clearly apparent in the building of long bridges which have no bases or supports holding them up, but are rather suspended from above, and hence named ‘suspension bridges.’

Allah *the Almighty* makes this easier for us to understand when He says: ‘Have they, then, never beheld the birds above them, spreading their wings and drawing them in? None but The Most Gracious upholds them: for, verily, He keeps all things in His sight.’ (*al-Mulk*: 19) So, just as He holds up the birds in the sky, He holds up the heavens, which only refrain from falling onto the earth by His Leave. He *the Almighty* did not only build the sky, but also ‘...adorned it...’ with all the stars and planets shining therein,

and also made it 'with no rifts in it...', that is, there are no fissures or breaks in it, but we see that it is level and smooth. Behold it when it is clear, and you will see the most beautiful of colours.

After speaking to us about the signs of the sky, Allah *the Almighty* then speaks to us of the signs He has placed in the earth; if the signs of the heavens are far away from us, then the signs of the earth are close to us and easy for us to perceive.

He *the Almighty* says: 'How We spread out the earth...' (*Qaf*: 7) which means 'laying it out and making it level and easy to live upon'. When something is truly spread out and extended, it has no end – and this is true of the earth, for no matter where you go, you will always find it spread out before you, and it has no edge where it ends. So, this spreading out explains to us the spherical shape of the earth.

As for the saying of Allah, '...and put solid mountains on it...' (*Qaf*: 7), it tells that mountains keep the earth firm so that it does not constantly shake, as He *Glorified is He* says elsewhere: 'And [have We not made] the mountains [its] pegs?' (*an-Naba'*: 7) That is, the mountains are for the earth like the pegs of a tent. He *the Almighty* also causes plants to grow in the land 'And caused...' the earth '...every kind of joyous plant to grow in it...' (*Qaf*: 7). The word for 'kind' here is *zawj* (literally 'pair') means a single type accompanied by another of its kind.

In order for plants to reproduce, there must be a pair of male and female, just as is the case with human beings and animals; and therefore Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And in everything have We created opposites...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 49) because otherwise there can be no reproduction.

It is known that plant reproduction involves pollination which is facilitated by butterflies and flying insects which transfer pollen from the male to the female parts. When people use pesticides to kill them all the insects in a garden, they found that the trees in the garden neither flowered nor gave fruits. Why? It is because the butterflies and insects, which would have transferred the pollen, were all dead.

They noticed that insects often have the same colour as the flowers which they pollinate, so that their colours are remarkably alike, to the extent that you

can hardly see the butterfly when it is on the flower; and the consonance of these colours is a clear example of Allah's Amazing Creation.

The word *bahij* 'joyous' means a thing is beautiful and pleasant to look at. Scholars understood from the saying of Allah, '...and put solid mountains on it...' (*Qaf*: 7) that the earth used to shake in the very beginning of its creation, and that it turns; for if it were stable from the very beginning, it would not need firm mountains to hold it in place, lest it stray out of place along with all those upon it.

These were all mysteries of the heavens and the earth which Allah *the Almighty* revealed to us by means of the advances of science and civilisation, and therefore we read, for example: 'And you will see the mountains, which [now] you deem so firm, pass away as clouds pass away...' (*an-Naml*: 88). Indeed, mountains move just as air does; but how could the mountains move when they are firmly fixed in place on the surface of the earth? So, the mountains only move as the earth moves; and because such a fact would astonish you, the True Lord says after it: '...a Work of Allah, who has ordered all things to perfection!' (*an-Naml*: 88) As long as it is the Work of Allah *the Almighty* then do not be astonished or find it far-fetched.

Then Allah *the Almighty* says: 'as a lesson and reminder for every servant who turns to Allah' Thus offering an insight and a reminder...' (*Qaf*: 8), that is, these cosmological signs in the heavens and the earth give insight to people, and remind them of the Omnipotence of the Creator *the Almighty* so that they reflect on how this universe and all within it were created with such precision and brilliance.

The word 'insight' means a constant sign, whilst a 'reminder' is used to refer to a phenomenon which is liable to change; for example, the earth can be dry and barren, and then when rain falls upon it, it springs into verdure.

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty* '...for every servant who turns to Allah...' (*Qaf*: 8), it refers to the one who repents to Allah *the Almighty* much, and sees in Allah's signs in the cosmos a proof of His Omnipotence, and so yields to them and believes in them.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً مُبْرَكًا فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ وَحَبَّ الْحَصِيدِ
وَالنَّخْلَ بَاسِقَاتٍ لَهَا طَلْعٌ نَضِيدٌ

**And how We send blessed water down from the sky and
grow with it gardens, the harvest grain [9] and tall palm
trees laden with clusters of dates [10] (The Quran, *Qaf*: 9-10)**

Allah *the Almighty* says: *nazzalna* ‘And how We send...’; the root word *n-z-l* gives us the verbs *anzala* and *nazzala*: *anzala* means to send something down all at once, a meaning which is clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty* ‘Behold, from on high have We bestowed (*anzalna*) this [divine Book] on Night of Destiny.’ (*al-Qadr*: 1) That is, We sent it all down at once on this Night, and then the Angel of Trusted Inspiration brought it down step by step according to different circumstances, as He *Glorified is He* says: ‘Trustworthy divine inspiration has alighted with it from on high [193] Upon thy heart...[194]’ (*ash-Shu'ara*: 193-194).

Likewise, water does not fall from the sky all at once, but rather, it falls down and again on different occasions, and therefore He *the Almighty* says: ‘And We send down...’ (*Qaf*: 9). His words ‘from the skies’ mean ‘from the direction of the sky’, for rain comes from clouds, and originates from the salt water found on earth, which then evaporates and rises to the sky where it clings together and forms clouds which Allah *the Almighty* then directs by the power of wind until it falls when it comes to cold climes. He *the Almighty* calls it ‘...blessed water...’ (*Qaf*: 9) because He made it safe to drink and to water plants. In addition, He *Glorified is He* made it fresh and tasty for those who drink it.

When this blessed rain falls upon the earth, the earth breaks open and gives forth plants: ‘...and cause thereby gardens to grow...’ (*Qaf*: 9). The word for ‘gardens’ here is *jannat* which is the plural of *janna* which means a place which is filled with trees which give shade (*tajinnu*) to those who walk among them, whence it is named *Janna*. Allah *the Almighty* uses the word in this sense when He says: ‘Then, when the night overshadowed (*janna*) him with its darkness...’ (*al-An'am*: 76). That is, it covered him with its darkness.

The meaning of ‘fields of grain’ is any grain which is harvested such as wheat, oats, maize and rice, which are annually sown and reaped. As for ‘gardens’, they contain trees which remain in place and live for many years in which they give forth fruit, and we only gather their fruit, leaving the trees themselves to remain until the following year.

As for His saying, ‘And tall palm trees...’, it refers to those palm trees which are very tall and lofty; the height of a palm-tree is a wonder of creation and an indication of the ultimate precision, for we see that storms uproot many huge trees, but we never see palm-trees falling by storms, as other trees fall; but if the palm-tree is weak, we see it bending little by little in stages until it reaches the ground. So it is tall and lofty. Allah *the Almighty* mentions the date palm after the trees of gardens and the fields of grain because the palm-tree combines attributes of both, that is, it gives its fruits every year like other trees, but if it is not pollinated, then the fruit it produces is dry and useless, and is simply cut and discarded.

When He *the Almighty* says ‘...laden with clusters of dates’ (*Qaf*: 10), the word *Tal‘* ‘cluster’ means a green cob which opens, and from which comes a bunch of panicles which contain date seeds. It is a wonder of creation that you see how thickly clustered these seeds are, and how they are precisely organised within the panicle, such that one does not sit in front of another, but they are spread out evenly in the panicle like ‘crow’s feet’, as they say.

So Allah *the Almighty* mentions to us here some of His signs in the heavens and the earth. We said before that the heavens and the earth are containers for what is within them; and despite the remarkable creation of the heavens and the earth, what they contain is even more remarkable.

Within these contents, man has a special place because he is Allah’s vicegerent on earth, and with respect to their status as contents, all men are equal and none of them has a higher status than any other has in this regard. For the purpose of the container is to protect its contents, and a fifty-pound note is equal to a one-pound note in how they are protected in the same container; and gold, silver and iron are equal in the way they are maintained, even though they differ in their natures.

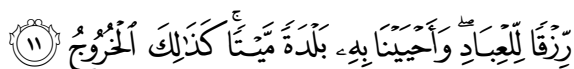
In the same way, all men are looked-after equally even though they may have different values. This difference exists for a wise reason which Allah

the Almighty willed for the good of all society: ‘...and [We] raise some of them by degrees above others, to the end that they might avail themselves of one another’s help...’ (*az-Zukhruf*: 32). So people are strong and weak, rich and poor, learned and ignorant, intelligent and stupid; in this way, they complement one another in the motions of life.

We said before: ‘What if every single person went to university and graduated? Who then would do the manual labour? It is therefore necessary that some people are the elite, whilst others work to serve them, for life would not work properly otherwise.’

Despite the way in which the value of each man’s work and effort differs from that of another, the fact remains that we are all Allah’s dependents and slaves, and none of us is ‘Allah’s son’; therefore, each one of us should mind his manners and keep within his boundaries, for we are all superior in one way and inferior in another; in a sense, no one is better than anyone else.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:



**As a provision for everyone; how with water We give
[new] life to a land that is dead? This is how the dead will
emerge [from their graves] [11] (The Quran, *Qaf*: 11)**

Allah *the Almighty* caused gardens, orchards and farms to grow, some of which give forth grains which nourish people and are thus harvested, such as wheat; He also caused date palms to grow high into the sky, giving goodness to people for many generations.

Therefore, He then says: ‘As a provision for everyone...’ (*Qaf*: 11) It is sustenance for all Allah’s slaves, believer and disbeliever, righteous and sinner because He created everyone and therefore undertook to provide for those whom He created the sustenance they need to live, even if they do not believe in Him.

Then He says: ‘how with it’, that is, by the water which He mentioned before when He said: ‘And We send down from the sky blessed water...’ (*Qaf*: 9); so, by this water, ‘how with water We give [new] life to a land that is dead?’ That is, We bring back to life the soil of a land which had died

meaning the dry and dead soil which is bereft of vegetation. As a matter of fact, when rain falls onto it, life returns to it in the form of vegetation, as He *the Almighty* says elsewhere: ‘...And [if, O man, thou art still in doubt as to resurrection, consider this:] you cannot see the earth dry and lifeless – and [suddenly,] when We send down waters upon it, it stirs and swells and puts forth every kind of lovely plant!’ (*al-Hajj*: 5)

Allah made the revival of dead earth a proof and a living example of the Resurrection of the dead, saying: ‘...This is how the dead will emerge [from their graves]...’ (*Qaf*: 11). This is similar to what He *the Almighty* says elsewhere: ‘and He it is who sends down, again and again, waters from the sky in due measure: and [as] We raise therewith dead land to life, even thus will you be brought forth [from the dead].’ (*az-Zukhruf*: 11) It is also similar to His saying: ‘He [it is who] brings forth the living out of that which is dead, and brings forth the dead out of that which is alive, and gives life to the earth after it had been lifeless: and even thus will you be brought forth [from death to life]...’ (*ar-Rum*: 19). That is, you shall be brought forth and resurrected in the same way. So, anyone who denies the Resurrection should look at how the hard dead earth is brought back to life with vegetation after rain falls on it. The earth is dead and dry, bearing no signs of life, and then when rain falls upon it and waters it, it springs into motion and the dry cracks in the soil close up, and then it gives forth all manner of beautiful plants, which is a living example of creation and life for all to witness.

Allah *the Almighty* says:

كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَأَصْحَابُ الرَّسِّ وَثَمُودُ ﴿١٢﴾ وَعَادُ وَفِرْعَوْنُ وَإِخْوَانُ لُوطٍ ﴿١٣﴾
وَأَصْحَابُ الْأَيْكَةِ وَقَوْمُ ثَبَعٍ كُلٌّ كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ وَعِيدِ ﴿١٤﴾

The people of Noah disbelieved long before these disbelievers, as did the people of Rass, Thamud [12] 'Ad, Pharaoh, Lot [13] The Forest-Dwellers, Tubba': all of these people disbelieved their messengers, and so My warning was realized [14] (The Quran, *Qaf*: 12-14)

These words consoled Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and made it easier for him to bear the stubborn disbelief of his people; the

stance they took was shown in the previous verses, first of all in His saying: '...they deem it strange that a warner should have come unto them from their own midst...' (*Qaf*: 2). They then denied the Resurrection of which He says: 'Why – [how could we be resurrected] after we have died and become mere dust? Such a return seems far-fetched indeed!' (*Qaf*: 3) So, Allah *the Almighty* wanted to present to His Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* the stories of the previous Divine Messages, to show him how often his fellow Messengers were also denied.

It is as though He *the Almighty* were saying to him: O Prophet Muhammad, you are not the first to experience this, for '[Long] before those [who now deny resurrection] did Nuh's people give the lie to this truth...' (*Qaf*: 12) even though he *peace be upon him* lived among them for nine hundred and fifty years, yet they still gave him the lie, and none but a few of them believed in him.⁽¹⁾

But did Allah simply leave them? No, He requited them by drowning them and utterly wiping them out to the last man; for He *the Almighty* would not leave the people of corruption, those who denied and opposed His Messengers, without punishing them, but rather, He would grant them respite for a while, and then take them to task without further delay.

The people of Nuh Allah *be pleased with him* used to mock at him while he was building the Ark, and so he used to say to them, 'A day will come when we shall mock at you as you now mock at us.' It is as though he was completely certain that Allah *the Almighty* would give succour and aid to his mission.

And just as Nuh people gave the lie to the truth, so did the people of Ar-Rass; Ar-Rass is the name of a righteous man; so was the case of '...[The tribes of] Thamud' (*Qaf*: 12) to whom Prophet Saleh (Shelah) Allah *be pleased with him* was sent; so was the case of the people of 'Ad', the tribe of Prophet Hud Allah *be pleased with him*; so was the case of the people of 'Pharaoh...' (*Qaf*: 13) The story of Pharaoh and Prophet Musa (Moses) Allah *be pleased with him* is well known; so was the case of the people of Prophet '...Lut' (*Qaf*: 13), and so was the case of '...the forest dwellers...' (*Qaf*: 14) who lived in a garden

(1) Allah *the Almighty* says: '...for only a few [of Noah's people] shared his faith.' (*Hud*: 40)

thick with trees and whose branches wind around each other. As a matter of fact, these are the people of Prophet Shu‘aib *Allah be pleased with him*, ‘...And the people of *Tubba’*...’ (*Qaf*: 14) *Tubba’* was a king of Yemen named Abu Kurb Al-Hamiri; those of his people who gave the lie to Allah’s Message were possessed of civilisation, comfort and luxury, but after they gave the lie to their Messenger and contravened Allah’s Way of Guidance, He *the Almighty* changed their condition and destroyed them for their sins.

Therefore, He *the Almighty* says here: ‘...they all gave the lie to the apostles – and thereupon that whereof I had warned [them] came true.’ (*Qaf*: 14) That is, when they gave the lie to My Messengers, they called upon themselves the punishment of which I had warned them, and they had to be destroyed.

In another verse, He *the Almighty* gives the details of this requital, saying: ‘For every one of them did We take to task for his sin: and so, upon some of them We let loose a deadly storm wind; and some of them were overtaken by a [sudden] blast; and some of them We caused to be swallowed by the earth; and some of them We caused to drown. And it was not Allah who wronged them, but it was they who had wronged themselves.’ (*al-‘Ankabut*: 40)

Allah *Glorified is He* subsequently says:

أَفَعَيْنَا بِالْخَلْقِ الْأَوَّلِ بَلْ هُمْ فِي لَبْسٍ مِّنْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ﴿١٥﴾

So were We incapable of the first creation? No indeed! Yet they doubt a second creation [15] (The Quran, *Qaf*: 15)

The discourse returns to refuting the allegations of those who deny the Resurrection; those who said before: ‘Why – [how could we be resurrected] after we have died and become mere dust? Such a return seems far-fetched indeed!’ (*Qaf*: 3) He returns to His subjects to say to them: Why do you deny the Resurrection? Do you not have before you the first creation? ‘So were We incapable of the first creation?’ (*Qaf*: 15) That is, were We unable to do it, or worn out by it? Of course not, but rather, We (Allah) were fully able to do it, and We brought it into being from nothing.

In the first creation, Allah created the heavens, the earth and the first man, Adam *Allah be pleased with him* and the One Who is able to create in the first place is all the more able to recreate.

As for the saying of Allah: 'No indeed! Yet they doubt a second creation.' (*Qaf*: 15), it means that they are confused and uncertain, just as He says about them earlier: '...and so they are in a rift confusion.' (*Qaf*: 5)

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ وَنَعْلَمُ مَا تُوَسْوِسُ بِهِ نَفْسُهُ
وَحَنُّنٌ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْ حَبْلِ الْوَرِيدِ ﴿١٦﴾

We created man — We know what his soul whispers to him: We are closer to him than his jugular vein [16]
(The Quran, *Qaf*: 16)

After speaking about the signs of the heavens and the earth, Allah *the Almighty* now speaks to us about the signs He placed in the creation of man. He *Glorified is He* made it clear that the signs of the heavens and the earth are greater than the signs which reside in the creation of man: 'Greater indeed than the creation of man is the creation of the heavens and the earth...' (*Qaf*: 57).

He gives us the promise that 'In time We shall make them fully understand Our Messages [through what they perceive] in the utmost horizons...' (*Fussilat*: 53), i.e. the horizons of the heavens and the earth, '...and within themselves so that it will become clear unto them that this [revelation] is indeed the truth...' (*Fussilat*: 53).

Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Verily, We created man...' (The Quran, 50) emphasising this statement with the word 'verily' because they deny this fact and give the lie to it, and this denial of theirs is purely a matter of obstinacy because Allah *the Almighty* says elsewhere in the Quran: 'Now if you ask those [who worship any being other than Allah] as to who it is that has created them, they are sure to answer, Allah...' (*az-Zukhruf*: 87).

As long as Allah *the Almighty* has said 'Verily, We created man...' (*Qaf*: 16), it would be far-fetched to say that it is possible to make a copy or 'clone' of man; for the man who forms a family composed of a mother and a father could never be copied, for only He Who created him could copy him.

This is proved by the fact that He *the Almighty* created Adam *Allah be pleased with him* and then created Eve from his rib. You shall never be able to do this. You might be able to clone plants or animals, for these beings are not required to form families.

The purpose of plants and animals is only to reproduce; man, on the other hand, is not required only to reproduce but also to adhere to the moral values. A man strives to form a family, and he thus looks for certain things in the woman he marries and the way he lives with her. Each one of them plays a role in raising the family in a way which is appropriate for them: he goes out and works, and she performs her role inside the home – and her role is higher and more important than his role.

Therefore, we find that the child, whom his father forsakes, undergoes a miserable life because he does not have a father with whom to connect. The child who has a father, on the other hand, is connected to his father who is in charge with him before the entire society. He provides for his living and his education. So, if we suppose that human beings indeed could be cloned, what kind of life do you suppose they would have?

Allah *the Almighty* is the man's Creator and Maker. The Creator knows best those whom He has created, and knows best their secrets and what is good for them: '...We know what his soul whispers to him...' (*Qaf*: 16). That is, We do not only know his open actions, but We also know his inner intentions, and We even know the thoughts and notions which come to his mind. 'How could it be that He who has created [all] should not know [all]? Yea, He alone is unfathomable [in His wisdom], all aware!' (*al-Mulk*: 14)

He *the Almighty* knows the intricate matters and the hidden details of things, just as the manufacturer knows the details of his product. When your clock runs slow, for example, you have no idea what is wrong with it, so you take it to the clockmaker, and as soon as he looks at it, he knows what is wrong with it, and mends it with a simple action.

Allah *the Almighty* created man, that is, man is His *Glorified is He Make and Creation*. Therefore He *the Almighty* knows the secrets of his soul, not just his outward actions; for outward actions are known to all people, and

there is no special distinction to this knowledge. As for the innermost whisperings of the self, this is a matter of the unseen which no one can perceive or know but Allah *the Almighty*. This is one of the signs of Allah *the Almighty* in the human being: 'In time We shall make them fully understand Our Messages [through what they perceive] in the utmost horizons and within themselves...' (*Fussilat*: 53).

He calls the thoughts which come to the mind *waswasa* (whisperings), which literally means the quietest kind of speech; sometimes these whisperings come from the soul, whilst, at other times, they come from Satan, and therefore they convey nothing but evil. Imam 'Ali *Allah be pleased with him* made the difference between the two clear when someone asked him, 'How can I tell whether this whispering comes from my own soul or from Satan?' He replied, 'The soul insists on a particular sin and never relinquishes it, whilst Satan wants you to sin in any way so that if you disobey him in one sin, he will suggest to you another, and so on, until he gets you.'

The soul is the origin of all whisperings because if we consider the first sin of Iblis and ask, 'Who whispered this to him?' The answer is 'his own soul'; that is why a poet once posed this question, saying: When Iblis sinned, who was his Iblis?

So, it all comes back to the soul and the self, and Iblis takes advantage of the soul's desire and encourages it, and makes it seem alluring to the person. It is amazing how these whisperings assail a man and drown him in concerns and fantasies which are completely baseless so that he concerns himself with things that never happened, imagining that they did happen, or things from the past which he calls to mind again and again.

In this way, worries envelop him so that when you speak to him, you find that he is forgetful, or that he walks along talking to himself. The truly intelligent person is the one who does not allow himself to be caught by these whisperings, and who knows that he has a Lord Who is fully aware of the innermost self-whispers within him; a Kind Lord Who relives worries and alleviates woes. The intelligent person is the one who knows that the past is done with, and the future is a mystery, and what matters is the present moment.

The believer was created to have faith, to protect him so that if the means do not avail him, he can seek refuge with the Creator of all means. Therefore he never despairs or gives up.

We said before that if a man has a single pound, nothing more, and he loses it, he will certainly grieve, especially if he is on a journey to an unfamiliar place. But if he loses a pound and has ten pounds in the house, then his grief will be less. So, what if you have the Lord of the worlds to call on? Therefore, they say, ‘There can be no woe as long as You are here, Lord!’ We saw this true faith in the story of Prophet Musa (Moses) *Allah be pleased with him* who said, when the means had been straightened for him: ‘...Nay indeed! My Lord is with me, [and] He will guide me!’ (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 62)

Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...We are closer to him than his jugular vein...’ (*Qaf*: 16). The *habl al-warid* (neck-vein) means the two veins in the neck which convey nourishment to the whole body so that if they are cut, life ends. These words are meant to symbolise the nearness of Allah *the Almighty* to His servant, as though He were saying to him: ‘I am close to you, and I know every detail about you, and I know the innermost whisperings of your soul.’

He *the Almighty* then says

إِذْ يَنْفَلِقُ الْمَتَلَقَّانِ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ قَعِيدٌ ۚ
مَا يَلْفِظُ مِنْ قَوْلٍ إِلَّا لَدَيْهِ رَقِيبٌ عَتِيدٌ

With two receptors set to record, one on his right side and one on his left [17] He does not utter a single word without an ever-present watcher [18] (The Quran, *Qaf*: 17-18)

Allah *the Almighty* makes it clear that His Knowledge is all embracing so that He does not only know the outer actions of the body, but also knows what goes on in the soul, and all its notions and thoughts, even before they are translated into actions. So if He *the Almighty* knows the innermost whisperings of the soul, then He certainly knows the outermost actions of the body; and so if a man says to himself, ‘I shall hide so that no one can see me’, He *the Almighty* tells him that even if he hides from the people, he cannot hide from Allah *the Almighty*

and his actions shall not escape the attention of the two angels who observe his deeds and record them: an angel on the right to record his good deeds and an angel on the left to record his bad deeds.

The meaning of 'seated' is that each of the two angels sits beside for him, watching him and never leaving him such that 'Not even a word can he utter but there is a watcher with him, ever-present.' (*Qaf*: 18) Now you might say, 'Since Allah *the Almighty* knows all that a man does, and not the least thing escapes Him, then why does He record his actions for him?' They answer this by saying that He records the actions so that there may be an argument against their doers on the Day of Resurrection, for just as Allah *the Almighty* will make the body parts speak and testify against their owners, this written record will also speak. He *the Almighty* says: 'On the Day when their own tongues and hands and feet will bear witness against them by [recalling] all that they did!' (*an-Nur*: 24)

He *the Almighty* also says: 'And they will ask their skins, "Why did you bear witness against us?"' – [and] these will reply: "Allah *the Almighty* who gives speech to all things, has given speech to us [as well]..." (*Fussilat*: 21). He *the Almighty* further says: 'this Our record speaks of you in all truth: for, verily, We have caused to be recorded all that you ever did!' (*al-Jathiya*: 29)

Out of His Mercy with His servants in the recording of their deeds, Allah *the Almighty* makes the angels record each good deed tenfold, and each bad deed one fold. In addition, the good deed is recorded as soon as you think of it,⁽¹⁾ whilst the bad deed is not recorded unless you actually do it – and even then, He gives you the opportunity of repenting, and correcting yourself.

Allah *Glorified is He* subsequently says

(1) *Abu Hurayra narrated that Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said: 'If a person intends to do a good deed but does not do it, one good deed is recorded for him; and if he intends to do a good deed and does it, it is recorded for him between tenfold and seven hundredfold. And if a person intends to do a bad deed and does not do it, it is not recorded; and if he does it, it is recorded.'* See Muslim, *Sahih*, Hadith no. 186; see also Ahmad, *Musnad*. Hadith no. 6898.

وَجَاءَتْ سَكْرَةُ الْمَوْتِ بِالْحَقِّ ذَلِكَ مَا كُنْتَ مِنْهُ تَحِيدُ

The trance of death will bring the Truth with it: ‘This is what you tried to escape’ [19] (The Quran, *Qaf*: 19)

The meaning of ‘the trance of death’ is the darkness and unconscious state which overcomes a man as he is on the brink of death and the exit of his spirit; it is also called the ‘...the trance of death...’ (*Qaf*: 19) because it is the beginning of death, He *the Almighty* then says that it ‘...brings the truth with it’ (*Qaf*: 19) because death is the truth; it is the due of all creatures, and an arrow which is shot at every new born who only lives until the arrow reaches him.

Therefore, some people die while in their mothers’ womb, whilst others die in their childhood; yet others die in their youth, while others in their old age.

One of the signs which Allah *the Almighty* has placed in death is that He has made its time and place unpredictable. Here, we should know that its unpredictability makes it completely clear, for it makes you expect it at any moment, and makes you prepare for it by repenting and doing good deeds, and makes you feel timid before Allah *the Almighty* lest He causes you to die whilst you are committing sin.

He *Glorified is He* then says: ‘This is what you tried to escape.’ (*Qaf*: 19) That is, this is what you would always seek to avoid, and which you fear. Indeed, we all fear death and wish to avoid it, and we imagine that everyone will die except us. Therefore the saying goes: ‘There is no certitude more similar to doubt that the certitude people have of death.’⁽¹⁾

We do not always think about death is something Allah *the Almighty* willed for a wise reason; for if every one of us carefully reflected on the reality of death, his life would never be peaceful, he would constantly be at unease and no one would ever benefit from his labour. So it is better to hope for life because this hope is what keeps life in motion. Love for life is what causes us to thrive in it; what is important is that this hope does not make you forget death. You must always be prepared for death by repenting and asking Allah for forgiveness whenever you sin.

(1) It is a saying of ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd Al-‘Aziz or of Hasan Al-Basri.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ ذَلِكَ يَوْمُ الْوَعِيدِ
وَجَاءَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَعَهَا سَائِقٌ وَشَهِيدٌ

The Trumpet will be sounded: ‘This is the Day [you were] warned of’ [20] Each person will arrive attended by an [angel] to drive him on and another to bear witness [21] (The Quran, *Qaf*: 20-21)

Allah *the Almighty* depicts for us here an image of the Day of Resurrection, the Day when the Trumpet shall be blown; saying that this refers to the second Trumpet, for which the people will rise from their graves. This Trumpet shall be blown by the angel Israfil *peace be upon him* on the Day of Resurrection.

His saying, ‘...This is the Day [you were] warned of...’ (*Qaf*: 20) refers to the warning which He gave us and which causes us fear. A warning is the opposite of a promise, for it heralds something bad, whilst a promise heralds something good. Only those who have committed bad deeds fear death, exactly as the negligent pupil fears the final exam, whilst the hard-working pupil feels happy when it comes.

Likewise, the one who has done good deeds rejoices to meet Allah *the Almighty* because he knows that he is passing on to Allah’s Ample Reward; and therefore when a righteous man dies, we say, ‘O Allah *the Almighty* cause us to join him!’

He *the Almighty* says: ‘Each person will arrive attended by an [angel] to drive him on and another to bear witness.’ (*Qaf*: 21) He *the Almighty* will drive him on to the place of the Gathering, and his conscious mind will bear witness to all that he has done. Allah *the Almighty* then says:

لَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَٰذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ

‘You paid no attention to this [Day]; but today We have removed your veil and your sight is sharp’[22] (The Quran, *Qaf*: 22)

The saying of Allah, ‘You paid no attention to this [Day]...’ (*Qaf*: 22) means that people were, before death, heedless and forgetful of this Day, ‘...but

today We have removed your veil' (*Qaf*: 22), i.e. the veil of their heedlessness, 'and your sight is sharp.' (*Qaf*: 22) That is, man's sight is piercing and sharp, and can well perceive things as they really are, i.e. the things of the Hereafter and what it contains of Resurrection, Reckoning, and Requital.

Allah *the Almighty* then says

وَقَالَ قَرِينُهُ هَذَا مَا لَدَيَّ عَتِيدٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ أَلْقِيَا فِي جَهَنَّمَ كُلَّ كَفَّارٍ عِنْدِي ﴿٢٤﴾ مَتَاعٍ لِلْخَيْرِ
مُعْتَدٍ مَّرِيبٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ الَّذِي جَعَلَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ فَأَلْقِيَاهُ فِي الْعَذَابِ الشَّدِيدِ ﴿٢٦﴾

The person's attendant will say, Here is what I have prepared [23] Hurl every obstinate disbeliever into Hell [24] Everyone who hindered good, was aggressive, caused others to doubt [25] And set up other gods alongside God. Hurl him into severe punishment! [26] (The Quran, *Qaf*: 23-26)

The meaning of 'The person's attendant...' is the angel who always remained with him on his right and his left, recording all his deeds and all his breaths which will come forth; this angel will say: '...Here is what I have prepared' (*Qaf*: 23). 'This is what I have recorded for this man, and all that I set down in writing of his deeds is ready and prepared.' It is like when we see a policeman giving his report to the district attorney, presenting all his evidence, and saying, 'This is what I have, and that is the end of my role; the DA must now decide what to do about it.'

He *the Almighty* then says: 'Hurl every stubborn disbeliever into Hell [24]' (*Qaf*: 23). This is a commandment from Allah *the Almighty* to the two angels to cast into the hell '...Everyone who hindered good, was aggressive, caused others to doubt [25]' (*Qaf*: 25). *Kaffar* means every wilful and defiant disbeliever. The word *kufir* can mean either 'ingratitude' or 'unbelief'; and the former meaning can be found in the story of the people of Sheba, of whom Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Thus We requited them for their having denied the truth (*kafaru*)...' (*Saba'*: 17), that is, they denied Allah's Blessings by showing ingratitude for them. When *kufir* means 'unbelief', it means to deny the Giver of all Blessings, i.e. to deny the Existence of Allah *the Almighty*. The word *kaffar* is an intensive form of the word *kafir* (disbeliever) which

implies repetition, i.e. the *kaffar* is one who frequently commits the act of disbelief, that is, not just once, which is why He describes this sort of person as 'stubborn', i.e. stubborn, persistent and wilfully determined in his unbelief (*Kufr*).

The root meaning of *kufr* is 'to cover' and express 'ingratitude' (*kufr an-Ni'ma*, literally 'covering the blessing'); it is of two kinds: to cover the blessing in its place meaning that they do not go to it by working and striving to attain it; or that they attained unto it and placed it in their possession, and then were too miserly to share it with the needy. Likewise is the word '*anid* (stubborn); it has an element of intensiveness in its morphological form. The '*anid* is the one who stubbornly refuses every time you call him to the Truth, and insists on keeping to his current position. There is no doubt that the Heaven-sent Messenger always invites the people to embrace faith many times, but the stubborn man refuses to accept the invitation and to follow guidance, and persists in holding to his view, accepting no argument or discussion. So *kufr* can mean 'ingratitude', or 'to cover blessings'; it can also mean 'unbelief', or 'to deny the existence of the Giver of Blessings.'

The saying of Allah, 'Everyone who hindered good, was aggressive, caused others to doubt [25]' (*Qaf*: 25) is a third description of the stubborn disbeliever; in addition to his firm unbelief and his stubbornness, he is also *manna' lil-khayr* (hindering of good). The word *manna'* is also the intensive morphological form of the noun *mani'*, that is, 'one who withholds'; this means that he frequently withholds what is good, withholding it even from himself after withholding it from others by standing in the way of the call to faith, and by withholding his wealth and not giving any of it to the needy.

In addition to all this, he is also '...aggressive...' (*Qaf*: 25); so, he does not content himself with withholding the good, but also assaults the good which others possess and takes it unrightfully. Sometimes he steals it; sometimes he gets it through bribery; sometimes he plunders and seizes it; sometimes he embezzles it; sometimes he cheats his way to it, and so on.

So, he is an aggressor in every way, and he also '...caused others to doubt [25]' (*Qaf*: 25), that is, he doubts and does not believe in this Day; for if he believed in it and believed in the Reckoning and the Requit, he would

not do any of these things, and if he believed in the Divine Justice, he would give instead of withholding.

Another attribute of that person is that he ‘...set up other gods alongside Allah. Hurl him into severe punishment!’ (*Qaf*: 25) It is the ultimate sin against faith in Allah *the Almighty*; Allah says: ‘Verily, Allah *the Almighty* does not forgive the ascribing of divinity to aught beside Him, although He forgives any lesser sin unto whomever He wills...’ (*an-Nisa*: 116) And therefore the requital for all this is: ‘...Hurl him into severe punishment!’ – So we have two kinds of suffering: a general suffering which He *the Almighty* does not describe as ‘severe’ when He says: ‘...Hurl him into severe punishment!’ (*Qaf*: 24), and this is for those who disobey Allah *the Almighty* and commit grave sins without going so far as to ascribe divinity to aught besides Him.

There is then a suffering which He *the Almighty* calls ‘severe’; it is for those who ascribe divinity to aught besides Allah *the Almighty*. This is because the one who commits grave sins whilst still believing in the Oneness of Allah *the Almighty* might repent because monotheism has a protective effect on the soul, even in the case of the sinner.

As for the idolater, he does not believe in the Oneness of Allah *the Almighty* and therefore it has no effect on his soul. So, if both of these people went to the same place in the Hereafter, then this would mean that the conviction of Allah’s Oneness had no meaning or effect.

When He says: ‘...although He forgives any lesser sin unto whomever He wills...’ (*an-Nisa*: 116), this mercy might be given immediately, whilst the person is still alive, and this is the case for those who repent and turn back to Allah *the Almighty* and who replace their evil deeds with righteous ones, in which case Allah’s saying will apply to them: ‘Excepted, however, shall be they who repent and attain to faith and do righteous deeds: for it is they whose [erstwhile] bad deeds Allah *the Almighty* will transform into good ones...’ (*al-Furqan*: 70).

Or it may be that the forgiveness is delayed for him so that he has to suffer in hell for a time, after which Allah’s Mercy comes to him; the grace of ‘There is no deity but Allah *the Almighty*’ envelops him; and the honour of the testimony of faith brings him out of hell.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

قَالَ قَرِينُهُ رَبَّنَا مَا أَطْغَيْتُهُ وَلَكِنْ كَانَ فِي ضَلَالٍ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٢٧﴾

**And his [evil] companion will say, ‘Lord, I did not make him transgress; he had already gone far astray himself’ [27]
(The Quran, *Qaf*: 27)**

His ‘evil companion’ here means his constant companion who made misguidance seem alluring to him, whether from jinn or mankind; this being will say, by way of excusing and defending himself: ‘...Lord, I did not make him transgress; he had already gone far astray himself.’ (*Qaf*: 27) He will seek to absolve himself from his errant companion, and leave him in the pit he dug for himself.

The Noble Quran tells us more than once of this dialogue which will take place between the follower and the followed among those who followed the way of error, and how each one of them will seek to blame the other.

Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘But [since it will be too late,] they will turn upon one another, demanding of each other [to relieve them of the burden of their past sins] [27] some [of them] will say: “Behold; you were wont to approach us [deceptively] from the right!” [28] [To which] the others will reply: “Nay, you yourselves were bereft of all faith! [29] Moreover, we had no power at all over you: nay, you were people filled with overweening arrogance! [30] But now our Lord’s word has come true against us [as well]: verily, we are bound to taste [the fruit of our sins]. [31] So then, [if it be true that] we have caused you to err grievously – behold, we ourselves had been lost in grievous error!” [32] And, verily, on that Day they all will share in their common suffering. [33] Verily, thus shall We deal with all who were lost in sin. [34]’ (*as-Saffat*: 27-34)

Even Satan will absolve himself of his followers: ‘and when everything will have been decided, Satan will say: “Behold, Allah promised you something that was bound to come true! I, too, held out [all manner of] promises to you – but I deceived you. Yet I had no power at all over you: I but called you – and you responded unto me. Hence, blame not me, but blame yourselves. It

is not for me to respond to your cries, nor for you to respond to mine...' (*Ibrahim*: 22). That is, neither one of us can defend the other.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

قَالَ لَا تَخْتَصِمُوا لَدَيَّ وَقَدْ قَدَّمْتُ إِلَيْكُمْ بِالْوَعِيدِ
مَا يُبَدَّلُ الْقَوْلُ لَدَيَّ وَمَا أَنَا بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ

God will say, 'Do not argue in My presence. I sent you a warning [28] And My word cannot be changed: I am not unjust to any creature [29] (The Quran, *Qaf*: 28 - 29)

Allah *the Almighty* brings an end to this dialogue and this argument between those who were astray and those who led them astray, and ends this battle by saying to them: '...“Do not argue in My Presence.” (*Qaf*: 28) because this contending will not avail you aught now, and none of you can cast the blame on any other, for I know you best, and I know best who sinned, who was astray, and who led others astray; so, there is no benefit in contending, '...I sent you a warning.' (*Qaf*: 28) That is, I gave you a warning in your earthly life, and I showed you My Way of Guidance and told you what is lawful and unlawful, and how such would be requited in paradise or in hell.

As for the saying of Allah, 'And My Word cannot be changed...' (*Qaf*: 29), it means, 'Your contending now will not change My Judgement of you in the least, and I will not go back on My Word', this is in reference to His Order 'Cast, cast into hell every [such] stubborn enemy of the truth.' (*Qaf*: 24) This will bring an end to their hope and cause them to despair of Allah's Mercy; '...I am not unjust to any creature...' (*Qaf*: 29). That is, My Judgement is right and fair, and based on wisdom, not tyranny, and injustice. So, these defences and contentions you offer will not avail any of you aught.

When He *the Almighty* says '...I am not unjust to any creature...' (*Qaf*: 29) [Literally, 'I am not *zhallam* to any of My creatures' (*Qaf*: 29)], the word *zhallam* is an intensive form of the word *zhalim*, which means 'wrongdoer'; so, when we call a person *zhallam* (a great wrongdoer), this means that he is certainly a *zhalim*, a 'wrongdoer' in the general sense; but in the reverse, when the word *zhallam* is negated, this does not mean that the word *zhalim*

is also negated. That is, a person might not be a 'doer of great wrong', but he could still be a 'wrongdoer' in a lesser sense. So, when He says: '...I am not unjust to any creature' (*Qaf*: 29), He negates that He is *zhallam*, but not necessarily that He is *zhalim* – so does this mean that Allah *the Almighty* could be called *zhalim* (a wrongdoer)?

We say that an intensive morphological form in Arabic could imply that the action is repeated. For example, when you say that someone is *akul* (the intensive form of *akil*, 'one who eats'), this does not necessarily mean that he eats large meals; it could mean that he eats a single piece of bread for a meal, but does so several times a day.

Moreover, Allah *the Almighty* is not speaking about one person here, but rather about everyone in the world, and all His creatures and servants. Because of this, when *zhallam* is negated, *zhalim* is also negated. [So He is not a 'great wrongdoer', nor is He a 'wrongdoer' in any sense.]

The meaning might also be to negate the action in itself because wrongdoing is commensurate with the power of the wrongdoer over the one whom he wrongs; that is, wrongdoing is only as strong or as weak as the wrongdoer himself is. Therefore, if Allah *the Almighty* could be described as doing wrong – and of course He is completely and transcendently absolved above this – then His wrongdoing would be severely powerful, so we would say *zhallam* not *zhalim*.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

يَوْمَ نَقُولُ لِجَهَنَّمَ هَلِ امْتَلَأَتْ وَتَقُولُ هَلْ مِنْ مَزِيدٍ ﴿٣٠﴾

**We shall say to Hell on that day, 'Are you full?'
and it will reply, 'Are there no more?' [30]
(The Quran, *Qaf*: 30)**

In the previous verses, He *the Almighty* says: 'Cast, cast into hell every [such] stubborn enemy of the truth.' (*Qaf*: 24), and here He *the Almighty* asks hell: 'Are you full?' Allah *the Almighty* also gave His Promise to fill the hell; He says: '...Most certainly will I fill hell with invisible beings as well as with humans, all together!' (*as-Sajda*: 13) So He will certainly fulfil this promise, and the

question here is ‘Are you full?’ which is a rhetorical question, to which the answer comes: ‘...and it will reply, “Are there no more?”’ (*Qaf*: 30)? This means that it is full, but it wants more; so where will it put them?

We said before that the Creator destined paradise from pre-eternity to have room for all of humanity, were they all to believe, and created hell to have space for all humanity, were they all to disbelieve. Therefore there are empty spaces in the hell which the believers would have taken, and empty spaces in paradise which the disbelievers would have taken; and the hell will say: ‘...and it will reply, “Are there no more?”’ (*Qaf*: 30) in order that the empty spaces within it would be filled.

He *Glorified is He* says:

وَأَزَلَفْتُ الْجَنَّةَ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ ﴿٣١﴾

**But Paradise will be brought close to the
righteous and will no longer be distant [31]**

(The Quran, *Qaf*: 31)

After speaking about the hell in several verses, we now have the contrasting view of paradise: ‘be brought close’ (*Qaf*: 31), that is, it will be brought near to those people who were conscious of Allah, for they were given glad tidings of it in this worldly life, and Allah *the Almighty* never breaks His promise.

Allah *the Almighty* says:

هَذَا مَا تُوْعَدُونَ لِكُلِّ أَوَّابٍ حَفِيفٍ ﴿٣٢﴾
مَنْ خَشِيَ الرَّحْمَنَ الْغَيْبَ وَجَاءَ بِقَلْبٍ مُنِيبٍ ﴿٣٣﴾

**This is what you were promised — this is for everyone
who turned often to God and kept Him in mind [32]
who held the Most Gracious in awe, though He is
unseen, who comes before Him with a heart turned to
Him in devotion [33] (The Quran, *Qaf*: 32-33)**

Allah’s saying: ‘This...’ (*Qaf*: 32) refers to what was just said about how pious people will enter paradise. Allah’s saying: ‘...is what you were

promised...’ (*Qaf*: 32) refers to what Allah *the Almighty* has promised. As for Allah’s saying: ‘...this is for everyone who turned often to Allah...’ (*Qaf*: 32), the Arabic word *awwab* is an intensive form which means to turn back often to Allah such that when one sins he quickly regrets it and repents. The True Lord *the Almighty* explained this concept to us in His saying: ‘Repentance with Allah is only for those who do evil in ignorance...’ (*an-Nisa*’: 17), that is, they do not relish it or grow accustomed to it. Allah *the Almighty* then says: ‘...then turn (to Allah) soon, so these it is to whom Allah turns (mercifully), and Allah is ever Knowing, Wise [17] And repentance is not for those who go on doing evil deeds until when death comes to one of them, he says: Surely now I repent [18]...’ (*an-Nisa*’: 17-18).

Awwab is the one who regrets and repents when he commits a sin. This does not mean that he commits a lot of sins; rather, if he, out of heedlessness, ever misses out on a righteous deed, he quickly repents. For the one who repents of his sin and then returns to it, and keeps on doing this, this person is described by Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* as being like one who mocks his Lord. This is not the case with respect to the *awwab*. The word *Hafizh* in Allah’s saying: ‘...kept Him in mind (*hafizh*)...’ (*Qaf*: 32) is also the emphatic morphological form of the word *hafizh* (keeper). The *hafizh* is the one who always guards Allah’s Boundaries and keeps away from the things which He prohibits; he guards himself against falling into sin and from even going near them. This is the meaning of the Noble Hadith, ‘Watch over Allah, and He will watch over you.’⁽¹⁾ The way to watch over Allah is to keep within His Boundaries, to obey His Commandments and to stay away from His Prohibitions. Another attribute of the pious people, to whom Allah has made this promise, is that they are those: ‘who held the Most Gracious in awe, though He is unseen...’ (*Qaf*: 33). The word ‘awe’ means fear, and it is of two kinds: you might fear someone whom you hate and revile because he is stronger than you, or because he debases and tyrannises you, so that you fear and despise him; and this is the fear which men have

(1) See *At-Tirmidhi, Hadith, no; (2440) and Ahmad, Hadith, no; (537) on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas Allah be pleased with him.*

for each other. There is yet another kind of fear, which involves love, awe, and wonder, as the poet says:

I fear you in your majesty, though you have no power over me,
Save that which the beloved has in the eye of the lover.

So you love the one you fear, and you know that he has done favours for you which you could never repay; and this is the Fear of Allah. The following saying of Allah makes this easier for us to understand: ‘Do you not see that Allah sends down water from the cloud, then We bring forth therewith fruits of various colours; and in the mountains are streaks, white and red, of various hues and (others) intensely black? [27] And of men and beasts and cattle are various species of it likewise; those of His servants only who are possessed of knowledge fear Allah [28]’ (*Fatir*: 27-28). The True Lord *the Almighty* does not issue a binding commandment of Sacred Law here, nor does He give us a cause to fear being remiss therein; rather, He speaks about the signs of His universe, wanting us to seek them out and reflect upon them and to delve into their secrets and behold their beauty. Every time we look upon the signs of the universe around us, our awe of Allah increases, and we feel more and more wonder and amazement at His Grandeur and the Blessings He gives us; those who are truly endowed with knowledge are the ones who behold this first and who are closest to giving Allah the awe and esteem He deserves. Let us reflect here on the precision of the Quranic discourse, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘who held the Most Gracious in awe, though He is unseen...’ (*Qaf*: 33). He chose the attribute of Grace and Mercy (*rahma*) and did not say, ‘Those who stand in awe of the All-Compeller’ or ‘the All-Dominant’ because the awe here springs from love, mercy and magnification of Allah whom we fear and before whom we stand in awe. Then He specifies this awe by saying: ‘...though He is unseen...’ (*Qaf*: 33) meaning that this awe is not proclaimed before the people, and that the true believer stands in awe before Allah in private before he does so in public, and in seclusion before company; he fears Him when he is alone.

As for the one whose faith is weak, he fears Allah in front of other people; when he is among them, he speaks about the lawful and the unlawful; but once he is by himself, he violates Allah’s Boundaries. This

means that his awe of Allah is tainted by ostentation and idolatry; therefore He describes the pious people and the denizens of paradise as being those who fear Allah when only He Almighty can see them. Another meaning of Allah's saying: '...though He is unseen...' (*Qaf*: 33) is that when the believer is reminded of the Terror of Allah's chastisement and of hell, while he is still in the comfort of this world, he fears it and believes in it even though he has not seen it. This is what it means to stand in awe of that which we cannot perceive; for in our present situation, hell is unseen and imperceptible, and we only believe that it exists because Allah has told us that it does. The believer accepts what Allah tells him as though he can see it with his own eyes and touch it with his own senses, and indeed Allah's saying is even truer than the vision of the eye. I clarified this point before while explaining Allah's saying: 'Have you not considered [*alam tara*, literally 'did you not see'] how your Lord dealt with the possessors of the elephant?' (*al-Fil*: 1) This is an address to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* who did not see the incident of the Elephant, for he was born that very year; so why did He *the Almighty* not say to him 'Do you not know?', and say instead 'Did you not see'? Some scholars said that it is because Allah's saying is even truer than the vision of the eye, for indeed the eye might deceive you, but Allah's saying is absolutely true. Allah *the Almighty* then says: '...who comes before Him with a heart turned to Him in devotion.' (*Qaf*: 33) That is, a heart which is solely devoted to Allah and truly obedient. The heart is the seat of faith and as I said before; Allah wants our hearts, not our external forms. You might force the external form to believe, but the heart will only come out of love and obedience. This is why the True Lord *the Almighty* made faith a matter of free will, not compulsion; for had He *the Almighty* willed otherwise, He could have compelled all of His creatures to believe in Him *the Almighty* just as He compelled the heavens and the earth; but He wanted His servants to come to him in obedience and conviction.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

أَدْخُلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ ذَٰلِكَ يَوْمُ الْخُلُودِ ﴿٣٤﴾ هُمْ مَا يَشَاءُونَ فِيهَا وَلَدَيْنَا مَزِيدٌ ﴿٣٥﴾

**So enter it in peace. This is the Day of everlasting
Life [34] They will have all that they wish for
there, and We have more for them [35]
(The Quran, *Qaf*: 34 - 35)**

This is an order from Allah *the Almighty* to the believers to enter the paradise in peace, safe and free of all discomforts; in other words, they shall never experience woe or distress again. As for Allah's saying: 'enter it in peace...' (*Qaf*: 34), it will be uttered by the angels when they greet them with the greeting of peace. Likewise, the True Lord *the Almighty* will say it to them, as He says: 'Peace: a word from a Merciful Lord.' (*Ya Sin*: 58) If a man receives greetings of peace from his Lord, he shall never suffer again. Another possible interpretation for Allah's saying: 'so enter it in peace...' (*Qaf*: 34) is 'enter it while giving greetings of peace to your fellow believers, saying to them, 'Peace be upon you', just as you used to greet them in this worldly life; likewise, in the Hereafter you will greet the angels at the doors of paradise with the same words. You will also greet your fellow believers. Allah's saying: 'This is the Day of everlasting Life...' (*Qaf*: 34) refers to the Day of Resurrection. As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...the Day of everlasting Life...' (*Qaf*: 34), it means that the Day of Judgment will be of permanence and endless uninterrupted bliss; and this is the difference between the bliss of this world and that of the Hereafter. However how great the bliss of this worldly life may be, two things cause the one who attains it to worry about it: either he will leave it by dying, or it will leave him through poverty or sickness. As for the bliss of the Hereafter, it is free of all obstacles and imperfections. Allah's saying: 'They will have all that they wish for there...' (*Qaf*: 35) means that this will take place in the paradise. The orientalist objected to this verse, saying: 'How could they have whatever they desire, when the Hadith states that paradise contains: '...What no eye has ever seen, nor any ear heard, nor any human heart imagined.'?(1) 'If they

(1) See *Al-Bukhari, Hadith, no. 3005; Muslim, Hadith, no. 5050 on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him.*

desire it,' does this not mean they must know what it is?' Some scholars said that the believer will desire the blissful things of this worldly life which he knows and which he used to enjoy, while the bliss of the Hereafter will be completely different from these things, sharing nothing in common with them but their names, while their true natures will differ. Therefore, He *the Almighty* goes on to say: '...and We have more for them.' (*Qaf*: 35) The True Lord *the Almighty* explained this further when He says: 'And convey good news to those who believe and do good deeds, that they shall have gardens in which rivers flow; whenever they shall be given a portion of the fruit thereof, they shall say: This is what was given to us before; and they shall be given the like of it...' (*al-Baqara*: 25). That is, when the believer yearns to eat a mango, for example, he will find it to be different from what he knew in his worldly life; and when he asks for it the next day, he will find it to be different from the one he ate the day before, and so on. It will resemble it, but will not be the same. So He gives them the ability to desire what they know of the delights of this world, and what they enjoy of it, yet in the Hereafter they will be something different, which is what is meant by the Hadith: '...What no eye has ever seen, nor any ear heard, nor any human heart imagined.' This is because if you desire something, you ask for it by name, and the name is part of the knowledge of the thing; and so long as they are things utterly new to us, we do not know their identity, or their names.

Allah *the Almighty* says:

وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ هُمْ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا
فَنَقَّبُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ هَلْ مِن مَّخِصٍ ﴿٣٦﴾

**We have destroyed even mightier generations before
these disbelievers, who travelled through [many] lands
– was there any escape? [36] (The Quran, *Qaf*: 36)**

The Arabic word *Kam* (how) in this verse means 'many'; the meaning thus is, 'We destroyed a great many'; Allah's saying: '...before these...' (*Qaf*: 36) means 'before your people, Quraysh'; regarding Allah's saying: '...generation...' (*Qaf*: 36), the word (*qarn*) means a group of people who live in a specific time. *Qarn* is one hundred years. It might mean something

else if it is linked to a Prophet, such as Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* for they were all included in his spell of prophethood which lasted for nine hundred and fifty years. So *qarn* is derived from *iqtiran* (connection), whether that of the time of a king, a Prophet or an event. In another verse, the True Lord *the Almighty* explains how He destroyed the nations who gave the lie to their Prophets in the past, saying: ‘So each We punished for his sin; of them was he on whom We sent down a violent storm, and of them was he whom the rumbling overtook, and of them was he whom We made to be swallowed up by the earth, and of them was he whom We drowned...’ (*al-’Ankabut*: 40).

All of those people were stronger and more powerful than Quraysh; for what were they, compared to Iram- the many-pillared, the like of whom were never created in all the land? And what were they, compared to Pharaoh, he of the many tent-poles?

Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...who travelled through [many] lands...’ (*Qaf*: 36) They went out into the land and travelled therein, which shows that they had power and stability, and that they were not overly concerned with the affairs of their lives. The True Lord *the Almighty* made it clear that travel might be undertaken for the purpose of reflection, as He *the Almighty* says elsewhere: ‘Say: Travel in the earth, then see...’ (*an-Naml*: 69). Or it might be undertaken to seek provision or for tourism, as He *the Almighty* says: ‘Say: Travel in the land, then see...’ (*al-An’am*: 11). So His saying: ‘...who travelled through [many] lands...’ (*Qaf*: 36) means that they travelled on earth to seek pleasure and benefit, for they were not content with what they possessed at home, but wanted to enter other lands too; and only the strong do this, while the weak do not leave their homes and are content with a little. And elsewhere in the Quran, He *the Almighty* says of them: ‘...and dug up the earth, and built on it in greater abundance than these have built on it...’ (*ar-Rum*: 9). The Arabic word *naqqaba* (to dig) means ‘to look for something concealed beneath the earth’. So they were not content with the easily obtained blessings, but they sought after those which were concealed underground. Allah’s saying: ‘...was there any escape?’ (*Qaf*: 36) means that they sought a place to hide in and to be safe from the torment. This means that although they possessed power and stability and were able to travel throughout the land, once the

torment was sent down upon them, they could not find any refuge to protect them, or any place wherein they could be defended from Allah's chastisement. The Arabic word *mahis* is derived from the verb *hasa* which means 'to flee.' Even in our common speech, we say, 'He has nowhere to run and nowhere to hide.' In Allah's saying: '...was there any escape?' (*Qaf*: 36), the reason this saying is framed in the form of a question is so that you can answer it yourself. Did they find a refuge from the torment? No, they did not.

This verse was revealed to console Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and to relieve his suffering on account of the adversity and stubborn resistance he met from his people. It is as though He *the Almighty* were saying to His Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: 'Do not grieve, Muhammad, and take your example from your fellow Messengers who came before you; for in the end you shall be victorious.'

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَذِكْرٍ لِمَنْ كَانَ لَهُ قَلْبٌ أَوْ أَلْقَى السَّمْعَ وَهُوَ شَهِيدٌ ﴿٣٧﴾

**There truly is a reminder in this for whoever has a heart,
whoever listens attentively [37] (The Quran, *Qaf*: 37)**

Allah's saying: 'There truly is...' (*Qaf*: 37) refers to the stories of the communities of the past who were taken to task by Allah. As for His saying: '...a reminder...' (*Qaf*: 37), it means that a reminder for you all and to which you must pay heed; for you have learned about what happened to them, i.e. the previous nations either by seeing the remains of their settlements; Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And most surely you pass by them in the morning, [137] And at night; do you not then understand? [138]' (*as-Saffat*: 137-138) Or else you have heard the accounts of what happened to them in the divinely-revealed scriptures; hearing and sight are indeed man's most important means of perception, which is why He *the Almighty* says here: '...whoever listens attentively' (*Qaf*: 37) that is, who hears and sees. As for Allah's saying: '...for whoever has a heart...' (*Qaf*: 37), it means a conscious heart which reflects and perceives, not a foolish or heedless heart – for what is the point in hearing if one does not have a conscious heart? The words would simply

go in one ear and out the other, and the one who heard them would not learn anything from them.

Allah's saying: '...whoever listens attentively' (*Qaf*: 37) means 'to pay attention to what is heard' meaning that one gives his ear and listens with an attentive heart to take in what he hears and receive it with the proper rational inquiry.

The Arabic word *shahid* is the emphatic form of the word *shahid* (one who sees); it implies that he is especially attentive to what he sees, and that he benefits from it; he hears and sees with an attentive heart and a conscious mind, far from any heedlessness.

The True Lord *the Almighty* then says:

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا
فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَمَا مَسَّنَا مِنْ لُغُوبٍ

**We created the heavens, the earth, and
everything between, in six Days without tiring [38]
(The Quran, *Qaf*: 38)**

The True Lord *the Almighty* makes it clear here that He created the heavens and the earth and all the cosmological signs within them and between them in a total of six Days. He *the Almighty* then says: '...without tiring.' (*Qaf*: 38) That is, this action of creation did not tire Us or exert Us. There are other verses in the Noble Quran similar to this one indicating that the creation took place over eight Days. He *the Almighty* says: 'Say: What! Do you indeed disbelieve in Him Who created the earth in two Days, and do you set up equals with Him? That is the Lord of the Worlds.' (*Fussilat*: 9) So, we have here two (additional) Days. In addition, He *the Almighty* says: 'and He made in it mountains above its surface and He blessed therein and made therein its foods, in four Days: alike for the seekers.' (*Fussilat*: 10) So, the total now is six Days. He *the Almighty* furthermore says: 'then He directed Himself to the heaven and it is a vapour, so He said to it and to the earth: Come both, willingly or unwillingly. They both said: We come willingly [11] So He ordained them seven heavens in two Days [12]' (*Fussilat*: 11-12). So, this seems to give us a total of eight Days, a matter that caused some orientalists to claim

that these verses in question are contradictory: is it six Days or eight Days? But this accusation of theirs is born of their lack of understanding of the Arabic language and its rhetorical styles. The True Lord *the Almighty* first spoke about the creation of the earth as a separate entity, and then spoke about the creation of what came after the earth, all of which took place in a total of four Days. So the two times states here are inclusive meaning that the two Days are included in the four because they both refer to the creation of one single thing: the earth. After the True Lord spoke about the creation of the earth, He *the Almighty* said: ‘...in four Days: alike for the seekers.’ (*Fussilat*: 10) That is, it was completely finished in four Days. It is like if you say, ‘We went from Cairo to Tanta in an hour, and to Alexandria in two hours.’ So, there is no contradiction in the verses, but rather they are all in harmony with each other. Another misconception in this regard is that they said, ‘If the True Lord *the Almighty* can do whatever He wills without any need for effort, then why did He not create this universe with the word ‘Be’ so that it would not have taken six Days?’ I said before in answer to this that there is a difference between creating something and making the precursors to creation and then allowing the thing to develop on its own and become what it is destined to be. I explained this with the example of yoghurt: we take milk and yeast and mix them together, and then leave this mixture at a certain temperature, and after a while the ingredients react with each other and give us yoghurt. So the effort required to do this takes only a few minutes, but the process of reactions takes place over several hours, until it becomes what we want it to be after we first assembled the ingredients needed to make it. The same is true for the creation of the universe in six Days like the days we know. The meaning of weariness is the lethargy which comes after one works until he is tired. So tiredness and exertion accompany work, and then weariness is the lethargy and relaxation which come after the work is done; and if the lesser thing is negated, then of course the greater thing is negated all the more. So, the meaning is that He became neither weary nor tired, just as is the case when He *the Almighty* says: ‘...slumber does not overtake Him or sleep...’ (*al-Baqara*: 255). Slumber means the drowsiness which comes before sleep; and thus negating slumber means that sleep is negated all the more.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ
وَقَبْلَ الْغُرُوبِ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَأَدْبَرَ السُّجُودِ ﴿٤٠﴾

**So [Prophet], bear everything they say with patience;
celebrate the praise of your Lord before the rising and
setting of the sun [39] proclaim His praise in the night and at
the end of every prayer [40] (The Quran, *Qaf*: 39 - 40)**

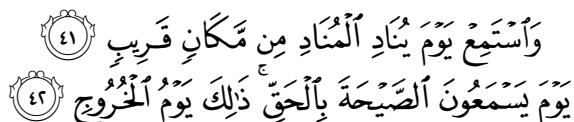
The True Lord *the Almighty* wants to console His Messenger after all the persecution he encountered from his people, so He says to him: ‘Go on with your mission, and be not saddened by what they say, and do not despair of your ever triumphing over them’; for when the persecution directed at them became especially severe, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and his Companions felt that victory was far-off; Allah says of this: ‘...and they were shaken violently, so that the Messenger and those who believed with him said: When will the help of Allah come?..’ (*al-Baqara*: 214) Here, He *the Almighty* says to him: ‘So [Prophet], bear...’ (*Qaf*: 39). This is because every time you bear persecution and trial patiently, you earn reward and a higher rank. So the more they persecute you, the more you must bear their persecution patiently, for they are only increasing their sin, while you are increasing your reward. Allah’s saying: ‘...celebrate the praise of your Lord...’ (*Qaf*: 39) means ‘declare your Lord’s Absolute Transcendence above any imperfection and any attribute which does not befit Him *the Almighty* by which His creatures might be characterised; for Allah has a Hand, but it is not like our hands; and He possesses Hearing, but it is not like ours. So, understand all these Divine Attributes in the light of Allah’s saying: ‘...nothing like a likeness of Him; and He is the Hearing, the Seeing.’ (*ash-Shura*: 11) Therefore the True Lord *the Almighty* began telling the story of the Night Journey and Ascension by saying: ‘Glory be to Him Who made His servant to go...’ (*al-Isra*: 1). That is, Allah is transcendentally above all imperfections and above having any resemblance to His creatures because the story involved the breaking of the natural laws with which men are familiar. So, do not find this event far-fetched because it is attributed to Allah, not to a human being; Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* did not say,

'I travelled', but rather said, 'I was taken'. Distances are traversed in a speed commensurate with the power of the doer: you can travel from Cairo to Alexandria by horse in ten hours and by car in three hours and by plane in half an hour and by rocket in a few minutes. In this way, speed is commensurate with the power of the doer, and as the power increases the time needed decreases. Because the speed in question here is that of the True Lord *the Almighty* no time was involved at all; and the reason why Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* made this journey over a whole night was that he was shown many things during it, which used up this time. The meaning of Allah's saying: 'celebrate the praise of your Lord...' (*Qaf*: 39) is: Extol the glory your Lord and at the same time praise Him for His Blessings; and therefore, we find that expressions of glorification and praise are always linked with one of Allah's Blessings and Signs which none but He could provide. Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Glory be to Him Who made His servant to go...' (*al-Isra'*: 1). He *the Almighty* also says: 'Glory be to Him Who created pairs of all things, of what the earth grows, and of their kind and of what they do not know.' (*Ya Sin*: 36) Therefore we have seen over the passing of history that the disbelievers, idolaters, and atheists worship their idols and sanctify them, but yet they never say to their idols, 'Glory be to you' because this can only be said to Allah. Also, the Divine Name 'Allah' has never been given to anyone despite the existence of atheists and those who deny the Existence of Allah; none of them has ever dared to give his son this name because he is afraid to call his son Allah. Therefore He *the Almighty* says: '...Do you know of anyone equal to Him?' (*Maryam*: 65) So these are two things which no one has ever dared to do, because of Allah's Grandeur, even though man has free will to do as he chooses.

We can also understand from Allah's saying: '...celebrate the praise of your Lord...' (*Qaf*: 39) that His Glory itself is a blessing which deserves our praise; for the fact that the True Lord *the Almighty* is transcendentally above any likeness, equal or partner, is a great blessing for mankind. For if Allah had a likeness, equal or partner, our lives would be ruined, and we would suffer on account of this equality, and we would not be able to live in peace. Therefore He *the Almighty* says: 'If there had been in them any gods except Allah, they would both have certainly been in a state of disorder...' (*al-Anbiya'*: 22).

He *Glorified is He* also says: ‘Never did Allah take to Himself a son, and never was there with him any (other) god— in that case would each god have certainly taken away what he created, and some of them would certainly have overpowered others; glory be to Allah above what they describe!...’ (*al-Mu’minun*: 91) The meaning of Allah’s saying: ‘...before the rising and setting of the sun; [39] proclaim His praise in the night and at the end of every prayer[40]’ (*Qaf*: 39-40) is: Glorify Him always without ceasing, for these times summarise the entire day; for there are people who work during the day and sleep at night, and others who work at night and sleep during the day; the former take a break from their responsibilities during the night, whilst the latter do so during the day. There are similar verses to this one in the Quran, all of which have their own meaning. Elsewhere, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘Bear then patiently what they say, and glorify your Lord by the praising of Him before the rising of the sun and before its setting...’ (*Ta Ha*: 130). He *the Almighty* says here the Arabic word *ghurubiha* and in chapter of *Qaf* the Arabic word *Al-Gharub*. Therefore they ask: ‘what is the difference between the two? Which of them is clearer?’ I say that each word is clear in its place; for when the sun sets, some of us see the sign of the setting, while others do not because of the clouds and such things, and thus deduce that the sun has set by using other means which indicate this to them. In *Ramadan*, for example, many of us do not see the sunset, but we can still break our fasting because we have other means of telling the time. So, Allah’s saying: ‘...and before its setting (*ghurubiha*)...’ (*Ta Ha*: 130) refers to those who can see the sun. As for Allah’s saying: ‘...before the setting (*AL-Gharub*)’ (*Qaf*: 39), it refers to those who cannot see it. Likewise, He *the Almighty* says: ‘...proclaim His praise in the night and at the end of every prayer’ (*Qaf*: 40) while elsewhere He says: ‘...and during hours of the night do also glorify (Him)...’ (*Ta Ha*: 130). The former refers to those who wish to glorify Allah for a single part of the night and then sleep, whilst the latter refers to those who wish to glorify Allah and then sleep, and then glorify again and then sleep, several times in a single night. Allah’s saying: ‘...and at the end of every prayer’ (*Qaf*: 40) means ‘after the prescribed prayers’; Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* taught us how to glorify Allah after the prayer’s end.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:





Listen out for the Day when the caller will call from a nearby place [41] They will come out [from their graves] on that Day, the Day when they hear the mighty blast in reality [42] (The Quran, *Qaf*: 41-42)

The caller here is Israfil, the angel charged with the task of blowing the Trumpet, and the 'mighty blast' is the second trumpet-peal which will bring the people forth from their graves for the Resurrection. The True Lord *the Almighty* says to His Messenger: 'listen out for the Day when the caller will call...' (*Qaf*: 41). These words were issued after Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* endured persecution through both words and deeds, and so it is as though his Lord *the Almighty* was consoling him and saying to him: If they have done all this, then wait for this Day, the Day when the caller will call them to stand and be reckoned and requited. And listen to what will happen to them then, and how they will regret it, and repudiate and curse one another. This is as the rustic saying goes: 'Tomorrow we shall sit on the wall and listen to the clamour.' That is, 'Wait, Muhammad, and you shall hear all about them.' And Allah's saying: '...from a nearby place...' (*Qaf*: 41) means that the one who gives the call will be close to everyone, as though he is keeping their company, and as though every one of us has his own caller. Allah's saying: 'the Day when they hear the mighty blast...' (*Qaf*: 42) means the second trumpet-peal. Allah's saying: '...in reality...' (*Qaf*: 42) means the very truth which they used to deny and disbelieve in their worldly life, namely the truth of the Resurrection; and the Quran mentioned their saying: '...What! When we are dust, shall we then certainly be in a new creation?...' (*ar-Ra'd*: 5) And His saying: '...that Day of [their] coming-forth' (*Qaf*: 42) means the Resurrection and the coming-forth from the graves; and the second blast will sound after all creatures have died upon the first blast. And therefore Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* would always recite the chapter of *Qaf* on the Days of the two *Eid* festivals because of how Allah says therein: '...that Day of [their] coming-forth' (*Qaf*: 42).

Coming forth is a good thing on the days of *Eid*, and even the menstruating woman should attend the prayer, merely to witness the goodness and the gathering of Muslims on this day. And therefore Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* bequeathed to us the practice of holding the *Eid* pray outdoors because it is a prayer attended and observed by those who are in a state where they themselves do not pray. And likewise, reciting the chapter of *Qaf* on *Eid* also indicates that the day of celebration, going out, dressing nicely and rejoicing should not make us forget the greater Day of coming-forth, the Day of Resurrection.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:


 إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي وَنُمِيتُ وَإِلَيْنَا الْمَصِيرُ

 يَوْمَ تَشَقَّقُ الْأَرْضُ عَنْهُمْ سِرَاعًا ذَلِكَ حَشْرٌ عَلَيْنَا يَسِيرٌ

It is We who give life and death; the final return will be to Us [43] on the Day when the earth will be torn apart, letting them rush out – that gathering will be easy for Us [44]
(The Quran, *Qaf*: 43 - 44)

After saying: ‘...that Day of [their] coming-forth’ (*Qaf*: 42) He *the Almighty* then affirms this truth and gives the conclusion of it, saying: ‘It is We who give life and death...’ (*Qaf*: 43), and because some people deny this fact, He emphasises it by stressing the pronoun: ‘Verily, it is We...’ (*Qaf*: 43), for He Alone *the Almighty* is able to do that. Allah’s saying: ‘...the final return will be to Us’ (*Qaf*: 43) means the final destination and the return; for the beginning is from Him, and the end is with Him. Allah’s saying: ‘on the Day when the earth will be torn apart, letting them rush out...’ (*Qaf*: 44), that is, they will come forth from it rapidly because they will all respond to the blast at once, coming forth quickly without delay. And Allah’s saying: ‘...that gathering...’ (*Qaf*: 44) means, all of the things which happen of this Day, of the earth splitting and the people hastening forth from their graves and being gathered all together for the Gathering: ‘...will be easy for Us.’ (*Ghafir*: 44)

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِجَبَّارٍ
فَذَكِّرْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مَنْ يَخَافُ وَعِيدِ

**We know best what the disbelievers say. You [Prophet]
are not there to force them, so remind, with this Quran,
those who fear My warning [45] (The Quran, *Qaf*: 45)**

As long as We are fully aware of them and of what they are saying, then leave their requital to Us, for if you requite them, you will only do so with your power, while if We requite them We shall do so with Our power, and We shall not have mercy on them, nor shall they evade punishment. So, leave the matter to Us, for We are most capable of punishing them. Allah's saying: '...You [Prophet] are not there to force them...' (*Qaf*: 45), for your mission is to convey the Message, So do not worry yourself about them, and do not make yourself responsible for more than you are able to do. It is just as the True Lord *the Almighty* corrected him when He says: 'Perhaps you will kill yourself with grief because they do not believe.' (*ash-Shu'ara*: 3) And the meaning of Allah's saying: '...You [Prophet] are not there to force them...' (*Qaf*: 45) is force them to have faith, for if Allah wanted this He would have forced them to have faith as He forced others; but He wants them to come to Him in obedience out of their own free choice. Allah's saying: '...so, remind with this Quran, those who fear My warning.' (*Qaf*: 45) This is because this is your mission, to remind the people by means of the Quran. And then He specifies who this reminder is for: '...those who fear My warning.' (*Qaf*: 45) That is, who fear My warning and My admonition, for only the believer fears this warning, since he is prepared to accept it and respond to it. I explained before the difference between the action and the one who receives it, for not all those who listen to the Quran are alike. Some listen to it, and this listening has an impression on them and they respond, others listen without any attentiveness or reflection so that it is as though they have not heard anything. Therefore He *the Almighty* says of them: 'And there are those of them who seek to listen to you until when they go forth from you, they say to those who have been given the knowledge: What was it that he said just now?...' (*Muhammad*: 16) This kind of listening is a

bodily action only, without the presence of an open and attentive heart. Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...Say: It is to those who believe a guidance and a healing; and (as for) those who do not believe, there is a heaviness in their ears and it is obscure to them...’ (*Fussilat*: 44). So the Quran is one, but those who listen to it are different. Some listen to it with an attentive heart, a pure soul, and a mind empty of adversity and corrupted beliefs so that they are affected and respond. And others listen to it with stubborn hearts and minds which are occupied with errant beliefs which prevent them from responding. Therefore I said to those who wish to choose between two things: you must remove both of them from your heart, and then seclude yourself and think and reflect on both of them. Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘Say: I exhort you only to one thing, that rise up for Allah’s sake in twos and singly, then ponder: there is no madness in your fellow-citizen...’ (*Saba*: 46). Group thinking is not organised, and usually does not come to the correct conclusion.

You will remember that I said, when explaining the different effects of a single action that you blow into your hands in winter to warm them, and you blow into hot tea to cool it down. So, the True Lord *the Almighty* specifies here that this reminder is for: ‘...those who fear My Warning.’ (*Qaf*: 45) This is because they possess attentive hearts and minds free of opposition, delusion, and error; and this is the right way to receive the Quran.

the chapter of

adh-Dhariyat

In the Name of God,⁽¹⁾ the Most Merciful, the Dispenser of Mercy

The chapter of *adh-Dhariyat* ⁽²⁾. Allah *the Almighty* says:

وَالَّذِينَ ذَرَوْا ۝١ فَلَا حِيلَ وَلَا قُرَىٰ ۝٢
فَالْجُرِيتِ يُسْرًا ۝٣ فَأَلْمَسَتِ أَمْرًا ۝٤

**By those [winds] that scatter far and wide [1] and
those that are heavily laden [2] that speed freely [3]
that distribute [rain] as ordained! [4]
(The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 1-4)**

The Arabic word *wa* expresses a vow, and these are vows which the True Lord *the Almighty* is swearing. We only swear by Allah because the believer magnifies nothing more than he magnifies Allah. As for the True Lord *the Almighty* He may swear by whichever of His creations He wills, for He *the Almighty* knows best the aspects of magnificence they possess, and the wisdom behind every vow which is sworn by Him. For example, elsewhere He *the Almighty* says: ‘I swear by the early hours of the day, [1] And the night when it covers with darkness. [2]’ (*ad-Duha*: 1-2) So why does He *the Almighty* swear here by

-
- (1) The Islamic conception of 'Allah' is not the same as the Christian and Jewish conception of 'God'. However, the word 'Allah' does not refer to a tribal god or God of only Muslims, it refers to the Creator of the whole world, the One God (who has no son). We prefer, however, to use 'Allah' rather than 'God' as it has a unique character: it cannot be used to refer to any false gods and does not have any derivatives like goddess, gods, etc. It is a unique word used solely to describe the One God of this universe.
- (2) In his *Tafsir*, Al-Qurtubi says: The chapter of *adh-Dhariyat* is number 51 in the written order of the Quran, and contains 60 verses. It was revealed before *Hijra*. In his *Al-Itqan*, As-Suyuti says: It was revealed between the chapter of *al-Ahqaf* and the chapter of *Al-Ghashiya*, and was thus the 66th chapter to be revealed.

the bright morning hours and the dark still night in particular here, and not by anything else? This vow was a reply to the disbelievers of Mecca, when the Revelation stopped coming to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* for a while, and they rejoiced and said, 'Muhammad's Lord has scorned him!'⁽¹⁾ So the vow here had a purpose and an occasion; for the morning hours are a time when movement and work take place, and the night is a time of rest and stillness, and neither of them can do without the other. So, there is an indication here of the wise reason for the Revelation's temporary cease, as though He were saying to them: 'Reflect on the time which encompasses you, and how it is composed of a night for rest and a day for work, each of which compliments the other.' And the same is true of the Revelation which came to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: at first it was difficult and exhausting for him, and Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* described this difficulty, saying of the angel: 'He whelmed me in his embrace until he reached the limits of my endurance.'⁽²⁾ When he returned to his house, he said: 'Cover me, cover me! Wrap me up, wrap me up!' So, it is as though the temporary ceasing of the Revelation for Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was a chance for him to have a rest from this hardship, and yearn to meet the angel again. So, He compared the first descent of the Revelation to the day, and its ceasing to the night. And here, the True Lord *the Almighty* swears by the winds which scatter dust; and wind is a power and energy essential for life in this world. When He says: '...that scatters far and wide.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 1), this means that these winds blow things and move them; and these are the winds which carry water vapour to the places where it forms clouds. And therefore, He then says: 'and those that are heavily laden' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 2) meaning the clouds which bear water and gather together so that they become heavy, as Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Do you not see that Allah drives along the clouds, then gathers them together, then piles them up so that you see the rain coming forth from their midst...' (*an-Nur*: 43). And the Arabic word '*waqr*' means something heavy, as He *the Almighty* says elsewhere: '...and (Who) brings up the heavy cloud.' (*ar-Ra'd*: 12) And

(1) See *At-Tabari, Tafsir*.

(2) See *Al-Bukhari, Hadith, no; (3) and Muslim, Hadith, no; (231) on the authority of 'A'isha Allah be pleased with her*.

then once these clouds are formed, they do not remain in the same place, but the wind moves them. Allah's saying: 'that speed freely' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 3), that is, the clouds move along gently, floating in the air with subtlety and ease.

He then says: 'that distribute [rain] as ordained' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 4), that is, the winds apportion these clouds and transport them to the lands where they are destined to fall, as He *the Almighty* says elsewhere: '...afflicting there with whom He pleases and turning it away from whom He pleases...' (*an-Nur*: 43). And then the subject of these four vows is given.

Allah *the Almighty* says:

إِنَّمَا تُوْعَدُونَ لَصَادِقٌ ۖ وَإِنَّ الدِّينَ لَوُفْعٌ ۖ

**What you [people] are promised is true [5]
the Judgement will come [6]
(The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 5 - 6)**

That is, the Resurrection and Reckoning of which you have been promised '...is true.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 5) It means a reality and a fact. Allah says: 'the Judgement will come.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 6) The judgement meant here is the Day of Judgement, the Day when all deeds will be requited, which is as Allah *the Almighty* says: '...will come' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 6): it will definitely come, beyond all doubt. But what is the relationship between the four objects of the vow, and the Day of Judgement? Some scholars said that when you look at the universe in which we live, you find that The Creator *the Almighty* created everything within it, and all of these constituents are just as they were in Allah's universe the moment He created it, and they will remain until the Day of Resurrection, where nothing shall be recreated except man. Take, for example, water or air, by both of which Allah has sworn: you find that water is the same as it has ever been since Allah has created this universe, neither increasing nor decreasing because it goes around in a circle which always returns it back to the natural state of water in which Allah has created it. For example, in the course of your life you might drink several tons of water, but does it all remain inside you? Of course not, it comes out of you in the form of urine, sweat and so on, and returns once again to its source. Even the small

amount of water which remains in a human being is absorbed by the earth when he dies, and returns to the ground water. So this is a sign of the fact that you are born, then die, then return once again; take from the material world around you proof of the possibility of your return, and take perceptible material things as proof of the truth of the imperceptible things of which Allah tells you. Do not find it far-fetched that something could disappear and then return once more.

He *the Almighty* then says:

وَالسَّمَاءِ ذَاتِ الْحُبُوكِ ﴿٧﴾ إِنَّكُمْ لَفِي قَوْلٍ مُّخْتَلِفٍ ﴿٨﴾ يُؤْفَكُ عَنْهُ مَنْ أُفِكَ ﴿٩﴾

**By the sky with its pathways [7] you differ in what
you say [8] those who turn away from it are [truly]
deceived [9] (The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 7-9)**

This is another vow, wherein the True Lord *the Almighty* swears by the sky. Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘by the sky with its pathways.’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 7) The Arabic word *hubuk* is derived from the root *habaka* which means ‘to fashion something precisely’ neither doing too much nor too little; and this is true of the sky, which we see to be smooth and straight without any fissures or cracks because it was created with precision and skill. Some scholars also say that *hubuk* here means the paths which the celestial bodies follow as they move. And the main clause of this vow is: ‘you differ in what you say.’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 8) This refers to the disbelievers of Mecca who opposed Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and said different things about him; it is as though the True Lord *the Almighty* were alluding to them that their beliefs should be united without any inconsistency, just as the sky was created uniformly without any variance. He says elsewhere: ‘And the heaven, He raised it high, and He made the balance. [7] That you may not be inordinate in respect of the measure. [8] And keep up the balance with equity and do not make the measure deficient [9].’ (*ar-Rahman*: 7-9) So the sky is straight and level because it was created according to the True Lord’s measure; and if you want your affairs to be ordered, then you must order them in conformity with this measure; for otherwise, you will differ, and your affirmations will be at variance.

The meaning of Allah's saying: 'those who turn away from it are [truly] deceived' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 9) is that the only one who would reject Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and faith in him: '...are [truly] deceived' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 9), for Satan has diverted him away from faith; one of Satan's concerns is to divert the people of truth away from truth, and to make falsehood seem alluring to them, Allah *the Almighty* says: '...and most surely the Satan suggest to their friends that they should contend with you; and if you obey them, you shall most surely be polytheists.' (*al-An'am*: 121)

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

فَقُلِ الْخَرَّصُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي غَمْرَةٍ سَاهُونَ ﴿١١﴾ يَسْأَلُونَ أَيَّانَ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿١٢﴾
يَوْمَ هُمْ عَلَى النَّارِ يُفَنُّونَ ﴿١٣﴾ ذُوقُوا فِتْنَتَكُمْ هَذَا الَّذِي كُنتُمْ بِهِ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

**Perish the liars [10] those steeped in error and
unaware! [11] They ask, 'When is this Judgement
Day coming?' [12] On a Day when they will be
punished by the Fire [13] Taste the punishment!
This is what you wished to hasten [14]
(The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 10 - 14)**

The meaning of: '...(AL-Kharrasun)...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 10) is liars, as He said in another verse: '...they only lie.' (*az-Zukhruf*: 20) But how could He say: 'Perish the liars.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 10) when they are still alive? Some scholars say that the meaning here is that they have been cursed by Allah and banished from His mercy; to be killed takes you out of the enjoyment of this world, while to be cursed takes you out of Allah's mercy in the Hereafter and puts you into His chastisement – we seek Allah's refuge! It is as though He *the Almighty* were saying to them: 'Who do you curse, and who do you slay? Nay, it is you who shall be slain, and resurrected, and reckoned; and it is you who shall be cursed and banished from Allah's mercy.'

He *the Almighty* then describes them by saying: 'Those steeped in error (*ghamara*) and unaware!' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 11) The Arabic word *ghamara* describes the action of water when it completely covers someone and drowns him; it is as though these people were immersed in ignorance until they drowned in

it and it blinded them; and the meaning of Allah's saying: '...unaware!' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 11) is that they are heedless, foolish and astray from their proper purpose. And these people will find no salvation on the Day of Resurrection, the Day which they deny and which they ask about, with doubt and sarcasm: 'They ask, "When is this Judgement Day coming?"' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 12) So Allah makes it clear to them: 'On a Day when they will be punished by the Fire.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 13) The Day of Judgement which you deny will be the Day when you shall be cast into hell wherein you shall taste all manner of torments, as requital for your mocking and your sarcasm. Allah *the Almighty* then says: 'Taste the punishment...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 14), that is, taste the results of the trials you inflicted on others in your worldly life. The Arabic word *fitna* is also applied to fire when it smelts metals to clean them of their impurities. So the Day of Judgement, about which you so mockingly ask, is the Day when you shall be smelted in the fire of hell and burned by it just as gold and iron are smelted; and although Gold and Iron are smelted to remove their impurities so they become pure, you shall be smelted in the fire to be tormented by it and exposed to endless pain. Allah's saying: 'This is...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 14) means, the Day of Resurrection: '...what you wished to hasten.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 14) And their hastiness in asking for it was the result of their lack of faith in it; for had they believed that it was real, they would never have called for it to be hastened. And the Quran tells us that they said: '...then bring us what you threaten us with, if you are of the truthful ones.' (*al-Ahqaf*: 22)

So, their question about the Day of Judgement: 'When is this Judgement Day coming' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 12) was meant to mock it and deny it because they do not believe in any of the unseen things of which Allah has told us, although they were happy to accept the material blessings which Allah bestowed upon them, and the benefits He created for them. They took the blessings without considering the Blessor; indeed, they were deluded by the blessings, and that is why they mocked and denied as they did. Therefore we find that many verses debate them with arguments and proofs, and affirm to them that the Resurrection is real. And when they said: '...When we shall have become bones and decayed particles, shall we then certainly be raised up, being a new creation?' (*al-Isra'*: 49) He responded: 'Say: Become stones or iron[50] Or some other creature of those which are too hard (to receive life)

in your minds! But they will say: Who will return us? Say He: Who created you at first...’ (*al-Isra’*: 50-51) because they found it far-fetched that bones could be restored to life, He took them even further than bones, for bones have an origin in life; so He said to them: ‘Even if you were inanimate objects like stones or iron, which are hard and lifeless, We could still bring you to life.’ And after speaking about those who opposed Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and denied the Resurrection, the True Lord *the Almighty* then speaks of their contrast; and as I said before, contrast helps to make the image clearer, and opposites show the beauty of their opposites. So He *the Almighty* says:

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ۖ آخِذِينَ مَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَبْلَ
ذَلِكَ مُحْسِنِينَ ۖ كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ ۖ وَبِالْأَسْحَارِ هُمْ
يَسْتَغْفِرُونَ ۖ وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ

**The righteous will be in Gardens with [flowing]
springs [15] They will receive their Lord’s gifts
because of the good they did before [16] sleeping
only little at night [17] praying at dawn for God’s
forgiveness [18] giving a rightful share of their
wealth to the beggar and the deprived [19]
(The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 15 - 19)**

In Allah’s saying: ‘Verily, the righteous...’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 15), the word ‘verily’ imparts emphasis to the saying; and righteousness (*taqwa*), as I said, means to place a barrier (*wiqaya*) between yourself and Allah’s chastisement. This is why the Quran can say in one place: ‘...be careful of (your duty to) Allah...’ (*al-Hashr*: 18), and in another place, say: ‘...And guard yourselves against the fire...’ (*Al-Imran*: 131). The meaning is: Continue to obey Allah, and avoid disobeying Him and all the means which incur His chastisement; for Allah has Attributes of Beauty and Attributes of Majesty, and pious means to place a protective barrier between yourself and the Attributes of Majesty which deter the sinner and turn him away from evil. And one manifestation of the Attributes of Beauty is that He created for us things which benefit us in this worldly life, and one of these is fire: ‘Have you considered the fire which

you strike? [71] Is it you that produce the trees for it, or are We the producers? [72]' (*al-Waqi'a*: 71-72) But although you benefit from this fire in this worldly life and consider it to be one of Allah's blessings upon you, you must beware it in the Hereafter because it will be an instrument of torment, and it will be one of the hosts by which Allah punishes the sinners; so be conscious of it. So the meaning is the same: Be conscious of Allah, and be conscious of the fire. And we may observe here that Allah's saying: 'The righteous...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 15) refers to the time of moral responsibility, and it is a plural; and Allah's saying: '...gardens...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 15) refers to the time of reward, and it is a plural, and the same is true of Allah's saying: '...springs...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 15). It is as though the True Lord *the Almighty* were saying that every pious person shall have his own garden with a spring running through it. Indeed yes, he will have his own garden because the grammatical rule says that if one plural is associated with another, they may each be divided individually with the same association. For example, if the teacher says to the pupils, 'Take out your books', this means that each individual pupil must take out his book. But in the chapter of *ar-Rahman*, we find that Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And for him who fears to stand before his Lord are two gardens.' (*ar-Rahman*: 46) So how can we make an agreeable synthesis of these two verses? Some scholars say that the chapter of *ar-Rahman* came to address both man- and jinn-kind, so the meaning is: For those who fear their Sustainer's Presence, whether of man- or jinn-kind, there is a garden: one garden for mankind, and another for jinn-kind. Or, the meaning is that the individual really will have two gardens, and I explained before that when the True Lord *the Almighty* created paradise with room enough for all of mankind were they all to believe, and created hell with room enough for all of mankind were they to disbelieve? I said that there will be no 'overpopulation' in the Hereafter. This means, that when the people of hell enter hell, their places in paradise will be free, and pious people will inherit them. So it will be as though each one will claim both his garden and the garden of the disbeliever who left it and went to hell. A 'garden' is a verdant place filled with trees with tangled branches which give shade and cover to him who walks beneath them, or which contains all the needs of life so that he never has to leave it; and this is the meaning of *qasr* 'palace' or 'castle', namely' a

place which relieves (*qasara*) you of the need to go anywhere else, such that you do not need to leave it to go anywhere else to obtain any of life's needs.

He *the Almighty* says: '...will find themselves amid gardens and springs...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 15), that is, springs of water because the basis of gardens is verdure, growth and fruits, and all of these things are the result of the presence of water. So, the gardens contain springs to preserve them and keep them as gardens.

Therefore when the Quran speaks of the rivers of the paradise and the presence of the water its gardens require, it sometimes says: '...through which running waters flow...' (*at-Tawba*: 100) *Tajri tahtaha*, and other times says: '...through which running waters flow...' (*as-Saff*: 12) *Tajri min tahtiha* which literally means 'from under which running water flow'; this indicates that the water is an inherent part of the garden, so we do not imagine that the water which flows through them could ever be cut off. It is as if He *the Almighty* is saying to you: 'Rest assured that the waters of the garden are guaranteed for it because they flow right from it.'

His words, 'They will receive their Lord's gifts because of the good they did before' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 16) return the context here to the past, and tell us about the cause of this felicity. These divine-conscious people will receive this reward because they accepted Allah's Guidance willingly and freely.

The Arabic word *akhidhin*, here literally means 'takers' which is the plural of *aakhidh* 'taker' means someone who takes something with eagerness and desire, and with acceptance and pleasure. A man does not stretch out his hand to take something unless it will give him benefit, unlike something which is thrown at you so you take it unwillingly.

It is as though these people heard Allah's Way of Guidance and recognised that it would rectify their lives, repair their actions and give them salvation in the Hereafter; so, they took it with desire, love and eagerness; they took it with all their strength, as Allah says: '...Hold fast with [all your] strength unto what We have vouchsafed you...' (*al-Baqara*: 63).

A strong act of taking indicates that the one who takes appreciates the benefit which he is obtaining. Moreover, you took, whilst others left, and you did good, whilst they did evil, although you had free will and the ability to choose whether to take or leave.

You did good when you had the ability to do evil and accept evil; and you listened to Allah's Revelation and obeyed it, and bore the burden of its responsibilities, gladly and willingly, so you are worthy of this reward.

The verses then made it clear that this taking is a limited one; we do not take everything and all that comes to us, but rather, we take that which comes to us from our Lord and Creator: 'They will receive their Lord's gifts...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 16). He chose to mention the Attribute of Lordly Sustenance here because it is connected with giving; for the 'Lord' is the One Who creates from nothing and sustains from nothing, and preserved the essential needs of life for you by His All-Sustaining Power (*qayyumiyya*); for if we say that a man is *qa'im* over something, this means that he is concerned with it, and does not leave it to anyone else.

So, by His wisdom and Omnipotence, Allah created; and by His All-Sustaining Power He preserved all good things; therefore when something good comes to you, remember the lordly sustenance which gave it to you. Allah's Lordship is pre-eternally present in a person's life; for He gave to you and provided for you before you were even created, yet He only made you religiously responsible when you reached the age of adulthood.

So as long as you took the bestowal of lordship and enjoyed it, you must also take the bestowal of godhood and just as you took the first bestowal with love, eagerness, and desire, you must also take the other bestowal in the same way. It is not right for you to take the first bestowal and leave the second and reject it; for if you reflect on the bestowal of godhood, you will find that it is better and more lasting for you than the bestowal of lordship.

The first bestowal of lordship gave you the essential needs of this worldly life, which is limited and ephemeral; it gave you the essentials of the impermanent outer shell. As for the bestowal of godhood, it guarantees for you eternal life in the Hereafter, and revives within you the eternal spirit which never comes to an end. So which of these does it make more sense to take? Therefore, when Allah *the Almighty* spoke to us about this matter, He *the Almighty* said: 'O children of Adam! Indeed, We have bestowed upon you from on high [the knowledge of making] garments to cover your nakedness, and as a thing of beauty: but the garment of Allah-consciousness is the best of all...' (*al-A'raf*: 26) .

The garments which cover one's nakedness represent necessities, and the garments of beauty represent luxuries and comforts; and this is the most we can possibly take from this worldly life. He then draws our attention to what is more important: '...but the garment of Allah-consciousness is the best of all...' (*al-A'raf*: 26). They are better than the delights of this worldly life and its ornaments and trifles because all of this will come to an end, whilst the other will be eternal without end. The garment of this world covers you in this world, but the Garment of Allah-consciousness covers you in this world and the next.

Because of the bestowal of godhood has this importance, Allah only gives it to those who believe in Him willingly. Therefore, He only holds the believer religiously responsible, which is why whenever He issues responsibilities to us, He says: 'O you who have attained to faith!' (*al-Baqara*: 153)

The verses then mention another attribute of the divine-consciousness: '...because of the good they did before' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 16). That is, they only deserve this rank because they '...were doers of good [*muhsinin*, literally 'doers of *ihsan*']...before' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 16), and *ihsan* or 'spiritual excellence' is the highest rank of faith. Scholars have defined *ihsan* as being that of which Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'It is to worship Allah as though you see Him, for if you see Him not, He sees you.'⁽¹⁾ *Ihsan* means to do more righteous deeds than Allah commanded you to do; and therefore, since this verse was revealed in Mecca before the poor-due had been made obligatory, He said: 'Giving a rightful share of their wealth to the beggar and the deprived' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 19), and did not say 'a due share appointed', for this means the poor-due, which was only made obligatory in Medina, whilst during the Meccan period there was only charity.

So, the meaning of *ihsan* is that they rose to the ranks of spiritual excellence before they were commanded to do so, and this means that the ranks of spiritual excellence are natural and instinctive, and are within your ability and do not overburden you. Likewise, all aspects of obedience and righteousness are natural and not contrived, unlike sin.

(1) See *Al-Bukhari*, no. 48 and *Muslim* no. 10, on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him.

Therefore, we say that the righteous man saves on the cost of sitting in cafes and smoking and drinking coffee, drugs and intoxicants; righteousness makes more economic sense.

Even in the physical sense, righteousness is more natural, whilst sin requires affectation, stealth, and wiliness. Therefore, on the linguistic level, The Quran speaks of the acquisition of good deeds using the verb *kasaba*, and of the committing of sins by using the verb *iktasaba* which is from the same root, but implies affectation.

To acquire (*kasb*) is something natural, whilst to commit (*iktasaba*) involves affectation; and you see this affectation in the one who stealthily attempts to look at something which Allah has forbidden him to see, and how he steals glances at people. You see the same difference between the man who walks to the mosque, and the man who walks to the bar, and so on.

The scholars have defined the level of spiritual excellence in worship, saying that spiritual excellence means to do all the worship which Allah has obliged you to do, and then to do more of the same acts which He has obliged. The ordinary believer offers the five daily prayers, and the doer of good (*muhsin*) offers as many extra supererogatory prayers as he can in addition to them. The ordinary believer pays the poor-due of one twentieth or one fortieth of his standing wealth, whilst the doer of good gives more than that; and so on. So 'a rightful share...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 19) here has two meanings: It means that they did good before they were obliged to, and were eager to do good deeds even before they were obliged to do so; or it means that they did what they were obliged to do, and then did even more of the same kind of acts of worship which Allah obliged them to do.

Allah *the Almighty* then describes the doers of good by saying: 'Sleeping only little at night' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 17). The verb *huju*' means literally 'to be still', to neither do something good nor something evil; and therefore in Arabic we say to the naughty child, *Ihja* ' , that is, 'Be still!'

This is why they say, 'The tyrant's sleep is an act of worship' because it keeps him from his tyranny. These doers of good have the right to pray the evening prayer and then sleep until the dawn prayer, but their love for

obedience made them refrain from sleep save for a small part of the night; and the negation of their lack of movement (*huju* ') negates their lack of sleep.

Spiritual excellence is a result of the servant's love for his Lord. Allah was good to you when He gave these responsibilities to you, and greeted you by them, so you must return the greeting with a better one: if He obliges you to do five prayers, you make it ten; and if He obliges you to give a twentieth or a fortieth of your wealth as poor-due, you give many times more than this; and so on, for all other acts of worship and righteous deeds.

When our master Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was asked about spiritual excellence, he said: 'It is to worship Allah as though you see Him, for if you see Him not, He sees you.' If you can see someone, this means he is present and not absent. Suppose you are hired by a man who sits behind you and watches you, and observes all your actions: will you be lax or remiss in your work whilst he is there?

The same is true of the doer of good when he worships; and it is related in a Qudsi Hadith: 'O My servants! If you think that I cannot see you, then the fault is in your faith; and if you think that I can see you, then why have you made Me the least important of all those who behold you?'⁽¹⁾

And He then says: 'Praying at dawn for Allah's forgiveness' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 18). The word *ashar* (praying at dawn) is the plural of *sahar* which means the last part of the night before the dawn breaks, when a faint light can be seen which a man might imagine to be the light of the sun, although the sun has not yet risen; therefore, it is called 'imaginary light.'

From this is derived the word *sihr* which means 'sorcery' or 'magic', for sorcery means to alter reality by means of illusion which is not actually real; Allah says: '...they cast a spell (*saharu*) upon the people's eyes...' (*al-A'raf*: 116). The watches of the night are among the best times to pray for forgiveness but what are these people seeking forgiveness for, given that their Lord described them as Allah-conscious, took all that He gave to them, have attained the station of spiritual excellence, and only sleep for a little part of the night?

(1) *Ibn Rajab Al-Hanbali narrated it as a saying of Abu Al-Jald.*

So, they do not seem to have any sins for which they need to ask Allah for forgiveness. The scholars say that their prayers for forgiveness are appropriate to the rank of spiritual excellence; they do not ask Allah's forgiveness for their sins, they ask His forgiveness for the shortcomings they think they have in their worship and their deeds, as though they see all they have done to be paltry, and to fall short of the appreciation and worship which Allah deserves. This is an example of the maxim: 'The good deeds of the pious are the sins of those who are truly close to Allah.'

Allah then says: 'Giving a rightful share of their wealth to the beggar and the deprived.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 19) He ascribes the possessions to them, saying 'their wealth' because they own it now even though in reality it belongs to Allah, and man has only been entrusted with it for a while. Therefore He *the Almighty* says: '...spend on others out of that of which He has made you trustees...' (*al-Hadid*: 7).

Man is Allah's vicegerent on earth, and in light of this vicegerency, he must obey The One Who made him His vicegerent by giving those who ask for help and those who suffer privation from the wealth which Allah has entrusted to him. He must give to the one who is unable to work and earn, giving it in thanks to Allah who gave him the strength to work, whilst others are unable to work and lack this strength.

When Allah *the Almighty* commands us to do this, He gives security to the life and future of both those who are able to work and those who are not because time changes people's situations, and the events of life are in constant flux, and perhaps the able man will become disabled tomorrow, and then he will find someone to help him in turn.

Therefore, we said before that The Wise Lawgiver taught us to work as much as we are able to, not only as much as you need to; for when you work with all the power that Allah placed within you, you earn enough to meet your needs and also to give charity to those who are unable to work. If we have this assurance and this security, then a man will live without dreading the events of life, or fearing poverty for himself or for his children after him.

When He *the Almighty* says, '...to the beggar and the deprived' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 19), this means the poor person who is forced by necessity to

ask people for help; and ‘the deprived.’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 19) means the one who is also poor, but feels ashamed to ask for help, and he might go hungry or even die because of this. In doing this, he sins against himself because Allah has given him the right to ask; he is first of all deprived of possessions, and then he has deprived himself of asking even though it is lawful for him to do so.

Because of this, Islam encourages us to be acquainted with one another, and to attend gatherings where people get to know one another, in the course of which we will come to know those who are needy so we can help them, and those who are sick so we can visit them, and so on.

A beggar came to one of the righteous, and he gave him what he needed, and then his wife came to him and found him weeping. She asked him, ‘Why are you crying when you gave him what he needed?’ He said, ‘I am crying because I neglected him until he had to come and ask me.’ So, people should be given their rights without even having to ask for them, and the rich person should spare the poor person the need to ask.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ آيَاتٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَفِي أَنفُسِكُمْ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

**On earth there are signs for those with sure faith [20]
and in yourselves too, do you not see? [21]
(The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 20 - 21)**

The earth is the earth upon which we live, and it is singular; yet the reality is that there are many earths, as Allah says: ‘Allah is He who has created seven heavens, and, like them, of the earth...’ (*at-Talaq*: 12). This means that there are seven earths.

The scholars say that this is because the earth contains several environments in terms of hot and cold weather, and in terms of the soil and the elements it contains, and the good things it produces; because of this, there are several lands; and this is why scientists speak of ‘wheat belts’, ‘banana belts’, and so on.

Allah *the Almighty* has given each land what it needs to produce specific plants which suit the populations there. The problem is that we transport the product of one land to another where it is not suitable, for, were it good for

those people, they would already have it there. Therefore, we find that that when plants grow in lands where they are not native, they are afflicted by blights. If we look, for example, and the banana belt, we will find that the banana crops there are strong and never get blighted or ruined, whilst when we move these crops to lands where they are not native, they are constantly beset by blight and ruin. It is as though He *the Almighty* were saying to us: 'This was not created for your environment, but it has its own environment where it excels and where it has all the constituents it needs to grow well.'

'Signs' are signals which point to the power of the Creator *the Almighty*. The first of the signs on earth we can observe is how the surface of the earth is divided between water and dry land; and some water is fresh, whilst some is salty and bitter. We drink the fresh water and water our crops and animals with it, and we get fish from the salty water: '...And yet, from either of them do you eat fresh meat, and [from either] you take gems which you may wear...' (*Fatir*: 12).

Some dry land is fertile and good for farming, whilst other land is desert, or mountainous; and each kind of land has its own particular goodness. Another of the signs of the earth is that three-quarters of its surface is covered with water; and the wisdom of this is that the surface area of the water is vast to facilitate the evaporation which gives us rain enough for drinking and farming.

So, the salt water is the store of water on earth, and Allah made it salty to save it from becoming putrid and to keep it from changing; and He says: 'And He it is who sends forth the winds as a glad tiding of His coming grace – so that, when they have brought heavy clouds, We may drive them towards dead land and cause thereby water to descend; and by this means do We cause all manner of fruit to come forth. Even thus shall We cause the dead to come forth: [and this] you ought to keep in mind.' (*al-A'raf*: 57)

Another of the signs of the earth is how fresh water runs on a higher level than salty water. If the salty water were higher, it would flow into the fresh water and spoil it and we would not be able to benefit from it. Allah says of this: 'Between them is a barrier which they may not transgress.' (*ar-Rahman*: 20)

One of the wonders of creation of plants is how the best kinds of date palms and fig trees are found on the salty shores, such as in Al-'Arish and other places. This is an aspect of Allah's omnipotent power which is not

subject to material means, but rather does as it will; for from salt water, we eat the sweetest and most delicious of dates.

And another of the signs of the earth is the mountains: ‘...Just as in the mountains there are streaks of white and red of various shades, as well as [others] raven-black.’ (*Fatir*: 27) As we said before the mountains are the storehouses of fertility and nourishment, and the storehouses of many treasures such as metals and precious stones.

We explained before that Allah *the Almighty* dispersed good things and spread them out over the whole earth so that if we consider any particular part of the earth, we will find good things therein equivalent to those of any other part: this one has metals, that one has oil; this one has crops, and so on.

And another of the signs on earth is that a single soil can be watered from a single water source, yet the crops which grow from it have different forms and tastes: ‘And there are on earth [many] tracts of land close by one another [and yet widely differing from one another]; and [there are on it] vineyards, and fields of grain, and date-palms growing in clusters from one root or standing alone, [all] watered with the same water: and yet, some of them have We favoured above others by way of the food [which they provide for man and beast]. Verily, in all this there are messages indeed for people who use their reason!’ (*ar-Ra’d*: 4)

Indeed, they use their reason and so understand Allah’s power of creation, and that these signs were created by a Wise, All-Sustaining Power. And here, He says: ‘...signs for those with sure faith...’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 20). That is, those who are certain of this and believe in it; for the highest level of knowledge is the cosmological sciences which study the cosmos and find, in its signs, proof of Allah’s power.

Read, for example: ‘Are you not aware that Allah sends down water from the skies whereby We bring forth fruits of many hues – just as in the mountains there are streaks of white and red of various shades, as well as [others] raven-black, [27] and [as] there are in men, and in crawling beasts, and in cattle, too, many hues? Of all His servants, only such as are endowed with [innate] knowledge stand [truly] in awe of Allah... [28]’ (*Fatir*: 27-28).

Notice that Allah does not mention here any ruling of Sacred Law such as fasting, praying, or giving the poor-due. So the meaning of; such as are endowed with knowledge' here is those people who have knowledge of nature and the cosmos, and who study plants, animals, man and minerals, deriving from this power evidence of Allah *the Almighty* and guiding mankind to faith in The Creator; and this is something which benefits them both in this life and the next.

And the one who reflects on Allah's words: 'On earth there are signs for those with sure faith' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 20) will understand that if man looks at the universe around him, he will see therein evidence of the existence of Allah *the Almighty*. Therefore, He trapped the disbelievers when He asked them: 'Now if thou ask those [who worship any being other than Allah] as to who it is that has created them, they are sure to answer "Allah"' (*az-Zukhruf*: 87). Also His saying: 'And thus it is [with most people]: if you ask them, "Who is it that has created the heavens and the earth?"—they will surely answer, Allah' (*az-Zumar*: 38).

Indeed, they could not say anything else, for this is as clear and plain as the light of the sun, and no one else has claimed it for himself; and how could anyone claim it, when he was created as a baby without the power to do anything at all? How could he say, 'I created myself', when he was brought into the world just as it is, and how could he claim to have created it?

And His words: 'And in yourselves too, do you not see?' mean that just as in the earth there are cosmological signs which point to Allah's power, there are also signs within your own selves; and if you cannot perceive the signs of the universe around you, then look for them within your own self. And He says '...do you not see?' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 21) because although the signs of the universe around you might be far from you, your own self is close to you, and therefore it is all the more essential that you behold it and contemplate it.

There are many signs in the human self. Take, for example, how the temperature of the body is 37°C for the one who lives at the frozen North Pole, and also for the one who lives on the equator, and the body parts and limbs only work properly at this temperature, and if it increases, the whole system of the body is thrown out of balance, and malfunctions.

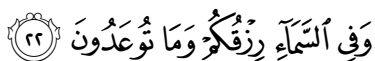
As for within the body, each organ has a temperature which is appropriate for it so that there is not one single temperature for the whole body, as we know,

although the overall body temperature is 37°C. The temperature of the eye, for example, goes no higher than 9°C; otherwise the eye would be damaged.

As for the liver, it can only function at 40°C; and it is amazing how this difference can exist inside a single body and within a single skin – glory be to Allah, the best of creators!

Likewise, if you reflect on the blood which flows in the veins, and breathing, and the heart, and the brain, and the bones, everything in your body is a sign, or rather each of them contains many signs such that when you contemplate them, you say: ‘Glory be to The Ingenious Creator! Glory be to Him who possesses omnipotent power!’ So, there is no argument left for the one who does not believe, once he has seen all the signs which exist in his own self and in the world around him.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:



In the sky is your sustenance and all that you are promised [22] (The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 22)

This rhetorical form is called in Arabic *al-qasr* ‘restriction’, namely when the preposition and the noun it precedes come before the subject of the sentence. This implies that sustenance is in Heaven alone, not anywhere else; sustenance comes to you from on high, from Allah. The word ‘sustenance’ means everything which gives benefit: money is sustenance, and health is sustenance, and intelligence is sustenance, and security is sustenance.

The meaning of sustenance being in Heaven is that it is a command of destiny which was ordained before time began, and inscribed in the Preserved Tablet. If you understand it to mean the material life which we live, then the heavens are also the source of the water which falls as rain, and is the source of life and nourishment.

‘...And that you are promised’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 22) comes from Heaven too, for everything is destined and inscribed in the Preserved Tablet, all things great and small, and all that ever was or will be, as He says: ‘...and not a leaf falls but He knows it; and neither is there a grain in the earth’s deep darkness, nor anything living or dead, but is recorded in [His] clear decree.’ (*al-An‘am*: 59)

So as long as sustenance has been apportioned by Allah, and as long as everything was predestined before time began, then be well-behaved when you seek it, and do not worry about the issue of sustenance except by going to it and working to get it; for you do not create it, but you only go to it, as He *the Almighty* says: ‘...go about, then, in all its regions, and partake of the sustenance which He provides...’ (*al-Mulk*: 15). So travelling and seeking provide the means of the provision which was apportioned to you before time began; and we learned this lesson from Hajar the mother of Ismail (Ishmael) *Allah’s peace be upon them* when Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* left her and her child by the *Ka’ba* and went away, and she said to him, ‘Did your Lord command you to do this?’ He said yes, so she said: ‘then He will not forsake us.’⁽¹⁾

She was fully confident that all provision comes from Allah, and her running seven times between Safa and Marwa were only meant to give us a clear example of how we should seek provision; it is as though Allah *the Almighty* wanted to make her a witness of the truth of this verse. When Hajar had used up all the means at her disposal for seeking sustenance, she returned to her son with complete confidence in what she had said: ‘Allah will not forsake us.’ And then the boy struck the ground with his foot and out burst forth the well of *Zamzam*.

And after this, Allah made these events one of the rites of the pilgrimage for us, to remind us always of this truth, which is that all sustenance is from Allah, but we are still required to work for it, and to strive to attain it is one of its means. He says:

فَوَرَبِّ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ مِثْلَ مَا أَنْتُمْ نَطِقُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

**By the Lord of the heavens and earth!
All this is as real as your speaking [23]
(The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 23)**

The scholar Al-Asma‘i⁽²⁾ related that he met a Bedouin man one day, who asked him where he was from. He replied, ‘From (the tribe of) Al-Asma‘.’ The Bedouin said, ‘And where have you just come from?’ He said, ‘From the

(1) See *At-Tabari, Tafsir*.

(2) *The story of Al-Asma‘i with the Arab Bedouin*

mosque.’ He asked, ‘What were you doing there?’ He replied, ‘Reading Allah’s Quran.’ So, the Bedouin said, ‘Read it to me.’

So, he recited *adh-Dhariyat* chapter until he got to the verse ‘In the sky is your sustenance and all that you are promised’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 22), whereupon the Bedouin took out his hunting gear and broke it, saying, ‘My sustenance must come from heaven, for Allah does not lie.’ Al-Asma‘i said: ‘So I went on pilgrimage with Harun Ar-Rashid, and there I met that Bedouin man, save that this time he looked very pale and wan. I asked him if he was the man from before, and he asked me if I was Al-Asma‘i. I said: Yes I am – but what has put you in this condition?’ ‘He asked me to recite for him what I had recited before, so I read it to him until I got to the verse: ‘By the Lord of the heavens and earth! All this is as real as your speaking’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 23) He was startled, and said: ‘Who incurred the wrath of the Almighty so that He had to swear an oath?’ He continued to repeat this, until after the third time of saying it he passed away.’

I remember once I made the pilgrimage with Sheikh Ahmad Abu Shaqra⁽¹⁾, and we wanted to climb up to the Cave of Hira’. He said to me, ‘We need a guide to show us the way,’ and I said to him, ‘We know the way.’ So, we went, but we found they had altered the road which leads to the Cave, so we got lost. Then my companion went to a secluded place to urinate, and suddenly he called me, ‘Come and see!’ I looked, and an insect had come forth to drink his urine. I said, ‘Glory be to Allah, it is as though we lost the way just so we could give water to this insect.’ And then a man passed us by and saw we had lost the way, and he guided us aright.

Allah *the Almighty* here swears by His Own Self *the Almighty* and His lordship over heaven and earth; for rainfalls from the heavens, and the earth receives this rain, and gives forth the plants which form the basis of nourishment and life.

When He says: ‘this is the very truth’, He is referring to what He said before: ‘In the sky is your sustenance and all that you are promised.’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 22) These words are true and there is no doubt in them because it was all destined in the Preserved Tablet before time began.

(1) See the story of Sheikh Ash-Sha‘rawi *may Allah rest his soul* with Sheikh Ahmad Abu Shaqra during the pilgrimage and their climbing to the cave of Hira’.

He then gives us an example to illustrate this, saying: ‘...as true as that you are endowed with speech’ (*ar-Rahman*: 23). So just as you know that you are capable of speech, and you are certain that this is true, and you have no doubt in it because you experience it yourself, you should equally have no doubt about the matter of your sustenance, and that it is from Allah; trust this report, for The One Who told you of it is truthful.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

هَلْ أُنَبِّئُكَ حَدِيثُ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ
إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا قَالَ سَلَامٌ قَوْمٌ مُنْكَرُونَ

**[Muhammad], have you heard the story of the
honored guests of Abraham? [24] They went in to
see him and said, ‘Peace.’ ‘Peace,’ he said, [adding
to himself] ‘These people are strangers’ [25]
(The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 24-25)**

Allah tells us here about Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him*. Because this was an important event, He *the Almighty* begins it with a question: ‘Muhammad], have you heard the story of the honored guests of Abraham?’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 24)

This kind of question is always used with amazing things to which we should pay attention. Allah *the Almighty* makes us eager to find out what this thing is. Another instance of this can be found when He says: ‘O you who have attained to faith! Shall I point out to you a bargain that will save you from grievous suffering [in this world and in the life to come]?’ (*as-Saff*: 10) In this way, He makes us eager to say, ‘Yes, Lord, show us!’

Because this story of Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* is an incredible one, Allah says of it: ‘Muhammad], have you heard the story of the honored guests of Ibrahim?’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 24) And Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* is the Father of the Prophets, and Allah honoured him by saying of him: ‘Verily, Ibrahim was a man who combined within himself all virtues...’ (*an-Nahl*: 120). Literally, ‘he was a nation’ as he possessed all the virtues which would usually only be found in an entire nation because Allah dispersed the virtues amongst all mankind: you have a certain virtue, someone else has another, and so on.

In this way, mankind compliment and support one another, for otherwise we would not need one another and society would be divided. Therefore, you find that the intelligent person does not despise anyone when he sees that he is better than him in some way because he knows that these virtues are spread out equally amongst mankind so he says to himself: 'If I am better than him in one way, he must be better than me in another.'

And Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'Allah has hidden three in three He has hidden His goodly pleasure in His obedience, so do not belittle any act of obedience, no matter how small, for Allah once forgave a man because he gave water to a dog which was so thirsty it was eating moist soil. He has hidden His wrath in His disobedience, so do not belittle any act of disobedience, no matter how small, for Allah once sent a woman to hell for imprisoning a cat, and neither feeding or watering it, nor allowing it to eat the insects on the floor. He has hidden His secrets in His creatures, so do not belittle any human being.'⁽¹⁾

Companion 'Ali said: 'When you see someone lower than you in something, then grieve, for you do not know in what way he is better than you.' People must be aware of this fact, for they are all equal in front of Allah. Allah was not born and none were born of Him, and His creatures are all equal in His sight, and they only become better than one another by their Allah-consciousness and righteous deeds.

The word 'story' means a piece of information which has been passed around, and which contains truth or wisdom so that people pass it around and take interest in it. The word 'guests' here is *dayf* which literally means 'guest' in the singular. Although the guests were several angels, Allah did not use the plural here but rather chose to use the singular.

The scholars say this is because the word *dayf* can actually be used for both singular and plural when it means the person you invite to your house, or who comes to you and becomes your guest; for the host should treat all the guests in the same way and greet them all the same, without honouring one of them more than the others, or paying more attention to one of them than the others.

(1) *Something similar was narrated by Al-Bayhaqi as a saying of Dhu An-Nun Al-Misri.*

So, it is as though they are all one person with him, none of them is distinguished from the others, either in the place they are seated nor in the attention the host pays to them. Therefore, The Quran refers to them in the singular, as though they were all one man.

And our Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* taught us this lesson, for it is related that he would treat those with whom he sat equally even with regard to how much he looked at them⁽¹⁾ so that each one of them would feel like he was the most honoured guest.

There are many places in The Quran where the singular noun is used to refer to a plurality, and when this happens it means that their intention and aim is united, when they gather together for the sake of Allah's Command, which is always one single command without any disparity; and in this case, the group is like a single individual.

Read, for example, what Allah says about Musa (Moses) and Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon them*: 'And go, both of you, unto Pharaoh and say, 'Behold, we bear a message from The Lord of all the worlds.' (*ash-Shu'ara*: 16)

So the word *dayf* here means 'guests', and the meaning of 'honoured' is someone who is given honour by someone else so that the subject of the verb honours and the object of the verb is honoured; and if they were honoured, then who honoured them? Scholars say that this has two meanings: Allah honoured them, as He *the Almighty* says: 'And [yet,] some say, "The Most Gracious has taken unto Himself a son"! Limitless is He in His glory! Nay, [those whom they regard as Allah's "offspring" are but His] honoured servants: [26] they speak not until He has spoken unto them, and [whenever they act,] they act at His behest. [27]' (*al-Anbiya*: 26-27)

Or they were honoured in that Prophet Ibrahim *peace be upon him* honoured them when he prepared for them food and served them himself instead of having his servants do it, and had his wife help him to serve them even though women are usually secluded; and he also honoured them by greeting them first.

(1) See *At-Tabarani, Al-Kabir*, no. (17868).

Moreover, he did not simply offer them the food he had at the time, but honoured them by slaughtering a calf which Allah describes in one place as being fat, and in another says that it was roasted; and these descriptions show the perfection of this offering, for the calf was plump and not skinny, and roasting was the best way they had of cooking meat; so, it was plump and well-cooked which is the height of honour for a guest.

When He says, ‘They went in to see him and said, “Peace.” “Peace.” He said, [adding to himself] “These people are strangers”’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 25), this means that he did not know who they were – and some say that he said these words to himself, not out loud.

And we may observe that there was a difference between the greeting of the angels and the greeting of our master Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* for they said *salaman*, which is ‘peace’ with an accusative grammatical ending, whilst he said *salamun*, which has a nominative ending. They greeted him first because when you approach someone they might fear you, so they greeted him first to let him know they meant no harm.

Their greeting *salaman* is in the accusative case indicates that it is the subject of a verb, which we could understand to be ‘We wish you peace’; and the presence of this elided verb in the sentence indicates that an event was about to happen which was the reason why they came.

As for his returned greeting *salamun* in the nominative, is simply meant ‘Peace be upon you’ which is an Arabic nominal sentence that indicates stability, which would be the future state of Prophet Ibrahim *peace be upon him*.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

فَرَاغَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ ۖ فَجَاءَ بِعِجْلٍ سَمِينٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَقَرَّبَهُ إِلَيْهِمْ قَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

He turned quickly to his household, brought out a fat calf [26] and placed it before them. ‘Will you not eat?’ he said [27] (The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 26 - 27)

The meaning of ‘He turned quietly to his household...’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 26) is that he went quietly from the guests to his wife; for usually when a guest comes in, the host gets up to go and bring him things to make him comfortable,

and the guest says, 'No no, sit down.' So, Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* slipped away from his guests to bring them food without their noting it, and without their saying to him, 'Sit down, we do not want anything.'

When he brought them the fat roasted calf, he placed in it front of them for them to eat it, but he saw that they did not reach for the food as most people would do, so he said to them '...Will you not eat?' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 27) to encourage them to eat, but they did not eat, and did not even stretch out their hands to the food, and so he felt afraid of them.

Allah *Glorified is He* subsequently says:

فَأَوْجَسَ مِنْهُمْ خِيفَةً قَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ وَبَشَرُوهُ بِعِلْمٍ عَلِيمٍ
فَأَقْبَلَتْ امْرَأَتُهُ فِي صَرَقٍ فَصَكَتْ وَجْهَهَا وَقَالَتْ عَجُوزٌ عَقِيمٌ
قَالُوا كَذَلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَلِيمُ

Beginning to be afraid of them, but they said, 'Do not be afraid.' They gave him good news of a son who would be gifted with knowledge [28] His wife then entered with a loud cry, struck her face, and said, 'A barren old woman?' [29] But they said, 'It will be so. This is what your Lord said, and He is the Wise, the All Knowing' [30] (The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 28 - 30)

When the fear showed on Ibrahim *peace be upon him* the angels reassured him by saying, 'Do not be afraid'; and then they gave him glad tidings of a son who would be endowed with deep knowledge – and this meant our master Ishaq (Isaac) *peace be upon him*; and He described him as being '...a son who would be gifted with knowledge' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 28) meaning that he would have a great amount of knowledge. But how could this be, when Ibrahim *peace be upon him* was an elderly man, and his wife Sara was barren?

'His wife then entered with a loud cry, struck her face...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 29) making a clamour and a noise, 'and struck her face' a blow in astonishment at these tidings, '...and said, "A barren old woman?"' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 29) That is, how could I have a child when I am a barren old woman?

So, she judged the matter according to the standard of human causal means, which said that it was impossible for her to conceive a child but Allah has other standards, and His omnipotent power had something else to say on the subject which is what the angels had come to convey, ‘but they said, “It will be so. This is what your Lord said, and He is the Wise, the All Knowing.”’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 30) The words ‘This is what your Lord said’ mean: As long as He *the Almighty* has decreed this, it is a certainty in which there can be no doubt because Allah’s power is beyond all material means.

The amazement of Sara *peace be upon her* is expressed when she was given tidings of Ishaq *peace be upon him* is similar to that which Maryam *peace be upon her* is expressed when she was given tidings of ‘Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him*: ‘Said she: “O my Lord! How can I have a son when no man has ever touched me?” [The angel] answered: “Thus it is: Allah creates what He wills...”’ (*Al-Imran*: 47). He says: ‘...He is the Wise, the All Knowing’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 30). He is wise in how He puts all things in their proper places, and all knowing in how His knowledge encompasses all things, and He knows that when He commands something, it obeys Him and does not refuse Him.

He *the Almighty* then says:

قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالُوا إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ مُّجْرِمِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾
لَنُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهِمْ جِبَارَةً مِن طِينٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ مُّسَوِّمَةً عِندَ رَبِّكَ لِلْمُسْرِفِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

Abraham said, ‘What is your errand, messengers?’ [31]
They said, ‘We are sent to a people lost in sin [32]
to bring down rocks of clay [33] marked by your
Lord for those who exceed all bounds [34]
(The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 31 - 34)

‘Abraham Said’ to those who had come to visit him: ‘...What is your errand, messengers?’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 31) *Ma khatbukum*, that is, what is your affair, and what is your story, and what vital thing is it for which you have come? The word *khatb* used here for ‘...What is your errand, messengers?’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 31) implies that the thing in question is an event of great importance, and he wanted to know what it was, and whether it concerned him or someone else.

This word *khatb* is also used in this way in the story of our master Joseph *Allah's peace be upon him*: '[Thereupon the King sent for those women; and when they came,] he asked: 'What was it that you hoped to achieve (*ma khatbukunna*) when you sought to make Joseph yield himself unto you?...'
(*Yusuf*: 51) That is, what incredible matter was it that made you do such a thing?

And Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* also said it when he saw the two daughters of Shu'aib *peace be upon him* who had come out to water their livestock: '...He asked [them]: "What is the matter with you (*ma khatbukuma*)?"'
(*al-Qasas*: 23) That is, what has forced you to go out? It was as though this was an unusual thing. So, this word is used for vitally important things which inspire astonishment and amazement.

The angels replied: '...“We are sent to a people lost in sin...”' (*Qaf*: 32). This reassured Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him*, and he realised that the matter was not directly concerned with him; and the people lost in sin at that time were the people of Lut (Lot). Then they revealed that their mission was: 'to bring down rocks of clay...' (*Qaf*: 33) The original Arabic here literally says 'Stones of clay' (*Hijara min tin*), and it is clear that stone is different from clay; stone possesses a hardness and firmness which differs according to the type of stone, starting with marble then granite, then limestone. So how could stones be made of clay when these two words describe completely different things? The scholars say that it means clay which has been baked in fire so that it has become hard and firm, as is done in the pottery craft.

The meaning of '...marked by your Lord for those who exceed all bounds.' (*Qaf*: 34) is that each stone bears the name and address of the one for whom it is intended, and is specially meant for him and no other, and it is directed at him and will not miss.

The words 'marked by your lord' indicate that these stones were sent down from Heaven, and were not made from the stone of the earth, and that they were marked by Allah and then came forth ready to be used; and the role of the angels was to cast them at those whose names were written upon them so that no stone was confused with any other.

The meaning of '...for those who exceed all bounds' (*Qaf*: 34) is those who go beyond the bounds in their sin; it is as though all things have boundaries,

and the lawful and unlawful have boundaries, which Allah *the Almighty* has made clear to us and taught us how to keep within them. He said about the lawful: ‘...These are the bounds set by Allah; do not, then, transgress them...’ (*al-Baqara*: 229).

Whilst about the unlawful, He said: ‘...These are the bounds set by Allah: do not, then, offend against them...’ (*al-Baqara*: 187). [Literally, ‘Do not go near them’] that is, stay within the bounds of the lawful and do not cross them for anything else; as for the unlawful, do not even go near it, and beware of even approaching it because if you approach it you might fall into it – so this is a protection for you.

Likewise, Allah said to Adam *peace be upon him*: ‘...but do not approach this one tree...’ (*al-Baqara*: 35); and He said: ‘And do not commit adultery...’ (*al-Isra*’: 32) [Literally meaning, ‘Do not approach adultery’]. So where forbidden things are concerned, He does not only forbid us from the action, but also forbids us from even approaching the means which lead to it.

So, in what way did those people who wasted their own selves transgress? They transgressed by committing an unlawful deed which contradicts the pure natural way which Allah created. When Allah wanted to place His vicegerent on earth, He created Adam *peace be upon him* and created with him his spouse so that there would be procreation, and the tribes would come forth to populate the earth, for it could not be populated by one or two people, but a great number of people were required.

He then also made procreation for all the other things He wanted to grow and continue to serve this vicegerent: ‘And in everything have We created opposites...’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 49).

If man was to procreate, then the part of earth upon which he lived would also procreate, and the plants upon which he lived would also have to multiply. Allah said: ‘...And out of the two spread abroad a multitude of men and women...’ (*an-Nisa*’: 1). So we needed crops which suited this multiplication.

The one who reflects on the matter of procreation in these plants and in man, will find that it is commensurate with the importance of the thing and the degree to which it can be benefitted from. For example, when you plant

radishes you can eat them after ten days, and cucumbers after forty days, and dates after four years.

So, before anything gives to you, it takes from you according to how important it is. If you want to produce a human being, this certainly will require a great deal of effort and exertion. Because of this, The Creator *the Almighty* linked procreation to a great pleasure superior to all other pleasures which a person feels in every part of his body, and which is superior to the pleasure of the eye when it sees, the nose when it smells, the tongue when it tastes, the nose when it smells, and the hand when it touches; for each part of the body has its purpose and its domain, whilst sexual pleasure involves every part of the body. Had The Creator *the Almighty* not linked procreation with this pleasure, no one would ever do it or assent to bear its difficulties.

You can compare the difference between the raising of a child and the raising of a lamb or a calf, for example: the lamb can stand and walk behind its mother only a few minutes after it is born, whilst the baby only walks after a year and a half.

Thus, we see that the childhood of a human being is longer than the childhood of any other creature. This is why The Creator *the Almighty* linked human procreation with this great pleasure which a person cannot resist, in order to encourage procreation; for otherwise, no one would be prepared to bear this responsibility and this difficulty.

Islam is also concerned with the makeup of the family, and has set regulations for it which ensure success for us; for this instinct cannot simply be discharged in any way as is the case with animals, but rather, Islam has set for it rules for the choosing of a good spouse, encouraging us to choose a religious person for our spouse. It has made a period of engagement so that each party can get to know the other. It allowed each of them to look at the other so that each can choose the spouse who is right for them, and satisfy their tastes and preferences for the other sex. It legislated the dowry and the marriage contract. All of this is so that the family is made strong and firm, prepared to deal with life and all of its difficulties and responsibilities.

The crime which these people committed and for which they deserved all the punishments which befell them was that they diverted this instinct which

Allah placed in man, from its proper lawful course and directed it towards another, unlawful, end which had no benefit or positive result, and which contradicted sound natural disposition and upright tastes. They preferred to have relations with men instead of women, as Allah allowed; and it is obvious that the only place where sexual relations should occur is the place where a seed may be planted and grow: ‘...Go, then, unto your tilth as you may desire...’ (*al-Baqara*: 223).

So, by this act of theirs, they squandered their own souls, and went beyond the bounds which Allah established; and to engage in sexual relations in the wrong place is forbidden in the case of men and in the case of women as well, and it is all forbidden.

Since this action is tantamount to fornication, it deserved the punishment of stoning. Allah stoned them, not with the stones of this earth, but with stones from Heaven which fell upon each one of them by name, singling him out so that not one single one of them remained, and thus they were wiped from the face of the earth.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

فَأَخْرَجْنَا مَن كَانَ فِيهَا مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَمَا وَجَدْنَا فِيهَا غَيْرَ بَيْتٍ مِّنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا فِيهَا آيَةً لِلَّذِينَ يَخَافُونَ الْعَذَابَ الْأَلِيمَ ﴿٣٧﴾

We brought out such believers as were there [35] We found only one household devoted to God [36] and left the town to be a sign for those who fear the painful punishment [37] (The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 35 - 37)

That is, before the torment was unleashed upon them, We took all of the believers out of the town; this does not mean that He told them to get out, but rather, He facilitated their exit by casting thoughts into their minds, so they left and were untouched by the chastisement. ‘We found only one household...’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 36), i.e. in the town, ‘...only one household devoted to Allah’ (*Qaf*: 36). So He spoke first about the believers, and then about those who surrendered themselves to Him, and it is *iman* (clear that belief) is broader than *Islam* (surrender), for belief is a matter of doctrine,

whilst surrender is a matter of behaviour; thus, every believer surrenders, but not everyone who surrenders believes.

Belief and surrender meet in that you only surrender yourself to the command of one in whose wisdom you believe; as for if the believer acts hypocritically or ostentatiously, this is another matter. Therefore Allah says: 'The Bedouin say, "We have attained to faith..."', so He replied to them: 'Say [unto them, O Muhammad]: "You have not [yet] attained to faith"; you should [rather] say, "We have [outwardly] surrendered" – for [true] faith has not yet entered your hearts...' (*al-Hujurat*: 14)

So here He spoke of those who were rescued as being both believers and people who surrendered to Allah; and elsewhere, He *the Almighty* said: '...all but your wife: she will indeed be among those that stay behind.' (*al-'Ankabut*: 33) For true kinship is not that of blood and lineage, but rather, it is the kinship of the call and the kinship of following, as The Prophet Muhammad said: 'Salman is one of us, from our own family.'⁽¹⁾

When Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* said to his Lord, 'O my Lord! Verily, my son was of my family...' (*Hud*: 45), He replied to him: '...he was not of thy family, for, verily, he was unrighteous in his conduct...' (*Hud*: 46).

Allah says here: '...and left the town to be a sign for those who fear the painful punishment.' (*Qaf*: 37) That is, in the town and the place where this event occurred. They say that the sign which remained after their destruction is that the stones with which Allah destroyed them still exist, and those who see them say, 'These are not the stones of this earth'; for they are another kind of stone which Allah sent to fall upon those sinners and destroy them. In this way, this sign remains to warn all those who think of doing what they did. Others say that the sign Allah left to bear witness to them was a stream with a disgusting smell which no one can bear.

Allah then says:

(1) See *Al-Hakim*, no. 6616, *At-Tabarani*, no. (5908), *Al-Bayhaqi*, no. (1306) and *Abu Na'im*, no. (2956).

وَفِي مُوسَى إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَاهُ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ بِسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَتَوَلَّىٰ مُرْكِبُهُ وَقَالَ
سَاحِرٌ أَوْ مَجْنُونٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ فَأَخَذَتْهُ وَجُودُهُ فَبَذَلَتْهُمْ فِي أَلِيمٍ وَهُوَ مُلِيمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

There is another sign in Moses: We sent him to Pharaoh with clear authority [38] Pharaoh turned away with his supporters, saying, ‘This is a sorcerer, or maybe a madman’ [39] so we seized him and his forces and threw them into the sea: he was to blame [40] (The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 38 - 40)

After narrating part of the story of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham), the verses tell us the story of Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon them* as the Quran frequently mentions Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) and Prophet Musa (Moses) in the same context because of the similarities that exist between their divine missions.

Allah says: ‘Indeed, this is in the former scriptures. The scriptures of Abraham and Moses’ (*al-A’la*: 18-19), He also says: ‘Or has he not been informed of what was in the scriptures of Moses. And [of] Abraham, who fulfilled [his obligations].’ (*an-Najm*: 36-37)

The Quran links between them because Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) was the first man who encountered, in the course of his call, a man who argued with him about his Lord. It appears that he claimed divinity for himself, as he said, ‘...I give life and cause death...’ (*al-Baqara*: 258).

There were many occasions when Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* showed Allah’s signs to the people, as he was the first one to teach them to behold the signs of the cosmos. He had experiences with the idol-worshippers, particularly with his father Azar. Then, the Quran narrates that he was cast into fire, and then he was granted a son and was tested with the command to sacrifice him. The Quran also mentions the story of the building of the *Ka’ba* until the end of his story.

Therefore, Allah says about him: ‘and [mention, O Muhammad], when Ibrahim was tried by his Lord with commands and he fulfilled them...’ (*al-Baqara*: 124). This means that he fulfilled them completely and in an outstanding manner. Therefore, his Lord praised him saying: ‘Indeed, Ibrahim

was a [comprehensive] leader, devoutly obedient to Allah, inclining toward truth, and he was not of those who associate others with Allah.' (*an-Nahl*: 120) This means that he combined all the good attributes which can only be found in an entire nation.

Likewise, Prophet Musa (Moses) underwent similar experiences and trials in the course of the call he made to Pharaoh, who claimed divinity for himself saying to his people: '...I have not known you to have a god other than me...' (*al-Qasas*: 38).

In Allah's saying: 'And there is another sign in Moses...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 38), the word 'and' here implies that Musa (Moses) is one of Allah's signs since this sign is joined to Allah's previous saying: 'On earth there are signs for those with sure faith.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 20) Likewise, there are signs to be found in the story of Prophet Musa (Moses): '...We sent him to Pharaoh with clear authority.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 38) It means he was sent with a clear and plain proof.

As we explained before, authority may be based on power and compulsion which forces the other person to yield or may be based on arguments which convince him. The authority of compulsion compels a person physically, whilst the authority of argument convinces the mind and attracts the heart. Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* had only the authority of argument, as he had no power to compel Pharaoh. Allah gave him a clear authority to convince Pharaoh, namely the miracles and signs which accompanied his *Da'wah* (calling to Allah).

A miracle becomes effective with people if it is based on something in which they excel; if it challenges them with something they do not know, the challenge will be meaningless. Therefore, the miracle of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was the Quran, as the Arabs excelled in rhetoric and eloquence, so it challenged them with that which they excelled in. As for the people of Pharaoh, they excelled in sorcery, but they were forced to do sorcery, as this is proved by the fact that when Pharaoh called for all the sorcerers in the country to use their sorcery against Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* they said: '...Is there indeed for us a reward if we are the predominant?' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 41) This is because they were forced to do the

other types of work without receiving any remuneration such as the building of the pyramids.

The basis of the call of Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* was that he came to call Pharaoh to Allah in order to save the children of Israel from his tyranny. However, he called Pharaoh to Allah was secondary to his main *Da'wah* (calling to Allah), which is proved by how he said: ‘...so send with us the Children of Israel and do not torment them...’ (*Ta Ha*: 47).

Before Prophet Musa (Moses) could call the children of Israel to Allah, he had to rid them of Pharaoh and his clutches. It is well known that Pharaoh persecuted the children of Israel because they helped and cooperated with the Hyksos against Pharaoh when they invaded Egypt until Hyksos triumphed, abolished the Pharaonic dynasty, and replaced it with kingship.

This is how we know that the Hyksos entered Egypt at the time of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) *peace be upon him* because when the Quran mentions Egypt, it speaks of Pharaoh, but when it tells the story of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) it speaks of the King: ‘And the King said...’ (*Yusuf*: 50) and does not use the word ‘Pharaoh.’



When Allah willed to free the children of Israel from the clutches of Pharaoh, He sent Prophet Musa (Moses) with this task. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Pharaoh turned away with his supporters, saying, “This is a sorcerer, or maybe a madman.”’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 39) Pharaoh turned away from Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* and his *Da'wah* because of his power, authority, tyranny and his oppression over the land.

When you turn away from anyone, you turn your side to him, then your back after you facing him. The Noble Quran depicts this when it says: ‘...And those who hoard gold and silver and spend it not in the way of Allah - give them tidings of a painful punishment. The Day when it will be heated in the fire of hell and seared therewith will be their foreheads, their flanks, and their backs.’ (*at-Tawba*: 34-35)

This was the order in which they turned away from those who seek something, for they turned away first with their faces, then their sides, then their backs. The torment that people will face on the Day of Resurrection will be a fair requital according to how they acted while refusing to do good deeds.

Pharaoh said: ‘... “This is a sorcerer or maybe a madman”’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 39). Reflect on the contradictions in this accusation; the sorcerer has the ability to arrange things, and is intelligent enough to make people imagine seeing things in a manner that differs from what they really are. However, the madman is completely different because he cannot arrange things and does not even have the power to control his own will and actions. This indicates the confusion caused by falsehood.

Then, Allah punished Pharaoh: ‘So We seized him and his forces and threw them into the sea: he was to blame.’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 40) Allah seized them by casting into their hearts the desire to pursue Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* so they followed him and plunged into the sea after him. Then, Allah unleashed the waters and drowned them, after saving Prophet Musa (Moses) and the children of Israel. ‘...and threw them into the sea.’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 40) Allah threw Pharaoh and his followers into the sea; ‘...he was to blame.’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 42) This is because of his arrogance, tyranny, and claims of divinity. The verse also means that Allah did not destroy him and his forces out of tyranny or injustice, but because they deserved to be punished.


 وَفِي عَادٍ إِذْ أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمُ الرِّيحَ الْعَقِيمَ

 مَا نَذُرُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا جَعَلْتَهُ كَالرَّمِيمِ

**There is another sign in the 'Ad: We sent the life-
 destroying wind against them [41] And it reduced
 everything it came up against to shreds [42]
 (The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 41- 42)**

The word ‘And’ is used in ‘And there is another sign in the ‘Ad...’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 41) which is joined with the verse: ‘On earth there are signs for those with sure faith’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 20) and the verse: ‘There is another sign in Musa...’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 38). The verse under discussion means that there is another sign in ‘Ad. This implies that the Quran was consoling Messenger Muhammad and asking him not to grieve because of his people’s obstinacy and refusal of his *Da’wah* (calling to Allah), as the best outcome will be for him. They will have the fate of the other people who belied their messengers, and he could derive lessons from their stories.

Allah says: ‘There is another sign in the ‘Ad...’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 41) mentioning the tribe and not the prophet, but in another verse, He says: ‘And to ‘Ad (We sent) their brother Hud...’ (*al-A‘raf*: 65). In the verse under discussion, Allah mentions the name of the tribe only because He states their bad end because they belied their prophet.

‘Ad lived at the site of the sand dunes of *Ahqaf*. Allah says about them: “‘Have you not considered how your Lord dealt with ‘Ad, with Iram, possessors of lofty buildings, the like of which were not created in the (other) cities.’ (*al-Fajr*: 6-8) Then, Allah says: ‘...And [with] Pharaoh, owner of the stakes.’ (*al-Fajr*: 10)

This implies that the civilisation of ‘Ad was even greater than that of the Pharaohs, but it is now buried beneath the earth, for Allah destroyed them with a wind which buried them under the sand. This is not astonishing because they lived in a sandy area; when a violent storm blows up, and it can bury a whole caravan, so it disappears into the sand. Therefore, we can find remnants of these people by excavation.⁽¹⁾

The meaning of ‘*ar-rih al-‘aqim*’ is a life-destroying wind; for the wind may blow softly and gently, then it is called a breeze, and it may blow fiercely and destructively, in which case then it is called a hurricane. It is one of Allah’s signs, which can be a blessing or a curse.

Wind consists of the same air that you breathe, and which is the most important constituent of life, as if a person is prevented from breathing, he will die. In addition, air is one of the basic components of water, and it makes the movement of clouds and rainfall. It also maintains the lives of animals and plants, and facilitates the pollination of fruits and crops.

We said previously that the Arabic word *rih* refers to evil and destructive wind, while the plural form of the word *riyah* refers to the wind which brings goodness. Allah says: (*ar-rih al-‘aqim*) which means life-destroying wind,

(1) By use of radar and satellite technology, NASA discovered evidence of buried buildings in the desert of the Empty Quarter, including a fortress with huge pillars 9 meters high and 3 meters thick: ‘With Iram, possessors of lofty buildings, the like of which were not created in the (other) cities.’ (*al-Fajr*: 6-8) (Time Magazine, Feb 17 1992)

and He also says (*ar-riyah lawaqih*) the fertilizing winds. In the verse under discussion, the wind is described as '*aqim* (literally means barren), as it does not bring about any benefit, goodness, rain or pollen, but it only brings about evil and destruction.

Allah says: 'It left nothing of what it came upon but that it made it like disintegrated ruins.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 42) The word *tadhar* which is mentioned in the Arabic text of the verse means 'left nothing' like the Arabic verb *tada*'. Both of them are in the present tense and have no past form except in the form mentioned as follows: 'By the morning brightness. And [by] the night when it covers with darkness, Your Lord has not taken leave of you, [O Muhammad], nor has He detested [you].' (*ad-Duha*: 1-3) The word *wadda 'aka* (has not taken leave of you) the word *kar-rameem* means that that the wind leaves everything like disintegrated ruins.

وَفِي ثَمُودَ إِذْ قِيلَ لَهُمْ تَمَنَّوْا حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٤٣﴾ فَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ
وَهُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا مِنْ قِيَامٍ وَمَا كَانُوا مُنْصَرِفِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

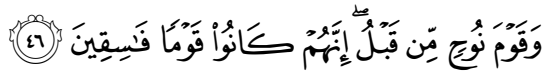
And also in the Thamud: it was said to them, 'Make the most of your lives for a while' [43] but they rebelled against their Lord's command, so the blast took them. They looked on helplessly [44] they could not even remain standing, let alone defend themselves [45] (The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 43 - 45)

There is also another sign in the story of Thamud, who are the people of Prophet Saleh Allah tells Messenger Muhammad to remember when '...it was said to them, "Make the most of your lives for a while."' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 43) This verse includes a threat and warning to them after what they did to Prophet Saleh (Shelah). Allah tells them to make most of their lives for a while, then the punishment will befall them, and Allah will overtake them after the manner of a Mighty, Powerful One.

Despite this threat and warning, they persisted in their stubbornness. '...but they rebelled against their Lord's command...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 44). The threat did not have any effect on them. Allah says: '...but they rebelled

against their Lord's command...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 44). They disobeyed their Lord and deviated from His command.

The verb '*ata*' can be followed by the preposition '*ala*', as in *ashad 'ala Allah 'itiyya* '...who were worst against the Most Merciful in insolence.' (*Maryam*: 69) It is followed by the preposition '*an*' as in the case '*fa'ataw 'an amr rabbihim*' '...but they rebelled against their Lord's command...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 44). The word 'blast' means noise which accompanies either lightning or a destructive wind. 'They could not even remain standing...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 45) because of the terror which overcame them and frightened them so much that they could not even stand or flee. '...let alone defend themselves.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 45) They could not help or defend themselves and no one defended themselves.



Before that We destroyed the people of Noah.

They were a truly sinful people! [46]

(The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 46)

The people of Nuh (Noah) were also a sign and a cause for reflection before Pharaoh, 'Ad and Thamud. '...They were a truly sinful people!' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 46) They disobeyed Allah and belied Prophet Nuh (Noah).

Their story is mentioned in the Quran in detail. Although Nuh (Noah) spent nine hundred and fifty years preaching his people and calling them to Allah, only a few of them believed. They put their fingers in their ears, covered themselves with their garments, persisted, and were extremely arrogant, until Nuh (Noah) despaired of them and invoked Allah against them: '...And Nuh said, "My Lord, do not leave upon the earth from among the disbelievers an inhabitant. Indeed, if You leave them, they will mislead Your servants and not beget except [every] wicked one and [confirmed] disbeliever.'" (*Nuh*: 26-27)

In the following verse, Allah summarises their status, saying: '...They were a truly sinful people!' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 46) They were rebels and disobedient to Allah. from the Arabic verb *fasaqa* means 'breaks away from'. The phrase *fasaqat ar-ratibah* '*an qishratha* means: the date breaks away from its peel.

Fresh dates are soft and full of water, so Allah provided Maryam (Mary) with them, as He says: 'And shake toward you the trunk of the palm tree; it will drop upon you ripe, fresh dates. So eat, drink, and be contented.' (*Maryam*: 25-26) Thus, the fresh dates served as food and drink at the same time.

In the verse under discussion, there is a metaphor which depicts Allah's *Shar'* (Law) as the peel which covers the fruit; the *Shar'* (Law) protects the believer just as the peel protects the fruit. Thus, beware of breaking away from the *Shar'* (Law) which protects shields and adorns you.

وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ وَإِنَّا لَمُوسِعُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَالْأَرْضَ فَرَشْنَاهَا فَنِعْمَ الْمَبْهُدُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾
وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

We built the heavens with Our power and made them vast [47] We spread out the earth – how well We smoothed it out! [48] – and We created pairs of all things so that you [people] might take note [49] (The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 47 - 49)

Allah built the *sama'* (literally means everything which is above us) with power, and wisdom. The act of building requires skill. Then He says: 'We spread out the earth...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 48). It means that the earth is extended and spread out.

The heavens have the attribute of stability, so Allah says: 'We built the heavens...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 47). The earth is changeable, as highlands may become depressions, and its undulations always undergo change, so He says: 'We spread out the earth.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 48) Allah prepared it in a manner that becomes comfortable to its inhabitants, just as we prepare a bed for a baby so that it has no wrinkle. How '...well We smoothed it out!' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 48) The word *al-mahidun* (smoothed it out) which is used in the Arabic text of the verse, is derived from the word *mahd* (comfortable bed). Just as we always clean and we always change the baby's mattress from time to time, the earth is in constant change.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And We created pairs of all things so that you [people] might take note.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 49) In another verse, He says:

‘Exalted is He who created all pairs - from what the earth grows and from themselves and from that which they do not know.’ (*Ya Sin*: 36) The words: ‘...and from that which they do not know’ (*Ya Sin*: 36) encourage us to look for pairs which are not known.

With the progress of science, we have found pairs in the atom, and we have found that rain does not fall unless atomic conjugation takes place. In addition, we have found that electric currents as well as inanimate objects contain opposite pairs. Many scientists continue to research this matter although people’s minds could not imagine or understand them in the past, as the Arab community to which the Quran was first revealed was an illiterate community, bereft of culture. If these things had been revealed to them, they might have been disturbed and abandoned the *Da’wah* (calling to Allah).

Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* gave them a concise glimpse of these things by saying: ‘We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth...’ (*Fussilat*: 53) so that there will always be a room for all future developments and new discoveries.

The letter ‘sin’ in the word *sanurihim*, which is mentioned in the Arabic text of the verse indicates the future, and the word *nurihim* (We will show them) is in the present tense which implies continuation, as these discoveries will continue until the Day of Resurrection.

As reproduction takes place by the mating of male and female, Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* has the power to create human beings in a manner that differs from this rule. Allah does not abide by these rules; He creates whatever He wishes, as He can create from two parents, from one single parent, and without any parents.

This means that Allah’s Omnipotence covered all the possibilities of this matter. In addition, He says: ‘...and He renders whom He wills barren...’ (*ash-Shura*: 50). Some people may marry, but they do not beget any children.

As the whole matter of pairs is amazing, Allah introduces it by saying: ‘Exalted is He who created all pairs...’ (*Ya Sin*: 36). It is Allah’s Omnipotence that creates these pairs, and He is too exalted and beyond compare with anything else.

فَقَرُّوا إِلَى اللَّهِ إِنِّي لَكُمْ مِنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَا تَجْعَلُوا
مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ إِنِّي لَكُمْ مِنْهُ نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٥١﴾

[So, say to them, Prophet], ‘Quickly, turn to God
– I am sent by Him to give you clear warning [50]
and do not set up any other god alongside Him.
I am sent by Him to give you clear warning! [51]
(The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 50 - 51)

This is a command to flee, which implies that there is a source of fear from which you want to escape, and you want to resort to someone who can keep you safe. This action involves three things: the one who flees, the thing from which he flees, and the thing to which he flees.

In this verse, Allah addresses His servants, saying: ‘Flee to Allah...’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 50). From what should they flee? In case of fleeing to Allah, people must flee from all that which contradicts Allah’s Law, from Iblis (Satan) who opposes Allah’s Commandments, from their vain desires, illegal passion, caprice and from suffering to endless bliss.

Thus, the word ‘flee’ implies moving from something frightening to something safe; and you will never find a refuge safer for you than your Creator Who will provide you with security, peace, happiness, and bliss. He imposes punishment for violations of His Law, so that you return and flee to Him. He cares about you because you are His servants whom He has created, and every artisan is concerned with the safety of his products and keen to protect them from damages.

We must learn this lesson from our Lord *the Glorified and Exalted* and try to perfect our work, as Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* taught us: ‘Allah loves that when any of you does any work, he does it perfectly.’⁽¹⁾ Doing one’s work perfectly increases the spirit of faith and belief in the world. It suffices that your good work impresses everyone who sees it, causing him to remember Allah. Not only man remembers Allah, but also the whole universe does.

(1) Related by At-Tabarani in *Al-Awsat* (909) and *Al-Bayhaqi* in *Shu’ab Al-Iman* (5080), on the authority of ‘A’isha Allah be pleased with her

Allah's saying: 'Flee to Allah...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 50) means clinging to His Rope, following His guidance, drawing close to Him and adhering to His Law. Country people say: 'Cling to your Lord and go wherever you like.' As long as you are on Allah's side, nothing will harm you. Truthful is the one who said:

My Lord, Your love is mixed with my blood and my being,
Like a blazing light which melts in my soul?
I will not be wronged as long as you protect me,
I fear not as long as your good Pleasure makes me safe.

'...I am sent by Him to give you clear warning!' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 50) In this verse, Messenger Muhammad addresses people telling them that he gives them warning from Allah. Allah mentions: 'give you clear warning!' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 50) because warning encourage fleeing so that you flee from the source of threat to the source of protection. The word 'clear' indicates that this warning is clear and his arguments are manifest. 'And do not set up any other god alongside Him. I am sent by Him to give you clear warning.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 51) The verse instructs us not to set up any other deity and obey its commands instead of Allah. It is obvious that those who worship idols or anything else besides Allah do so because these idols do not really enjoin any commandments or responsibilities or give any guidance. Therefore, their worship is false and useless.

Allah is the Deity who deserves to be worshipped and obeyed in all His commandments and prohibitions. The prohibition mentioned in Allah's saying: 'Do not set up any other god alongside Him...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 51) is linked to His command '...Flee to Allah...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 50). There is no deity and no refuge for you but Him.

This is the true religion accepted by man's sound natural disposition when the souls were created but the bodies were not created yet. Allah made us testify: '...Am I not your Lord?...' (*al-A'raf*: 172)

Some people have deviated from this covenant because of heedlessness, Satan's insinuations, and the soul's caprice and vain desires. The disbelievers

worshipped idols only to satisfy their natural inclination towards religion and to relieve themselves of any hardship, as the idols enjoin neither commandments nor prohibitions.

Before performing any action, the intelligent person should think of its consequences and requital. When he is about to sin, he should imagine the punishment which awaits him; when he is too lazy to perform a good deed, he should imagine the reward prepared for him. If people consider the consequences of any action, they will flee from sin to righteousness.

كَذَلِكَ مَا أَتَى الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا قَالُوا سَاحِرٌ أَوْ مُجُنٌّ ﴿٥٢﴾
 أَنْوَاصًا بِهِءَ بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

**Every previous people to whom a messenger was sent
 also said, ‘A sorcerer, or maybe a madman!’ [52] Did they
 tell one another to do this? No! They are a people who
 exceed all bounds [53] (The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 52 - 53)**

The word ‘*kadhalik*’ which is mentioned in the Arabic text of the verse refers to the punishments which befell the previous people, such as the blast, and life-destroying winds, as they wait for these people too. They are not so far away from punishment. Allah tells Messenger Muhammad not to grieve, as he is not the first messenger who was belied by his people: ‘Every previous people to whom a messenger was sent also said, ‘A sorcerer, or maybe a madman!’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 52)

Allah instructs Messenger Muhammad to show patience because other Messengers were accused by their people of sorcery and madness: ‘...So be patient, [O Muhammad]; indeed, the promise of Allah is truth. And whether We show you some of what We have promised them or We take you in death, it is to Us they will be returned.’ (*Ghafir*: 77) If torment does not befall them in this worldly life, it awaits them in the Hereafter.

Allah was merciful to those who belied Messenger Muhammad - despite their disbelief and stubbornness - because His Messenger *peace and blessings of Allah be upon him* was amongst them. This is the meaning which the following verse refers to: ‘But Allah would not punish them while you, [O Muhammad],

are among them, and Allah would not punish them while they seek forgiveness...’ (*al-Anfal*: 33). Messenger Muhammad was strongly concerned with guiding his people, no matter what they did, and he always called upon his Lord, saying, ‘My community, my community!’⁽¹⁾

We explained previously the falsehood of these accusations as Prophet Muhammad was never a sorcerer or a madman, as he was an example of good conduct, and they never saw on him any sign of sorcery or madness.

If he had been a sorcerer, he would have bewitched all the disbelievers in order for them to believe him. If he had been a madman, he would not have been able to arrange things in this way and would not have conveyed his Lord’s Message to you. Moreover, the accusation of sorcery negates the accusation of madness, and they cannot be combined with each other.

Therefore, He says after this: ‘Did they tell one another to do this?...’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 53) It seems that those people who belied Allah’s messengers over the ages told one another or agreed to accuse their messengers of sorcery. This implies insistence on belying all the messengers and persistence in stubbornness.

Therefore, Allah disregards them and refutes their accusations, saying: ‘...No! They are a people who exceed all bounds.’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 53) Allah instructs Messenger Muhammad to forget about these people, as they exceeded all bounds.

﴿٥٥﴾ وَذَكِّرْ فَإِنَّ الذِّكْرَى تَنْفَعُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَنُؤَلِّهِمْ هَهُنَا بِلَاغِ آيَاتِنَا لِلْمُقَلِّبِينَ

**So ignore them [Prophet] – you are not to blame [54]
and go on reminding [people], it is good for
those who believe to be reminded [55]
(The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 54 - 55)**

Allah instructs Messenger Muhammad to turn away from these people and to forget about them, for he is not required to force them to believe; he only has to deliver the message to them. Allah *Glorified is He* addresses Prophet Muhammad with words which convey this same meaning: ‘Then perhaps you

(1) Related by Muslim (301), An-Nasa’i (11268) and At-Tabarani (1515) on the authority of ‘Amr ibn Al’As Allah be pleased with him

would kill yourself through grief over them, [O Muhammad], if they do not believe in this message, [and] out of sorrow.' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 3)

Allah tells Messenger Muhammad not to destroy himself through grief over them and out of eagerness to guide them, as his mission is to deliver the message, Allah is the One Who guides people: 'If We willed, We could send down to them from the sky a sign for which their necks would remain humbled.' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 4) This means if Allah willed, He would force all people to have faith in the manner the heavens and the earth are compelled to believe in Allah. However, Allah wants people's hearts to believe in Him, not only apparently.

He says, '...you are not to blame.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 54) This means that if people persisted in their disbelief; Messenger Muhammad is not to blame. When Allah blames him for something, it was for his own sake and out of mercy for him, such as when Allah blamed him for what happened with the blind man, 'Abdullah ibn Um Maktum, concerning which Allah says: 'The Prophet frowned and turned away. Because there came to him the blind man, [interrupting], but what would make you perceive, [O Muhammad], that perhaps he might be purified.' (*Abasa*: 1-3) Allah blamed him because he overburdened himself and turned away from this believer seeking to guide the chieftains of Quraysh.

Allah says: 'And go on reminding...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 55). This means that Prophet Muhammad's mission is to remind the people who believed him and those who turned away from him of Allah and His guidance. '...it is good for those who believe to be reminded.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 55) The believer is the one who benefits from this reminding and clings to faith.

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسَ إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُونِ ﴿٥٦﴾ مَا أُرِيدُ مِنْهُمْ مِنْ رِزْقٍ
وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ يُطْعِمُونِ ﴿٥٧﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الرَّزَّاقُ ذُو الْقُوَّةِ الْمَتِينُ ﴿٥٨﴾

I created jinn and mankind only to worship Me [56] I want no provision from them, nor do I want them to feed Me [57] God is the Provider, the Lord of Power, the Ever Mighty [58] (The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 56 - 58)

Allah says: 'I created...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 56). Creating means bringing something into existence from nothing, and forming it without recourse to a

previous model, this kind of creation can only be done by Allah. However, He did not withhold this attribute from His creatures, as He allowed them to create in their own way. Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...So blessed is Allah, the best of creators.’ (*al-Mu’minun*: 14) A person may be called a creator when he brings something into existence. For example, the one who made a glass from sand can be called a creator, because he brought it into being. He is a creator who is not denied the fruits of his efforts. Allah is the best of creators. It is obvious that human beings only create by using materials which already exist, but Allah creates from nothingness. Human beings create lifeless objects, but Allah *Glorified is He* creates living beings which can grow, develop, and reproduce. There are many other differences we can list which show that Allah is the best of creators.

In this verse, Allah has mentioned the jinn and mankind as being created in order to worship Allah, and has not mentioned the more sublime creatures, namely angels. Scholars said that He has not mentioned the angels in this verse because they were created for worship, and do not have any choice in the matter. They were created from the outset in order to worship Allah and were compelled to do so. ‘...they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them but do what they are commanded.’ (*at-Tahrim*: 6) This verse tackles the creatures which possess free will and can either obey or disobey Allah.

Why does Allah mention the jinn before mankind in this verse? Some scholars said it is because worship can be either secretly or publicly, and the jinn worships Allah secretly because we cannot see them. Secret worship is better because it is not tainted by hypocrisy, whilst people’s worship is usually in public and is sometimes tainted with hypocrisy.

There is another opinion stating that although the worship of the jinn is hidden from us because we cannot see him, it is public for the members of his kind. Therefore, it is also subject to hypocrisy, as the jinn can see each other.

This issue can be tackled in another way; if you read The Quran carefully, you will find that the jinn were created before mankind: ‘And the jinn We created before from scorching fire.’ (*al-Hijr*: 27) Thus, Allah mentions the jinn before mankind because they were created before mankind.

Moreover, the main reason behind some people's deviation from worshipping Allah is Satan who is a jinni: '...except for Satan. He was of the jinn and departed from the command of his Lord...' (*al-Kahf*: 50). Thus, the jinn were mentioned before mankind with regard to worship.

Allah's saying: 'I created jinn and mankind only to worship Me' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 56) includes a restrictive style, as He restricted the purpose for the creation of jinn and man to worship Him. This indicates that this is the only reason why they were created. Worship means obeying the one you worship with regard to all commands and prohibitions. This is the true meaning of worship which Allah wants of His servants. Therefore, Allah only accepts that which is devoted sincerely to Him.

Yet not all mankind worship Allah sincerely, but rather, each of them offers that which is commensurate with his ability and his view of the Deity he worships.

People are at different levels in this regard, at the top of which are the messengers and Messenger Muhammad, the Seal, is the best of Messengers, as he worshipped Allah truly as Allah intended.

Some people go to an extreme saying that the whole universe was created only for the sake of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. We say that it suffices that he is the best person who has ever worshipped Allah, for worship is a concept which can only be realised by means of a true worshipper who does exactly what Allah wants of him.

This type of true worshipper cannot be an ordinary human being, but he must be a prophet. The Master and seal of all prophets is our Messenger Muhammad, who is the best of all who realized true worship of Allah.

The purpose of creation is worship, yet Allah is too exalted to be asked about the reason for His actions, as He does what He wants to what He wants with regard to what He wants. The reason for actions which we should not ask Allah about is that which is relevant to Him.

However, we may find the reason for things which benefit people; worshipping Allah benefits all people because it gives them happiness in the worldly life and salvation in the Hereafter, However, Allah does not benefit

from it in any way; He is free of any need for His created beings. Their obedience does not benefit Him and their disobedience does not harm Him.

He created all creation while possessing all Attributes of Perfection and this creation has not added to Him any attribute which He did not possess. He is The Creator before He created, the Provider before He provided, and was glorified before the existence of anyone to glorify Him.

As worship means obeying the commands and prohibitions of the one you worship, this concept encompasses all the motions of life, and is not restricted only to prayer, fasting, and obligatory charity, as is thought by some of those people who wish to separate religion from the motions of life. They say that religion has nothing to do with politics, yet this statement is false and incorrect. People who adopt this line want to gain temporal power which yields to their caprices so that they can do what pleases them.

They have deliberately separated Allah's guidance from management of the people's affairs because Allah's guidance restricts their actions; yet they forgot that it also restricts the actions of the ruled people for their own good.

Therefore, Allah's guidance encompasses all fields of life, from the testimony of faith: 'There is no deity but Allah' to the removal of obstacles from the street⁽¹⁾. We should execute the murderer, carry out the *Hadd* (ordained punishment for violating Allah's Law) with the adulterer, punish the one who drinks intoxicants, prevent corrupt people from spreading corruption, and resist the people who do evil deeds. So what do they want to achieve by annulling Allah's Law and separating it from our daily life? Allah has enjoined worship for the good of mankind, as it organises their lives and makes them happy.

When we speak of this matter, we always quote the following Qudsi Hadith (Revelation from Allah in the Prophet's words): 'O My servants, if the first and last of you, humans and jinn, were as pious as the heart of the most

(1) *Abu Hurayra related that Messenger Muhammad said: 'Faith is has over seventy branches - or over sixty branches - the uppermost of which is the testimony: 'None has the right to be worshipped but Allah'; and the least of which is the removal of harmful object from the road, and modesty is a branch of faith.' Related by Muslim (51), At-Tirmidhi (2539), An-Nasa'i (4919) and Ibn Majah (56)*

pious man among you, it would not increase My dominion aught. O My servants if the first and last of you, humans and jinn, were as wicked as the heart of the most wicked man among you, it would not decrease My dominion ought.'⁽¹⁾

Thus, how can we keep Allah's religion away from our daily lives, when it applies to the simplest matters? A sinful man entered paradise because he gave water to a dog,⁽²⁾ and a woman went to hell for locking up a cat,⁽³⁾ so what do you think about the human being, whom Allah has honoured? Are we supposed to leave aside the politics of man?

Another Qudsi Hadith reads, 'O Son of Adam, I created you to worship Me, so do not play.'⁽⁴⁾ This means that seriousness in life because play is an action with no benefit or purpose. Allah wants the actions of His servants to be beneficial and meaningful.

If you consider the side of worship, the most important of which is prayer, do you not need to cover your private parts with clothes in order to perform this act of worship? How will you get these clothes?

Reflect on the way cotton is taken from the field until you wear the clothes. It is a long course full of work, effort, and labour in which thousands of people are involved in your service.

Accordingly, life activities are not confined to prayer alone, but they include everything which helps one to pray, pay *zakat* (obligatory alms), fast, and make pilgrimage.

(1) *Related by Muslim (4674), Al-Bayhaqi in Al-Sunnan Al-Kubra (vi. 93), Al-Hakim in Al-Mustadrak 'Ala As-Sahihayn (7714) and Al-Bayhaqi in Shu'ab Al-Iman (6822) on the authority of Abu Dhar Al-Ghiffari*

(2) *Al-Bukhari (168) and Ahmad (10334) narrate on the authority of Abu Hurayra that Prophet Muhammad said: 'A man saw a dog so thirsty that it was eating moist soil, so he took off his leather sock, scooped up water in it and gave it to the dog to drink. Thus, Allah thanked him by sending him to paradise...'*

(3) *Al-Bukhari (2192) and Muslim (4160) related on the authority of 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar that Messenger Muhammad said, 'A woman was punished because of a cat which she locked up until it died, so she was admitted to hell. He said: 'You did not feed it or give it to drink when you confined it, nor did you let it free to eat the insects on the floor.'*

(4) *Narrated by Ibn Kathir in his exegesis as a saying of one of the earlier religions, not a Hadith*

Worship is included in all aspects of life, so how can we separate religion from life activities including politics and the affairs of mankind?

Allah's saying: 'I want no provision from them, nor do I want them to feed Me.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 57) This means that Allah does not want His creatures to provide for Him because He is the All-Provider who has undertaken to provide for all creatures. He provides for the believers as well as the disbelievers, and He has existed before them and has possessed all the Attributes of Perfection before He created them.

Under this divine provision, people serve as a means of provision for one another, and Allah encourages His servant to give and provide for others and likened giving people to giving Him.

This is because Allah is the One Who created mankind, brought them into existence, and has provided for them. Allah's Hand is stretched out to His creatures by means of His creatures, so He called the charity one gives to the poor man a loan, saying: 'Who is it that would loan Allah a goodly loan...' (*al-Baqara*: 245)?

In another Qudsi Hadith (Revelation from Allah in the Prophet's words), He says: 'Son of Adam, I was ill yet you visited Me not.' Man will say, 'Lord, how could I visit You when You are the Lord of the worlds?' He will say, 'Did you not know that My servant so-and-so was ill, yet you did not visit him? Did you not know that had you visited him, you would have found Me there?' Son of Adam, I asked you for food yet you fed Me not.' Man will say, 'Lord, how could I feed You when You are the Lord of the worlds?' He will say, 'My servant so-and-so asked you for food, yet you did not feed him. Did you not know that had you fed him, you would have found Me there?'⁽¹⁾

The good deed is appreciated by Allah before being appreciated by Allah's servants. Had Allah wanted, He could have sent His provision directly to His servants, but He willed it to pass from the hands of some of His servants to others in order to create affection and love among them, to spread compassion and prevent pride. Allah wants society to be interdependent and cooperative.

(1) Narrated by Muslim (4661), *Al-Bayhaqi in Shu'ab Al-Iman* (8879) and Ibn Hibban (268) on the authority of Abu Hurayra

‘...I want no provision from them, nor do I want them to feed Me.’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 57) Why does He join the idea of feeding to the idea of sustenance? We explained before that sustenance means everything that gives benefit. Thus, knowledge, forbearance, generosity, and good health are forms of sustenance. Sustenance, which is mentioned in this verse, refers to general sustenance after which Allah specifically mentions food because it is the most obvious kind of sustenance, and it preserves life. Scholars said that Allah does not mention drink in this verse because it is included with food.

‘Verily Allah is the Provider, the Lord of Power, the Ever Mighty.’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 58) The context here emphasises this fact in order to firmly establish it in the mind, and to reassure each one that his provision is guaranteed: ‘Allah is the Provider...’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 58). The word *inna* (verily) then *Dhu Al-Quwwa* (Lord of Power) to emphasise that Allah is the Possessor of Power. This means that His Entity is separated from His Power.

In another verse, Allah speaks about Power and Dominance, saying: ‘Allah has written, “I will surely overcome, I and My messengers.” Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Exalted in Might.’ (*al-Mujadala*: 21) The power here is part of the Entity, for He does not say ‘the Lord of power’ because the purpose of these words is to proclaim how He prevails over the stubborn people.

The word ‘powerful’ entails prevailing over others, but other powerful people may join their efforts and powers against a powerful person and prevail over him. Thus, Allah says: ‘...Exalted in Might.’ (*al-Mujadala*: 21) which means that He is invincible and cannot be defeated, In the verse under discussion, Allah says: ‘...the Ever Mighty.’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 58) This means that His Power is constant and neither weakens or lessens.

فَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا ذُنُوبًا مِّثْلَ ذُنُوبِ أَصْحَابِهِمْ فَلَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

The evildoers, like their predecessors, will have a share of punishment – they need not ask Me to hasten it [59] (The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 59)

One of the rhetorical styles employed in the Quran is to mention opposites side by side. After mentioning the believers, Allah mentions the disbelievers

of Mecca, for they are the ones meant by Allah's saying: 'The evildoers...' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 59) They committed evil by denying and opposing Messenger Muhammad and standing in the way of his call. Thus, they deserved to have '...like their predecessors, a share of punishment - they need not ask Me to hasten it.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 59) This 'share of punishment' will be akin to that of former deniers belonging to 'Ad, Thamud and Pharaoh.

The word *Dhanub* literally means the pail we use to take out water from a well, and the rope to which the pail is attached is called the *rasha*'. If the pail contains much water, the bucket comes out heavily and slowly. Thus, it is said:

Pails come up slowly because they are full,
And the slowest clouds to come are the fullest.
An Arab poet expressed this meaning, saying:
When a man praises another for gaining benefits,
His critique will also be beyond limits,
If he did not think that the well was distant,
He would not make his rope so long.

If the water is a long way down the well, you need a long rope; if it is difficult to gain benefits from the one praised, it will take a long time to praise him.

The Arabs were accustomed to take out water from wells by pails. These aggressors used a pail to pour water to drink in this worldly life, they will use it in the Hereafter in order to inflict suffering, and punishment upon them, as Allah says in another verse: '...boiling water shall be poured over their heads.' (*al-Hajj*: 19) It will be poured over the people of Quraysh who belied Messenger Muhammad, just as it was poured over the people of Nuh, 'Ad, Thamud, and Pharaoh, as disbelief is the same over time.

Therefore, when Allah spoke about the punishment of the people of Lot, He said: '...rained down upon them stones, of what had been decreed, one after another. Marked (for punishment) with your Lord and it is not far off from the unjust.' (*Hud*: 82-83) The punishment which afflicted the predecessors is not so far away from those who lived after them.

Allah emphasises this meaning, saying: ‘...they need not ask Me to hasten it.’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 59) The punishment will inevitably afflict them, and it is not far away from them; it is only a matter of time.

فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ يَوْمِهِمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

**And woe betide those who deny the truth
on the Day they have been promised [60]
(The Quran, *adh-Dhariyat*: 60)**

Some scholars said that the word *wayl* which is the name of a valley in hell,⁽¹⁾ and others said that it means destruction suffering and curse from Allah upon those who refused to obey Him, and did not fulfil the purpose for which they were created: worshipping Him alone.

When they got along without Allah, He left them, casting them out of His Mercy and damning them to eternal suffering which will not come to an end by death and will not be mitigated.

Therefore, Allah says about them: ‘and they shall call out: O Malik! Let your Lord make an end of us. He shall say: Surely you shall remain.’ (*az-Zukhruf*: 77) He also says about them: ‘...Every time their skins are roasted through We will replace them with other skins, so they may taste the punishment....’ (*an-Nisa*: 56)

Allah’s saying: ‘...on the Day they have been promised’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 60) refers to the Day of which Allah warned them. Allah did not take them unawares, nor did He leave them in their heedlessness, but He told them about the consequences of their actions, saying: ‘whoever does righteousness - it is for his [own] soul; and whoever does evil [does so] against it. And your Lord is not ever unjust to [His] servants...’ (*Fussilat*: 46).

(1) Abu Sa’id Al-Khudri narrated that Messenger Muhammad said, ‘*Wayl* is a valley in hell in which the disbelievers will fall for forty autumns.’ (*Lisan Al-‘Arab*)

the chapter of

at-Tur

In the Name of God,⁽¹⁾ the Most Merciful, the Dispenser of Mercy

The chapter of *at-Tur* ⁽²⁾ :

وَالْطُّورِ ۝١ وَكَتَبَ مَسْطُورٍ ۝٢ فِي رَقٍّ مَّنْشُورٍ ۝٣

**By the mountain [1] by a Scripture inscribed [2]
in unrolled parchment [3] (The Quran, *at-Tur*: 1 - 3)**

We notice that the beginning of the chapter of *at-Tur* is similar to the beginning of the chapter of *adh-Dhariyat* which precedes it. At the beginning of the chapter of *adh-Dhariyat*, Allah *Glorified is He* swears an oath saying: ‘By those [winds] that scatter far and wide, and those that are heavily laden, that speed freely, that distribute [rain] as ordained!’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 1-4) The oath is about: ‘what you [people] are promised is true: the Judgement will come.’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 5-6)

In the chapter of *at-Tur*, Allah *Glorified is He* swears an oath saying: ‘By the mountain, by a Scripture inscribed in unrolled parchment, by the much-visited House, by the raised canopy, by the ocean ever filled’ (*at-Tur*: 1-8). The oath is about: ‘[Prophet], your Lord’s punishment is coming – it cannot be

-
- (1) The Islamic conception of 'Allah' is not the same as the Christian and Jewish conception of 'God'. However, the word 'Allah' does not refer to a tribal god or God of only Muslims, it refers to the Creator of the whole world, the One God (who has no son). We prefer, however, to use 'Allah' rather than 'God' as it has a unique character: it cannot be used to refer to any false gods and does not have any derivatives like goddess, gods, etc. It is a unique word used solely to describe the One God of this universe.
- (2) The chapter of *at-Tur* is the 52nd chapter of the Quran. It consists of 49 verses and is a Meccan chapter by consensus. It was revealed after the chapter of *as-Sajda* and before the chapter of *al-Mulk*. It is the 75th chapter to be revealed according to the order of the revelation of the Quranic chapters. [See: Al-Itqan fi ‘Ulum Al-Quran, 1/27]

put off.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 7-8) Both chapters testify to the truthfulness of facts about the Day of Judgment and the unavoidable suffering it includes.

When we reflect upon that which Allah swears by in the two chapters, we see that in the chapter of *adh-Dhariyat*, Allah swears by material things such as the wind and the clouds that carry the water that brings life to the earth. In the chapter of *at-Tur*, He swears by spiritual matters. Material things please one in the worldly life, but spiritual things please one in the worldly life and the Hereafter. No matter how long the worldly life lasts, it will end with the Hereafter whose bounties never come to an end.

Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* addresses us, saying: 'O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life...' (*al-Anfal*: 24). He says this, while they are already alive. Thus, the other life is intended by this verse; it refers to the spiritual life and ever-lasting bliss.

This meaning is referred to by Allah's saying: '...And indeed, the home of the Hereafter – that is the [eternal] life, if only they knew.' (*al-'Ankabut*: 64) The word *al-hayawan*, which is mentioned in the Arabic text of the verse, means the real life that will not end.

Why does Allah swear in the verses under discussion by Mount *at-Tur*? Scholars said that all the other Messengers were addressed via the Revelation, whereas Allah spoke to Prophet Musa (Moses) directly, while he was at the top of this mountain. Therefore, Mount At-Tur has a special status.

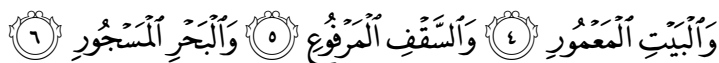
The children of Israel were stubborn and persistent in their enmity, and were inclined to materialism in everything, even religion. Thus they said to Musa (Moses): 'O Musa! We will not believe in you until we see Allah manifestly...' (*al-Baqara*: 55). Had he told them that the Revelation came to him in secret, they would not have believed him.

In Allah's saying *wa-Tur*, the letter *waw* at the beginning refers to taking an oath. In this verse, Allah takes an oath by Mount At-Tur. We said previously that Allah swears by whatsoever He wills of His creatures. The word At-Tur is mentioned ten times in the Quran because Allah gives it a high status, as He spoke to Prophet Musa (Moses).

‘By a Scripture inscribed’ (*at-Tur*: 2); the verse refers to the Torah and the Tablets. The word *mastur*, which is mentioned in the Arabic text of the verse, means that the writing was inscribed and arranged in lines.

Allah says: ‘In unrolled parchment.’ (*at-Tur*: 3) The word *raq* refers to any type of skin that can be written on, and was the first thing people wrote on. In ancient times, people also used bones and other things to write on. The word *manshur* they mean spread out and not rolled or closed. For example, when a cloth merchant spreads out his textiles to show them to you, this reveals that they are good and free from flaws. Were they faulty, he would not spread them out and give you the opportunity to inspect them.

Allah has opened His Book and presented it for all the created beings to read, a fact that indicates that it is a precise and perfect Book, free from flaws or shortcomings.



**By the much-visited House [4] By the raised
canopy [5] By the ocean ever filled [6]
(The Quran, *at-Tur*: 4 - 6)**

Allah’s saying, ‘By the oft-frequented house [of worship]’ is an oath sworn by the House, i.e., the *Ka’ba*. This is a proof that there were people in this time who answered the call to Allah’s way and went to the House and lived there. The scholars said that this also refers to a celestial house which is frequented and circumambulated by angels.

It is as though Allah is saying to them, beware of thinking that I need you to believe in Me to come and visit My House, for I have a House in the seventh heaven. Every day 70,000 angels enter it, and whoever enters it once never goes out again⁽¹⁾. These are His slaves who have been ennobled; they do not speak before He does and they carry out His commandments.

(1) *This Hadith is agreed upon... Al-Bukhari narrates it in his Sahih [2968] and Muslim in his Sahih [234] on the authority of Abu Hurayra. Its wording is, ‘The Oft-frequented House (Al-bayt Al-Ma’mur) was placed before me so I asked Jibril (Gabriel) who said, ‘This is the Oft-frequented House, every day 70,000 angels pray in it. Once they leave it they do not return to it. It is the first and last time they enter it.’ The full Hadith is much longer than this.*

His saying, 'By the vault [of heaven] raised high', refers to the sky, a roof raised without supports. 'By the surf-swollen sea': the word *masjur* (surf-swollen) has two meanings: It can mean full of water, and in this vein the sea can be of two types, either freshwater or saltwater. It is remarkable that Allah said of these two, '...and yet, from either of them do you eat fresh meat...' (*Fatir*: 12). We do not get salty fish from saltwater seas; we only get fish like those we get from fresh water. The saltiness of the water does not affect the taste of the fish.

Masjur can also mean 'ignited'; the Arabs say *sajjarahu* meaning 'he lit it on fire'. It is well known that water and fire are incompatible. Thus this refers to the seas that were full of water, yet on the Day of Judgment they will burn after all their water has evaporated.

Then Allah speaks of the thing He is swearing to:



 إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّكَ لَوَاقِعٌ مَّا لَهُ مِنْ دَافِعٍ

**[Prophet], your Lord's punishment is coming [7]
It cannot be put off [8] (The Quran, *at-Tur*: 7 - 8)**

That is, the punishment of the afterlife will certainly happen, there is no doubt about it, for The One Who has promised it is The Strong, The fully-Capable, Whose command none can refuse and Whose Will cannot be opposed by anyone. Allah has neither partner nor peer, neither equal nor opposite, and so long as the matter is thus then, 'there is none who could avert it'. That is, no-one can turn it back when it comes. When is it going to come?⁽¹⁾

He says:

(1) *Jubayr ibn Mut'im said, 'I came to Medina to ask The Messenger of Allah about the captives from the Battle of Badr. I showed up as he was reading the chapter of at-Tur in the sunset prayer until when he reached Allah's saying, "Verily, [O man,] the suffering decreed by your Lord [for the sinners] will indeed come to pass: [7] there is none who could avert it. [8]" (at-Tur: 7-8) I felt as if my heart had been rent asunder and I entered Islam out of fear of the punishment descending upon me. I thought that I would not move from the place where I was before the punishment befell me.'* [Tafsir Al-Qurtubi 9/6463]

يَوْمَ تَمُورُ السَّمَاءُ مَوْرًا ﴿٩﴾ وَتَسِيرُ الْجِبَالُ سَيْرًا ﴿١٠﴾
فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَدِّقِينَ لِلْمَكْذِبِينَ ﴿١١﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي خَوْضٍ يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

**On the Day when the sky sways back and forth [9] And
the mountains float away [10] Woe on that Day to those
who deny the Truth [11] Who amuse themselves with
idle chatter [12] (The Quran, *at-Tur*: 9 - 12)**

Allah speaks here of the Day of Judgement when the skies will be most severely perturbed. i.e., this sky, this secured roof raised high, this perfect construction of which Allah said, ‘And it is We who have built the heavens with [Our creative] power...’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 47), i.e. with power and precision, and of which He also said, ‘And We have built above you seven firmaments’ (*an-Naba'*: 12). This sky will be convulsed, i.e., it will become disturbed, start to move and break up, in a similar way to an old, shredded piece of cloth.

In another place Allah described this matter saying, ‘[It will take place] on a Day when the sky will be like molten lead’ (*al-Ma'arij*: 8). This means that the structure of the sky will be destroyed and it will come to pieces, just as everything else in creation will because they will have no role left to play. In this world the sky plays a role in the sustenance of life, but in the next world there will be no need for these intermediaries, for there we will live by the Owner of causes *Glorified is He* and we will have no need of the means we require to live in this world. It is for the same reason that Allah says of that Day, ‘And the earth will shine bright with her Lord’s light...’ (*az-Zumar*: 69), i.e. we will have no need of the sun because we will be illuminated by the Lord of the sun and its Creator.

Allah *Glorified is He* then says, ‘and the mountains will move with [an awesome] movement’ (*at-Tur*: 10), as He said elsewhere, ‘and when the mountains are made to vanish’ (*at-Takwir*: 3). These solid mountains are like stakes driven into the ground, yet despite their hugeness they will be made to move, and then they will disintegrate and disperse. He also says, ‘and the mountains will be like tufts of wool’ (*al-Ma'arij*: 9), i.e. like scattered carded wool, for there will be nothing left for them to do; they

were there to stabilise the earth, but now the old order has come to an end and been destroyed.

‘Woe, then, on that Day to all who give the lie to the truth’ (*at-Tur*: 11) Woe to them because they took the means (*al-asbab*) and sufficed themselves with them forgetting the One Who provided them with these means, Now the means have perished and nothing remains except the Lord of these means, Allah, in whom they disbelieved and whose Messengers they denied. Now the only ones who will get good from Him are those who believed and confirmed the Messengers when the means were in place.

This is why we say, beware of becoming deceived by the means, no matter how much they serve you or give you, rather know that behind them is their Creator.

Do you remember some time ago when Pakistan came up with a plan to cultivate huge areas of wheat. Their evaluations promised that Pakistan could become self-sufficient and would then be able to export wheat, even to America. They did indeed cultivate the wheat until the time to break even drew near, but a harmful blight came and ruined the crop, and in that year they had to import wheat, all because they had relied upon the means and forgotten the Lord of the means.

Similarly in the story of Qarun (Korah): ‘Answered he: “This [wealth] has been given to me only by virtue of the knowledge that I have!”...’ (*al-Qasas*: 78). So when he became deluded by his knowledge and understanding, Allah abandoned him and said to him as it were, ‘preserve then your wealth by means of your knowledge’. Then a catastrophe that he was unable to repel befell him, ‘And thereupon We caused the earth to swallow him and his dwelling...’ (*al-Qasas*: 81). So where are your skills now?

Indeed, ‘Woe, then, on that Day to all who give the lie to the truth’ (*at-Tur*: 11); those that deny Allah, The Creator Most High, and deny His Messengers; those who thought that the life of this world was an end in itself and the final chapter, for this is what they who deny Allah and put their faith in nature claim.

This is why Allah goes on to define them saying, ‘all those who [throughout their lives] but idly played with things vain’, and in another verse, ‘Hence, leave

them to indulge in idle talk and play...' (*al-Ma'arij*: 42). *Al-Khawd* (idle things) refers literally to walking through water. It signifies clumsiness and a lack of guidance, for when one goes walking on the ground, he can see where one's feet are going, one is aware of the dangerous places in his path because one can see where he is going. When however one walks through water, he does not know where he is putting his feet and he is not safe from injury. When we study the Gracious Quran, we find that it does not use the word *khawd* except in relation to falsehood. Allah says, '...and then leave them to play at their vain talk (*khawd*)' (*al-An'am*: 91), and, 'Now, whenever you meet such as indulge in [blasphemous] talk about (*yakhudun fi*) Our messages, turn your back upon them...' (*al-An'am*: 68). The Quran also expresses this meaning when it says, 'they who blunder along, in ignorance lost (*fi ghamra sahun*)' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 11), as though they are submerged in water stumbling through it.

يَوْمَ يَدْعُوتُ إِلَى نَارِ جَهَنَّمَ دَعَاً
هَذِهِ النَّارُ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ

**On that Day they will be thrust into the Fire of
Hell [13] This is the Fire you used to deny [14]
(The Quran, *at-Tur*: 13-14)**



The word *yuda'un* (they will be thrust) is declined from the verb *da'a* meaning to push somebody violently so that he falls on his face. Another example of it is found in Allah's saying, 'have you ever considered [the kind of man] who gives the lie to all moral law? [1] Behold, it is this [kind of man] that thrusts the orphan away [2]' (*al-Ma'un*: 1-2). That is, he pushes him away forcefully. It is an orphan who has come to him seeking help regarding some need relating to his sustenance. The man could give to him, or he could ignore and refuse him without harming him, instead however he shoves him away and hurts him, and this is why he deserves the recompense he will get.

Such is the case here with these disbelievers: 'on the Day when they shall be thrust into the fire with [an irresistible] thrust...', they will be driven

into it, vehemently forced in total humiliation. Who will be casting them to the fire? The angels will. By Allah it would have been sufficient humiliation for them had it been men casting them in – just as in this world a criminal is pushed through the door of the prison for instance – so what then when it is the angels of punishment who are thrusting them into the fire?

When they enter it, they are met by other angels who have a different role to play: ‘On the Day when they shall be dragged into the fire on their faces, [they will be told:] ‘Taste now the touch of hell-fire!’ (*al-Qamar*: 48)

So the thrusting here will be in proportion to the strength of the angels, and what will that be like? To further their humiliation the angels confront them with the reality they now face: ‘This is the fire which you were wont to call a lie!’ (*at-Tur*: 14) Now it is visible, you see it with your own eyes and you can feel its true heat.


 أَفَسِحْرٌ هَذَا أَمْ أَنْتُمْ لَا تُبْصِرُونَ

 أَصْلَوْهَا فَاصْبِرُوا أَوْ لَا تَصْبِرُوا سَوَاءٌ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنَّمَا تُجْرُونَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

**So is this sorcery? Do you still not see it? [15] Burn in it –it
 makes no difference whether you bear it patiently or not —
 you are only being repaid for what you have done [16]
 (The Quran, *at-Tur*: 15 - 16)**

Ponder this rebuke. They used to hurl accusations at The Messenger *peace be upon him* saying he was a sorcerer and that the Quran was sorcery, but now they are being addressed with their own words. They say to them, ‘Was it, then, a delusion...’, i.e. this punishment that you are now experiencing, is it magic? Magic is illusion, it does not inflict pain upon you, yet you are in pain. Thus, it cannot be magic, indeed it is real; ‘...or is it that you failed to see [its truth]?’ It must be one or the other.

‘Endure it...’, i.e., enter hell. Experience its heat and its suffering. ‘...But [whether you] bear yourselves with patience or without patience...’, this is the first time we see patience which has no benefit nor reward – the patience of these people dealing with the heat of hell. ‘...It will be the same to you...’: Whether you are patient or not, it makes no difference to Us;

both are evil states, and you will never escape it. This is not oppression though, it is their just desserts.

‘...You are but being requited for what you were wont to do’; none of this is a form of injustice, and rather, it is merely the consequences of your deeds which we bring you. It is you who put yourselves in this position.

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَعِيمٍ ﴿١٧﴾ فَكِهِينَ بِمَا ءَاتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ وَوَقَاهُمْ
رَبُّهُمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٨﴾ كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

Those who were mindful of God are in Gardens and in bliss [17] rejoicing in their Lord’s gifts: He has saved them from the torment of the Blaze [18] ‘Eat and drink with healthy enjoyment as a reward for what you have done’[19] (The Quran, *at-Tur*: 17-19)

Mentioning opposites together is one of the pinnacles of the Quranic rhetoric and one of the manifestations of its excellence. As we mentioned previously, one thing manifests the good in its opposite, and it is for this reason that we so often find these pairs of opposites in the Quran. Allah *Glorified is He* says for example, ‘Behold, [in the life to come] the truly virtuous will indeed be in bliss, [13] whereas, behold, the wicked will indeed be in a blazing fire [14]’ (*al-Infitar*: 13-14).

Having spoken here of the disbelievers and their recompense in hell, (we seek Allah’s refuge from it), He then speaks to us of the pious and the blessings that await them.

Thus when the believer reads these verses and visualises the two opposite outcomes, he says, ‘Praise be to Allah for the faith which will save me from this ignominious ending,’ while the disbeliever says, ‘Woe to me! My disbelief will prevent me from attaining these blessings’.

This comparison makes the believer cheerful while making the disbeliever feel miserable. It lifts the believer up and it puts the disbeliever down. Allah also says, ‘...he that shall be drawn away from the fire and brought into Paradise will indeed have gained a triumph...’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 185).

Allah *Glorified is He* then says, '[But] verily, the God-conscious. (*al-muttaqin*)...' *Taqwa* (God-consciousness) is that one places a barrier of obedience between oneself and Allah's punishment. We have said previously that The True Lord says, '...Remain conscious of Allah...' (*al-Baqara*: 278), and '...then be conscious of the Fire...' (*al-Baqara*: 24), yet the meaning is effectively the same: that one place a barrier of obedience between oneself and Allah's attributes of majesty. When you protect yourself from the fire, you protect yourself from Allah because it is but part of Allah's army.

We note here that in Allah's saying, '[But] verily, the Allah-conscious will find themselves [on that Day] in Gardens and in bliss', the word *Muttaqin* (God-conscious) is in the plural, as is the word 'Gardens'. This means that every believer will have a garden specific to him. It is just as if we said to some students, 'Get your books out,' i.e., let each and every student get his book out. When two plurals are put together like this, it means that the distribution is on individual basis.

For the same reason when we explained the verse in the chapter of *ar-Rahman*: 'But for those who of their Lord's Presence stand in fear, two gardens [of paradise are readied]' (*ar-Rahman*: 46), we asked how we could join between them. The scholars say that it says, 'two gardens' because the speech here relates to men and jinn, the two 'sin-laden' groups (*ath-thaqalayn*): '[One day] We shall take you to task, O you sin-laden two!' (*ar-Rahman*: 31) Thus it means that he from among the jinn who fears his Lord will have a Garden, and he from among men who fears his Lord will have a Garden.⁽¹⁾

(1) *Al-Mawardi said in his exegesis of this verse, 'There are four interpretations of these two gardens:*

The first is that there is one garden for men and one garden for the jinn. This was the opinion of Mujahid.

The second is that one is the Garden of 'Adn while the other is the Garden of an-Na'im, and this was the opinion of Muqatil.

The third is that they are two of the gardens of Paradise, and this was related with an unconnected chain of narrators (marfu').

The fourth is that one of the gardens is that of his own residence, while the other is the garden of his wives and servants' residence, as is the practise of the rich in this world.

There is also a fifth possibility, and that is that one of the gardens will be the place where he lives, while the other will be its garden.

A sixth possibility is that one of the gardens is beneath his palaces, while the other is above them.

The preposition in Allah's saying, '...in Gardens...' means that the Gardens are a place and the God-conscious will be inside them. The garden will encompass the believer. He then says, '...and in bliss' because someone's being in a garden does not necessitate his being in comfort. Imagine for instance the Pasha sitting in the garden of his residence, with flowers, trees, and fruits. He has a worker with him who cares for the trees, pruning and watering them. The garden is comfortable only for its owner; it is not comfortable for he who works in it.

As for these believers, they are in Gardens and in comfort; they are enjoying themselves. This is why The True Lord *Glorified is He* emphasises this saying afterwards, 'rejoicing in all that their Lord will have granted them...' (*at-Tur*: 17-19). That is, rejoicing in the comforts that they have. The word *fakihun* (rejoicing) means they are joyful, and this is another addition because one may be in a garden and be in comfort, yet not happy with it.

We saw this in Egypt after the revolution of 1952. We saw such-and-such a Pasha with estates and gardens, filled with all different types of fruits to eat, yet he was not happy because the state was confiscating land and nationalising it, and the fear of this spoiled his enjoyment of them for him. Thus, he was in a garden and in comfort, but he was not happy with it.

'...In all that their Lord will have granted them...', i.e. directly from Himself with no intermediaries. So, the God-conscious are in gardens, in comfort, enjoying themselves rejoicing in what Allah has granted them, and on top of and prior to all of that: '...their Lord will have warded off from them all suffering through the blazing fire' (*at-Tur*: 17-19). This is from the fulfilment of Allah's blessing, for it is possible that after having entered paradise, one would be afraid of being taken out of it and put into the fire. Thus this verse tells us this will not happen, for he who enters it will never leave it.

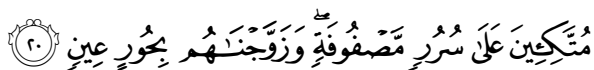
It could also refer to the fact that Allah has already protected them from entering the fire in the first place, i.e. before they entered paradise, as Allah says, '...he that shall be drawn away from the fire and brought into paradise will indeed have gained a triumph...' (*Al-Imran*: 185).

Allah *Glorified is He* then says, '[And they will be told:] 'Eat and drink with good cheer as an outcome of what you were wont to do,' and in

another verse He says, '...then 'eat it, tasty and wholesome' (*hani'a mari'a*)' (*an-Nisa'*: 4). That is, in paradise, eat and drink from it, tasty and wholesome (*hani'a mari'a*). *Al-Hani'* refers to food or drink which one eats and finds to have a delicious taste at first but which afterwards is followed by unwanted side effects such as causing indigestion, wind, etc. It is tasty, but it is not wholesome (*mari'*). Allah describes the food and drink of paradise as being tasty and wholesome; it is good for you and it does not produce any ill effects.

The food and drink of paradise of course has none of that because people there do not eat out of hunger, rather, they eat out of luxury; even if one does not eat – it is all the same.

Allah *Glorified is He* then goes on to mention some of the other comforts of paradise.



**They are comfortably seated on couches arranged in rows; We pair them with beautiful-eyed maidens[20]
(The Quran, *at-Tur*: 20)**

Reclining (*al-ittika'*) is a type of sitting. One does not sit on one's posterior rather, he leans on his side. This is indicative of rest and tranquillity and that nothing is disturbing him. The concerned person on the other hand is anxious in his sitting; he can hardly rest his back against anything. Why? Because his heart is busied by things that prevent him from resting even when sitting

Thus, Allah's saying, 'reclining...' indicates that their hearts are tranquil, free from concerns or disturbances. '...On couches [of happiness]...' The word *surur* (couches) is the plural of *sarir*. It refers to something that one may sit on, and it has connotations of happiness. '...Ranged in rows...', i.e., arranged and attached one to other. When we went to France we saw hotels at the acme of luxury, beauty, and comfort. The people were astonished by it, so I said to them, 'Are you astonished by what man has prepared for man? What then do you imagine The Lord of man has prepared for man?'

‘...We shall mate them with companions pure, most beautiful of eye’ (*at-Tur*: 20), i.e., Allah will partner them with beautiful-eyed, pure companions (*al-hur al-`in*). The Arabic verb *zawwaj* (to marry/mate) is transitive in and of itself. One says *zawwajtu fulanan fulana*, meaning ‘I married so-and-so to so-and-so’ because marriage is a mutual benefit, the husband and the wife both derive benefit from each other.

As for being married to the *hur al-`in*, the benefit is one-way. In paradise the believer will derive pleasure from his associations with the *hur al-`in*, but they will not do so. Allah says, ‘...We shall mate them with companions pure, most beautiful of eye (*zawwajnahum bi hur `in*)’ making the verb transitive with the preposition *ba’* (with). The word *hur* is the plural of *hawra’* and it refers to a woman, the whites of whose eyes are extremely white, and whose pupils are extremely dark. *Al-`In* is the plural of *`ayna* and it refers to a woman whose eyes are wide, a sign of elegance and beauty.

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَاتَّبَعَتْهُمْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُمْ بِإِيمَانٍ أَلْحَقْنَا بِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَمَا
أَلَنَّا لَهُمْ مِّنْ عَمَلِهِمْ شَيْءٌ ۚ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ بِمَا كَسَبَ رَهِينٌ ﴿٢١﴾

We unite the believers with their offspring who followed them in faith — We do not deny them any of the rewards for their deeds: each person is in pledge for his own deeds [21] (The Quran, *at-Tur*: 21)

‘And as for those who have attained to faith...’, i.e., faith in Allah alone, believing that He is One, Singular and has no associates. His being One (*Wahid*) means that there is no one else with Him, and His being Singular (*Ahad*) means that He is One in Himself, i.e., that He has no parts: ‘Say: ‘He is The One Allah’ (*al-Ikhlās*: 1).

Faith is not complete until it is accompanied by the actions which such faith dictates, i.e., action according to the path The One you have believed in has decreed. This is why Allah has mentioned faith and righteous deeds together in so many places, an example of which being: ‘...those who have attained to faith and do righteous deeds...’ (*at-Talaq*: 11).

Allah then says here, ‘...and whose offspring will have followed them in faith...’ (*at-Tur*: 21). Such a man believed and did righteous deeds and his offspring followed him in that. They had faith as he did, yet their works were less than those of their father. The True Lord through His mercy and generosity for the offspring, and honour to the father, raises his children up to the higher level at which he is.

‘...We shall unite them with their offspring; and We shall not let aught of their deeds go to waste...’ (*at-Tur*: 21). We will take nothing from them. We will grant increase to the offspring, yet not lessen the lot of the fathers, for the condition of faith is present in both. As for deeds, if they are few, then Allah will fix that out of His generosity and bounty.

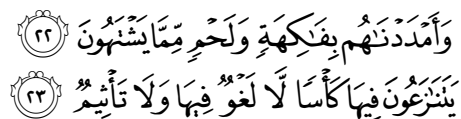
The Arabic word *dhurriyya* (offspring) refers to one’s chain of descendants. Thus the *dhurriyya* of a man includes his children and his grandchildren. A father can be from the *dhurriyya*, as can a son – it refers to relations through descent. It is split into two sorts: before carrying legal responsibility, and after carrying it. What is referred to in this verse is the offspring which is legally responsible and from which faith and action are sought.

When Allah says, ‘...and We shall not let aught of their deeds go to waste...’, it means none of them, no matter how small.

He *Glorified is He* then says, ‘...every human being will be held in pledge for whatever he has earned’ (*at-Tur*: 21). The word *raheen* (held in pledge) is in an emphatic form on the morphological pattern *fa’il*. This pattern can have the meaning of an active participle, such as *Raheem*, meaning ‘merciful’, and it can have the meaning of a passive participle, such as *qatil*, meaning ‘killed’.

Here *raheen* has a passive meaning derived from the word *rahn*. The word *rahn* refers to something of value that the one who needs money leaves as a guarantee with the one granting him a loan until he repays his debt. The *rahn* stands in place of the money until it is returned to its owner. Similarly on the Day of Judgement, the slave of Allah is subject to his works, captive to them.

We could also say that the word *rahin* has an active meaning in this verse, i.e. he is the mortgagor of his work. If it is good, he will get good, and if it is bad, he will get bad.



**We provide them with any fruit or meat they desire [22]
They pass around a cup which does not lead to any idle
talk or sin [23] (The Quran, *at-Tur*: 22-23)**

Allah's saying, 'And We shall bestow on them...' means that this is another gift on top of and in addition to what has preceded it 'and in that ... they shall pass on to one another a cup...', i.e. they will pass a cup around in paradise. This passing will not spring from any type of difference or dislike; rather, it will be out of kindness and intimacy. Thus it seems they will be drinking in pleasure, harmony, and mutual care. 'And in that [paradise] they shall pass on to one another a cup...' (*at-Tur*: 22-23): The word *ka's* (cup) refers to the vessel from which wine would be drunk, and such a cup is not called a *ka's* unless it is full. If it is empty it is called a *koob*.

Allah then says, '...which will not give rise to empty talk...' *al-Laghw* (empty talk) refers to action in which there is no benefit and frivolous talk that is devoid of meaning, while yet also being devoid of sin. '...And neither incite to sin'; it comprises no sin, nor does it lead to forbidden things. This is the distinguishing characteristic of the wine of the next life.

The difference between it and the wine of this world is that the latter veils the intellect and takes its drinker into an irrational state, and what ensues is frivolous talk and sin. The wine of the next world is above such traits; this is why The True Lord *Glorified is He* says, '...and rivers of wine delightful to those who drink it...' (*Muhammad*: 15). The True Lord describes wine in terms of its shortcomings. The wine of the afterlife shares only its name with the wine of this world. If you see someone drinking alcohol you see him swig it back quickly in one go, why? This is because it smells and tastes nasty.

In the next life however, they will savour its flavour and take pleasure in it. So why do people drink alcohol in this world if its characteristics are such? If you ask one of them, he will tell you it is so he can forget his sorrows, worries, and troubles. This is strange because Allah does not want us to forget our sorrows and concerns and flee from them. He wants us to

live with them, know their causes, and try to overcome them. There is no benefit in trying to cover them up and forget them.

وَيَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ غِلْمَانٌ لَهُمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لُؤْلُؤٌ مَّكَنُونٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

**Devoted youths like hidden pearls wait on them [24]
(The Quran, at-Tur: 24)**

In paradise, they will be served drinks by youths. The word *ghilman* (youths) is the plural of *ghulam* and it refers to a handsome young boy. In another place Allah *Glorified is He* says describing them, ‘and immortal youths...’ (*al-Insan*: 19), i.e., they are perpetually young, never getting older. If a youth ages, he will eventually become an old man; these youths, however, stay at the same age and do not grow old.

Allah’s saying, ‘...of their own...’ means they are assigned to serve them. The preposition *lam* (of/for) can denote ownership and it can also denote assignment. If we say ‘the money is for (*li*) Zayd’, it means it is his property. If we say however, ‘the reins are for (*li*) the horse,’ it means they have been assigned to the horse – not that the horse owns them. The words *lahum* in this verse indicate that this cupbearer serves them without wages or other benefit. Allah *Glorified is He* then says, ‘...as if they were pearls hidden in their shells’ (*at-Tur*: 24), i.e., these youths are pure and white like pearls. Pearls are famed for their purity, whiteness, and glow. What then if it is still hidden in its shell, for when a pearl comes out of the oyster it becomes subject to dust and impurities that may blemish its purity.

وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا قَبْلُ فِي أَهْلِنَا مُشْفِقِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾
فَمَرَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا وَوَقَّنَا عَذَابَ السَّمُورِ ﴿٢٧﴾

**They turn to one another and say [25] When we were
still with our families [on earth] we used to live in fear
[26] God has been gracious to us and saved us from the
torment of intense heat [27] (The Quran, at-Tur: 25 - 27)**

Allah’s speech here still relates to the people of paradise: ‘And they [who are thus blest] will turn to one another, asking each other [about their

past lives]’. ‘They will say: ‘Behold, a foretime...’, i.e. in the world, ‘...when we were [still living] in the midst of our kith and kin – we were full of fear (*mushfiqin*)...’ (*at-Tur*: 25-27). The word *ishfaq* refers to fear, and this can be either fear with a hatred for the source of fear, or it can be out of awe and respect for the source of one’s fear. What is intended here is the fear of awe and respect because it is Allah whom they fear, but why? The scholars say it is because they are afraid of falling short in their worship of Allah. Although they obeyed Him and fulfilled their obligations, yet they did not worship Allah as He deserves to be worshipped, for He deserves more than that. Their fear thus contains hope that Allah will make up for this shortcoming on their part. Allah *Glorified is He* says of the angels, ‘...Nay, [... they ... are but His] honoured servants’ (*al-Anbiya*: 26), and ‘...who do not disobey Allah in whatever He has commanded them, but [always] do what they are bidden to do’ (*at-Tahrim*: 6), and yet despite that Allah says of them, ‘they fear their Lord high above them...’ (*an-Nahl*: 50).

Alternatively, ‘...when we were [still living] in the midst of our kith and kin – we were full of fear...’ (*at-Tur*: 25-27) could mean that they were afraid that death would separate them after having once been together, but now that they are in the next world they are in a better state than they were before. It could also mean they were afraid of Allah’s punishment in the hereafter. They then say, ‘and so Allah has graced us with His favour...’ (*at-Tur*: 25-27), i.e. out of His bounty, and given us more than we deserve out of His generosity and grace. He gave us gifts unaccompanied by harm or punishment: ‘...and has warded off from us all suffering through the scorching winds [of frustration]’. The Arabic word *as-sumum* (in Allah we seek refuge from it), refers to pure fire. It is called *sumum* because it penetrates through the pores of the skin.

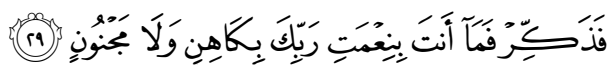
إِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلُ نَدْعُوهُ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْبَرُّ الرَّحِيمُ

We used to pray to Him: He is the Good, the Merciful One [28] (The Quran, *at-Tur*: 28)

Allah *Glorified is He* mentions here the reasons for their entering paradise and being saved from fire: it is because they frequently supplicated to Him.

They did not attribute it to their deeds, but to their supplication, humility, and hope in Allah. They called on Him as a merciful Lord, good and generous, hoping for the mercy which outstrips His anger. '...He alone is truly benign, a true dispenser of grace' (*at-Tur*: 28). The manifestation of His response was that He entered us into paradise. We moved on to better things without tiredness, worry, or sorrow. We moved on to bliss the likes of which had never occurred to us.

He is the '...truly benign...', i.e. the extremely generous and beneficent. The, '...true dispenser of grace' (*at-Tur*: 28), i.e. extremely merciful with His creation, for He is their Lord, Creator and guarantor. He created them from nothing and provided for them. He only made them legally responsible after puberty and the stabilisation of their intellects, along with other blessings



**So [Prophet] remind [people]. By the grace of your Lord
[Prophet], you are neither oracle nor madman [29]
(The Quran, *at-Tur*: 29)**

This is a commandment to The Messenger of Allah to remind his people. Reminding is to repeat what you have already informed somebody of, and to do it again and again. Reminding does not take place except after forgetfulness, and this is the nature upon which Allah has created man.

Reminding is beneficial in numerous ways. First it benefits the one who is reminding because when he does it he is rewarded for it. Then it benefits the believer whom he is reminding: 'yet go on reminding [all who would listen]: for, verily, such a reminder will profit the believers' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 55).

As the events of life pass by the believer, the purity of his belief may become clouded. Reminding him removes these clouds and wipes away the dust of heedlessness and forgetfulness. This is why Mu'adh *may Allah be pleased with him* would often ask The Messenger of Allah about matters that escaped him.

The Messenger of Allah said, 'Temptations will be presented to men's hearts as a reed mat is woven stick by stick. Any heart which rejects them

will have a white mark put on it, while any heart which is permeated by them will have a black mark put on it. This will continue until there are two types of hearts: one white like a white stone which will not be harmed by any temptation as long as the heavens and the earth endure; and the other like a vessel on its side, not accepting what is good or rejecting what is detestable'.⁽¹⁾ One's reminders may benefit the disbelievers as well, the proof of which is that the leaders of disbelief in Mecca eventually came to faith through constant reminders. What is important is that the reminder encounters a pure heart so that it may extinguish the fervour of pre-Islamic ignorance.

We can see this in the story of 'Umar's⁽²⁾ acceptance to Islam; before Islam he was a tyrant, yet, when he heard the Quran, his heart softened and he was affected by it. This was because when he struck his sister and the blood flowed from her face, his feelings for her were stirred and along with them his compassion and thus his heart was softened. So when his heart

(1) *Narrated be Muslim in his Sahih (307), Ahmad in his Musnad (22343), Abu 'Uwanah in his Mustakhraj (112), Hadith of Hudhayfa ibn Al-Yaman*

(2) *Ibn Kathir mentions in As-Sira An-Nabawiyya [2/32] that 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab went out bearing his sword searching for The Messenger of Allah and a group of his Companions, of whom he had been told that there were nearly 40 gathered in a house near As-Safa... [On his way] he met Na'im ibn 'Abdullah who asked him, 'Where are you going 'Umar?'*

'I want Muhammad, this heretic who has divided Quraysh, muddled their minds, found fault with their religion and insulted their gods, so I may kill him,' he replied.

'By Allah 'Umar you are deluded. Do you think the tribe of Bani 'Abd Manaf will leave you to walk on earth after you have killed Muhammad? Why do you not return to your own family and set them straight?'

'And which of my family might that be?''Your son-in-law and paternal cousin Sa'id ibn Zayd and your sister Fatima; they have both entered Islam and followed Muhammad in his religion. It is them you should go after.' So 'Umar went back to his sister Fatima who was with Khubab ibn Al-'Aratt who was reading to her from a parchment on which was the chapter of Taha. When he entered he said, 'What was that murmuring I heard?' and he struck his son-in-law Sa'id ibn Zayd. His sister stood up to him to restrain him from her husband, so he struck her, breaking her skin. When 'Umar saw what he had done to his sister he felt remorseful and said to her, 'Give me that parchment that you were reading just now. I want to see what this thing that Muhammad has brought is,' but his sister would not let him touch it until he had washed. When he read some of it he said, 'How good and noble this speech is!' So he went to where The Messenger of Allah and his Companions were and entered Islam.



opened up, the light of guidance entered and he submitted to Allah. Thus he benefited from being reminded.

‘...For, by your Lord’s grace, you are neither a soothsayer nor a madman’ (*at-Tur*: 29). The True Lord *Glorified is He* negates these accusations they have made against His Messenger *peace be upon him* and emphasises this negation by addressing his prophet. He says, ‘...you are neither...’. Then He uses the preposition *ba*’ when He says, ‘...a soothsayer (*bi kahin*)...’ meaning that there is not a trace of this attribute in you at all. A soothsayer is a diviner who claims knowledge of the unseen, and there were many of them at the time. They tended to have bodies different from those of normal men. There was, for example, a man named Shiqq Anmar who had one eye, half a nose, half a mouth, one hand and one foot. Our Lord chose to bestow upon the likes of these an element of acceptance. The devils would come and reveal things to them that they had overheard in the heavens before The Prophet was sent and before heavens being closed before them. They would mislead people with things that contained a little truth and a lot of falsehood, which they themselves would add so as to lead them astray. When these soothsayers spoke, people would listen to them. They would consult them and accept their opinions in both secular and religious matters.

Yet The Messenger of Allah *peace be upon him* was as far as it could be from their attributes. Similarly Allah negated his being mad. The madman has no intellect. He cannot put things into order, nor take care of his daily affairs. Was anything like this visible in the life of The Messenger of Allah? He was well known among them for the maturity of his intellect, his excellent character, his truthfulness and his trustworthiness. How could they say this when Allah praised him saying, ‘for, behold, you keep indeed to a sublime way of life’ (*al-Qalam*: 4).

When Allah says, ‘...For, by your Lord’s grace...’, it means that Allah’s blessings upon you are many, and among them is that, as He says, you are neither a soothsayer nor a madman. Alternatively it could mean, ‘remind by the grace of your Lord, not by the grace of a soothsayer or of a madman’.

Allah then negates another accusation against him saying:


 أَمْ يَقُولُونَ شَاعِرٌ نَّتَرَبَّصُ بِهِ رَيْبَ الْمَنُونِ

 قُلْ تَرَبَّصُوا فَإِنِّي مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الْمُرِصِينَ

If they say, ‘He is only a poet: we shall await his fate’ [30]

Say, ‘Wait if you wish; I too am waiting’ [31]

(The Quran, *at-Tur*: 30 - 31)

After their schemes came to nothing and their accusations of soothsaying and madness did not stick, they called Him a poet, and in this too they failed because The Messenger of Allah came to a people who were as eloquent as could be. They knew rhetoric and they knew how to speak with precision. They knew poetry all too well, and they knew that what Muhammad *peace be upon him* was reciting to them was not poetry and neither had they seen him to be a poet before his election to Prophethood. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* said in refutation of their claims, ‘Say: ‘Had Allah willed it [otherwise], I would not have conveyed this [divine writ] to you, nor would He have brought it to your knowledge. Indeed, a whole lifetime have I dwelt among you before this [revelation came unto me]: will you not, then, use your reason?’’ (*Yunus*: 16) Where are your intellects? I have lived amongst you for forty years and you have never seen me recite poetry. Has it suddenly come forth after forty years when it is well known that genius manifests in the second decade of life?

Then how could I guarantee that I would have this gift to bring such speech before I died? Furthermore I do not tell you that this is my speech. Rather this is from Allah, through revelation from Him, such is not granted to soothsayers, for soothsayers take their inspiration from the devils, ‘...And, verily, the evil impulses [within men’s hearts] whisper unto those who have made them their own...’ (*al-An‘am*: 121) nor is it granted to madmen, sorcerers, or poets.

When these claims also failed, they said, ‘...Fables of ancient times’ (*al-Qalam*: 15). They said that Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* would steal away⁽¹⁾ to a man from the people of the Book who would teach

(1) *Yakhtalif ila fulan* means, ‘to visit and sit with him from time to time’.

him this speech, but yet again the Quran exposed their falsehoods and self-contradiction. Allah has said, 'And, indeed, full well do We know that they say, "It is but a human being that imparts [all] this to him!" – [not withstanding that] the tongue of him to whom they so maliciously point is wholly outlandish, whereas this is Arabic speech, clear [in itself] and clearly showing the truth [of its source].' (*an-Nahl*: 103) Thus all these claims spring from obstinacy and enmity and none of them hold water with the intelligent person who reflects upon them.

They then say, '...let us await what time will do unto him', i.e. we will wait and see what happens to him in life and wait for the death that will free us from him. So Allah replied, 'Say: "Wait, [then,] hopefully; behold, I, too, shall hopefully wait with you!"'. The command here, 'Say: "Wait..."' (*at-Tur*: 30-31) is a threat, just as one may say to one's enemy, 'Do your worst!' That is, do what you will, for whatever you do, you will get nothing from me.

So Allah tells them to wait as they wish, for they will not damage the believers, and their plots against them will come to nothing because they are in Allah's care and under His watchful gaze. They already had experience of this. They harmed the believers through speech but they did not damage them. They harmed them physically but they did not renounce the Message. They harmed them through plots and schemes to kill them, but Allah turned their plans against them. When their outward schemes failed, they turned to secret plots using sorcerers and jinns, but still they did not achieve their goals and Allah thwarted their efforts.

So, wait as you like, and be sure that we are also waiting with you. Allah has illustrated this matter in another verse when He said, 'Say: "Are you, perchance, hopefully waiting for something [bad] to happen to us – [the while nothing can happen to us] save one of the two best things? But as far as you are concerned, we are hopefully waiting for Allah to inflict chastisement upon you, [either] from Himself or by our hands! Wait, then, hopefully; behold, we shall hopefully wait with you!"' (*at-Tawba*: 52) So, what are you waiting for? Either we gain victory over you or we are killed and achieve martyrdom. Both ways are good. We are waiting with you. Either Allah will punish you in the afterlife for your disbelief or He will

punish you on our hands when we are victorious over you. So wait with us; your schemes will achieve nothing because we are in Allah's care and under His watchful gaze.

﴿٣٢﴾ أَمْ تَأْمُرُهُمْ أَهْلُهُمْ بِهَذَا أَمْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ طَاغُونَ

**Does their reason really tell them to do this,
or are they simply insolent people? [32]
(The Quran, *at-Tur*: 32)**

The word *ahlam* (minds) refers to intellects. When their intellects, '...bid them [to take] this [attitude]...', i.e. of obstinacy and opposition to the call to Allah, it indicates the corruption of their thought and intellects. Had their intellects been left in the natural state in which they were created, and had they been liberated from passion, they would have come to faith in Allah and His Messenger, and not taken the stance they did.

'...Or are they [simply] people filled with overweening arrogance'? The True Lord repeats the word *am* (or) a number of times here to present all the possibilities that they had. The word *taaghun* (people filled with overweening arrogance) refers to people who have crossed the boundaries in disbelief, obstinacy, and opposition to the summons to Allah.

﴿٣٣﴾ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ نَقُولُهُ ۖ بَلْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

﴿٣٤﴾ فَلْيَأْتُوا بِحَدِيثٍ مِّثْلِهِ ۖ إِن كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ

**If they say, 'He has made it up himself' – they certainly
do not believe [33] let them produce one like it, if what
they say is true [34] (The Quran, *at-Tur*: 33 - 34)**

'...He himself has composed this [message]...', i.e. he fabricated it of his own accord. When this calumny failed to deceive, they said, '...It is but a human being that imparts [all] this to him...' (*an-Nahl*: 103), to which Allah replied, '...the tongue of him to whom they so maliciously point is wholly outlandish, whereas this is Arabic speech, clear [in itself] and clearly showing the truth [of its source].' (*an-Nahl*: 103) Here, The True Lord replies to them



saying, ‘...Nay, but they are not willing to believe’ (*at-Tur*: 33-34). Thus this is not an issue of the Quran being from Muhammad; rather, it is that they do not want to enter the realm of faith. This is it, out of obstinacy, oppression, and arrogance; they refuse to accept the truth, without thought or reflection. They know that all of these accusations that they try to affix to The Messenger of Allah or the Book of Allah are falsities invented by themselves to try to prevent Him from his mission. They know he is truthful, that the Quran is true and that it is from Allah, but they do not want to have faith.

For this reason, The True Lord teaches them sound ways to reflect that will bring them to the truth. He says to them, ‘Say: “I counsel you one thing only: Be [ever-conscious of] standing before Allah, whether you are in pairs or alone ⁽¹⁾; and then bethink yourselves [that] there is no madness in [this prophet,] your fellow-man...”’ (*Saba*: 46). That is, leave your groupthink and your public speech because it will not bring you to the truth. If you use your intellects and think in a sound manner, you will necessarily arrive at the fact that Muhammad is truthful in that which he has brought.

The Quran invites them to reflect only so that this reflection might bring them to this reality. This is why we read so often, ‘...will they not, then, use their reason?’ (*Ya Sin*: 68), and, ‘...will you not, then, keep this in mind?’ (*Yunus*: 3), and, ‘...Will you not, then, take thought?’ (*al-An’am*: 50)

Allah *Glorified is He* then says, ‘But then, [if they deem it the work of a mere mortal,] let them produce another discourse like it – if what they say be true!’ (*at-Tur*: 34) That is, if this Quran is fabricated as they claim, and then let them produce a fabricated recital like it. These were the most capable people in terms of speech, eloquence, and rhetoric; so much so that they even had market places for making speeches and reciting poetry. ‘...If they are truthful’, i.e. in their claims!

(1) *Ash-Shawkani* said in “*Fayd Al-Qadir*” (*Saba*’ 43): ‘This refers to one’s efforts to reach the truth with serious thought while in pairs or alone because larger groups distort thought’. *Al-Alusi* said in “*Ruh Al-Ma’ani*”: ‘Because usually in crowds one’s thoughts become distorted and one is unable to reflect. Speech gets mixed up and there is little justice.’


 أَمْ خَلِقُوا مِنْ غَيْرِ شَيْءٍ أَمْ هُمُ الْخَالِقُونَ

 أَمْ خَلَقُوا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بَلْ لَا يُوقِنُونَ

**Were they created without any agent? Were they the
 creators? [35] Did they create the heavens and the earth?
 No! They do not have faith [36] (The Quran, *at-Tur*: 35 - 36)**

The True Lord *Glorified and Exalted is He* presents them with the intellectual proofs that establish the truthfulness of His Messenger in conveying the Message from Allah. He expresses surprise at their deeds and how they deny Allah and oppose the mission of His Messenger *peace be upon him*.

So he asks them, ‘...Have they themselves been created without anything [that might have caused their creation]...’ (*at-Tur*: 35-36)? How could such be when creation means to bring something out of nothing? Did they come into the universe just like that, without a creator? The intellect tells us that nothing can come into being without a creator even the smallest of things. Could we believe that this clear crystal glass that I am now drinking out of, after having drunk from mugs made from tin or pottery, came into being without a maker? Similarly this universe must have a creator.

Allah then moves to deal with another issue regarding creation: ‘...or were they, perchance, their own creators’ (*at-Tur*: 35-36) i.e., the creators of this creation? In another place He says, ‘Now if you ask those [who worship any being other than Allah] as to whom it is that has created them, they are sure to answer, “Allah.”...’ (*az-Zukhruf*: 87) Indeed they could say nothing else. Man came into this marvellous universe with its sun, moon, stars, earth, water, wind, sky and mountains, so how can he say, ‘I created this,’ when it is older than him? He cannot claim to have created himself, and even if he did, who was it who created his father and his descendants all the way back to Adam?

This sequence of logic brings us to a creator who himself was not created, and this is The True Lord. This is why Allah says afterwards, ‘[And] have they created the heavens and the earth? Nay, but they have no certainty of anything’ (*at-Tur*: 35-36). If they are not able to create themselves, then how could they possibly have created the heavens and the earth? We have

mentioned previously that no one has claimed this creation to be his own; a matter is given to the one who claims it if no opponent manifests himself, and no one has claimed to have created heavens and earth except Allah.

﴿٣٧﴾ أَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَائِنُ رَبِّكَ أَمْ هُمُ الْمُصَيِّطُونَ

**Do they possess your Lord's treasures or have control
over them? [37] (The Quran, *at-Tur*: 37)**

That is, do they possess the storehouses of providence such they provide for whom they will and deprive whom they will? Do they possess the storehouses of mercy such that they can grant mercy to whom they will. '...Or are they in charge...' (*at-Tur*: 37), i.e. the possessors of ultimate power, to allow, forbid or vanquish whom they will? The answer of course is that they are neither this nor that. Allah only deprived them of rain, and they were starving until they ate the leaves of the trees and *'al haz'*⁽¹⁾, i.e. blood mixed with fur. Then they went to the uncle of The Prophet to seek rain through him⁽²⁾.

They admitted that the storehouses were Allah's and that they had no hand in the matter. The proof of this is that one time they were rich and another poor, one time strong and another weak. So they had no control; rather, the storehouses are in the hands of one they hate and deny. Similarly they had no power over the keys of the universe or the outcome of matters. The proof of this is that, despite their great numbers on the day of the battle of Badr, the faithful minority defeated them; their leaders were captured and they had to come and negotiate with The Messenger of Allah for their ransom.

(1) Al-Jawhari said in "As-Sihah" under 'Ala that 'al-'al haz is a type of food they would make from blood and camel fur in years of famine'. An-Nawawi said in "Tahdhib Al-Lugha" under 'Al haz that, 'Abu Al-Haytham said, 'Al-'Al haz is dried blood pounded with camel fur in times of hunger to be eaten'.

(2) It is related on the authority of Anas who said, 'If there was a drought in the time of The Messenger of Allah, the people would ask him to pray for rain. He would pray and the rain would come. During the time of 'Umar, there was a drought, so he brought out Al-'Abbas to seek rain through him saying, 'O Allah, if we had a drought in the time of Your Prophet, we would ask him to pray for rain and it would come. Now we turn to You through the uncle of our Prophet, so grant us rain.' And the rain came.' It was related by Ibn Abu 'Asim in Al-Ahad wa Al-Mathani and Ibn Habbab in his Sahih.

أَمْ لَهُمْ سُلَّمٌ يَسْتَمِعُونَ فِيهِ فَلْيَأْتِ مُسْتَمِعُهُمْ بِسُلْطَانٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٣٨﴾
 أَمْ لَهُ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَكُمْ الْبَنُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

**Do they have a ladder to climb, in order to eavesdrop
 [on Heaven's secrets]? Let their eavesdropper produce
 clear proof [38] Does God have daughters while you
 have sons? [39] (The Quran, *at-Tur*: 38 - 39)**

Allah asks them if they have a ladder (*sullam*), i.e. a means to rise up into the heavens so that they might bring something like what The Prophet Muhammad has brought. So, this is an admission from them that there is something in heavens, but you do not have the means to reach it. Muhammad who has no ladder, revelation came to him from heavens.

‘...Let, then, any of them who has listened [to it] produce a manifest proof [of his knowledge]’ (*at-Tur*: 38-39). That is, if they do have somebody who has listened, then let him come forth with clear proof and disprove Prophet Muhammad’s words.

Allah then goes on to say, ‘Or, [if you believe in Allah, how can you believe that] He has [chosen to have] daughters, whereas you yourselves would have [only] sons?’ This verse exposes their foolishness regarding the issue of daughters, in that they would prefer males and despise females.

The Quran mentioned them in this matter in Allah’s saying, ‘for whenever any of them is given the glad tiding of [the birth of] a girl, his face darkens, and he is filled with suppressed anger, [58] avoiding all people because of the [alleged] evil of the glad tiding which he has received, [and debating within himself:] Shall he keep this [child] despite the contempt [which he feels for it] – or shall he bury it in the dust... [59]’ (*an-Nahl*: 58-59).

It mentions their burying of their daughters, saying, ‘and when the girl-child that was buried alive is made to ask [8] for what crime she had been slain [9]’ (*at-Takwir*: 8-9). Yet then they attribute the weaker sex to Allah and the stronger sex to themselves. Allah says, ‘and [yet] they claim that the angels – who in themselves are but slaves to The Most Gracious – are females: [but] did they witness their creation? This false claim of theirs will be recorded, and they will be called to account [for it on Judgment Day]!’ (*az-Zukhruf*: 19)

In another verse The True Lord mentions their transgression in this matter saying, ‘Why – for yourselves [you would choose only] male offspring, whereas to Him [you assign] female: [21] that, lo and behold, is an unfair division[22]’ (*an-Najm*: 21-22) which is an unjust and ill-allocated distribution, How could the weaker sex be for Allah and the stronger sex for you?

﴿٤٠﴾ أَمْ سَأَلْتَهُمُ أَجْرًا فَهُمْ مِنْ مَّغْرَمٍ مُثْقَلُونَ

**Do you [Prophet] demand a payment from them
that would burden them with debt? [40]
(The Quran, *at-Tur*: 40)**

The verses are still asking about the reason these people are rejecting and denying the path of The True Lord *Glorified is He*. Did The Messenger of Allah demand payment for his summons, such as weighed upon them and they were unable to bear it. The word *maghram* (debt) is money that is paid for other than a crime or somebody's right. ‘...They would be burdened...’ (*at-Tur*: 40), i.e., overwhelmed and unable to pay it.

The Quran has mentioned in several places that the Messengers did not seek any reward for calling people; that their rewards for that lay with Allah who sent them. Allah says that prophets used to say, ‘...I have asked no reward whatever of you: my reward rests with none but Allah...’ (*Yunus*: 72).

﴿٤١﴾ أَمْ عِنْدَهُمُ الْغَيْبُ فَهُمْ يَكْتُبُونَ

**Do they have [access to] the unseen? Could they
write it down? [41] (The Quran, *at-Tur*: 41)**

Or perhaps they have attained knowledge of the unseen and come to know that they will be leaders in the next world just as they were leaders in this one, and that their afterlife will be better than this one, like the one who said, ‘...But even if ... I am brought before my Lord, I will surely find something even better than this as [my last] resort’ (*al-Kahf*: 36). Thus it means that your mission does not bother them O Muhammad because they think they are going to paradise any way!

أَمْ يُرِيدُونَ كَيْدًا ۖ فَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا هُمُ الْمَكِيدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

**Do they think they can ensnare you?
It is the disbelievers who have been ensnared [42]
(The Quran, *at-Tur*: 42)**

That is, are they scheming against you? The word *kayd* refers here to plotting and planning in secret to harm The Messenger of Allah *peace be upon him*. The danger of such schemes is that they are formulated in secret, and thus one cannot see them to oppose them. They are the affair of the weak who are unable to face opposition. When the opportunity presents itself, they do not waste it. As the poet said:

When the weak one found the opportunity,
she killed, for that is the nature of the weak.

Allah then says, ‘...But they who are bent on denying the truth...’, i.e. these plotters and planners, ‘...it is they who are truly entrapped’. Just as Allah says in another verse, ‘...Yet [in the end,] such evil scheming will engulf none but its authors...’ (*Fatir*: 43) because when they plot, they must hide their scheme from their peers, yet when Allah has plans for them no-one can protect them, and His plans for the disbelievers are painful and severe. The word *al-makidun* is a passive participle and means that they are the objects of His plans.

The proof that Allah has frustrated their plans is that He thwarted their plots against The Messenger of Allah *peace be upon him*; indeed, their plots turned against them. On the night of the Emigration they gathered to kill him, and conspired against him such that his blood would fall upon all the tribes together, yet despite their planning and scheming, it was they who were mocked; dust was thrown upon their heads, while he *peace be upon him* was saved and unharmed.

أَمْ لَهُمْ إِلَٰهٌ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ ۚ سُبْحٰنَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

**Do they really have another god besides God?
God is far above anything they set alongside Him [43]
(The Quran, *at-Tur*: 43)**

This is another rhetorical question. What is it that has turned you away from Allah’s summons? Do they have some other god beside The One True

God? And if so then what does he have to do with the creation of the heavens and earth? Why does he remain silent and not answer?

Allah *Glorified and Exalted is He* refutes them in this matter saying, ‘...If there were – as some people assert – [other] deities side by side with Him, surely [even] they would have to strive to find a way unto Him who is enthroned on His almightiness’ (*al-Isra’*: 42).

Then the end of this verse clarifies the question at its beginning: ‘...Utterly remote is Allah, in His limitless glory...’ (*at-Tur*:43), i.e., transcendent and high above, ‘...anything to which men may ascribe a share in His divinity’ (*at-Tur*:43), and the claims they make. Allah is One, Unique, Singular, the Self-Sufficing. He has no son and He has no associates, and there is nothing like unto Him.

وَلَإِنْ يَرَوْا كِسْفًا مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ سَاقِطًا يَقُولُوا سَحَابٌ مَّرْكُومٌ ﴿٤٤﴾

**Even if they saw a piece of heaven falling down on
them, they would say, Just a heap of clouds [44]
(The Quran, *at-Tur*: 44)**

The Lord *Glorified and Exalted is He* said in another verse, ‘then He makes them into a mass, and you see the rain emerge from within it’ (*an-Nur*: 43)

See how they are deceived by the outward of the universe. They think it is for their benefit when in fact it is an affliction and a punishment. When they see a cloud coming towards them they think it is bringing them rain and goodness, but then it rains down punishment upon them.

This message is clear in Allah’s saying, ‘And so, when they beheld it in the shape of a dense cloud approaching their valleys, they exclaimed, “This is but a heavy cloud which will bring us [welcome] rain!” [But Hud said:] “Nay, but it is the very thing which you [so contemptuously] sought to hasten– a wind bearing grievous suffering, [24] bound to destroy everything at its Sustainer’s behest!” And then they were so utterly wiped out that nothing could be seen save their [empty] dwellings’ (*al-Ahqaf*: 24-25).

Here Allah *Glorified and Exalted is He* says,

فَذَرَّهُمْ حَتَّى يَلْقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي فِيهِ يُصْعَقُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾
يَوْمَ لَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

So leave them, Prophet, until they face the Day when they will be thunderstruck [45] the Day when their snares will be of no use to them, when they will get no help [46] (The Quran, *at-Tur*: 45 - 46)

‘Hence, leave them alone...’ (*at-Tur*: 45), i.e. turn away from them and leave them be because there is no hope for them and there is no benefit to be gained from them, so leave them and do not overburden yourself trying to guide them. Allah *Glorified and Exalted is He* also said to Him, ‘...your only duty is a clear delivery of the message [entrusted to you]’ (*an-Nahl*: 82), so leave them, ‘...until they face that [Judgment] Day of theirs, when they will be stricken with terror’ (*at-Tur*: 45). That is, they will be afflicted by death and destruction. What is referred to here is the Day of Judgement. Then Allah *Glorified and Exalted is He* clarifies this Day some more saying, ‘the Day when none of their scheming will be of the least avail to them...’ (*at-Tur*: 46), i.e. their scheming against The Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* and their conspiracies against him. ‘...And they will receive no succour’ (*at-Tur*: 46), i.e. Allah *Glorified and Exalted is He* will not help them, nor will anyone else be able to defend them from the punishment, for the command will be Allah’s alone on that Day

وَإِنَّ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا عَذَابًا دُونَ ذَلِكَ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾

Another punishment awaits the evildoers, though most of them do not realize it [47] (The Quran, *at-Tur*: 47)

Those intended here are the disbelievers of Mecca, for they oppressed themselves through their disbelief and prevented themselves from attaining the everlasting blessings in the afterlife they would have attained had they believed. As Allah *Glorified and Exalted is He* said, ‘...and no wrong did We do to them, but it was they who persistently wronged themselves’ (*an-Nahl*: 118). Such as these will have, ‘...suffering in store [even] closer at hand...’

(*at-Tur*: 47), i.e. than the punishment of the afterlife; they will be punished in this world, '...but most of them are not aware of it' (*at-Tur*: 47).

وَأَصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ فَإِنَّكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ حِينَ تَقُومُ
وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْهُ وَإِدْبَرَ النُّجُومِ

Wait patiently [Prophet] for your Lord's judgement: you are under Our watchful eye. Celebrate the praise of your Lord when you rise [48] Glorify Him at night and at the fading of the stars [49] (The Quran, *at-Tur*: 48 - 49)

This is a commandment to our master Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to have patience waiting for Allah's decree. It is a commandment accompanied by such care and concern as is reserved only for Prophet Muhammad and Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon them* for his Lord addressed him saying, '...Build, under Our eyes and according to Our inspiration, the ark...' (*al-Mu'minun*: 27). Thus Allah *Glorified and Exalted is He* consoles His Messenger and comforts him: Bear with patience O Muhammad the harm of your people. You are under our watchful eye, care, and protection, so do not be concerned about what they do. This is a station that Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* was also given in Allah's saying, 'and I bestowed upon you love from Me that you would be brought up under My eye' [*Ta Ha*: 39].

So, Allah's saying, '...or indeed, you are in Our eyes ...' (*at-Tur*: 48) is a higher station that is appropriate to the rank of Muhammad, the master of the Prophets *peace and blessings be upon him*.

'And exalt [Allah] with praise of your Lord when you arise' (*at-Tur*: 48), i.e. glorify Him and praise Him at the same time. 'when you arise' (*at-Tur*: 48), i.e. when you rise from your seat say, 'Glory be to Allah,' and, 'All praise is for Allah,' and it will be an expiation for anything that may have happened in your gathering. It is purification for the end of gathering. The words *qu'ud* and *julus* both refer to the same type of sitting, but *qu'ud* means sitting down from being standing, whereas *julus* means sitting up from lying down. We say that someone was lying down and then he sat up (*jalas*), or he was standing up and then he sat down (*qa'ad*).

‘When you arise’ (*at-Tur*: 48) could also mean when you rise from sleep praise and glorify Allah for returning your soul to your body and replenishing your energy after your sleep. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* taught us to say when we wake up, ‘Glory be to the One Who brought us to life after giving us death, and unto Him is the resurrection,’⁽¹⁾ and when getting up from a gathering to read the chapter of *al-‘Asr* as an expiation for anything that may have happened during it⁽²⁾.

Similarly, ‘and extol His glory at night...’ (*at-Tur*: 49), i.e., glorify Allah throughout the night, at its beginning and at its end, ‘...and at the time when the stars retreat’ (*at-Tur*: 49), i.e. at the very end of the night when the stars go dim. Thus it means one should glorify Allah at all these times, a continuous glorification because Allah *Glorified and Exalted is He* has given you many blessings and more that are specific to you that necessitate this praise and adoration.

-
- (1) *It is narrated on the authority of Hudhayfa ibn Al-Yaman may Allah be pleased with him that he said, ‘When Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him went to bed he would say, ‘In Your Name do I die and live,’ and when he rose he would say, ‘All Praise is for Allah who brought us to life after giving us death, and unto Him is the resurrection’. It was related by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih [5837, 5839], and Muslim relates it in his Sahih on the authority of Al-Bara’ ibn ‘Azib may Allah be pleased with him [4886].*
 - (2) *It is narrated on the authority of the Companion Abu Madina Ad-Darimi that if two of the Companions of Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him met, they would not part until one had read to the other: “Consider the flight of time! [1] Verily, man is bound to lose himself [2]” (al-‘Asr: 1-2), and then one of them would wish peace unto the other. [It is related by A-Tabarani in Al-Mu’jam Al-Awsat 5281].*

the chapter of

an-Najm

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Dispenser of Mercy

The chapter of *an-Najm*⁽¹⁾ (The Star):

وَالنَّجْمِ إِذَا هَوَىٰ ﴿١﴾ مَا ضَلَّ صَاحِبُكُمْ وَمَا غَوَىٰ ﴿٢﴾

**By the star when it sets! [1] Your companion
has not strayed; he is not deluded [2]
(The Quran, *an-Najm*: 1-2)**

Here, Allah swears by whatever He wills from among His created things, and here He swears by the star. In the Arabic phrase *wa-an-najm*, the letter *waw* is used to introduce something which is sworn by, which in this case is *an-najm* usually referring to a star. The word *an-najm* has two meanings, the first of which is a celestial body in the sky such as the sun and the moon. In this sense Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* has said: ‘as well as [various other] means of orientation: for [it is] by the stars that men find their way’ (*an-Nahl*: 16), in other words, as they travel by night. Another connotation of *an-najm* is herbage which has no stalk and which camels graze upon in the desert.

Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* has combined both meanings in His utterance: ‘[At His behest] the sun and the moon run their appointed courses; [5] [before

(1) The chapter of *an-Najm* is number 53 in the arrangement of the Noble Quran, comprising a total of 62 verses. It was entirely revealed in Mecca according to the opinion of Al-Hasan Al-Basri, ‘Ikrimah, ‘Ata’ and Jabir. According to Ibn ‘Abbas and Qatada one verse is an exception to this and was revealed in Medina, this being His utterance: “As for those who avoid the [truly] grave sins and shameful deeds...” (*an-Najm*: 32). It has also been said that the entire chapter was revealed in Medina; however, Al-Qurtubi states in his *Tafsir* (9/6483): ‘It is correct that it was revealed in Mecca based on Ibn Mas‘ud’s related statement that it was the first verse which Prophet Muhammad proclaimed publicly in Mecca.’

Him] prostrate themselves the stars and the trees. [6]' (*ar-Rahman*: 5-6) A poet likewise combined the two meanings when he said:

I observe the stars in my journeying towards her

And my camel grazes upon herbage of the wasteland.

Just contemplate here the precision of the wording of the Quran, as the sun and the moon signify the celestial bodies (*an-najm*) of the sky, and the trees denote by association the herbage (*an-najm*) of the earth. All prostrate to Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* and the greatest thing and the most insignificant thing submit to Him; everything is obedient to the same degree.

In another passage He *the Glorified and Exalted* says: 'Nay, indeed, I swear by the mansions of the stars – [75] and, behold, this is indeed a most solemn affirmation, if you but knew it! [76]' (*al-Waqi'a*: 75-76) Hence, swearing an oath by the stars is an oath sworn by a tremendous sign of the signs of Allah. The swearing of an oath by the stars here is specific to a particular state from among their states.

The opening verse (*wa-an-najm idha hawa*) means that the star has fallen. Now the star is a distinguishable mark in the sky which guides the traveller and shows him the way; therefore, when it falls, guidance is prevented and the usefulness is halted. However, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* has not lost his way nor has he become deluded.

The next verse: 'This fellow-man of yours has not gone astray, nor is he deluded' (*an-Najm*: 2) comprises the concluding clause of the oath. It is as if He *the Glorified and Exalted* were saying: Even if the star which guides travellers falls, the star of Muhammad will never fall. The stars of the sky lead to material things which are bound by time, while the star of Muhammad leads to moral values and spiritual phenomena which are enduring, everlasting.

As for the meaning of '...has not gone astray...' (*an-Najm*: 2), this is to say that he has not turned aside from the truth, nor inclined away from it, and he has not deviated from the path of correct guidance. With respect to the phrase: 'fellow-man...' (*an-Najm*: 2), as expressed in the Arabic *sahibu-kum*, this refers to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* since the companion (*sahib*) of a people is one of them, beloved by them and possessing

stature among them. Finally, concerning the passage: ‘...nor is he deluded’ (*an-Najm*: 2), delusion (*al-ghawaya*) is to hold false convictions, and Muhammad never believed in any false convictions even before the beginning of his prophetic mission.

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ۚ (٢) إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُوحَىٰ (٤)
عَلَّمَهُ شَدِيدُ الْقُوَىٰ (٥) ذُو مِرَّةٍ فَاسْتَوَىٰ (٦)

He does not speak from his own desire [3] The Quran is nothing less than a revelation that is sent to him [4] It was taught to him by [an angel] with mighty powers [5] and great strength, who stood [6] (The Quran, *an-Najm*: 3 - 6)

These verses are an extension of the concluding clause of the oath: ‘This fellow-man of yours has not gone astray, nor is he deluded’ (*an-Najm*: 2). Here, Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* swears by another attribute of Prophet Muhammad: ‘and neither does he speak out of his own desire’ (*an-Najm*: 3). In this verse, the Arabic word *an-nutq*, used as a verb and translated as ‘speak’ means utterance. In other words, he does not make statements based upon his own capricious inclination, and does not bring forth anything from himself, nor through his own independent judgement.

The initial phrase of the following verse, expressed in Arabic as *in huwa* and translated as ‘that [which he conveys to you] is’ means ‘it is not’, whereby ‘it’ refers to the Noble Quran to which Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* gave voice. There follows: ‘...but [a divine] inspiration with which he is being inspired’ (*an-Najm*: 4), this is to say that it comes from Allah *the Glorified and Exalted*. This comprises succinctness of expression signifying: The Quran is only divinely inspired revelation and nothing else.

As regards the next verse: ‘something that a very mighty one has imparted to him’ (*an-Najm*: 5), this means that the one who taught Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and inspired him with the revelation is ‘...a very mighty one...’ (*an-Najm*: 5), ‘Mighty One’ being the guardian of divine inspiration, Jibril (Gabriel) *peace be upon him*. In this verse, the Arabic word *al-quwa*, signifying powers, is the plural of *quwwa*, for he has numerous powers which

accord with his function. He possesses the power of intelligence with respect to reception, the power of preservation, the power of transmission, and the power of delivery. He has in him no whimsical desire which might alter that which has come to him, nor any trace of traitorous deception or falsehood. These are the attributes which have protected the Quran from alteration as previous scriptures have been altered.

Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* said of the people of the Scripture: 'Woe, then, unto those who write down, with their own hands, [something which they claim to be] divine writ, and then say, 'This is from Allah,' in order to acquire a trifling gain thereby...' (*al-Baqara*: 79).

With respect to the phrase '...a very mighty one...' (*an-Najm*: 5), Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* clarified this in other verses wherein it is said, even with reference to the Quran before it descended: 'Behold, it is a truly noble discourse, [77] [conveyed unto man] in a well-guarded divine writ [78] which none but the pure [of heart] can touch [79]' (*al-Waqi'a*: 77-79). Elsewhere, He said: 'trustworthy divine inspiration has alighted with it from on high' (*ash-Shu'ara*: 193); and He also said: 'with strength endowed, secure with Him who in almightiness is enthroned [20] [the word] of one to be heeded, and worthy of trust! [21]' (*at-Takwir*: 20-21) All of these are the attributes combined in Jibril.

In the verse under study, He said of Jibril: '[an angel] endowed with surpassing power, who in time manifested himself in his true shape and nature' (*an-Najm*: 6). The Arabic phrase *dhu mirra*, translated as 'with strength endowed', means the possessor of *mirra* which is strength and efficacy (*quwwah*) in everything it undertakes. It is precision which does not err. *Al-mirra* is a trait of tenacity and constancy which strengthens things. For example, when you see a rope as it is being twisted together, its manner of plaiting is suited to its function; thus, a clothesline, for example, is not the same as a rope which holds the sails of boats in place.

Likewise, the function of Jibril *peace be upon him* with Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is to perform this function with strength, precision and intelligence in such a manner as to appear to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in an acceptable form which will not be rejected, a form which

engenders a longing for receiving divine inspiration so that the human nature of Muhammad does not reject it. Similarly, the speech itself possesses sweetness because it is the speech of Allah and not the speech of men, and it has certain outward manifestations which signify it, and which point to its divine origin.

When divine inspiration first came to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* it was a very great strain on him. This is because it was the first time in which the human nature and the angelic nature encountered one another, and therefore he exuded sweat and became cold, saying: 'Wrap me up, cover me up!' Hence, he was affected in his body and in his soul, to the degree that he was afraid that what had happened to him was something related to the influence of Satan.

When he informed our lady Khadijah *may Allah be pleased with her* of the situation, and she possessed sagacity in these matters, she told him: 'When he comes to you, inform me.' Then when divine inspiration came to him, he informed her, whereupon she sat on his knee and asked him: 'Can you see him?' He said: {Yes.} Then she laid her chest bare and asked: 'Can you see him?' He said: {No.} She said: 'Hence he is an angel and not a devil.'⁽¹⁾

Take a moment to contemplate the judiciousness of Khadija *peace be upon her* and that which she possessed of understanding before the advent of Islam. It is as if Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* had prepared certain people from among men and women who would be receptive to its first communication, and

(1) This narration is narrated by Ibn Sayyid An-Nas in 'Uyun Al-Athar (1/117) as related by Isma'ī ibn Abu Hakim, a subordinate client of the house of Az-Zubayr, who recounted that Khadijah said to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: 'O son of my paternal uncle, are you able to inform me of this your companion [i.e., Gabriel] who comes to you when he comes to you?' He said: {Yes.} She said: 'So when he comes, then tell me about him.' Then Gabriel came and so The Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'O Khadijah, this is Gabriel who has come to me.' Thereupon, she told him: 'Get up, O son of my paternal uncle, and sit on my left thigh.' So The Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* got up and sat on her. She asked: 'Do you see him?' He said: {Yes.} Then she had him sit on her right thigh, and then in her lap, and each time he responded: {Yes.} Then she became distressed and cast aside her head shawl as The Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was sitting in her lap, and subsequently she asked him: 'Do you see him?' He said: {No.} Thereupon she said: 'O son of my paternal uncle, be assured and of good cheer, for by Allah he is indeed an angel, this is not a devil.'

would support it and believe steadfastly in it without waiting for a miracle they could witness in order to have faith in it. This is because for them the miracle of The Messenger of Allah was extant in his person and in his comportment among them. His miracle from their perspective was in his truthfulness, his trustworthiness, his generosity, and his virtuous character.

In this context it is sufficient for us to mention the stand taken by Abu Bakr As-Siddiq when people said to him: 'Verily your companion claims that he is a prophet and that divine inspiration comes to him.' Whereupon As-Siddiq, who was just returning from a journey, said: 'If he had said this, then he has spoken the truth.'⁽¹⁾ Hence, the proof of his truthfulness in the eyes of As-Siddiq is that he says it, the mere fact of his uttering it, it sufficient for his statement to be believed.

This meaning is evident in His utterance: 'Muhammad is Allah's Apostle...' (*al-Fath*: 29), in other words, it is sufficient as regards his identification that he is Muhammad, whom you all know, that he is Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. The station of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* among his people does not require description or definition beyond this.

It might have been expected from them to say: 'And who is more deserving of the mission of prophethood than him?' However, instead they said, as the Quran relates: '...Why was not this Quran bestowed from on high on some great man of the two cities?' (*az-Zukhruf*: 31)

(1) It is narrated by A-Bayhaqi in *Dala'il An-Nubuwwa* (2/361) on the authority of 'A'isha that she said: "When Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was taken on his night journey to Al-Aqsa Mosque [in Jerusalem], he began to tell people about this, and some people who had previously believed in him and put faith in his words became apostates. Some of these rushed to Abu Bakr and told him: 'What do you think of your companion who claims that he was taken on a night journey to Jerusalem.' He responded: 'Did he really say that?' They replied: 'Yes'. Thereupon he stated: 'If he indeed said that, then he has spoken the truth.' They then said: 'You mean you actually believe that he went this last night to Jerusalem and returned before morning?' He replied: 'Yes, for verily I believe him in that which is even more remote than this. I believe him in what he conveys from heaven in the early morning and in the evening.' So it is for this reason that he was called As-Siddiq." This narration is likewise narrated by Al-Hakim in his *Mustadrak* (6213, 63).

Returning to the verse under study above, '[an angel] endowed with surpassing power...' (*an-Najm*: 6), another meaning of the original Arabic phrase *dhu mirra*, is one possessed of excellent character and handsome appearance. Now, Jibril used to come to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in a good-looking form which he liked, and He *peace and blessings be upon him* used to appreciate the appearance of a man called Dahiya Al-Kalbi⁽¹⁾ so Jibril used to come in his form.⁽²⁾

Hence, the Arabic expression *dhu mirra* encompasses in meaning every good attribute which will render Jibril acceptable and unobjectionable. Yet with this power is also attributed to him, for when he manifested himself to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in his true form, he appeared in the form of a beautiful flying creature with wings. As He *the Glorified and Exalted* said: '...endowed with wings, two, or three, or four. [Unceasingly] He adds to His creation whatever He wills...' (*Fatir*: 1). As an illustration of his power it suffices that he smote the villages of Lot with one feather of his wing, thereby smashing them and turning their most elevated portions into their lowest portions.

-
- (1) *Dahiya Al-Kalbi's full name was Dahiya ibn Khalifa ibn Farwa ibn Fadala Al-Kalbi. He was a Companion whom Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him sent with his message to the Byzantine Emperor (Qaysar), calling him to Islam. He was present at many military campaigns, among them the Battle of Yarmuk; then he settled in Damascus, residing in Al-Mizza. He lived until the Caliphate of Mu'awiyah and died in the year 45 AH. (This information is taken from Az-Zirikli's Al-A'lam 2/337).*
- (2) *It was narrated by At-Tabarani in Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabi (707) as related by Anas ibn Malik that The Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him used to say: {Gabriel comes to me in the appearance of Dahiya Al-Kalbi.} Anas added: Dahiya was a handsome man of fair complexion. It was also related by Al-Bayhaqi in Dala'il An-Nubuwwa (1361) as related by 'A'isha that Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him heard the sound of a vigorous jumping, so he went out towards it and I followed him to see what it was. Then there he was, leaning against the mane of his horse, and behold it was Dahiya Al-Kalbi—as far as I could perceive—and there he was bound in a turban with the slack part of it hanging between his shoulders. When Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him came back in to my dwelling, I said: 'There was vigorous jumping sound and so I left and went to see and lo there was Dahiya Al-Kalbi.' He said: {Did you actually see him?} I replied: 'Yes'. He then said: {That was Gabriel who ordered me to march on Banu Qurayzha}.*

And what can enable you to grasp the status of the one who taught Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* as expression in the verse: 'something that a very mighty one has imparted to him' (*an-Najm*: 5)? Now, the student increases in dignity and honour according to the dignity and honour of the teacher. This is similar to when we see an articulate preacher who does not make a single linguistic mistake in his sermon, and hence we say: 'Yes, indeed, for the one who taught him is so-and-so.' Likewise, the one who taught Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is Jibril *peace be upon him* with all that he possesses of the attributes of power, intelligence, trustworthiness and honesty; in summary: *dhu mirra*.

As regards the final phrase of the last verse above, *fa-stawa*, translated interpretatively as 'who in time manifested himself in his true shape and nature', it signifies that Jibril taught him to the point where Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* attained to a firmly established station (*istawa*) and matured through a process of sufficient learning in order to provide guidance to the world. He then entrusted him with this mission to guide people. Along these same lines, we have His utterance with regard to Prophet Musa (Moses): 'Now when [Moses] reached full manhood and had become mature [of mind] (*istawa*) We bestowed upon him the ability to judge [between right and wrong] as well as [innate] knowledge: for thus do We reward the doers of good.' (*al-Qasas*: 14)

However, in its initial period divine inspiration was burdensome for Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* as Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* says: '...We shall bestow upon you a weighty message' (*al-Muzzammil*: 5). So, Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* wished to relieve His Messenger of this strain in order to give him the opportunity to taste the sweetness of what he was conveying unto him, and in order that he might long for it once again. Thus, divine inspiration would be lighter on his heart and its hardships made easier for him.

It is well known that a person normally bears difficulty for the sake of that which he loves. Hence, when divine inspiration subsided from Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* for a period of six months, the adversaries of the message took advantage of this opportunity, saying: 'Verily

Muhammad's Lord has forsaken him. Exalted be Allah, only now and during a period of tribulation, they acknowledge Muhammad's Lord. For this reason Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* refuted them: 'Consider the bright morning hours, [1] and the night when it grows still and dark. [2] Thy Sustainer has not forsaken you, nor does He scorn you: [3] for, indeed, the life to come will be better for you than this earlier part [of your life]! [4] And, indeed, in time will thy Sustainer grant you [what your heart desires], and you shall be well-pleased. [5]' (*ad-Duha*: 1-5)

In other words: 'Your Lord has not forsaken you, O Muhammad, nor has he scorned you. Rather, he has desired that you have a restful respite.' Then He provides him with analogies drawn from the actual movements of the cosmos: 'For in your relationship to divine inspiration you are only like the bright morning hours and the night. The bright morning hours are for toil, and the night is for rest. Then morning comes again in order that you might face it with renewed energy and strength. Similarly, divine inspiration will come back to you, and will be more beloved to you and easier on you. And the latter portion of your life—or the Hereafter—will be better for you than the initial portion.

It must also be stressed that the Arabic word *al-wada* ' , meaning farewell, as employed as a verb in the verse: 'Thy Sustainer has not forsaken you (*wadda* 'a-ka), nor does He scorn you' (*ad-Duha*: 3), signifies love in its essence. For He did not say 'spurn you', for example, but rather 'bid you farewell', and bidding farewell is done in the hope of meeting again, just as a beloved bids farewell to his loved one when he embarks upon a journey.

وَهُوَ بِالْأُفُقِ الْأَعْلَى ﴿٧﴾ ثُمَّ دَنَا فَتَدَلَّى ﴿٨﴾ فَكَانَ قَابَ قَوْسَيْنِ أَوْ أَدْنَى ﴿٩﴾

**On the highest horizon [7] and then approached —
coming down [8] until he was two bow-lengths away or
even closer[9] (The Quran, *an-Najm*: 7-9)**

It is said that the discourse here concerns Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* inasmuch as he was in the highest part of the horizon during the voyage of the night journey and ascension (*al-Isra* ' *wa-al-Mi* ' *raj*).

In this respect, He *the Glorified and Exalted* said: 'And, indeed, he saw him descend a second time [13] by the lote-tree of the farthest limit [14]' (*an-Najm*: 13-14).

This is to say that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saw Jibril *peace be upon him* once on the earth and once in the heaven. There follows: 'and then drew near, and came close, [8] until he was but two bow-lengths away, or even nearer [9]' (*an-Najm*: 8-9). In other words, after Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had become firmly established in spiritual maturity, and had attained the objective which qualified him to carry out his mission of conveying the message from his Lord, he was exposed to many hardships and wrongs from his people in both word and deed in Mecca. The situation reached such an impasse that he sought protection in the city of Ta'if where they goaded their foolhardy youths against him who threw stones at him until they bloodied his two feet. In the same year came the death of his wife Khadija—who used to mitigate the vexation of that which he encountered from his people—as well as the death of his paternal uncle Abu Taleb, who used to protect him and defend him against the enmity of Quraysh.

It is for this reason that this year was called 'the year of sadness', as you know. Then, when He *peace and blessings be upon him* returned from Mecca, he returned with a broken spirit. He was unable to find anyone in Mecca who could assure his security to reside in his own house. Just as he found it impossible to find support in Ta'if, he found it impossible to find a protecting guardian in Mecca, until at last Al-Mut'im ibn 'Udai received him—and he was a disbeliever—who then granted him his sworn protection to take up residence there. This illustrates to us that Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* may provide assistance to His Prophet and his message even by means of a disbeliever.

Therefore, Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* wished to heal the spirit of His Prophet, and to compensate him for the mistreatment of the people of the earth towards him. Hence, He told him: 'If this is the welcome reception of the people of the earth for you, then I will show you the welcome reception of the residents of heaven.' Consequently, He took him on the voyage of the night journey and ascension that it might provide consolation for Him *peace and blessings be upon him* it was there that he saw the horizon's loftiest part, while he was two bow-lengths away, or even nearer, from the station of his

Lord *the Glorified and Exalted*. It is this which is meant by His utterance: ‘for, indeed, the life to come will be better for thee than this earlier part [of thy life]!’ (*ad-Duha*: 4)

After that Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* made His religion triumphant and provided aide to His Prophet, causing the adherents of disbelief and the leaders of Quraysh to fall down one after the other. Thus, was the unfolding of events until even Khalid ibn Al-Walid would say to ‘Amr ibn Al-‘As: O ‘Amr! Verily the distinctive sign of your companion has risen upright—that is to say, the situation has become well-established for Muhammad — and his star has ascended and there is no longer anyone who can resist him.⁽¹⁾ Thus, there is nothing for us to do but to go to him and believe in him.’ Later Mecca was conquered and people embraced Islam in successive masses.

Hence, the discourse here: ‘and then drew near, and came close’ (*an-Najm*: 8) means that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* drew near to the station of his Lord, and to the lote-tree of the farthest limit (*sidrat al-muntaha*). Concerning the verse: ‘until he was but two bow-lengths away, or even nearer’ (*an-Najm*: 9), this means the extent of two bow-lengths, with the bow being the well-known instrument for shooting arrows. The final phrase of this verse, ‘...or even nearer’ (*an-Najm*: 9) signifies ‘or closer than that’, with the Arabic particle *aw*, translated as ‘or’ denoting an affirmation of the extent of two bow-lengths away. This usage is similar to that of another passage in which He *the Glorified and Exalted* said: ‘And [then] We sent him [once again] to [his people,] a hundred thousand [souls] or more’ (*as-Saffat*: 147). This is because the increase alluded to confirms the existence of the number one hundred thousand inasmuch as this amount is not be diminished but only augmented. The same is true for the proximity of two bow-lengths or closer than two bow-lengths.

There are some commentators who believe that the words here refer to Jibril. Hence, they interpret the Arabic phrase *fa-stawa*, rendered above as: ‘...who in time manifested himself in his true shape and nature’ (*an-Najm*: 6),

(1) *This Hadith is narrated by Al-Harith in Al-Bughya (chapter 27, Hadith 1032). It was likewise related by Al-Hakim in his Mustadrak (5299, 5947), and it was cited by Al-Haythami in Mujma‘ Az-zawa‘id (4/281) who attributed it to Ahmad and At-Tabarani.*

to mean that Jibril *peace be upon him* appeared to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in his actual form, and with his wings which blocked the horizon. Furthermore, they understand the verse: ‘and then drew near, and came close’ (*an-Najm*: 8), as signifying that Jibril *peace be upon him* came close to Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Finally, in their opinion, the verse: ‘until he was but two bow-lengths away, or even nearer’ (*an-Najm*: 9) means that he came near to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* until he was this distance away from him.

فَأَوْحَىٰ إِلَىٰ عَبْدِهِ مَا أَوْحَىٰ ﴿١٠﴾ مَا كَذَبَ الْفُؤَادُ مَا رَأَىٰ ﴿١١﴾

**And revealed to God's servant what He revealed [10]
[The Prophet's] own heart did not distort what he saw [11]
(The Quran, *an-Najm*: 10-11)**

This is to say that Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* revealed unto His servant Muhammad as regards the verse: ‘The [servant's] heart did not give the lie to what he saw’ (*an-Najm*: 11); this means that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* did not see Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* with his eyes, but rather saw Him with his innermost being and his heart. Thus, Musa (Musa) *peace be upon him* heard [Allah's] Word on the earth, and Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saw [Him] with the vision of his heart in heaven. The passage: ‘The [servant's] heart did not give the lie...’ (*an-Najm*: 11), implies a warning to those who have doubts about this issue and deny it. For this reason, there follows this critical question:

أَفْتُمِرُّونَهُ عَلَىٰ مَا بَرَأَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ رَآهُ نَزْلَةً أُخْرَىٰ ﴿١٣﴾
عِنْدَ سِدْرَةِ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ ﴿١٤﴾ عِنْدَهَا جَنَّةُ الْمَأْوَىٰ ﴿١٥﴾

**Are you going to dispute with him what he saw with his own
eyes? [12] A second time he saw him [13] by the lote-tree
beyond which none may pass [14] near the Garden of
Restfulness [15] (The Quran, *an-Najm*: 12-15)**

Here, the initial particle indicates a interrogative clause from which is to be understood a reproachful contestation and amazement at their denying the

truthfulness of The Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* regarding what he informed them of after the voyage of the night journey and ascension concerning his going up into the heaven and his vision of his Lord *the Glorified and Exalted*. The Arabic verb *tumarun* in the first verse above, translated as ‘contend with’, is derived from the same semantic root as *al-mira*’ meaning to argument or dispute. However, this contention is groundless and engaged in for the sake of denial and provoking doubt, it is not intended as a means of arriving at the truth.

With respect to the following verse: ‘And, indeed, he saw it descend a second time’ (*an-Najm*: 13), this means that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saw Jibril *peace be upon him* a second time. The next verse mentions where this occurred: ‘by the lote-tree of the farthest limit’ (*an-Najm*: 14). Here the Arabic word *as-sidra*, translated as ‘lote-tree’, refers to the lote-tree which is located to the right of The Throne of Allah. Concerning the Arabic word *al-muntaha*, translated as ‘of the farthest limit’, this signifies that at this tree the knowledge of created things comes to an end, and not one of the angels can pass beyond it, let alone men. It was at this lote-tree that He *peace and blessings be upon him* saw Jibril *peace be upon him* for the second time. Moreover, in this place of proximity prayer was made incumbent upon Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Canonical prayer is the sole ritual obligation which was imposed by direct oral command, and this means that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* heard the word of Allah in this intimate divine audition.

But when he *peace and blessings be upon him* was asked about his vision of his Lord he said: {Light wherever I saw Him.}⁽¹⁾ In other words, in whatever manner I perceived Him. This is a very subtle expression on the part of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* for when he looked he found nothing but light, and light is not visible but rather makes things perceptible to sight. Thus, if Allah is light, then there is no means of seeing Him.

(1) This Hadith was narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih* (261) as related by Abu Dharr who said: “I asked The Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him*: ‘Did you see your Lord?’ He replied: {Light wherever I saw Him.}” This was also narrated by At-Tirmidhi in his *Sunnan* (3204), by Ahmad in his *Musnad* (20427, 20547) and by At-Tayalisi in his *Musnad* (470).

Now, as for visualization as expressed in the likes of His utterance: 'Some faces will on that Day be bright with happiness, [22] looking up to their Sustainer [23]' (*al-Qiyama*: 22-23), the discourse here concerns the Day of Resurrection when mankind will be brought back to life in another form other than their form in this world. By means of this form they will be enabled to see their Lord. Evidence of this is found in the fact that in this new state in the Hereafter we eat but do not defecate, we drink but do not urinate or sweat. Why? This is because Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* has fashioned us in another form which is suited to the blissful pleasures of the Hereafter. While we eat in this world from what we cook and what we prepare, whereas in the hereafter we eat of Allah's cooking. This cuisine is prepared with precise calculation whereby no waste remains of it in the body.

Likewise, among the miraculous aspects of the voyage of the night journey and heavenly ascension is that Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* prepared Prophet Muhammad in a special way so that he might be capable of ascending into heaven. It is common knowledge that oxygen does not exist in the higher layers of the atmosphere. The Quran confirms this fact in Allah's utterance: 'And whomsoever Allah wills to guide, his bosom He opens wide with willingness towards self-surrender [unto Him]; and whomsoever He wills to let go astray, his bosom He causes to be tight and constricted, as if he were climbing unto the skies: it is thus that God inflicts horror upon those who will not believe.' (*al-An'am*: 125)

The question of visualization of Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* is an issue of great controversy about which much debate has raged without just cause. The Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saw light, and the true vision will be in the Hereafter. We must limit our discussion of this topic to what has been authoritatively reported about it, otherwise it becomes knowledge which is of no benefit and ignorance which is of no harm.

What is important is the prescribed path which he brought and the extent of our adherence to its application to our practical lives. The apex of this prescribed path is canonical prayer which was imposed upon him directly on account of its importance in the proceedings of life, and the rectification of what is crooked in it. We have previously elucidated this in the following

analogy: a director or chief sends a communication to the employee to do this and that; but if the matter is more important than this, he contacts him by telephone; and if it is even more important, he summons him to his office and notifies him of what he wants directly. In such a way was prayer prescribed. It is for this reason that we view prescribed prayer as incumbent upon every male and female Muslim. It is an obligation that can never be waived under any circumstances, as opposed to all other acts of worship which may be neglected with adequate excuse.

The Hadith concerning the pillars of religion: {Islam is founded upon five...}⁽¹⁾ makes the stature of prayer evident. Prayer is among the pillars of religion and among the central supports upon which it is erected. This Hadith also makes it clear that these five pillars do not constitute all of Islam. Nay, indeed, Islam is of greater scope than these for Islam encompasses all the activities of life, beginning with the summit of 'There is no deity save Allah, Muhammad is The Messenger of Allah' to removing something harmful from a pathway.

We are therefore astonished by those who call for the separation of Allah's religion from the politics and policies of this world. They say: There should be no politics in religion and no religion in politics. Now, this statement is absurd and incorrect. Would it be permissible to allow the murderer, the fornicator, the thief, and other criminals like them to run havoc among Allah's human creatures without punishment or restricting deterrents?

Given the importance of prayer in the proceedings of life, Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* rendered it a duty based on certain times, thus its obligation is linked to specific timing. These times are dispersed throughout the day and night in order that the believer remains in permanent contact with his Lord, and continually mindful of the prescribed path. It is not permissible to delay prayer beyond its prescribed time except with an acceptable excuse in the eyes of The Wise Law-Giver. Thus, whoever sleeps through a time of prayer, its time is when he awakens. And whoever forgets a prayer, its time is when he remembers. In these two cases, the obligation of prayer is not waived, but

(1) *This Hadith regarding the five pillars of Islam is narrated by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (7), by Muslim in his Sahih (20, 21), and by Imam Ahmad in his Musnad (4567, 5414) as related by 'Abdullah ibn 'Umar.*

rather, it must be observed immediately. On the other hand, if a person misses a prayer out of indolence without excuse, then his prayer cannot be fulfilled because it has a specific time which he has let pass to the detriment of his own soul without a legal pretext.

The deeper wisdom of assigning prayers a determined time lies in the fact that a man does not know when he will be caught unawares by his destined death, and therefore takes the initiative first by performing his prayers according to their appointed times. Prayer comprises duration and continuity across the extent of hours, as opposed to pilgrimage, for example, which is only once in an entire life.

We reiterate, then, that there is no call for us to differ with regard to the vision that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had of his Lord *the Glorified and Exalted* in the course of the night journey and heavenly ascension. What is important is that he was transported to a sublimely elevated place in view of being charged with ritual prescriptions. He used to be charged with religious obligations while he was on the earth, and now he is being charged with such prescriptions, while he is in heaven. Is it not enough that Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* spoke to him directly aside from divine inspiration and is it not sufficient that He *peace be upon him* says about his vision of his Lord: {Light wherever I saw Him.}?

Now, someone might justifiably ask: why did this vision come in the heaven specifically, while Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* is capable of manifesting Himself to His Messenger, and appearing to him while he is on the earth? To this we respond: The place is not for what is seen, but rather for the beholder, for the latter only sees in this place. Analogous to this is if I were to say to you, for example, while we were in the mosque, the moon has appeared. Then one of you says: But I do not see it. Then I tell him: Whoever is outside of the mosque or on its roof can see it.

In this context, His utterance: ‘will you, then, contend with him as to what he saw?’ (*an-Najm*: 12) is an affirmation of the vision, lending it weight and warning against doubting in it. And why should there be any dubiousness when the entire matter in the issue belongs to Allah, and Muhammad did not claim any special power for himself, but rather said: {I was taken on a night journey.}?

Perhaps you recall when we discussed His utterance: ‘O you who live in close communion with [evil] invisible beings and humans! If you [think that you] can pass beyond the regions of the heavens and the earth, pass beyond them! [But] you cannot pass beyond them, save by a sanction [from Allah]!’ (*ar-Rahman*: 33); we noted that there were some scholars of the opinion that the final Arabic word of this verse *sultan*, translated as ‘sanction [from Allah]’, meant knowledge or science (*al-‘ilm*). We said that this is not so, and that rather *sultan* was from Allah, The All-Capable of accomplishing this. Now, if the intended meaning of *sultan* were knowledge or science, He would not have said after this: ‘A flash of fire will be let loose upon you, and smoke, and you will be left without succour!’ (*ar-Rahman*: 35) If it were not for this verse, heaven would be wide open, with the Jinn having easy access to it.

Prophet Muhammad’s vision of Gabriel as expressed in His utterance: ‘And, indeed, he saw it descend a second time [13] by the lote-tree of the farthest limit [14]’ (*an-Najm*: 13-14) is to be viewed as an honour and distinction for Gabriel and an honour and distinction for The Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him*. As we have said the lote-tree (*as-sidra*) is a tree which produces the *nibq* fruit, which is an edible berry the size of an olive. Whereas the *nibq* tree of this world has thorns, the lote-tree of the utmost boundary has no thorns. It is as He said: ‘amidst fruit-laden lote-trees’ (*al-Waqi‘a*: 28) comprising the Arabic word *makhdud* which is to say denuded of its thorns. Prophet Muhammad said in describing the size of its fruits in paradise, that they were as the capacious ceramic jugs made in *Hijr*, in other words, like large earthenware jars.

But do not be astonished at the existence of this tree in the seventh heaven, for this arises from the unlimited extent of divine power and capability. Did He not place a tree in hellfire—may Allah protect us from it—regarding which, He *the Glorified and Exalted* said: ‘for, behold, it is a tree...’ (*as-Saffat*: 64) which is to say the tree of *az-Zaqqum*, ‘...that grows in the very heart of the blazing fire [of hell], [64] its fruit [as repulsive] as satans’ heads [65]’ (*as-Saffat*: 64-65).

Concerning His utterance: ‘near unto the garden of promise’ (*an-Najm*: 15), this signifies the garden in which find ultimate refuge the martyrs who have been slain striving in the path of Allah. It is as if it is a special garden reserved for them, apart from the garden of the Hereafter which is for after The Day of

Reckoning. For in the case of the one who dies a martyr, and sacrifices his life in the path of Allah, Allah says to him: 'You will not die in my presence'. Then He restores him from death a second time, as if He were saying: 'It is I who grants life, and I am the one who takes it; so if someone else takes it, I conspire against him in that I render the martyr alive in my presence, with his life in the world joined to his life in the *al-barzakh* 'an interval life between life and death' awaiting the Last Hour.

You will recall that when we discussed Prophet Yahya (John), we said that it was Allah who named him Yahya. Furthermore, we said that when we give names to our children, we select beautiful, excellent names out of optimism for what they signify. Thus, we call a child *Dhaki* (intelligent), in the hope that he will be so, and we call a child *Sa'id* (happy), yearning that he be happy in his life. However, it may happen that reality brings forth the contrary of that for which we had wished. We call him *Dhaki*, but he is dull-witted, or *Sa'id* and then we see that in actuality he is unhappy. This is because we do not have control over the realization of that for which we wish.

But if the name-giver is Allah, then there is no doubt that the name ascribed by Him will correspond to reality. This is because with respect to Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* there is nothing that can hinder His decree, and nothing that can amend His pronouncement, nor is there anyone who can stand in opposition to His command. Hence, the appellation Yahya, which has the semantic connotation of 'to live' is an indication that he will live an eternal unbroken life. From this, certain scholars possessed of comprehension of the divine have understood that he will die a martyr. The reason for this is that it is martyrdom which guarantees him continuation of life inasmuch as his life in this world is connected to the life of a martyr with Allah *the Glorified and Exalted*:

إِذْ يَغْشَى السِّدْرَةَ مَا يَغْشَى ﴿١٦﴾ مَا زَاغَ الْبَصَرُ وَمَا طَغَى ﴿١٧﴾

**When the tree was covered in nameless [splendour] [16]
His sight never wavered, nor was it too bold [17]
(The Quran, *an-Najm*: 16 - 17)**

The meaning of '...the lote-tree veiled...' (*an-Najm*: 16) is that it was covered, or encompassed and concealed. The Arabic particle *ma*, not translated literally

here, is indicative of abundance and something tremendous deserving of amazement. The lote-tree of the utmost boundary is veiled in a multitude of marvellous created things of which only Allah is cognizant. The structure of the expression here is analogous to what occurs in His previous utterance: ‘and thus did [Allah] reveal unto His servant whatever He deemed right to reveal’ (*an-Najm*: 10), which is to say that He revealed unto him a great number of tremendous, wondrous things, This usage is similar to when you say: ‘I was magnanimous to him, how numerous and marvellously diverse was my magnanimity to him’.

It has been narrated that among the amazing created things around the lote-tree of the utmost boundary were birds of wondrous forms and colours. Now, if we witness a great many marvellous manifestations of creation in the birds of the earth, and all that they possess of beautiful forms and patterns which we place for ornamentation in baskets in our houses, and all that they possess of lovely sounds, then how would you envisage the birds which Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* placed around this lote-tree in heaven?

Locusts made of gold have also been mentioned in this context, and these golden locusts are related to a story⁽¹⁾ involving Prophet Dawud (David) *peace be upon him*. It is related that he was sitting on the roof of his house, worshipping Allah and confiding in Him, when on that day he saw a locust made of gold fluttering above him. Thereupon he spread out his robe for it, and it came to pass that the locust landed upon it and Dawud seized it. At that point Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* said to him: ‘O Dawud, do I not suffice you?’ And he answered: ‘Yes, indeed, O Lord, but I cannot dispense with your gracious favour.’⁽²⁾

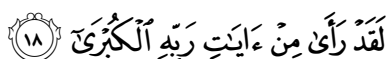
With respect to His utterance: ‘[And withal,] the eye did not waver, nor yet did it stray’ (*an-Najm*: 17), this is to say that the sight of Prophet Muhammad did not deviate during this journey. The Arabic verb *zagha*, translated as ‘waver’, has the meaning of inclining away from the objective. The word *zagha* bears the same significance as *ragha* which occurs in the story of

(1) *The story of David with the golden locust*

(2) *This Hadith is narrated in the context of a Hadith by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih (270, 3140, 6939), and by An-Nasai in his Sunnan (406), and by Ahmad in his Musnad (7695, 7812, 9957) as related by Abu Hurayra, but in reference to Job rather than David.*

Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him*: ‘Then he turned quietly (*ragha*) to his household, and brought forth a fat [roasted] calf’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 26), in other words, he inclined towards his family in a discreet manner so that those present would not perceive it. The difference between the two words lies in the diacritical dot above the letter *za*’, but the meaning is the same or close to it. When we say: ‘So-and-so departed surreptitiously (*zugha*)’, this signifies that he left furtively such that no one was aware of him. Another expression which approximates this meaning is His utterance: ‘...those of you who would withdraw surreptitiously...’ (*an-Nur*: 63), in other words sneak out stealthily.

Concerning His utterance after this: ‘...nor yet did it stray’ (*an-Najm*: 17), this means that his gaze did not transgress or go beyond the proper bounds in vision, and he did not extend it to anything besides its objective. Here we learn the correct norm of looking, and how it remains within the limits of what is permitted. This is like the guest who enters your house in the presence of your family and daughters, for he does not probe with his eyes to gaze upon that which he is not allowed to see.



**And he saw some of the greatest signs
of his Lord [18] (The Quran, *an-Najm*: 18)**

In other words, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saw numerous wondrous signs of Allah during the voyage of the night journey and heavenly ascension, including both marvellous signs on the earth and in heaven. The Arabic word *al-kubra*, translated in this verse as ‘the most profound’, is the feminine plural and also the superlative form of *kabira*, whereas the corresponding masculine forms are *kabir* and *akbar*. The meaning here is that He *peace and blessings be upon him* saw a great number of the wondrous signs of his Lord which are described as being the great signs (*ayat kubra*), or that he saw the greatest of all the marvellous signs.

After these *ayat* (signs) have related this to us and have sworn to the truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* with regard to conveying the message of his Lord, and have mentioned to us some of the

cosmic signs and miracles, they subsequently transport us to the opposing phenomenon, to a discussion of idols and the worshippers of idols

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ اللَّاتَ وَالْعُزَّىٰ ﴿١٩﴾ وَمَنْوَةَ الثَّالِثَةَ الْآخَرَىٰ ﴿٢٠﴾
 أَلَكُمُ الذَّكَرُ وَلَهُ الْأُنثَىٰ ﴿٢١﴾ تِلْكَ إِذَا قِسْمَةٌ ضِيزَىٰ ﴿٢٢﴾

[Disbelievers], consider al-Lat and al-'Uzza [19] and the third one, Manat [20] are you to have the male and He the female? [21] that would be a most unjust distribution! [22]
(The Quran, *an-Najm*: 19 - 22)

The interrogative structure in the phrase 'Have you, then, ever considered' (*an-Najm*: 19) signifies: 'Inform me of the status of these idols which you have adopted as deities apart from Allah.' They were wont to adopt deities of various types: human, animal or tree, and sometimes they adopted an idol which had no form at all.

Concerning *al-Lat*, this was an idol in the form of a man who resided among them and used to knead (*yaluttu*) dough in order to relieve women of this toilsome labour. He died and left no offspring behind him to carry on with this task, so they were grieved by his death, and fashioned a statue of him in honour of his memory. Later they began to worship this statue.

As for *al-'Uzza*, this is the name of a tree which they used to worship, and which Prophet Muhammad ordered Khalid to go and cut down⁽¹⁾. Concerning it, Khalid would say:

(1) In the book *'Uyun Al-Athar* (2/207) it is narrated that the raid of Khalid ibn Al-Walid against *al-'Uzza* took place five days before the end of the month of Ramadan in the year 8 AH in order to raze it. So he departed with thirty horsemen from among his companions until he reached it, and then he demolished it. Then he returned to Prophet Muhammad and notified him. Thereupon he said: {Did you see anything?} Khalid answered, 'No'. Then He peace be upon him said: {Then surely you did not destroy it.} So Khalid returned to it in great fury, and unsheathed his sword, and there came out to him a naked black woman with unkempt hair, and the custodian began to scream at her. Khalid then struck her and split her in half. He then returned to Prophet Muhammad and informed him of what had happened, at which He said: {Yes, that was *al-'Uzza*.}

O 'Uzza, your disavowal [I seek], not your forgiveness

Verily, I perceive that Allah has distained you.⁽¹⁾

Regarding the verse: 'as well as [in] *Manat*, the third and last [of this triad]?' (*an-Najm*: 20), *Manat* was also a name of one of their idols. Here He said: '...the third and last [of this triad]?' (*an-Najm*: 20), as this is the third of them, and it was not in the form of a man or beast, The final Arabic word *al-ukhra*, translated as 'last' is an expression of contempt and ridicule for these idols and for those who worship them.

Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* has set them up as judges over what they are doing and over their worship of idols, saying to them: 'Tell Me about these idols, do they merit being worshipped, do they have power and volition, although they are rocks which you brought with you own hands and moulded them into the forms which you desired? Subsequently, when an idol falls over or is knocked down by the wind, you raise it upright; and if its arms should break, you mend it; how then can you worship them? Where are your clear minds?'

However, this is a reflection of the fact that devotional nature in an innate part of the human constitution. The Creator fashioned man with a natural disposition towards religiosity. Even before Adam was created, while he was still in the world of potential

Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* has us make a solemn pledge while we were in the world of potential enclosed in the back of Adam *peace be upon him*.

Thus, Allah said: 'And whenever Your Sustainer brings forth their offspring from the loins of the children of Adam, He [thus] calls upon them to bear witness about themselves: "Am I not your Sustainer?" – to which they answer: "Yea, indeed, we do bear witness thereto!" [Of this We remind you,] lest you say on the Day of Resurrection, "Verily, we were unaware of this"; [172] or lest you say, "Verily, it was but our forefathers who, in times gone by, began to ascribe divinity to other beings beside Allah; and we were but

(1) This is cited by Ibn Kathir in his *As-Sira An-Nabawiya*, as well as by Ash-Shami in *Subul Al-Huda wa-Ar-Rashad* (chapter 52), and by Al-Waqidi in his *Maghazi* (1/873). In all sources al-'Uzza is a constructed idol and not a tree.

their late offspring: wilt Thou, then, destroy us for the doings of those inventors of falsehoods?” [173]’ (*al-A ‘raf*: 172-173)

Hence, they worshipped idols on account of what they possessed of innate faith in the soul. But true belief comprises consequences and requirement which may be hard on the soul and bind its movements towards objects of lust and desire. Therefore, man is inclined to worship a deity with no prescriptions in order to satisfy the instinctive yearning for devotion in his soul. And based on this they began worshipping idols because they were deities according to their claims. But these idols did not make any demands, and possessed on prescribed path, and they did not worship them except to relieve their devotional sentiments.

We notice here the precision of the Quranic expression in His utterance ‘Have you, then, ever considered [what you are worshipping in] al-Lat and al-‘Uzza, [19] as well as [in] Manat, the third and last [of this triad]? [20]’ (*an-Najm*: 19-20) They also used to worship angels apart from Allah, but He does not mention them with al-Lat, al-‘Uzza and Manat since angels cannot be seen. With regard to the verbal phrase of the first verse above: *a-fa-ra ‘aytum*, meaning ‘Have you, then, seen’ but translated as ‘have you, then, ever considered’, it would not be correct to use it for angels since they could not perceive angels. Rather, they heard about them and believed in them though they were invisible. About all of these they said: these are our intercessors with Allah. Similarly, they said: ‘...We worship them for no other reason than that they bring us nearer to Allah...’ (*az-Zumar*: 3). Thus, even in their disbelief in Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* they are disputatious about Allah.

There follows His utterance: ‘Why – for yourselves [you would choose only] male offspring, whereas to Him [you assign] female’? (*an-Najm*: 21) Here the interrogative is to indicate amazement and repudiation of them since they have ascribed the angels to Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* and classified them as feminine, in light of the final feminine *ta’ marbuta* of the plural word for them (*mala’ika*). However, angels are creations of Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* composed of light, they do not eat, drink, or procreate and they are not qualified as being masculine or feminine.

Now, the situation described in this verse is viewed in terms of judgement and partitioning in a way which the Quran refers to as: ‘that, lo and behold, is

an unfair division!’ (*an-Najm*: 22) This is to say: iniquitous and wrong. This is because you attribute to yourselves the superior gender, and to Allah the inferior one. The first error is that you regarded the angels as females, and the second is that you worshipped them. Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* refutes them: ‘And [yet] they claim that the angels – who in themselves are but beings created by The Most Gracious – are females: [but] did they witness their creation? This false claim of theirs will be recorded, and they will be called to account [for it on Judgment Day]!’ (*az-Zukhruf*: 19)

Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* also said: ‘Verily, you and all that you [were wont to] worship instead of Allah are but the fuel of hell...’ (*al-Anbiya*: 98), in other words, its combustible material which kindles it—may Allah protect us from such. The critical conundrum into which the worshippers of idols have fallen into is that they said: ‘...We worship them for no other reason than that they bring us nearer to Allah...’ (*az-Zumar*: 3); but if only they had said: ‘We only seek closeness to them in order that they might bring us closer to Allah’, this would have been acceptable. However, they said ‘we worship them’, and this is a false, groundless statement. Hence Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* rebuts them, saying: ‘Verily, you and all that you [were wont to] worship instead of Allah are but the fuel of hell...’ (*al-Anbiya*: 98).

If you were to ask: ‘So, what is the offence of ‘Isa (Jesus) and ‘Uzair (Ezra)? And what is the offence of the angels if people have worshipped them apart from Allah?’ The answer is found in the same verse, examine it closely: ‘...all that you [were wont to] worship...’ (*al-Anbiya*: 98), for in the Arabic original, *wa-ma ta‘buduna*, the relative pronoun *ma* here, translated as ‘all that’ is for non-rational things. Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* did not say: ‘and all those who you worshipped’. Hence, this decree does not include ‘Isa or ‘Uzair or the angels.

Consider the Arabic word *diza*, translated as ‘unfair’, you will discover it to be a rare, obscure word in its formulation and pronunciation which does not re-occur among the vocabulary items of the Quran. It occurs in just this perplexing way in order to signify that their deed is strange and bewildering. It also signifies that this division of theirs is outrageously iniquitous and unjust since they have assigned offspring to Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* while He is The Creator of the fair sex, at least in their own opinion.

The dogmatic convictions in Islam did not give any preference to the male over the female, for both the male and the female are equivalent in the scale of religious jurisprudence. In order to illustrate this question, you should read, for example, the story of Maryam (Mary) *peace be upon her* in the Quran, in which Allah *Glorified is He* said: ‘...when a woman of (the House of) ‘Imran prayed, ‘O my Lord! Unto You do I vow (the child) that is in my womb, to be devoted to Your service’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 35).

The mother of Maryam (Mary) *peace be upon her* wanted to raise her child strictly in the service of the house of worship. ‘But when she had given birth to the child, she said, “O my Lord! Behold, I have given birth to a female” – the while Allah had been fully aware of what she would give birth to, and (fully aware) that the male child is not like the female child’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 36). The mother of Maryam assumed that a male child would have been more suitable for the service of a house of worship than a female child. Allah *Glorified is He* made it clear to her that this female child shall assume a station which no other female has assumed before her, as she would attain a great stature in the history of religion, and a position which will raise her above all women.

When Allah *Glorified is He* spoke of several examples of women in the Quran, He referred to each of them without mentioning their names. He said: ‘For those who are bent on denying the truth, Allah has revealed a lesson in (the stories of) the wife of Nuh (Noah) and the wife of Lut (Lot)’ (*at-Tahrim*: 10). Likewise, He said ‘And for those who have believed, Allah has revealed a lesson in (the story of) Pharaoh’s wife’ (*at-Tahrim*: 11). Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* specified that the name of Pharaoh’s believing wife was Asiya Bint Muzahim *may Allah be pleased with her*. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* did not mention the specific names of these women in the Quran. Their stories were mentioned to set a parable and a lesson, and to stress the issue of a woman’s freedom of belief. There is no one who is able to coerce anyone into adhering to a particular belief system.

On the other hand, when Allah *Glorified is He* narrated the story of Maryam (Mary) *peace be upon her* he mentioned her name and the name of her father. He said: ‘...Mary, the daughter of ‘Imran,’ (*at-Tahrim*: 12) because her story was a unique and a special example that will not be repeated after her. Hence,

there are verses in the Quran where the anonymity of the persons was preferred, and there are other verses where the person concerned is specifically identified and named. Each of these preferences was used properly, with every instance having its appropriate motive.

Allah told us the story of the young men in the chapter of the Cave: '...Behold, they were young men who had believed in their Lord: and (so) We increased their guidance to the right way' (*al-Kahf*: 13). However, the Quran did not specify their exact number or their names, and it did not mention anything about them aside their belief in Allah *Glorified is He*. This is the intended extent of their description in the verses, as specific details regarding their names and exact number had no importance in the context of their story. Mentioning these specific names would have been unnecessary because a person learning them will not gain any utility and a person ignorant of them will not be harmed in their life.

These young men were mentioned to show the believers how to adhere steadfastly to their convictions and confront oppressive injustices during any time and in any place, regardless of their number and their circumstances. If Allah had specified their names, they would have been perceived as a unique story that may not necessarily be repeated in other circumstances.

At this point, I would like to discuss whether Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saw Allah *Glorified is He*. This issue was greatly debated among the commentators of the Quran and their opinions varied.

I would like to begin by saying that this is an issue of controversy which does not affect the basis of the theological dogma. It only serves to highlight the stature of Prophet Muhammad in the Eyes of his Lord. There are scholars who, out of love for Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* desired to elevate him to the degree of seeing his Lord.

However, there are other scholars who also had deep love towards Prophet Muhammad *peace blessings be upon him* but they also desired to shield people from the labyrinths of doubt. Therefore, they saw that this encounter between Prophet Muhammad *may the peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him* and his Lord *Glorified is He* did not involve an actual physical vision of Allah.

We will try to simplify this issue in a manner that makes it clear for everyone. It is normal that the opinions of scholars may differ regarding certain concepts. Such differences strengthen the essence of religion and do not impair it. When we read the beginning of the chapter of *an-Najm*, we find that it discusses the issue of divine inspiration (*al-wahy*) in two verses. Allah said in the first passage: ‘that (which he conveys to you) is but (a divine) inspiration with which he (Muhammad) is being inspired. The one with a mighty power taught (it to) him,’ (*an-Najm*: 4-5). The intended inspiration here is the divine revelation which Angel Jibril (Gabriel) *peace be upon him* brought down to Prophet Muhammad while he was on the earth.

Consequently, the subsequent verse referring to divine revelation: ‘And, thus, He (Allah) revealed to His servant that which He revealed’ (*an-Najm*: 10) does not have the same meaning as the first verse referring to divine revelation upon the earth. Rather, the second verse adds a new meaning, and the inspiration mentioned in it referred to a more direct revelation from Allah to his Prophet Muhammad. Furthermore, the second verse did not mention Angel Jibril *peace be upon him* as the intermediary of this divine inspiration. Moreover, the nature of the revelation was not explained, as Allah said: ‘...revealed to His servant that which (*ma*) He revealed’ (*an-Najm*: 10). Thus, the revelation mentioned in this verse was different, and its nature was lexically concealed by the ambiguous pronoun *ma* (‘that which’). On the other hand, the previous divine verses, conveyed by Angel Jibril to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* were not ambiguous or concealed.

The general description of this direct divine revelation indicated the revelation’s sublime greatness, and that it transcended material limitations. Another possible interpretation is that this new revelation that Prophet Muhammad experienced was extraordinary and overwhelming. In this sense, the usage of the pronoun *ma* was similar to its usage in another chapter in which Allah said: ‘...and they were overwhelmed by the sea, with that which (*ma*) they were overwhelmed by’ (*Ta Ha*: 78).

Thus, we can see that the verses in the beginning of the chapter of *an-Najm* have mentioned two types of divine inspiration (*al-wahy*). The two revelations do not have the same meaning because if both types of revelation were

similar, there would be no imperative necessity for Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to go on this journey from the earth to the heavens since the Angel Jibril already came down to him with revelation.

Therefore, the verse: 'And, thus, He (Allah) revealed to His servant that which He revealed,' (*an-Najm*: 10) refers to a new bestowal upon Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* but it is a bestowal enveloped in mystery. It may be that conventional minds were not constituted to accept this different revelation, as these sublime bounties only inspire the pure souls. People's constitutions differ greatly regarding this issue.

Thus, there are scholars who did not believe that Prophet Muhammad *may the peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him* saw Allah *Glorified is He* while other scholars accepted that concept. Praises are due to Allah *Glorified is He* that He did not make this disputed opinion part of our necessary body of religious beliefs. Allah *Glorified is He* addressed all believers by the necessary message. These believers include those who only fulfil the fundamental ordinances of Islam, as well as those who enhance their actions and intensively observe further voluntary acts of worship. Indeed, Allah will grant appropriate rewards for each group of believers.

The direct revelation that Prophet Muhammad received from Allah *Glorified is He* involved proximity, and listening. Prophet Mohammad defined what he saw during that revelation by saying: 'There was Light. How could I see Him?'⁽¹⁾ Hence, Prophet Muhammad *may the peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him* definitely saw the Light, and what other objective is needed beyond this experience?

There is another narration that confirmed this meaning which has been cited in a narrated Hadith stating that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said to one of his Companions: 'My Lord has granted me three vessels (of knowledge): a vessel which he commanded me to convey and this is the knowledge of prayer, a vessel which he left me free to choose (to

(1) This Hadith was narrated by Imam Muslim in his *Sahih* (261) as related by Abu Dharr who said: "I asked Prophet Muhammad, 'Did you see your Lord?' He replied, "There was Light. How could I see Him?" The same Hadith was narrated by At-Tirmidhi in his *Sunnan* (3204) and by Ahmad in his *Musnad* (20427, 20547).

convey it to the folk of purity who are capable of receiving it and to conceal it from those who are not capable of its reception) and a vessel which Allah forbade me to divulge (and this vessel contains matters which are beyond the comprehension of all men and which their minds could not bear).’ Thus, there are details which Prophet Muhammad *may the peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him* was commanded to conceal.

The Companions themselves were diverse in their capacity to understand such concepts. Thus, when ‘Umar⁽¹⁾ *may Allah be pleased with him* finished his circumambulation around the *Ka’ba* and stood before the Black Stone, he said: ‘By Allah, I truly know that you are just a stone that cannot do harm or cause benefit, and if I had not actually seen the Messenger of Allah [Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*] kissing you I would not have kissed you.’⁽²⁾

Thus, ‘Umar *may Allah be pleased with him* drew our attention to the fact that a devotional act is not observed for its own sake, but rather out of belief in the one who instructed us to perform it. However, ‘Ali *may Allah be pleased with him* possessed another form of abundance of understanding. Therefore, he closely approached ‘Umar *may Allah be pleased with him* and said: ‘O Commander of the

(1) The story of ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab circumambulating the *Ka’ba* and his stance regarding the black stone and the response of ‘Ali ibn Abu Taleb

(2) This Hadith is narrated by Al-Hakim in his *Mustadrak* (1635) as related by Abu Sa’id Al-Khudri who said: “We performed pilgrimage with ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab and when he set about circumambulating, he faced the (Black) Stone and said, “Verily, I know that you are a stone which cannot do harm or bring benefit, and if I had not actually seen Prophet Muhammad kiss you, I would not have kissed you.” Then he kissed it. Thereupon, ‘Ali ibn Abu Taleb remarked, “But indeed, O Commander of the Faithful. It surely can do harm and cause benefit.” (‘Umar) then asked, “On what basis?” (‘Ali) replied, “On the basis of the Book of Allah.” (‘Umar) then asked, “And where is this in the Book of Allah?” (‘Ali) said, “Allah said: “And when your Lord brought forth their offspring from the backs of the children of Adam, He (thus) called upon them to bear witness about themselves, ‘Am I not your Lord?’ – to which they answered, ‘Indeed, we do bear witness thereto!’” (al-A’raf: 172) And verily, I bear witness that I heard the Messenger of Allah say: “On the Day of Resurrection, the Black Stone will be brought and it will possess an eloquent tongue that testifies to those who have acknowledged it within the framework of Divine Unity.” Hence, O Commander of the Faithful (‘Umar), it can do harm and bring benefit.’ Thereupon, ‘Umar said, “I seek protection from Allah from living amidst a people among whom you are not present, O father of Al-Hasan (‘Ali).””

Faithful ('Umar), but I know that it (the Black Stone) can do harm and give benefit, for it does bear witness to its companion on the Day of Resurrection.'

Hence, it is not necessary for us to know everything. Allah *Glorified is He* said: '...and you have been granted very little of (real) knowledge' (*al-Isra'*: 85). This is the case of all people, regardless of who they are. In our daily lives, we have the habit of protecting precious items in several wrappers. For instance, we may place the item in an envelope, and then place the envelope in a secure storage container. We may then place the storage container in a private chamber. Therefore, if the precious matter was related to the vision of Allah *Glorified is He* we should expect a transcendental level of concealment. Hence, this knowledge was concealed highly in this sublime manner, and every intellect will perceive this knowledge according to its own understanding.

Allah said: 'Will you (disbelievers), then, contend with him (Muhammad) as to what he saw?' (*an-Najm*: 12) It might be asked whether divine inspiration is seen or heard. Indeed, divine inspiration is heard, so why did Allah say: '...as to what he (Muhammad) saw?' (*an-Najm*: 12) Therefore, we have to recognize that there was a vision involved. The people who do not accept the notion that Prophet Muhammad *may the peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him* saw Allah, support their opinion with Allah's verse: 'No human vision can encompass Him (Allah), whereas He encompasses all human vision' (*al-An'am*: 103). Allah has defined the instrument of perception in this verse as being the sense of sight, and indeed, human vision cannot encompass Allah. However, this verse only stated that the eyes cannot perceive Allah. Therefore, the verse did not negate that other senses can perceive Allah. There is a saying that wisely stated, 'When my eyesight was transformed into a spiritual insight, I saw the One (Allah) to whom nothing can be compared.' It is imperative that we understand that this issue comprises the concealment of a precious and a wondrous phenomenon.

Indeed, the one who meditates upon these verses discovers that they go far beyond that which we are discussing. Read the verse in which Allah said: 'Will you, then, contend with him as to what he saw?' (*an-Najm*: 12) And read the verse that comes after it: 'Truly did he (Muhammad) see some of the most profound of his Lord's symbols' (*an-Najm*: 18). In other words, Prophet

Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saw more than that of which you are speaking. So, what would your stance be if We informed you of all that he saw?

In this context, let us consider the story of our Prophet Musa (Moses), when he said to his Lord: “O my Lord! Show (Thyself) to me, so that I might behold Thee!” (Allah) said, “Never can you see Me. However, behold this mountain: if it remains firm in its place, then – only then – will you see Me.” And as soon as his Lord revealed His glory to the mountain, He caused it to crumble to dust; and Musa (Moses) fell down in a swoon’ (*al-A‘raf*: 143). Firstly, consider Allah’s statement: ‘...Never can you see Me...’ (*al-A‘raf*: 143). Allah did not say, ‘Never will I be seen.’ In other words, Allah was telling Prophet Musa, ‘You will never see Me, O Musa, while you are in a state that does not enable you to have such a vision.’ However, Allah revealed Himself to the mountain, and this revelation implies vision. Hence, the phenomenon here lies in the beholder and the extent of his preparedness to perceive Allah.

Prophet Muhammad is like Prophet Musa in this respect except that when he ascended into the heavens, he assumed an angelic nature which enabled him to ascend and enter these sublime realms. This angelic nature covered his human nature and overcame it, Allah *Glorified is He* then said:

إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا أَسْمَاءٌ سَمَّيْتُمُوهَا أَنْتُمْ وَآبَاؤُكُمْ مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ بِهَا مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ
إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَمَا تَهْوَى الْأَنْفُسُ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ الْهُدَى ﴿٢٣﴾

These are nothing but names you have invented yourselves, you and your forefathers. God has sent no authority for them. These people merely follow guess-work and the whims of their souls, even though guidance has come to them from their Lord [23] (The Quran, *an-Najm*: 23)

The discourse remains focused on the idols of *al-Lat*, *al-‘Uzza* and *Manat*, with Allah *Glorified is He* stating that these idols are naught: ‘...but empty names which you have invented – you and your forefathers – (and) for which Allah has not revealed any warrant’ (*an-Najm*: 23). They fabricated these idols by their own hands. Now, it is well known that a name is coined in order to refer to the thing that is named. However, the names which they gave to these idols

were references to null and invalid forces. They have claimed that they are deities, but they were only stones which do no harm and produce no benefit.

Allah said: ‘...which you have invented – you and your forefathers...’ (*an-Najm*: 23). This is due to the fact that they inherited these idols from their ancestors. The polytheists themselves said in that respect: ‘Behold, we found our forefathers agreed on what to believe – and, verily, it is but in their footsteps that we follow!’ (*az-Zukhruf*: 23) Hence, they acknowledged that it was the path of their forefathers, and confirmed that they were pursuing their pre-established course.

Subsequently, Allah stated the falsity of their beliefs: ‘...for which Allah has not revealed any warrant’ (*an-Najm*: 23). These beliefs arose from themselves without any proof or evidence and were not from Allah *Glorified is He*. Indeed, neither they nor their forefathers were fit to be religious legislators. In fact, religious ordinances and tenets of faith are not to be derived from men, but are only to be received from Allah *Glorified is He*. These disbelievers did not follow the guidance of Allah, but instead: ‘Indeed, they (who worship them) follow (*inn yatibi’una*) nothing but surmise (*azh-zhann*),’ (*an-Najm*: 23). The Arabic phrase *inn yatibi’una* contains the negating particle *inn*. The use of this particle gives rise to the meaning, ‘They do not follow but their guesses and their own wishful thinking.’ They do not follow fundamental truths or adhere to reality. The Arabic word *azh-zhann* (surmise) is one of the six levels of the truthfulness of a statement which we have previously clarified. These six levels state that a scholastic statement or utterance can be either a statement of knowledge (*ilm*), a statement of ignorance (*jahl*), an unthinking imitation (*taqleed*), a doubt (*shakk*), a hypothesis (*zhann*) or a deluded statement (*wahm*).

Firstly, if a scholastic axiom reports a definitive reality and establishes the proof of that reality, then it constitutes a statement of knowledge (*al-ilm*). The second type is a statement that definitively defends a perception without providing a proof for it. Then, this statement would only be considered an imitation (*al-taqleed*). Thirdly, if the scholastic assertion is not founded upon reality, but is asserted with a definitive manner, then it is ignorance (*al-jahl*). Fourthly, in the event that the scholastic imputation is not asserted with

certainty meaning that there is an equal probability of the event occurring or not occurring, then it is doubt (*as-shakk*). The fifth form of utterance is a hypothesis or an assumption (*azh-zhann*) which is when an event is likely. Finally, if the statement is highly improbable, then it is a self-deceiving delusion (*al-wahm*).

It is possible to base some of our actions upon an assumption (*azh-zhann*) in ordinary affairs. Thus, for example, if we wished to travel to Alexandria, and I said to my companion, 'This first route is easy and it is provided with the necessities of travelling,' he might respond, 'I believe (*azhunnu*) that the second route is better because it is newly constructed.' In that situation, it would be permissible for me to leave aside the certainty with which I regard the first route, and instead, take the second route based on an assumption. This is because if our choice is mistaken, the resulting harm will be minimal.

On the other hand, in the matters of religion and fundamental beliefs, it is necessary to adhere to certainty and not to assumption. Allah *Glorified is He* informed us that these polytheists followed hypothetical assumptions in their matters of worship. For instance, they said, 'Verily, Allah has an elevated majesty and glorious grandeur, and so, we cannot worship Him directly. We need to worship other (earthly) deities that can bring us closer to Him and that can intercede for us with Him.'

Therefore, Allah's words: 'Indeed, they (who worship them) follow nothing but surmise' (*an-Najm*: 23) refer to the false religious convictions of these polytheists. On the other hand, the phrase which follows this: '...and their own wishful thinking (*tahwa al-anfus*)' (*an-Najm*: 23) means that they follow the passionate inclinations of their souls in their behaviours and actions. The Arabic word *tahwa* is the verb derived from the word *al-hawa* (desire or wishes). *Al-hawa* is formed of the blameworthy and unprincipled yearnings and longings of desire.

In the final passage of this verse, Allah said: '...although, righteous guidance has hitherto, indeed, (*la-qad*) reached them from their Lord' (*an-Najm*: 23). The Arabic word *la-qad* ('hitherto, indeed') consists of the particle *la* which is used for lexical confirmation, followed by the particle *qad* which strongly confirms the verb following it. Hereby, Allah confirmed a reality which is

that the guidance of Allah *Glorified is He* has indeed reached these polytheists and that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* properly conveyed it to them. Yet, in spite of this, they turned aside from this certain truth, and followed the mere suppositions and presumptions they had inherited and imitated.

If they had followed their assumptions and passionate desires before the prescribed path of their Lord was conveyed to them, they would have had an excuse. However, as they have done this after guidance has come to them from Allah *Glorified is He* they have no excuse or defence, Then, Allah said:

﴿٢٤﴾ أَمْ لِلْإِنسَانِ مَا تَمَنَّى ﴿٢٥﴾ فَلِلَّهِ الْآخِرَةُ وَالْأُولَى

**Is man to have everything he wishes for [24] when the
present life and the life to come belong only to God? [25]
(The Quran, *an-Najm*: 24 - 25)**

After deviating from Allah's guidance and following their spurious assumptions, did they imagine that they can proceed in this world on the basis of their unprincipled inclinations and desires? Did they think that man can have whatever he wants, even if his longings are contrary to the ordained path of his Lord? The reality is that mankind will not attain their unchecked desires in this world because the principals of religion and faith are not obtained through desires. Indeed, Allah's decrees do not follow mankind's whims.

The Arabic verb *tamanna* (wished) is derived from the word *at-tamanny*, which is when a person seeks something that is impossible to attain. This word only signifies the great desire and love towards a particular aspiration, and that the aspiration will never be accomplished. A poet once said:

‘If only my young years would return one day,
So I can inform them of what my old age has done.’

The polytheists may wishfully desire a particular outcome, but their wishes will be in vain. They wished that they could have whatever they wanted without restrictions, and this was a futile desire and will never be realized. This is because man does not have any control over his own circumstances, nor does he have control over all the causative factors that can lead to his wishes. Nay, indeed, he has a Lord who decrees all the destinies and deeds.

There are numerous verses in which Allah illustrated the vain desire of these people. Among their vain wishes was their statement: ‘We worship them (the idols) for no other reason than that they bring us nearer to Allah’ (*az-Zumar*: 3). Another example of a vain desire was uttered by the owner of the garden in the chapter of *al-Kahf*. This disbeliever said: ‘...But even if (the Day of Judgment should come, and) I am (resurrected and) brought before my Lord, I will surely find something even better than this (garden) as (my last) resort!’ (*al-Kahf*: 36) In another verse, a man was mentioned to have said: ‘...but if (it should come, and) I should indeed be brought back unto my Lord, then, behold, the ultimate good awaits me with Him!’ (*Fussilat*: 50) In this manner, these disbelievers only had vain wishes that did not respect any limit. Thus, Allah said: ‘Man is never weary of asking for the good (things of life); and if evil fortune touches him, he abandons all hope, giving himself up to despair’ (*Fussilat*: 49).

Likewise, these vain desires included the utterances of Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira. The Quran described Al-Walid in the verses in which Allah said: ‘And have you (Muhammad) seen the man who denied the truth of Our messages and said, “I will surely be given wealth and children”? Has he (Al-Walid), perchance, attained to a realm which is beyond the reach of a created being’s perception? – or has he concluded a covenant with (Allah) the Most Gracious?’ (*Maryam*: 77-78) Indeed, Al-Walid did not reach the knowledge of the unseen realms, nor has he had a covenant with Allah regarding these wishes. Subsequently, Allah *Glorified is He* refuted his wishes, and said: ‘Nay! We shall record what he said, and We shall greatly lengthen his suffering (in the hereafter), and divest him of all that he is (now) speaking of: for (on the Day of Judgment), he will appear before Us in a lonely state’ (*Maryam*: 79 - 80).

Thus, man will not have what he vainly desires, and how could he have his desires when the entire matter belongs to Allah *Glorified is He* alone, from beginning to the end. Allah said: ‘Rather, to Allah belongs the Hereafter and the first (life)’ (*an-Najm*: 25).

This verse employed an abbreviated lexical mode of expression in which the main clause, ‘...belongs to Allah,’ preceded the opening clause, ‘The Hereafter and the first (life).’ This lexical mode highlights that the Hereafter and the first life belong to Allah alone. Here, Allah placed the reference to the

Hereafter first because the polytheists said that their idols were their intercessors with Allah *Glorified is He*. Therefore, Allah announced that the Hereafter belongs to Him alone, and that the polytheists will not derive any benefit from their idols because their assumptions were futile and groundless. The phrase: '...and the first (life)' (*an-Najm*: 25) refers to the fact that they have not even achieved their enjoyments in this life by themselves.

It is also said that the Hereafter is mentioned before the present life in this verse, despite the fact that it is contrary to the normal order because the Hereafter is the object of contention between the person who believes in it and the one who denies it. It is the concept that the disbelievers have a doubt in and therefore, Allah mentioned it before the first life to reaffirm that it is the truth. Indeed, its truth is more certain than the first life they are now living, Then, Allah said:

وَكَمْ مِّن مَّلَكٍ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ لَا تُغْنِي شَفَعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا
إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ أَنْ يَأْذَنَ اللَّهُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَرْضَىٰ ﴿٦٦﴾

There are many angels in heaven whose intercession will be of no use until God gives permission to those He will, whose words He will accept [26] (The Quran, *an-Najm*: 26)

The polytheists believed that the idols would intercede for them with Allah *Glorified is He* as they said: 'We worship them (the idols) for no other reason than that they bring us nearer to Allah' (*az-Zumar*: 3). Allah *Glorified is He* refuted this concept with a statement that illustrated the futility and groundlessness of their convictions. How could they expect that the idols can intercede for them, when even the angels of divine proximity and the honoured servants in Allah's presence do not possess the power of intercession except by His permission?

Allah said: 'And (how) many (*kam*) an angel?' (*an-Najm*: 26) This means that there is a multitude of angels, as the particle *kam* is an explicative rather than an interrogative particle. It refers to the great number of these angels since it is asking about a number which has no limit.

The verse continued talking about these numerous angels: '...their intercession will not avail at all except (only) after Allah has permitted (them) to whom He wills and approves' (*an-Najm*: 26). Consequently, there are two conditions for the acceptance of the intercession of the angels. The first condition is that it

can only happen if Allah *Glorified is He* gives the permission for the angels to intercede. The second condition is if Allah *Glorified is He* is well pleased with the one for whom the angels are interceding. Indeed, Allah will be pleased with the adherents of pure monotheism (*at-tawheed*). Therefore, this refers to the dignity of the intercessor and the dignity of the one interceded for.

In the verse of *al-Kursi*, Allah said: ‘Who is there that could intercede with Him, unless it be by His leave?’ (*al-Baqara*: 255) The angels are honoured servants who do not speak without His leave and they only execute his commands. Allah has said about them: ‘...they do not disobey Allah in whatever He has commanded them, but (always) do what they are bidden to do’ (*at-Tahrim*: 6). Hence, if this is the conditional state of the angels with respect to the acceptance of their intercession, then what is one to think of the intercession of the null futile idols?

We can observe in the Quranic wording of this verse that the words: ‘...many (*kam*) an angel (*malaak*),’ (*an-Najm*: 26) was mentioned in the singular form. On the other hand, the intercessions were attributed to many angels when Allah said: ‘...their intercessions will not avail at all,’ (*an-Najm*: 26). Allah did not say, ‘...his intercession’ because the particle *kam* is explicative and indicates a great quantity, and when it is conjoined with the singular form ‘angel’, it still renders the plural meaning. The Arabic phrase *wa-kam min malaak* (...and (how) many an angel) signifies a multitude of angels, and it is fitting that Allah then said: ‘...their intercessions’ employing the plural form. Then, Allah said:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ لَيُسَمُّونَ الْمَلَائِكَةَ تَسْمِيَةَ الْأُنثَىٰ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَمَا لَهُمْ بِهِ
مِنْ عِلْمٍ إِنْ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنَّ الظَّنَّ لَا يُغْنِي مِنَ الْحَقِّ شَيْئًا ﴿٢٨﴾

Those who deny the life to come give the angels female names [27] They have no knowledge to base this on: they merely follow guesswork. Guesswork is of no value against the Truth [28] (The Quran, *an-Najm*: 27 - 28)

Allah exposed the false convictions that the polytheists expressed in their statement: ‘We worship them (the idols) for no other reason than that they bring us nearer to Allah’ (*az-Zumar*: 3). The polytheists considered that the angels would intercede for them with Allah *Glorified is He*. However, their

concept was fragile and frail because they did not really believe in the Hereafter. Therefore, their speech of an intercession in the Hereafter was only composed of empty statements.

Allah said: 'Behold, those who do not believe in the Hereafter,' (*an-Najm*: 27) and this is a reference to the disbelievers. The verse continued that they: '...regard the angels as female beings' (*an-Najm*: 27) which means that they claimed that the angels were the daughters of Allah *Glorified is He*. Then Allah *Glorified is He* stated that their statement had no basis in knowledge: '...but they have no knowledge thereof,' (*an-Najm*: 28). Allah said in another passage: 'I did not make them witnesses of the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor of the creation of their own selves; and neither do I (have any need to) take as My helpers those (beings) that lead (men) astray' (*al-Kahf*: 51).

Hence, they had no knowledge regarding the creation of the angels, and, thus, they were liars in their claim. The problem is that they followed their baseless suppositions in this matter, as they only considered the angels to be females because the Arabic word *mala'-ika* (angels) is lexically feminine. In the Arabic language, the lexical femininity of a name is not an indication that the being carrying the name is feminine, but these disbelievers did not have any connection with veritable reality.

The truth regarding this issue is what Allah *Glorified is He* informed us since He is their Creator Who has the absolute knowledge of their nature. Thus, Allah said: 'Indeed, conjecture (*azh-zhann*) will never take the place of the Truth,' (*an-Najm*: 28). Supposition or assumption (*azh-zhann*) can never take the place of definitive manifest knowledge, Then, Allah said:

فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْ مَن تَوَلَّىٰ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَلَمْ يُرِدْ إِلَّا الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ﴿٢٩﴾ ذَلِكَ مَبْلَغُهُمْ
مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَن أَهْتَدَىٰ ﴿٣٠﴾

**So [Prophet] ignore those who turn away from Our
revelation, who want only the life of this world [29] Their
knowledge does not go beyond that. Your Lord knows best
who strays from His path and who follows guidance [30]
(The Quran, *an-Najm*: 29 - 30)**

After Allah made the position of His adversaries clear to His Prophet, and that they did not have any desire for the truth, but instead, followed their vain

assumptions, Allah told him: ‘O Muhammad, relieve yourself of such people, for there is nothing to be gained from them.’ Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was earnestly keen on the guidance of his people. He used to push himself to great lengths for the sake of summoning them to the truth, far beyond what is bearable for human beings. For this reason, Allah addressed Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* with the following words: ‘But wouldst thou, perhaps, torment thyself to death with grief over them if they are not willing to believe in this message?’ (*al-Kahf*: 6) In addition, He said to him: ‘...thou art not bound to do more than deliver the message (entrusted to you)’ (*ash-Shura*: 48).

We have clarified that Allah *Glorified is He* did not want the disbelievers to approach obedience as empty shells without obedient hearts. Rather, he wanted their hearts to approach Him voluntarily and of their own free choosing. Therefore, Allah said to His Prophet: ‘Avoid (*a’rid*), therefore, those who turn away from all remembrance of Us’ (*an-Najm*: 29). In this passage, the word *a’rid* was used to mean ‘avoid’. The word is derived from the same semantic root as the verbs ‘*arada* (presented or showed), and the word ‘*aarid* (a presenter or shower, such as those who present their merchandise in markets). However, in this verse, a *hamza* (glottal stop) was added to these roots, and this *hamza* is known as *hamzat al-izala* (cessation). In other words, when this *hamza* is added to the semantic verb ‘*arada* (presented), it transforms it into *a’rada* (avoided) which has the opposite meaning of the word ‘*arada* (presented).

Therefore, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* presented (*’arada*) the guidance and the ordained path of Truth to his people. He explained the objectives and advantages of this path. However, they only renounced his guidance. They showed insults and opposition to him and avoided his way. This situation remained until his Lord commanded him to avoid them (*a’rid*) and pay no heed to those who reject his way. Allah ordered him: ‘Avoid, therefore,’ (*an-Najm*: 29). Just as they have turned away from you, then you must turn away from them. They have avoided you, O Muhammad, so you must shun them.

This lexical principal of *hamzat al-izala* which transforms a verb into its opposite meaning can also be found in other words. For instance, the verb

a'jama is used to refer to a book that is provided with diacritical points (*u'jima al-kitab*), as these points remove the book's obscurity. Another example of this usage is the word *mu'jam* (dictionary) that eliminates the ambiguities of words or expressions. This is because a *mu'jam* clarifies the meanings of the words of the language, deciphers them and renders them intelligible. However, if we remove the *hamza* from the word *a'jama*, it becomes '*ajama* (ciphered) which is the opposite of *a'jama* (deciphered).

Likewise, *a'rada* means the cessation presentation (*al-'ard*). Hence, the passage: 'Avoid, therefore, those who turn away from all remembrance of Us' (*an-Najm*: 29) indicated that it was the disbelievers who began by shunning the remembrance of Allah *Glorified is He*. In other words, they averted themselves from the Quran and from its ordained path because it restricted their indulgent freedoms and lustful desires.

The ordained path entails prescriptions and proscriptions, and they had no desire for such obligations. They desired an unbridled pursuit of their passionate inclinations, where they can enjoy their pleasures without any oversight. If these disbelievers had given serious consideration to the ordained path of Allah *Glorified is He* they would have recognized that it was in their interest. This is because, for example, when religion forbids you from stealing as an individual it also forbids all people from stealing from you. It does restrain your hand, but at the same it also restrains millions of hands from stealing you.

Therefore, before looking at the hardships of religious ordinances, you should look at its beneficial gifts. You may recall the youthful companion who came to Prophet Muhammad *may the peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him* and said to him, 'O Messenger of Allah. Give me the legal permission to fornicate.' Can you imagine the reaction of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* towards this bizarre request? He did not drive him away, but rather brought him closer to himself, and smiled in his face and told him: 'O kinsman of the Arabs. Would you accept it if your sister did it (fornicated)?' Thereupon, the man said, 'No, O Messenger of Allah, may I be your ransom.' Then, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* asked: 'Would you like this for your mother? Would you like this for your daughter?' The narrator of this Hadith said, '(The Prophet continued asking him) until he

mentioned the paternal aunt and the maternal aunt, with the man saying, ‘No, O Messenger of Allah, may I be your ransom.’ Then, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said to him: ‘It is the same for other people, O kinsman of the Arabs. They too would not like this for their sisters, or their mothers, or their daughters.’ The young man subsequently said, ‘So I departed from the presence of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and there was nothing more detestable to me than fornication, and I have never thought of committing anything (of that sort) except that I recalled the honour of my sister, my mother and my daughter.’⁽¹⁾

For this reason, Allah said of the righteous and pious people at the beginning of the chapter of *al-Baqara*: ‘It is they who are upon the guidance (which comes) from their Lord; and it is they, who shall attain to a happy state’ (*al-Baqara*: 5). Thus, religious ordinances and the ordained path are not an encumbrance upon you, but rather, carry and deliver you towards your objective. The cited verse refers to the righteous people as being ‘upon the guidance’ (*‘ala al-huda*), with the preposition *‘ala* suggesting mastery and superiority over (*al-isti‘la*). Hence, it is the ordained path that carries you, and it helps you and renders you happy.

Now, we can return to our verse in the chapter of *an-Najm* in which Allah said regarding the disbelievers: ‘...and (those who) care for no more than the life of this world’ (*an-Najm*: 29). This signifies that the life of this world constitutes their ultimate aim, and they act only for its sake. The disbelievers have surely confirmed their disbelief by saying: ‘There is nothing beyond our life in this world. We die as we come to life, and nothing but time destroys us’ (*al-Jathiya*: 24). Hence, the Hereafter is of no account to them. Therefore, Allah deemed their opinion to be foolish by saying: ‘which, to them, is the only thing worth knowing’ (*an-Najm*: 30). This is the ultimate extent of the knowledge they had acquired, and they stopped at that limit of knowledge.

(1) This Hadith is narrated by Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad* (21185), by At-Tabarani in *Al-Mu‘jam Al-Kabir* (7077), and is found in *Musnad ash-shamiyin* (1036, 1494) as well as in *Shu‘ab Al-Iman* by Al-Bayhaqi (5181) as related by Abu Umama. In its full version, it is narrated that The Messenger of Allah prayed for the youth: {O my Allah, forgive him his transgression and purify his heart, and safeguard his sexual organ.} And afterwards, the young man never so much as glanced at anything.

It is bewildering that they have closed their ears and deafened their hearing towards the guidance, and that they did not adopt the knowledge that Allah *Glorified is He* revealed to them. 'Behold, your Lord is fully aware as to who has strayed from His path, and fully aware is He as to who follows His guidance' (*an-Najm*: 30).

Let us first examine the conciseness of expression in the Arabic phrase *huwa a 'lamu*, '(He) is fully aware'. In this phrase, knowledge and awareness were limited to Allah *Glorified is He* alone. This because the issue of guidance and straying from the right path is primarily related to the world of the unseen and no one is acquainted with this world except Allah, the One Who knows all secrets and what is even more concealed than secrets. Moreover, every person claims to be rightly guided and that others are misguided. For this reason, Allah *Glorified is He* reserved this knowledge exclusively for Himself.

It is noteworthy to say that Allah said: 'Behold, your Lord is fully aware as to who has strayed from His path, and fully aware is He as to who follows His guidance,' (*an-Najm*: 30) after He had said to His Prophet: 'Avoid, therefore, those who turn away from all remembrance of Us' (*an-Najm*: 29). There is a correspondence between these two verses, as Allah's knowledge of their reaction to His message preceded their existence and their turning away from this message.

Therefore, Allah told Prophet Muhammad *may the peace and the blessings of Allah be upon him* to unburden his soul: '...thou art not bound to do more than deliver the message (entrusted to thee)' (*ash-Shura*: 48). Moreover, Allah informed Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* of those who will be guided and those who will remain lost in misguidance. In this respect, consider that Abu Lahab, Abu Sufyan, 'Amr ibn Al-'As and Khalid ibn Al-Walid were all aligned in a single trench against Islam, but it was Allah's will that Abu Sufyan, Khalid and 'Amr become believers. On the other hand, Abu Lahab continued in his idolatry, even after the following verses were revealed concerning him: 'Doomed are the hands of Abu Lahab, and doomed is he! What will his wealth avail him, and all that he has gained? (In the life to come) he shall have to endure a fire fiercely glowing' (*al-Masad*: 1-3). Then, Allah said:

وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَوُوا
بِمَا عَمِلُوا وَيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا بِالْحُسْنَى ﴿٣١﴾

**Everything in the heavens and earth belongs to God.
He will repay those who do evil according to their deeds,
and reward, with what is best, those who do good [31]
(The Quran, *an-Najm*: 31)**

Here, again, is a concise expression that placed the predicate of a nominal clause before its nominal clause signifying that everything belongs to Allah *Glorified is He* alone. In another passage Allah said: ‘To Allah alone is the dominion over the heavens and the earth’ (*ash-Shura*: 49). Now, the heavens and the earth are wondrous in themselves, and that which is in them is even more marvellous. ‘Indeed, to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth’ (*an-Najm*: 31). Likewise, He said: ‘And to Allah (alone) is the knowledge of the hidden reality of the heavens and the earth’ (*an-Nahl*: 77).

There are three realms of Allah’s dominion. He holds absolute command over the heavens and the earth. He supremely reigns over the contents that are in the heavens and the earth, as each of them has wondrous and amazing contents of their own. Finally, he is the sole master of what is even more marvellous, which is the unseen realm that is hidden from us in the dominions of the heavens and the earth.

This means that mankind should not abstain from working towards more discoveries and inventions, as the universe will continue to overflow with marvellous signs and wonders, some of which they are familiar with and some of which they have no knowledge of. The heavens and the earth contain provisions which have no limit and cannot be finished as long as the heavens and the earth abide. Then, when the marvels and secrets run out with the termination of this world, there will arise wonders and secrets of the Hereafter.

Then, Allah made it clear that this dominion over the heavens and the earth is the reason for the presence of recompense in the Hereafter. This is because the dominion is the dominion of Allah *Glorified is He* and the creation is Allah’s creation. Indeed, the messengers are Allah’s messengers, and the ordained path is the ordained path of Allah. In front of you, O man, is the vast

universe and all that it comprises of wondrous cosmic signs showing the power and capability of the Creator. Therefore, you should seek to find the proofs and signs of the Creator throughout His creation.

Then Allah sent to you His messengers, revealed His Books, established the laws and clarified that which is permissible and that which is forbidden. He defined the limits and made the reward clear. It is absolutely necessary that the dominion of the heavens and the earth be concluded with requital. Indeed, the recompense must comprise the same nature as the deeds that were done in this world. Therefore, Allah said: ‘...and so He will reward those who do evil in accordance with what they did, and will reward those who do good with ultimate good’ (*an-Najm*: 31).

We have previously said that there are three kinds of messages (*ayat*). These include the cosmic signs which indicate the omnipotence of Allah *Glorified is He*. They also include the miraculous signs which illustrate the truthfulness of the messenger in his conveyance from Allah *Glorified is He* and finally, include the verses of a binding judicial nature which the Noble Quran encompasses. Hence, whoever does not give proper consideration to these verses, and does not receive them in an adequate manner, has done wrong and will be punished for their transgression.

On the other hand, whoever receives them with care and excellence, will be rewarded for this excellence. It is as if their worldly obedience was a greeting or a salutation to the One Who ordained these religious obligations, and Allah *Glorified is He* will return the greeting in a superior form: ‘...and will reward those who do good with ultimate good’ (*an-Najm*: 31). In other words, they will be rewarded with a reward that is better than their actions. Thus, if Allah had ordered us to return any good salutation in this world with a superior salutation, we should know that Allah will reward our good actions with a greater good in the Hereafter.

Consider the fluency and the precision of the expression that is found in this verse. Allah did not say that He will punish those who have done evil with an evil punishment, but instead said that the punishment will be: ‘...in accordance with what they did,’ (*an-Najm*: 31). He will not confront them with an ‘evil’ action, but rather, He will place before them the deeds which they have done

themselves. This is an illustration of the justice of Allah *Glorified is He* that is referred to in the following verse: ‘...for it is not Allah who does them wrong, but it is they who are wronging themselves’ (*Al-Imran*: 117).

Furthermore, in our verse in the chapter of *an-Najm*, Allah mentioned the reward of the evil deeds before mentioning the reward of the doers of good, in order that the recompense of the ultimate good (*al-husna*) be the last thing that we hear. Subsequently, the verses expanded and provided detailed descriptions concerning those who have done good, including the aspects of charity and righteousness found in their deeds, Then, Allah said:

الَّذِينَ يَجْتَنِبُونَ كَبِيرَ الْإِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ إِلَّا اللَّمَمَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ
هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِكُمْ إِذْ أَنشَأَكُم مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ وَإِذْ أَنْتُمْ بِحُجَّتٍ فِي بُطُونِ
أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ فَلَا تُزَكُّوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنِ اتَّقَى ﴿٣٢﴾

As for those who avoid grave sins and foul acts, though they may commit small sins, your Lord is ample in forgiveness. He has been aware of you from the time He produced you from the earth and from your hiding places in your mothers' wombs, so do not assert your own goodness: He knows best who is mindful of Him [32] (The Quran, *an-Najm*: 32)

One of the attributes of those that do the good is that they: ‘...avoid the (truly) grave sins and immoralities’ (*an-Najm*: 32). This is to say, that they entirely avoid these major transgressions (*al-kaba'ir*) of sins, and do not approach this forbidden area. However, they may still fall in occasional unfortunate slips (*al-lamam*) which are minor sins. It is as if Allah *Glorified is He* with His Mercy guaranteed the forgiveness of the minor offenses by deleting them and providing an eraser which removes them. This eraser is the five obligatory prayers, on the condition that we avoid the major sins.

Hence, we find that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said in a Hadith: ‘The five daily obligatory prayers, and one Friday congregational prayer to the next Friday congregational prayer, and one *Ramadan* to the next *Ramadan*, are an expiation (*kaffara*) for what lies between them, if the major

sins are avoided.^{'(1)} So, whoever does these obligatory good deeds, and pursues this prescribed path, will have the ultimate good (*al-husna*), and will be considered among the doers of good.

Therefore, the sinful offenses and lewd acts are the major sins that Allah *Glorified is He* threatened with dire consequences. The Arabic word *al-fawahish* (immoralities) comprises the major sins that are excessively obscene or abominable. Allah *Glorified is He* has laid down a prescribed punishment and a penalty for these sins.

Then, there are the occasional unfortunate slips (*al-lamam*) which Allah *Glorified is He* will forgive. These are the miniscule insignificant sins which do not give rise to serious harm. However, there is a condition for these sins to be forgiven, which is that a person should not recklessly indulge upon them, or be excessive in doing them, in order that they do not become part of a sinful habit.

So, if Allah *Glorified is He* deals with you in this manner, then you should show sufficient bashfulness towards Him and refrain from being emboldened in disobeying Him, even in the domain of minor sins. This is because when a minor offence is added to another minor offence and is committed repeatedly and regularly over time with wilfulness, it becomes a major sin. Moreover, the thinking people should consider the Greatness of Allah. He is the One they are disobeying when they are committing these minor sins. Hence, they are ordered to restrain themselves.

We have said that the Arabic word *al-kaba'ir* refers to the grave sins. This word is the plural of *kabeera* which is a sin concerning which Allah *Glorified is He* gave a stern warning of chastisement in the Hereafter, or are the crimes for which He has prescribed a penalty in this world. These sins pertain to the rights of the servants, for Allah *Glorified is He* has given precedence to the rights of servants over His own rights and has established just punishments for them in this world. Do you not see that Allah *Glorified is He* has made the

(1) This Hadith is narrated by Al-Bayhaqi in his *Sunnan Al-kubra* and also in *Shu'ab Al-Iman* (3466) as related by Abu Hurayra. It was also narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih* (344, 342) with a slightly different wording.

payment of debt a greater priority than the performance of pilgrimage? Moreover, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* did not pray at the funeral of one of the Companions because he was in debt, and urged the other companions to first settle the debts of the deceased companion.

It is even said that: ‘Whoever performs pilgrimage without having behaved in an obscene manner, or having acted sinfully, will be delivered from his sins like the day his mother gave birth to him.’⁽¹⁾ It is also said that this Hadith pertains to the due rights of Allah *Glorified is He* as well. However, the due rights of servants will remain upheld until they are justly settled, or until an atoning punishment is carried out. This provides a deterrent factor and prevents people from recklessly transgressing against the inviolable belongings of others.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* taught us this lesson in his supplication: ‘O Allah. Whatever I have done against your rights, and then grant me forgiveness for it, and whatever I have done against the rights of your servants, and then relieve me of its burden.’ He was only asking for forgiveness from the servants’ rights only if he became unable to fulfil their requirements himself.

Consider a thief who has wronged his own soul and wishes to repent after persisting in his crimes. In order to repent, he must exert every effort to restore the stolen possessions to their owners. Then, if he is still unable to do this, he must calculate the sum total of all that he has robbed from the people, and give it away in charity with the intention that the reward for this action be attributed to its rightful owners. If Allah *Glorified is He* acknowledges the sincerity of his repentance, He will forgive these transgressed rights, as a mercy unto this repentant sinner.

(1) This Hadith is related by Ahmad in his *Musnad* (6839) with the wording: “Whoever performs pilgrimage without having behaved in an obscene manner, or having acted sinfully, will revert to the form he had on the day his mother gave birth to him.” It is related by Al-Bayhaqi in his *Shu‘ab* (3933, 3934, 3935), by Ibn Hibban in his *Sahih* (3764) and by Ibn Khuzayma in his *Sahih* (3214) as related by Abu Hurayra with the wording: “Whoever performs pilgrimage, without having behaved obscenely, or having acted sinfully, will revert to the state when his mother gave birth to him.” None of these Hadiths contains the phrase, “...from his sins.”

Let us take note that the verse conjoined the word *al-fawahish* ('shameful deeds') with the word *kaba'ir al-ithm* ('grave sins'). This is because both of these groups are types of grave sins. However, shameful deeds add the attribute of obscenity and ignominy to that of a major sin. Hence, they constitute more serious and more severe offences than major sins, because they are abominable and abhorrent.

Scholars have discussed the topic of major sins (*al-kaba'ir*) and have established a link between them and the bodily extremity or organ which commits them. 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd⁽¹⁾ was a pious scholar who used to avoid that which other scholars and poets of his day were indulged in, regarding their visits to kings and princes in order to receive their gifts. He continued this avoidance, until a poet in the 'Abbasid era said of him:

'All of them seek quarry

Except for 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd'

'Amr Ibn 'Ubayd examined the issue of major sins (*al-kaba'ir*) and wished to ask the most knowledgeable man of his time with respect to the Quran and the transmitted practice of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* regarding these sins. Ultimately, he found no one more knowledgeable than Ja'far As-Sadiq⁽²⁾, who was the son of Muhammad Al-Baqir, who was in turn the son of Zayn

Al-'Abideen, the son of Al-Husayn, the son of 'Ali 'ibn Abu Taleb and Fatima Az-Zahra' *may Allah be pleased with them all*.

(1) 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd At-Taymy (Abu 'Uthman Al-Basri) was the most famous scholar among the Mu'tazilites of his time, and he was their mufti. He was also one of the famous ascetics. He was born in 80 AH and died in 144 AH at the age of 64 years. His grandfather was among the captives of Persia, and his father was a policeman for Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf in Basra. He died in the vicinity of Mecca. There are some scholars who regarded him as a falsifier and a disbeliever.

(2) He is Abu 'Abdullah Al-Hashimi Al-Qurashi, one of the most honorable of the generations after the Prophetic age who held an exceptionally elevated status in religious knowledge. He was born in 80 AH and died in 148 AH at the age of 68. Among his students were the two Imams Abu Hanifa and Malik. His place of birth and death was in Medina. (Summarized from Al-A'lam of Az-Zirikli 2/126)

Ja'far As-Sadiq was well versed in the verses of the Quran, the absorption of its secrets and the investigation of its treasures. He used to research its meanings and bring forth proofs based upon them. He once said: 'I am astonished by the one who fears anything without occupying himself with the remembrance of the verse: 'Allah is enough for us; and how excellent a guardian is He!' (*Al- 'Imran*: 173) Indeed, I have surely seen that Allah *Glorified is He* said after it: '...and (they) returned with Allah's blessings and bounty, without having been touched by evil' (*Al- 'Imran*: 174). He went on to say, 'and I am astonished by the one who is plunged into anxiety without occupying himself with the remembrance of the verse: 'There is no deity except You (Allah)! Limitless are You in Your glory! Verily, I have done wrong (*La illaha illa anta Subhanak, Inny kontu mina azhzhlimeen*)' (*al-Anbiya*': 87). Indeed, I have seen that Allah said after it: 'And so We responded unto him and delivered him from (his) distress: for thus do We deliver all who have faith' (*al-Anbiya*': 88).

Furthermore, Ja'far As- Sadiq said, 'And I am astonished by the one who is the object of insidious plotting without occupying himself with the remembrance of the verse: '...But (as for me,) I commit myself unto Allah: for, verily, Allah sees all that is in (the hearts of) His servants,' (*Ghafir*: 44). Indeed, I have seen that Allah said after it: 'And Allah protected him from the evil of their scheming,' (*Ghafir*: 45). And I am astonished by the one who desires this world without occupying himself with the remembrance of the verse: '...Whatever Allah wills (shall come to pass, for) there is no power except with Allah' (*al-Kahf*: 39). Indeed, I have seen that Allah said after it: 'Yet, it may well be that my Lord will give me something better than your garden' (*al-Kahf*: 40).

Thus, Ja'far ⁽¹⁾ *may Allah be pleased with him* established this therapeutic prescription and derived it from the Book of Allah. This prescription encompasses everything that can happen to the servant in terms of their different circumstances. So, 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd went to ask Ja'far about the major sins (*al-kaba'ir*) inquiring about each grave sin according to the physical organ which commits it.

(1) *The story of Ja'far As-Sadiq with 'Amr ibn 'Ubayd and his talk about cardinal sins*

Ja'far replied: 'The heart is required not to associate any partners with Allah, not to despair from the mercy (*rawh*) of Allah, and not to feel secure from the encompassing plots (*makr*) of Allah.' Then, he brought evidence from the Book of Allah for each one of these concepts. With respect to the issue of associating partners with Allah, Ja'far cited the verse in which Allah said: 'Verily, Allah, does not forgive the ascribing of divinity to aught beside Him, and He forgives any lesser sin unto whomever He wills' (*an-Nisa'*: 48). Regarding the sin of despairing from the mercy of Allah, Ja'far cited the verse: 'O you servants of Mine who have transgressed against your own selves! Despair not of Allah's mercy' (*az-Zumar*: 53)

One of the major sins of the tongue is the offering of false testimony. Allah said: 'And (know that the true servants of Allah are only) those who never bear witness to what is false, and, whenever they pass by (people engaged in) frivolity, pass on with dignity' (*al-Furqan*: 72). Other grave sins of the tongue include slandering chaste believing women behind their backs, and swearing an ominous oath (*al-yameen al-ghamus*) which means making a solemn oath regarding something which has passed and intentionally falsifying reality. Additionally, sorcery is among the major sins of the tongue.

As for the major sins of the stomach, these are related to drinking wine, consuming the wealth of the orphans, and eating from the money resulting from usury. We seek the refuge of Allah from such sins. With respect to the sexual organs, their grave sins are fornication or adultery. Regarding the hands, their major sins consist of stealing and murder, while the sins of the legs involve running away after engaging in the combat of battle. The sinfulness of each of these grave transgressions was clearly stated in the Book of Allah.

These major sins also include abandoning the observance of the prescribed prayers. This sin is very grave, as many parts of the body are involved in it. Neglecting prayers is a major sin because it was imposed as an obligation, as we have said, directly by Allah *Glorified is He* to His Messenger, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Thus, these prayers should never be waived by a Muslim under any circumstances. Therefore, it is one of the pillars of Islam, and also, a pillar of the Muslim himself because it is obligatory upon him and cannot be omitted.

As for the minor infractions (*al-lamam*), these are the transgressions that are lesser than the major sins (*al-kaba'ir*). They are called *as-sagha'ir* (the lesser sins), and include looking (*annazhar*) at what is forbidden. It is for this reason that it is said: 'You are given the first glance, but you are not permitted the second one.'⁽¹⁾ This is because the first glance came upon you unexpectedly, and you necessarily need that first glance to recognize the person's identity.

As for the second glance, it comprises the intention of continuing to stare, and this, in turn, draws us into looking at what is forbidden. Hence, the person who prolongs the first glance under the excuse that the first glance was permitted should beware. Indeed, Allah is the Overseer of sight and is the One Who is aware of the treachery of the eye and that which is concealed in the heart. In reality, you are not actually entitled for the first glance, yet you are excused in taking it since it spontaneously occurred to you without your intention.

Other minor sins include giving someone a light blow which does no physical harm, finding fault with some attribute of someone else, or with one of their features or mannerisms, and other things of this nature. It is for this reason that Allah refers to them as *al-lamam*. The records of such misdemeanours will be quickly forgiven by asking Allah for His forgiveness and the observance of daily acts of devotion.

Therefore, following this passage, Allah said: '...behold, your Lord is vast in forgiveness' (*an-Najm*: 32). Yes, indeed, Allah's forgiveness is vast and frequent. Indeed, He created man and is aware of the weak spots in him. When He imposed certain obligations upon him, He did not constrict him or place severe hardships upon him. Rather, Allah imposed obligations upon him to the extent of his capabilities, and did not make him responsible for them except after the attainment of maturity. Hence, as a child, he remains free to romp around in the universe without any binding religious obligations for more than ten years.

Then, once he has been made responsible for the injunctions, the negative consequences of committing minor sins are erased, and the woeful punishments of grave sins is made clear to him so that he does not approach them. This is a

(1) *Burayra ibn Al-Hasib Al-Aslami narrated that Prophet Muhammad said to 'Ali: "O 'Ali, verily, you are given the first glance, but not the second one." This Hadith is narrated by Abu Dawud in his Sunnan (1837), by At-Tirmidhi in his Sunnan (2701), and by Ahmad in his Musnad (21896, 21913, and 21943).*

mercy from Allah *Glorified is He* for his servant. Allah said in another chapter: '...and He pardons a great deal (of sins)' (*al-Ma'ida*: 15). Allah's forgiveness is abounding and forbearing. His mercy takes precedence over his wrath, and his pardon takes precedence over his punishment.

Then, in a man's life comes the great repentance, as Allah said: '...And so, when he attains full maturity and reaches forty years, he (that is righteous) prays, 'O my Lord! Inspire me so that I may forever be grateful for those blessings of You with which You have graced me and my parents, and that I may do what is right (in a manner) that will meet with Your goodly acceptance; and grant me righteousness in my offspring (as well). Verily, unto You have I turned in repentance: for, verily, I am of those who have surrendered themselves unto You!'' (*al-Ahqaf*: 15)

Therefore, the one who disobeys his Lord after the age of forty is a spoiled person. This is because they have attained the age where they can no longer be excused for having the audacity to disobey Allah *Glorified is He*. On the other hand, when a Muslim attains an advanced elderly age in Islam, Allah *Glorified is He* may choose not to punish him since he had devoted himself to Islam in his younger years.

Regarding His saying: '...He is fully aware of you when He brings you into being out of dust, and when you are still hidden in your mothers' wombs...' (*an-Najm*: 32), the initial creation is known by no one save Allah, a fact which is proved by His saying: 'I did not make them witnesses of the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor of the creation of their own selves...' (*al-Kahf*: 51).

His saying '...He brings you into being out of dust...' (*an-Najm*: 32) means that He initially created you from the clay of the earth which is a reference to the creation of Adam *peace be upon him*. Inasmuch as we are created of the earth, it is thus considered our origin and mother, which is why we, the sons, should be attached to their mother to which will be their final return.

Subsequently, He mentions another phase of the phases of creation: '...and when you are still hidden in your mothers' wombs...' (*an-Najm*: 32). For while Adam was created out of earth's clay, yet his offspring arose from coupling which results in the creation of the foetuses in the wombs of mothers.

Allah says: '...do not, then, consider yourselves pure...' (*an-Najm*: 32) The Arabic *tazkiyat an-nafs* means 'self-praise' and 'deeming purity'. There

follows His saying: ‘...[For] He knows best as to who is conscious of Him.’ (*an-Najm*: 32); this is to say that Allah *the Almighty* is Most Aware of the subtle, hidden and what is apparent. He is the Most Knowledgeable of you. He knows what you conceal and what you appear. Thus, there is no room for deeming yourself a praiseworthy or a superior person.

Even in the case of praising others and eulogising them, we have learned to say: ‘We do not evaluate one's belief; it is Allah Who does so.’ This is because He *the Almighty* is the One Who praises and purifies, and He is the fully Aware of those possessed by obedience, and true fearing of Him *Glorified is He*.

Subsequently, Allah *the Almighty* says:⁽¹⁾

أَفَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي تَوَلَّى ۖ (٣٣) وَأَعْطَى قَلِيلًا ۖ وَأَكْذَى ۖ (٣٤) أَعِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ فَهُوَ يَرَى ۖ (٣٥)
أَمْ لَمْ يُنَبَّأْ بِمَا فِي صُحُفِ مُوسَى ۖ (٣٦) وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ الَّذِي وَفَّى ۖ (٣٧)

**[Prophet], consider that man who turned away [33] he only
gave a little and then he stopped [34] Does he have
knowledge of the Unseen? Can he see [the Hereafter]? [35]
Has he not been told what was written in the Scriptures of
Moses [36] and of Abraham, who fulfilled his duty [37]
(The Quran, *an-Najm*: 33 - 37)**

It is said⁽¹⁾ that these verses were revealed regarding Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira. At the early period of Islam, he argued with Muslims concerning their beliefs,

(1) Concerning the cause of revelation of these verses, *As-Suddi*, *Al-Kalbi* and *Al-Musayyab ibn Sharik* narrated that Ibn ‘Abbas, Allah be pleased with him, said: They were revealed concerning ‘Uthman ibn ‘Affan Allah be pleased with him. He used to disperse wealth and give in charity, so one day his milk brother ‘Abdullah ibn Abu Sarh said to him: ‘What is this that you are doing? Soon you will have nothing left.’ ‘Uthman replied: ‘I have surely accumulated many sins and made many mistakes, and verily I seek the good pleasure of Allah the Almighty with what I do, and I hope for his pardon.’ Thereupon ‘Abdullah said to him: ‘Give me your camel with its saddle and I will assume responsibility for all of your sins.’ So he gave him what he requested and called people to witness upon what had been agreed. Thereafter, he refrained from some of what he formerly used to give in charity. It was then that Allah the Almighty revealed: ‘Have you, then, ever considered him who turns away [from remembering Us, and cares for no more than the life of this world], [33] and gives so little [of himself for the good of his soul], and so grudgingly? [34]’ (*an-Najm*: 33-34) Then ‘Uthman returned to giving even more and better than previously. See *Al-Wahidi An-Naysaburi, Asbab An-Nuzul*, p. 227.

turned away from it and from the Quran. His heart, later on, began to soften and he was attracted by what Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said to him. He gave a small assurance of protection to the cause of the Message and felt reassured by this.

Thereafter, he recalled his high position among his people and feared that he would be accused of having become a monotheistic gnostic after being a follower of the religion of his fathers and forefathers. So he retreated and reverted back to his former beliefs. It is said that a man came to him and warned about believing in Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* telling him: 'If you are afraid of punishment, then I will assume charge of it in your place in exchange for you giving me such-and-such.' Then he gave him what he asked and reverted to disbelief and refrained from giving anything more in charity.

It is also said that these verses were revealed concerning An-Nadaru ibn Al-Harith⁽²⁾. A man came to him and told him: 'Most surely, Allah's punishment is severe, but I will take over its burden from you, so give me five young camels. However, he subsequently found this offer too generous, and so the man withheld this gift from him. It has also been said that these verses were revealed with regard to Safwan ibn Umayya.

This is the meaning of: '[Prophet], consider that man who turned away...' (*an-Najm*: 33). This means that this man had shunned you and gone his own way. The next verse continues: 'he only gave a little and then he stopped' (*an-Najm*: 34), that is, of gifts or assurance of protection. With respect to the

-
- (1) See *Al-Wahidi, Asbab An-Nuzul*, p. 228. This is the opinion of Mujahid and Ibn Zayd; he opines that they were revealed regarding Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira. He had followed Prophet Muhammad Allah's peace and blessings be upon him in his religion and was reviled by one of the polytheists who said to him: 'Why have you abandoned the religion of the elders, and decried them as being misguided, asserting that they are in hellfire?' He answered: 'I was afraid of the punishment of Allah the Almighty.' Then the one who had reviled him gave him something of that which he had safeguarded for him, and then became niggardly and withheld further gifts. Thereupon, Allah the Almighty revealed this verse.
 - (2) See *Az-Zirikli, Al-'Alam*, 8/33. This is the opinion of Ad-Dahhak who opines that An-Nadaru ibn Al-Harith gave five young she-camels to a poor man of the emigrants in order that he renounce his religion, and further guaranteed him that he would take charge from him the burden of his reversion to disbelief. He was the bearer of the flag of the polytheists at the Battle of Badr and was killed in it in the year 2 A.H.

Arabic phrase *wa-akda*, (stopped), it means that He withhold his giving out of stinginess. One says: ‘So-and-so dug a well-pit and it turned out successfully for him.’ In other words, he got what he was anticipating from it, while another says: ‘So-and-so dug a well-pit but it was begrudging.’ This is to say, that he did not gain anything, or that he came across a large stone which hindered him from reaching his objective. The stone in this case is called a *kudya*. In a related sense, we have the expression: ‘An insurmountable obstacle (*aqaba ka'da*)’. In other words, it prevents you from attaining your goal.

Allah says: 'Does he have knowledge of the Unseen? Can he see [the Hereafter]?' (*an-Najm*: 35) It means: ‘Did he look into the world of the unseen and gain cognizance of the truth? Or did he come to know that this man will fulfil his promise of taking charge of the burden for him?’ The next two verses read: ‘Has he not been told what was written in the Scriptures of Moses [36] and of Abraham, who fulfilled his duty [37]’ (*an-Najm*: 36-37). In other words: ‘Is this opponent unaware of the Message of truth which came in the Scriptures of Musa (Moses) and Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon them*?’

Yet, what is meant by with what came in the scripture of Musa and Ibrahim *peace be upon them*? The Quran gives us a detailed explanation saying:



 وَلَا نَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ ۚ وَأَنْ لَّيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ ۚ
 وَأَنْ سَعِيَهُ سَوْفَ بِرَأْيِ رَبِّهِ يُجْزَىٰ ۚ ثُمَّ يُجْزَىٰ الْجَزَاءَ الْآوَفَىٰ ۚ

**That no soul shall bear the burden of another [38] that man
will only have what he has worked towards [39] that his
labour will be seen [40] and that in the end he will be repaid
in full for it [41] (The Quran, *an-Najm*: 38 - 41)**

This is what is related in the Scriptures of Musa and Ibrahim *peace be upon them*: ‘That no soul shall bear the burden of another.’ (*an-Najm*: 38) No soul shall assume the burden of the sin of another soul. Therefore, do not think that someone can carry your burden, and that the punishment will befall him instead of you, for the reckoning in the Hereafter is based upon equity and justice.

Moreover: ‘That man will only have what he has worked towards...’ (*an-Najm*: 39) A man only has his deeds recorded for him: if they are good,

then it will be good with him; if they are evil, then it will be bad for him. This eliminates the hope of deriving benefit from someone else's deeds, as He *the Almighty* said: '[On the Day of Judgment,] every human being will be held in pledge for whatever [evil] he has wrought' (*al-Muddaththir*: 38). Thus, you do not benefit except from your own deeds and your own striving, so apply yourself with assiduity.

At the end of the chapter of *al-A 'la*, He *the Almighty* says: 'Verily, [all] this has indeed been [said] in the earlier revelations [18] the revelations of Ibrahim and Musa. [19]' (*al-A 'la*: 18-19) Yet, inasmuch as the context here is relating to a discussion regarding the fulfilment of a promise of someone who said to him: 'I will relieve you of the burden of your sins', He *the Almighty* mentions the attribute of fidelity possessed by Ibrahim *peace be upon him* saying: '...and of Ibrahim, who fulfilled his duty.' (*an-Najm*: 37)

For this reason, He *the Almighty* says with respect to Abraham *peace be upon him*: 'And [remember this:] when his Lord tried Ibrahim by [His] commandments and the latter fulfilled them...' (*al-Baqara*: 124). Yes, indeed, Ibrahim *peace be upon him* carried out that which Allah commanded him to do in the most literal way, and he succeeded in the examination with excellent grade, and with the rank of honour. This is evident in the story of the *Ka 'ba* construction, and in the story of the sacrifice of his son Ishmael *peace be upon them*. Then, when he had fulfilled what he was commanded to do, Allah said to him: '...Behold, I shall make you a leader of men...' (*al-Baqara*: 124). Thus, the reward was in accord with the fulfilment and the sincerity of execution.

Certain orientalists have scrutinised this verse: 'That no soul shall bear the burden of another' (*an-Najm*: 38) saying: 'How can we reconcile it with His *the Almighty* saying: 'Hence, on Resurrection Day they shall bear the full weight of their own burdens, as well as some of the burdens of those ignorant ones whom they have led astray: oh, how evil the load with which they shall be burdened!' (*an-Nahl*: 25) So which of these two is more correct? To this we respond: 'Both of them are correct since each one of them has a specific meaning. The first speaks of sin and evil which man commits of his own accord. Thus, he bears the punishment for this, and no one can relieve him of it. But as for the second verse, it speaks about man who misguides others. He

himself is misguided and his misguidance extends to others. Therefore, he bears his own burden and the burden of the one whom he has misguided without true knowledge.’

Scholars have differed in their opinions about His saying: ‘man will only have what he has worked towards.’ (*an-Najm*: 39) Some of them have said that man has nothing except what he sends before himself of good deeds, and that no one can benefit from the deeds of anyone else. Others have said that man can indeed benefit from the deeds of another. In our history and in the transmitted practice of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* we find that which supports this view. On our part, we give preference to the second opinion. This is because striving refers to an unrestricted endeavour in view of a specific goal. Now, this endeavour may have an evil end, such as the one who strives for corruption and injustice on the earth. It may be towards a laudable end, such as the one who strives for the betterment of the universe and its probity.

Striving differs according to the capacity of the one who is striving, and the extent his faith in the precepts of his religion and his homeland is. Hence, you have one person who strives for himself and gives no thought except to his own interest. But there is another person who strives for his family, another who strives for his country, and a third who strives to help the entire world. In this regard, a poet once said:

In accordance with the capacity of those of firm resolve
comes the accomplishment of challenging endeavours
And in accordance with the capacity of those of magnanimity
arise deeds of noble generosity.

Hence, it is said: ‘Unto men belong loci (*awtan*) which vary according to the differences of their zealous ambitions.’ Thus, for one man, his locus is himself; for another man, his locus is his family. For a third, his locus is his homeland; for a fourth, his locus is the entire world. This latter pertains to the philosophy of faith that urges the believer to go beyond his own benefit, extending to all people even the disbelievers among them.

With this philosophy and with this ideal, a man will be useful to others. The proofs of this opinion are numerous. Was Prophet Muhammad *peace and*

blessings be upon him not sent to the whole world? Are the Mercy and Grace of Allah not shown to both believer and unbeliever like? Did Allah not say to him *peace and blessings be upon him*: ‘And [thus, O Prophet,] We have sent thee as [an evidence of Our] grace towards all the worlds’ (*al-Anbiya*: 107)?

A manifestation of His Mercy unto those who stand awaiting judgment in the Hereafter is that He intervenes on their behalf by expediting the final reckoning for them. This is because they find themselves in a situation in which they yearn for departure, even if it be to hellfire. Furthermore, the intercession of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* includes interceding for those monotheists who committed sins and who have entered the fire. Is this not benefitting from the deeds of someone else?

Moreover, does Islam not command us to pray for the dead? If prayer for the dead were of no benefit to the deceased, this would be frivolous. Evidence of this is found in the fact that we petition Allah on his behalf in this prayer, and this is a benefit. But the counter opinion argues: ‘But do we pray over every deceased person? We pray over a deceased Muslim. Hence, the benefit comes from his being a Muslim, and his Islam is what avails him.’

To this, we say: ‘Take into consideration another proof which is clear in His *the Almighty* saying: ‘And as for those who have attained to faith and whose offspring will have followed them in faith, We shall unite them with their offspring; and We shall not let aught of their deeds go to waste...’ (*at-Tur*: 21). Does, therefore, offspring not derive benefit from the uprightness of their parents?’ But they retort: ‘They are availed by their uprightness because they have borne the burden of this uprightness in this world, and therefore Allah compensates them for what they have been deprived of in the Hereafter.’ This is to say that the righteous man who is intent upon eating and drinking only what is lawful undoubtedly oppresses his children. This is in contrast to the one who romps about through the length and breadth of this world without any concern for the issue of what is lawful and what is forbidden. This latter man’s children will be in a better condition in terms of food, drink, and clothing, and so forth. But the man who is pious and upright, his children will receive blessings of the Hereafter as compensation for what they have endured in this world.

In addition, it is related⁽¹⁾ about Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* that he once passed by a man who was praying alone. So, he said: 'Is there no man who will offer charity to this one?' In other words, is there no man to pray with him in order for him to receive the reward of praying in congregation? Is this not benefitting from the deeds of someone else?

When Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* refrained from praying over a deceased person who was in debt⁽²⁾, his abstaining was for the benefit of the deceased. The deceased actually derived benefit from this abstention: Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* refrained from praying over him because he wanted to urge people to settle their debts: 'Whoever obtains people's money with the desire to pay it back, Allah will settle the debt for him...' ⁽³⁾ It seems that this deceased person died, while he owed a debt which he was unable of repaying. Therefore, he *peace and blessings be upon him* wished to provoke the sentiments towards goodness in the souls of the Companions so that they would take the initiative of repaying the debt of their comrade. When he *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'Go ahead and pray over your Companion', Abu Qatada stood up and said: 'I will repay his debt for him, O Messenger of Allah.' Thereupon, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* led the funeral prayer over him⁽⁴⁾. Is this not deriving benefit from the deeds of others?

-
- (1) See Abu Dawud, *Sunnan*, Hadith no. (487, Ahmad, *Musnad*, Hadith no. (11187, 11380), and Al-Hakim, *Al-Mustadrak 'ala As-Sahihayn*, Hadith no. (714), on the authority of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudari Allah be Pleased with him.
 - (2) Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* used to be brought a deceased man who was in debt, so he would ask: 'Did he leave behind anything to settle his debt?' If it were said that he left enough behind to repay it, he would pray over him. But if not, he would say: 'Go ahead and pray over your comrade.' But after Allah had granted him conquests, he said: 'I am more duty-bound for the believers than they are for themselves. Hence, whoever dies while he owes a debt, it is my responsibility to repay it, and whoever leaves behind wealth or property, these are for his heirs.' This Hadith was narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih*, no. (3040).
 - (3) This Hadith is narrated by Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih* no. (2212) and by Ahmad in his *Musnad* no. (8378, 9039) as related by Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him.
 - (4) It is related by Salama ibn Al-Akwa' Allah be pleased with him who said: 'We were sitting in the presence of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* when there came a funeral procession, and people asked him to pray over it. Thereupon he asked: 'Did =

In order for us to settle this dispute and solve this controversy, we say: If we carefully examine the verse: 'That man will only have what he has worked towards.' (*an-Najm*: 39) We will find that it supports our opinion. Here, the initial preposition *li* of the Arabic phrase *li-l-insan*, translated as 'accounted unto man', is, as stated by grammarians, to indicate possession or control. This is such as when you say: 'Zayd has nothing belonging to him in my possession except for ten. This is the actual truth.'

Hence, Allah *the Almighty* mentioned justice, but did not mention magnanimity or gracious favour. Now, when you yourself go into a restaurant, for example, in order to eat lunch, as you are on the point of leaving, you ask the waiter: 'How much is the bill?' He then says: 'Such-and-such amount.' Whereupon you tell him: 'Here, take this and keep the change for yourself.' This is what transpires between people in affairs of this insignificant world. Therefore, how would you imagine things to be in affairs of religion and ordained law? If this is your own generous giving, then how would it be with Allah's Generous Giving?

With respect to His saying: 'That his labor will be seen.' (*an-Najm*: 40), which literally means 'his striving will be seen,' this striving is not neglected just like that without comment or consequences. Nay, indeed, it will be monitored and perceived, as He *the Almighty* says: 'And say [unto them, O Prophet]: "Act! And Allah will behold your deeds, and [so will] His Apostle, and the believers..."' (*at-Tawba*: 105).

In the verse under study, the Arabic word *sawfa*, translated as 'in time... will', denotes the future. Hence, your striving does dissolve into nothing; rather,

-
- = *he leave any debt unpaid?' They said, 'No.'* Then he asked: 'Then did he leave anything of an estate?' They said, 'No.' So he prayed over him. Then a second funeral procession came, and people said, 'O Messenger of Allah, lead the funeral prayer for it.' He asked: 'Did he leave any debt unpaid?' It was said, 'Yes.' Then he asked: 'Did he leave behind any estate?' They said, 'Three Dinars.' So, he presided over the funeral prayer. Then a third funeral procession came, and the people asked him to pray over it. He then asked: 'Did he leave behind any estate?' They said, 'No.' Then, he asked: 'Did he leave behind any unpaid debt?' They replied, 'Three Dinars.' Thereupon, he said pray over your comrade's funeral.' At this point, Abu Qatada said, 'Pray over him, O Messenger of Allah, and I will repay his debt.' So, then, he prayed over him.' ---This Hadith is narrated by Al-Bukhari in his *Sahih*, no. (2127, 2131); Abu Dawud narrated a similar Hadith in his *Sunnan*, no. (2902) and so did At-Tirmidhi in his *Sunnan*, no. (989).

your deeds in this world will be perceived by Allah and Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and the believers. In other words, in the Hereafter, where you shall receive a suitable recompense, not a reward based upon simple justice, but rather, a reward based on overflowing magnanimity.

In this context, consider the verse: ‘and that in the end he will be repaid in full for it’ (*an-Najm*: 41). Here, He did not say: ‘the most equitable requital’, but rather, requital with augmentation, gracious generosity, and incentives. As for the saying of Allah: ‘...repaid in full for it’ (*an-Najm*: 41), the Arabic word *al-awfa*, translated as ‘in full’, is in the superlative form which indicates supplemental augmentation. He *the Almighty* then says:

وَأَنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ ﴿٤٢﴾

**‘That the final goal is your Lord’[42]
(The Quran, *an-Najm*: 42)**

Unto your Lord is the return, and unto your Lord is the proceeding and ultimate end. The verse is phrased concisely through placing the predicate of the nominal clause before the clause itself, meaning literally: ‘unto your Lord is the ultimate end –or utmost limit’. Unto your Lord alone, apart from anyone or anything else, do all things eventually end up in the Hereafter? Thus, this world is not the final course, and it is not the final goal. This reason confirms this matter before the ordained law. For, if this world were the ultimate goal and the final end, then good fortune would belong to those who pursue their lustful desires and to those who commit injustice and transgressions. This is because, in such circumstances, they would have actualised that which they wanted in this world, and would have enjoyed life in it to its fullest extent, thereby having attained the pleasures of this world. For this they would not be punished or called to account.

Hence, reason says: ‘Nay, there must be a day for reckoning and requital, as justice requires this.’ If only people grasped this verse with certainty and understood this significance, their affairs would be set in order, and a person would think carefully a thousand and one times before he set about disobeying Allah or doing wrong to his fellow men. Moreover, he would take account of this ultimate end (*al-muntaha*) unto which he will inevitably terminate.’

This verse also indicates that while the servant is created by his Lord with free will—to believe or disbelieve, to obey or disobey—, there is nevertheless another domain comprised of coercion in which he has no freedom of choice.

To wit, do you have a choice in your being wealthy or impoverished; healthy or sick, or in the matter of your living or dying?

Thus, to whatever degree you are free and possessed of self-determination, you cannot dispense with your Lord, and you have no refuge other than Him. Therefore, do not rebel against Him through disobedience because your ultimate end is unto Him in the Hereafter for settling of accounts. In addition, your ultimate recourse in the affairs of your worldly life is also unto Him alone, for you are in the grasp of His All-Powerful decree and cannot evade it.

In the light of this, can the one who rebel against the ordained path of Allah rebel against sickness if it afflicts him? Can he fend off the angel of death if his time of death comes? Thus, you have your ultimate end in this world before the ultimate end of the Hereafter.

Subsequently, Allah *the Almighty* says⁽¹⁾:

وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَضْحَكَ وَأَبْكَى ۖ وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَمَاتَ وَأَحْيَا ۖ
وَأَنَّهُ خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَى ۚ ۖ مِنَ نُّطْفَةٍ إِذَا تُمْنَى ۚ

**That it is He who makes people laugh and weep; [43]
that it is He who gives death and life; [44] that He Himself
created the two sexes, male and female, [45] from an ejected
drop of sperm [46] (The Quran, *an-Najm*: 43 - 46)**

Concerning His saying: ‘That it is He who makes people laugh and weep’ (*an-Najm*: 43), it signifies that He created laughter and weeping in you, causing

(1) See *Al-Wahidi An-Naysaburi, Asbab An-Nuzul* p. 227; he cites a Hadith related by ‘A’isha Allah be pleased with him who said: ‘Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him once passed by a group of people who were laughing, and so he told them: ‘If you knew what I know, you would weep much and laugh little.’ Thereupon, Gabriel peace be upon him revealed unto him His saying: ‘...and that it is He alone Who causes [you] to laugh and to weep.’ (*an-Najm*: 43) So he returned unto them and said: ‘I did not take forty paces, but that Gabriel peace be upon him came to me and said, ‘Go back to those people and tell them that Allah the Almighty says: ‘...and that it is He alone Who causes [you] to laugh and to weep.’ (*an-Najm*: 43)

you be happy and sad. Hence, for example, when you watch a comic work, you laugh. It is the comedy which provoked laughter in you. However, it did not bring forth in you the inborn disposition to laughter. For this reason, in light of what this activity comprises of uncertainty regarding shared association, Allah *the Almighty* affirms His Singular, Unique role in the act. Hence, none but Him intervenes with it. This verse opens with the Arabic emphatic phrase *wa-anna-hu huwa*, translated as ‘and that it is He who...’, in which the attached relative pronoun *hu* is reaffirmed by the second relative pronoun *huwa* which is unattached, thus it is He alone Who makes you laugh. In other words, He created in you this natural disposition, and provides you with the aptitude for it.

Consequently, we find that sentiments and emotions and innate phenomenon in mankind are of a unified nature in all languages, and among all peoples with all their differences. There does not exist, for example, an Arab laugh or an English or German one. There is not a Russian manner of weeping or a Japanese one.

In these aspects, people are alike. Even in terms of gestures, we find that they are unanimous in spite of the differences of languages. Everyone comprehends them because they are the basis of mutual understanding between human beings even before the existence of languages. Gestures constitute the global language.

Similarly, with regard to His saying: ‘...that it is He who gives death and life’ (*an-Najm*: 44), the attached relative pronoun *inna-hu* reconfirms the unattached pronoun *huwa*. This is because the matter of giving life and causing death comprises a kind of shared association. Thus, some may think that the physician, for example, is the one who causes the sick person to die or to live, or one may think that the murderer is the one who kills the slain person.

Thus, Allah *the Almighty* claims exclusivity for Himself in these matters which pertain to Him alone apart from anyone but Him. Hence, He says: ‘that it is He who gives death and life’ (*an-Najm*: 44). The reality is that when the slain is killed, it is not the murderer who causes him to die; rather, it is his pre-ordained time of death that has come, coinciding with this blow and, so he dies. He dies because he was predestined to die at that moment, even if the killer had not smitten him.

For this reason, He *the Almighty* says in another verse: 'He who has created death as well as life...' (*al-Mulk*: 2) Hence, Allah created death and life by Himself, and no one else has anything to do with either of them. Thus, a poet once said:

Whoever does not die by the sword dies in another manner

The causes are numerous and diverse, but death is one.

It is also said: 'In the case of death without causes, death itself is the cause.' That is to say, a person died because he was destined to die.

There follows His saying: 'That He Himself created the two sexes, male and female' (*an-Najm*: 45). It is noteworthy here that He *the Almighty* did not say: *wa anna-hu huwa*, as in the previous verses where He repeats the relative pronoun to reaffirm that it is Him alone. This is because the phenomenon in question does not call for this emphasis, since the matter of all of creation is rendered unto Allah. No one has ever claimed it for himself, and there is no possible ambiguity of partnership with respect to creation. Concerning the meaning of the Arabic word *az-zawjayn*, translated as 'the two exes', it refers to the two genders of male and female. The word *az-zawj* signifies an individual along with another one of his kind, as occurs in His saying: '...eight pairs [of livestock], from among sheep one pair...' (*al-An'am*: 143).

The following verse reads: 'From an ejected drop of sperm' (*an-Najm*: 46); this is a reference to the fact that the basis of creation is a dribble of semen (*nutfā*) which is a drop of sperm. Concerning His saying, '...an ejected drop of sperm.' (*an-Najm*: 46), it refers to the sperm which is ejaculated into the womb of the woman and from which the foetus is created by the Power of Allah.

This verse solves a controversy for us which has long been the object of dispute among scholars. There are those who believe that the woman is the one who is responsible for determining the gender of offspring, male or female. However, when we read: 'That He Himself created the two sexes, male and female, [45] from an ejected drop of sperm [46]' (*an-Najm*: 45-46), we know with certainty that the man himself is the one who is responsible for this matter. This is because the word *an-nutfā* refers to the sperm of the man which he ejects into the womb of his wife. Hence, the wife looks like the ground which grows what is planted in it.

Furthermore, we say that the Arab woman has arrived at this truth by means of her nature and innate disposition. Thus, a woman whose husband married another because she only gave birth to daughters said:

What is wrong with Abu Hamza that he does not come unto us
 He remains in the dwelling which is next to ours
 Angry that we do not bear sons for us
 By Allah, this is not in our hands
 We are like the earth with respect to its sower
 We give them the like of which we have received.

Hence, the Arab woman by means of her primordial nature has come to the same conclusion which scientists have arrived at recently. It is necessary to differentiate between *an-nutfa* and *al-mani*: the former is the fluid in which the seminal organisms live; whereas the latter refers to the microorganism or sperm itself which results in a child.

May Allah have mercy on Al-‘Aqqad ⁽¹⁾ who once said: ‘Verily, half a tailor’s thimble contains the offspring of the whole world, and it is possible to fill half a tailor’s thimble with a single ejaculation of man.’ Exalted be Allah!

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

وَأَنَّ عَلَيْهِ النَّشْأَةَ الْآخِرَىٰ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ أَغْنَىٰ وَأَقْنَىٰ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَأَنَّهُ هُوَ رَبُّ الشَّعَرَىٰ ﴿٤٩﴾

**That He will undertake the second Creation [47] that it
 is He who gives wealth and possessions [48] that He is
 the Lord of Sirius [49] (The Quran, *an-Najm*: 47 - 49)**

In other words, He *the Almighty* says: ‘do not think that this world is itself the ultimate end of the journey because the One Who brought you all forth in this world is fully-capable of bringing you back in a second creation on the

(1) His full name is ‘Abbas Mahmud Al-‘Aqqad. He was born in June 28, 1889 CE in Aswan and completed primary school in the year 1903 CE. He was an avid reader in a wide range of fields, and served in clerical positions in a number of provinces. Then he directed himself towards work in journalism, in particular with the newspaper Sahifat Ad-Dustur. He engaged in literary disputes with Zaki Mubarak, Ar-Rafi‘i, and Bint Ash-Shati’. He died in the year 1964 CE at the age of 76 years.

Day of Resurrection. As He *the Almighty* says in another verse: “Could We, then, be [thought of as being] worn out by the first creation? Nay – but some people are [still] lost in doubt about [the possibility of] a new creation!” (*Qaf*: 15)’

The new creation will be in the Hereafter when Allah revives the dead, for the One Who created at the beginning from nothing is all the more fully capable of restoration from the remnants of the first creation. Therefore, He *the Almighty* says: ‘Well do We know how the earth consumes their bodies, for with Us is a record unfailing.’ (*Qaf*: 4)

There follows the verse: ‘That it is He Who gives wealth and possessions.’ (*an-Najm*: 48) Here, let us take note of the specification and affirmation expressed by the repetition of the unattached relative pronoun *huwa* after the attached relative pronoun *inna-hu*. This indicates to us that the question of sustenance, wealth, and poverty belongs to Allah alone, with no one else having anything to do with it. It is He *the Almighty* alone Who channels means of sustenance, and renders this person wealthy and that one impoverished.

Hence, as for the doubt of the possibility of someone sharing in this question with Allah, this verse occurs in this manner of expression. Just consider the verse which comes before it: ‘That He will undertake the second Creation’ (*an-Najm*: 47); it is phrased in the same way without the supplementary relative pronoun of *huwa*. This is because the issue of the second creation bears no ambiguity of there being a possible partner in actualising it.

With respect to the Arabic word *aghna* ‘free from want’, it signifies that He relieves you of need, O you servant, by means of that which He has granted you possession over apart from what is owned by others. Thus, the Arabic word *al-ghina* refers to everything which spares you from dependency upon people in terms of wealth, strength and such things. As for the Arabic word *aqna* ‘causes to possess’, it means that He has satisfied you and gratified you by means of what you possess, regardless of how little it is.

There are many people whose means of sustenance are constrained, yet you find them content with what Allah endowed them with, indeed happy with it. It may be that they are in a better state than the wealthy people. Hence, this wealth is a gift, and this contentment is also a gift. Contentment and satisfaction are tantamount to wealth and plenitude of life. In this vein it

is said⁽¹⁾: 'Contentment is a treasure which never runs out.' On the other hand, the treasure of money and possession may well run out. Hence, true wealth and self-sufficiency, then, are relating to the soul and not to the material things. It has also been said that the Arabic word *aqna*, translated as 'causes to possess', is related to property (*qinya*) which is to say: that which a person acquires of possessions, furnishings and the like.

Concerning the next verse: 'that He is the Lord of Sirius' (*an-Najm*: 49), the final word *ash-shi'ra*⁽²⁾ is one of the celestial bodies. It is said that it is one of the massive stars inasmuch as it is compounded of a million suns like our sun, and that if it were to come near to the earth, the earth would burn up. It is as if this gigantic star supplied heat to the sun, which in turn provides us with heat. Thus, we do not take from it directly as with an electrical current.

If we were to acquire power for our homes from high voltage transformers, the appliances and light bulbs in the house would burn up. This is because the weak is not able to receive directly from the strong; indeed, it is necessary to utilise a regulator or transformer. And such is the sun with respect to *ash-shi'ra*.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

وَأَنذَرْتُ أَهْلَكَ عَادًا الْأُولَىٰ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَتَمُودًا فَمَا أَبْقَىٰ ﴿٥١﴾
وَقَوْمَ نُوحٍ مِّن قَبْلُ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا هُمْ أَظْلَمَ وَأَطْغَىٰ ﴿٥٢﴾

**That it was He who destroyed, in their entirety, ancient
'Ad [50] and Thamud [51] and before them the people of
Noah who were even more unjust and insolent [52]
(The Quran, *an-Najm*: 50 - 52)**

It is well known that 'Ad are the people of Prophet Hud *peace be upon him* and that Allah annihilated them with a tempestuous, raging wind when they

(1) See *As-Suyuti, Ad-Durr Al-Manthur* (2/232); *Al-Bayhaqi* attributes it to Jabir ibn 'Abdullah Allah be pleased with him although there are some questions regarding the soundness of the chain of narrations.

(2) *Ash-shi'ra* is the name of two stars; one of them is the Northern Sirius which is the brightest star of the Lesser Dog Constellation, located eleven million light years away from the earth. There is also a Southern Sirius in the Greater Dog Constellation which is closer to the earth than the Northern Sirius; it is eight light years away from the earth. This information is taken from *Al-Mawsu'at Al-Falakiya*, p. 229, published by Al-Hay'at Al-Misriyat Al-'Amma li-l-Kitab.

gave the lie to their Prophet. The Arabic phrase '*Ad al-ula* 'the ancient [tribes of] 'Ad', signifies that besides this earlier or initial people, there was also a subsequent or second people called 'Ad. It is said that when this wind came down upon them, it wiped out those of them who existed at this locality where the punishment was unleashed upon them. In addition, there were among them scattered groups who gathered and sought refuge in a safe place. These then went to Mecca and they constituted the latter people of 'Ad.

There follows the verse: 'and Thamud' (*an-Najm*: 51). Thus, just as He annihilated 'Ad, He annihilated Thamud by means of a tremendous cry. The saying of Allah: 'and Thamud' (*an-Najm*: 51) means that not one of them survived. Similarly, with respect to the initial passage of the following verse: 'And before them the people of Noah who were even more unjust and insolent' (*an-Najm*: 52), it clearly indicated that Allah destroyed them. Subsequently, He distinguishes them from those mentioned previously with two attributes: 'who were even more unjust and insolent' (*an-Najm*: 52). Hence, wrongdoing and arrogant tyranny were prevailing among 'Ad and Thamud; however, the people of Nuh *peace be upon him* were even more excessive in their wrongdoing, and even more oppressively haughty. As evidence of this, it suffices to recall that their Prophet remained among them for nine hundred and fifty years, and only a few of them followed him in faith.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

وَالْمُؤْنَفَكَةُ أَهْوَىٰ ۖ فَفَشَنُهَا مَا عَشَىٰ ﴿٥٣﴾

**That it was He who brought down the ruined cities [53]
and enveloped them in the punishment He ordained for
them? [54] (The Quran, *an-Najm*: 53 - 54)**

The Arabic word *al-mu'tafika* 'the ruined cities' is conjoined to 'Ad, Thamud and the people of Nuh. It refers to the townships of the people of Lut *peace be upon him* which were called *al-mu'tafika* because Allah *the Almighty* reversed (*kafa'a*) them head over heels causing their elevated portions to become their lowest portions. It is for this reason that we use the word *ifk* meaning calumny or slander, to refer to a lie since it turns truths upside down. In this same sense, we have the incident of slander (*hadithat al-ifk*) in which

our Mother ‘A’isha *Allah be pleased with her* has been falsely and wrongly accused of fornication.

With regard to the Arabic word *ahwa* ‘He thrust into perdition’, this means that these townships tumbled down (*hawat*) and collapsed. This is because the angels raised them up to the clouds of the sky and then flipped them over upon all who were in them. There follows the verse: ‘and enveloped them in the punishment He ordained for them’ (*an-Najm*: 54) signifying that He descended upon them, encompassed them or covered them. The verse comprises the phrase *ma ghashsha*, loosely translated as ‘forever’, in which the particle *ma* is expressive of wonderment and incredulity, indicating great quantity which exceeds description. In other words, they were overcome by a terrifyingly amazing phenomenon and a horrifying spectre. Indeed, this is true because Allah *the Almighty* combined against the people of Lut *peace be upon him* various kinds of punishment at the same time, or sequentially one after the other. In this respect, He said: ‘And so, when Our judgment came to pass...’ (*Hud*: 82), that is to say, regarding your annihilation, ‘...We turned those [sinful towns] upside down, and rained down upon them stone-hard blows of chastisement pre-ordained, one upon another, [82] marked out in thy Sustainer’s sight [for the punishment of such as are lost in sin]. And these [blows of Allah-willed doom] are never far from evildoers! [83]’ (*Hud*: 82-83) The Arabic word *musawwama* in the last verse, translated as ‘marked out’ means labelled, with each stone bearing the name of the one it was meant for, and not striking anyone but him. These are like the stones which He rained down upon the companions of the elephant: ‘Thus, He let loose upon them great swarms of flying creatures [3] which smote them with stone-hard blows of chastisement pre-ordained [4]’ (*al-Fil*: 3-4).

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

فَيَأْتِيْءَ الْاِلٰهَ رَبِّكَ نَتْمَارِيْ

Which then of your Lord’s blessings do you deny? [55] (The Quran, *an-Najm*: 55)

Allah *the Almighty* comforts His Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* and reassures Him of Allah’s backing and support for him and for the conveyance

of the Message. The time-honoured practice of Allah with respect to His Messages is that the matter ends in the triumph of the truth, with the proofs still visible and tangible of the annihilation of those who denied the truth. Thus, He *the Almighty* said: 'and, verily, [to this day] you pass by the remnants of their dwellings at morning-time [137] and by night. Will you not, then, use your reason? [138]' (*an-Najm*: 137-138) Their ruins are still extant and you see them by day and at night.

Returning to the verse under study, He *the Almighty* says to His Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him*: 'Which then of your Lord's blessings do you deny?' (*an-Najm*: 55) In other words: with respect to which favour of your Lord, O Muhammad, do you remain in doubt? The Arabic word *al-mira'*, derived from the same semantic root as the final verb of the verse, means doubt or dispute. It is as if He *the Almighty* is telling him: 'Rest assured, for Allah will fulfil His favour unto you.'

A similar expression is found in the chapter of *ar-Rahman*: 'Which, then, of your Sustainer's powers can you disavow?' (*ar-Rahman*: 13) Here the discourse is directed towards men and Jinn. When Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* recited it, he said: 'I have already recited the chapter of *ar-Rahman* to your brothers from among the Jinn, and they were better in their affirmative response than you. When they heard 'Which, then, of your Sustainer's powers can you disavow?' (*ar-Rahman*: 13) they immediately replied, 'O, our Lord, of your gracious favours we do not deny a single one, for unto you all grateful praise is due.'⁽¹⁾

Hence, it is legitimate to react with emotions when we hear the Quran with what is appropriate to the situation. When there is mention of thankful praise (*al-hamd*), we give thankful praise to Allah; when mention is made of exaltation, we say 'Exalted be Allah (*subhana Allah*)'; when mention of paradise is made, we supplicate Allah to bless us with it; and when mention of hellfire is made, we seek refuge in Allah from it, and so forth.

(1) See *Al-Bayhaqi, Dala'il An-Nubuwwa* no. (532) as related by Jabir ibn 'Abdullah Allah be pleased with him; it was also narrated by At-Tirmidhi in his *Sunnan* no. (3291). It is cited by As-Suyuti in *Ad-Durr Al-Manthur* who attributes it to Al-Bazzar, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Mundhir, Ad-Daraqutni, Ibn Mardawayh, and Al-Khatib with a sound chain of narration as related by Ibn 'Umar Allah be pleased with him.

There is a difference between silent wonderment suppressed in the soul, and voiced wonderment expressed openly. Moreover, when you give expression to your interaction with the Quran in words, the power of this affects the one who hears you.

With regard to the opening phrase of the verse under study, *fa-bi-ayyi-ala*’, translated interpretively as, ‘which, then, of...powers’, the word *ayyi* (which) is indicative of copiousness or varied multiplicity. As for the Arabic word *ala*’, translated as ‘powers’, this signifies gracious favours and is the plural of *alan*, that is to say blessing. Concerning the final verb of the verse, *tatamara* ‘can you disavow’, it is derived from the same semantic root as *al-mira*’ which refers to dispute. This latter occurs between two parties with each of them striving to establish definitive evidence against the other. In linguistic usage the word *al-mira*’ is taken to mean two things. The first is related to the twisting (*marw*) of a cord or rope, this is to say, braiding it in order to strengthen it, with the number of threads braided depending upon the intended function of the cord or rope. Another meaning derives from milking a she-camel (*yamri an-naqa*); in other words, to draw milk from it and bring forth everything it its udder.

Hence, it means that you wrangle in order to strengthen your argument, or you wrangle (*tujadil*; a word related to *jadala* which can also signify twisting or plaiting a rope) in order to draw out everything that is contained in the cartridge of the opponent.

هَذَا نَذِيرٌ مِّنَ النَّذِرِ الْأَوَّلِ ﴿٥٦﴾ أَزِفَتِ الْأَازِفَةُ ﴿٥٧﴾ لَيْسَ لَهَا مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ كَاشِفَةٌ ﴿٥٨﴾

**This is a warning just like the warnings sent in former times [56]
The imminent Hour draws near [57] and only God can
disclose it [58] (The Quran, *an-Najm*: 56 - 58)**

Concerning the initial word of the first verse above, it consists of the demonstrative pronoun *hadha*, not translated here but meaning ‘this’, it refers to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and his Message. This is followed by the Arabic word *an-Nadheer*, translated as ‘warning’ but also meaning ‘warner’, is the one who warns people and cautions them of evil before its time of occurrence. In the passage: ‘...a warning just like the warnings

sent in former times.' (*an-Najm*: 56), the phrase *an-nudhur al-ula*, signifies those who passed away before Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* of the procession of previous messengers. The tremendous stature of the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* with regard to his function of solemn harbinger lies in his being the final warner and the culminating seal of all messengers.

There follows His utterance: 'The imminent Hour draws near' (*an-Najm*: 57). In other words, the Final Hour is approaching. Thus, it is as if he *peace and blessings be upon him* appeared on the cusp of the Final Hour since immediately after the verse speaking of him as a warner He followed it with: 'The imminent Hour draws near' (*an-Najm*: 57). It is for this reason that a Noble Hadith states: 'I was sent as an Envoy, with me and the Final Hour being like these two' and he held up his index finger and middle finger.'⁽¹⁾ Thus, His mission is counted among the signs of the impending Final Hour.

His Lord has addressed him with His utterance: '[But] how could you tell anything about it' (*an-Nazi'at*: 43), which is to say: about the Final Hour and its signs? But in as much as its time has drawn near and come close, you better take heed, for this is the last of the messages. Therefore, attach yourself to it and adhere to this culminating Messenger and final warner after whom there will be no warner for you to gain salvation through.

We grasp from the connotation of the Arabic verb *azifat* translated as 'draws ever nearer' that the Final Hour is approaching, and that the Final Hour itself which is striving towards you, seeking you with urgent steps, hastening towards you. Not long after this, in *al-Qamar* chapter, He will state: 'The Last Hour draws near...' (*al-Qamar*: 1).

The next verse under study reads: 'and only Allah can disclose it' (*an-Najm*: 58). In other words, when the horrors of the Last Hour arise, there will be no one except Allah capable of dispelling or controlling it. In the accidents of this world and the mishaps of life, there may be someone who can relieve you of calamity or protect you from evil. However, in the Hereafter, that is the place

(1) See *Al-Bukhari, his Sahih*, no. (4889); see also *Muslim, Sahih*, no. (5244) as related by *Sahl ibn Sa'd As-Sa'idi Allah be pleased with him*.

of truly momentous happenings, where no one has the power to hinder them. How could anyone repel it, for this is the day of the mighty overwhelming disaster which universally affects everyone—how could someone shield you, while he cannot even defend himself against it?

Therefore, prepare yourselves for this situation, and acquire for yourselves protective force from Allah, for it is He alone, without any partner, is the All-Capable of protecting you on this day. There is nothing strange about this impending event which draws ever nearer and the approaching of the Final Hour given the fact that in the actual reality of life some of its minor signs, about which Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* has prophesied to us, have already appeared. Among these is the existence of women in Muslim society bedecked, naked, bent over, tilting their heads like the slumping backs of hybrid camels.⁽¹⁾

Other signs of the Last Hour include his statement ‘When authority is entrusted to those not worthy of it, then expect the Final Hour.’⁽²⁾ Similarly, there is His utterance: ‘[When you witness] the self-satisfaction of every opinion-holder with his own opinion.’⁽³⁾ Also: ‘...if you witness barefoot, naked sheep-herders constructing towering buildings.’⁽⁴⁾ These are in addition to other prophetic sayings regarding the signs of the Final Hour which we have witnessed in actuality. Why, then, should there be such astonishment with respect to this matter?

-
- (1) *This depiction of the signs of the Final Hour is narrated by Ahmad in his Musnad, no. (8311), by Al-Bayhaqi in his Shu‘ab, no. (5124, 7553), by Abu Ya‘la Al-Mawsuli in his Musnad, no. (6549) and by Ibn Hibban in his Sahih, no. (7584) as narrated by Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him.*
 - (2) *This Hadith is narrated by Al-Bukhari in his Sahih, no. (6015) and Al-Bayhaqi in his As-Sunnan Al-kubra as narrated by Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him.*
 - (3) *In Kitab Al-Fitan, Nu‘aym ibn Hammad narrated on the authority of Abu Tha‘laba Al-Khishani that Prophet Muhammad Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him said: ‘When you witness the self-satisfaction of every opinion-holder with his own opinion, then you should leave aside the condition of the masses.’ This was narrated by At-Tabarani in Al-Mu‘jam Al-Kabir (18033), by Al-Bayhaqi in Shu‘ab Al-Iman, no. (9397), and by Ibn Hibban in his Sahih, no. (386).*
 - (4) *This Hadith was narrated by Muslim in his Sahih (9), by Abu Dawud in his Sunnan (4075), by At-Tirmidhi in his Sunnan (2535), and by An-Nasa’i in his Sunnan, no. (4903, 4905) as related by ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab Allah be pleased with him.*

Allah *the Almighty* says:

أَفَإِنَّ هَذَا الْحَدِيثَ تَعْجَبُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَتَضْحَكُونَ وَلَا تَبْكُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾
وَأَنْتُمْ سَمِيدُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ فَاسْجُدُوا لِلَّهِ وَاعْبُدُوا ﴿٦٢﴾

Do you [people] marvel at this? [59] Why do you laugh instead of weeping? [60] Why do you pay no heed? [61] Bow down before God and worship [62] (The Quran, *an-Najm*: 59 - 62)

The interrogative particle at the beginning of the first verse is to express amazement, for they were bewildered by ‘...marvel at this...’ (*an-Najm*: 59). This is to say, by the Quran, which, in turn, expresses bewilderment at them. It says to them: ‘Are you astonished and perplexed at the Quran? It would be more fitting for you to be bewildered and amazed at your own state, and what you are engrossed in of distracting pastimes, heedlessness, and aversion to the truth. This will cause you to miss an opportunity, and will deprive you of abundant benefit.’

This same notion is contained in the verse: ‘Why do you laugh instead of weeping?’ (*an-Najm*: 60) You laugh out of scorn and mockery, but it would have been more fitting for you to weep over yourselves and over that which has passed you by of goodly benefit. The next verse continues: ‘Why do you pay no heed?’ (*an-Najm*: 61), in other words, engaged in idle distractions and heedlessly negligent.

This is the state of those whose hearts have grown hard, and whom Satan and the sensual soul have vanquished. Besides their aversion to the truth, you see them deriding those who follow it sincerely and laughing contemptuously at them. As He *the Almighty* says in depicting this situation: ‘Behold, those who have abandoned themselves to sin...’ (*al-Mutaffifin*: 29), whom he has called criminal sinners (*al-muijrimun*), ‘...are wont to laugh at such as have attained to faith; [29] and whenever they pass by them, they wink at one another [derisively]; [30] and whenever they return to people of their own kind, they return full of jests; [31] and whenever they see those [who believe,] they say, “Behold, these [people] have indeed gone astray!” [32] And, withal, they have no call to watch over [the beliefs of] others. [33]’ (*al-Mutaffifin*: 29-33).

Yes indeed; this is the state of the adherents of vain falsehood who invert truths in this world. But this world is not the ultimate goal, and not the termination of the course of existence, for there is another day in which those who do wrong are separated from those who are wronged. As it is said: ‘In Allah’s presence are assembled all antagonists.’

Allah reassures the adherents of faith saying: ‘But on the Day [of Judgment]’ (*al-Mutaffifin*: 34), that is, on the Day of Reckoning, ‘...they who had attained to faith will [be able to] laugh at the [erstwhile] deniers of the truth’ (*al-Mutaffifin*: 34) and the one who laughs last, laughs much‘[for, resting in paradise] on couches, they will look on [and say to themselves]: [35] “Are these deniers of the truth being [thus] requited for [aught but] what they were wont to do?” [36]’ (*al-Mutaffifin*: 35-36) At this juncture, we will say: ‘Yes, O Lord, you have requited them with what they deserved.’

The chapter then ends with His utterance: ‘Bow down before Allah and worship’ (*an-Najm*: 62) Him. We note here, firstly, the concise manner of expression of Quranic wording which leaves space for acquired acumen. The obvious meaning is: ‘Then prostrate yourselves to Allah and worship Allah since He alone merits worship without any partners ascribed with Him. Thus, the matter of worship is directed towards none save Him even if the one worshipped the Almighty is not specifically referred to.

When Allah *the Almighty* orders them to prostrate, submit and obey, it is as if he were saying to them: ‘You had all the more reason to weep, to show humility and to beseech in supplication, you should have clung steadfastly to this truth which came to you, so that it might assist you, for it is the rope of salvation which you cannot encounter with derisive ridicule.

Here it is noteworthy that at the end of the chapter comes the command to prostrate: ‘Bow down before Allah and worship’ (*an-Najm*: 62) Him. It is as if Allah is reaching out in compassion to his servants, even to the disbelievers, telling them: ‘O My servants, you are My handiwork and My dependents, so come forth to My domain. Stop arguing and bickering, and submit to me through prostration and worship, for I wish only the best for you.’ Is there any craftsman who wishes ill to his handiwork? For this reason in a Qudsi Hadith,

we find: 'O Son of Adam, I am full of love for you, hence, by my due right over you, be full of love for me.'⁽¹⁾

Unto Allah belongs the most sublime parable; Can you imagine if there were a rich man whom Allah had given plentiful means, and he had a son who was dissolute and so he called after him saying: 'O my son, come and take advantage of my wealth, since you are the more entitled to it'? In a similar manner, Allah *the Almighty* calls to those who are outside the bounds of his ordained path: 'Come hither, copious good awaits you.'

Now, while the command found in: 'Bow down before Allah and worship' Him (*an-Najm*: 62) is meant for the disbelievers, yet it is also directed at the believers: 'Prostrate in gratitude to Allah who has guided you to faith and has saved you from disbelief.'

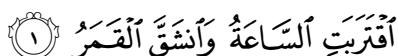
(1) See *Al-Qushayri in his Tafsir in the context of commenting upon His utterance: 'And, lo, Moses spoke [thus] unto his people: 'Remember the blessings which Allah bestowed upon you...'* (*Ibrahim*: 6). He says that this saying is mentioned in certain scriptures revealed to the prophets. It is also mentioned by Isma'il Haqqi in his *Tafsir* and attributed it to Ka'b Al-Ahbar from the Torah.

the chapter of

al-Qamar

In the Name of God, the Most Merciful, the Dispenser of Mercy

The chapter of *al-Qamar*⁽¹⁾ (The Moon):



**The Hour draws near; the moon is split in
two [1] (The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 1)**

‘The Hour’ is one of the names of the Day of Resurrection, which is known as the Hour, the Reality, the Cry, the Event, the Calamity, and other names besides this. All of these names convey a sense of fear and alarm.

We can observe how the ending of the chapter of *an-Najm* correlates to the beginning of the chapter of *al-Qamar*, for He said there: ‘The Hour draws near; the moon is split in two’ (*al-Qamar*: 1), and He says here: ‘The Hour draws near...’ (*al-Qamar*: 1). As we said, the very arrival of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was one of the signs of the Last Hour, for we know that the Hour will only rise upon the most evil of men, when no one remains who says, ‘Allah, Allah.’⁽²⁾

As for those who have lain in their graves from the time of Prophet Adam *peace be upon him* and all who will die before the Last Hour, we said that time is stopped for them because time is a locus for events, and therefore those who experience no events experience no time. Therefore, Allah says of them: ‘...On the Day when they behold it...’ (*al-Hujurat*: 46), i.e. the Resurrection,

(1) The chapter of *al-Qamar* is number 54 in the written order of the Quran. The majority consider it to have been revealed in the Meccan period. It was revealed between the chapters of *at-Tariq* and *Sad*, and was thus the 37th chapter to be revealed.

(2) See *Muslim, Sahih*, no. (3550), on the authority of ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn Al-‘As Allah *be pleased with him*.

'[it will seem to them] as if they had tarried [in this world] no longer than one evening or [one night, ending with] its morn.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 46) Allah caused the man who argued with Ibrahim *peace be upon him* about his Lord to die for one hundred years and then raised him to life, whereupon he said: '...I have remained thus a day, or part of a day...' (*al-Baqara*: 259).

The People of the Cave said the same after having been asleep for three hundred and nine years because this is as long as a person usually spends asleep. The time spent in the isthmus-world of the grave will be the same, and it will be as though they just fell asleep for a while, and then woke up.

Now Allah *the Almighty* is the Owner of time, and He is The Withholder and The Out spreader: He withholds from whom He wills and outspreads for whom He wills.

The meaning of 'The Hour draws near' is that it is close to you on a personal level, so do not wait for the minor signs of it to come, and then the major signs, saying, 'There is still a lot of time between us and the Resurrection'; for this is not how the Resurrection should be envisaged.

For a man's resurrection comes when he dies, and not after thousands of millions of years, as Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'When a person dies, his resurrection has come.'⁽¹⁾ Indeed this is true, for he moves on from the realm of this worldly life to the realm of the Hereafter, and his worldly works all come to an end. Allah kept the time of death unknown to us all so that we would remember it at all times.

He says: 'The Hour draws near; the moon is split in two' (*al-Qamar*: 1). The splitting of the moon was a cosmological sign affirmed by The Quran and the *Sunna*, and it is related that the moon split for Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* so that the cave of Hira' could be seen between the two halves;⁽²⁾ and this sign was witnessed by all those at the time who were able to see it, and they witnessed it just like that.

We do not say that the whole world saw it, for the purpose of cosmological miracles is to support the messengers, and prove that they are truly sent by Allah.

(1) Narrated by Ad-Daylimi on the authority of Anas Allah be pleased with him; there is some doubt as to whether it is a Hadith or a saying of one of the early Muslims

(2) Narrated by Al-Bukhari, no. (3579) on the authority of Anas Allah be pleased with him

It was not necessary that everyone alive at the time saw this sign – and how could this be, when even now with the amazing progress of science and the abundant means of communication, we hear about solar or lunar eclipses at certain times, and the television channels show them, yet despite the advanced reports only a few people are able to see them? The moon is a phenomenon of night at a time when most people are sleeping.

Moreover, the cosmological signs and miracles given to the messengers are not intended to be eternal miracles, but rather, each miracle is meant only for those who witness it, to strengthen their faith if they are already believers, or to bring them to faith in Allah if they are disbelievers.

Therefore, they say that a miracle is like a matchstick: it can only be lit once and this is the case with all the miracles of the messengers. Had The Quran not told us of the staff of Musa *peace be upon him* we would not know anything about it.

These cosmological signs break the laws of nature the moment they occur, and then things go back to how they were. The moon split, for instance, and its natural state was altered, and then it returned to its previous state after it had been seen by the disbelievers of Mecca who gave the lie to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* – not all the disbelievers, but only some of them, for those of them who saw the miracle were enough to affirm it.

They say that the meaning of ‘The Hour draws near’ is that the hour of every man’s death, and his appointed time, is near to him, ‘and the moon is split on two’ meaning that he will split away from his life and leave it behind. As long as Allah said ‘draws near’, this means that it truly has drawn near, and you do not need to look into this fact any further.

Allah *the Almighty* also said: ‘Allah’s judgment is [bound to] come: do not, therefore, call for its speedy advent...’ (*an-Nahl*: 1). He said that it was ‘come’ in the past tense, as though it has already happened – but then how could He then say ‘do not, therefore, call for its speedy advent’? The scholars say that it is because Allah is The One Who said ‘come’, and no one can object to Him or prevent Him from bringing His words into fruition.

The same is the case when He says ‘The Hour draws near’, for it has truly drawn near, whether it means the Last Hour of every person which comes at

the moment of his death, which is near, or it means the Last Hour at the end of time, which is also near, for the splitting of the moon and the coming of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* were among its heralds.

It is narrated that the disbelievers said to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* 'If you were telling the truth, bring forth a sign now that could prove that you are truthful.' They were al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira, Abu Jahl ibn Hisham, Al-'As ibn Wa'il, Al-'As ibn Rabi'a, Al-Aswad ibn 'Abd Yaghuth, Al-Aswad ibn 'Abd Al-Muttalib, Rabi'a ibn Al-Aswad and An-Nadr ibn Al-Harith.

All of those men and others witnessed this event-taking place. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* called upon and beseeched his Lord and the moon split into two halves, one half above the mountain of Abu Qabis and the other half above Qaynuqa' so that the cave of Hira' was visible between them. When the disbelievers saw that, they called it sorcery, while the people of intelligence said, 'We shall ask the people travelling in the desert far from this place.' On asking them, some were positive about it and others said that they did not see it. 'Ali *peace be upon him* observed that the splitting of the moon was a night sign, so some people saw it, whilst others, indeed most, did not.

On examining the verses that are concerned with the Last Hour and the signs that shall herald it, we read: 'When the sun is covered. And when the stars darken' (*at-Takwir*: 1-2). We read many other verses that depict for us how these beings will meet destruction. However, Allah says nothing about the moon except: 'So when the sight becomes dazed. And the moon becomes dark.' (*al-Qiyama*: 7-8) The darkening of the moon is lesser and lighter than the shrouding of the sun.

We understand from this that the worldly event of the moon's splitting will be counted for it in the Hereafter and thereby the moon will not endure what will happen to the other celestial bodies. Therefore Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And the trumpet shall be blown, so all those that are in the heavens and all those that are in the earth shall swoon, except such as Allah please.' (*az-Zumar*: 68) This implies that certain beings will be spared.

Similarly, when the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* depicted the events of the Resurrection, he said, 'When I shall awake, I shall find

my brother Musa (Moses) holding on to the frame of the Throne.' This means that Musa will not swoon as others. That is why the Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was amazed at this.⁽¹⁾

Prophet Muhammad clarified that Musa *peace be upon him* already swooned in this world when he was on the mount as Allah says: 'but when his Lord manifested His glory to the mountain He made it crumble and Musa fell down in a swoon.' (*al-A'raf*: 143) Allah *Glorified is He* would not cause His Prophet Musa to swoon twice. Since he already swooned in this world, he will be saved from swooning in the Hereafter. And that is the exception meant by the verse: 'except such as Allah please.' (*az-Zumar*: 68)

The same is the case of the moon, i.e. the splitting was real and a cosmological sign which changed the moon from its natural and usual state; and thereby the moon will not be subject to the same destruction which other celestial bodies face in the Hereafter.

وَإِنْ يَرَوْا آيَةً يُعْرِضُوا وَيَقُولُوا سِحْرٌ مُسْتَمِرٌّ

Whenever the disbelievers see a sign, they turn away and say, 'Same old sorcery!' [2] (The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 2)

The word *aya* (sign) here means an amazing and incredible thing of huge impact, the like of which people have never seen. It means a cosmological sign as is the case when He says, '...and He has made the sun and the moon subservient...' (*az-Zumar*: 5), and when He says: 'And amongst His signs are the night and the day...' (*Fussilat*: 37).

Although these signs are clear proof of Allah's Power and the obligation to have faith in Him and believe His Messenger, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*, they reacted to them by turning aside and ignoring them: 'whenever the disbelievers see a sign, they turn away...' (*al-Qamar*: 2). They turned away from the sign which they suggested and demanded from the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* even when it came to them as plain as dawn. This shows how they were too haughty to

(1) Narrated by *Al-Bukhari and Muslim*

accept the truth and how they stubbornly resisted the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* despite the clarity of the sign. Their intense stubbornness and hatred of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* blinded them to the truth.

It is enough here for us to mention⁽¹⁾ the stance taken by his uncle Abu Lahab who had been happy to see two of his sons marry two of Muhammad's daughters. Yet, when Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* began his call and enmity broke out between him and his uncle, Abu Lahab could not bear to see his sons married to Muhammad's daughters and made them divorce them.

This in itself did not anger the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* but what angered him was that one of these two sons⁽²⁾ passed him by and then spat towards him. The Messenger *peace and blessings be upon him* supplicated against him, 'May one of Allah's hounds devour you!'⁽³⁾

When Abu Lahab heard that the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had supplicated against his son with these words, he became fearful because in the depths of his soul he knew that his nephew was on the truth. When it was time for his son to set out with the trade caravan, Abu Lahab told his son's companions not to leave him alone by saying, 'When you make camp, put my son in the middle of you, for I fear for him because of what Muhammad has invoked against him.' Indeed, one night during the journey a lion came to him and ate him before their eyes.

(1) *This is the story of Abu Lahab and his two sons with the Prophet and the latter's accursing the son of Abu Lahab.*

(2) *His name may have been Lahab, 'Utba or 'Utayba, according to Al-Bayhaqi Dala'il An-Nubuwwa, Vol. 2, p. 338.*

(3) *Al-Bayhaqi narrated in Dala'il An-Nubuwwa 623 that after the sons of Abu Lahab divorced the daughters of the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him one of the sons 'Utayba came to Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him and said, 'I disbelieve in your religion, and I have forsaken your daughter. You love me not, nor do I love you.' He then rushed at the Prophet peace and blessings be upon him and tore his shirt. The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him then said, 'Behold, I implore Allah to unleash His hounds upon you!' 'Urwa ibn Al-Zubayr said that a lion came to them that night and then went again, so they slept, and then the lion came back and pounced upon them, seizing 'Utayba's head in its jaws and crushing it.*

What is strange here is that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'One of Allah's hounds', but it was a lion. They explain that this is because when a hound is ascribed to Allah, it must surely be a lion. So, this was another sign which came to this very same stubborn opponent and which was not far from him; yet, he did not believe and his heart did not soften to the call of the truth which came to him from his nephew.

Out of His Mercy to this community, Allah *Glorified is He* did not destroy those of them who denied His Message, nor did He wipe them out as He did with the communities who came before them. The people of 'Isa (Jesus) *peace be upon him* asked him to supplicate to Allah and so he said, 'Lord, send down to us a feast from heaven so that we can have a festival—the first and last of us...' (*al-Ma'ida*: 114). This was a tangible sign which they suggested, and Allah *the Almighty* responded to them thus: 'I will send it down to you, but anyone who disbelieves after this will be punished with a punishment that I will not inflict on anyone else in the world.' (*al-Ma'ida*: 115)

Likewise, the people of Saleh (Shelah) *peace be upon him* hamstrung the she-camel, and Allah *Glorified is He* says of them: 'and then they hamstrung the camel. They defied their Lord's commandment and said, "Saleh (Shelah), bring down the punishment you threaten, if you really are a messenger!" An earthquake seized them; by the next morning they were lying dead in their homes.' (*al-A'raf*: 77-78)

As for the community of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* the True Lord *the Most High* did not treat them in this way; rather, He said: 'But Allah would not send them punishment while you [Prophet] are in their midst, nor would He punish them if they sought forgiveness.' (*al-Anfal*: 33)

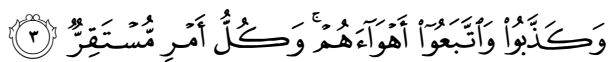
His Words, 'Whenever the disbelievers see a sign, they turn away...' (*al-Qamar*: 2), mean that they saw it with their own eyes in reality, so how could they deny it? Scholars say that they did so due to their stubbornness and persistent denial because they thought that Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* wanted to gain something for himself through his call such as fame and power amongst his people, as well as to exalt himself on earth.

This is why, when they sent their delegation to Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* they said, 'O, Muhammad, if you want dominion, we shall make

you our king, and if you want wealth, we shall gather wealth for you until you are the richest one of us', and so on. So, he said to his uncle his famous words, 'By Allah, uncle, were they to put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left, that I leave this affair, I would not leave it, until Allah makes it ascendant or I die before that.'⁽¹⁾ They did not stop at merely turning away and denying, but they went as far as reviling and insulting.

They '...turn away and say, "An ever-recurring delusion!"' (*al-Qamar*: 2) This accusation was ever levelled at the messengers *peace be upon them* and the deniers ever resorted to it throughout history. After these people witnessed the splitting of the moon, their sick natures refused to acknowledge the truth, and so they levelled accusations at it instead. What did they say? They said, 'An ever-recurring delusion!' (*al-Qamar*: 2); what this means is a constant⁽²⁾ one, as though Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* were bringing them a series of acts of sorcery, one after another. As we said previously, this is a false and base accusation, for which the only rebuttal needed is that if Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* were a sorcerer, why did he not bewitch you as well as he bewitched those who believe in him?

It is obvious that sorcery is only a trick of the eyes, and is not real as Allah *Glorified is He* says, '...and they did, casting a spell on people's eyes...' (*al-A'raf*: 116), and He says: '...through their sorcery, their ropes and staffs seemed to him to be moving.' (*Ta Ha*: 66) Concerning the signs which Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* brought, they were real, and they all had proofs which those people knew and recognised.



**They reject the truth and follow their own desires —
everything is recorded [3] (The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 3)**

The meaning of *kadhhabu* ('they reject the truth') is that they denied the clear signs; *al-kadhib* means one speaking words which contradict reality, and

(1) Narrated by Al-Bayhaqi in *Dala'il An-Nubuwwa* 495, Ibn Kathir in *As-Sira* Vol. 1, p. 474, and As-Suhayli in *Ar-Rawd Al-Anf* Vol. 2, p. 6

(2) Ibn Al-Jawzi narrates three possible meanings of 'ever-recurring' *mustamirr* in this verse: The first is 'passing', as in 'impermanent' from *marra*, 'to pass'; the second is 'powerful' from *Al-marra*, meaning 'power'; and the third is 'constant'.

it is blameworthy according to all. These people denied the truth through stubbornness and deference to their desires: ‘...and follow their own desires...’ (*al-Qamar*: 3).

Desires, then, incite them to deny the truth in order to obtain what they desired. Desires never call one to goodness, but they call one only to evil and destruction as Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...those who follow their own low desires, those whose ways are unbridled.’ (*al-Kahf*: 28) Also, the True Lord *the Most High* says of them: ‘...These people merely follow guesswork and the whims of their souls...’ (*an-Najm*: 23). The desire of the soul controls them and governs their actions.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...everything is recorded.’ (*al-Qamar*: 3) Everything, whether it be disbelief or faith, obedience or disobedience, always comes to a goal which is set and known unto Allah *the Almighty*. Allah *the Exalted* knows all things from pre-eternity. Before any event occurs, He knows it, and the inscribing angels have recorded it.

When the True Lord *the Most High* ordained the disbelief of a disbeliever, He did not force him to disbelieve but gave him the choice; however, due to His pre-eternal knowledge, He wrote down what he would do. This is part of His Magnificence and the absolute encompassment of His Knowledge over all that was, all that is and all that is not.

We spoke of this matter before when discussing His Words: ‘May the hands of Abu Lahab be ruined! May he be ruined too! Neither his wealth nor his gains will help him. He will burn in the Flaming Fire and so will his wife, the firewood-carrier, with a palm-fibre rope around her neck.’ (*al-Masad*: 1-5)

These verses were revealed and recited for Abu Lahab to hear, and he was still in the life of this world and the realm of free will⁽¹⁾; he could have denied these verses by claiming to have entered Islam, even falsely. Yet, he did not do so, for he could not even do this; Allah’s decree came to pass both for him and for his wife. Why is this? The reason is due to Allah’s Decree that cannot be resisted by anyone, and no one can amend what He ordains.

(1) Abu Lahab lived another 15 years after these *ayat* (verses) were revealed.

This is the meaning of ‘...everything is recorded.’ (*al-Qamar*: 3) Indeed, everything must do so because it is firmly set in Allah’s Knowledge. Do not trouble yourself, then, Muhammad, and do not wear yourself out by preaching to these people. All you have to do is convey the message; as for faith and disbelief, it is already known to Allah *the Almighty* that this one will believe and take a place in paradise, whilst that one will disbelieve and take a place in hell.

Thus, the desire of these deniers would not ever change from this set position because it was a truth and a reality inscribed in the Preserved Tablet in the Mother of all Books, which no one can change.

Allah *Glorified* is He says:

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ مِنَ الْأَنْبِيَاءِ مَا فِيهِ مُرْدَجَرٌ
حِكْمَةٌ بَالِغَةٌ فَمَا تُغْنِ النُّذُرُ

**Although warning tales that should have restrained them
have come down to them [4] far-reaching wisdom — but
these warnings do not help [5] (The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 4 - 5)**

These verses speak about the deniers from amongst the disbelievers of Mecca and how Allah *the Exalted* gave them tidings of the nations who came before them and how they brought destruction and death down upon themselves by lying about their messengers *peace be upon them*. Indeed, the remnants of these nations still existed so that they could see them when they passed by them: ‘You [people] pass by their ruins morning and night. Will you not take heed?’ (*as-Saffat*: 137-138) He also says: ‘And surely it is on a road that still abides.’ (*al-Hijr*: 76) This means that these remains still existed on roads which were still travelled and known to them, which they often traversed. *Muqim* (still abides), and also *yugim* mean to confirm signs.

The word *Al-anba’* (narratives) (*al-Qamar*: 4) literally means news. Its singular is *naba’* which is an important piece of news that should inspire one to take admonition and to pay heed to its lessons. These narratives included what they had been told about concerning the Ad, Thamud, the people of Lot, the Ahqaf, and so on.

The meaning of ‘...wherein is prevention...’ (*al-Qamar*: 4) is that they were given admonitions and lessons in the stories of such nations who had come before them and had denied so that Allah *the Almighty* destroyed them; this should have restrained them from falling into the very same denial and rejection of the call to the truth. ‘Far-reaching wisdom’ (*al-Qamar*: 5) means to put things in their proper places, and ‘far-reaching’ means that which reaches its ultimate goal so that nothing could be wiser than it, for wisdom differs according to the minds which bring it.

So, people are described with the level of wisdom which is appropriate to their minds, and the True Lord possesses the ultimate wisdom. This is akin to what we said about the attributes of being a creator: man may be described by this attribute when he invents something which did not exist before; he is then a creator, and Allah *Glorified is He* is the best of creators.

If you like, read what He says about the story of how adoption was prohibited, which concerned the relationship between the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and Zayd ibn Haritha *Allah be pleased with him* when Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Name your adopted sons after their real fathers; this is more equitable in the sight of Allah...’ (*al-Ahzab*: 5).

When Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* adopted Zayd, this was equitable and just, but Allah’s verdict was even more equitable and just. What our master, the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* did was equitable in human terms, and it was an honour for the one who preferred him to his own father and family; however, what Allah *the Exalted* decreed that people should be named after their real fathers was even more equitable. This is because it gives the true father his right since he was the direct means of life and existence for the child; furthermore, by valuing the father, we value the Lord, Creator and Originator of all.

Therefore, the True Lord *the Most High* made a link between worshipping Him and treating parents well by saying more than once: ‘Worship Allah; join nothing with Him. Be good to your parents...’ (*an-Nisa*: 36); He also says: ‘Your Lord has commanded that you should worship none but Him and that you be kind to your parents...’ (*al-Isra*: 23). Therefore, to dishonour parents

is a grave sin, ⁽¹⁾ and it is a sin which spreads throughout the entire body as we explained before.

Concerning His Words ‘...but these warnings do not help.’ (*al-Qamar*: 5), they say that *nudhur* (warnings) in this verse means the messengers who warned and alerted them of the punishment and consequence of denying; this would make *nudhur* in this verse the plural of *nadheer*, which means ‘warner’. This indicates that they did not benefit from these warnings, and the calls of the messengers did not affect them.

Then, the True Lord *the Most High* says:

فَوَلِّ عَنْهُمْ يَوْمَ يَدْعُ الدَّاعِ إِلَى شَيْءٍ نَّكَرٍ

**So [Prophet] turn away from them. On the Day the
Summoner will summon them to a horrific event [6]
(The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 6)**

The commandment in this verse is being issued to our master the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: ‘...turn thou away from them...’ (*al-Qamar*: 6). Turn from them and bid them farewell as He says elsewhere: ‘So, [O, Prophet] ignore those who turn away from Our revelation, who want only the life of this world.’ (*an-Najm*: 29) This means they will never believe.

His Words ‘...On the Day the Summoner will summon them to something that the mind cannot conceive’ (*al-Qamar*: 6) allude to the second blowing of

(1) ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar Allah be pleased with him narrated that a Bedouin came to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and said, ‘O, Messenger of Allah, what are the grave sins?’ He said, ‘To associate partners with Allah.’ He said, ‘Then what?’ He (Prophet Muhammad) *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘To dishonour one’s parents.’ He said, ‘Then what?’ He (Prophet Muhammad) *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘The disastrous oath.’ He said, ‘What is the disastrous oath?’ He said, ‘It is to swear falsely to obtain the property of a Muslim.’ Narrated by *Al-Bukhari* 6409... Ahmad 7609 narrated on the authority of ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr Allah be pleased with him that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘The gravest of the grave sins is to dishonour one’s parents.’ He was asked what this means, and answered, ‘A man curses a man, so the latter curses the former’s father, and he curses his mother, so he curses his mother (in return).’

the trumpet whereupon all mankind will rise for the Lord of the worlds, and the meaning of ‘something that the mind cannot conceive’ is something unknown to the people, something whose horror and awfulness is beyond their ken so that the soul cannot conceive of it.

We may ask what the connection between ‘turn away from them...’ and ‘...On the Day the Summoner will summon’ (*al-Qamar*: 6) is. Scholars say that this means for the Prophet to turn away from them now and not to say anything to them about this Day; others say it means for the Prophet to turn away from them and not to intercede for them on that Day.

Then, the True Lord *the Most High* says:

خُشَعًا أَبْصَرُهُمْ يَخْرُجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ كَأَنَّهُمْ جَرَادٌ مُنْتَشِرٌ ﴿٧﴾
 مُهْطِعِينَ إِلَى الدَّاعِ يَقُولُ الْكَافِرُونَ هَذَا يَوْمٌ عَسِرٌ ﴿٨﴾

**Eyes downcast, they will come out of their graves like
 swarming locusts [7] rushing towards the Summoner.
 The disbelievers will cry, ‘This is a stern day!’ [8]
 (The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 7-8)**

These verses are connected to what *the Almighty* says before: ‘...On the Day the Summoner will summon them to something that the mind cannot conceive’ (*al-Qamar*: 6); on that Day, these deniers will have ‘eyes downcast’ (*al-Qamar*: 7).

Allah *the Exalted* describes in this verse what their state will be on the Day when the Summoner will summon them, and they will come forth, ‘...come out of their graves...’ (*al-Qamar*: 7), in a state of humility and abasement; their eyes will be cast downwards looking to the ground, none of them having the power to look upwards.

So, the movement of the eyes in order to see has significance and reactions, and the movement of the eyes is connected to the state of its owner. The people of truth will have eyes which are strong and bold, whilst the people of falsehood will have eyes which are abased and humiliated. This is why we criticise the people of falsehood when they are proud of their falsehood, and we say, ‘So-and-so said such-and-such with eyes like daggers’;

indeed, this is said because the liar contradicted the nature of the situation in which he finds himself.

His Words ‘...like swarming locusts’ (*al-Qamar*: 7) mean that when they come forth from their graves, they will come forth scattered like locusts; this describes their multitudes and how they will disperse here and there. Imagine if we were to examine any settled place and consider how many will have been buried there, generation after generation from the time of Adam *peace be upon him* until the Day of Resurrection; how many graves will there be?

Notice that the verb *yakhrujun* (come out) (*al-Qamar*: 7) is in the active voice; He did not say *yukhrajun* (brought out) in the passive voice. This means that they will come out of the graves as though they are doing so out of their own volition, all at once, after the second trumpet blast awakens them by Allah’s Leave, and they will rise and come forth.

His Word *muhti’in* (rushing towards the Summoner) (*al-Qamar*: 8) means rushing swiftly; for in such a situation, who could be slow or tardy? The *muhti’* is the one who stretches his neck forward as he walks so he goes faster. Reflect on the state of these people in the life of this world and how they were governed by arrogance, haughtiness and stubbornness which took them far away from the straight path; yet, now they come forth humiliated and abased, rushing to the destination to which they had always denied, like a criminal being taken to his punishment.

Because of this, He then says: ‘...The disbelievers will cry, "This is a stern day!"’ (*al-Qamar*: 8) He specifies that it will solely be disbelievers who will say this, and indeed, it will be a sorely calamitous day, for there will be no way to avoid it or escape it, along with there being no way to be protected from it or succoured against it. How could they have any escape or succour when the deities (gods) they worshipped instead of Allah, thinking they would intercede for them, will enter hell before them?

Allah *Glorified is He* says about Pharaoh: ‘He will be at the forefront of his people on the Day of Resurrection, leading them down towards the Fire. What a foul drinking place to be led to!’ (*Hud*: 98) This will cause them to despair and lose all hope.

The discourse now moves away from the Quraysh, and Allah tells them about the deniers of another nation, specifically the people of our master Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him*. Allah *Glorified is He* says:

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ فَكَذَّبُوا عَبْدَنَا وَقَالُوا مَجْنُونٌ وَازْدُجِرَ ﴿٩﴾

The people of Noah rejected the truth before them: they rejected Our servant, saying, ‘He is mad!’ Noah was rebuked [9] (The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 9)

It is as though Allah were saying to the idolaters of Mecca, ‘You are not so far from the fate which met other people who denied, for you have not stopped at denying alone but have assaulted the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in every manner and way; you have assaulted him with words and deeds, openly and plainly, and when this did not avail you, you assaulted him with plots and devious schemes. More than this, you even sought the aid of jinn to assault him, working sorcery upon him.⁽¹⁾ You tried to kill him with poison but could not.⁽²⁾ Thus, give yourselves a break, for the call of Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* will continue on its way, and nothing will hold it back; therefore, stop trying to impede it, and the people of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* are not so distant from you.

‘The people of Nuh (Noah) rejected the truth before them...’ (*al-Qamar*: 9); thus, take admonition from them. He begins with the people of Nuh (Noah) in this verse because our master Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was sent to all mankind for all times and places, while our master Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* was sent to his own people, and the breadth of his Message was restricted to them alone, and was not for all times and places; then after

(1) It is narrated that ‘A’isha Allah be pleased with her said, ‘A man of Banu Zurayq named Labid ibn Al-A’sam worked sorcery on Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* so that he (the Prophet) would imagine he had done something when he actually had not.’ Narrated by Al-Bukhari 5321, 3524, 5912 and Muslim 4059

(2) Anas ibn Malik related that a Jewess gave Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* a poisoned sheep, and he ate from it. She was brought forth, and it was said, ‘Shall we not kill her?’ He said, ‘No.’ Anas said, ‘And ever after I could see the effect of it on the Messenger of Allah’s *peace and blessings be upon him* throat.’ Narrated by Al-Bukhari 2424 and Muslim 4060

this his Message was restricted to the people who boarded the Ark. Moreover, our master Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* spent nine hundred and fifty years making his call, so the denial which occurred in his story is plain to see. He tried every way possible to reach them, but they did not believe; thus, Allah *the Almighty* made them an example and an admonition for the deniers who came after them.

See how this verse mentions how they denied their prophet twice: 'The people of Nuh (Noah) rejected the truth before them...' and '...they rejected Our servant...' (*al-Qamar*: 9). So, their denial went beyond all denial, and this is why Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* lived longer than any other messenger, for his call lasted longer than any other call.

When Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Our servant', in this verse, He means our master Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him*; it is an honour for him that Allah *the Exalted* called him 'Our servant', which is akin to what Allah says about the ascension of our master Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: 'Glory to Him who made His servant travel by night...' (*al-Isra*': 1).

Therefore, sincerity in servitude brings about the gifts of Lordship. We said before that servitude to human beings is demeaning, whilst servitude to Allah is noble and honourable. When a person is servant to another human being, he gives his goodness to his master; however, when a person is a servant to Allah *the Almighty* he takes the goodness of his Master. It is thus a kind of 'servitude of sovereignty'.

They did not stop at merely denying Allah's prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* but they went as far as assaulting him: '...saying, "He is mad!"' (*al-Qamar*: 9) They accused him of being mad, which, as we said, is a foolish and easily rebutted accusation; furthermore, if it were to prove anything at all, it would only prove the stupidity and intellectual bankruptcy of such people.

Wa izdujir (was rebuked) (*al-Qamar*: 9) appears in the verse; it means that they rebuked him and prevented him from completing his call and delivering his message.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَغْلُوبٌ فَأَنْصِرْ ﴿١٠﴾ فَفَتَحْنَا أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاءِ بِمَاءٍ مُّنْهَمِرٍ ﴿١١﴾ وَفَجَّرْنَا
الْأَرْضَ عُيُونًا فَالْتَقَى الْمَاءُ عَلَى أَمْرٍ قَدْ قُدِرَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَحَمَلْنَاهُ عَلَى ذَاتِ أَلْوَاحٍ وَدُسُرٍ ﴿١٣﴾
تَجْرَى بِأَعْيُنِنَا جَزَاءَ لِمَنْ كَانَ كُفِرَ ﴿١٤﴾

And so he called upon his Lord, 'I am defeated: help me!'
[10] So We opened the gates of the sky with torrential water
[11] burst the earth with gushing springs: the waters met for
a preordained purpose [12] We carried him along on a vessel
of planks and nails [13] that floated under Our watchful eye,
a reward for the one who had been rejected [14]
(The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 10 - 14)

After all this patience on the part of our master Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* only a few of the people believed in him, which caused him to feel despair that they would never be guided: 'and so he called upon his Lord, "I am defeated. Help me!"' (*al-Qamar*: 10) What this means is for Allah to succour him against them because he does not have the power to face them alone. To 'come to someone's succour' means to claim the right for him which he cannot claim for himself. This is why Allah *Glorified is He* says that disbelievers '...have no one to help them' (*ar-Rum*: 29); they cannot succour themselves, nor find anyone else to succour them.

When Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* made this supplication, Allah *Glorified is He* responded: 'So, We opened the gates of the sky'; this refers to the clouds: '...with torrential water' (*al-Qamar*: 11). Thus, the heavy fall of rain 'burst the earth with gushing springs...' so that many springs of water gushed forth from the ground, and so 'the waters met', the water of the sky from above and the water of the ground from below '...for a preordained purpose' (*al-Qamar*: 12). Therefore, it was something which Allah *the Almighty* had decreed and ordained, which was namely the destruction of these deniers and the survival of the believers. This was pre-ordained, which means before time began.

Elsewhere in the Quran the details of this story are given. Before water fell upon them from, the sky and springs gushed forth from the earth, Nuh's (Noah's) Lord commanded him to build the Ark: 'Build the Ark under Our [watchful] eyes and with Our inspiration...' (*Hud*: 37); thus, it was the first

ship ever to be built on earth, and people knew nothing about this. So, Allah *the Most High* taught him how to build it.

It is said that Allah *the Almighty* gave him the first clue as to how to build it by showing him the trunks of trees floating on the surface of the water and not sinking; this has its own law pertaining to size and volume. When Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* saw this phenomenon, he was inspired to gather the trunks and bind them together with rope. Then, he was inspired with the concept of nails.

In this verse, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'We carried him along on a vessel of planks and nails' (*al-Qamar*: 13); this refers to the Ark. The word *dusur* means nails which hold planks of wood together. Once he had built the Ark, '...We opened the gates of the sky with torrential water.' (*al-Qamar*: 11)

His Words 'floated under Our watchful eye...' (*al-Qamar*: 14) mean that the Ark floated on the surface of the water 'under Our watchful eye', namely by Allah's power and under His care, His protection and His observance. This is akin to what Allah *the Exalted* says to our master Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*: '...planned that you should be reared under My watchful eye.' (*Ta Ha*: 39) Were it not for Allah's protective care, the Ark would not have settled above those billows.

His Words '...a reward for the one who had been rejected' (*al-Qamar*: 14) mean that the Ark, the destruction of the disbelievers and the survival of the believers were all a reward for Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* whose people had disbelieved in him and denied him. He is the one who was rejected, or was disbelieved, and his reward and that of those who believed with him was that Allah *the Exalted* saved him and those who believed in him.

This could also mean 'a recompense for those who disbelieved,'⁽¹⁾ which means how they were punished by drowning.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

(1) *Al-Qurṭubī states in his exegesis Vol. 9, p. 6533 that some early Muslims read the verse in this way with kafar 'who rejected' rather than kufir 'who had been rejected'.*

وَلَقَدْ تَرَكْنَهَا آيَةً فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدْرِكٍ ﴿١٥﴾ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذُرٍ ﴿١٦﴾

We have left this as a sign: will anyone take heed? [15] How [terrible] was My punishment and [the fulfilment of] My warnings! [16] (The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 15 - 16)

These words pertain to the Ark: ‘We have left this as a sign...’ (*al-Qamar*: 15); what this means is that it is a lesson and an admonition to the people who came after Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him*? Scholars say that this may mean that Allah left it as a story which would be read in a preserved Book until the Day of Resurrection, namely the Quran; furthermore, the Quran would continue to tell the story to people as the ages pass so that they might take admonition from it.


It may also mean that Allah *Glorified is He* caused the Ark itself to remain a sign in the place where it berthed after the waters subsided, namely Mount Judi,⁽¹⁾ about which Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...The Ark settled on Mount Judi...’ (*Hud*: 44). It is said that this mountain is in Turkey, and I think you have probably read articles about this which affirm that there are some signs in this region; this might be an indication from Allah *the Almighty* of this incredible sign by which He saved the believers and drowned the disbelievers. Since it is a sign which must be pondered and reflected on, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...Will anyone take heed?’ (*al-Qamar*: 15) This means who is willing to reflect on it, ponder it, and take admonition from it?

The discourse then returns to address our master Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* directly: ‘How [terrible] was My punishment and [the fulfillment of] My warnings!’ (*al-Qamar*: 16) This is a rhetorical use of a question to affirm a reality; the True Lord asks His Messenger, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: ‘How [terrible] was My punishment and [the fulfillment of] My warnings!’ (*al-Qamar*: 16); this indicates that there is a connection between the inflicting of suffering and warning.

(1) In southeastern Turkey near the borders with Iraq and Syria there are many indications that this is the right mountain, for the town and villages in the area are named after Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him*; the nearest town to the north of the mountain is called ‘The Town of the Eighty’, which is the number of people who survived the flood with Nuh (Noah).

Allah *the Almighty* did not wrong them, nor take them to task without their being aware. Rather, He sent a warning to them—and what a warning—after a call which lasted nine hundred and fifty years, during which Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* warned them of the coming chastisement. It is as they say, ‘The one who is being warned has no excuse.’ When someone warns you, he removes your excuse, and you have no excuse after that.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

 وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ

**We have made it easy to learn lessons from the
Quran: will anyone take heed? [17]
(The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 17)**

The letter *lam* (*la*) in the word *la-qad* is used in Arabic for emphasis, and *qad* is used for establishing. The True Lord wants to emphasise this fact, which is that the Quran has been made easy: ‘We have made it easy to learn lessons from the Quran...’ (*al-Qamar*: 17). We have made it easy to read and recite; We have made it easy to listen to and We have made it easy to understand, to appreciate and enjoy and to which to react.

The Quran is the only book which you love more the more you repeat it, and it is one which you understand more, along with experience and discover more of its secrets. Its wonders never cease, and its gifts are never exhausted because they are the overflowing graces of the Speaker of this Quran.

Therefore, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said about the Quran, ‘Its wonder never ceases, and it does not grow stale after much repetition.’⁽¹⁾ This is because when you speak, you give your words as much meaning as your ability allows you to and as far as your literary and cerebral power allows you to; likewise, if the speaker is the True Lord, His gifts never cease. As long as what you have is ephemeral, whilst what Allah *the Almighty* has is everlasting, the Quran will remain fresh and keep on giving its abundant gifts to you until the Day of Resurrection.

(1) Narrated by At-Tirmidhi 2831 as part of a longer Hadith

Moreover, Allah's Speech is one of His Attributes, and the Attribute of the Perfect One is itself perfect. Therefore, He says about the Quran: 'which falsehood cannot touch from any angle, a Revelation sent down from the Wise One, Worthy of All Praise.' (*Fussilat*: 42) A poet said about the Quran:

All things are explained therein,

And every reciter of it takes from it as his mind allows.

For example, when you reflect upon Quranic explanations through the ages, you will find that it is incredible. Were explanations confined to any one person, the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to whom the Quran was revealed, would have been the only one fit to give explanation of it; however, he left this task to others.

Had Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* given explanations about the Quran, no one else would have been able to add anything to his, but he left it to the coming generations so that each generation could take from it according to its perception, its development, its inventions and discoveries, as well as the secrets it uncovered, as Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'We shall show them Our signs in every region of the earth and in themselves, until it becomes clear to them that this is the Truth...' (*Fussilat*: 53).

Had the Quran given all it had to give to the generation of the companions, for example, all the subsequent generations would not have anything else to take from it, but Allah *the Exalted* wants to keep on giving His gifts until the Day of Resurrection.

So, He says: 'We shall show them...' (*Fussilat*: 53); each generation reads these words in the future tense like this, regardless of how much they have taken from the Quran because they are taking from a spring which never stops flowing.

One aspect of this making the Quran easy to read is that both Arabs and non-Arabs can read the Quran; when you are in *Al-Haram* (the Holy Mosque) in Mecca, you are amazed to see many non-Arabs reciting the Quran, though they know not even a single sentence of Arabic; yet, they recite the Quran in Arabic with a proper Arab accent. Indeed, they make mistakes in it and find it difficult to read, but they would not go through all that hardship if they did not find sweetness in the experience.

Also, young children read it, and even memorise it at the age of seven; yet, if you were to give them any man-made book, they would not be able to memorise it.

All this is part of the meaning of His Words: 'We have made it easy to learn lessons from the Quran...' (*al-Qamar*: 17). Were it not for this Divinely decreed ease, the child whose mind is not yet fully developed would not be able to memorise it; yet, he memorises it even though he does not know what it means or understands its decrees.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* taught us that the Quran is not counted by sentences but is counted by letters, each letter having a secret and a gift to offer, and indeed even an angel assigned to it.⁽¹⁾ So, when you love to read the Quran, you love the angels of the True Lord; and when you need them, they come to you and aid you.

Test yourself with the Quran: when you read it with a longing and hope and then forget a letter or a word, when you repeat the foregoing part in your mind, it quickly comes to you because it loves you just as you love it. Is it like the servant who loves his master so that when he calls him, he rushes to him? You all know the Hadith, '...do not say that "*alif-lam-mim*" is a letter. Nay, "*alif*" is a letter, "*lam*" is a letter and "*mim*" is a letter.'⁽²⁾

Therefore, we have seen wonders during Noble Quran competitions held for children and youths and how they test seven hundred competitors in a limited amount of time. To do this, they employ artful questions by which you can test the competitor's memorisation of the entire Quran with a single question. For example, one could say to him, 'This is a reminder. Let whoever wishes take the way to his Lord' (*al-Muzzammil*: 19), and ask him to read on. If he has really memorised everything, this boy will say, 'From where should I read?' This is because this sentence appears in more than one place.

(1) *As narrated by At-Tirmidhi 2835 and Al-Bayhaqi in Shu'ab Al-Iman 1928, on the authority of Ibn Mas'ud.*

(2) *Ibn Mas'ud Allah be pleased with him narrated that Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said, 'Whosoever reads a letter from the Book of Allah earns a good deed thereby, and good deeds are rewarded tenfold. I do not say that "alif-lam-mim" is a letter. Nay, "alif" is a letter, and "lam" is a letter, and "mim" is a letter.'* Narrated by At-Tirmidhi 2835 and Al-Bayhaqi in Shu'ab Al-Iman 1928

There is a question which they framed as a verse of poetry:

How many times does the plural of *nas* appear in Allah's Book?

Qad, yawma nad'u, akhriju, wa anasi. (Arabic)

(What they are asking is how many times the word *unas* or *anasi*—both are plurals of *nas*, meaning people—occur in the Quran. The question is in the first line of the poem, and the answer is in the second):

These words refer to key words in the verses wherein this word is found, as follows:

'...*Qad 'alima kullu unasin mashrabahum...*' ('...and every people knew its watering place...') (*al-Baqara*: 60).

'*Yawma nad'u kulla unasin bi imamihim...*' ('The day when We will call every people with their record...') (*al-Isra'*: 71).

Akhrijuhm min qaryatikum innahum unasun yatatahharun' ['...Turn them out of your town. Surely, they are a people who seek to purify (themselves).'] (*al-A'raf*: 82)

Akhriju al lutin mun qaryatikum innahum unasun yatatahharun' ['...Turn out Lut's (Lot's) followers from your town. Surely, they are a people who would keep pure!'] (*an-Naml*: 56).

Wanusqihi mimma khalaqna an'aman wa anasiyya kathiran' ('...and give it for drink, out of what We have created, to cattle and many people.') (*al-Furqan*: 49)

So, the second line of the poetry gives the answer to the question in the first line. Why is this? The reason is that it has been made easy: 'We have made it easy to learn lessons from the Quran...' (*al-Qamar*: 17).

He then says: '...Will anyone take heed?' (*al-Qamar*: 17) Since We have made this Quran easy for remembrance, will anyone take lessons and admonition from it, along with taking admonition from the signs it contains?

For whom the Quran has been made easy? Allah *the Exalted* has made the Quran easy for those who believe in the speaker of the Quran and who believe

in Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to whom it was revealed. For there are those who hear the Quran and then ignore it and turn away, along with those who hear the Quran and mock it; the Quran has spoken about such people: 'And there are those of them who seek to listen to you, until when they go forth from you, they say to those who have been given the knowledge, "What was it that he said just now?"...' (*Muhammad*: 16) They say this by way of mocking and disparaging the Quran.

Allah *Glorified is He* also says: '...Say: It is to those who believe a guidance and a healing, and [as for] those who do not believe, there is a heaviness in their ears and it is obscure to them...' (*Fussilat*: 44). The Quran is one, as we have said, but those who receive it vary.

This is why when Al-Walid calmed himself and wanted eagerly to listen, he received the Words of Allah in the best way, inclined towards it, and was moved by it. The Quran affected him when he was yet a disbeliever, and he said, 'By Allah, I have heard a speech that is not sorcery, nor poetry, nor soothsaying. By Allah, the highest part of it is fruitful, and the lowest part of it is plentiful, and it is above all, and below nothing!'⁽¹⁾

Reflect on the first impact the Quran had on this man's soul, whilst he was yet a disbeliever and how he expressed it in this beautiful way, 'The highest part of it is fruitful, and the lowest part of it is plentiful.' He was comparing the Quran to a tree which is fruitful above and green and verdant from below; trees generally have their fruit at the top at a time when their lowest parts are covered with dry leaves which fall. As for the Quran, it is all good, and every single letter of it has gifts to give.

Then, the True Lord *the Most High* says:

(1) Narrated by Ibn Kathir in his *Sira Vol. 1*, p. 499, Ash-Shami in *Subul Al-Huda wa Al-Irshad Vol. 9*, p. 408, Al-Hakim 3831 and Al-Bayhaqi in *Dala'il Al-Nubuwwa* 505 and *Shu'ab Al-Iman* 126, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas Allah be pleased with him.

كَذَّبَتْ عَادٌ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَدَايَ وَنُذْرٍ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيحًا صَرْصَرًا فِي يَوْمٍ نَحْسٍ
مُتَسَمِّرٍ ﴿١٩﴾ تَزْعُ النَّاسَ كَانْتَهُمْ أَعْجَازُ نَخْلٍ مُنْقَعِرٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَدَايَ وَنُذْرٍ ﴿٢١﴾

**The people of 'Ad also rejected the truth. How [terrible] was
My punishment and [the fulfilment of] My warnings! [18]
We released a howling wind against them on a day of terrible
disaster [19] it swept people away like uprooted palm trunks [20]
How [terrible] was My punishment and [the fulfilment of]
My warnings [21] (The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 18 - 21)**

The Quran now lists, for those who deny the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and opposed his call, the people who denied their own messengers throughout history. It has already spoken to them about the people of Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* and what became of them, and now it speaks to them about the people of 'Ad, and what Allah *the Almighty* did with them when they denied their Messenger Hud (Eber) *peace be upon him*.

The people of 'Ad were the ones who dwelled in the southern sand dunes, and they had a great civilisation of which Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Have you [O, Prophet] considered how your Lord dealt with [the people] of 'Ad, of Iram, [the city] of lofty pillars, whose like has never been made in any land, and the Thamud, who hewed into the rocks in the valley' (*al-Fajr*: 6-8). Their civilisation was mightier than that of Pharaonic Egypt which astonished the whole world; despite the scientific advances of the modern world, they have still not discovered all the secrets of this civilisation, and the pyramids remain a wonder whose secrets are still unknown.

The civilisation of 'Ad was greater still, but now it is buried below the sand because it is a desert environment wherein there are many sandstorms and the passage of time has caused sand to cover it. In this regard, they say that the sands of the dunes could bury an entire caravan if a storm blew over it. For this reason, we could only find the remains of this nation which Allah *the Almighty* destroyed under many layers of earth.

He speaks about the people of 'Ad, just as He speaks about the people of Nuh (Noah): '...How [terrible] was My punishment and [the fulfilment of] My warnings!' (*al-Qamar*: 18) The suffering did not come to them by surprise,

and their Lord did not take them to task while unaware; rather, He sent warnings to them by means of their prophet Hud (Eber) *peace be upon him* but they did not benefit from this, and the one who has been warned has no excuse.

Allah *the Exalted* then explains how He destroyed them: 'We released a howling wind against them on a day of terrible disaster.' (*al-Qamar*: 19) *Sarsar* (storm-wind) is a wind of intense cold, accompanied by an alarming cry which terrified them.

In another verse, this sound is called a *Sayha* (blast) (*Hud*: 94), and a blast is accompanied either by a fierce destructive wind or a blazing burning fire. On '...a day of terrible disaster' (*al-Qamar*: 19) is a day of destruction that was *mustamirr* which means both 'terrible' and continuous; it means that it continued to assail them for the time which Allah had decreed, until it utterly destroyed them. The meaning of 'It swept people away...' (*al-Qamar*: 20) is that this fierce wind plucked them from their places, picked them up and flung them, scattering their belongings.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...like uprooted palm trunks.' (*al-Qamar*: 20) You know what happens to the trunk of a palm tree when you cut off its upper part and uproot it from the ground. It is as though the wind was so strong it uprooted them from the ground, dragged them from their houses, and flung them as though they were uprooted palm-trunks. He then repeats: 'How [terrible] was My punishment and [the fulfillment of] My warnings!' (*al-Qamar*: 21) He repeats it to repeat the admonition and also because the suffering inflicted upon those people was varied, taking each of them to task with the kind of punishment and requital which Allah *the Almighty* willed. This is the absoluteness of Allah's Power when it deals with punishment; Allah *the Exalted* has absolute Power to give blessings and also absolute Power to deal out retribution. He says: 'And We punished each one of them for their sins: some We struck with a violent storm, some were overcome by a sudden blast, some We made the earth swallow, and some We drowned. It was not Allah Who wronged them; they wronged themselves.' (*al-'Ankabut*: 40)

The discourse then repeats once more. Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدْرِكٍ ﴿٢٢﴾

**We have made it easy to learn lessons from the Quran:
will anyone take heed? [22] (The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 22)**

This is in order to emphasise the fact that Allah has made the Quran easy; ‘...Will anyone take heed?’ (*al-Qamar*: 22) It is as though He is seeking out one person to take admonition, 'O, mankind is there no one who will take the signs of the Quran to heart and reflect upon them?'

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُودُ بِالنُّذُرِ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَقَالُوا أَبَشَرًا مِمَّنَّا وَاحِدًا نَتَّبِعُهُ إِنَّا إِذَا لَفِيَ ضَلَالٍ وَسُعُرٍ ﴿٢٤﴾
أَمْ لَقِيَ الذِّكْرُ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ بَيْنِنَا بَلْ هُوَ كَذَّابٌ أَشِرٌّ ﴿٢٥﴾ سَيَعْلَمُونَ غَدًا مَنِ الْكَذَّابُ الْأَشِرُّ ﴿٢٦﴾

**The people of Thamud also rejected the warnings [23] they said,
‘What? A man? Why should we follow a lone man from
amongst ourselves? That would be misguided; quite insane! [24]
Would a message be given to him alone out of all of us? No,
he is an insolent liar!’ [25] Tomorrow they will know who is
the insolent liar [26] (The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 23 - 26)**

The True Lord tells us here about the people of our master Saleh (Shelah) *peace be upon him* who were called Thamud and dwelled in Mada'in Saleh near Medina. He says: ‘The people of Thamud also rejected the warnings.’ (*al-Qamar*: 23) The word *nudhur* is the plural of *nadheer*, which literally means ‘warner’, namely a messenger. Allah *Glorified is He* says to His Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: ‘You [O, Muhammad] are not but a warner.’ (*Fatir*: 23)

The word *nudhur* is in the plural for this verse because the one who denies one messenger has essentially denied all messengers since they have a common goal and a common way, the essence of which is the worship of Allah *Glorified is He* alone with no partner.

Read this: ‘Allah took a pledge from the prophets by saying, "If, after I have bestowed Scripture and wisdom upon you, a messenger comes confirming what you have been given, you must believe in him and support him. Do you

affirm this and accept My pledge as binding upon you?"..." (Al-'Imran: 81) The duty of a messenger is to counsel his people that when a new messenger comes to them with a way akin to the way he has brought them, they must follow him believe in him and aid him.

The usual thing is that people are loyal to their messenger, for he teaches them: 'The goal is one and the way is one, and if anyone comes to you and has these attributes, then follow him and do not oppose him, for we are all enlightened by the same lamp.'

Allah *Glorified is He* then tells us the Words by which these people denied: 'They said, "What? A man? Why should we follow a lone man from amongst ourselves? ..."' (al-Qamar: 24) This is akin to what the Quraysh said, 'and they said, "Why was this Quran not sent down to a distinguished man, from either of the two cities?"' (az-Zukhruf: 31)

Thamud found it far-fetched that they should follow a single man amongst them, namely our master Saleh (Shelah) *peace be upon him* when he was merely a human being. They objected to his being human and his being just one man. So, what do you want? They wanted a group of people all sharing in the delivery of this message so that all of them would be equal.

The reality is that the prophet does not bring anything of his own invention, nor of anyone else's invention; he brings forth Revelation from Allah *the Exalted*. Doubting a messenger or prophet because he is human is rebutted by Allah's Words: 'Indeed, if We had sent an angel as messenger, We would still have sent him in the form of a man, so increasing their confusion.' (al-An'am: 9) Furthermore, an angel cannot be a role model for human beings.

They then said, 'Most surely we shall in that case', which means if they followed one man, they would '...be in sure error and distress!' (al-Qamar: 24) *Su'ur* means madness, and it also means *sa'ir* (the flames) of hell.

Their Words 'Would a message be given to him alone out of all of us? ...' (al-Qamar: 25) are a question by which they intended to express incredulity and denial of this. 'How could the reminder have been given to him, and the Message been revealed to him from amongst all of us?' By saying this, they were declaring that they deemed themselves to be equal to Allah's prophet,

Saleh (Shelah) *peace be upon him*; yet, prophethood is not a matter of equality because Allah *the Exalted* elects whomever He wills from amongst His servants: '...But Allah knows best where to place His Messages...' (*al-An'am*: 124). He also says: 'Allah chooses messengers from amongst the angels and from amongst men. Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.' (*al-Hajj*: 75)

They then took their denial to another level and made a bold accusation of lying: '..."No, he is an insolent liar!"' (*al-Qamar*: 25) A liar is someone who speaks untruths, and this was a false accusation, for our master Saleh (Shelah) *peace be upon him* never told them anything untrue.

Ashir (insolent) means 'very arrogant and haughty', or a person who is not content with his situation and is unhappy with what he has; he wishes to usurp authority over others and make himself the leader of his people so that everyone follows him.

So, Allah *Glorified is He* rebuts them by saying: 'Tomorrow they will know who is the insolent liar' (*al-Qamar*: 26); this means on the Day of Resurrection and Requit. The word 'Tomorrow' is used to refer to the near future, namely the day which comes after the present day, but in this verse, Allah *the Almighty* calls the Resurrection 'Tomorrow'. Why is this? It is because it is indeed near to us, for there is nothing between you and it but your own death. Therefore, He says about it: 'The imminent Hour draws near.' (*an-Najm*: 57) He also says: 'Ever closer to people draws their reckoning, while they turn away, heedless.' (*al-Anbiya'*: 1) In this chapter we are discussing, He says: 'The Hour draws near...' (*al-Qamar*: 1).

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...who is the insolent liar' (*al-Qamar*: 26)? This was a warning to them, along with being a casting back of their own accusation upon them, 'No, you are the boastful liars, for you hate and envy Saleh (Shelah) because of how his Lord has chosen him for prophethood from amongst you. Yet, this is Allah's Grace which He gives to whomever He wills, and so you ought to have believed in him, not opposed him.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِنَّا مُرْسِلُوا النَّاقَةَ فَنَنَ لَهُمْ فَارْتَقِبْهُمْ وَاصْطَبِرْ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَنَبِّئُهُمْ أَنَّ الْمَاءَ قِسْمَةٌ بَيْنَهُمْ كُلُّ شَرْبٍ مُّخَضَّرٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَادَّوْا صَاحِبَهُمْ فَنَعَاطَى فَعَقَرَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ عَذَابِي وَنُذْرٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَكَانُوا كَهَشِيمِ الْمُحْتَظِرِ ﴿٣١﴾

For We shall send them a she-camel to test them: so watch them [Salih] and be patient. [27] Tell them the water is to be shared between them: each one should drink in turn.’ [28]

But they called their companion, who took a sword and hamstrung the camel. [29] How [terrible] was My punishment and [the fulfilment of] My warnings! [30] We released a single mighty blast against them and they ended up like a fence-maker’s dry sticks[31] (The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 27 - 31)

The she-camel that was brought forth by our master Saleh (Shelah) was a sign, a plainly visible sign which they themselves had suggested when they said to their prophet, ‘Bring forth for us a she-camel out of this rock.’⁽¹⁾ Indeed, the she-camel did miraculously come forth from the rock.

So, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘For We shall send them a she-camel to test them...’ (*al-Qamar*: 27). This means that the she-camel is a trial and a test for them: Will they believe in Allah *the Most High* or disbelieve? ‘So [O, Saleh (Shelah)] watch them’ (*al-Qamar*: 27) means that Saleh (Shelah) should watch what their reaction will be ‘...and be patient.’ (*al-Qamar*: 27) Prophet Saleh (Shelah) *peace be upon him* should be patient in the face of their stubbornness and in the face of their assaults and their denials; he must not expect his call to them to yield fruit immediately.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Tell them the water is to be shared between them...’ (*al-Qamar*: 28). As long as the she-camel was a miracle, it has a special position regarding its food and drink, and Allah made it clear to them that they were to divide the water they drank between them and the she-camel.

He says: ‘...each one should drink in turn.’ (*al-Qamar*: 28) They each had their open apportioned share of drink which came in turns; they would drink on their day and not go near the water on the she-camel’s day; however,

(1) Narrated by Ibn Kathir in his *Tafsir (al-A'raf: 73)*

on the day when they did not drink, the she-camel would give them enough of its milk to suffice any need for water on that day.

In the chapter of *al-A'raf*, this verse speaks about what the she-camel ate: 'To the people of Thamud We sent their brother Saleh (Shelah). He said, "My people, serve Allah. You have no deity other than He. A clear sign has come to you now from your Lord. This is Allah's she-camel—a sign for you—so let her graze in Allah's land and do not harm her in any way, or you will be struck by a painful torment.'" (*al-A'raf*: 73)

However, they did not understand this warning: '...and do not harm her in any way...' (*al-A'raf*: 73); they did not believe in this sign, so they began inclining towards the notion of slaying the she-camel, resolving upon doing so. A foolish and wicked man amongst them, a 'thug' as they say, volunteered to do it; they call him 'the ruddy-faced man of Thamud', and scholars tell us his name was Qaydar ibn Salif.

The proof that he was one of the most foolish and wretched of people is that when he wanted to hobble the she-camel, he had nothing to do it with, so he snatched a sword from one of the others and hobbled it with it. They were responsible for this deed since not only did they agree together to do it, but they also cooperated in doing it.

When they did this, they brought upon themselves this chastisement: 'We released a single mighty blast against them ...' (*al-Qamar*: 31). A blast is a terrifying and destructive sound; scholars say that Jibril (Gabriel) *peace be upon him* shouted out, and this was enough to utterly destroy them.⁽¹⁾

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...and they ended up like a fence-maker's dry sticks.' (*al-Qamar*: 31) The True Lord *the Most High* compares them to *hasheem*, which means dried up twigs that the wind blows here and there. '*Al-muhtadhir*', (fence-maker) is a farmer who makes a pen for his sheep out of these twigs. So, when this blast struck them, it overtook them exactly like the manner of a Mighty, Powerful One, making them like dry sticks.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* repeats the verse:

(1) Narrated by At-Tabari in his *Tafsir*

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدْكِرٍ ﴿٣٢﴾

**We have made it easy to learn lessons from the Quran:
will anyone take heed? [32] (The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 32)**

Observe that the discourse keeps repeating this verse and mentioning the Quran after each mention of a community that denied the truth. This is because the Quran is the final Revelation which encompasses all those which came before it as Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘We sent to you [O, Muhammad] the Scripture with the truth, confirming the Scriptures that came before it and with final authority over them...’ (*al-Ma‘ida*: 48).

Then, the True Lord *the Most High* says:

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ بِالَّذُرِّ ﴿٣٣﴾ إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حَاصِبًا إِلَّا آلَ لُوطٍ نَجَّيْنَاهُمْ بِسَحَرٍ ﴿٣٤﴾
نِعْمَةٌ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي مَنْ شَكَرَ ﴿٣٥﴾

**The people of Lot rejected the warnings. [33] We released a
stone- bearing wind against them, all except the family of
Lot. We saved them before dawn [34] as a favour from Us:
this is how We reward the thankful [35]
(The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 33 - 35)**

After beginning their discourse on the communities who denied the messengers with the people of Nuh (Noah), 'Ad and then Thamud, the verses now move on to their brethren, the people of Lut (Lot). What all these communities have in common is that they denied Allah's messengers *peace be upon them*. Thus, we find that the Quranic discourse says of each of these communities that they denied *Al-nudhur* (the warnings) (*al-Qamar*: 33).

We said before that the word *nudhur* literally means ‘messengers’, for the one who denies one messenger has essentially denied all messengers, for they all share a common purpose and a common way.

The verses now take us directly to a scene of chastisement and requital: ‘We released a stone-bearing wind against them...’ (*al-Qamar*: 34). *Al-hasib* is a strong wind which blew upon them and pelted them with little pebbles by means of which Allah *the Almighty* rained down destruction upon them.

Allah *Glorified is He* only saved the family of Lut (Lot) before dawn. No one was spared from this suffering but the kinsfolk of Lut (Lot) and those who believed in him. They were saved at the break of dawn, and to be absolutely precise, the final part of the night, right before dawn. Allah *the Exalted* saved them as a blessing from Him, and that is how He rewards the thankful.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَلَقَدْ أَنْذَرَهُمْ بَطْشَتَنَا فَتَمَارَوْا بِالنُّذُرِ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ رَاودُوهُ عَنْ صَيفِيهِ، فَطَمَسْنَا
أَعْيُنَهُمْ فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي وَنُذِرِ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَبَحَهُمْ بُكْرَةً عَذَابٌ مُسْتَقَرٌّ ﴿٣٨﴾
فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي وَنُذِرِ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَّكِرٍ ﴿٤٠﴾

He warned them of Our onslaught, but they dismissed the warning [36] they even demanded his guests from him – so We sealed their eyes – ‘Taste My [terrible] punishment and [the fulfilment of] My warnings!’ [37] and early in the morning a punishment seized them that still remains [38] “‘Taste My [terrible] punishment and [the fulfilment of] My warnings!’ [39] We have made it easy to learn lessons from the Quran: will anyone take heed? [40] (The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 36 - 40)

Lut (Lot) *peace be upon him* warned his people of Allah's onslaught and chastisement. He warned them of how sternly Allah takes those who disbelieved in the messengers. Other verses give further details of this story and show how Lut (Lot) engaged in debates with his people. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'He said, "O, my people! These are my daughters. They are purer for you, so guard against [the punishment of] Allah and do not disgrace me with regard to my guests. Is there not amongst you one right-minded man?"' (*Hud*: 78)

However, they denied him *peace be upon him* and stubbornly cast doubt on these warnings. When he warned them of Allah's punishing Might, they stubbornly cast doubt on it; that is, they doubted it, denied and rejected it and then persisted in the wickedness in which they had been indulging. In addition, they even demanded that he give up his guests (to them).

The Arabic word for guest (*dayf*) refers to both the singular and the plural as is the case here. This is because whether one, two, or three guests come to

you, you do not differentiate between one guest, and another but must treat them all the same as though they are one guest. Thus, the Quranic discourse refers to them using the singular form on more than one occasion. Allah says: 'And inform them of the guests of Ibrahim (Abraham).' (*al-Hijr*: 51) He also says: 'has there come to you information about the honored guests of Ibrahim (Abraham)?' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 24) Yet, Ibrahim (Abraham) did not have only one guest, but several. They demanded his guests from him and asked him to leave them so that they could do to them the abhorrent things they were accustomed to; they, namely the people of Lut (Lot), saw that they were the most exceedingly beautiful people they had ever seen which is why they thought that they could sodomise them. They did not know that those guests were not human beings but angels. Thus, Heaven intervened immediately to protect Lut (Lot) and preserve his dignity.

Thus, Allah *the Almighty* sealed their eyes and blinded them which mean that He took away their sight. Other scholars say that He *the Almighty* completely wiped their eyes from their faces so that it looked as though they had never had eyes to begin with.

As a result, we observe that all the stories of the communities before Lut's (Lot's) were followed by the words 'How [terrible] was My punishment and [the fulfilment of] My warnings ' (*al-Qamar*: 30). Yet as far as the people of Lut (Lot) were concerned, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Taste My [terrible] punishment and [the fulfilment of] My warnings.' (*al-Qamar*: 37) In other words, they taste the suffering which they deserve. The word 'taste' in this verse imparts irony and mockery towards them because of the enormity of their sin and the vileness of their deed.

Thereafter, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And early in the morning a punishment seized them, and it still remains.' (*al-Qamar*: 37) The suffering befell them in the early morning as Allah says: 'But when it shall descend in their court, evil shall then be the morning of the warned ones.' (*as-Saffat*: 177) There is a special wisdom behind the way the suffering befell the deniers from the people of Lut (Lot) by morning. The reason for this is that early morning is a time when people are usually still asleep or just rising from sleep, so when suffering befalls them at this time, they are surprised and cannot flee what is befalling them which is more severe on them.

Once again comes the mention of the Quran as Allah says: 'We have made it easy to learn lessons from the Quran. Will anyone take heed?' (*al-Qamar*: 17) This is because there is a lesson to learn in the story of each of these deniers, so after each story, Allah *Glorified is He* repeats: 'Will anyone take heed?' That is, is there anyone to reflect and take admonition from such people?

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَ آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ النُّذُرُ ﴿٤١﴾ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كُلِّهَا فَأَخَذْنَاهُمْ أَخَذَ عَزِيزٌ مُّقْدِرٌ ﴿٤٢﴾

**The people of Pharaoh also received warnings [41]
They rejected all Our signs so We seized them with all
Our might and power[42] (The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 41 - 42)**

Allah speaks to us here about another group of deniers, namely the people of Pharaoh, who denied and rejected Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* and to the clear signs he brought forth and which numbered nine in all, i.e. the staff, the hand, etc.

Thus, the consequence of this was that Allah took them with all His Might and Power. 'To take' means 'to grasp firmly', and the action of taking is determined by the power of the taker. When the taker is Allah, it is the Most Powerful, which is why He *the Almighty* mentions two of His Divine Attributes in this context, namely *the Almighty* and the All-Powerful. *The Almighty* is the One Who overcomes all and cannot be overcome, and The Powerful is the One Who possesses absolute power which is never exhausted.

We said before that the mission of Musa (Moses) concerning Pharaoh was to save the children of Israel from his clutches and from the suffering which the people of Pharaoh afflicted upon them as Allah says: 'therefore send the children of Israel with us and do not torment them.' (*Ta Ha*: 47) This was the essential mission and then Musa's (Moses') preaching to Pharaoh was only part of this mission; he began to call him to Allah and to explain to him matters of doctrine and religion.

The reason for the enmity which existed between Pharaoh and the children of Israel was that when the Hyksos entered Egypt, the children of Israel aided them and helped them to defeat the Pharaohs; the children of Israel staying at

that time in Egypt were all of the descendants of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph). When the Pharaohs defeated the Hyksos and drove them out of Egypt, they paid the children of Israel back with mistreatment and cruel torment; so, Allah *the Exalted* sent Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* not to preach to Pharaoh and his people, but to free the children of Israel from this torment.

You all know the story of how Prophet Musa (Moses) left Egypt with the children of Israel and how Pharaoh followed them with his armies and how the sea divided and Musa (Moses) and the children of Israel were saved by a clear miracle: when Musa (Moses) struck the sea with his staff, it divided and became like two great mountains. Scholars say that when they were saved from both Pharaoh and drowning, they passed by people who were keeping vigil before idols. Thus, the children of Israel said, 'O, Musa (Moses)! Make for us a god as they have [their] gods.' (*al-A'raf*: 138) The exegetes say that they asked this of Musa (Moses) when their feet were still wet from crossing the sea. Thus, they denied the miracle of the signs at a time when it was all the more proper and fitting that they believe in Allah Who have rescued them and saved them from suffering.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

أَكْفَارُكُمْ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أُولَٰئِكُمْ أَمْ لَكُم بَرَاءَةٌ فِي الزُّبُرِ ﴿٤٣﴾ أَمْ يَقُولُونَ نَحْنُ جَمِيعٌ مُّنتَصِرُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾
سَيُهْزَمُ الْجَمْعُ وَيُوَلُّونَ الدُّبُرَ ﴿٤٥﴾ بَلِ السَّاعَةُ مَوْعِدُهُمْ وَالسَّاعَةُ أَذًى وَأَمْرٌ ﴿٤٦﴾

‘Are your disbelievers any better than these? Were you given an exemption in the Scripture?’ [43] Do they perhaps say, ‘We are a great army and we shall be victorious’? [44] Their forces will be routed and they will turn tail and flee. [45] But the Hour is their appointed time –the Hour is more severe and bitter [46] (The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 43 - 46)

After telling us the stories of the communities of old who denied and rejected the messengers, starting with the people of Nuh (Noah), passing by the people of 'Ad, then the people of Thamud, the people of Lut (Lot) and ending with the people of Pharaoh, the Quran now returns to the disbelievers of Mecca who denied and rejected Prophet Muhammad, who opposed him

and who stood in the way of his mission. It comes back to mention their story with Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* after it shed light on the punishments that afflicted the previous peoples who denied the Messages of their messengers.

Allah *the Exalted* asks whether the disbelievers of Mecca are better than other deniers upon whom Allah's Retribution and Chastisement were unleashed, or have the disbelievers of Mecca been given an exemption in the ancient books that they would not be punished! Has Allah given you a Promise that He would not chastise you?! Do you perhaps say, 'We are a great army, and we shall be victorious?' Thus, you were deluded by your large numbers and your collective agreement on falsehood.

Therefore, the Quran was revealed to debate with the disbelievers of Mecca with the aim of convincing them. It let them choose from three possibilities: Are they better than the deniers of the Truth who came before you and were destroyed by Allah? Or have they been given immunity in the Scriptures of old or promised that Allah would not chastise them? Or were their numbers so great that they could not be overcome? All the three possibilities are rejected, for they were not better than those who preceded them, nor did they have any immunity from chastisement because Allah has given immunity to no one, nor allowed anyone to deny and reject His Messengers.

Furthermore, concerning the third possibility, He *the Almighty* says: 'Their forces will be routed and they will turn tail and flee.' (*al-Qamar*: 45) This means that these hosts, of which you, O, disbelievers of Mecca, are so proud, shall be routed.

This verse was revealed at the time when the disbelievers' oppression of the Muslims was exceptionally severe. Muslims were a minority and could not defend themselves. Therefore, when 'Umar *Allah be pleased with him* heard this verse he said: 'What forces are these that will be routed when we are unable even to defend ourselves and protect our lives?' However, when the Battle of Badr took place and the forces of disbelief were indeed routed, he said, 'Indeed, Allah spoke the truth.'

Therefore, when you see the Quran declare things in the future tense, you should know that they are definitely true and that they will inevitably occur

because the Quran has recorded them and preserved them. Usually, one is keen to record things that others owe him, not what he owes others.

It is the Quran that clearly mentions that the hosts of the disbelievers would be routed, thus events would never ever contradict this Divine Decree; this is proven by the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'And most surely Our host alone shall be the victorious ones.' (*as-Saffat*: 173) As long as people are a true host that fight for the Cause of Allah, succour is assured for them. Yet, if they fail to live up to the conditions of being Allah's Hosts, succour will not be theirs; Muslim's defeat in the Battle of Uhud when they disobeyed Prophet Muhammad is a case in point.

Moreover, Allah *the Almighty* says that they will turn tail and flee. They will flee and be routed. This is the punishment that will afflict them in this world, but the punishment of the Hour is more severe and bitter. The Resurrection will be the time for recompense and punishment. The Last Hour will be most calamitous and most bitter. It will be more painful and bitter than what they suffer in this world because the calamity of this world has an end, and its wounds can be healed, whilst the calamity of the Hereafter is the greatest calamity, which neither ends nor heals.

Before the beginning of the Battle of Badr, it is amazing that our prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* stood on the battlefield and pointed with his staff saying, 'This is where so-and-so will die, and this is where so-and-so will die.' He was referring to the chieftains of the Quraysh.⁽¹⁾ Indeed they were all slain in the very places where Prophet Muhammad had indicated. Look at this trust in Allah's Succour for His Messenger Muhammad; he *peace and blessings be upon him* made these declarations and was not worried that the events of the battle would prove him wrong, despite the fact that battles are always to-and-fro melees, and no one could ever predict what will happen with this much detail. Yet, this was the declaration of him who spoke not from caprice.

Allah *Glorified is He* subsequently says:

(1) Narrated by Al-Bukhari, Abu Dawud, An-Nasa'i and Ahmad

إِنَّ الْمَجْرِمِينَ فِي ضَلَالٍ وَسُعُرٍ ﴿٤٧﴾ يَوْمَ يُسْحَبُونَ فِي
النَّارِ عَلَى وُجُوهِهِمْ ذُقُوا مَسَّ سَقَرٍ ﴿٤٨﴾

**Truly the wicked are misguided and quite insane [47] on the
Day when they are dragged on their faces in Hell. ‘Feel the
touch of Hell’ [48] (The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 47 - 48)**

Indeed, the deniers of the Truth are misguided for they have recognised the truth yet refused to follow it. They are quite insane on the Day of Judgment. The Arabic word for insane has two meanings. It either means a blazing fire or else a kind of madness. However, the following verse suggests that the meaning here may actually be blazing fire.

On the Day of Resurrection, these wicked people will be dragged on their faces into Hellfire. The face is the noblest part of a person, and therefore, he tries to protect it and keep it from harm. It is the part through which man's identity is known and the most dignified part of him. For example, when a car comes past you and splashes you with water, you spontaneously raise your hands to protect your face without even thinking about it. Thus, the most degrading and humiliating of things will be the on the Day when the disbelievers are dragged on their faces into hell. The word ‘taste’ mocks at and humiliates them. Furthermore, Allah *the Most High* mentions only ‘the touch’ because the mere touch of it is enough to inflict suffering and degradation upon them. The word *saqar* is one of the names of hell; some say it is the name of a valley in hell.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَمَا أَمْرُنَا إِلَّا وَاحِدَةٌ كَلَمْحٍ بِالْبَصَرِ ﴿٥٠﴾

**We have created all things in due measure [49]
when We ordain something it happens at once, in the
blink of an eye [50] (The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 49 - 50)**

The antecedent of the pronoun 'We' is Allah *Glorified is He*. Everything in the universe, great, or small, from the atom to the galaxy, is created in due and precise measure and proportion set by Allah Who has the All-Power to do all that He wills and decrees. He is the only deity who has no partner. There is no other power which could change His Measure or Decree.

Therefore, concerning the testimony of faith 'there is no deity but Allah', we previously stated that Allah *the Almighty* testified to Himself even before creation did so; He *the Most High* says: 'Allah bears witness that there is no god but He...' (*Al-Imran*: 18).

Were this testimony not utterly true, He *the Almighty* would not be able to bring a thing into being by saying, 'Be!' since if He had a partner, this partner would say to the thing, 'Do not be!' So, all creation belongs solely to Allah, and all the command belongs solely to Him. Thus, He says about the earth, which is one of His created beings: 'And obeys its Lord and it must.' (*al-Inshiqaq*: 2) The earth hears and listens to receive the command.

Consider the story of Musa's (Moses') mother, when Allah *Glorified is He* said to her: '...then when you fear for him, cast him into the river and do not fear nor grieve; surely We will bring him back to you and make him one of the messengers.' (*al-Qasas*: 7)

Allah *Glorified is He* reassured Musa's (Moses') mother and gave her this promise that her son would survive and would be one of Allah's messengers. The reason for this is that the sea belongs to Allah and thus would obey His Command to protect the boy and to bear him to the place it was supposed to. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* testified for Himself that there is no god but He and ordained His Decree in His Universe, the Decree of One Who knows that there is no god but He and that no one can defy His command. Since He has stated it, reality never contradicts it.

Therefore, we said that the first evidence proving faith in Allah is that He Himself declared that He alone is the Creator and that no one else made a counterclaim; He *the Almighty* says: 'Say: If there were with Him gods as they say, then certainly they would have been able to seek a way to the Lord of power.' (*al-Isra*': 42)

When Allah ordains something, it happens at once, in the blink of an eye. This means that He does not have to repeat the commandment, for His commands always come to fruition immediately. He expresses this in another verse by saying: 'Our Word for a thing when We intend it is only that We say to it, "Be", and it is.' (*an-Nahl*: 40) Thus, a single word of two letters, 'Be', is immediately obeyed. The word 'and' here expresses order and consequence.

Furthermore, Allah says: 'He said, "Even so, your Lord says: 'It is easy to Me.'"' (*Maryam*: 21) He also says: 'And this is not difficult for Allah.' (*Ibrahim*: 20)

Reflect here on the swiftness of the response; the Divine Order takes place in a blink of an eye meaning 'a quick unfocussed glance'. Allah *Glorified is He* is likening the swiftness of the response to the swiftest and the most instantaneous thing known to man, namely the twinkling of an eye. All things are the created beings of Allah. They know their Creator and respond to His commands without delay because it is their nature to respond and obey. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Surely, We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to be unfaithful to it and feared from it, and man has turned unfaithful to it; surely, he is unjust, ignorant.' (*al-Ahzab*: 72)

He *Glorified is He* subsequently says:

وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا أَشْيَاعَكُمْ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ ﴿٥١﴾
وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ فَعَلُوهُ فِي الزُّبُرِ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَكُلُّ صَغِيرٍ وَكَبِيرٍ مُسْتَطَرٌّ ﴿٥٣﴾

We have destroyed the likes of you in the past. Will anyone take heed? [51] Everything they do is noted in their records; [52] every action, great or small, is recorded [53] (The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 51 - 53)

Allah *the Almighty* addresses the disbelievers of Mecca by saying that He had destroyed people like them in the past. He *the Most High* destroyed those who followed the same way of resistance, opposition, denial, and rejection of the messengers throughout the ages. Therefore, will anyone from amongst you, O, disbelievers of Mecca, take heed? Who will take admonition and reflect on the lessons of history and the Way of Allah with His Messages?

Everything the deniers of the Truth did is recorded in the books to be evidence against those who committed such deeds. Allah *the Almighty* says: 'He utters not a word but there is by him a watcher at hand.' (*Qaf*: 18) If we are now able to watch events with images and sound in every detail, why should we find it hard to imagine that Allah could have the power to do so? The mind which beholds the scientific and technological advances in the field of sound and image recording will certainly arrive to faith in the angelic scribes

who record all of man's deeds. Every action, great or small, is recorded and written in the Preserved Tablet.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَهَرٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ فِي مَقْعَدٍ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِكٍ مُّقْنَدٍ ﴿٥٥﴾

The righteous will live securely among Gardens and rivers [54] secure in the presence of an all-powerful Sovereign [55] (The Quran, *al-Qamar*: 54 - 55)

This is the conclusion of the matter and the ultimate goal to which we must strive. It is to achieve righteousness which will lead us to Gardens and rivers. Allah does not say a garden and a river; rather, He says gardens and rivers.

Allah prepares for them, namely believers, a secure seat. A seat is where one sits, for a person may sit in a place which is rightfully his, meaning a place which is good and of which he is worthy, whilst another may sit in a seat of evil which is not rightfully his and of which he is not worthy. A believer who truly achieves righteousness is worthy to sit in this place which receives him gladly. Therefore, when we look into the word 'secure seat' in the Quran, we find that it is something for which the faithful should hope and pray. Read this: 'and say: "My Lord! Make me enter a goodly entering, cause me to go forth a goodly going forth and grant me from near You power to assist [me]."' (*al-Isra*': 80)

If you want to begin any action, call upon Allah and ask Him to enter, or begin, it in a correct and beneficial manner, that is, to enter a goodly entering by having Allah aiding you to do it so that you do it properly and sincerely and in a way pleasing to Him *the Almighty* and His Messenger. Likewise, when you finish doing something, call upon Allah to bring you out of it in a manner which is true and sincere and to complete it for you with the same truth as that with which you began it.

Elsewhere, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And ordain for me a goodly mention among posterity.' (*ash-Shu'ara*': 84) The word 'goodly mention' in this verse symbolises remembrance and praise. Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* was asking Allah to make the praise directed towards him true and

not false. He wanted to be worthy of praise and not to be praised falsely or hypocritically. He was saying, 'Make them praise me for what is true, not what is false. Furthermore, O, Allah, make their praise be for the goodness I truly have, which will be passed down to later generations.'

Thus, those who are eager for good at their entrance, their exit and in their praise as well as truth in their lives will come by means of it by obtaining truth in the Hereafter. It is a secure seat of honour in the presence of the All-Powerful Sovereign. By Allah, were this seat to be only in the presence of a king of this world, it would be a great honour and ennoblement. So, what do you think about a seat in the presence of Allah, the Sovereign? This is the One Who rules over all kings and all that they rule.

O, Allah, help us to attain this goal, inspire all our hearts sound belief and aid our bodies to act in proper accordance with it, by adhering to the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad so that he may take us all by the hand and lead us in his company to a seat of truth in the presence of a Sovereign Who determines all things! Amen. The word 'Sovereign' is one of the Names of Allah that refers to His Absolute Power and Might.

One of the rhetorical features of the Quran is that it brings together opposing concepts because opposites highlight each other's beauty. Thus, after concluding this chapter with the Lofty Name 'Sovereign', Allah begins the next chapter *ar-Rahman*, by saying: 'He is the Lord of Mercy.' (*ar-Rahman*: 1) Thus, the Sovereign Who determines all things is also the Most Merciful.

the chapter of

ar-Rahman

In the Name of God,⁽¹⁾ the Most Merciful, the Dispenser of Mercy

The chapter of *ar-Rahman* (The Merciful). Allah *Glorified is He* says:



It is the Lord of Mercy [1] (The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 1)

The Most Merciful is one of Allah's Most Beautiful Names; it is derived from the Attribute of Mercy which means to give favours even if the recipient does not deserve them. Therefore, we have been taught to say before beginning any action, 'In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, and the Dispenser of Mercy.' If you have been sinful, you might be ashamed to begin your action with the Name of the One you have disobeyed. Nevertheless, Allah orders you to say it, for He is the Most Merciful.

The attribute is an intensive noun derived from 'mercy', and its hyperbole form has two aspects: intensiveness of the attribute itself, thus meaning 'vast mercy' and intensiveness in the number of mercies for those to whom this mercy is shown, meaning that no one mercy can take the place of any other. This is the meaning of Allah being the Lord of Mercy. He is the One Whose Mercy enfolds believer and disbeliever alike. He does not withhold from either of them if they utilise the means at their disposal as He *the Almighty*

(1) The Islamic conception of 'Allah' is not the same as the Christian and Jewish conception of 'God'. However, the word 'Allah' does not refer to a tribal god or God of only Muslims, it refers to the Creator of the whole world, the One God (who has no son). We prefer, however, to use 'Allah' rather than 'God' as it has a unique character: it cannot be used to refer to any false gods and does not have any derivatives like goddess, gods, etc. It is a unique word used solely to describe the One God of this universe.

says: 'Whoever desires the gain of the Hereafter, We will give him more of that gain, and whoever desires the gain of this world, We give him of it, and in the Hereafter he has no portion.' (*ash-Shura*: 20) It is as though sinners and disbelievers are given blessings in this world because of the manifestation of the attribute of Mercy.

Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* is the Most Merciful in this world and the Giver of Mercy in the Hereafter. This is why they say 'the Most Merciful of this world, the Giver of Mercy of the Hereafter'. This is because His Mercy in the Hereafter is only given to a believer, while a disbeliever will have no share of it.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ ۚ خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ ۚ عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ ۚ

Who taught the Quran [2] He created man [3] and taught him to communicate[4] (The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 2 - 4)

Allah *Glorified is He* revealed the Quran to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* by the intermediation of Jibril (Gabriel) *peace be upon him*; He *the Almighty* says: 'The Lord of Mighty Power has taught him, The Lord of Strength; so he attained completion.' (*an-Najm*: 5-6) He also says about him: 'The processor of strength, having an honourable place with the Lord of the Dominion.' (*at-Takwir*: 20)

Thus, the knowledge of Prophet Muhammad was imparted from Heaven and not from the earth. Knowledge is something that could only bring absolute good to man in his conduct. When knowledge comes from earth, it is a mixture of good and evil. This is why we said before that illiteracy is usually a weakness and a flaw; yet, it was an honour for Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* because it meant that He did not take his knowledge from any human being but learnt all he knew from Heaven.

It is the wisdom of Allah that the community of Muhammad be an unlettered nation of nomads who had no civilisation and were not known to be advanced in science or any other of life's fields. Thus, when Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was sent from amongst them, he established a new civilisation for them and gave them the power to smash the civilisations of Persia and

Byzantium at the same time. This means that their power came from this religion which came from Heaven and took its teachings from the Lord of all humanity, not from any human being.

It is curious that Allah *Glorified is He* speaks of '*Ilm* (knowledge) first before speaking of creation. He did this in order to teach us the importance of knowledge and establishing guidance and principles before we begin to act. Before creating man, Allah *the Almighty* established guidance for his life. This is akin to how a manufacturer makes an 'instruction booklet' for his product, explaining how to make sure it works properly. We see that machines break down and stop working if they are not used in accordance with the instructions given for their use; likewise, human beings only go wrong when they contravene the guidance of their Lord.

Thus, this means that the establishment of guidance came before the creation of man so that when man came into existence, he found the guidance which told him: 'Do this and do not do that; this is lawful and that is unlawful, and this is good and that is evil.'

One of the meanings of the mercy included in the Quran is that the merciful person/object takes care of the person/object to whom the mercy is shown in a way which preserves its constituents and keeps them safe and unblemished. Allah says: 'And We reveal of the Quran that which is a healing and a mercy to believers.' (*al-Isra*: 82) Scholars say this means a cure for a disease that comes from heedlessness. Thus, we should take into account that mercy prevents the affliction of a disease from the very beginning.

Concerning the circumstances behind the revelation of these verses, they say that the disbelievers of Mecca accused Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* of learning the Quran from a non-Arab man. They said, as the Quran tells: 'And certainly We know that they say, "Only a mortal teaches him."' (*an-Nahl*: 103) However, Allah answered them logically: 'The tongue of him whom they reproach is barbarous, and this is clear Arabic tongue.' (*an-Nahl*: 103) How could a non-Arab, without knowledge of Arabic, have come up with this eloquent Quran? Rather, the Quran came from on high and was sent down from Heaven; it did not come from earth.

Let us consider another meaning of mercy which we find in Words of Allah: 'Say: Call upon Allah or call upon, the Beneficent Allah.' (*al-Isra'*: 110) Allah *the Exalted* appends the Attribute of Mercy in this verse to the Attribute of Divinity. This is because divinity implies responsibility which can be difficult for the soul, so it was fitting to mention the Attribute of Mercy after it. It is as though Allah were saying to you: 'Do not worry, for the One Who has issued responsibility to you is the Most Merciful Whose Mercy enfolds all and Whose Most Mercifulness encompasses believer and disbeliever alike.'

Concerning the beginning of creation, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...Who created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six periods, and He is firmly established on the throne of authority, the Merciful Allah, so ask respecting it one aware.' (*al-Furqan*: 59) Allah *Glorified is He* after creating all creation established Himself upon His Throne meaning that He had control and command over all things. He thereby mentions the Attribute of Mercy by way of saying to us that His Power is not that of tyranny and despotism, but it is a Merciful Power.

It is even when speaking about the Hereafter and all the terrors it involves, He speaks of His Mercy: 'There is no one in the heavens and the earth but will come to the Merciful Allah as a servant.' (*Maryam*: 93) Allah is Ever Compassionate with His created beings, thus He gives them cause to hope for His Affection and His Love for them.

He *the Most High* mentions the Attribute of Mercy in the very first independent verse. The reason for this is when such Attribute is generally mentioned, nothing comes to one's mind but Allah. It combines all these concepts and flows through in every Divine Command.

Concerning the precedence of the matter of knowledge over that of creation, scholars have spoken about means and ends and which of them precedes the other. It is usually the case that the end comes after the means. For example, if you want to go to Alexandria, you use a mode of transport and follow the road which leads you there; that means that by using this means, you arrive at your destination which is Alexandria. A poet expressed this concept by saying:

Ah, who will show me my destination before I leave?

How could they, when destinations always come after journeys?

Indeed, people cannot know ends before they come to be. However, the Lord of mankind knows them in advance and from pre-eternity. He, therefore, informs you of the end. Thus, it is possible for ends to precede means. On the other hand, we say that you only followed the road to Alexandria because you already had it in mind; thus, the end existed before the means.

Furthermore, we can synthesise these two opinions by saying that when the end comes first, it is a plan because you define the desired end before you set out to use the means; however, when the means comes first, it is reality and implementation. Means takes us to the desired end. Thus, the means coming after the end represents prior planning, whereas the end coming after the means represents utilisation. In other words, the end comes before the means as motive, but when it comes after the means, it is an actual reality.

The ultimate purpose and end of the Quran is to impart doctrines, laws, ethics, and stories. Man's heart is the place of the doctrines, and their essence is to believe in One God without any partner of any kind. This faith has two essential sides, which are fear and hope. If you are in a state of goodness, safety and security, do not doubt that Allah might change this, and if you are in a state of severe difficulty and anguish, do not despair of the Mercy of Allah. When a heart is imbibed with this sound doctrine, it pumps it through the rest of the body, and therefore, the whole body acts in accordance with the heart's belief.

When you follow the laws, commands and ethics of the Quran, you find that the Mercy of the Most Merciful flows through the whole body. Where moral responsibility is concerned, the primary part of the body is the tongue and then comes the ear because it is the tongue that conveys and the ear that receives. When the Message is first conveyed from Allah, it must be accompanied by sincerity and trustworthiness because it is a Divine One.

Therefore we said, by way of praising Prophet Muhammad: *'Peace and blessings be upon you, O, Messenger of Allah. You are ear of goodness which received the final Message from Heaven and the tongue of sincerity which conveyed Allah's Will to creation!'* Allah prepared His Messenger Muhammad for this

task and endowed him with the necessary qualities of reception and conveying. Before he was sent forth, his people attested to this. As we know, there were those who believed in Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* before seeing any miracle to support his claim; they believed in him because of what they already knew of his moral character and nature.

Therefore, when Allah *the Exalted* spoke to his people about him, He said: 'Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.' (*al-Fath*: 29) This is as though He *the Almighty* were saying, 'Muhammad, whom you know, to whose character you have attested and upon whose sincerity and trustworthiness you are all agreed, is the Messenger of Allah to you.' It is as though the word 'Muhammad' and his very name offer a proof for his being the Messenger of Allah.

Moreover, the Quranic guidance is the instruction booklet that rectifies the motions of human life; it gives instructions for the protection of the tongue, commanding you to remember Allah and speak the truth and forbidding you from speaking falsehoods and vain words; it gives instructions for the protection of the ear, commanding you to listen to what is good for you and beneficial for your life and forbidding you from paying heed to what is false.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And when you see those who enter into false discourses about Our communications, withdraw from them.' (*al-An'am*: 68). He also says: 'And indeed He has revealed to you in the Book that when you hear Allah's communications disbelieved in and mocked at, do not sit with them until they enter into some other discourse; surely then you would be like them; surely Allah will gather together the hypocrites and the disbelievers in Hell.' (*an-Nisa'*: 140)

Thus, you find that the Quranic guidance protects your whole body for you by making clear to you what is lawful and what is unlawful and by the goodness it enjoins upon you and the evil from which it forbids you. Furthermore, when you reflect upon these commandments and prohibitions, you find that they are all manifestations of Allah's Mercy and that His Most Mercifulness is flowing through them all. If the motions of life are based on Allah's Guidance, security and ease will prevail, and the rights of all will be preserved, but if they are based on anything other than this guidance, then rights will be squandered, corruption will spread and honours will be violated.

Out of His Mercy, Allah forbade lying and false testimony because it wrest people's rights from them and gives those rights to others. Just reflect on the corruption which sweeps through society because of the violation of rights. Bearing false witness, cheating, stealing, usurping, embezzling, bribery, forgery, nepotism and other such things are forbidden by the Law, which is why the Quran calls them 'devouring the wealth of others wrongfully' as Allah says: 'O you who believe! Do not devour your property amongst yourselves falsely.' (*an-Nisa'*: 29) Is this not a Mercy of Allah upon us? Indeed, it is for we are mercifully spared from each other's injustice.

Thus, we say that the manifestation of 'The Most Merciful' flows through all the laws and teachings of the Divine Guidance. Even when He commands us to apply lawful retribution and decrees that murderers be executed, there is even mercy in this execution since it protects the murderer, the victim, and all society. When the prospective murderer knows that he will be executed if he does it, he will be less likely to go through with it.

Since Allah *the Almighty* created Adam *peace be upon him* and made him dwell in the Garden and gave him the test of obeying His command, all religious responsibilities spring from this Divine Mercy. As long as Adam obeyed the command, he remained in the Garden and enjoyed it; however, when he disobeyed it, he failed, his nakedness was exposed and his condition became wretched. From this experience, we learnt what the attitude of Satan is towards man. In other words, we must learn a lesson from what our father Adam experienced so that we are wary of contravening Allah's Guidance.

Read: 'Then his Lord chose him, so He turned to him and guided [him]. He said: "Get forth you two therefrom, all [of you], one of you [is] enemy to another. So there will surely come to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy. And whoever turns away from My reminder, his shall be a straitened life, and We will raise him on the day of resurrection, blind. He shall say, 'My Lord! Why have You raised me blind, and I was a seeing one indeed?' He will say, 'Even so, Our communications came to you, but you neglected them. Thus, you shall be forsaken this day.'"' (*Ta Ha*: 123-126)

Therefore, all responsibility is a manifestation of the Divine Mercy. Even when you contravene His Guidance, your Lord does not forsake you, and this Mercy does not leave you, for He has established the possibility of repentance for you and opened the door for you to return to Him by saying: 'Surely, Allah does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him and forgives what is besides that to whomsoever He pleases.' (*an-Nisa'*: 48) The very establishment of repentance itself manifests mercy.

Next, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And taught him to communicate.' (*ar-Rahman*: 4) To understand this verse, we refer to the verse 'who taught the Quran' (*ar-Rahman*: 2) where Allah *Glorified is He* did not explicitly state to whom He taught it. Thus, it means that He prepared the Quran and qualified it to be taught and then when He created man, He *the Almighty* taught him how to communicate. This means that He taught man, His vicegerent on earth.

'To communicate' means to be able to express what it is in your mind in a clear and plain way which the hearer understands. This means that we must have something in common which we all understand, namely language, and this is what Allah imparted unto Adam. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And He taught Adam all the names.' (*al-Baqara*: 31) Allah did as such so he *peace be upon him* could use them to express what was in his mind. The meaning of 'the names' is the individual name for every single thing. So, Adam is the source of all languages.

We said before that if we were to follow the chain of language back to its origin, we would come back to Adam *peace be upon him*. The child learns from his father who learned from his father, and so on until we come back to Adam. So, who taught Adam? His Lord taught him. Someone might say, 'Allah taught Adam the names of the things that existed in his environment, so he learnt the names of the sky, the earth, the sun, the moon, certain people and certain animals and so on; however, what about the names that were made after his time?'

We say in response that the imparting of the names to him means more than we understand from the concept of teaching alone. What it means is that He imparted unto him the tools of speech, to enable him to express the new names which he would see and to use what he was taught to discover new things which he had not known before. Television, for example, did not have a name before it was invented, but once it came along, they agreed on a name for it. This answers

the claim of those who say that language must be taken as it is in a fixed way. No, we say, this is not the case for those new words which come into being.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ بِحُسْبَانٍ ۝ وَالنَّجْمُ وَالشَّجَرُ يَسْجُدَانِ ۝

**The sun and the moon follow their calculated courses [5]
the plants and the trees submit to His designs [6]
(The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 5 - 6)**

The sun and the moon are two of the signs of Allah *the Almighty*. They follow their calculated courses that are precisely fixed. It is akin to what we say of a well-made clock, 'It never misses a beat', meaning that it is extremely precise.

Allah *Glorified is He* says elsewhere describing this precision: 'Neither is it allowable to the sun that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day; all float on in a sphere.' (*Ya Sin*: 40) Since Allah created the sun and moon, they have followed their courses without any deviation, and because they are so precise, Allah has made them measures and indicators of the passage of time. If the watch on your wrist did not run precisely, it would not be useful for telling the time.

The sun indicates for us the passage of day and night, while the moon indicates for us the passage of the months. The sun does this by rising and setting, whilst the moon by the stages it passes through during the month, starting from a crescent and then growing until it becomes full in the middle of the month after which it shrinks until it is as it was at its very beginning. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'He it is Who made the sun a shining brightness and the moon a light and ordained for it mansions that you might know the computation of years and the reckoning. Allah did not create it but with truth; He makes the signs manifest for a people who have knowledge.' (*Yunus*: 5)

The sun has its own light and heat; the moon reflects the light of the sun and does not produce heat. We may observe that the lunar month is shorter than the solar one because of the different motions of each; the sun has a different position every day. This is why the temples of Pharaohs have 365 apertures, so that the sun enters a different one of them every day. By means

of this, they were able to allow the sun to shine on Ramses' face on any given day of the year.

Out of His Wisdom, Allah has connected our daily worship and prayers to the sun and connected our monthly and annual acts of worship to the moon. If *Ramadan* was connected to the motion of the sun, for example, it would always fall at the same time of year. If it fell in June, for example, it would always be in June, and if it fell in January, it would always be in January. But its connection to the motion of the moon means that it falls in every part of the year, and all of us, at some point, have fasted *Ramadan* in summer and in winter. The same is the case for the pilgrimage.

You know that the difference between the solar and the lunar year is eleven days; this makes the responsibilities of worship easier and allows them to be fulfilled without ever breaking down, for the sun and the moon are two great cosmic signs which do not ever need to be maintained by human hands. They do their jobs by the Power of Allah and have done so since He created them.

Allah *the Almighty* says that plants and trees submit to His Designs. The Arabic word for plants can mean the stars of the sky, a meaning which is clear in the verse: 'And landmarks, and by the stars they find the right way.' (*an-Nahl*: 16) It can also mean herbage and plants which have no stalk.

Thus, these two verses bring together two different kinds of the signs of the universe: the sun and the moon are signs of the heavens, whilst herbage and trees are signs of the earth; the word 'plants' combines them. The sun and the moon are together because they are of one kind and so are the herbs and the trees: one of the heavens, the other of earth.

They all submit to the Will of the Creator. In many other verses, Allah *Glorified is He* makes it clear that these inanimate objects and plants prostrate before Him and glorify Him in the way that suits them. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Do you not see that Allah is He Whom obeys whoever is in the heavens and whoever is in the earth, along with the sun, the moon and the stars, and the mountains and the trees, and the animals and many of the people; many there are against whom chastisement has become necessary. Whomsoever Allah abases, there is none who can make him honorable; surely, Allah does what He pleases.' (*al-Hajj*: 18)

This is why we hear biologists saying that plants draw their nourishment from the ground by means of capillaries; yes, it is utterly true that plants have capillaries which are miraculously created. They also have life and power. If you take a basin of water and put some of these capillaries in it, they will suck up all the water. As for the way plants draw their nourishment, it is something else, for they take what they need from the soil and are able to distinguish between the soil's different constituents. Observe how sugarcane absorbs the sweetness from the soil, whilst pepper absorbs what is spicy.

Read the verse: 'And in the earth there are tracts side by side and gardens of grapes and corn and palm trees having one root and [others] having distinct roots. They are watered with one water, and We make some of them excel others in fruit; most surely, there are signs in this for a people who understand.' (*ar-Ra'd*: 4) Therefore, it is not a question of the capillaries, but it is one of the signs of Allah 'Who creates, then makes complete, and Who makes [things] according to a measure, then guides [them to their goal]' (*al-A'la*: 2-3).

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٧﴾ أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ ﴿٨﴾
وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٩﴾

**He has raised up the sky. He has set the balance [7]
so that you may not exceed in the balance [8]
weigh with justice and do not fall short in the balance [9]
(The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 7 – 9)**

The word 'sky' in this verse follows the plants and the trees in the previous verses. Allah raised the sky up, and you see it above you without any support. He has set the balance. He revealed the foundations of justice and truth; the measure is the tool which determines what is true and what is false. He then commands us to not exceed in the balance, which means do not fail to meet the required measure. Do not exceed the line between truth and falsehood. Thus, these verses are telling us about a cosmological order which is founded on truth and a precise measure which has no exceptions or violations.

Justice governs the motions of the sun and the moon, just as it governs the motions of man. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Neither is it allowable to the sun

that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day; all float on in a sphere.' (*Ya Sin*: 40) Thus, nothing transgresses against anything else, and so must man be.

Allah *Glorified is He* orders us to not exceed in the balance because when the celestial bodies remain firm upon the nature in which they were created and the role Allah wanted them to play, their motions run smoothly and they fulfil their purpose in existence. We have never seen any conflict between these bodies. Likewise, if man wants the motions of his life to run smoothly, he has to direct them according to this measure that Allah established for them.

After forbidding any transgression against the measure, He then commands us to weigh according to the justice with that which everyone is given their rights, as He says elsewhere: 'And weigh [things] with a right balance.' (*ash-Shu'ara*: 182) 'To weigh something with equity' means to perform it in the most perfect way. Since measure is the criterion, it must be precise and adhere to the law which Allah wants for it, namely justice. He then emphasises this by ordering us to not fall short in the balance. Scholars say that this means 'do not decrease the measure'. However, there are several different ways to decrease the measure. The one who cheats you by disguising rancid fruit as fresh and selling it to you thereby decreases the measure; and the one who rigs his scales thereby decreases the measure. Allah *the Exalted* wants to preserve His creatures' rights for them, and this is a manifestation of the Mercy of Allah.

He *Glorified is He* subsequently says:

وَالْأَرْضَ وَضَعَهَا لِلْأَنَامِ ﴿١٠﴾ فِيهَا فَكْهَةٌ وَالنَّخْلُ ذَاتُ الْأَكْمَامِ ﴿١١﴾
وَالْحَبُّ ذُو الْعَصْفِ وَالرَّيْحَانُ ﴿١٢﴾ فَيَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَذِبٌ بَانٍ ﴿١٣﴾

**He set down the Earth for His creatures [10] with its fruits,
its palm trees with sheathed clusters [11] its husked grain, its
fragrant plants [12] which, then, of your Lord's blessings do
you both deny? [13] (The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 10 - 13)**

Allah *Glorified is He* says about the skies that He raised them up, and He says about the earth that He set it down which means He made it low and spread out. He *the Almighty* says: 'the earth for you an expanse' (*Ta Ha*: 53). So, it is spread

out like a bed. Elsewhere He *Glorified is He* called it a 'resting-place' (*an-Naba'*: 6), which bears mankind just as a crib bears a baby. Thus, the earth was laid down for man to dwell upon it.

The word 'created beings' refers to human beings and some have said that it actually includes all those things which have a spirit, which would mean that animals are also included since they consume the fruits of the earth and live upon it. They also say that the jinn are included.

We may also observe that this verse speaks of the earth in general terms; it does not say which part of the earth is meant for whom. This means that it is comprehensive: the earth in this verse refers to the whole earth, in other words, every place on it. Likewise, 'created beings' means all living beings, whatever their identity is. So, Allah's earth, in every place, is for Allah's servants, in every place.

We can also understand this from Allah's Words: 'Behold, those whom the angels gather in death while they are still sinning against themselves, [the angels] will ask, "What was wrong with you?" They will answer, "We were too weak on earth." [The angels] will say, "Was, then, Allah's earth not wide enough for you to forsake the domain of evil?" For such, then, the goal is Hell and how evil a journey's end!' (*at-Tawba*: 97)

Thus, Allah's earth is for everyone; if you find it hard to live in a given place, and then go somewhere else where it is easier. This on its own would be enough to solve the problems of the world today if they were to implement it; however, what has happened is that they have cut-off the means of this natural unity which the Creator wanted for mankind, and they have set up their own borders and barriers.

It is extraordinary how we see them squabbling over metres of land at their borders when they live in thousands of kilometres of Allah's earth. If you look at a map and observe the borders between nations now, are they composed of straight lines? No, they are bent and crooked and intertwined. Therefore, this is how Allah *the Almighty* wanted it to be: the whole earth is meant for all living beings.

We now witness lands which are almost exploding with overpopulation but have scarce resources, while on the contrary, there are other lands which

are empty of people but filled with resources which are neglected and have no one to extract them. Is this the just measure upon which the affairs of man are supposed to be based? No, by Allah, this is injustice and a transgression of the measure.

Just look at the man-made borders, the walls, the airports, the doors and the stern laws that govern them, along with the visas and conditions for entry. It sometimes takes months and months to prepare all the paperwork and visas to enter certain countries.

When these boundaries were made, this led to disputes between nations, and nationalist divisions, along with the hoarding of wealth and resources by such nations who possessed them; as a result, wars and conflicts broke out as you can see for yourselves.

The verses then list a number of Allah's Favours on earth: 'with its fruits...' (*ar-Rahman*: 11); this refers to the fruits on the earth. The Arabic word for fruit is *fakiha*, related to the word *tafakkaha*, which means 'to amuse oneself'; this is because fruit is a luxury which is extraneous to the basic elements of food. Fruit is mentioned here before wheat, barley or any other grain.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...its palm trees with sheathed clusters' (*ar-Rahman*: 11). The word *kumm* means the sheath that covers the fruit before it ripens, and in this verse, the plural *akmam* means 'sheathed clusters'. 'Its husked grain...' (*ar-Rahman*: 12) means wheat, barley, corn and other staples. As for His saying, '...its fragrant plants...' (*ar-Rahman*: 12), it refers to the husk which covers the grain; the fact that it is mentioned calls our attention to its nutritional importance. Scientists have discovered that the husk of wheat has many important medicinal values⁽¹⁾ and that wheat grains only fulfil their purpose when they are with their husks.

Furthermore, scientists have warned against eating high-grade flour in which the grain has been separated from the husk; people who eat too much high-grade flour are forced in their old age to eat bread made of bran or coarse flour. This is why whole-wheat bread is more expensive than white bread.

(1) The thin husk of wheat contains six vitamins, from B1 to B6 as well as several others. It also contains a phosphorous substance which is good for the brain and the nerves, as well as iron, which is good for the blood. It also contains calcium, which strengthens the bones, silicone, which strengthens the hair, iodine, which aids the thyroid gland, and so on.

Therefore, we understand from '...its husked grain and its fragrant plants...' (*ar-Rahman*: 12) that the grain should be taken just as it is when it comes out of the ground on its stalk, for this is how it is supposed to be. The word '*asf*' (stalk) also occurs when Allah speaks of the people of the Elephant: 'And [He] caused them to become like a field of grain (*'asf*) that has been eaten down to stubble.' (*al-Fil*: 5) In other words, this is like chewed stalks and the remnants of food.

As for the word *rayhan* (fragrant plants), scholars say that this means either the kernel of a grain or a sweet-smelling plant which is known by this name. 'Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny?' (*ar-Rahman*: 13) These words are addressed to the 'sin-laden two', namely jinns and mankind, to whom He will later address thus: 'We shall attend to you two huge armies [of jinn and mankind]' (*ar-Rahman*: 31). In the verse being discussed, Allah *the Almighty* addresses them with this question: these are the favours of Allah and His boons, so which of these favours will you deny, O, men and jinns?

One of the rhetorical features of the Noble Quran is that when Allah *the Exalted* wants to affirm and emphasise something, He presents it not as a statement but as a question as though He were saying to them, 'You say it.' Thus, when you look for an answer to the question, you will inevitably say, 'Not one of Your Favours, Lord, do we deny.'

Now you only use this rhetorical question if you are certain that the answer will prove your point. For example, if someone denies that you have done him any favours, you might say to him, 'Did I not do such-and-such for you?'

The word *ala* means blessings; it is the plural of *al*. This verse 'Which then of your Lord's blessings do you both deny?' is repeated many times in this chapter, and there is a special purpose and wisdom to this, just as the similar repetition in the previous chapter of 'Hence, indeed, We made this Quran easy to bear in mind: who, then, is willing to take it to heart?' (*al-Qamar*: 17) and 'For how severe is the suffering which I inflict when My warnings are disregarded' (*al-Qamar*: 21). Such repetitions have wisdom, and they add something new, for otherwise, they would be meaningless additions, and there is none of that in the Quran.

So, the repetition of the Words 'Which then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny?' (*ar-Rahman*: 13) serves to make each favour independent; with each favour, these words are repeated, and this question is asked for every individual favour.

This verse is repeated thirty-one times in the chapter of *ar-Rahman*. It is as though Allah *the Almighty* wants to emphasise for us how His Most Mercifulness flows through this chapter, so He mentions it after each favour: 'Can you disavow this?' 'Can you disavow this?'

Thus, how could we disavow, when we live in the midst of this favour night and day? Therefore, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* taught us that when we read this verse, we should say, 'Not one of Your favours, Lord, do we deny!'

Likewise, it is narrated that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'I recited the chapter of *ar-Rahman* to your brethren amongst the jinns, and they responded to it better than you did. Every time I read 'Which then of your Lord's blessings do you both deny?' (*ar-Rahman*: 13), they said, 'Not one of Your favours, Lord, do we deny! Praise be to You!'⁽¹⁾

This means that when we listen to the Quran, we must react to it and reflect on its meaning, not simply let it pass through our ears as we do when we listen to human speech. we have seen those of strong faith who are near to Allah doing just this: when the Name of Allah is mentioned, they say 'Glory be to Allah', or 'Truly Majestic is He'; and when the name of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is mentioned, they say 'Allah bless him and grant him peace'; and when paradise is mentioned, they ask for it; and when hell is mentioned, they seek refuge with Allah from it. This is how the believer should react to Allah's Word. Do we do as they do?

I once heard the Quran being recited at a wake. The master was reciting verses in which the suffering of the hellfire was described, and one from the audience was saying to him, 'How wonderful, master, keep going, May Allah increase you!'

(1) See *At-Tirmidhi* and *Al-Bayhaqi*

خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَلٍ كَالْفَخَّارِ ﴿١٤﴾ وَخَلَقَ الْجَانَّ
مِنْ مَّارِجٍ مِّن نَّارٍ ﴿١٥﴾ فَيَأْتِيءَ آلَاءَ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿١٦﴾

He created mankind out of dried clay, like pottery [14] the jinn out of smokeless fire [15] which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [16] (The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 14 - 16)

Sounding clay (*salsal*) means clay which has dried out and hardened, and this is one of the stages through which man passed during the first creation of Adam *peace be upon him*. Allah *the Almighty* told us that man was created from water, clay, soil and transmuted dark sludge; thus, he passed through all these stages until he became sounding clay, like pottery.

So, these are all stages of the same thing. Water and soil combined make clay, and if clay is left, it ferments and decays, along with its scent changing so that it becomes transmuted sludge. Then, it dries and becomes sounding clay.

Therefore, no particular one of these stages was the beginning of creation; rather, all of them combined constituted the beginning of creation. Allah *the Exalted* tells us: 'I did not make them witnesses of the creation of the heavens and the earth, nor of the creation of their own selves...' (*al-Kahf*: 51). So, we do not know how we were created except for such things which Allah has told us of the matter, and therefore, He follows these Words by saying: '...and neither do I [have any need to] take as My helpers [beings] that lead [men] astray.' (*al-Kahf*: 51) Those who lead others astray are ones who describe the creation in terms other than that which Allah has told us of such as the one who came along⁽¹⁾ and told us that the origin of man was an ape which then evolved into man. The Quran anticipated this and spoke of what would come in the future, and it warned us not to trust these lies and fabrications against Allah.

Thus, when Allah *the Almighty* speaks to us about a matter of the unseen which the mind has difficulty comprehending, He clarifies it for us by using something visible which is comparable to it. Indeed, we did not witness the first creation, and it is a matter of the unseen, but we have seen its opposite, which is death, and we have witnessed this plainly. Death brings an end to life, and

(1) Charles Darwin (1809-1882)

usually destruction is the mirror image of building: that which is built first is destroyed last, and that which is built last is destroyed first.

Thus, creation began with water, soil and clay, then transmuted sludge and then sounding clay like pottery. Then after that, Allah blew something of His Spirit into it so that life quickened within it. As for death, it begins with the exit of the spirit, and then the body dries out so it becomes as sounding clay; then, its scent changes so it smells like transmuted sludge; then, all the water evaporates, and there is nothing left but materials which degrade into soil. So from the death which we witness, we can take evidence of the unseen matter of 'He created mankind out of dried clay, like pottery.' (*ar-Rahman*: 14)

He then says: 'the jinns out of smokeless fire' (*ar-Rahman*: 15). The word *marij* means a clear flame unadulterated by any smoke. The nature of fire is subtler than that of clay since fire is quick moving and penetrating, unlike clay which does not penetrate in this way. For example, if you have an apple and you are in one room, can the person in the room next door feel the presence of the apple? However, fire is different because it penetrates through the wall so that the person on the other side can feel its heat. This is where the jinns get their power. They have the power to penetrate through things and are not impeded by anything material. This means that they were created from the translucency of fire, whilst we were created from the solidness of clay; this is why they can see us, but we cannot see them. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Which then of your Lord's blessings do you both deny?' (*ar-Rahman*: 13)

رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ وَرَبُّ الْمَغْرِبَيْنِ ﴿١٧﴾ فَإِنِّي ءَالِئٌ بِكُمْ نِكَدَانٍ ﴿١٨﴾

**He is Lord of the two risings and Lord of the two
settings [17] Which, then, of your Lord's
blessings do you both deny? [18]
(The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 17-18)**

Allah *the Almighty* mentions in this verse the points of sunrise and sunset in the context of His favours, which means that there must be many favours contained within them. When we examine these two words *mashriq* meaning 'east' or 'point of sunrise', and *maghrib* meaning 'west' or 'point of sunset', in the Quran, we find that they are sometimes given as singulars and sometimes as

duals. He says: 'The Lord of the east and the west [is He]...' (*al-Muzzammil*: 9). Yet, in another verse, He says: '[He is] the Lord of the two farthest points of sunrise, and the Lord of the two farthest points of sunset. Which, then, of your Lord's favours can you disavow?' (*ar-Rahman*: 17-18) Likewise, He says: 'But nay! I call to witness [Our being] the Lord of all the points of sunrise and sunset...' (*al-Ma'arij*: 40).

The reason for this plurality is that there are several locations; in one place there is a point of rising and a point of setting for the sun, but when the sun sets for you, it rises for someone else. Thus, there is a sunset with every sunrise and a sunrise with every sunset.

So there are two points of sunrise and two points of sunset, and the revolving motion of the earth gives us a sunrise and a sunset at every moment so that here are multiple sunrises and sunsets. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Which then of your Lord's blessings do you both deny?' (*ar-Rahman*: 18)

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ يَلْتَقِيَانِ ﴿١٩﴾ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخٌ لَا يَبْغِيَانِ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَيَأْتِيَا إِتَّكَافًا تُكْتَبَانِ ﴿٢١﴾

He released the two bodies of [fresh and salt] water. They meet [19] yet there is a barrier between them they do not cross [20] which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [21] (The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 19 - 21)

'He released' means that He has brought together 'the two bodies of [fresh salt] water', or in other words, the fresh and the salty, '...meet' (*ar-Rahman*: 19); what this means is that they exist side by side or follow one another. 'Yet, there is a barrier' means that a boundary prevents them from mixing: '...barrier between them they do not cross' (*ar-Rahman*: 20); neither of them can infringe upon the other. This is one of the signs of creation. Fresh water comes into contact with salt water without either diffusing into the other. This is why when you go to a place like 'Areesh, you find the finest kinds of palm trees growing on the beach. If these trees were nourished by salt water, they would not be so fine, but Allah has ordained it to be this way.

Read: 'Are you not aware that it is Allah Who sends down water from the skies, and then causes it to travel through the earth in the shape of springs?'

(*az-Zumar*: 21) He *the Almighty* says: 'We send down water from the skies in accordance with a measure [set by Us], and then We cause it to lodge in the earth, but, behold, We are most certainly able to withdraw this [blessing]' (*al-Mu'minun*: 18).

Allah's Power preserves fresh water so that it does not mix with salty water. This is why you find that fresh water is found higher up than salty water. If you go to Dumyat, you will find that the fresh water of the Nile extends for some distance out into the salt water, without the salt water intruding into the fresh. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny?' (*ar-Rahman*: 21)

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

يَخْرُجُ مِنْهُمَا اللُّؤْلُؤُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٢٣﴾

**Pearls come forth from them: large ones, and
small, brilliant ones [22] Which, then, of your
Lord's blessings do you both deny? [23]
(The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 22 - 23)**

The meaning of 'Pearls come forth from them: ...' (*ar-Rahman*: 22) is out of the two waters, fresh and salty. Yet, pearls (great and small alike) only come out of salt water. We can understand this if we consider the story⁽¹⁾ of the court doorman who went to propose marriage to Saniyya bint Mahdiyya. They asked him, 'What is your job?' He said, 'I am the court doorman.' 'And how much do you earn,' they asked. 'Well,' he said, 'the judge and I are paid one hundred pounds.'

So, His Words 'Pearls come forth from them: ...' (*ar-Rahman*: 22) mean from the sum of them together⁽²⁾; now, scientists say that pearls (both great and small) are only found in those areas of the sea into which fresh water flows.⁽³⁾ 'Which then of your Lord's blessings do you both deny?' (*ar-Rahman*: 23).

(1) The story of the court's secretary who went to ask Saniyya bint Mahdiyya's hand in marriage

(2) *Al-Qurtubi confirms this in his Tafsir.*

(3) *Even some of the scholars of old stated this, including Al-Qurtubi in his Tafsir.*

وَلَهُ الْجَوَارِ الْمُنشَآتُ فِي الْبَحْرِ كَالْأَعْلَامِ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَيَا أَيُّهَا الْعَالَمِينَ رَبِّكُمْ تَكْذِبُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

His are the moving ships that float, high as mountains, on the sea [24] Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [25] (The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 24 - 25)

'His', meaning Allah's, 'are the moving ships', the ships which sail on the surface of the water. These are ships 'that float', for they are made for sailing on the sea (or produced by the sea) 'high as mountains through the seas' (*ar-Rahman*: 24); this means they are like great and prominent mountains, or huge palaces. 'Which then of your Lord's blessings do you both deny?' (*ar-Rahman*: 25)

It is amazing that our master Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* informed us of this, despite the fact that he never made a seagoing voyage and was not familiar with these kinds of ships. The ships that existed at the time of our master Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* were small and flat with only one tier; multi-tiered ships were not invented until the eighteenth century CE. Therefore, this verse is a miracle and a sign of prophethood, along with being proof of the truth of what the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* conveyed to us from Allah.

He *the Almighty* then says:

كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَيَبْقَىٰ وَجْهُ رَبِّكَ ذُو الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَيَا أَيُّهَا الْعَالَمِينَ رَبِّكُمْ تَكْذِبُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

Everyone on earth perishes; [26] all that remains is the Face of your Lord, full of majesty, bestowing honour [27] Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [28] (The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 26 - 28)

His Words 'Everyone on earth...' (*ar-Rahman*: 26) mean everyone who is upon the earth. The earth is not specifically mentioned in this verse, but scholars say that a pronoun can refer to something which has been recently stated or to something which is intuitively obvious as is this case. Allah says: '...perishes' (*ar-Rahman*: 26); this means that one is bound to die.

All '...that remains is...' after everything has passed away '...the face of your Lord (*wajh*)' (*ar-Rahman*: 27); the word *wajh* literally means 'face', but it can

also express the self or being because for all mankind the face is what identifies the person, as no two people are exactly alike; thus, the face represents the self.

Therefore, 'the face of your Lord' means His Being. This issue serves as a rebuttal to those who say that no figurative interpretation of the Quran is allowed, for if so, then what can you say about this verse?⁽¹⁾

The meaning of 'full of Majesty' is the Possessor of magnificence and absolute self-sufficiency; as for 'and glory' (*ar-Rahman*: 27), this means the Possessor of absolute munificence and bounty. 'Which then of your Lord's blessings do you both deny?' (*ar-Rahman*: 28)

Allah says:

يَسْأَلُهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ كُلَّ يَوْمٍ هُوَ فِي شَأْنٍ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَإِنِّي أَعْلَمُ الْغَوِيَّاتِ ﴿٣٠﴾ تَكْذِبَانِ ﴿٣١﴾

Everyone in heaven and earth entreats Him; every day He is at work [29] Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [30] (The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 29 - 30)

The phrase: '...every day He' means that Allah *the Almighty* '...is at work.' (*ar-Rahman*: 29) The word 'day' means the period of time which includes all moments, both of daylight and night hours. Thus, the meaning of 'every day' in this verse is that in every moment, He manifests Himself in a new way. Every time something happens, in it is manifested a decree which He ordained in pre-eternity.

The Caliph Al-Ma'mun was asked about this, the questioner saying, 'What does your Lord do now when the pen (of destiny) has long since dried? Furthermore, why, then, does He say: '...every day He is at work' (*ar-Rahman*: 29)?' He replied, 'He does not begin things anew but brings them into the open. He raises some people and lowers others.'⁽²⁾

We have explained how all decrees of fate were ordained in pre-eternity and that they are preserved in the Preserved Tablet; all that happens now is

(1) What the sheikh means is that if we do not understand *wajh* to be 'Face' here, and we take it literally to mean 'face', this would mean that Allah *the Almighty* is made up of parts which will all pass away except for His face. Thus, scholars say that *wajh* here must mean 'Face'.

(2) It is narrated that when Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him was asked about this verse, He said, 'He forgives sin, relieves distress and raises some people and lowers others.'

the manifestation of this decree in reality. 'Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny?' (*ar-Rahman*: 30)

Allah says:

سَنَفْرُغُ لَكُمْ أَيُّهَ الثَّقَلَانِ ﴿٣١﴾ فَإَيُّ آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٣٢﴾

We shall attend to you two huge armies [of jinn and mankind] [31] Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [32] (The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 31-32)

These words are framed as a warning, and what do you think about a warning from Allah Himself? Who could dare disregard it? Yet, Allah's Most-Mercifulness is still present here because He is warning us in advance of this so that we can prepare for it: 'We shall attend you to...' (*ar-Rahman*: 31). It is like when you say to your enemy, 'Tomorrow I am coming for you'; what you mean is 'Prepare yourself for it.' Allah *the Almighty* is saying: 'We shall take you to task, reckoning you and requiting you, after first giving you some time. You shall not evade Us.'

The '...two huge armies' (*ar-Rahman*: 31) are the 'sin-laden two', the jinns and mankind; they are called *thaqalan* ('the two laden ones' or 'the two heavy ones') because they have settled firmly on earth.⁽¹⁾ 'Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny?' (*ar-Rahman*: 32)

He *the Almighty* then says:

يَمْعَشَرِ الْجِنَّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَانْفُذُوا لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَانٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ فَإَيُّ آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٣٤﴾

Jinn and mankind, if you can pass beyond the regions of heaven and earth, then do so: you will not pass without Our authority [33] Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [34] (The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 33 - 34)

This call is being made to all of jinns and mankind, who were addressed in the previous verse with the words '...you two huge armies' (*ar-Rahman*: 31).

(1) Ibn Al-Jawzi, *Zad Al-Masir*

Furthermore, He challenges them all: '...if you can pass beyond the regions of heaven and earth, then do so...' (*ar-Rahman*: 33). This means that jinns and mankind cannot do such a thing: '...You will not pass without Our Authority' (*ar-Rahman*: 33); this means that it is a sanction from Allah, for if He were to give this power to any of His created beings, they would be able to do it.

Therefore, some people understand that when man travelled to the moon, this constituted 'passing beyond the regions of the heavens and the earth', understanding '...You will not pass without Our Authority' (*ar-Rahman*: 33) to mean the sanction of science which allowed them to do so.

The fact of the matter is that man's landing on the moon was not a 'passing beyond' because the moon is but a region of the earth, like a suburb of a city. When we reflect upon the distances between planets, we will easily understand this.

Scientists have ascertained that we are eight light minutes from the sun and 2.5 million light years from the Andromeda Galaxy. One light second is three hundred thousand kilometres. So, what about the rest of the stars in the universe? As for the moon, it is only a suburb of the earth.

Now the exemption implied by '...You will not pass without Our authority' (*ar-Rahman*: 33) affirms that our master Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was truthful in what he informed us about the Night Ascension and Journey, for otherwise, they would have said, 'How can this be? It is beyond human power.' It can only be done with a sanction from Allah; if Allah wants someone to pass beyond, he will pass beyond by Allah's Power.

He *the Almighty* mentions the jinns before mankind in this verse because they are subtler and quicker moving than we are. In the story of our master Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him* we saw that when he wanted to be brought the throne of Balqis, he said to his aides: '...Which of you can bring me her throne?...' (*an-Naml*: 28) No human being responded because he wanted it to be brought before him quickly: '...she and her followers come unto me in willing surrender to Allah?' (*an-Naml*: 38) They were on their way to him at the time.

No human being could do this so quickly; however, as for the jinns, one of them said, '...I shall bring it to you before you rise from your council-seat...'

(*an-Naml*: 39). This was a bold jinni, not an ordinary one, which means that some of the jinns are energetic and skilled, whilst others amongst them do not have this ability.



Furthermore, this offer from the bold jinn would still have taken some time, for Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him* was not due to rise from his council-seat for several hours. So, another jinn who was even more skilled than the first and possessed knowledge of scripture said, '...[Nay,] as for me, I shall bring it to you before the twinkling of an eye ceases! ...' (*an-Naml*: 40) The twinkling of an eye takes no time at all.

Likewise, since jinns have this level of skill in motion, Allah *the Almighty* mentions them first here because He is issuing a challenge.

Moreover, this challenge pertained to the heavens (*samawat*), the plural of (*sama'*) 'heaven' or 'sky'. Man has been able to reach as far as the moon, and jinns are able to ascend to listen; yet, all this takes place in the sky of this earth. Thus, has man or have jinns been able to penetrate the other heavens?

These are the heavens which our master Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* ascended through in the company of our master Jibril (Gabriel) *peace be upon him* until he came to their end at the Lote-Tree of the Uttermost End. So '...You will not pass without Our Authority' (*ar-Rahman*: 33) does not mean the sanction of science, but it means the sanction of Allah's Power. Otherwise, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* passed through places wherein there is no air to breathe—and how can science do this?

Allah *the Almighty* then says:


 يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمَا شُوَاظٌ مِّن نَّارٍ وَنُحَاسٌ فَلَا تَنْصُرَانِ

 فَيَايَآءَ آلَاءَ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

A flash of fire and smoke will be released upon you and no one will come to your aid [35] Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [36] (The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 35 - 36)

These words are addressed to jinns and mankind: if you want to pass beyond the regions of the heavens and the earth without any sanction from

Allah, 'A flash of fire and smoke will be released upon you, and no one will come to your aid' (*ar-Rahman*: 35); this means that both jinns and mankind have boundaries of motion beyond which they cannot venture. The meaning of 'a flash of fire' is a pure flame of fire with no smoke, and this kind of fire is extremely hot.

And 'brass' in this verse means melted, or molten, brass, which is an instrument of torture; '...and no one will come to your aid' (*ar-Rahman*: 35), which means you will not be able to pass by, and you will find no one to defend you from this torment.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

فَإِذَا أَنْشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ وَرْدَةً كَالدِّهَانِ ﴿٣٧﴾
فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذُنُوبِهِ إِنْسٌ وَلَا جَانٌّ ﴿٣٩﴾
فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٤٠﴾

**When the sky is torn apart and turns crimson, like red hide [37]
Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [38]
On that Day neither mankind nor jinn will be asked about their
sins [39] Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both
deny? [40] (The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 37 - 40)**

We may observe in this verse that the word used for 'when' is *idha*, which is used in Arabic to introduce a conditional clause: 'When the sky is torn apart...' (*ar-Rahman*: 37). The main clause is 'On that Day neither mankind nor jinns will be asked about their sins.' (*ar-Rahman*: 39) So between the conditional clause and the main clause there is a separation because in each of them there is a sign and a wonder, and each of them are amongst Allah's favours; thus, each of them is mentioned in a separate verse and followed by 'Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny?' (*ar-Rahman*: 38)

The renting asunder of the sky is one of the signs of the Resurrection and the Day of Reckoning, the Day when all shall be asked about what they have done. Because of this, some orientalists objected to this verse and said that it contradicts what Allah says elsewhere: "'And halt them [there]!" [And then,]

behold, they shall be asked, "How is it that [now] you cannot succour one another?" Nay, but on that Day they would willingly surrender [to Allah].'
(*as-Saffat*: 24-26)

The reason they think there is a contradiction in this verse is that they do not have a proper understanding and mastery of the language. The word *su'al* (question) in Arabic has two aspects: the pupil asks the teacher to learn the truth from him, and the teacher asks the pupil to make sure he knows the truth. Therefore, His Words "And halt them [there]!" [And then,] behold, they shall be asked' (*as-Saffat*: 24) refer to how they will be questioned so that they themselves will admit the truth.

Likewise, the meaning of '...neither mankind nor jinns will be asked about their sins' (*ar-Rahman*: 39) is that Allah will not need to hear their words or their confession since He will have recorded all their actions, and His angels will have written their deeds, so He will have no need to ask them about it.

Allah *Glorified is He* then says:

يَعْرِفُ الْمَجْرُمُونَ سِيمَاهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَصِي وَالْأَقْدَامِ ﴿٤١﴾
فَأَيُّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٤٢﴾

The guilty will be known by their mark and will be seized by their foreheads and their feet [41] Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [42]
(The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 41-42)

This describes one of the moments of the Day of Resurrection when the angels of chastisement will know those who were lost in sin by marks which identify them. Those lost in sin will be known '...by their mark...' (*ar-Rahman*: 41) meaning by their blackened faces, and the angels will seize them by their forelocks, namely the hair at the front of their heads, and by their feet, and then cast them into hell—we seek refuge in Allah! This seizure will be a humiliation and a debasement, in addition to the suffering because the forelock is a place of human pride and dignity.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾
يَطُوفُونَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ ءَانِ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٤٥﴾

**This is the Hell the guilty deny [43] but they will go round
between its flames and scalding water. [44] Which,
then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [45]
(The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 43 - 45)**

Allah *the Almighty* will chide them, rebuke them, and increase their woe, for the angels will say to them: 'This is Hell...' (*ar-Rahman*: 43); in other words, it means 'The place you now see, and whose heat you now feel, is the very place you used to belie in the life of the world. So taste its heat now!'

Observe that the imperfect verb is used in this verse, expressing a continuous action: '...the guilty deny' (*ar-Rahman*: 43). What this means is that they call it a lie here in this world, but on that Day, they will suffer therein and experience its heat directly.

So, He evoked their denial in this world, as though they have taken in with them to the Resurrection, and this is all the more bitter for them, along with being a sterner rebuke for them.

He then says: 'between its [Hell]...scalding water'; this refers to boiling hot water which is so hot it scalds their insides as they drink it. Allah *the Exalted* then says: '...but they will go round between its flames and scalding water' (*ar-Rahman*: 44). As the heat of hell increases, they will look for water to lessen it, so they will be taken to boiling water, of which they will drink their fill in the hope that it will lessen the burning of hell, yet it will make them even hotter: 'Out of the frying pan into the fire' as the saying goes.

Yet, we see that the Quran still follows this by saying: 'Which then of your Lord's blessings do you both deny?' (*ar-Rahman*: 45) This description of the suffering of hell is counted amongst Allah's favours and His blessings upon us since it inspires us to flee from this fate and to avoid the things which lead to it.

Allah *the Almighty* then describes the contrasting state:

وَلِمَن خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٌ ۖ ﴿٤٦﴾ فِيْهَاۤ اِلَآءُ رَّبِّكُمْ تُكَذَّبٰنِ ﴿٤٧﴾ ذٰوَاتَاۤ اَفْنَانٍ ﴿٤٨﴾
 فِيْهَاۤ اِلَآءُ رَّبِّكُمْ تُكَذَّبٰنِ ﴿٤٩﴾ فِيْهٖمَا عَيْنٰنِ تَجْرِيٰنِ ﴿٥٠﴾ فِيْهَاۤ اِلَآءُ رَّبِّكُمْ تُكَذَّبٰنِ ﴿٥١﴾
 فِيْهٖمَا مِنۢ كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ زَوْجٰنِ ﴿٥٢﴾ فِيْهَاۤ اِلَآءُ رَّبِّكُمْ تُكَذَّبٰنِ ﴿٥٣﴾

For those who fear [the time when they will] stand before their Lord there are two gardens. [46] Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [47] With shading branches. [48] Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [49] With a pair of flowing springs. [50] Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [51] With every kind of fruit in pairs. [52] Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [53] (The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 46 - 53)

What this means is that those who fear Allah's Attributes of Majesty and fear His reckoning along with His chastisement—what is their reward? They shall have '...two gardens' (*ar-Rahman*: 46), not only one garden. The orientalists have also objected to this by saying: 'Is it one garden, or two?' Now, scholars say it is two gardens in this verse because Allah is speaking about mankind and jinns, and jinns will have their own garden.

Others understand it differently, saying that it means the paradise of a believer which Allah has prepared for him in the Hereafter and then the paradise of a disbeliever which was prepared for him by Allah in case he believed; however, since he did not believe, a believer inherited it from him, as we have explained already. Thus, a believer will have two gardens.

Furthermore, our master Shaiqi Al-Balkhi,⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾ a great gnostic, said something of interest about this verse. He had a pupil named Hatim⁽³⁾ who was nicknamed Al-Asamm, 'the Deaf One', and the story of how he got this nickname is itself a story which shows us the fine conduct of those who fear their Lord's presence.

(1) A Sufi of the 9th century CE

(2) The story of Shaiqi Al-Balkhi with his disciple Hatim Al-Asamm

(3) The story of Hatim Al-Asamm, the deaf one, and the reason behind calling him so

They say that a woman came to him to ask him for something, but as she was about to speak she broke wind and was sorely embarrassed. However, Hatim said, 'Raise your voice, I did not hear you', pretending to be deaf to put her at ease. From then on, they called him 'the Deaf One'.

So, Al-Balhki asked his pupil Hatim Al-Asamm, 'How long have you been with me, Hatim?' 'Thirty-three years,' he answered. He asked, 'And what have you gained from me in all this time?' He said, 'Several things. 'Indeed we belong to Allah, and to Him we shall return!' he said. 'In all this time, you have only gained a few things?' Hatim replied, 'It is as I have said.' 'Then what are these things?' asked Al-Balkhi. Hatim replied, 'I have come to love paradise because I have seen that people amongst whom I live are all consumed by spite and malice toward one another, so I have come to hate those traits. When I heard Allah say: "...We shall have removed whatever unworthy thoughts or feelings may have been [lingering] in their bosoms..." (*al-A'raf*: 43), I yearned for the paradise wherein there is no malice.' 'Well done,' said Al-Balkhi. 'And what is the second?' Hatim replied, 'I have learned that the path which leads to it is fear of Allah: "For those who fear [the time when they will] stand before their Lord, there are two gardens" (*ar-Rahman*: 46). Thus, I feared my Lord's Presence and rid my soul of its caprice, so that it became easy for me to obey Him.' [He was alluding to Allah's Words: 'But unto him who shall have stood in fear of his Lord's Presence and held back his inner self from base desires, Paradise will truly be the goal!' (*an-Nazi'at*: 40-41)]

'Well done, Hatim,' said Al-Balkhi. 'And what is the third?' Hatim replied, 'I examined mankind and found that every one of them has a beloved whom he loves and accompanies, but however great his love may be, it ends when he enters the grave. So, I loved to have a companion who does not leave me even in my grave, and I found no such companion but my own deeds.' Well done, Hatim,' said Al-Balkhi. 'What is the fourth?' Hatim replied, 'I saw that everyone loves something and looks after it, and yet, it may be stolen by a thief or snatched away by the whim of fate. Therefore, I dedicated all my deeds to Allah so that my Lord could look after them for me.' 'What is the fifth?' he asked. Hatim replied, 'I learnt that people make enemies of one another, envy one another, and hate one another. Thus, when I searched for the reason for this, I found that it is that some have abundant provisions, and others have scanty provisions. When I

read Allah's Words "...It is We Who distribute their means of livelihood amongst them in the life of this world..." (*az-Zukhruf*: 32), my heart was at peace, and I cast from me all malice, rancour and envy.

'What is the sixth?' he asked. Hatim replied, 'I saw the enmity that exists amongst people, and then read: "Behold, Satan is a foe unto you: so treat him as a foe..." (*Fatir*: 6). So, I left all enmity towards my fellow man and directed all my enmity towards Satan.' 'And what is the last, O, Hatim?' he asked. Hatim replied, 'I found that people put their trust in things such as wealth, property, business and manufacture, yet these things will eventually leave their owners, so I put my trust in the Living One Who neither dies nor leaves.'

Furthermore, His Words 'With shading branches' (*ar-Rahman*: 48) mean that the two gardens contain many branches (*afnan*, plural of *fanan*); they are filled with many branches which intertwine, so that they cover and shade those who walk amid them.

'With a pair of flowing springs' (*ar-Rahman*: 50) refers to fresh water. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'With every kind of fruit in pairs' (*ar-Rahman*: 52). Scholars say that this means there will be two kinds, one of which you will recognise and the other of which you will not. If this is how it will be with fruits, which are luxuries, then what do you imagine it will be with necessities?

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

مُتَكِّينَ عَلَى فُرُشٍ بَطَافُهَا مِنْ إِسْتَبْرَقٍ وَحِىَ الْجَنَّتَيْنِ دَانٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَيَايَا آلَاءَ رَبِّكُمَا
تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٥٥﴾ فِيهِنَّ قَصِيرَتُ الْأَطْرَافِ لَمْ يَطْمِئِنَّ إِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَيَايَا آلَاءَ
رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٥٧﴾ كَأَنَّهُنَّ الْيَاقُوتُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ ﴿٥٨﴾ فَيَايَا آلَاءَ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٥٩﴾

They will sit on couches upholstered with brocade, the fruit of both gardens within easy reach. [54] Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [55] There will be maidens restraining their glances, untouched beforehand by man or jinn. [56] Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [57] Like rubies and brilliant pearls. [58] Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [59] (The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 54 - 59)

The verses continue to list the different kinds of favours which will be manifested in paradise; one of these is that you will see the dwellers of

paradise 'sit on couches upholstered with brocade...' (*ar-Rahman*: 54), which means rich silk. Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...the fruit of both gardens within easy reach' (*ar-Rahman*: 54). The word *Jana* here means fruit which is ripe and ready to be picked, and 'within easy reach' means that this fruit will be close at hand without anything to prevent you from taking it, and nor anything between you and it. It will be close at hand wherever you are and whatever position you are in: you will take it when you are standing, when you are sitting and when you are lying down on this silken couch of yours.

There will be more than this, for you will only need to think of something and you will find it before you⁽¹⁾ without your having to move a muscle or make any effort to get it: 'In that [Paradise] they shall have whatever they may desire, but there is yet more with Us.' (*Qaf*: 35).

He then tells us of another of paradise's favours, that which is 'There will be maidens restraining their glances...' (*ar-Rahman*: 56). This means that there will be beautiful women whose eyes will look only upon their spouses, and not stray anywhere else.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...untouched beforehand by man or jinn' (*ar-Rahman*: 56). That is, they have never before been wed, and no one has taken their virginity, neither human nor jinn. This further means that they are preserved exclusively for the dwellers of paradise. Allah *the Almighty* says, 'Like...' which means as beautiful as '...rubies and brilliant pearls' (*ar-Rahman*: 58).

One might ask how all this favour can be attained. The next verses give the answer:

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَنِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَنُ ﴿٦٠﴾ فَإِنِ يَءَاذُكَ رَبُّكَ تَكْذِبَانِ ﴿٦١﴾

Shall the reward of good be anything but good? [60]

Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [61]

(The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 60 - 61)

Actions are rewarded like-for-like; when a believer does good, Allah does good to him, for He has mercy on him for such things wherein he has fallen short—for action alone is not enough to reach this goal.

(1) See *Ibn Abu Ad-Dunya and As-Suyuti: Ibn Mas'ud Allah be pleased with him narrated that Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said, 'You will behold the birds of paradise and desire one, and it will fall roasted into your hands.'*

وَمِنْ دُونِهِمَا جَنَّتَانِ ﴿٦٢﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٦٣﴾
مُدَّهَامَتَانِ ﴿٦٤﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٦٥﴾

There are two other gardens below these two. [62] Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [63] Both of deepest green. [64] Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [65] (The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 62 - 65)

What this means is that alongside the two gardens mentioned earlier, and lower than them in rank, there are two other gardens. This is because paradise is a place of levels and ranks, according to people's deeds and their level of sincerity to Allah. These levels will be explained in the chapter of *al-Waqi'a*. The previously mentioned two gardens, with all these blessings, is the level of those who are nearest to Allah and besides them and lower than them are two other gardens, for 'the companions of the right'.

The meaning of 'Both of deepest green' (*ar-Rahman*: 64) is that these two gardens will be a deep green colour which is almost black; this colour is only found in fertile lands which are well irrigated with fresh water.

Therefore after describing the gardens as being of the deepest green, He then says:

فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ نَضَّاحَتَانِ ﴿٦٦﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٦٧﴾
فِيهِمَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَنَخْلٌ وَرُمَّانٌ ﴿٦٨﴾ فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٦٩﴾

With a pair of gushing springs. [66] Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [67] With fruits – date palms and pomegranate trees. [68] Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [69] (The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 66 - 69)

This means that in these two gardens will be two springs gushing forth with water, and fresh water is the source of growth and verdure in plants. He then mentions that another of this level's favours is that 'With fruits—date palms and pomegranate trees' (*ar-Rahman*: 68). Of a higher level, He says: 'With every kind of fruit in pairs' (*ar-Rahman*: 52).

فِيهِنَّ خَيْرَاتٌ حَسَنٌ ﴿٧٠﴾ فَيَايَءَ الْآءِ رَيْكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٧١﴾
 حُورٌ مَّقْصُورَاتٌ فِي الْخِيَامِ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَيَايَءَ الْآءِ رَيْكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٧٣﴾
 لَمْ يَطْمِئِنَّ إِلَهُهُنَّ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جِآنٌ ﴿٧٤﴾ فَيَايَءَ الْآءِ رَيْكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٧٥﴾

**There are good-natured, beautiful maidens. [70]
 Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [71]
 Dark-eyed, sheltered in pavilions. [72] Which, then, of your
 Lord's blessings do you both deny? [73] Untouched beforehand
 by man or jinn. [74] Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do
 you both deny? [75] (The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 70 - 75)**

This is also a description of the maidens of paradise; they are 'most excellent', which scholars say refers to their character and comportment, and they are beautiful in face and appearance. They are *hur* or 'Dark-eyed' (*ar-Rahman*: 72). The related word *hawr* describes an intense whiteness and blackness of the eyes, for which a woman is praised; '...sheltered in pavilions...' (*ar-Rahman*: 72) means that they keep to their houses, neither acting immodestly nor going out to work.

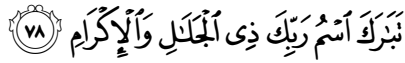
Allah *the Almighty* then says:

مُتَكِينٍ عَلَى رَفْرَفٍ خُضْرٍ وَعَبْقَرِيٍّ حَسَانٍ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَيَايَءَ الْآءِ رَيْكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ ﴿٧٧﴾

**They will all sit on green cushions and fine carpets. [76]
 Which, then, of your Lord's blessings do you both deny? [77]
 (The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 76 - 77)**

The word *rafrāf* (cushions) means a pillow which is leaned upon or a rug upon which is sat. The word for 'carpets' in this verse is '*abqari* which means an especially beautiful carpet, yet in ordinary Arabic usage, it means 'genius'. The word comes from a valley in Arabic called '*Abqar* which Arabs used to believe was haunted by jinns, so when someone said something brilliant, they would call him '*abqari*, meaning that he went to the valley of '*Abqar* and learnt it from jinns there. Thus, it came to be that they would call anything of outstanding and seemingly super-human craftsmanship '*abqari*.

Allah *the Almighty* then ends the chapter by praising Himself by saying:



**Blessed is the name of your Lord, full
of majesty, bestowing honour [78]
(The Quran, *ar-Rahman*: 78)**

The word *tabarak* 'Blessed' is derived from *baraka* which means 'blessing', so He affirms the blessing of the Name itself—even the Name is hallowed.

The word *tabarak* is a verb in the perfect *madi* (past tense), and no other derivation of this word exists, such as the imperfect or the active participle. The meaning of it is the following: Allah's goodness is immense and ever increasing, and this goodness is magnificent and free of any flaw.

Allah *the Almighty* says elsewhere: 'Blessed is He Who from on high, step by step, has bestowed upon His servant the standard by which to discern the true from the false...' (*al-Furqan*: 1). Also, He says: 'Blessed be He in whose hand all dominion rests...' (*al-Mulk*: 1). Thus, the attribute is ascribed to the Named and to His Essence.

As for here, He says: 'Blessed be your Lord's name...' (*ar-Rahman*: 78) which affirms the attribute for His Name. Therefore, how can the Name be magnified and of immense goodness, when these attributes seem to belong more properly to the Named?

Scholars say that when names are given, they are given with optimism for the named. For example, we might call a child *Dhakiy* (clever) hoping that he will turn out to be clever or *Sa'id* (happy) hoping that he will turn out to be happy, and so on.

After this, the reality of the person named might turn out to be the opposite of his name; we call him *Amin* (honest), and he ends up being a traitor. Thus, blessed indeed is the name whose attribute conforms to that of the named, so that we call him *Sa'id*, and he ends up being happy.

In such a case, the name is imbibed with the blessing of the named such that it agrees with it and does not contradict it. Therefore, He *the Almighty* says, 'Blessed is the name of your Lord...' (*ar-Rahman*: 78), for His is the Name which has the best claim over this blessing.

Allah *Glorified is He* is: '...full of Majesty, bestowing honour' (*ar-Rahman*: 78). He is the possessor of Magnificence, the possessor of awe and dread and the possessor of Power, Might, and Dominance. We said before that Allah has Attributes of Majesty, such as those we have just mentioned, and He also has Attributes of Beauty, such as Mercy, Kindness, Forgiveness, Clemency, and so on.

So, when Allah *the Almighty* manifests His Attributes of Majesty for you to behold, you see that which strikes fear and awe into you; likewise, when He manifests His Attributes of Beauty for you to behold, you see that which gives you peace, happiness, and joy.

Therefore, when someone said to us, 'I find that my state in Medina is different to that in Mecca', we replied to him, 'That is so because Allah manifests Himself in Mecca with His Attributes of Majesty and manifests Himself with His Attributes of Beauty in Medina.'

Furthermore, just as He is 'full of Majesty', He is at the same time 'full of Glory', showering mankind with His Grace, Favour and Goodness.

the chapter of

al-Waqi'a

In the Name of God,⁽¹⁾ the Most Merciful, the Dispenser of Mercy

The chapter of *al-Waqi'a* ⁽²⁾ (The Final Day):

إِذَا وَقَعَتِ الْوَاقِعَةُ ۚ لَيْسَ لَوْفَعَهَا كَاذِبَةٌ ﴿١﴾

**When that which is coming arrives [1]
no one will be able to deny it has come [2]
(The Quran, *al-Waqi'a*: 1-2)**

The verb *waqa'a* (to come to pass) literally means 'to fall from above' in such a way that nothing can prevent it from falling, and we say it was gravity that made it fall. The root letters *w-q-* also relate to the concept of weighty and awe-inspiring matters. For example, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Now, [as for the deaf and blind of heart] when the word [of truth] stands revealed (*waqa'a*) against them, We shall bring forth unto them out of the earth a creature which will tell them...' (*an-Naml*: 82). He says: 'Whereupon the truth was established (*waqa'a*), and vain was proved all that they had been doing.' (*al-A'raf*: 118) Likewise, He says: 'Said [Hud (Eber)]: "You are already beset (*waqa'a*) by loathsome evil and by your Lord's condemnation..."' (*al-A'raf*: 71).

-
- (1) The Islamic conception of 'Allah' is not the same as the Christian and Jewish conception of 'God'. However, the word 'Allah' does not refer to a tribal god or God of only Muslims, it refers to the Creator of the whole world, the One God (who has no son). We prefer, however, to use 'Allah' rather than 'God' as it has a unique character: it cannot be used to refer to any false gods and does not have any derivatives like goddess, gods, etc. It is a unique word used solely to describe the One God of this universe.
- (2) It is chapter 56 in the written order of the Quran, containing 96 verses, revealed in Mecca according to Al-Hasan, 'Ikrima, Jabir and 'Ata'; Ibn 'Abbas and Qatada who said it was all revealed in Mecca save for one verse, no. 82, which was revealed in Medina. It was revealed between the chapters of *Ta Ha* and *ash-Shu'ara*. (*Tafsir Al-Qurtubi*)

Therefore, the verb *waqa'a* suggests something inevitable and bound to occur by the command of Allah Who ordained and set it to occur in this way, just as you set the alarm clock to wake you for the dawn prayer; when it rings at dawn and rouses you, this is not the favour or greatness of the alarm clock, but it is of the one who set it to go off at that time. Likewise, when the truth is established and comes to pass, the greatness belongs to Him Who established it.

Thus, the words 'come to pass' indicate that the thing was inevitable and cannot be put off; so He *the Almighty* says: 'When that which is coming arrives' (*al-Waqi'a*: 1); referring to the Resurrection that is certain to come to pass and was ordained as such before time began so that it is as though it has already come to pass, for the one speaking these words is Allah *the Almighty* Whose command cannot be rebutted.

He gave it this name in pre-eternity, and then says of it: 'no one will be able to deny it has come' (*al-Waqi'a*: 2). This is because they were belying it and denying that there is any life after death, so Allah *the Almighty* speaks of the Resurrection as though it has already come to pass: 'no one will be able to deny it has come' (*al-Waqi'a*: 2); it is as though it is already here.

So, He called it 'no one will be able to deny it has come' in pre-eternity and set a precise time for it known only to Him, and then said, 'This thing which must come to pass, of which We have told you, has indeed already come to pass, and it might have been possible to deny it before it happened, but now that it has happened there can be no denial.'

Therefore, *Al-Waqi'a* is one of the names of the Resurrection. It has many other names which illustrate for us an aspect of this terrible and portentous Day. Reflect on these names: it is The Disaster, The Reality, The Sudden Calamity, The Clamour, and That Which Must Come to Pass. Each of these names has a lesson, and this Day combines all of these meanings in their different aspects, all at the same time.

Also, by looking into the occurrences of the root *w-q-* ' in the Quran, we find that it usually means something terrifying except when Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And he who forsakes the domain of evil for the sake of Allah shall find on earth many a lonely road as well as life abundant. If anyone leaves his

home, fleeing from evil unto Allah and His Prophet, and then death overtakes him, his reward is ready (*waqa'a*) with Allah...' (*an-Nisa'*: 100).

This means that his reward falls to Allah. To understand the Words 'his reward is ready (*waqa'a*) with Allah', we must read again Allah's Words: 'Now, [as for the deaf and blind of heart] when the word [of truth] stands revealed (*waqa'a*) against them...' (*an-Naml*: 82).

The word *waqa'a* in this verse means 'to fall', but not like the falling which we know; it means to go unto Allah. Why does Allah use the word *waqa'a* here to mean 'to fall'? He *the Almighty* does it to alert us to something important which is that the reward is more eager to go to the servant than the servant is to get the reward. If a servant dies, the reward rushes to him and is kept for him with Allah, and the reward knows exactly to whom it is meant to go.

Thus, the meaning of 'no one will be able to deny it has come' (*al-Waqi'a*: 2) is that when it comes to pass, no one will be able to belie it. It is like the Words: 'Be constant in [your] prayer from (*li*) the time when the sun has passed its zenith...' (*al-Isra'*: 78); the preposition *li* in this verse means 'when', namely when the sun has passed its zenith.

Allah *the Almighty* then says

خَافِضَةٌ رَّافِعَةٌ ۚ إِذَا رُجَّتِ الْأَرْضُ رَجًا ۖ
وَبُسَّتِ الْجِبَالُ بَسًا ۖ فَكَانَتْ هَبَاءً مُنْبَثًا ۖ

**Bringing low and raising high [3] When the earth is shaken
violently [4] and the mountains are ground to powder [5]
and turn to scattered dust [6] (The Quran, *al-Waqi'a*: 3 - 6)**

What this means is that it abases some people and exalts others; it debases disbelievers who belied it and did not act with it in mind. Allah says: 'But as for those who are bent on denying the truth, their [good] deeds are like a mirage in the desert, which the thirsty supposes to be water—until, when he approaches it, he finds that it was nothing. Instead, he finds [that] Allah [has always been present] with him and [that] He will pay him his account in full, for Allah is swift in reckoning!' (*an-Nur*: 39)

It exalts those who believed in it, worked with it in mind, and awaited it and hoped for the best reward from it; so, it raises them through the levels of the gardens paradise. Allah *the Exalted* says: '...whereas those who have attained to faith stand in awe of it and know it to be the truth...' (*al-Kahf*: 42). Thus, the Resurrection will lower disbeliever down through the levels of hell and raise believers up through the levels of paradise.

'When the earth is shaken violently (*rujjat*)' (*al-Waqi'a*: 4). This earth, made firm by solid mountains, will shake and tremble. From this, we may understand that Allah *the Almighty* created the earth in a moving state and then made it firm with mountains; for had it already been firm, it would not need the mountains. Therefore, these verses affirm that the earth moves and revolves.

The word *rajj* means to shake from its position and shake it violently, just as a peg is pulled from the ground; you do not pull it out from the ground all at once, but you move it back and forth to uproot it and weaken the ground's grip on it, so it is easier to pull out. In the same way, the earth will be violently shaken and disturbed.

Elsewhere in the Quran, Allah *the Almighty* describes this as an earthquake: 'When the earth is shaken with its [final] earthquake' (*az-Zalzala*: 1); also, He says: '...verily, the earthquake of the Hour (of Judgment) is a terrible thing.' (*al-Hajj*: 1) Since this shaking will be violent and strong, He emphasises its violence by repeating the root word (this is called the *maf'ul mutlaq* in Arabic or 'absolute or cognate object' that expresses the manner of the action) by saying: 'When the earth is shaken violently' (*al-Waqi'a*: 4), this means a strong and violent shaking. Can you imagine how this will be like when it will be Allah Who does it?

Allah *Glorified is He* then says: 'and the mountains are ground to powder (*bussat*).' (*al-Waqi'a*: 5) This will be the result of the violent shaking which will break these hard immovable mountains into pieces, making them seem like ground flour, as the rural dish that we call *bisia* (a mixture of roasted, ground grains). The verbal form *bussat* means to be crumbled and grounded into powder.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'and turn to scattered dust' (*al-Waqi'a*: 6). What this means is that it will be like dust too small to be seen with the naked eye unless a beam of sunlight shines directly on it because of its minuteness.

In another verse, the Quran expresses this meaning in another way: ‘And the mountains will be like wool, fluffed up.’ (*al-Qari'a*: 5) What this means is that mountains will become like carded wool. When the threads of wool are separated, they become like scattered dust.

So, the Resurrection will begin with the destruction of this entire universe. All the fixed constituents of the universe around you will come to an end; the sky will split and crack, the stars will fall and disperse, the mountains will crumble, and then it will be time for you to stand and be judged.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَكُنْتُمْ أَزْوَاجًا ثَلَاثَةً ﴿٧﴾ فَأَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَيْمَنَةِ ﴿٨﴾
وَأَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْمَشْأَمَةِ ﴿٩﴾ وَالسَّيِّفُونَ السَّيِّفُونَ ﴿١٠﴾
أُولَئِكَ الْمُقَرَّبُونَ ﴿١١﴾ فِي جَنَّاتٍ النَّعِيمِ ﴿١٢﴾

Then you will be sorted into three classes. [7] Those on the Right — what people they are! [8] Those on the Left — what people they are! [9] And those in front — ahead indeed! [10] For these will be the ones brought nearest to God [11] in Gardens of Bliss [12] (The Quran, *al-Waqi'a*: 7 - 12)

That is, mankind at this juncture will be divided into three categories: the first are those on the right side (*ashab al-maymana* or the companions of the right), who elsewhere are called *ashab al-yamin* (which means the same thing). They are those who will receive their books of deeds in their right hands. The statement ‘...who will be those on the Right Hand? (*al-Waqi'a*: 8) magnifies and exalts this status. This linguistic structure resembles His saying elsewhere: ‘...and there covered them from the sea that which covered them’ (*Ta Ha*: 78). (In both cases, the word *ma* implies a sense of special importance to what follows it.)

The right side symbolises goodness; therefore, the right hand is used for good and virtuous actions. The Islamic Law urges us to use the right hand and prefer the right side. However, the left side is not denied the favour of the right, for when you cut your fingernails, for example, the right hand cuts the

left-hand nails precisely and safely, while the left hand cuts the right-hand nails haphazardly and imprecisely.

This teaches us a lesson in life, which is that we can benefit from those who are better than us, so we must not hate them or envy them because they compensate for what we ourselves lack, their goodness benefits us and they make up for our own shortcomings.

Owing to this, the Islamic Law encourages us to seek knowledge, to teach it to people and to spread virtue throughout society; it also encourages us to enjoin it upon others and to forbid indecent and immoral acts, for the good of others will affect you, as will their evil; therefore, if all people adhere to Allah's Law, they would be at peace and behave peacefully with one another.

Also, the True Lord *the Exalted* has told us that those on the right side will be proud of their records of deeds when they receive them in their right hands, and they will boast of them by saying: "Here, read my record! Indeed, I was certain that I would be meeting my account." So, he will be in a pleasant life—in a lofty Paradise.' (*al-Haqqā*: 19-22) These are the ones whom the Resurrection exalts.

The second group are those on the left side—we seek Allah's refuge from this—who shall receive their records of deeds in their left hands: 'and those on the Left Hand; who will be those on the Left Hand?' (*al-Waqi'a*: 9) The right side is associated with good omens and goodness, while the left side is associated with bad omens and evil.

The Quran tells us what they will say when they receive their books of deeds in their left hands: 'Oh, I wish I had not been given my record and had not known what my account is. I wish my death had been the decisive one. My wealth has not availed me. Gone from me is my authority.' (*al-Haqqā*: 25-29)

Then, a command will be issued concerning them: 'Seize him and shackle him. Then into Hellfire drive him. Then into a chain whose length is seventy cubits insert him.' (*al-Haqqā*: 30-32)

The third and final of the three groups is 'And those foremost will be foremost.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 10) He repeats the word 'foremost' to honour them. Now though these people are mentioned last, they are the best and the highest

ranked of all three groups, which is made clear by what He *the Most High* says about them next: 'These will be those nearest' (*al-Waqi'a*: 11). This means that they will be close to the Throne. So, if you wanted to list them in order with the highest first, you would say the foremost, then those of the right side, then those of the left side.

Thus, these are the three ranks to which people will be assigned in the Hereafter, depending on what their deeds are like in this world. The foremost will be those who have begun their lives with good deeds in their youths, and then have continued in this way until their deaths so that they will be foremost to enter paradise. Then those of the right side, or the companions of the right, will be those who have started their lives with evil deeds in their youths, but then their self-reproaching souls corrected them so they repented and changed their ways and have continued to do good deeds until their death. Then, the people of the left side, or the companions of the left, will be those who have done nothing but evil, from their youth until their death.

Now, paradise is Allah's Gift, and therein will be placed both the foremost and those of the right side except that the foremost will have a place which is higher and nearer to (Allah's) Throne: 'These will be those nearest' (*al-Waqi'a*: 11). Where will they be? They will be in the Gardens of Bliss. We can infer this from what Allah says in the chapter of *az-Zumar*: 'and those who kept their duty to their Lord will be led to Paradise in groups, till, when they reach it, and its gates will be opened [before their arrival for their reception], and its keepers will say: "Peace be upon you! You have done well, so enter here to abide eternally therein."' (*az-Zumar*: 73) After this, He says: 'And you will see the angels surrounding the Throne (of Allah) from all round...' (*az-Zumar*: 75). Therefore, 'closeness' in this context means closeness to the Throne.

The 'foremost' in this verse means those who vie with others to outstrip them, and the competition here is for goodness, which is something that the Islamic Law encourages. Therefore, the True Lord commands us to vie and compete for good causes: 'And hasten to forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as wide as the heavens and earth, prepared for the righteous.' (*Al-Imran*: 133) He also says: 'Race to forgiveness from your Lord and a Garden whose width is like the width of the heavens and earth...' (*al-Hadid*: 21).

This is a competition of faith and righteous deeds, and it is open to all who want to be foremost and at the same time love for others what they love for themselves. It is a competition free of all rancour and selfishness.

A believer vies with others, and the issue is clear in his mind. Prizes await those who are foremost, and they come from a source which is inexhaustible. It is amazing how a believer strives eagerly to do good deeds in his life and might even strive eagerly for his death because of his longing for the paradise whose signs he has seen, while he lies in the final moments of his life.

So, when people in the countryside say, 'His funeral bier bore him very swiftly', some people deny this and say it is delusion. However, it is indeed true that some good people seem to be sped to the grave by their biers, and by looking at their lives, we see that they were good people and that they are rushing because of their eagerness to receive their rewards. Those who are directly involved in the burial preparations of the deceased know that dead people are marked by certain signs that their ending was good or bad—we seek Allah's refuge from bad ending.

Allah Glorified is He says:

ثَلَاثَةٌ مِنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ۖ وَقَلِيلٌ مِنَ الْآخِرِينَ ﴿١٣﴾
عَلَى سُرُرٍ مَوْضُونَةٍ ﴿١٥﴾ مُتَّكِئِينَ عَلَيْهَا مُتَقَابِلِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

**Many from the past [13] and a few from later
generations. [14] On couches of well-woven cloth [15]
they will sit facing each other [16]
(The Quran, *al-Waqi'a*: 13 - 16)**

These words are connected with the previous context. The foremost, who are close to Allah, are 'a multitude', the majority of which are composed of 'the first generations.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 13) These are those people who were first and foremost to embrace Islam, namely the Companions *Allah be pleased with them*.

So, there were many of the foremost who were close to Allah in the generation of the companions. 'And a few of those [foremost] will be from the later time [generations]' (*al-Waqi'a*: 14); this means that a minority of them will be from the later generations. Only a few in our generation and

those preceding it, at such later times, could be described as being of the foremost who are close to Allah *the Exalted*.

We often hear arguments where one person says, 'So-and-so is a good man who does so much good that he is like the Companions', and the other responds, 'No, none of us could be like the Companions, and no matter what we do our actions will never reach their level.'

However, the Quran settles this issue for us. The foremost who are close to Allah are present in the Islamic worldwide community; the first of them are those who lived at the time of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and those who followed them, and also even in our time, but there were more of them in the first generations and less of them in the later ones.

The reason there are less now is either because there are more people in general, so that the foremost among them seem to be less, or because wickedness and corruption have become so widespread in these times. Yet, they do exist. A poet said:

The One Who made the truth bitter

Will never leave a generation bereft of people of truth;

And perhaps passion has killed many of its men –

Perished be passion! How many has it killed!

Likewise, His Words '[They will be] on thrones woven with gold and precious stones' (*al-Waqi'a*: 15) mean that their reward will be to dwell in paradise 'on thrones woven with gold and precious stones'; this is referring to exquisitely and finely embroidered and interlaced with threads of gold. And 'reclining thereon...' (*al-Waqi'a*: 16) means that they will be upon these thrones. A reclined position indicates tranquility, repose, and comfort. As well '...face to face' (*al-Waqi'a*: 16) means that they will be positioned face to face, not back to back; this position indicates companionship and comfort when faces filled with joy and cheerfulness are turned to one another. This position will always be possible to them; even when they move, they will not turn their backs to one another.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

يَطُوفُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَدُنُّ مُخَلَّدُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ بِأَكْوَابٍ وَأَبَارِيقَ وَكَأْسٍ مِنْ مَعِينٍ ﴿١٨﴾
لَا يُصَدَّعُونَ عَنْهَا وَلَا يُزْفُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

**Everlasting youths will go round among them [17]
with glasses, flagons, and cups of a pure drink [18]
that causes no headache or intoxication [19]
(The Quran, *al-Waqi'a*: 17-19)**

One of the delights of paradise which they will enjoy is that ‘they will be served by immortal boys’ (*al-Waqi'a*: 17); what this means is that they will be waited upon and served glasses of drink by youths, namely young boys with beautiful faces; to behold a beautiful face is itself a blessing. Furthermore, these youths will remain as they are, without growing older.

This is the general state of all the dwellers of paradise; they remain the same age, namely the age of youth and vigour, and never suffer decrepitude or old age. This is why the women there are described as ‘loving [their husbands only], equal in age’ (*al-Waqi'a*: 37); this means that they are all of the same age.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘with vessels, pitchers and a cup [of wine] from a flowing spring.’ (*al-Waqi'a*: 18) This means that these immortal youths will wait upon them with goblets, ewers and ‘...a cup [of wine] from a flowing spring,’ (*al-Waqi'a*: 18) which means filled with fresh water or wine that flows from springs, for these are all drinking vessels.

The difference is that a *kub* (goblet) means a vessel with no handle or spout; a vessel with both a handle and a spout is called an *ibriq* (ewer). As for a *ka*’s (cup), it specifically means a drinking vessel containing liquid. (This means an empty cup in Classical Arabic would not be called *ka*’s, but only a full cup would have this name.)

Furthermore, when they partake of these blessings, ‘...they will get neither any aching of the head...’ (*al-Waqi'a*: 19). Since Allah says ‘...and a cup [of wine] from a flowing spring’ (*al-Waqi'a*: 18), then these words must be referring to the drinking of wine. Yet, this wine must be different to the wine of this world, for He says ‘...wherefrom they will get neither any aching of the

head...' (*al-Waqi'a*: 19); what this means is that they will not be affected as one who drinks wine in this world is affected, and they will not get headaches.

The phrase '...nor any intoxication' (*al-Waqi'a*: 19) means that the wine will not impair their mental faculties as the wine of this world does. Thus, the wine of the Hereafter will be a pure pleasure, free of all ills and defects. The first thing the wine of this world does to the one who drinks it is to cause him a headache, and then make him feel sick. This is the meaning of '...nor any intoxication' (*al-Waqi'a*: 19). The wine of the Hereafter gives pleasure without making the drinker feel these bad sensations. It is a pure pleasure and joy without anything to cloud it.

It is strange that many people drink wine because they have a worry which they want to get rid of, so they cloud their minds with alcohol in order not to think about their worry. Yet, this only makes things more complicated; it does not solve problems. Concealing a worry does not remove it. An intelligent person faces his problems and looks for a way to remove his worries through thought, reflection, and seeking practical solutions.

When the Quran describes the wine (of the Hereafter), it says that it is '...delightful to those who drink it...' (*Muhammad*: 15). Allah *the Almighty* took something to which people had a connection, which they loved and enjoyed, and made it one of the delights of paradise; however, He purified it from all the defects of worldly wine by saying: '...wherefrom they will get neither any aching of the head nor any intoxication.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 19)

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَفَكَهَةٍ مِّمَّا يَتَخَذُونِ ۖ وَلَحْمِ طَيْرٍ مِّمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ ۚ وَخُورٍ عَيْنٍ ۚ
كَأَمْثَلِ الْوُلُوفِ الَّتِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۚ جَزَاءُ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ۚ

[there will be] any fruit they choose [20] the meat of any
bird they like [21] and beautiful companions [22] like hidden
pearls [23] a reward for what they used to do [24]

(The Quran, *al-Waqi'a*: 20 - 24)

Another one of the delights of paradise will be that they will find before them fruit '...that they may choose' (*al-Waqi'a*: 20) and of the kind they love;

they will choose from many different kinds in order to know the difference between one and the other. The fact that they have a choice implies that much will be offered to them. The phrase 'and the flesh of fowls that they desire,' (*al-Waqi'a*: 21) means of the kind which they prefer and love. Thus they will be given food, drink, and fruit – so what human pleasure found in this world remains? They say it is the pleasure of women, and therefore, He then says: 'and [there will be] *houris* [fair females] with wide, lovely eyes [as wives for the pious]' (*al-Waqi'a*: 22); thus, all forms of pleasure will be included.

The word *hur* (fair female) is the plural of *hawra'*, derived from *hawar* which is an attribute of beauty in women describing eyes, which is intense whiteness of the white part of the eye along with intense blackness of the pupils; so, they are strikingly black and strikingly white and wide as well. An ancient Arab poet praised this kind of beauty by saying:

The eyes wherein there is hawar

Have slain us and never again revived us;

They can overcome even a wise man and render him powerless,

Though they be the weakest of Allah's human creations!

He then describes these beautiful-eyed companions by saying: 'like unto preserved pearls.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 23) A pearl is beautiful in itself, with its resplendence and its attractiveness, and yet, it is also 'preserved' which means protected and secured so that it cannot be sullied by dust that would lessen its beauty and resplendence. From 'like unto preserved pearls' (*al-Waqi'a*: 23), we understand that the beautiful-eyed companions are not like the women of this world in the pleasure they give, for the feelings you experience with them are loftier and more refined than what occurs with the women of this world.

Then, pleasure is elevated until it reaches the highest of levels, wherein there is neither food, nor drink, nor women, and where nothing suffices but the pleasure of beholding Allah *the Exalted* Himself.

All this is 'a reward for what they used to do.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 24) This is due to their good deeds, so they attain this reward. This does not mean that the deeds 'pay' for the reward, for it is mentioned in a Noble Hadith that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'None of you shall enter

paradise by his deeds.' The Companions said, 'Not even you, O, Messenger of Allah?' He said, 'Not even I, unless Allah showers me with His Mercy.'⁽¹⁾

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا تَأْثِيمًا ﴿٢٥﴾ إِلَّا قِيلًا سَلَامًا سَلَامًا ﴿٢٦﴾

**They will hear no idle or sinful talk there [25]
only clean and wholesome speech [26]
(The Quran, *al-Waqi'a*: 25 - 26)**

This means that in paradise 'no evil vain talk will they hear...' (*al-Waqi'a*: 25). The Arabic word *laghw* means empty, useless talk or false speech. '...nor any sinful speech' (*al-Waqi'a*: 25) means they will not lead one another into sinful speech because they will do no sin there at all. The words 'but only the saying of "Peace, peace"' (*al-Waqi'a*: 26) mean that they will hear nothing there other than the word 'peace'. This means that they will give greetings of peace to one another, or the angels will greet them; beyond this, it means that the True Lord *Glorified is He* Himself will greet them as He says in the chapter of *Ya Sin*: '[It will be said to them]: "Peace", a word from a Merciful Lord.' (*Ya Sin*: 58)

وَأَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٢٧﴾ فِي سِدْرٍ مَّخْضُودٍ ﴿٢٨﴾
وَطَلْحٍ مَّنْضُودٍ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَظِلِّ مَمْدُودٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَمَاءٍ مَّسْكُوبٍ ﴿٣١﴾ وَفِكَهَةٍ كَثِيرَةٍ
﴿٣٢﴾ لَا مَقْطُوعَةٍ وَلَا مَمْنُوعَةٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَفُرُشٍ مَّرْفُوعَةٍ ﴿٣٤﴾

**Those on the Right, what people they are! [27] They will dwell
amid thornless lote-trees [28] and clustered acacia [29] with
spreading shade [30] constantly flowing water [31] abundant
fruits [32] unfailing, unforbidden [33] with incomparable
companions [34] (The Quran, *al-Waqi'a*: 27 - 34)**

The previous verses have already told us about three groups: those of the right side, those on the left side and the foremost; the reward of the foremost is then made clear, and how most of them are of the early generations and

(1) Narrated by Muslim in his *Sahih* (5037) on the authority of Abu Hurayra

only a few are of the later generations. Now, the verses turn to the reward of those of the right side.

We can observe here that their reward in paradise will be a lower degree than that of the foremost who are close to Allah. It is as though the Quran is now giving the details of these three groups, after first mentioning them in general terms.

Allah says: 'And those on the Right Hand; who will be those on the Right Hand? (*ma ashabu l-yamini*)' (*al-Waqi'a*: 27). He repeats their name after the exclamatory *maa* (*maa l-ta'ajjub*, or the *maa* of wonder); this magnifies and honours these people. It is akin to using *maa* to express your wonder or amazement by saying, 'I gave him what (*maa*) I gave him.' It is also like Allah's Words: 'And He revealed to His Servant what (*maa*) He revealed.' (*an-Najm*: 10) This means that He revealed to him something tremendous which can hardly be described or encompassed by words.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'amongst thornless lote-trees' (*al-Waqi'a*: 28); the word *sidr* is the plural of *sidra* and means 'lote-trees'. This tree has a great distinction, which is that *Sidrat-Al-Muntaha* (the Lote-Tree of the Uttermost End) is of this type of tree although, of course, it is not like the lote-trees known to us.

In description of its fruit, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said they were as big as *hajar* jugs (a huge jug known to the Arabs).⁽¹⁾ When the fruit of the lote-tree is ripe and the tree is planted in good soil and a good environment, it is delicious and sweet. You eat one after another and do not want to stop.

What tempers this delight is that the lote-tree has thorns that hurt you whenever you want to pick its fruit. Precious trees often have thorns to protect their fruit, just as roses and date palms do, to protect them from mice and insects.

As for paradise, we said that all the blessings therein are free of all imperfections and anything which might sully their purity. The lote-trees of paradise are 'thornless' (*makhdud*), which means that their thorns have been

(1) Narrated by Abu Nu'aym in *Hilyat Al-Awliya*

removed. Allah *the Almighty* has removed from them all that which is harmful and preserved in them all that which is delightful and pleasurable. Paradise does not contain any blights or pests for which the trees might require protective thorns.

The phrase 'and banana trees layered [with fruit]' (*al-Waqi'a*: 29) means banana trees whose fruits are arranged in compact piles, one on top of the other, as bunches of bananas are, with the bananas lined up in an orderly way.

And 'in shade long-extended' (*al-Waqi'a*: 30) means that the shade is extended at all times and does not decline. As you know, the sun is what causes shade to move and depart, but in paradise, there will be no sun so that the shade that these trees provide will be constant.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'by water flowing constantly' (*al-Waqi'a*: 31) and then 'and fruit in plenty, whose season is not limited, and their supply will not be cut off.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 32-33) By Allah, once the delights of food, drink, and fruit have been met, what other human enjoyments remain?

The enjoyment of women remains, and so the Quranic discourse then speaks of it with this subtle phrase, alluding to it by saying: 'and on couches (*furush*), raised high.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 34). Now, the word *furush* literally means beds and the word in Arabic may be used to allude to a person's spouse. This is a lofty expression of this pleasure, which is based on concealment and privacy, and therefore, He then says:

إِنَّا أَنشَأْنَهُنَّ إِنثَاءً ﴿٣٥﴾ فَجَعَلْنَهُنَّ أَبْكَارًا ﴿٣٦﴾ عُرُبًا أَتْرَابًا ﴿٣٧﴾
لِأَصْحَابِ الْبَيْمَنِ ﴿٣٨﴾ ثَلَاثَةٌ مِّنَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَثَلَاثَةٌ مِّنَ الْآخِرِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

**We have specially created [35] virginal, [36]
loving, of matching age [37] for those on the Right [38]
many from the past [39] and many from later
generations [40] (The Quran, *al-Waqi'a*: 35 - 40)**

Thus, we understand the word *furush* to be a euphemism for 'women' because He *the Exalted* says thereafter: 'Verily, We have created them [maidens] of special creation' (*al-Waqi'a*: 35); this refers to the *houris* whom Allah forms and creates anew.

So, do not take the image you have of her in this world and say, 'She will be with me in the Hereafter as well.' Indeed, she will be with you, if you go to paradise, but she will have another form which is cleansed and purified from all the imperfections that existed in her in this world, and free of all that you do not like about her.

Also, Allah says: '...and purified spouses' (*Al-Imran*: 15). Once I was talking to a friend about Allah's Words 'They and their spouses—in shade, reclining on adorned couches' (*Ya Sin*: 56), and he said, 'Ah! Does this mean that so-and-so will be my wife even in paradise?' I said, 'Yes, but after Allah has purified her of everything that you do not like about her in this world.'

'And made them virgins' (*al-Waqi'a*: 36); that is, they will ever remain as virgins no matter how often they couple so that they will never tire of one another. The phrase 'loving (their spouses only), equal in age' (*al-Waqi'a*: 37) means they will love their spouses and will be all of the same age so that no one will ever be attracted to anyone but their own spouses.

'A multitude [of those on the Right Hand] will be from the first generation. And a multitude [of those on the Right Hand] will be from the later times.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 39-40) This means that the rank of 'the companions of the right' will include many from past times and many from later times, an equal amount from each. As for the higher level (the foremost), they will consist of many of the first generations and a few from later generations.

Allah then tells us about the other side – may He protect us!

وَأَصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ مَا أَصْحَابُ الشِّمَالِ ﴿٤١﴾ فِي سَمُومٍ وَحَمِيمٍ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَظِلٍّ مِنْ يَحْمُومٍ ﴿٤٣﴾ لَا
بَارِدٍ وَلَا كَرِيمٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُتْرَفِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَكَانُوا يُصِرُّونَ عَلَى الْحَنِثِ الْعَظِيمِ
﴿٤٦﴾ وَكَانُوا يَقُولُونَ أَإِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظْمًا أَأَنَا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ أَوْءَابَاؤُنَا
الْأَوَّلُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ قُلْ إِنَّكَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ لَمَجْمُوعُونَ إِلَى مِيقَاتٍ يَوْمَ مَعْلُومٍ ﴿٥٠﴾

**But those on the Left, what people they are! [41]
They will dwell amid scorching wind and scalding water [42]
in the shadow of black smoke [43] neither cool nor refreshing [44]
Before, they overindulged in luxury [45] and persisted in great
sin [46] always saying, 'What? When we are dead and have**

**become dust and bones, shall we then be raised up? [47]
And our earliest forefathers too?' [48] Say [Prophet], 'The
earliest and latest generations. [49] will all be gathered on a
predetermined Day [50] (The Quran, *al-Waqi'a*: 41 - 50)**

Those on the left side (or the companions of the left) are those who will receive their records in their left hands—Allah is our refuge! Allah *the Almighty* says in this verse '...who will be those on the Left Hand? ...' (*al-Waqi'a*: 41) to place emphasis and draw attention to their condition and to imply that the torments they will suffer are beyond description. They shall be 'in fierce hot wind and boiling water' (*al-Waqi'a*: 42) meaning that they are enveloped by scorching winds and scalding water. The Arabic word *samum* (scorching winds) means extremely hot winds that penetrate through the pores of the skin, whereas *hamim* (boiling water) means extremely hot water.

Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And shadow of black smoke.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 43) which is *Yahmum* meaning very hot, black smoke; when people see it, they will imagine that it will give them shade, yet in fact a fire within it will burn them. Allah *the Exalted and the Glorious* further describes this shadow by saying that it is 'neither cool nor good' (*al-Waqi'a*: 44) because we usually hope for shade to be cool and pleasant, protecting us from the sun's heat, along with being soothing and relaxing for those taking shelter under it. As for the shade of these people (Allah is our refuge!), it will be a shadow of billowing smoke.

The Quran then answers the question as to why Allah does all this with them by saying: 'Verily, before that, they indulged in luxury' (*al-Waqi'a*: 45) meaning during the life of this world, and so their recompense will be akin to their deeds, just as He says of the foremost: '...as a reward for what they used to do.' (*as-Sajda*: 17)

Thus, those on the left side will meet this fate because of how they indulgently pursued pleasure in the life of this world. Now, pleasure and comfort are not sins in themselves, but these people kept all the pleasure to themselves and neglected to share it with others and were stingy in sharing it with those who had no pleasure of their own. They did not fulfil Allah's commandments pertaining to the comforts they enjoyed. This is what the word *mutraf* denotes; it is one who abandons himself to the pursuit of pleasures.

As for those who uphold Allah's Rights and share the comforts they enjoy with others, they are not termed *mutrafeen* (people abandoned to the pursuit of pleasure) because by enjoying things, they allow others to attain their essential needs. The one who makes his house nice or buys new furniture is not guilty of recklessly pursuing pleasure because he spends his money for the public good and does a service to the lower strata of society who benefit from this.

Furthermore, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And were persisting in great sin (*al-hinth*)' (*al-Waqi'a*: 46). The Arabic word *Al-hanth* means all misdeeds and acts of disobedience which constitute sin. However, scholars say that here it signifies *shirk* (associating others with Allah in His Divinity or worship) because it is described as 'great,' and *shirk* is the worst of all sins.

Thus, they combined affluence and pleasure with the worst disobedience towards the Bestower, which is disbelief in Him *the Exalted*. In the same respect, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Have you not considered those who exchanged the favour of Allah for disbelief and settled their people [in] the home of ruin?' (*Ibrahim*: 28) What is even more heinous still: 'And they used to say, "When we die and become dust and bones, shall we then indeed be resurrected? And also our forefathers?"' (*al-Waqi'a*: 47-48) They deny the Resurrection because they have done nothing that could be of any avail to them on that Day. Once the Resurrection and the Reckoning would occur, their fate would be grave indeed. Thus they prefer to deny the Resurrection. Otherwise, if the Resurrection were on their minds, they would never have dared sin and would never have fallen into disbelief and *shirk*.

So, Allah replies to them with words that affirm the truth they deny by saying: 'Say [O, Muhammad], "[Yes] verily, those of old, and those of later times. All will surely be gathered together for appointed Meeting of a known Day."' (*al-Waqi'a*: 49-50) He has already affirmed it earlier by saying: 'And there can be no denying of its befalling.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 2)

Therefore Masruq⁽¹⁾ *Allah be pleased with him* said, 'Whosoever desires to have knowledge of the first and the last, the life of this world and the Hereafter and reward and punishment, let him read the chapter of *al-Waqi'a*.'⁽²⁾

(1) *Masruq ibn Al-Ajda` ibn Malik Al-Hamadani Al-Wadi`i, Abu Aisyah; he was a well-known trustworthy tabi`i from the people of Yemen.*

(2) *Narrated by Ibn Abu Shaybah and Al-Qurtubi in his Tafsir*

It was also narrated that our master `Uthman *Allah be pleased with him* heard something about `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud *Allah be pleased with him* which made him cut off his allowance. When Ibn Mas`ud fell ill, `Uthman went to visit him and said, 'Of what do you complain?' He replied, 'I complain of my sins' — and this is the condition of those who live by Allah and for Allah; he did not say 'I complain of a headache' or 'stomach ache'. He said, 'And for what do you hope?' He replied, 'I hope for my Lord's Mercy.' He said, 'Shall we return to you the allowance you should have had?' He said, 'You withheld it from me when I was well, and now you wish to give it to me as I lie dying?' He said, 'It shall be for your children.' He replied, 'They need it not, for I have taught them the chapter of *al-Waqi'a*. I heard the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* say, "Whoever reads the chapter of *al-Waqi'a* (every night) shall never suffer poverty."' (1)

ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ أَتَيْتُمُ الضَّالِّينَ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ لَا يَكُونُ مِنْ شَجَرٍ مِنْ زُقُومٍ ﴿٥٢﴾ فَالْأَثْوَنَ مِنْهَا الْبَطُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾
فَشَرِبُوا عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْحَمِيمِ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَشَرِبُوا شُرْبَ أَهْمِيمٍ ﴿٥٥﴾ هَذَا نَزَّلْنَاهُمْ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿٥٦﴾

**And you who have gone astray and denied the truth [51]
will eat from the bitter tree of *Zaqqum* [52] filling your
bellies with it [53] and drink scalding water [54] lapping it
like thirsty camels [55] This will be their welcome on the Day
of Judgement [56] (The Quran, *al-Waqi'a*: 51-56)**

After affirming to them that they will indeed be resurrected and gathered on a Day known only to Him, the True Lord *the Exalted* informs them what their requital will be on that Day. The trees of *zaqqum* are explained in detail in another place in the Quran when Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Verily, the tree of *Zaqqum* will be the food of the sinners. Like boiling oil, it will boil in the bellies, like the boiling of scalding water.' (*ad-Dukhan*: 43-46) He also says regarding it: 'Verily, it is a tree that springs out of the bottom of Hellfire; the shoots of its fruit-stalks are like the heads of devils.' (*as-Saffat*: 64-65)

Allah *the Almighty* wants to show us how ugly this tree is, so He compares it to something frightful which no one has seen, namely the heads of devils so

(1) Narrated by Al-Bayhaqi in *Shu`ab Al-Iman* and by Al-Qurtubi in his *Tafsir*

that people will go to great extremes in imagining its vileness. We have already explained that if we held a competition for artists to draw a picture of Satan, each artist would present a different vile image from the ones presented by the others. We could gather up millions of depictions of Satan's vileness, each artist drawing the vileness he imagines. Therefore, the Quran compares the tree of *zaqqum*, which is unknown to us, with the heads of devils, which are also unknown to us. This is not how comparison usually works: we compare something unknown to something known. As we said before, sometimes obscurity is, in itself, disclosure; this is also the case when it comes to the vagueness of the timing of death and the Last Hour.

The statement, 'Then you will fill your bellies therewith' (*al-Waqi'a*: 53) indicates that they will have no other food with which to fill their bellies. This is another kind of the torments they will have to endure, filling their bellies with it. That is the food, but what about the drink? (Allah is our refuge) 'And drink boiling water (*hameem*) on top of it. So you will drink (that) like thirsty camels!' (*al-Waqi'a*: 54-55). *Hameem* means boiling hot water, at the absolute hottest it can possibly be. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'So you will drink [that] like thirsty camels (*heem*)!' (*al-Waqi'a*: 55); the word *heem* means a thirsty camel which keeps on drinking without being satiated. So, they will fill their bellies of the *zaqqum* tree. Then they need to drink to abate its heat, but they will be given boiling water to drink, which they will also drink until their bellies are full. In another verse, He says about this boiling water: '...and are given to drink scalding water that will sever their intestines.' (*Muhammad*: 15)

After this punishment, the True Lord *Glorified is He* rebukes them by saying: 'That will be their entertainment (*nuzuluhum*) on the Day of Recompense!' (*al-Waqi'a*: 56) In Arabic, the word *nuzul* signifies an 'accommodation' that is prepared to entertain a guest and the food and drink which are presented to him; so *the Almighty* says in this verse 'That will be their entertainment...' (*al-Waqi'a*: 56) by way of deriding them.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

نَحْنُ خَلَقْنَكُمْ فَلَوْلَا تُصَدِّقُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تُمْنُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾
 ءَأَنْتُمْ تَخْلُقُونَهُ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْخَالِقُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ نَحْنُ قَدَرْنَا بَيْنَكُمْ الْمَوْتَ وَمَا نَحْنُ
 بِمَسْبُوقِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾ عَلَى أَنْ يُبَدِّلَ أَمْثَلَكُمْ وَنُنشِئَكُمْ فِي مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

**It was We who created you: will you not believe? [57]
 Consider [the semen] you eject [58] do you create it
 yourselves or are We the Creator? [59] We ordained death
 to be among you. Nothing could stop Us [60] if We intended
 to change you and recreate you in a way unknown to you[61]
 (The Quran, *al-Waqi'a*: 57 - 61)**

The matter of creation is acknowledged solely for Allah, and none but He has laid claim to it. Therefore, He speaks of it in this emphatic way: ‘It is We Who have created you...’ (*al-Waqi'a*: 57); He is restricting creation to Himself. ‘...then why do you believe not?’ (*al-Waqi'a*: 57) This means ‘Now that I have told you this fact, do not belie it and do not believe those misguiding people who tell you about how the creation process was, for they are liars.’

Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘I did not make them witness to the creation of the heavens and the earth or to the creation of themselves, and I would not have taken the misguiders as assistants.’ (*al-Kahf*: 51) We said before that a claim is rightfully proved to the claimant as long as no counter-claim is made, and no one else has ever laid claim to creation, not even disbelievers. We can read in the Quran: ‘And if you ask them who created them, they will surely say, “Allah.” How then are they turned away [from the worship of Allah Who created them]?’ (*az-Zukhruf*: 87). Allah *the Most High* says: ‘Say, [O, Muhammad], “If there had been with Him [other] gods, as they say, then they [each] would have sought to the Owner of the Throne a way.”’ (*al-Isra*: 42)

‘Then tell Me (about) the human semen that you emit.’ (*al-Waqi'a*: 58) This is one of the stages of creation, which began first with clay as we are told by the verses which give the details of creation: ‘Who perfected everything which He created and began the creation of man from clay. Then He made his posterity out of the extract of a liquid disdained.’ (*as-Sajda*: 7-8) So, the first stage was the creation of Adam *Allah be pleased with him* from clay, and the latter stage was creating his progeny from a humble fluid. Therefore, you can

witness the act of procreation which occurs through the meeting of male and female, so take from it evidence of the truth of the first creation. Therefore, Allah *the Exalted* says: '...then why do you believe not?' (*al-Waqi'a*: 57) This refers to the truth of your own existence through procreation. The words 'then why' are meant to exhort and inspire reflection.

Therefore, Allah speaks to us about this stage in this verse: 'Then tell Me [about] the human semen that you emit (*tumnun*).'¹ (*al-Waqi'a*: 58) Semen (*mani*) is the fluid which a man casts into the womb of a woman and from which the foetus is formed.

Elsewhere, He says: 'From a sperm-drop when it is emitted.'² (*an-Najm*: 46) The 'drop' here is the sperm by which the creation takes place, and semen is the fluid in which this sperm lives. The True Lord *Glorified is He* is saying: 'Have you seen this drop, which is almost invisible—do you create from it a perfectly-formed human being, or is it us Who do so?'

Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Is it you who create it [i.e. make this semen into a perfect human being], or are We the Creator?' (*al-Waqi'a*: 59) The rhetorical question in this verse is for affirmation, for there is only one possible answer, which is that creation is Allah's Work alone. If you were the creators, none of you would ever be stricken with the problem of infertility.

He *Glorified is He* then says: 'We have decreed death to you all, and We are not unable, to transfigure you and create you in [forms] that you know not.'³ (*al-Waqi'a*: 61). After speaking about creativity and creation from nothing, the True Lord *the Exalted* says to us: 'Beware of being deluded by the fact that We created you in the best form, for the One Who gave you the life is well able to take it away.'

In another place, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '[He] Who has created death and life, that He may test you [and thus show] which of you is best in deed. And He is the All-Mighty, the Oft-Forgiving.'⁴ (*al-Mulk*: 2) He mentions death first so that we face life without delusion: the strong should not be deluded with their strength, nor the rich with their riches. Remember always that you will die. So before we can face life, we must face death.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...and We are not unable to transfigure you...' (*al-Waqi'a*: 60-61). It is like Allah is saying, 'Nothing can overcome Us, and

no one can prevent Us from bringing forth a new creation instead of you.' Allah *the Almighty* says: 'If He will, He can remove you and bring (in your place) a new creation! And for Allah that is not hard or difficult.' (*Ibrahim*: 19-20) The reality of life affirms this, for the jinns were created before you. '...and create you in [forms] that you know not.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 61) This means creating you in a hideous form, after you were in the best of forms.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمُ النَّشْأَةَ الْأُولَىٰ فَلَوْلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾

**You have learned how you were first created:
will you not reflect? [62] (The Quran, *al-Waqi'a*: 62)**

Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And indeed, you have already known the first form of creation...' (*al-Waqi'a*: 62). This refers to the first creation, the creation of Adam *peace be upon him* from clay, the truth of which you can deduce from the second creation which you all witness, that of procreation. Therefore, as long as you know this, '...Why then do you not remember or take heed?' (*al-Waqi'a*: 62). This means that you must bethink yourselves of Allah's Power and keep it always in your minds. They also say that the 'first form of creation' means 'your first creation in the life of this world'.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

أَفَرَأَيْتُمْ مَا تَحْرُثُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ ۚ أَنْتُمْ تَزْرَعُونَهُ ۖ أََمْ نَحْنُ الزَّارِعُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ لَوْ نَشَاءُ لَجَعَلْنَاهُ حُطًا مَّا فَظَلْتُمْ تَفَكَّهُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ إِنَّا لَمُعْرِمُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ بَلْ نَحْنُ مُحَرِّمُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

**Consider the seeds you sow in the ground [63] is it you who
make them grow or We? [64] If We wished, We could turn
your harvest into chaff and leave you to wail [65] ['We are
burdened with debt [66] we are bereft' [67]
(The Quran, *al-Waqi'a*: 63 - 67)**

After speaking to us of the creation of man, the True Lord *Glorified is He* now speaks to us of the creation of plants: 'Tell Me! The seed that you sow in the ground' (*al-Waqi'a*: 63). Soil is the place of crops and their growth because

before the farmer sows the seeds, he ploughs the land to turn the soil so that it is penetrated by air and becomes more fertile. Just as Adam *peace be upon him* the first man, was created from the earth, plants are also created from the earth.

Allah *the Exalted* asks us, and He knows best, so the question must be rhetorical for affirmation: 'Is it you that make it grow, or are We the Grower?' (*al-Waqi'a*: 64) Thus, He speaks no more about the ploughed soil but speaks about crops since the purpose of ploughing is to grow crops.

The True Lord makes clear the power He has over this matter, for no one has ever claimed that he causes crops to grow from the earth. It is a matter of creation to which no one has ever laid claim. Furthermore, once a plant has grown and matured, can you then protect it? Allah *the Exalted* says: 'Were it Our Will, We verily could crumble it to dry pieces, and you would be regretful [or left in wonderment].' (*al-Waqi'a*: 65). Allah could turn it into chaff and dust blown by the wind, from which you could not benefit in any way. So, He has spoken here about human life and its antithesis, death, and then about plant life and its antithesis, namely its drying up and withering away into chaffs.

For this reason, when Allah *the Almighty* gives a parable of the life of this world, He says: 'And present to them the example of the life of this world, [its being] like rain which We send down from the sky, and the vegetation of the earth mingles with it and [then] it becomes dry remnants, scattered by the winds. And Allah is ever, over all things, Perfect in Ability.' (*al-Kahf*: 45)

Thus, beware of being deluded by your crops and their beauty and lushness, for in reality it is We (Allah) Who cause them to grow, and We are well able to take them away. Your role in the matter, as a human being, amounts to nothing more than casting the seeds into the earth. You play no further role in the growing of the crop or plant, which is carried out by an overwhelming power that belongs solely to Allah.

For example, we may predict a large harvest of blooming cotton plants, but shortly before it is ready for picking it is afflicted by blight and completely ruined without anyone being able to prevent it. Thus, Allah says thereafter: '...and you would be regretful [or left in wonderment]' (*al-Waqi'a*: 65); we are left wondering just what has happened and how the harvest could have been

taken away so quickly and saying, 'We are indeed ruined!' (*al-Waqi'a*: 66). This means that we planted but did not harvest! 'Nay, but we are deprived [of our livelihood]!' This means that we have been deprived of the fruits of our harvest.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمَاءَ الَّذِي تَشْرَبُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ أَأَنْتُمْ أَنْزَلْتُمُوهُ مِنَ الْمُزْنِ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنْزِلُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾
لَوْ نَشَاءُ جَعَلْنَاهُ أُجَاجًا فَلَوْلَا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

**Consider the water you drink [68] was it you who brought
it down from the raincloud or We? [69] If We wanted,
We could make it bitter: will you not be thankful? [70]
(The Quran, *al-Waqi'a*: 68 - 70)**

After speaking about food, He now speaks about water; these are the two essential constituents of life: food and water. We explained before that life's constituents are ranked according to how much they are needed: the first of them is air, then water, then food. You need air at every moment and cannot survive without it, for if even a single breath is denied you, you will die. Therefore, Allah, in His Wisdom, has made air universally available so that no one individual could possess it.

Then, when it comes to water, you can go without it for ten days; and therefore, you usually find that water is free, and people rarely own it. As for food, you could go as long as a month without it. This is because if you are denied food, your body can draw nourishment from the fat stored in it.

We can make an observation here concerning the linguistic style used. When the True Lord *the Glorious and Exalted* speaks about farming and crops, He says: 'Were it Our Will, We verily could crumble (*laja`alnahu*) it to dry pieces, and you would be regretful [or left in wonderment]' (*al-Waqi'a*: 65); the verse has *lam al-tawkid*, or the *lam* of emphasis, and it is translated as 'verily'. Yet, when He speaks about water, He says: 'If We willed, We could make it salt [and undrinkable]...' (*al-Waqi'a*: 70); in this verse, He without the *lam* of emphasis is not used. Scholars say this is because mankind plays a part in the act of farming since he ploughs, sows, and harvests. Yet, when it comes to water, no human being plays any role in it, for the act of causing

rain to fall is solely the province of Allah's Omnipotence. Who else can cause even a drop of rain to fall? Think about the work and processes required for a chemist to prepare even a single cup of distilled water. Therefore, Allah *the Exalted* says: 'is it you who cause it from the rainclouds to come down, or are We the Causer of it to come down?' (*al-Waqi'a*: 69) Man plays no part in the bringing down of rain, not even in a superficial way as is the case with farming. He says: 'If We willed, We could make it salt [and undrinkable]...' (*al-Waqi'a*: 70); this means that it is salty and useless. Then, His question '...why then do you not give thanks [to Allah]?' (*al-Waqi'a*: 70) stresses the importance of giving thanks for these favours which are sent to you, favours that happen without your playing any part in them.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ النَّارَ الَّتِي تُورُونَ ﴿٧١﴾ ءَأَنْتُمْ أَنْشَأْتُمْ شَجَرَتَهَا أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنْشِئُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾
نَحْنُ جَعَلْنَاهَا تَذْكَرَةً وَنَمَتًا لِلْمُقْوِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٧٤﴾

Consider the fire you kindle [71] is it you who make the wood for it grow or We? [72] We made it a reminder, and useful to those who kindle it [73] so [Prophet] glorify the name of your Lord, the Supreme [74] (The Quran, *al-Waqi'a*: 71-74)

The meaning of '...the fire which you kindle' (*al-Waqi'a*: 71) is the fire that you light using kindling. The question 'Is it you who made the tree thereof to grow, or are We the Grower?' (*al-Waqi'a*: 72) implies that the origin of fire is the wood which is taken from these trees. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'We have made it a Reminder...' (*al-Waqi'a*: 73); this is an enduring reminder for all. So, you can see how the True Lord *Glorified is He* mentions a favour of His and its antithesis: He speaks of man's creation, and then says: 'We have decreed death to you all...' (*al-Waqi'a*: 60). He speaks of crops, and then says: 'Were it Our Will, We verily could crumble it to dry pieces...' (*al-Waqi'a*: 65). He speaks of water, and then says: 'If We willed, We could make it salt...' (*al-Waqi'a*: 70).

However, when it comes to fire (Allah is our refuge), He does not mention its antithesis, but He says after mentioning it: 'We have made it a Reminder...'

(*al-Waqi'a*: 73). He caused it to remain so that it may be a reminder for you: '...and an article of use for travellers.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 73) This alludes to the man who is travelling abroad and wants to light a fire to give him warmth.

After all these favours, there is nothing left but for us to give thanks to Allah for them, and the first of thanks is to say 'Glory be to Him Who blessed us with all these favours!': 'Then glorify with praises the Name of your Lord, the Most Great.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 74) This is why we find that the words 'Glory be to Allah' are always uttered after every amazing thing: 'Exalted is He Who took His Servant by night from *Al-Masjid Al-Haram* [in Mecca] to *Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa* [in Jerusalem]...' (*al-Isra'*: 1) and 'So glory be to Allah when you enter the night and when you enter the morning.' (*ar-Rum*: 17)

Scholars say that if, when you receive a blessing, you say: 'Glory be to Allah. This is Allah's Will. There is no power save through Allah', you will not see anything bad in this blessing, and it will not be spoiled because you have ascribed the blessing to its Giver, and so He will take care of it. It is like when a manufacturer sells you a product and gives you a one-year guarantee. Thus, when the True Lord *Glorified is He* gives you a guarantee, it is open and has no time limit.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِمَوْقِعِ النُّجُومِ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَإِنَّهُ لَقَسَمٌ لِّوَعْلَمُونَ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٧٦﴾
 إِنَّهُ لَقُرْءَانٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ فِي كِتَابٍ مَّكْنُونٍ ﴿٧٨﴾
 لَا يَمَسُّهُ إِلَّا الْمُطَهَّرُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ تَنْزِيلٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾

**I swear by the positions of the stars [75] a mighty oath,
 if you only knew [76] that this is truly a noble Quran [77]
 in a protected Record [78] that only the purified can touch [79]
 sent down from the Lord of all being [80]
 (The Quran, *al-Waqi'a*: 75 - 80)**

His Words 'But nay, I swear by...' (*al-Waqi'a*: 75) are meant to affirm and give emphasis. Allah swears here '...by the mansions of the stars' (*al-Waqi'a*: 75). Now the orientalist did not understand this and objected to the verse by saying: 'How can He say, 'But nay, I swear,' and then give the main clause of

the oath right afterwards, as though He said, 'I do swear'? To explain this, we say that to say 'I swear' means to take an oath. In matters of legal rights, they say that the plaintiff has the burden of proof, and the defendant has to swear to his innocence. If there is no proof to be given, we turn to the oath. So an oath is only sworn to give emphasis and in a situation where there is denial.

When you ask, for example, 'Is Mohammad in the house?' the answer is 'Yes, he is,' not 'By Allah *the Almighty* Mohammad is in the house.' There is no need for all this because you do not doubt or deny the answer. Yet, if the other person feels that you do not believe him, he will emphasise his claim with an oath, saying, 'By Allah *the Almighty* it is true.'

So, it is as though when the True Lord *the Exalted and the Glorious* says: 'But nay, I swear by the mansions of the stars' (*al-Waqi'a*: 75), the thing to which He is swearing is so clear that it requires no argument, evidence, emphasis or oath. Furthermore, if I were to swear, I would swear by what I say, not by such-and-such.

If you reflect on this oath, which is preceded by a negative, and on its main clause, you would see that it is something clear that does not need to be affirmed by an oath. Take, for example: 'Nay, I swear by this city [Mecca]' (*al-Balad*: 1). To emphasise something which is plain and requires no oath can actually serve to raise doubts about it, so such things should not be emphasised.

The Arabic for *mawaqi' an-nujum* literally means 'the positions of the stars' and it signifies the paths or courses which they follow; this is one of Allah's creations, in which there are miracles and mysteries. Moreover, the True Lord *the Exalted* may swear by any of His creations He wills, and for any reason He wills, for He knows these created beings best.

Elsewhere, He says about stars: 'and landmarks. And by the stars they are [also] guided.' (*an-Nahl*: 16). A star has mysteries when it rises and mysteries when it sets (or falls), of which we know nothing; however, the Lord of the stars knows.

This allusive phrase is enough for us: 'And verily, that is indeed a great oath, if you but know.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 76) Be alert and well aware because in the stars there are many benefits for you of which you are not aware, and the fact

that you are not aware of something does not prevent you from benefitting from it, along with gaining from its motion and activity.

A farmer, for example, knows nothing about how a television works or how a signal is transmitted. Yet, he can switch on the television and benefit from its presentations—if only they were beneficial.

This indicates that if you knew the mysteries and benefits of this, you would certainly find it to be great. We see how those who study the stars and their movements and delve into their mysteries say that there is a connection between the stars and mankind, such that each one of us has a star which resembles him. There are bright stars which symbolise famous people, and then stars which are less bright, and stars whose light has not yet reached us. They say that a person's 'star has waned', meaning that he is no longer important.

Then, *jawab al-qasam*, or the thing sworn about, comes: 'That [this] is indeed an honourable recital [the Noble Quran].' (*al-Waqi'a*: 77) This means that this Book which you have before you is noble, and we sense that there is a kind of aptness here since the stars *nujum* were the object of the oath, and the thing sworn about is *munajjam* (the Quran came down in stages). So, the heavenly *najm* (star) is mentioned along with the Quranic *najm* (coming down in stages).

He describes the Quran as *karim* (noble) because the person who is *karim* (in Arabic) is the one who gives what he has without stinginess; likewise, the Quran gives to each generation after the other, an infinite gift and an unceasing flow.

Allah *the Almighty* says: 'In a Book well-guarded' (*al-Waqi'a*: 78). This means that it is guarded in the Preserved Tablet, along with being guarded in people's hearts. Owing to its position and lofty rank, it is a must 'which [that Book with Allah] none can touch but the purified' (*al-Waqi'a*: 79). Those who touch the Quran must be ritually pure of body and also spiritually pure of all deviance and corruption.

The final attribute of the Quran is that it is 'A Revelation [this Quran] from the Lord of the worlds.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 80) Its revelation is ascribed to the Lord of the worlds Who is generous to believer and disbeliever alike, and the fact that the attribute 'Lord of the worlds' is used here indicates that the Quran is a Book for all the worlds.

It was revealed by the Lord of the worlds Who knows what is best for the worlds and is their Creator and the One Who knows them best. His Quran for them is like a maintenance booklet which protects them and keeps them safe with its instructions and guidance, for the One Who created them is the One Who revealed this guidance.

Therefore, He addressed Adam and Hawwa' (Eve) *peace be upon them* after they had eaten from the Tree, with the Words: '...but if, as is sure, there comes to you Guidance from Me, so whosoever follows My Guidance will not lose his way nor fall into misery. And whoever turns away from My reminder, his shall be a straitened life, and We will raise him on the Day of Resurrection blind.' (*Ta Ha*: 123-124)

We said that if a servant follows the guidance of his Lord and Creator, he will never fall into ruin. If you have encountered difficulties in your life, then consider how you have deviated from your Lord's guidance. A pious person once said, 'I see the effects of my sin on my wife and my horse.' Indeed, every time his horse stalled, he would say, 'What have I done?' Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...Allah does not change the condition of a people [for the worse] unless they change what is in themselves...' (*ar-Ra'd*: 11).

What tells us that what is meant here by *najm* is the part-by-part revelation of Quranic verses is that Allah swears by it, i.e. by the Quran: 'That [this] is indeed an honourable recital [the Noble Quran].' (*al-Waqi'a*: 77) *Al-Karim* (a generous person) is the one who gives from the good things he has, and this depends on how much generosity he has and how constant it is.

One aspect of the Quran's noble generosity is that it keeps on giving to all aspects of life, both material and spiritual: in agriculture, manufacturing, economics, engineering, language, wisdom, and morality. Another aspect of its generosity is that it does not give everything it has to give all at once because it did not come for one particular time, but it came for all times until the Last Hour.

Had the Quran given all it had to give in one century, every other century would have had to go without receiving anything. We can infer this from the letter *sin* in Allah's words: 'We will soon show them Our signs' (*Fussilat*: 53). It

is a constant and ever-renewed gift because 'What is with you passes away and what is with Allah is enduring...' (*an-Nahl*: 96).

The word *Al-Karim* also means (precious), as when we describe a stone that it is *karim* (gemstone), which means a stone that is innately precious. Thus, He then says, 'In a Book well-guarded' (*al-Waqi'a*: 78) because a precious thing must be stored in a safe place that safeguards it.

The Quran is guarded and protected against being touched by any but a pure hand; and in this verse, '*al-mutahharun*', or 'the purified' (*al-Waqi'a*: 79) are the angels. The word *mutahhar* means those purified by another, not by themselves; that is why He did not say *al-mutatahhirun*. The scholars who say that it is permissible to touch the written Quran without ritual purity adduce this verse as evidence since the *mutatahhir* is the one who purifies himself.

This is relevant to the issue of menstruation: (*fa'tazilu an-nisa' fi al-mahidi wa la taqrabuhunna hatta yathurna fa idha tathharna fa'tuhunna min haythu amarakumu Allah*) '...do not go near them until they have become clean; then when they have cleansed themselves, go in to them as Allah has commanded you...' (*al-Baqara*: 222). The word *yathurna* means that their courses have come to an end, whilst *tathharna* means that they have bathed. Thus, *yathurna* comes from another because Allah *Glorified is He* decrees when menstruation finishes, unlike where bathing is concerned.

As for those who say that ablution is necessary before touching the written Quran, they look at the verse in a general sense, namely that it shows that the written Quran is not like any other book, but must be handled with sanctity. They say that you received it from those who are pure, so do not touch it unless you have purified yourselves.

Allah *the Exalted* describes the Quran here with three attributes: it is noble, protected in a well-guarded divine writ, and can only be touched by the pure. He is saying to us, 'Take this Book carefully, for it contains a gift which never stops giving, and it came to you safely just as it was sent down from Allah *Glorified is He* so look after it and do not even let anyone impure touch it.'

Allah *the Almighty* says: 'A Revelation [this Quran] from the Lord of the worlds' (*al-Waqi'a*: 80). This summarises and explains all that has just been

said. It is a noble Book which only the pure can touch because it is a revelation from the Lord of all being, and 'the Lord of the worlds' (*al-Waqi'a*: 80) implies sustenance, and the giving of Lordship is to believers and disbelievers, righteous and sinners alike. It is a noble and generous Quran in its gifts, from a generous Lord Who gives unto His sinful servant and does not withhold from him, despite his sin.

Then, the True Lord *the Most High* says:

أَفِهَذَا الْحَدِيثِ أَنْتُمْ مُذْهَبُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَتَجْعَلُونَ رِزْقَكُمْ أَنَّكُمْ تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَلَوْلَا إِذَا
بَلَغَتِ الْخُلُقُومَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَأَنْتُمْ حِينِيذٍ تَنْظُرُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَنَحْنُ أَقْرَبُ إِلَيْهِ مِنْكُمْ وَلَكِنْ لَا
تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ فَلَوْلَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ غَيْرَ مَدِينِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ تَرْجِعُونَهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾

How can you scorn this statement? [81] And how, in return for the livelihood you are given, can you deny it? [82] When the soul of a dying man comes up to his throat [83] while you gaze on [84] We are nearer to him than you, though you do not see Us [85] why, if you are not to be judged [86] do you not restore his soul to him, if what you say is true? [87]

(The Quran, *al-Waqi'a*: 81 - 87)

The word *Hadith*, or 'statement' (*al-Waqi'a*: 81) in this verse refers to the Quran; He says elsewhere: (*Allahu anzala ahsana al-Hadithi...*) 'Allah has sent down the most beautiful of all teachings...' (*az-Zumar*: 23); the word *Hadith* literally means what people say (*yatahaddath*), and it also means 'new'. We said before that the Quran gives us something new every day so that its wonders never cease, and it never grows old however much it is repeated.⁽¹⁾

The word *mudhinun*, or 'scorn' (*al-Waqi'a*: 81), is the plural of *mudhin*, whose origin is what someone does when he used *dihan*, meaning *dahana* (to smear something so that it sticks to something else); it also means cajoling, and flattering'. In this verse, it means to doubt and belie, along with scorning this 'statement', namely the Noble Quran.

(1) These latter words are from a description of the Quran given by the Messenger of Allah peace and blessings be upon him as narrated by At-Tirmidhi (2831) on the authority of 'Ali ibn Abu Taleb Allah be pleased with him.

The Noble Quran expresses this concept elsewhere by saying: 'When they meet the believers, they say, "We believe," but when they are alone with their evil ones, they say, "We are really with you. We were only mocking."' (*al-Baqara*: 14) In the chapter of *al-Qalam*, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'they want you to compromise with them, and then they will compromise with you.' (*al-Qalam*: 9) What this means is that they would like for you to sweet-talk and flatter them.

He says: 'And make [the thanks for] your provision that you deny [the Provider]' (*al-Waqi'a*: 82). This means that you make your portion and share of the life of this world to belie this Book, and you use the provision which Allah *the Almighty* sends unto you as a means of belying His guidance, instead of giving thanks to the Provider Who created you out of nothing and gave you sustenance out of nothing.

Indeed, He speaks truly of them when He says: '[Prophet,] do you not see those who, in exchange for Allah's favour, offer only ingratitude and make their people end up in the home of ruin, Hell, where they burn? What an evil place to stay!' (*Ibrahim*: 28-29).

He then speaks of the fate awaiting the deniers, from which there is no escape: 'Why is it not then that when it (soul) comes up to the throat' (*al-Waqi'a*: 83)? The subject of the verb 'comes up to the throat' is not mentioned directly here because it is obvious to everyone that it means the spirit; this is akin to His Words: '...until [the sun] was hidden in the veil [of night]' (*Sad*: 32); this is referring to the sun. Another example is found in His Words: 'If Allah were to punish men according to what they deserve, He would not leave on the back [of the earth] a single living creature...' (*Fatir*: 45); this means on the surface of the earth, which is obvious. It is true that a pronoun must have a clear antecedent, but if this antecedent is obvious and established, it does not need to be mentioned because it is clear what is meant.

The spirit's 'coming up the throat' is one's deathbed. Remember this moment, O, you who scorn. What will you do? Will you deny when this moment comes, too?

His Words 'while you gaze on' (*al-Waqi'a*: 84) means that when you look upon a person is in his deathbed and can do nothing for him nor keep death away from him since death belongs solely to Allah, and no one has any say in the matter.

The word *falawla*, or 'why, if you' (*al-Waqi'a*: 86) is a particle that indicates encouragement and exhortation, like the words 'Would you do such-and-such?' The word *hulqum*, or '...throat...' (*al-Waqi'a*: 83) is the first part of the windpipe which is where the spirit comes out. Scholars said that it does not come from the gullet through which food passes, but it comes from the windpipe through which air passes since air is the most important thing in human life. We spoke about the hierarchy of life's necessities, namely food, drink, and air, before and said that the most important of them is air, for one cannot go without it at all, and if a single breath is denied you, you will die.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'We are nearer to him than you, though you do not see Us' (*al-Waqi'a*: 85). This means that at this occasion, when the spirit finally leaves the body without your being able to do anything about it, We are closer to it than you are 'though you do not see Us' (*al-Waqi'a*: 85).

The Words 'though you do not see Us' (*al-Waqi'a*: 85) solve many problems for us, for some people understand 'togetherness with Allah' in His Words: '...Allah is with us...' (*at-Tawba*: 40) and 'for Allah is with those who are mindful of Him...' (*an-Nahl*: 128); they take them to mean togetherness of knowledge. Were this true, He would not have said: 'though you do not see Us' (*al-Waqi'a*: 85).

Thus, it is real togetherness, and if your sight were sharp, you would have been able to see, for there is no reason why this togetherness could not be envisaged impartially. There is an example for this in your own self; your spirit controls all your motions in life, yet do you know in what part of your body it resides?

If you cannot perceive it even though it is inside you, what do you think about the True Lord who controls this whole universe? Togetherness with Allah in His Essence is not like any other essence, and if you cannot perceive some of Allah's created beings, can you possibly hope to perceive exactly how He *the Exalted* is with you? Some of Allah's created beings cannot be

perceived, so how could you hope to perceive Him Who created that which cannot be perceived?

Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘Why, if you are not to be judged, do you not restore his soul to him if what you say is true?’ (*al-Waqi'a*: 86-87) This means to go ahead and return the spirit to the body—do you have the power to do so? In fact, you are dependent on Us and in Our grasp; you belong to Us. You do not have the power to return this spirit once We have decreed that it leaves. Thus, you are in the grasp of Divine Omnipotence, even though you were created with free will.

The Words ‘...if what you say is true’ (*al-Waqi'a*: 87) refer to their claim that there will be no Resurrection or Reckoning.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

فَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾ فَرَوْحٌ وَرَيْحَانٌ وَجَنَّتْ نَعِيمٌ ﴿٨٩﴾
وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٩٠﴾ فَسَلَامٌ لَكَ مِنْ أَصْحَابِ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٩١﴾

If that dying person is one of those who will be brought near to God [88] he will have rest, ease, and a Garden of Bliss [89] if he is one of those on the Right [90] [he will hear], ‘Peace be on you,’ from his companions on the Right [91] (The Quran, *al-Waqi'a*: 88 - 91)

At its beginning, the chapter spoke to us about these three groups, and now at its end, the True Lord summarises for us what the fate of each group will be. The first and highest in rank of them are the foremost or those who are drawn near; we said that they are near to Allah *Glorified is He* and to paradise. They are those who were keen to obey Him and did so consistently, not sullying themselves with sins, and therefore, they attained this rank.

Their reward, then, is *rawhun*, or ‘Rest’ (*al-Waqi'a*: 89), which scholars say means Allah’s Mercy and the joy of His favour. The extent of mercy depends on the power of the one who gives it, and if mercy is from Allah *the Almighty* it has no bounds.

The word *rayhan*, or ‘bounty’ (*al-Waqi'a*: 89), literally means basil, a well-known herb with a pleasant smell. This word also occurs when Allah

Glorified is He says: 'its husked grain, its fragrant plants.' (*ar-Rahman*: 12) However, the *rayhan* of paradise is something else, not at all the same as the one we know in this world.

The Messenger of Allah, Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* made this clear to us, by saying about paradise and its delights, 'Therein will be bounties which no eye has seen, no ear has heard and no human heart has ever perceived.'⁽¹⁾

It is obvious that the eye has seen less than the ear has heard because what the eye sees is confined to its power of sight, whilst the ear hears what the eye sees, what it does not see and what others see. The ear is therefore a broader means of reception. Beyond this, paradise contains what the heart has never conceived of and the mind never imagined. The eye sees things that exist, and the ear hears things that exist, but that which the mind has never imagined must be something completely new that we have never encountered and delights which no mind has ever thought of before.

Therefore, we said that when the True Lord *the Most High* wanted to give us a depiction of the bliss of paradise, He did not describe the bliss itself but gave parables to illustrate it as though it cannot be described with any words we know. Thus, He says: 'The likeness of Paradise, which the righteous have been promised...' (*ar-Ra'd*: 35).

When you reflect upon the bliss of paradise, you see that it encompasses all human sensations; it contains delights of taste such as food, drink, fruit, water, honey and milk, along with the delights of sight such as seeing *Al-hur Al-'in* (beautiful companions) like hidden pearls and the vision of the comely youths, and so on; it also contains the delights of touch, such as silk and brocade of many colours, and delights of hearing: 'They will hear no idle or sinful talk there, only clean and wholesome speech.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 25-26) It also contains the delights of smell such as *rayhan* (basil) of which we have just spoken.

He then says: '...and a garden of bliss' (*al-Waqi'a*: 89); 'bliss' means that which pleases the soul and gives it enjoyment without any annoyance to spoil

(1) Narrated by *Al-Bukhari* (3005) and *Muslim* (5050) on the authority of *Abu Hurayra* Allah be pleased with him

it. It is a pure bliss because you might consume food and drink in this world and enjoy it, and it might give you pleasure, that is true; however, after a while, you find that it causes you pain or undesirable effects.

Therefore, He says about the food of paradise: ‘...then eat it with enjoyment and with wholesome result.’ (*an-Nisa*: 4) It is pleasurable and enjoyable to consume, and it gives you cheer thereafter without causing any annoyance or discomfort.

Allah *the Exalted* says: ‘And if he is one of those on the Right, then peace to you from those on the right.’ (*al-Waqi'a*: 90-91) Those on the right are the second kind of people (of paradise); Allah *Glorified is He* does not describe the bliss which they will encounter in detail, and He does no more than allude to it; they will be in peace and give greetings of peace to one another, each multitude of them greeting the other: the angels will greet them, or the True Lord Himself will greet them, as He says in the chapter of *Ya Sin*: “Peace”, a word from the Lord of Mercy.’ (*Ya Sin*: 58) This greeting of peace from the Merciful Lord involves all blessings.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says

وَأَمَّا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ الصَّالِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾ فَتَزُلُّ مِنْ حِمِيمٍ ﴿٩٣﴾ وَتَصْلِيَةٌ جَحِيمٍ ﴿٩٤﴾

**But if he is one of those who denied the truth and went
astray [92] he will be welcomed with scalding water [93]
He will burn in Hell [94] (The Quran, *al-Waqi'a*: 92 - 94)**

These—Allah is our refuge—are the bad people, and their requital shall be in hell; they ‘will be welcomed with scalding water’ (*al-Waqi'a*: 93). *An-Nuzul* is the things by which a guest is shown hospitality; the word *nuzul* is used in modern Arabic to mean ‘hotel’. These people will have burning despair *hameem* (scalding water) prepared for them to consume, meaning boiling water of the highest temperature, and they will have hell prepared for them into which they will be cast and whose heat and pain they will suffer: ‘...When their skins have been burnt away, We shall replace them with new ones so that they may continue to feel the pain...’ (*an-Nisa*: 56). We said before that this verse is an example of the miraculous nature of the Quran

because it is the first one to affirm to the world that the skin is the place where human physical sensation takes place.

This will be the welcome of disbelievers and deniers, whilst the welcome of the believers will be paradise which Allah *Glorified is He* describes 'as a welcoming gift from the Most Forgiving, Most Merciful One.' (*Fussilat*: 32) An intelligent person may then decide which of these two welcomes he would rather have.

Then, the True Lord *the Most High* says:

إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ حَقُّ الْيَقِينِ ﴿٩٥﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٩٦﴾

**This is the certain truth [95]
[Prophet], glorify the name of your Lord the
Supreme [96] (The Quran, *al-Waqi'a*: 95 - 96)**

We said that there are three levels of knowledge: *ilm al-yaqin* (the knowledge of certainty), *ayn al-yaqin* (the eye of certainty) and *haqq al-yaqin* (the truth of certainty or certain truth). After speaking of the bliss of paradise and the torment of hell, the True Lord *the Most High* says: 'This is the certain truth' (*al-Waqi'a*: 95). This means that when they enter paradise and they experience its delights, and when the people of hell suffer its heat, this will be true certainty, the final stage of knowledge.

The first two of these three levels of knowledge are mentioned in the chapter of *at-Takathur* (chapter titled 'Striving for More'): 'Striving for more distracts you until you go into your graves. No, indeed! You will come to know. No, indeed! In the end you will come to know. No, indeed! If only you knew for certain. You will most definitely see Hellfire; you will see it with the eye of certainty. On that Day, you will be asked about your pleasures.' (*at-Takathur*: 1-7)

Ilm al-yaqin (the knowledge of certainty) is when a truthful person tells you something; *ayn al-yaqin* (the eye of certainty) is when you see it for yourself; *haqq al-yaqin* (the truth of certainty or certain truth) is when you experience it directly.

Here the final stage is spoken of; it will occur on the Day of Resurrection when the dwellers of paradise will directly experience its bliss and the

denizens of hell will directly suffer its torments. The requital of the Hereafter is a fair requital, the requital of Him who wrongs no one even the smallest amount. Were it not for this requital, people would not have been able to live in this world.

It is not possible that sinners and bad people who cause misery and woe to society because of their misdeeds could be equal to the believers who please society and benefit them with their virtue, generosity, and righteousness.

It is as though the True Lord *Glorified is He* is jealously protective of His created beings and angry for their sake, protecting them from falling into ruin; yet, aside from this, the True Lord is free of any need for His created beings; for their obedience does not benefit Him nor their disobedience harm Him. His created beings should receive their reward in the Hereafter by praising Allah *the Exalted* and glorifying Him because He has given them the blessing of reward in the Hereafter and not neglected them. Even the fire and torment of hell is a favour from Allah *Glorified is He*. This is why He ends the verses that speak about this matter by saying: 'glorify the name of your Lord the Supreme.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 96)

So, this glorification is a natural result of what Allah *the Almighty* has here mentioned, namely the endless bliss of believers and the lasting torment of disbelievers. This should inspire us to glorify Allah. This means to declare that He is free of all imperfections and of any resemblance to His creation, to affirm for Him every Attribute of Majesty, Perfection, and Beauty and to believe that there is nothing like Him.

The True Lord *the Most High* gives us a sign in our ordinary lives to indicate this: history is filled with tyrants and oppressors like Pharaoh and his kind, and people have gone so far as to make them deities beside Allah *the Almighty* along with offering them their allegiance and obedience, but no one ever said to them 'Glory be to you!' because this can only be said about Allah *the Exalted* and no one would dare say it about anyone except Allah.

We said the same about the Divine Name 'Allah' that despite the fact that atheists and disbelievers exist, none of them dare to give themselves this name. The simple reason for this is that they know deep down that Allah *Glorified is He* is real and that if they were to dare to use this name, He would

seize them with a seizure of one Exalted in Might and Perfect in Ability. Therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...Do you know of anyone equal to Him?' (*Maryam*: 65)

This exclusivity is also found in the obligation of fasting; a similar statement to the testimony of 'there is no deity but Allah' could be said to a human being, and we might see hypocrites and sycophants raising their voices and praising an evil tyrant and saying to him, 'There is only you, and no one besides you!' as Pharaoh said: 'You have no other god that I know of except me.' (*al-Qasas*: 38) History gives many further examples of this.

When it comes to prayer, you might find someone prostrating before his fellow human being and doing obeisance to him, and when it comes to the poor-due, we see those who spend money on parties to honour human beings. Likewise, when it comes to the pilgrimage, there are those who come on a weekly basis to sign the guest book and declare their allegiance and loyalty.

As for fasting, we have never seen anyone worshipping a human being by fasting, and therefore, the Qudsi Hadith says: 'All the deeds the son of Adam does are his, except for fasting. It is Mine, and I reward it personally.'⁽¹⁾

These three things belong solely to the True Lord *the Most High* and can only be for Him; this is proof of the absoluteness of Divine Omnipotence and the magnificence of the Supreme Being.

The meaning of His Words 'glorify the name of your Lord the Supreme' (*al-Waqi'a*: 96) is to glorify the name of Him Whose mightiness cannot be encompassed or comprehended. We say this 'Glory be to my Lord, the Supreme' every time we bow in prayer. The beauty of the Quran's accomplished form can be seen in how the next chapter *al-Hadid* 'The Iron' begins with the Words 'Everything in the heavens and earth glorifies Allah—He is the Almighty, the Wise.' (*al-Hadid*: 1) as though the heavens and the earth and all that they contain have responded to the command, 'glorify the name of your Lord the Supreme' (*al-Waqi'a*: 96), glorifying as they were commanded to. When you say *subhan Allah* (Glory be to Allah), you affirm that He is

(1) Narrated by Al-Bukhari (1771) and Muslim (1942) on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him

glorified without stating which of His created beings glorifies Him. It is similar to what we said about the attribute of creation: Allah *Glorified is He* possesses this attribute, and He was Creator before He created anything; it was by His attribute of creation that He created.

Likewise, He *the Almighty* was glorified in pre-eternity before there was anyone to glorify Him and merciful before there was anyone to receive His Mercy. So, Allah's Attributes are intrinsically His. When we call someone a poet, we do not say this because he has just composed a poem; rather, he composed the poem because he is a poet, and if he was not a poet in the first place, he would not have composed it.

The word *subhan* (glory be to) occurs several times in the Quran, followed either by a substantive or by the second person pronoun. It occurs eighteen times before a substantive in eighteen different chapters, first of all in the chapter of *Yusuf*, '...glory be to Allah. I do not join others with Him.' (*Yusuf*: 108), and finally in the chapter of *al-Qalam*, 'they said, "Glory be to Allah, our Lord! Truly, we were doing wrong:' (*al-Qalam*: 29), about the story of the people of the garden.

It occurs as the first *masdar* (verbal noun) added to '*kaf* of addressing' (*ka*) in the chapter of *al-Baqara* 'The Cow': '*qalu subhanaka la 'ilm lana illa ma 'allamtana*', 'They said, "May You be glorified! We have knowledge only of what You have taught us...:' (*al-Baqara*: 32). This form (with *kaf* of addressing) occurs in nine chapters. The word *subhana* occurs with *ha'* *al-ghaib* (third person *ha'*) in fourteen chapters, the first of which is in the chapter of *al-Baqara*: '*subhanahu bal lahu ma fi al-samawati wa al-ard kullun lahu qanitun*', '...May He be exalted! No! Everything in the heavens and earth belongs to Him, and all surrender with obedience [in worship) to Him.' (*al-Baqara*: 116) All these occurrences affirm for us that this attribute belonged to Allah *the Exalted* in pre-eternity, before He created anyone to glorify Him.

Once He had created the heavens and the earth and all that is within them: angels, jinns, men and all other beings; they obeyed the command of their Lord to glorify Him, and still continue to do so. This verb *yusabbih* (to glorify) is found in the Quran in both past and present perfect tenses to show that it will continue until the Day of Resurrection; it circles throughout the

entire universe and will remain as long as the universe remains until the Day of Resurrection.

He says: '*Sabbaha lillahi ma fi as-samawati wa al-ard*', 'Everything in the heavens and earth glorifies Allah.' (*al-Hadid*: 1); *Sabbaha* literally means (glorified). He also says: '*Yusabbihu lillahi ma fi as-samawati wa ma fi al-ard*', 'Everything in the heavens and earth glorifies Allah...' (*al-Jumu'a*: 1); *Yusabbihu* means (glorifies) this verb also occurs in the imperative form: '*fasabbih bismi rabbika Al-'Azhim*', 'so [Prophet] glorify the name of your Lord, the Supreme.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 74) This means 'O, mankind, do not break away from this chain of glorification. You must glorify, too.'

For us Arabs, to glorify means to say *subhan Allah* and every nation has their own way of saying this. Each nation glorifies Allah in their own language; even inanimate objects, plants, and animals glorify Him with their own languages which are known to their Creator. It is not necessary that we ourselves know these languages; if we do not know many human languages, how can we hope to learn the languages of other creatures?

The True Lord *the Most High* says: 'The seven heavens and the earth and everyone in them glorify Him. There is not a single thing that does not celebrate His praise, though you do not understand their praise...' (*al-Isra'*: 44). This means that they glorify in a literal way with a special language—not that they only glorify indicatively as some people say.

Does Allah *Glorified is He* not say: '...We made the mountains and the birds celebrate Our praises with Dawud (David). We did all these things' (*al-Anbiya'*: 79)? In the story of our master Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him* we saw that ants have a language, hoopoes have a language, and all birds have a language.

The True Lord blessed our master Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him* by teaching him this language so that he could understand what these creatures wanted to say to him. Language is based on mutual understanding; humans understand human language, animals understand animal language, plants understand plant language, and inanimate objects understand their own language.

Index

Chapter of *Muhammad*

Verse 1	7
Verse 2	10
Verse 3	14
Verse 4	16
Verse 5	21
Verse 6	21
Verse 7	23
Verse 8	24
Verse 9	25
Verse 10	27
Verse 11	28
Verse 12	28
Verse 13	29
Verse 14	30
Verse 15	31
Verse 16	40
Verse 17	44
Verse 18	46
Verse 19	50

Verse 20	59
Verse 21	60
Verse 22	62
Verse 23	62
Verse 24	67
Verse 25	69
Verse 26	69
Verse 27	72
Verse 28	72
Verse 29	73
Verse 30	73
Verse 31	75
Verse 32	77
Verse 33	81
Verse 34	83
Verse 35	83
Verse 36	85
Verse 37	85
Verse 38	88

Chapter of *al-Fath*

Verse 1	99
Verse 2	100
Verse 3	100
Verse 4	104
Verse 5	106
Verse 6	108
Verse 7	111
Verse 8	111
Verse 9	111
Verse 10	113
Verse 11	116
Verse 12	116
Verse 13	118
Verse 14	119
Verse 15	120

Verse 16	121
Verse 17	122
Verse 18	122
Verse 19	122
Verse 20	123
Verse 21	123
Verse 22	123
Verse 23	123
Verse 24	124
Verse 25	124
Verse 26	125
Verse 27	126
Verse 28	131
Verse 29	134

Chapter of *al-Hujurat*

Verse 1	151
Verse 2	154
Verse 3	157
Verse 4	158
Verse 5	158
Verse 6	160
Verse 7	165
Verse 8	169
Verse 9	170

Verse 10	173
Verse 11	176
Verse 12	186
Verse 13	194
Verse 14	200
Verse 15	203
Verse 16	204
Verse 17	205
Verse 18	206

Chapter of *Gaf*

Verse 1	211
Verse 2	215
Verse 3	218
Verse 4	219
Verse 5	220
Verse 6	223
Verse 7	223
Verse 8	223
Verse 9	226
Verse 10	226
Verse 11	228
Verse 12	229
Verse 13	229
Verse 14	229
Verse 15	231
Verse 16	232
Verse 17	235
Verse 18	235
Verse 19	237
Verse 20	238
Verse 21	238
Verse 22	238
Verse 23	239

Verse 24	239
Verse 25	239
Verse 26	239
Verse 27	242
Verse 28	243
Verse 29	243
Verse 30	244
Verse 31	245
Verse 32	245
Verse 33	245
Verse 34	249
Verse 35	249
Verse 36	250
Verse 37	252
Verse 38	253
Verse 39	255
Verse 40	255
Verse 41	258
Verse 42	258
Verse 43	259
Verse 44	259
Verse 45	260

Chapter of *adh-Dhariyat*

Verse 1	265	Verse 31	291
Verse 2	265	Verse 32	291
Verse 3	265	Verse 33	291
Verse 4	265	Verse 34	291
Verse 5	267	Verse 35	295
Verse 6	267	Verse 36	295
Verse 7	268	Verse 37	295
Verse 8	268	Verse 38	297
Verse 9	268	Verse 39	297
Verse 10	269	Verse 40	297
Verse 11	269	Verse 41	300
Verse 12	269	Verse 42	300
Verse 13	269	Verse 43	302
Verse 14	269	Verse 44	302
Verse 15	271	Verse 45	302
Verse 16	271	Verse 46	303
Verse 17	271	Verse 47	304
Verse 18	271	Verse 48	304
Verse 19	271	Verse 49	304
Verse 20	279	Verse 50	306
Verse 21	279	Verse 51	306
Verse 22	283	Verse 52	308
Verse 23	284	Verse 53	308
Verse 24	286	Verse 54	309
Verse 25	286	Verse 55	309
Verse 26	289	Verse 56	310
Verse 27	289	Verse 57	310
Verse 28	290	Verse 58	310
Verse 29	290	Verse 59	316
Verse 30	290	Verse 60	318

Chapter of *at-Tur*

Verse 1	321
Verse 2	321
Verse 3	321
Verse 4	323
Verse 5	323
Verse 6	323
Verse 7	324
Verse 8	324
Verse 9	325
Verse 10	325
Verse 11	325
Verse 12	325
Verse 13	327
Verse 14	327
Verse 15	328
Verse 16	328
Verse 17	329
Verse 18	329
Verse 19	329
Verse 20	332
Verse 21	333
Verse 22	335
Verse 23	335
Verse 24	336
Verse 25	336

Verse 26	336
Verse 27	336
Verse 28	337
Verse 29	338
Verse 30	341
Verse 31	341
Verse 32	343
Verse 33	343
Verse 34	343
Verse 35	345
Verse 36	345
Verse 37	346
Verse 38	347
Verse 39	347
Verse 40	348
Verse 41	348
Verse 42	349
Verse 43	349
Verse 44	350
Verse 45	351
Verse 46	351
Verse 47	351
Verse 48	352
Verse 49	352

Chapter of *an-Najm*

Verse 1	357
Verse 2	357
Verse 3	359
Verse 4	359
Verse 5	359
Verse 6	359
Verse 7	365
Verse 8	365

Verse 9	365
Verse 10	368
Verse 11	368
Verse 12	368
Verse 13	368
Verse 14	368
Verse 15	368
Verse 16	374

Verse 17	374	Verse 40	411
Verse 18	376	Verse 41	411
Verse 19	377	Verse 42	417
Verse 20	377	Verse 43	418
Verse 21	377	Verse 44	418
Verse 22	377	Verse 45	418
Verse 23	387	Verse 46	418
Verse 24	390	Verse 47	421
Verse 25	390	Verse 48	421
Verse 26	392	Verse 49	421
Verse 27	393	Verse 50	423
Verse 28	393	Verse 51	423
Verse 29	394	Verse 52	423
Verse 30	394	Verse 53	424
Verse 31	399	Verse 54	424
Verse 32	401	Verse 55	425
Verse 33	409	Verse 56	427
Verse 34	409	Verse 57	427
Verse 35	409	Verse 58	427
Verse 36	409	Verse 59	430
Verse 37	409	Verse 60	430
Verse 38	411	Verse 61	430
Verse 39	411	Verse 62	430
 Chapter of <i>al-Qmar</i>			
Verse 1	435	Verse 10	451
Verse 2	439	Verse 11	451
Verse 3	442	Verse 12	451
Verse 4	444	Verse 13	451
Verse 5	444	Verse 14	451
Verse 6	446	Verse 15	453
Verse 7	447	Verse 16	453
Verse 8	447	Verse 17	454
Verse 9	449	Verse 18	459

Verse 19	459
Verse 20	459
Verse 21	459
Verse 22	461
Verse 23	461
Verse 24	461
Verse 25	461
Verse 26	461
Verse 27	464
Verse 28	464
Verse 29	464
Verse 30	464
Verse 31	464
Verse 32	466
Verse 33	466
Verse 34	466
Verse 35	466
Verse 36	467
Verse 37	467

Verse 38	467
Verse 39	467
Verse 40	467
Verse 41	469
Verse 42	469
Verse 43	470
Verse 44	470
Verse 45	470
Verse 46	470
Verse 47	473
Verse 48	473
Verse 49	473
Verse 50	473
Verse 51	475
Verse 52	475
Verse 53	475
Verse 54	476
Verse 55	476

Chapter of *ar-Rahman*

Verse 1	481
Verse 2	482
Verse 3	482
Verse 4	482
Verse 5	489
Verse 6	489
Verse 7	491
Verse 8	491
Verse 9	491
Verse 10	492
Verse 11	492
Verse 12	492
Verse 13	492
Verse 14	497
Verse 15	497

Verse 16	497
Verse 17	498
Verse 18	498
Verse 19	499
Verse 20	499
Verse 21	499
Verse 22	500
Verse 23	500
Verse 24	501
Verse 25	501
Verse 26	501
Verse 27	501
Verse 28	501
Verse 29	502
Verse 30	502

Verse 31	503	Verse 55	511
Verse 32	503	Verse 56	511
Verse 33	503	Verse 57	511
Verse 34	503	Verse 58	511
Verse 35	505	Verse 59	511
Verse 36	505	Verse 60	512
Verse 37	506	Verse 61	512
Verse 38	506	Verse 62	513
Verse 39	506	Verse 63	513
Verse 40	506	Verse 64	513
Verse 41	507	Verse 65	513
Verse 42	507	Verse 66	513
Verse 43	508	Verse 67	513
Verse 44	508	Verse 68	513
Verse 45	508	Verse 69	513
Verse 46	509	Verse 70	514
Verse 47	509	Verse 71	514
Verse 48	509	Verse 72	514
Verse 49	509	Verse 73	514
Verse 50	509	Verse 74	514
Verse 51	509	Verse 75	514
Verse 52	509	Verse 76	514
Verse 53	509	Verse 77	514
Verse 54	511	Verse 78	515
 Chapter of <i>al-Waqi'a</i>			
Verse 1	519	Verse 14	526
Verse 2	519	Verse 15	526
Verse 3	521	Verse 16	526
Verse 4	521	Verse 17	528
Verse 5	521	Verse 18	528
Verse 6	521	Verse 19	528
Verse 7	523	Verse 20	529
Verse 8	523	Verse 21	529
Verse 9	523	Verse 22	529
Verse 10	523	Verse 23	529
Verse 11	523	Verse 24	529
Verse 12	523	Verse 25	531
Verse 13	526	Verse 26	531

Verse 27	531	Verse 62	541
Verse 28	531	Verse 63	541
Verse 29	531	Verse 64	541
Verse 30	531	Verse 65	541
Verse 31	531	Verse 66	541
Verse 32	531	Verse 67	541
Verse 33	531	Verse 68	543
Verse 34	531	Verse 69	543
Verse 35	533	Verse 70	543
Verse 36	533	Verse 71	544
Verse 37	533	Verse 72	544
Verse 38	533	Verse 73	544
Verse 39	533	Verse 74	544
Verse 40	533	Verse 75	545
Verse 41	534	Verse 76	545
Verse 42	534	Verse 77	545
Verse 43	534	Verse 78	545
Verse 44	534	Verse 79	545
Verse 45	534	Verse 80	545
Verse 46	534	Verse 81	550
Verse 47	534	Verse 82	550
Verse 48	534	Verse 83	550
Verse 49	534	Verse 84	550
Verse 50	534	Verse 85	550
Verse 51	537	Verse 86	550
Verse 52	537	Verse 87	550
Verse 53	537	Verse 88	553
Verse 54	537	Verse 89	553
Verse 55	537	Verse 90	553
Verse 56	537	Verse 91	553
Verse 57	539	Verse 92	555
Verse 58	539	Verse 93	555
Verse 59	539	Verse 94	555
Verse 60	539	Verse 95	556
Verse 61	539	Verse 96	556