

vol. [26]

REFLECTIONS

EL SHA'RAWY
الشعر اوان

فواطـر

المجلد [26]



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

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AL HOŞN RESEARCH & STUDIES CENTRE

Tel +97126265151

info@alhosnuae.ae

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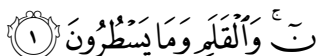
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the chapter of

al-Qalam

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

The chapter of *al-Qalam* ⁽¹⁾:



***Nun, By the pen! By all they write! [1]
(The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 1)***

Islam puts the pen, the inkwell, reading and writing in a high position, as Allah *the Almighty* has named this chapter in question *al-Qalam* (The Pen) and it is also named ‘Nun’ which means the inkwell that was used in writing. The first thing that was created is the pen, and then Allah *the Almighty* ordered it to write everything that will happen in the world till the Day of Judgment in the Preserved Tablet. So, the pen has written everything that would happen till the Day of Judgment, including the actions, the provisions and the appointed times of death.

In this regard, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘The first thing Allah created was the pen. He said to it, ‘Write.’ It asked, ‘What should I write, my Lord?’ He said, ‘Write what was decreed about everything till the Last Hour comes.’⁽²⁾ This is what is meant by His saying: ‘*Nun. By the pen! By all they write!*’ (*al-Qalam*: 1)

(1) The chapter of *al-Qalam* is number 68 in the Quranic order and it was revealed in Mecca. All its verses are clear, including no abrogating or abrogated verses. It is also named ‘Nun’ because it starts with the same word. It was the second chapter to be revealed in Mecca and the number of its verses is 52. It was revealed after the chapter of *al-‘Alaq*. Thus, the time of its revelation was between the beginning of the revelation and the migration to Abyssinia.

(2) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him. See Al-Qiryabi, Al-Qadar, 1/29; and Al-Ajurri, Ash-Shari’a, Hadith no. 179.

Allah *the Almighty* has written what the people will do because He knows it even before it is done, for He is the Omniscient. He knows what will happen in His Universe even before it occurs. In this connection, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And there is not a town but We will destroy it before the Day of Resurrection or chastise it with a severe chastisement; this is written in the Divine ordinance.' (*al-Isra*: 58) Thus, everything is written and recorded in the Preserved Tablet.

As for the saying of Allah '*Nun*' (*al-Qalam*: 1), we know that the Arabic letters are twenty-eight. In the Quran, half of them exist in the form of discrete letters at the beginning of some chapters. Some chapters begin with one of those letters, like the letter *Qaf* in Allah's saying: '*Qaf*. By the honoured Quran' (*Qaf*: 1); the letter *Sad* in His saying: '*Sad*. By the Quran containing a reminder' (*Sad*: 1); and the letter *Nun* here in the verse in question: '*Nun*. By the pen! By all they write!' (*al-Qalam*: 1)

Some chapters yet begin with two of these letters, like His saying: '*Ha Mim*.' (*al-Jathiya*: 1); some others begin with three letters as in His saying: '*Alif, Lam Mim*.' (*al-Baqara*: 1); some begin with four letters: '*Alif, Lam, Mim Sad*.' (*al-A'raf*: 1); and some begin with five letters: '*Kaf, Ha, Ya, 'Ayn Sad*.' (*Maryam*: 1).

We notice that the letter in the chapters that start with one letter is not considered a verse. The two or more letters are sometimes considered a verse, as in Allah's saying: '*'Ayn Sin Qaf*.' (*ash-Shura*: 2); '*Ta Ha*' (*Ta Ha*: 1); '*Ya Sin*' (*Ya Sin*: 1); '*Kaf, Ha, Ya, 'Ayn Sad*' (*Maryam*: 1) and '*Alif, Lam, Mim Sad*' (*al-A'raf*: 1) However, these letters constitute only part of a verse in His saying: '*Alif, Lam, Mim Ra*. These are the verses of the Book...' (*ar-Ra'd*: 1) and '*Ta Sin*'. These are the verses of the Quran and the Book...' (*an-Naml*: 1).

These discrete letters are pronounced by their names, not their sounds as in other words. They may refer to a name, like in *Ta-ha*, which is said to be one of Prophet Muhammad's names.⁽¹⁾ The letter *Nun* may also refer to the

(1) There is no authentic Hadith proving that *Ta Ha* is one of Prophet Muhammad's names, but this was only mentioned in some books of *Tafsir*.

Whale, as in His saying: ‘And remember the man with the whale, when he went off angrily...’ (*al-Anbiya*: 87); and *Qaf* may refer to a name of a mountain.

One of the miraculous aspects of the Quran is that it consists of the same letters and words of the normal speech. That is why Allah *the Almighty* often says after these discrete letters: ‘These are the verses of the clear Book.’ (*ash-Shu‘ara*: 2), and ‘These are the verses of the Quran and the Book that makes (things) clear.’ (*an-Naml*: 1) This means that the Quran consists of these discrete letters and their likes. Each of these letters has secrets that we have not reached yet. All the previous interpretations of these letters are just humble trials. He *the Almighty* mentions them many times throughout the Quran to remind us always about them.

When we want to recite these letters correctly, we must read them separately. In this regard, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘I do not say *Alif Lam Mim* is one letter; rather, *Alif* is one letter, *Lam* is one letter and *Mim* is one letter.’⁽¹⁾ To emphasise this meaning, these letters must be recited separately.

These letters are the main components of the words of the Quran. Let us give an example for this; if you have some textile workers and you want to know the most skilful one among them, you must give them the same material. It is not accepted to give someone of them cotton, the other wool and the third silk, that is to say that it is not accepted to give them different materials. Silk, for example, will be naturally softer. If you really want to know the most skilful one, give them all the same material. In the same sense, the Quran is miraculous because it is formed from the same letters that they use; however, they could not meet its challenge. The Quran used their letters and words, and put them in such an eloquent way that they could not bring even one chapter like it.

The Quran was revealed in Arabic and challenged the Arabs who were then the people of eloquence and magnificent ways of expression and styles. It was revealed among the people of Quraysh whose dialect enjoyed all the

(1) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of `Abdullah ibn Mas`ud *Allah be pleased with him*. See At-Tirmidhi, Sunnan, Hadith no. 2910; and Ibn Al-Mubarak, Az-Zuhd, Hadith no. 808.

accents of the Arabic tribes. There were among them very strong disbelievers, but none of them asked about the meaning of 'Alif Lam Mim' or 'Ha Mim'. If they had found that these discrete letters give them a chance to attack the Quran, they would have never missed this opportunity. But in fact, they have never asked about them which proves that they understood these letters and knew that they have a meaning. At least, they considered them letters for attracting attention, like what they were using in their poetry and speech.

Some scholars have said that the letter *Nun* at the beginning of this verse refers to the whale. That is why Prophet Yunus (Jonah) was named *Dhan-Nun* (The man of the whale) in Allah's saying: 'And remember the man with the whale, when he went off angrily...' (*al-Anbiya*: 87).

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...By the Pen...' (*al-Qalam*: 1). Here, He *the Almighty* swears by the pen, as He swears by whatever He wants about whatever He wants. The oath is used to emphasise something because someone has doubts about it. Allah *Glorified is He* has taken oaths by many things in the Quran. He swears by the figs, the olives, the Quran etc.

In some verses, the word *La* (no) precedes the oath, as in Allah's saying: 'Nay! I swear by this city. And you shall be made free from obligation in this city—And the begetter and whom he begot. Certainly, We have created man to be in distress.' (*al-Balad*: 1-4), the word 'nay' refutes their allegation, and then comes the oath to emphasise the issue that He states. It means that the disbelievers have no right to deny it.

So, Allah *Glorified is He* swears by whatever He likes about whatever He wants. He has sworn by the sun, by the places of the stars, and with the falling star. He is fully Aware of His creatures; none knows the greatness of a creature better than the One Who created it. He *the Almighty* knows the purpose for which He created these creatures. However, He ordered us not to take oaths except by Him.

In this verse, Allah *Glorified is He* swears an Oath to emphasise the meaning. In this regard, one of the righteous people said, 'Who provoked the Anger of the Most Gracious and made Him take an Oath'. He *the Almighty* does not swear except to stress a great matter. The human beings take an oath to emphasise the truthfulness of their speech. By contrast, Allah *Glorified is He*

is the All Truthful, and He does not need any Oath to fulfil His Promises. So, what if He takes an Oath?

Thus, He *the Almighty* swears here by the pen by which we write. That is why he said afterwards: ‘...and all what they write.’ (*al-Qalam*: 1) *Al-Qalam* (pen) also means a ‘lot’ which people use to cast lots if they differed about something. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: ‘...when they cast their pens (to decide) which of them should have Mary in his charge...’ (*Al-Imran*: 44). It is also mentioned in the Quran in the plural form, as in His saying: ‘And were every tree that is in the earth (made into) pens and the sea (to supply it with ink), with seven more seas to increase it, the words of Allah would not come to an end...’ (*Lugman*: 27). In the past, pens were made from the branches of trees, not from the plants that do not have trunks.

Then, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...and all what they write.’ (*al-Qalam*: 1) Some scholars said that this refers to what the angels write of the deeds of the humans. Others said it is what He *the Almighty* prescribed for the benefit and the interest of His creatures.

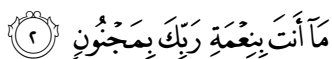
Allah *Glorified is He* tells us that the angels write our deeds, as He says: ‘And most surely there are keepers over you; Honourable recorders. They know what you do.’ (*al-Infitar*: 10-12); ‘...surely Our messengers write down what you plan.’ (*Yunus*: 21), and ‘Or do they think that We do not hear what they conceal and their secret discourses? Aye! And Our messengers with them write down.’ (*az-Zukhruf*: 80) Thus, the angels record all what the humans do; they then keep that in books that Allah *Glorified is He* keeps in a way that is unknown to us. On the Day of Judgment, it will be said to the human being: ‘Read your book; your own self is sufficient as a reckoner against you this day.’ (*al-Isra*: 14)

The writing of the angels is not in the way we are familiar with; it even records the voice and every breath. On the Last Day, everyone will find what he has done, and will read his book by himself, in order not to have any argument. In this vein, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘And the Book shall be placed, then you will see the guilty fearing from what is in it, and they will say: “Ah! Woe to us! What a book is this! It does not omit a small one nor a great one, but numbers them (all); and what they had done they shall find present (there); and your Lord does not deal unjustly with anyone.”’ (*al-Kahf*: 49)

The angels write both the good and the bad deeds. The pronoun in the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: '...what they write.' (*al-Mulk*: 1), refers to the angels. In this regard, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'When it is Friday, the angels stand at the gate of the mosque and keep on writing the names of the persons coming to the mosque in succession according to their arrivals. The example of the one who enters the mosque in the earliest hour is that of one offering a camel (in sacrifice). The one coming next is like one offering a cow, and then a ram, and then a chicken and then an egg respectively. When the Imam comes out (for the Friday Prayer) they (i.e. angels) fold their papers and listen to the *khutba* (preacher sermon).'

⁽¹⁾

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:



**Your Lord's grace does not make you
[Prophet] a madman[2] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 2)**

The mad person is the one whose mind is out of order. Unlike the sane person, he does consider things purposelessly; his speech is inharmonious; his deeds are not straight; and he has no restrictions as to what he takes or leaves. He has lost the intellectual balance by which he chooses from among the alternatives. For this reason, he is exempted from the religious obligations. In other words, as the insane person does not have the ability to choose, Allah *the Almighty* exempts him from these religious obligations.

Now, let us compare the insane person with the sane one; the highest stage that the sane person can reach is to say what he wants without being accounted or objected to. In fact, the insane person reaches this stage; none objects to his words and if he makes something wrong, none holds him accountable. Similarly, he will not be accounted on the Day of Judgment.

Thus, the insane person's deeds are not balanced and his intellect is not controlling him. His mind has no ability to realise or choose from among the alternatives. He does whatever comes into his mind without thinking. That is

(1) This Hadith is narrated on the authority Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him. See Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 10568; Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 929; and Al-Bayhaqi, As-Sunnan Al-Kubra, Hadith no. 5862

why we do not account him for his actions, even if he hits or insults someone. All what we do is to smile and ask Allah *the Almighty* to keep us safe from that which has afflicted him.

In the verse in question, Allah *the Almighty* categorically refute the claim that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is mad. Allah's Favour here means the Book and the Wisdom that was revealed to him *peace and blessings be upon him*. It is the Right Path that he, by Allah's Favour, was guided to after being lost, searching for guidance. The one who is guided by the favour of Allah *the Almighty* is not mad by any means.

The mad person acts without logic; he laughs, cries and hits the people unreasonably. So, have you, O people of Quraysh, seen Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* doing any of such actions?

Moreover, the favour of Allah *the Almighty* upon him *peace and blessings be upon him* is not magic as some of them claimed, for he does not force them to believe by using such alleged magic. Further, the Quran is not the words of a soothsayer, as he *peace and blessings be upon him* was brought up among his people, and they all knew that he is truthful and honest, and that none has taught him. Besides, the words of the soothsayers have special tones and characteristics which are different from that of the Quran.

The people of Quraysh knew that the Quran could not be the words of a mad person because the speech of such a person is harmonious. Have they seen anything that shows that Prophet Muhammad's deeds are inharmonious? Of course not!

The mad person has lost the intellectual balance by which he chooses among the alternatives. Then how could they say that Messenger Muhammad *peace be upon him* is mad although he has lived among them? They knew that he has never lost his intellectual balance; they named him the Truthful and the Honest; they even kept their valuable things with him, although they disbelieved in him.⁽¹⁾

(1) *Ibn Ishaq said that Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him told his cousin 'Ali that he would migrate to Medina, and ordered him to remain in Mecca to return the trusts to their owners. Everyone had a precious thing was keeping it with Prophet Muhammad because of what was known of his honesty and truthfulness. 'Ali remained for three days in Mecca to return the trusts and then he migrated to Medina. See Ibn Hisham, As-Sira An-Nabawiyya, 1/485 and As-Suhayli, Ar-Rawd Al-Unuf, 4/153*

They have wronged him *peace and blessings be upon him* when they brought illogical accusations against him. Allah *the Almighty* has advised those who accuse him, saying: '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. He is only a Warner to you before a severe punishment.' (*Saba'*: 46)

Each two of them should sit together and think: is Muhammad mad or sane?! All of them will then realise, out of their experience, that he is the most honest person; otherwise they would not have called him 'the Honest' even before the coming of the Revelation. Further, it is inconceivable that the Revelation affected him or made him lose his intellectual balance.

Thus, Prophet Muhammad's behaviour has nothing to do with madness, for the mad person does not know what he does and his actions are unreasonable. We cannot accuse such a mad person of anything like lying because his means of making choices is not working and his actions are inharmonious. For example, he may smile to you and hit you at the same time, and he may give you something then spit in your face. Thus, Allah *the Almighty* advises those who accused Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* of madness to consider the matter wisely to come to the fact that he cannot be mad by any means.

Madness entails that the person acts unwisely and aimlessly without considering the consequences of his actions. As for the sane person, he organises his actions wisely and examines them carefully. His intellect leads him to the good actions, and he treats the people in a harmonious, right way. So, did any of the disbelievers find any unreasonable behaviour on the part of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*? No, they did not.

Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* advises them to stand for Him in pairs and individually and to study Prophet Muhammad's behaviours. Then, they will find that his behaviour is logical and even built on perfect manners. It is far more different from the behaviour of a madman who has no restrictions that control his unreasonable actions.

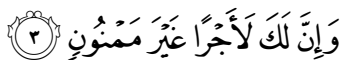
Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was not the only one to be accused of madness; many Prophets before him were accused of madness

as well, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: ‘Thus there did not come to those before them a Messenger but they said: “A magician or a mad man.”’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 52) That is, previous messengers were also accused of magic, despite the fact that these two characteristics cannot be found in a prophet because he is an example in his behaviour. There was no sign that indicates that he *peace and blessings be upon him* was a madman or a magician. Moreover, madness contradicts with magic; how could they accuse him with both?

Besides being mad, they also accused him of being a soothsayer, but He *the Almighty* refutes their allegations, saying: ‘Therefore continue to remind, for by the grace of your Lord, you are not a soothsayer or a madman.’ (*at-Tur*: 29). In the chapter of *as-Saffat*, they accused him of being a mad poet, saying: ‘...What! Shall we indeed give up our gods for the sake of a mad poet?’ (*as-Saffat*: 36). How could he organise the ideas and the verses of the poetry while being mad?! The problem then lies in their illogical thinking.

Allah *Glorified is He* relieves Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* by saying: ‘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). In addition to relieving him, He *the Almighty* gives him *peace and blessings be upon him* the examples of the previous Prophets in order that he does not feel sad for the disbelievers’ accusations and disbelief. It is as if He *the Almighty* says to him, ‘I know that you feel sad because of their disbelief and accusing you of being a poet, a magician, a madman, a liar and a soothsayer. Do not be sad, O Muhammad! You are innocent from what they say, and they know that you are truthful and honest, but they are jealous of what Allah has given you’. They disbelieve in the Quran because it orders them to abandon the false deities they worship, and to devote themselves to worshipping Allah, Alone.

Then Allah *the Almighty* relieves Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* from this sadness, saying:



**You will have a never-ending reward [3]
(The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 3)**

Allah *the Almighty* has prepared Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* for carrying out the Message with steadfastness, and promised him with everlasting reward. This means that the reward of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is neither interrupted nor limited. He will have a great and unlimited reward for his patience for the disbelievers' harm.

This reward is a favour from Allah *Glorified is He*; it far exceeds the reward of the deed itself. That is why Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'None amongst you can get into paradise by virtue of his deeds alone.' They asked Allah's Messenger, 'Not even you?' Thereupon he said, 'Not even I, but that Allah should wrap me in His Grace and Mercy.'⁽¹⁾ In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: '...and if not for the favour of Allah upon you and His mercy, you would have been among the losers.' (*al-Baqara*: 64) Therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* gives you more than what you deserve. All your good deeds do not fulfil the due right of one of Allah's Graces upon you. So, you should not depend on your deeds, for you will not enter paradise except by Allah's favour.

Even the martyrs who sacrificed their lives, which is the most precious thing they have, for the sake of Allah *Glorified is He* will enter the paradise by His favour, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'Rejoicing in what Allah has given them out of His Grace and they rejoice for the sake of those who, (being left) behind them, have not yet joined them, that they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve.' (*Al-Imran*: 170) If this is the case with the martyrs who are in the highest level of the paradise, what about those who are lower in rank than them?!

Thus, Allah's Favour encompasses all the people, as He says: '...most surely Allah is Gracious to people, but most people are not grateful.' (*al-Baqara*: 243).

(1) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him. See *Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 5673 and 6463; and Muslim, Sahih, Hadith no. 2186.*

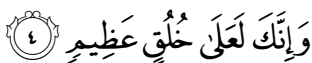
That is why we ask Him *the Almighty* to treat us with His favour rather than His Justice, and with His Goodness rather than the Balance. That is because our deeds are not enough to make us enter the paradise and His Justice may ruin us. So, we should look forward to His Favour and Grace.

However, Allah's favour is conditional on doing good deeds. When you make a good deed, your Lord doubles its reward for you many times. So, we will only be saved by His Mercy and Favour. The true believer does not feel arrogant for his good deeds; rather, he feels happy for Allah's Favour and Mercy. It is as if he is saying to his Lord, 'I am not relying on my deeds, but on Your Mercy and Favour. The acts of worship that you ordered me to do is nothing, if compared to Your favours upon me. They cannot fulfil You Right upon me. If you admit me into the paradise, this is a great Favour from You'. Thus, if we think wisely, we will come to the fact that the reward in the Hereafter is a mere favour of Allah *Glorified is He* and thus the person should only be happy when he is included among those who receive His Favour and Mercy.

In the verse in question, Allah *Glorified is He* says to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* that the reward of his patience for conveying the Message and enduring the disbelievers' harms is guaranteed. That is why He says: 'You will have a never-ending reward.' (*al-Qalam*: 3) He *the Almighty* emphasises this fact by using two particles, namely; *inna* and *a-lam* (indeed).

Prophet Muhammad's everlasting reward includes the lasting blessing of Allah upon him, and the supplication of the angels and the believers for him. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'Surely Allah and His angels bless the Prophet; O you who believe! Call for (Divine) blessings on him and salute him with a (becoming) salutation.' (*al-Ahzab*: 56). Allah's Blessing for him *peace and blessings be upon him* is a comprehensive and all-inclusive. It suffices that He *the Almighty* has made him the last Prophet.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* describes Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying:



**Truly you have a strong character [4]
(The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 4)**

The disbelievers of Mecca were accusing Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* of being mad. However, does a madman have great morals?! Allah *the Almighty* has created and endowed him *peace and blessings be upon him* with great morals. Further, Allah *Glorified is He* has prepared him to receive the Message with steadfastness, and promised him to have an uninterrupted reward.

Having a great moral character means that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* understands and reacts to the ongoing actions in the perfect way, and none can do this except a sane person. The disbelievers of Mecca all agreed that his morals are great, then how can they accuse him of being mad?! How can an insane person have an appropriate, good behaviour? This shows that all their accusations came out of their insistence on disbelief, and are not based on tangible proofs. They attested to the opposite of what they accused him. All the prophets faced the same accusation from their people who wanted to refute the veracity the Message of Truth with which the Prophets came.

Having great morals means that Prophet Muhammad's behaviour is controlled with values and that he naturally behaves in a moral manner. When you describe someone of being benevolent, you mean that benevolence is part of his character; he gives charities very easily. If the disbelievers examined Prophet Muhammad's behaviour singly and in pairs, they would find that it is based on a perfect moral character that cannot for sure be attributed to a madman.

The morals are the characteristics that qualify the human being to live peacefully in a sound community. When one's morals are sound, this means that his criterion of judgment is sound as well. That is why Allah *the Almighty* has mentioned the intellect and the morals together, saying: 'Your Lord's Grace does not make you [Prophet] a madman: you will have a never-ending reward, truly you have a great moral character.' (*al-Qalam*: 2-4) When someone has good morals, this means that he has some characteristics such as honesty and truthfulness that keep him on the right, moral way. The

intellect puts these morals in their right positions according to the situation, which may need strength, softness, and wisdom.

A madman cannot have good morals because he has no ability to choose from among the alternatives. That is why Allah *the Almighty* does not put him into account for his actions, or do the people do so. He cannot choose the right action in each situation. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* has refuted the claim that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is mad, and approved that he has great morals.

We do not hold the mad person accountable for his action even if they are rude ones. Someone may ask, ‘How does Allah deprive someone of the intellect by which He has honoured the human beings?’ To recognise the Divine Justice and Wisdom in this matter, we should draw a comparison between the sane and the insane people. The sane person is accounted for every action he does, whatever minor it is. The greatest rank that he can reach in the worldly life is to do whatever he wants without hearing objections from here and there. Do you not see that the insane person enjoys the same rank? He says and does whatever he likes without being asked in this worldly life or in the Hereafter. Is this not a sufficient compensation for him? So, we should not look at what was taken from him, but rather try to see the merits that he was given in this worldly life and in the Hereafter.

The mad person neither thinks about his actions nor chooses from among the alternatives, for he has no control over his will and behaviour. Did the disbelievers recognise any of the characteristics of insanity in Prophet Muhammad’s behaviour? Allah *Glorified is He* has refuted their claim, saying: ‘Nun. By the pen! By all they write! Your Lord’s Grace does not make you [Prophet] a madman: you will have a never-ending reward—truly you have a strong character—and soon you will see, as will they.’ (*al-Qalam*: 1-5)

A madman cannot have good manners because they only stem from the balanced faculties that make the person incline towards goodness. So, how can Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* be mad, while he was of great moral character? Did they notice any of the characteristics of madness in his behaviour? Further, if he was mad, how could they entrust him with the most precious things they owned? How could they call him ‘the Truthful’

and 'the Honest'? They did so because they knew his great morals which are firm and well established. They should have judged him according to his morals without considering the Message that he came with because morality has only one criterion. Could any of them accuse him of a bad moral? Of course not! If so, they should not have questioned his intellect as well because the intellect is the criterion and the essence of morality. Thus, Prophet Muhammad's great morals are the most compelling evidence of his sanity.

Apart from the behaviour of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* an insane person cannot speak or act reasonably. As the disbelievers of Mecca were well aware of his good manners, truthfulness and honesty, how could they accuse him of insanity? Having a good moral character makes the person incline to goodness and rectifies his behaviour. So, how can he *peace and blessings be upon him* be of a great moral character and simultaneously insane? This is sheer contradiction.

When `Aisha *Allah be pleased with her* was asked about the morals of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* she said, 'His morals were those of the Quran, have you not read in the Quran: 'Truly you are of a great moral character.' (*al-Qalam*: 4)?⁽¹⁾ This is how she *Allah be pleased with her* described him. As for Khadija, she described him *peace and blessings be upon him* and his morals at the beginning of Revelation. She encouraged and supported him, saying 'Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your kith and kin, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously, and assist the deserving calamity-afflicted ones.'⁽²⁾ How would Allah *Glorified is He* disgrace him with all these good attributes?

His wife, Khadija, believed in him *peace and blessings be upon him* before hearing one verse of the Quran, and so did his friend Abu Bakr *Allah be pleased with him* and the early believers. This is because they depended on his previous history before being a prophet. They knew for sure that the one

(1) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of `Aisha *Allah be pleased with her*. See Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 24601; Al-Bukhari, Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, Hadith no. 308; Khalq Af'al Al-'Ibad, 1/87.

(2) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of 'A'isha *Allah be pleased with her*. See Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 3; see also Muslim, Sahih, Hadith no. 160.

who does not lie about the people can never lie about his Lord. Abu Bakr *Allah be pleased with him* believed in Messenger Muhammad's prophethood as soon as he heard about it. He also unhesitatingly believed in his Night Journey. When he was asked about this, he said, 'We believe him in a greater matter, that is, the Revelation, so how can we not believe him in other matters? If he said it, he is truthful.'⁽¹⁾

It is thus crystal clear that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had great morals that made the people believe him in all what he says. He said about himself, 'My Lord has taught me good manners properly.'⁽²⁾ Thus, he has reached the peak of good manners because he was brought up and educated by his Lord, *Allah Glorified is He*.

One of his attributes was that he used to sit with his Companions and look at all of them equally. He never gave any of them more attention than the other. By so doing, no one of them would think that he *peace and blessings be upon him* favoured him over the others. He used to sit with the righteous people whom he knew that they would not exploit such a status to have authority over the people. When he shook hands with anyone, he used not to pull his hand till the other one does.⁽³⁾ This is one of the great morals that *Allah Glorified is He* has taught him.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* used to sit where he finds an empty place, and so did his Companions. None of them sat beside him all the way so that none could think that these companions have higher positions than the others. All of them were equal.

In addition, 'Ali ibn Abu Taleb *Allah be pleased with him* described Prophet Muhammad's morals in the gatherings, saying, 'When he visited people, he used to sit where he finds a place. He used to sit on ground and eat on

(1) *This narration is authenticated by Al-Hakim, and Adh-Dhahabi agreed with him. See Al-Hakim, Mustadrak, 3/62.*

(2) *In his book, As-Suyuti ascribes this Hadith to Ibn As-Sam`ani in his book Adab Al-Imla' on the authority of Ibn Mas`ud. Al-Albani graded it as weak. See Al-Albani, Da`if Al-Jame`, Hadith no. 249.*

(3) *A Hadith to this effect is narrated on the authority of Anas ibn Malik Allah be pleased with him. See Ibn Maja, Sunnan, Hadith no. 3716; and Ibn Al-Mubarak, Az-Zuhd, Hadith no. 392.*

ground. He sometimes milked the sheep. He accepted the invitations of the kings.^{'(1)} How great these morals are! He *peace and blessings be upon him* used to sit in any place. In this way, he gave his Companions the best example that makes them meet different people every time they sit with him. Through these gatherings and encountering different believers daily, they integrated with each other as a faithful community.

Look how humble he *peace and blessings be upon him* was! Despite his prophethood and messenger-ship, He used to carry his own things by himself. If any of his companions offered to carry it, he would refuse and say, 'The owner should carry his own things.'⁽²⁾ This shows how humble and far removed from arrogance he was.

In this connection, Anas ibn Malik, who enjoyed serving Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'I have served Prophet Muhammad for ten years, he has never asked me why did I do this or did not do that.'⁽³⁾

Moreover, Zayd ibn Haritha was greatly affected with Prophet Muhammad's good manners to the extent that he refused to leave him in order to return back to his family. He was one of the people of Banu Kalb and the thieves kidnaped and sold him as a slave. Hakim ibn Hizam bought him for Khadija, the wife of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and she gifted him to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to serve

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- (1) *This Hadith is narrated on the authority of 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas Allah be pleased with him. See At-Tabarani, Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir, Hadith no. 1239; and see also Al-Bayhaqi, Shu'ab Al-Iman, Hadith no.7843.*
 - (2) *This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him. In his book, Al-Haythami said, 'This Hadith is narrated by Abu Ya'la and At-Tabarani. Its chain of narrators contains Yousef ibn Zeyad Al-Basiri who is a weak narrator.' In his book, Al-'Ajluni said, 'This Hadith is narrated by Al-Qadi 'Ayyad in Ash-Shifa' without mentioning any chain of narrators. It is a weak Hadith, but Ibn Al-Jawzi went too far and graded it as fabricated. See Al-Haythami, Majma' Az-Zawa'id, 5/122; and Al-'Ajluni, Kashf Al-Khafa', 2/25*
 - (3) *This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Anas ibn Malik Allah be pleased with him. See Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 13021 and 13034; Al-Bazzar, Musnad, Hadith no. 6386 and 7122; Ibn Hibban, Sahih, Hadith no. 2893 and 2894; and Al-Bayhaqi, Shu'ab Al-Iman, Hadith no. 8383.*

him. One day, one of his people saw him in the streets of Mecca and told his family. Zayd's father went quickly to Mecca searching for his son till he found him. He told him *peace and blessings be upon him* the story of Zayd and asked him to let him return to his people. He *peace and blessings be upon him* loved Zayd very much, but he gave him the freedom to choose between him and his family. He said to his father, 'Give him the choice; if he chooses, you take him, but if he chooses to stay with me, I will be like his father.' Zayd replied, 'I can never choose anyone other than the Messenger of Allah.'⁽¹⁾ This choice was out of what he had seen of Prophet Muhammad's good manners about which Allah *the Almighty* says: 'So by mercy from Allah, [O Muhammad], you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude [in speech] and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So, pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter...' (*Al-Imran*: 159).

His nature was suitable for his mission, as it helped him face his people's refusal to believe in Islam and his prophethood. Although such a refusal can provoke anyone's anger he *peace and blessings be upon him* did not become angry because of the nature of his character which made him deal mercifully with his *ummah*.

Allah *Glorified is He* softened Prophet Muhammad's heart towards his *ummah*, which caused him a great deal of grieve reminding him about his merciful nature and kind heart, and urging him to keep this nature and not to act against it. Thus, He *the Almighty* endowed him *peace and blessings be upon him* with the mercy that suits his task and ordered him to forgive his *ummah* and be lenient with them.

The mercy in his heart is what attracted the hearts of the believers to him. This is besides his great manners, humbleness, kind smile, supporting look and considering their conditions. Out of his great moral character, when he *peace and blessings be upon him* shakes hands with someone, he does not pull his hand until the other person does so. All these great morals made him overlook their faults because he is their teacher. This requires not being angry at all their faults.

(1) See Ibn Hajar, *Al-Isaba Fi Tamyiz As-Sahaba*, Biography no. 2884.

Due to the mercy that Allah *the Almighty* conferred on him *peace and blessings be upon him* he was lenient towards the people and that is why they loved and followed him. If he had not been merciful, all the people would have dispersed from around him.

All of Prophet Muhammad's actions prove that mercifulness is one of his natural characteristics. One of the situations that show his mercy and forgiveness is the way he treated the people of Mecca when he opened it. When those who harmed became under his control, he forgave them. He said to them, 'O people of Quraysh! What do you think I am about to do with you?' They said, 'We think you will treat us well, you are a noble brother, the son of a noble brother.' He said, 'Then go; you are free.'⁽¹⁾ He did so even though they arrogantly and stubbornly rejected the Truth and forced him to leave Mecca, the most beloved city to his heart. On that day, he entered the city as a triumphant and was able to eliminate them all. However, he was not sent to do so, but rather to relieve and honour them.

Out of his great morals, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said to them, 'Go, you are free!' What a great merciful and lenient person he is! It is Allah *Glorified is He* Who bestowed this mercy and leniency on him *peace and blessings be upon him*. Would such a great Prophet be rejected and denied! Despite the fierce enmity and aggressiveness showed by the disbelievers of Mecca towards him and their continuous endeavours to harm him, he *peace and blessings be upon him* used to invoke Allah *the Almighty* to guide them, saying, 'O Allah, guide my people, for they do not know!'⁽²⁾ He

(1) See Ibn Hisham, *As-Sira An-Nabawiyya*, 2/412; *As-Suhayli, Ar-Rawd Al-Unuf*, 27/232; and Ibn Sayyid, *Uyun Al-Athar*, 2/266.

(2) During the Battle of Uhud, Prophet Muhammad's teeth were broken and his face was hurt. This was very difficult for the prophet's companions, so they said, 'O Prophet Muhammad, would you not invoke Allah to destroy them?' He replied, 'I was not sent to curse people, but as a mercy. O Allah, guide my people for they do not know.' This Hadith is narrated by Al-Bayhaqi in *Shu'ab Al-Iman* in the same wording on the authority of 'Abdullah ibn 'Ubaid. Al-Bayhaqi commented, 'It is a *mursal* Hadith (The name of the Companion is not mentioned in the chain of narrators).' He narrated another short narration which he attributed to Prophet Muhammad through an uninterrupted chain of narrators on the authority of Sahl ibn Sa'd, stating, 'O Allah, guide my people for they do not know!' See *Manahil As-Safa Fi Takhrij Ahadith Ash-Shif'a*, 1/60.

also used to say, 'I hope that Allah will let them beget children who will worship Allah Alone, and will worship none besides Him.'⁽¹⁾ This actually has come to pass and most of his people were guided to belief.

The people of Mecca were well acquainted with Prophet Muhammad's moral character and behaviour. Although they had bitterly fought him and tortured the earlier Muslims, he used to recommend his followers to maintain good relationships with their disbelieving relatives and to treat them well, regardless of their disbelief in Allah *the Almighty*.

Let us offer an example in this regard; although the mother of Asma' bint Abu Bakr, whose name was Qatila,⁽²⁾ was still a disbeliever, Asma' *Allah be pleased with her* asked Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* whether she was permitted to give her some money for food. She said to him *peace and blessings be upon him* 'My mother has come to me and she desires to receive a reward from me. Shall I keep good relations with her?' He *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Yes, keep good relations with her.'⁽³⁾

Such are the lofty morals preached by Islam. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* used to abide by this high moral standard even in his dealings with the disbelievers. Moreover, He ordered the Muslims to follow

(1) *When Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him went to At-Ta'if and called them to embrace Islam, they rejected his call, harshly responded to him and threw stones at him to the extent that his feet were severely injured. Being overwhelmed with excessive sorrow, he departed and proceeded on, and could not relax till he found himself at Qarn Ath-Th'alib. The angel of the mountains called him saying, 'Allah has heard your people's saying to you, and what they have replied back to you. If you like, I will let Al-Akshabayn (i.e. two mountains) fall on them.'* He *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'No, but I will wait, hoping that Allah will let them beget children who will worship Allah Alone.' See *As-Suhayli, Al-Huda Wa Ar-Rashad*, 5/90.

(2) *She is Qatila bint 'Abd Al-'Uzza ibn 'Amir ibn Lu'ay. She was a woman from the tribe of Quraysh. She was the wife of Abu Bakr As-Siddiq and the mother of 'Aisha bint Abu Bakr and Mohamad ibn Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr divorced her before the advent of Islam. Once she brought presents to her daughter, but the latter refused to accept them as the former was still a disbeliever. Afterwards, she embraced Islam and migrated to Medina.*

(3) *See Abu Dawud Al-Tayalisi, Musnad, Hadith no.1748; Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 26945 and 26939; As-Shafi'i, As-Sunnan Al-Ma'thura, Hadith no. 529; At-Tabarani, Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir, Hadith no. 203 and 342; Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 2620; and Muslim, Sahih, Hadith no.1003.*

the same manner in dealing with their disbelieving parents who try their best to convert their Muslim children to disbelief again.

Having observed his morals and lofty character, 'Aisha *Allah be pleased with her* said about Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* 'His character was (an application of the morals of) the Quran.' 'Aisha used to feel jealous of the late Khadija, Prophet Muhammad's first wife. One day, Fatima, the daughter of Prophet Muhammad, went to her father while she was very angry. He *peace and blessings be upon him* said to her, 'O my beloved daughter, what makes you angry?' She replied, 'Aisha said to me, 'The Messenger of Allah married your mother after she had been previously married, but I was the only virgin among all his wives.' He *peace and blessings be upon him* said to Fatima, 'Should she say this again, say to her, 'But my mother married Allah's Messenger while he was still a virgin and you married him while he was previously married.'⁽¹⁾ This was his prophetic comment. 'Aisha never said this again.

Out of his lofty character, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* used to say to his Companions, 'None of my Companions should convey to me anything regarding another one because I desire to meet every one of you with a clean heart.'⁽²⁾ This means that he *peace and blessings be upon him* did

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- (1) 'Aisha used to feel jealous of Khadija even though Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* married 'Aisha after the death of Khadija. Muslim narrates, in the chapter of the Merits of Khadija, that 'Aisha said to Prophet Muhammad, 'What makes you remember an old woman amongst the old women of Quraysh, an old woman (with a toothless mouth) of red gums who died long ago, and in whose place Allah has given you somebody better than her?' The colour of Prophet Muhammad's face changed and scolded 'Aisha, saying, 'By Allah, Allah did not grant me any one better than her; she believed in me while people disbelieved in me, believed me while people belied me, supported me with her money while people prevented me and Allah granted me children through her alone.' See Muslim, Sahih, Hadith no. 2437
- (2) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Ibn Mas'ud *Allah be pleased with him*. The completion of the narration states, 'The Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* was brought some wealth, so he distributed it. Then I came across two men that were sitting saying: "By Allah! Muhammad did not intend the pleasure of Allah in his distribution, and nor the abode of the Hereafter." So, I spread this when I heard them, and I went to the Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* and I informed him. So, his face became red and he said, "Do not bother me with this, for indeed Musa (Moses) was afflicted by more than this and he was patient.' See Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 3759; Al-Bazzar, Musnad, Hadith no. 2038; Al-Bayhaqi, Shu'ab Al-Iman, Hadith no. 10597 and 10598; Abu Dawud, Sunnan, Hadith no. 4860; At-Tirmidhi, Sunnan, Hadith no. 3898; and Al-Bayhaqi As-Sunnan Al-Kubra, Hadith no. 16675.

not want to develop a feeling of hatred or enmity towards any one so that he could deal with all people fairly and generously to an extent which may lead a sinner or disobedient person to return in repentance to Allah *Glorified is He* and follow the Straight Path.

Further, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* used to take care of all the matters. He used to command his Companions to be kind to their neighbours. In this regard, he said, 'The neighbours are of three kinds: the neighbour who has only one right, the right of this one is the lowest, a neighbour who has two rights and a neighbour who has three rights, and the right of this kind is the ultimate. As for the neighbour who has a right, he is the polytheist neighbour to whom you have no kinship. The neighbour who has two rights is the Muslim neighbour as he has a right as a Muslim and another right as a neighbour. The neighbour who has three rights is the Muslim neighbour to whom you have a kinship. So, he has a right as a Muslim, a right as a neighbour, and a right as a relative.'⁽¹⁾ In this connection, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And serve Allah and do not associate anything with Him and be good to the parents and to the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the neighbour of (your) kin and the alien neighbour, and the companion in a journey...' (*an-Nisa'*: 36).

In the same vein, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Jibril (Gabriel) kept on recommending me about treating the neighbours in a kind and polite manner so much so that I thought that he would confer on them a share of inheritance.'⁽²⁾ He *peace and blessings be upon him* was very keen that the Muslims cooperate with each other and deal with each other according to the high moral standard. He once said to Abu Dharr *Allah be pleased with him* 'Abu Dharr! If you cook some stew, make a lot of it, and divide it among your neighbours.'⁽³⁾

(1) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of `Amr ibn Al-`As *Allah be pleased with him*. See *Al-Khara`iti, Makarim Al-Akhlaq, Hadith no. 247; At-Tabarani, Musnad Ash-Shamiyyin, Hadith no. 2430; and Al-Bayhaqi in Shu`ab Al-Iman, Hadith no. 9113.*

(2) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of `Aisha *Allah be pleased with her*. See *Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 6014 and 6015; Muslim, Sahih, Hadith no. 2625; and Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 24260 and 26013.*

(3) See *Muslim, Sahih, Hadith no. 2625; Ibn Maja, Sunnan, Hadith no. 3262; and Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 21428.*

This was Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*; a man of a great moral character. He was a real application of the morals preached by the Quran. He is the best example of the true believer whom he *peace and blessings be upon him* described in one of his statements, saying, 'The believer is like a bee which eats that which is pure and wholesome and lies that which is pure and wholesome.'⁽¹⁾ He was a practical implementation of the teachings of the Quran and the Way of Guidance which Allah *the Almighty* has revealed to him. Thus, he *peace and blessings be upon him* is the role model that we should follow.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

فَسَبِّحْهُ وَبُصِّرْهُ وَيُصِرْهُ ۚ بِأَيِّكُمْ الْمَقْتُولُ ۚ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ۚ فَلَا تَطِعِ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ۚ وَدُّوا لَوْ تُدْهِنُ فَيُدْهِنُونَ ۚ

And soon you will see, as will they [5] Which of you is afflicted with madness [6] Your Lord knows best who strays from His path and who is rightly guided [7] So do not yield to those who deny the truth [8] They want you to compromise with them and then they will compromise with you [9] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 5 - 9)

It is as if Allah *Glorified is He* says to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*, 'You, Muhammad, and the people of Quraysh will see the recompense of those people who claim that you are insane when they will be defeated at the Battle of Badr. You as well as the people in Mecca will see those people, who levelled this accusation against you, in a state of humiliation, while you will be in a state of triumph and greatness. This is their recompense in the worldly life'.

Yet, some scholars state that the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'And soon you will see, as they will' (*al-Qalam*: 5) refers to the state of the disbelievers on the Day of Judgment when they see the punishment prepared for them. In

(1) This Hadith is narrated on the authority 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn Al-'As Allah be pleased with them both. See Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 6872; Al-Bayhaqi, Sunnan, Hadith no. 5382; and Al-Hakim, Al-Mustadrak, Hadith no. 253.

the same vein, He *the Almighty* says: ‘Tomorrow shall they know who the liar is, the insolent one.’ (*al-Qamar*: 26) Here is an important linguistic note; in Arabic, when we want to refer to the near future, we add the prefix *sin* to the verb, but to refer to the distant or remote future, we use the particle *sawfa*. In the verse in question and in the aforementioned verse, Allah *Glorified is He* uses the prefix *sin* to refer to what will happen to the disbelievers.

Accordingly, the meaning of the verse in question can refer to both meanings, i.e. the disbelievers will see the recompense of their misdeeds both in the worldly life and in the Hereafter. Similarly, Allah *the Almighty* says in another verse: ‘...they who act unjustly shall know to what final place of turning they shall turn back.’ (*ash-Shu‘ara’*: 227) Allah *Glorified is He* states that the disbelievers will come to know on the Day of Judgement that the insane person is one from among them, not Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* or any of his Companions.

Regarding the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘And soon you will see, as will they’ (*al-Qalam*: 5), it is associated with the interrogative sentence which comes after it, that is: ‘Which of you is afflicted with madness.’ (*al-Qalam*: 6) The Arabic verb *absara* (saw) signifies either sight or knowledge. Thus, the meaning of the verse is that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* as well as the people of Quraysh will come to know who was really afflicted with madness and was in clear error. This will take place when truth shall be clearly distinguished from falsehood on the Day of Judgment.

As for the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: ‘Which of you is afflicted with madness’ (*al-Qalam*: 6), we should note that the word *bi-ayyikom* (which of you) could be used without the preposition *ba`* in a context other than the Quran. Therefore, the people who are not versed in the rhetoric of the Arabic language may ask, ‘Why is this preposition mentioned?’ Some others may mistakenly say that it is superfluous. Those people should beware of saying that the Quran contains even one superfluous letter because this indicates that the meaning of the Quranic sentence can be completed without any need for some letters. This is completely untrue, for there is no superfluous letter in the Quran. Instead, in such a case, you should say, ‘I do not understand the reason of the existence of this letter’. The early Arabs heard Prophet Muhammad *peace and*

blessings be upon him reciting this very verse and none of them argued that the usage of the preposition *ba`* in this context is incorrect. Should it have been mistakenly used, they would have publicly declared it as the Quran challenged them to bring forth even one mistake or even one verse similar to it. Their failure to meet this challenge proves that the style of the Quran is completely consistent with the language of the early Arabs.

So, regarding the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Which of you is afflicted with madness' (*al-Qalam*: 6), the Arabic letter *ba`* in the word *bi-ayyikom* (Which of you) signifies an additional meaning. That is to say that it plays a linguistic role in asking them, 'Who among you is overwhelmed with madness or deviation'? Some scholars say that *maftun* (the deviant) refers to Satan because he leads anyone under his control to deviation and madness.

In this vein, Allah *Glorified is He* explains that the one who is touched by Satan is driven to insanity, as He *the Almighty* says: 'But those who take usury will rise up on the Day of Resurrection like someone tormented by Satan's touch...' (*al-Baqara*: 275). *At-Takhabbut* means to walk unsteadily and to move in an uncontrolled way. Accordingly, the verse signifies that Satan may touch a person in a way that corrupts the soundness his faculties which work together to make one's body behave in the correct manner. When Satan touches someone and corrupts his faculties, his psychological faculties get affected and disharmonised and thus his movements become disorganised or uncontrollable. In this way, we find that the proposition *ba`* in the verse under discussion is not superfluous. Unlike the human speech which can contain superfluous words or letter, Allah's Words or Speech can never include any superfluous letter or word. In fact, each word in the Quran is stated to communicate a certain meaning and should any letter be omitted from its place, the meaning would become incomplete. As it is He *the Almighty* Who revealed the Quran to communicate a certain Message, the linguistic style He uses must deliver this Message completely and perfectly.

Some scholars opine that the preposition *ba`* means 'in' and accordingly the meaning is as follows: 'In your opinion, which of the two parties (Prophet Muhammad and his Companions, and the then disbelievers of Quraysh) includes the one who is afflicted with madness?'

We should also note that Allah *Glorified is He* doubled the letter *ya`* in the same word. This signifies that the disbelievers of Mecca at that time reached the ultimate level of transgression. Therefore, they were the real insane people. This is because Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* who has the perfect standards of morals, cannot be described with insanity. Accordingly, whoever accuses him of insanity is the one who is really insane.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Your Lord knows best who strays from His path and who is rightly guided.’ (*al-Qalam*: 7) It is Allah *Glorified is He* Who really knows the reality of these disbelievers as well as that of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and his followers. The former group are polytheists who had gone astray and were overwhelmed by Satan, while the latter group are the believers who were guided to the Truth.

So, it is as if He *the Almighty* says to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*, ‘I know about those who have gone astray such as the disbelievers of Quraysh who deviated from Allah’s Religion and the Path of Guidance. Likewise, I am fully Aware of those who have been guided and followed the Truth’. Allah *Glorified is He* is Omniscient; He is fully Aware of the believers and the disbelievers and the rightly guided and the misguided ones.

Those who have gone astray are the people who deviated from Allah’s Way of Guidance and followed other paths which led them astray. They deviated in this worldly life and became the followers of Satan. Thus, they are far away from the true Religion and the Straight Path. In fact, Islam is all about following Allah’s Path as it is the only the true path which leads to the desired objective. All other paths shall not lead you to the desired objective as they run counter to the Way of Guidance which He *the Almighty* has clarified to us. Allah *Glorified is He* specified a certain path, i.e. His commands and legislations, so if we followed it, we will attain His Pleasure and Reward.

The Arabic word *as-sabeel* (path) signifies a material meaning. Yet, Allah *Glorified is He* uses it here to signify a creedal and an abstract meaning. So, He *the Almighty* clarifies this abstract meaning by means of the material sense of this word. At a crossroads, if someone deviates from his road even one inch, he will keep moving away from his intended destination. He keeps moving away from his destination as long as he walks in that direction.

Therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* orders us to follow His Straight Path and not to follow other paths, saying: 'And (know) that this is My Path, the right one therefore follow it, and follow not (other) ways, for they will lead you away from His Way...' (*al-A'raf*: 153).

Allah *Glorified is He* guides the people to the Truth and Guidance by the Quran, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'O followers of the Book! Indeed Our Apostle has come to you making clear to you much of what you concealed of the Book and passing over much; indeed, there has come to you light and a clear Book from Allah. With it Allah guides him who will follow His pleasure into the ways of safety and brings them out of utter darkness into light by His will and guides them to the right path.' (*al-Ma'ida*: 16) This verse indicates that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is a light and that the Quran explains the Truth and shows the Way of Guidance. He *the Almighty* guides those who obey Him and follow His legislations to the way of peace. This verse also indicates that following him *peace and blessings be upon him* who received the clear Book, is in itself an indication of Allah's pleasure which is shown to those who follow and obey Him. Moreover, He *the Almighty* rewards such people by guiding them to the way of peace which are so many. They include one's peace of mind, one's peace with his own family, community, world, and universe, and more importantly with Allah *Glorified is He*.

Therefore, He *the Almighty* warns Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* against obeying those misguided and disbelieving people, saying: 'So do not yield to those who deny the truth.' (*al-Qalam*: 7) The disbelievers of Quraysh were calling him *peace and blessings be upon him* to follow their religion. Therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* ordered him to hold fast to His Religion, Islam, and not to obey those who deny His Oneness.

The people who denied Allah's verses are the disbelievers and the polytheists and all those who deny and fight Islam. Denial in this case is an act of rebellion on the part of the denier who opposes Allah's Message and strives to destroy it and stop its spread.

This state of denial is preceded by a stage in which the hearts of those people get filled with deviation. Therefore, they declared that they deny the

prophethood of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and accused him of lying about conveying a Message from Allah *the Almighty* and that he contrived the Quran. Therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* ordered him *peace and blessings be upon him* not to follow them or respond to their wishes, saying: ‘And thus have We revealed it, a true judgment in Arabic, and if you follow their low desires after what has come to you of knowledge, you shall not have against Allah any guardian or a protector.’ (*ar-Ra’d*: 37)

Furthermore, Allah *Glorified is He* ordered him *peace and blessings be upon him* to say to them: ‘...I do not follow your low desires. For then indeed I should have gone astray and I should not be of those who go aright.’ (*al-An’am*: 56). Here, He *the Almighty* says to him *peace and blessings be upon him* that his mission is only to convey the Message to those polytheists and not to follow their wishes which shall lead him to deviation. Whoever follows such whims and wishes will surely go astray and deviate from the Path of the guided people. Therefore, He *the Almighty* prompts him *peace and blessings be upon him* to publicly declare that he does not follow their desires so that they should know that there is no room for any compromise with them in the matter of truth and falsehood.

Therefore, Allah *the Almighty* warns Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying: ‘They want you to compromise with them and then they will compromise with you.’ (*al-Qalam*: 9) He *the Almighty* warns him *peace and blessings be upon him* against being deceived by those people or making compromises with them, as they suggested that they would worship Allah with him for a year and he would worship their gods for a year.⁽¹⁾ Allah *Glorified is He* rejected this matter altogether and revealed His saying: ‘Say: “O disbelievers! I do not worship that which you worship. Nor do you worship Him Whom I worship. Nor am I going to worship that which you worship.”’ (*al-Kafirun*: 1-4)

(1) In his *Tafsir*, At-Tabari relates on the authority of Ibn ‘Abbas that the people of Quraysh said to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* ‘We are going to suggest only one thing to you which will be of benefit to us.’ He replied, ‘What is it?’ They said, ‘You will worship our gods (al-Lat and al-‘Uza) for one year and we will worship your god for one year.’ He *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘I will wait until Allah reveals something [in this regard].’ Afterwards, the chapter of *al-Kafirun* was revealed.’ See, At-Tabari, *Jame‘ Al-Bayan*, 24/662.

This is a categorical rejection of this compromise about mutual worshipping. We know that worship is an inward creed related to the heart and cannot be compromised. Therefore, severance of relationship with the disbelievers and total rejection of this compromise is an obligation. It is not a political matter; rather, it is a Divine Order prescribed by Allah Alone.

In another verse, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘And surely, they had purposed to turn you away from that which We have revealed to you, that you should forge against Us other than that, and then they would certainly have taken you for a friend.’ (*al-Isra*: 73) So, they made many malicious suggestions to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to divert him from the Divine Message. Once they proposed that he *peace and blessings be upon him* leave them to worship their false gods and they would give him what is consecrated to these gods. At another time, they prevented him *peace and blessings be upon him* from approaching the Black Stone until he glorified their gods first. They wanted to equalise between belief and disbelief in Islam. Instead, Allah *Glorified is He* made a final Judgment of categorical rejection of all such suggestions as the issue of belief and disbelief cannot be compromised

In this regard, severance of relations and the categorical rejection is different from the political severance of relations between two countries which may resume their relations again. Rather, severance of relations with the disbelievers here is categorical and permanent. It is as if Allah *the Almighty* is saying to them, ‘Do not ever think that your proposals and suggestion in this regard may be reconsidered at a later time’. To underline this fact, Allah *Glorified is He* asserts His Rejection of their suggestion many times in the chapter of *al-Kafirun* to the extent that some people, who read the Quran without deep understanding or contemplation, thought that a repetition. However, the different forms of negation in that chapter mean that we, the Muslims, do not accept to worship the disbelievers’ gods in the present time. Likewise, in the future, nothing shall oblige us to reconsider this decision or make compromises.

The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘They want you to compromise with them and then they will compromise with you’ (*al-Qalam*: 9) refers to the convictions. When someone has a conviction about something, all his faculties act accordingly. Therefore, as they suggested that Prophet Muhammad *peace*

and blessings be upon him worship their false gods and they worship Allah, they will not then have sincere belief in his religion. After all, this runs counter to their convictions. Allah *Glorified is He* told him *peace and blessings be upon him* that, as he would reject the suggestion of those disbelievers, they would always reject his call to serve their ends. Therefore, he should always beware of them.

Allah *the Almighty* also told him *peace and blessings be upon him* that Allah *Glorified is He* would expose all their plots and secrets so that he would be knowledgeable of all their actions and not to incline to have compromises with them or expect that they would have a sincere belief in his Message. Their only wish was that they turn him *peace and blessings be upon him* from belief in Allah *the Almighty* into disbelief.

Their only aim was that he *peace and blessings be upon him* would accept their suggestion of mutual worship of their false gods along with Allah *Glorified is He*. They spared no effort to urge him *peace and blessings be upon him* to abandon his call to Islam; they offered him wealth, authority and all kinds of temptations. Categorically rejecting all these proposals, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said his well-known statement, 'By Allah, should they place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand to abandon this matter (Islam), I shall not abandon it until Allah makes it predominant or I die in this cause.'⁽¹⁾

They sent a delegation to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and told him, 'We came to you so that we would be free from blame. You have brought about an innovative matter which has never appeared among

(1) *Abu Taleb was sent to Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him and said to him, 'O my nephew, your people came to me and said to me such and such. So, protect me and yourself and do not overburden me with something I cannot tolerate.' Prophet Muhammad felt that his uncle would stop supporting him and therefore he said to him, 'O uncle! By Allah, should they place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand to abandon this matter (Islam), I shall not abandon it until Allah makes it predominant or I die in this cause.' Then, Prophet Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him was about to cry and he headed to leave. At this point, Abu Taleb called upon him and said to him, 'O my nephew, come to me.' When he peace and blessings be upon him returned to him, Abu Taleb said, 'O my nephew, go and preach whatever you want for by Allah I shall never fail to support you.' See Al-Bayhaqi, Dala'il An-Nubuwwa, 2/187.*

your people; you cursed our gods, despised our minds, and insulted our religions. If you seek money, we would give you until you become the wealthiest among us and if you want authority, we would make you our leader or king.' He *peace and blessings be upon him* replied, 'By Allah, I do not seek any of what you are saying but Allah have sent me with the truth. It is either that you obey me, or I shall wait until Allah gives me victory over you.'

The disbelievers of Mecca made this attempt secretly hoping that they might come to a compromise with him *peace and blessings be upon him*. As they were his opponents, they thought that it would be difficult for him to respond to their proposals. Therefore, they decided to send him someone towards whom he *peace and blessings be upon him* showed respect and reverence. They went to his uncle Abu Taleb, and asked him to talk to him on their behalf. After Abu Taleb talked to him, he *peace and blessings be upon him* categorically rejected their proposals and said his well-known statement, 'O uncle, By Allah, should they place the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand to abandon this matter (Islam), I shall not abandon it until Allah makes it predominant or I die in this cause.'

All their attempts did not divert Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* from striving hard for disseminating Allah's Religion. Their attempts did not stop even when he migrated to Medina. In this regard, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And that you should judge between them by what Allah has revealed, and do not follow their low desires, and be cautious of them, lest they seduce you from part of what Allah has revealed to you...' (*al-Ma'ida*: 49). Some disbelievers tried to deceive him *peace and blessings be upon him* to issue some rulings in their favour. They said that they would accept Islam if such rulings were issued. But Allah *Glorified is He* warned him, against their plot, saying: '...and be cautious of them, lest they seduce you from part of what Allah has revealed to you...' (*al-Ma'ida*: 49). *Al-Hadhar* (caution) signifies one's cautiousness and fear of what may harm him, even if it may bring about some benefit. The one who wants to harm another may present him the harmful matter in a good way to beautify it in his eyes so that he sees it. Therefore, caution means being watchful against anyone who purposes to harm/her you by something while he tries to persuade you that it is beneficial.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَلَا تُطِيعْ كُلَّ حَالِفٍ مَّهِينٍ ﴿١٠﴾

Do not yield to any contemptible swearer [10]
(The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 10)

Halif/yahlif means to swear or take an oath. When we contemplate on the Quran, we find that *halif* is always stated to refer to false swearing while the word *qasam* (an oath) refers to both the honest and false swear. For example, Allah *the Almighty* states: ‘...This is the atonement for breaking your oath...’ (*al-Ma’ida*: 89). As there is expiation for one’s oath, this means that he has broken it.

Similarly, Allah *the Almighty* says here: ‘Do not yield to any contemptible swearer.’ (*al-Qalam*: 10) The swearer meant in this verse used to take many false oaths. In this regard, Allah *Glorified is He* says about the hypocrites: ‘They swear to you by Allah that they might please you...’ (*at-Tawba*: 62). They used their false swearing as a means to please the believers so that they feel assured towards them. Then He *the Almighty* asserts the fact that: ‘...Allah, as well as His Messenger, has a greater right that they should please Him...’ (*at-Tawba*: 62). On the other hand, the true believer takes oaths to please Allah *the Almighty* Alone because one may deceive some people for a while and circumvent man-made laws, but Allah *Glorified is He* cannot be deceived and His punishment cannot be avoided.

It is noteworthy that *yahlifun* (to swear) occurs in the chapter of *at-Tawba* more than any other Quranic chapter. It only occurs once in the chapters of *al-Ma’ida* and *an-Nisa`* and three times in the chapter of *al-Mujadala*.

This word occurs in the chapter of *at-Tawba* seven times. Therefore, some call it ‘the chapter of *yahlif* (to swear)⁽¹⁾’ because this word is mentioned in this chapter more than all the rest of the Quranic chapters.

(1) This word occurs in the chapter of *at-Tawba* in the following verses: ‘They swear to you by Allah that they might please you and, Allah, as well as His Messenger, has a greater right that they should please Him, if they are believers.’ (*at-Tawba*: 62); ‘They swear by Allah that they did not speak, and certainly they did speak, the word of=

Back to the verse in question, Allah *Glorified is He* orders Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* not to obey the one who frequently swears. It is said that the one intended here was Al-Akhnas ibn Shurayq⁽¹⁾, but some others state that it refers to Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira or Al-Aswad ibn 'Abd Yaghuth. Yet, this verse is not intended to refer to a specific person. Instead, it generally refers to anyone who frequently swears.

Such a person is described as '*maheen*' (degraded) and it refers here to the one who is of a poor discretion. The person should keep his oath, as Allah *Glorified is He* says: '*...and keep your oath...*' (*al-Ma'ida*: 89). Moreover, the early Arabs used to praise the one who did not frequently swear.

The wisdom behind Allah's order to people not to frequently swear by Him is that when one swears to all matters, taking oaths becomes an easy matter to him and thus he may swear to false matters. The Quran used to expose those who falsely take oaths and prohibits them from making such oaths, saying: '*...Say: "Swear not..."*' (*an-Nur*: 53). No one can be prevented from taking an oath, especially when one swears to do a good thing. But those people used to break their oaths and, therefore, their oaths would be worth nothing, as they had taken them insincerely.

As Allah *Glorified is He* ordered Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* not to obey the one who frequently took oaths, He ordered him to disobey other categories of people such as the disbelievers, the hypocrites and those who are unmindful of the remembrance of Allah *the Almighty* as He says: '*And be not compliant to the disbelievers and the hypocrites, and disregard their annoying talk...*' (*al-Ahzab*: 48); '*O Prophet! be careful of*

= unbelief, and disbelieved after their Islam, and they had determined upon what they have not been able to effect...' (*at-Tawba*: 74) and '*They will swear to you that you may be pleased with them; but if you are pleased with them, yet surely Allah is not pleased with the transgressing people.*' (*at-Tawba*: 96)

- (1) *Al-Akhnas ibn Shurayq Ath-Thaqafi embraced Islam on the day of the liberation of Mecca. He participated in the Battle of Hunayn and was given a share of the spoils. He died in the beginning of the caliphate of 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab. In his book, Ibn Hajar says that his name was 'Ubbay and was nicknamed as Al-Akhnas (lit. the retreating one) because he ordered his people to return and not to participate in the Battle of Badr when the news came that Abu Sufyan saved the caravan. See Ibn Sa'd, At-Tabaqat Al-Kubra, 1/293; and Ibn Hajar, Al-Isaba, 1/192.*

(your duty to) Allah and do not comply with (the wishes of) the disbelievers and the hypocrites; surely Allah is Knowing, Wise.’ (*al-Ahzab*: 1) and: ‘...and do not follow him whose heart We have made unmindful to Our remembrance, and he follows his low desires and his case is one in which due bounds are exceeded.’ (*al-Kahf*: 28)

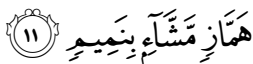
Obedience to Allah *Glorified is He* means to follow His commands and refrain from His prohibitions. The last verse denotes that the disbelievers asked Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* not to gather them with the poor people in one place. However, He *the Almighty* wanted him to honour those poor people by prohibiting him from driving them away. This is the lofty way of honouring those who constantly remember Him *Glorified is He* as they were the early believers and the Companions of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

The reason of the Divine Order that the one shall not follow the people who are unmindful of the remembrance of Allah *the Almighty* is that they lead him astray from Him *Glorified is He* and His Religion. In this connection, He *the Almighty* says: ‘And if you obey most of those in the earth, they will lead you astray from Allah’s way...’ (*al-An‘am*: 116). Those people follow their own desires and as long as one is preoccupied with his own desires, he neglects Allah’s Commands. The true believer is the one whose own desire is consistent with His commands and Legislation and never deviates from His Way of Guidance.

In the same vein, Allah *Glorified is He*: ‘So do not follow the disbelievers, and strive against them a mighty striving with it.’ (*al-Furqan*: 52) Here, He *the Almighty* orders Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* not to obey them should they offer him kingship, wealth, or leadership and to be sure that what Allah *Glorified is He* prepares for him is certainly better than that. This does not mean that he *peace and blessings be upon him* was obeying the disbelievers. Actually, this resembles His order to the believers to believe in Him, saying: ‘O you who believe! Believe in Allah...’ (*an-Nisa*: 136). So, He *the Almighty* orders him *peace and blessings be upon him* to refrain from following anyone who offers him money for renouncing his religion such as Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira who was a degraded and feeble trader. Similarly,

Allah *Glorified is He* commands him, saying: ‘...and obey not from among them a sinner or an ungrateful one.’ (*al-Insan*: 24)

Allah *the Almighty* describes this one who frequently makes oaths as being backbiter and slander-monger, saying:



**To any backbiter, slander-monger [11]
(The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 11)**

Likewise, He *the Almighty* says: ‘Woe to every slanderer, defamer.’ (*al-Humaza*: 1) *Al-Humaza* (a slanderer) refers to anyone who mocks at people, even by a gesture. For example, he may encounter a lame person and mocks at him by imitating his way of walking or by ridiculing him. As for *al-hamaz* (backbiter), it refers to the person who back bites people and defames their honour. These characteristics could be a sign of disbelief. The backbiter is imaged in Islam as if he is eating the corpse of his fellow Muslim.

Therefore, the Arabic word *al-humaza* signifies that one backbites and ridicules others in public, while the word *al-lumaza* means to ridicule people by imitating their way of walking or making sounds with his voice or any other movement to make people laugh.

For instance, when there is a group of people together and someone furtively tries to mock another by winking or whispering or any other way, provided that he refers to the slandered one’s defect stealthily without most people noticing it. So, *al-lumaza* (scorners) are those who frequently slander others in their presence openly and blatantly, whereas *al-humaza* (backbiters) are the weak ones who defame people stealthily.

Both Arabic words used in the verse for ‘slandering’ and ‘backbiting’ are exaggeration patterns indicating doing something excessively. Backbiting signifies frequent defamation of people and implies the weakness of the backbiter; otherwise he would do this action openly. Some hypocrites used to backbite Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* mock the legislation of the alms and blame the rich who exert themselves to get money then give it to the poor who make no effort, as stated in Allah’s saying:

‘And of them there are those who blame you with respect to the alms; so if they are given from it they are pleased, and if they are not given from it, lo! they are full of rage.’ (*at-Tawba*: 58) So, did they criticise the legislation itself? Or did they criticise Allah *Glorified is He* for urging people to give charity? Or did they vilify giving a varying amount on money to the poor? They used to defame all or most of these issues.

Further, the backbiter is the one who defames people verbally and the scorner is the one who defame them by action. Not only does such a person meant in the verse defame, mock and slander, but he also goes about with malicious gossip. Going about with malicious gossip always takes the side of evil and denotes spreading calumnies between people to harm and arouse hostilities between them. They conceal the good deeds of people and expose their evil ones to the extent that they tell lies about them if they cannot get to know their evils deeds.

Mashsha` (going about with malicious gossip) comes in the form of an exaggeration pattern to affirm that such an atrocious trait is deeply instilled in such a person that he habitually and excessively intends to spread hatred among people and sour their relations by gossip and telling lies. Thus, such a slander-monger causes discord between people. That is why Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said ‘A *qattat* (slanderer or bearer of false tales) shall not enter Paradise.’⁽¹⁾ *Qattat* refers to the one who overhears people’s talk and carries it to others to spread animosity and spoil their relations.

Further, Ibn `Abbas narrated that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* passed by two graves and said, ‘Both of them (the persons in these graves) are being tortured, and they are not being tortured for a major sin. One of them used not to save himself from being soiled with his urine, and the other one used to go about with calumnies.’⁽²⁾

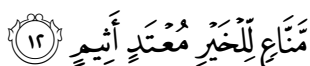
(1) *This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Hudhayfa Allah be pleased with him. See Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 23247 and 23305; Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 60656; and Muslim, Sahih, Hadith no. 170.*

(2) *This Hadith is narrated on the authority Ibn `Abbas Allah be pleased with him. In his Mustakhraj, Abu `Uwana narrated this Hadith with the addition, ‘He then took a green leaf of a date-palm tree split it into two pieces and fixed one on each grave. The people said, ‘O Allah’s Messenger! Why have you done so?’ He replied, ‘I hope that their =*

Further, Asma` bint Yazid ibn As-Sakan narrated that he *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Shall I not inform you of the worst amongst you? It is those who: go forth as tale-bearers (those who indulge in gossip); cause separation amongst people who love one another and make excuses for sins (which they commit).'⁽¹⁾ Causing discord between people and spoiling their relations are deemed as dangerous matters. Moreover, he *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Shall I not inform you of what is more virtuous than the rank of fasting, prayer and charity?' They said, 'But of course!' He said, 'Making peace between each other, for indeed spoiling relations with each other is the *haliqa* (razor). I do not tell you that it shaves the hair, but it shaves away the religion.'⁽²⁾

Allah *Glorified is He* describes this act as devilish, a fact which is crystal clear in his saying: 'Satan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst...' (*al-Ma'ida*: 91). The Arabic verse is worded in such a way to indicate that the one who indulges in gossip causes separation between two people who are firmly united and having a close relation.

Allah then says:



**Or hinderer of good, to anyone who is sinful,
aggressive [12] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 12)**

The chiefs of Quraysh used to hinder the people from doing good deeds and having faith in Allah *the Almighty*. In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Have you considered him who calls the judgment a lie? That is the one who

= punishment may be lessened till they (the leaf) become dry.' See Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, Hadith no. 1361 and 218; Al-Bayhaqi, *As-Sunnan Al-Kubra*, Hadith no. 4140; Ibn Abu Shayba, *Musannaf*, Hadith no. 12045; 'Abd Ar-Razzaq, *Musannaf*, Hadith no. 6753; and Abu 'Uwana, *Mustakhraj*, Hadith no. 495.

(1) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Asma` bint Yazid ibn As-Sakan Allah *be pleased with her*. See Ahmad, *Musnad*, Hadith no. 5092 and 27599; Al-Bukhari, *Al-Adab Al-Maghribi*, Hadith no. 323; At-Tabarani, *Al-Mu`jam Al-Kabir*, Hadith no. 423; and Al-Bayhaqi, *Shu`ab Al-Iman*, Hadith no. 10596

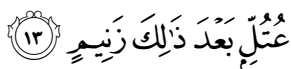
(2) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Abu Ad-Darda` Allah *be pleased with him*. See Ibn Hibban, *Sahih*, Hadith no. 5092; and At-Tirmidhi, *Sunnan*, Hadith no. 2509.

treats the orphan with harshness. And he does not urge (others) to feed the poor. So, woe to the praying ones who are unmindful of their prayers, who do (good) to be seen, and withhold the necessities of life!’ (*al-Ma’un*: 1-7) Allah *Glorified is He* points out that among the necessities of life that should not be withheld are the container used for kneading dough, sifter, etc. which a poor person may not possess, so he borrows them from his neighbour. Hence, the forbiddener of good is stingy in giving away money or charity. Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira, who was a rich man and had ten sons to whom he used to say, ‘Whoever accepts Islam among you, I shall deprive him of my bounty.’⁽¹⁾ That is why He *the Almighty* says: ‘Just because he has wealth and sons.’ (*al-Qalam*: 14) He is very cautious to forbid others and even himself from doing any good deed and that is why he stood against the Call of Faith and withheld his money from the needy.

He did not only prevent the good from others, but he also took it unlawfully by theft, bribe, seizure, extortion, and deception. By so doing, he commits transgression in all its forms, and therefore he is an extravagant sinner. He is not considered so only due to his misdeeds and injustice, but also because of his insistence on wronging himself without desisting from it or being reproached by an admonition from His Lord *Glorified is He*. In another verse, He *the Almighty* says: ‘Forbiddener of good, exceeeder of limits, doubter.’ (*Qaf*: 25) This suggests that he doubts the Day of Judgment, for if he had believed in the Reckoning and Recompense, he would not have prevented himself and his family from doing good deeds nor would he have resisted faith and giving Allah’s Rights. Being a sinner, a doubter fears to get exposed, as the traditional proverb goes: ‘A doubter is about to say take me.’ This is because he perpetrated evil, thereby he is a sinner.

Allah says:

(1) In his *Tafsir*, Az-Zamakhshari said that Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira Al-Makhzumi had ten sons and said to them, ‘Whoever accepts Islam among you, I shall deprive him of my bounty.’ See Az-Zamakhshari, *Al-Kash-shaf*, 4/587.



**Coarse, and on top of all that, an imposter [13]
(The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 13)**

'*Utul* (coarse), which originally connotes pushing fiercely and violently, refers to the treacherous ill-speaking person who is intensely stubborn in his disbelief and vehemently contentious. This linguistic meaning is mentioned in the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'Seize him, then drag him down into the middle of the Hell.' (*ad-Dukhan*: 47) Here, this word means to forcibly drag the disbeliever on his face into the middle of hellfire. This ignoble baseborn pretender is known by his evil as a sheep is known by its notable sign which usually hangs on its neck. In this regard, Zayd ibn Aslam, narrated that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'The heaven weeps over a person whom Allah has given strength, wealth and enlarged his stomach, but he does injustice to people; such is the ignoble baseborn pretender.'⁽¹⁾ *Zanim* (baseborn pretender) refers to one stuck with people, while he is not one of them; whose father is not known and his mother is a prostitute thereby attributed to someone other than his father and adopted by his people.

This does not mean, however, that everyone walking around with gossips is a fatherless baseborn pretender, since the context of the verse is about a specific person with such characteristics and therefore it is added: '...and on top of all that...' (*al-Qalam*: 13). This means that this description is added to the previous descriptions. Such a person with these consecutive characteristics, each is worse than the others, is a habitual swearer who knows himself to be neither honest nor trustworthy, thereby is typically characterised as mean and debased even if he has power, wealth or beauty. He prevents the good from himself and from others as well; transgresses the limits of truth, justice, and fairness; and indulges in sins, prohibitions, and forbidden matters. He is described as cruel, harsh, despised; and marked by his evil, wickedness and

(1) In his *Tafsir*, At-Tabari narrates this Hadith on the authority of Zayd ibn Aslam through a *mursal* Hadith (The Companion name is not mentioned). In his *Tafsir*, Ibn Kathir states that this Hadith is narrated through two *mursal* chains of narrators and was also narrated by many scholars, including Mujahid, 'Ikrima, Al-Hasan and Qatada. See At-Tabari, *Jame' Al-Bayan*, 23/536; and Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Al-Quran Al-'Azhim*, 8/211.

enjoying the spread of hatred between people. The one going around with gossip is a double-faced, dissembler, slanderer, and fully busy with finding faults in others, concealing the good, exposing the evil, telling lies and spreading rumours. Besides all this, he is a baseborn pretender of the lowest people; on looking into his reality, you find him having unknown father, attributed to a people to whom he does not belong as if all of his vicious traits emanate from his debased origin.

Allah says:

أَنْ كَانَ ذَا مَالٍ وَبَنِينَ

**Just because he has wealth and sons [14]
(The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 14)**

In this verse, it is noted that his origin has nothing to do with the wealth and sons that Allah *the Almighty* granted him, and this concept is affirmed by His saying: ‘So [Muhammad] leave them for a while steeped [in their ignorance]. Do they reckon that, by giving them wealth and sons, We race to give them good things? They really have no idea!’ (*al-Mu’minun*: 54-56) Do they think that what is extended to them of wealth and children is good for them? Contrarily, it is but a respite for them so that they may indulge more in committing sins. Therefore, we should not obey such a person even if he has wealth and children. It is said that Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira is intended here as he had a garden in At-Ta’if and twelve sons. However, his wealth and children did not separate him from his debased origin, and thus his traits came in conformity with such origin. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘My *ummah* will remain well so long as illegitimate birth is not prevalent among them; should it happen, Allah would inflict a punishment upon them.’⁽¹⁾ ‘Ikrima even said, ‘Prevalence of illegitimate births causes drought.’⁽²⁾ After Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira had been given wealth and

(1) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Maymuna Allah be pleased with her. See Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 26830; Al-Bukhari, At-Tarikh Al-Kabir, 1/138; Abu Ya’la, Musnad, Hadith no. 7091; and At-Tabarani, Al-Mu’jam Al-Kabir, Hadith no. 24/55

(2) In his Tafsir, Al-Qurtubi attributes this narration to ‘Ikrima. See Al-Qurtubi, Jame’ Ahkam Al-Quran, 18/235.

children in abundance, and yet desiring for more, Allah *Glorified is He* destroyed and deprived him of all that, leaving him penniless. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'Leave Me and him whom I created alone. And gave him vast riches, and sons dwelling in his presence. And I adjusted affairs for him adjustably. And yet he desires that I should add more! By no means! Surely, he offers opposition to Our communications.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 11-15)

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِذَا تَتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِ ءَايَاتُنَا قَالَ أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

When our revelations are recited to him, he says, 'These are just ancient fables' [15] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 15)

Aya (a sign or a verse) refers to the marvellous wonders capturing one's attention like the universal signs which include the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, the mountains, the seas, etc. Being beyond the ability of humans, such wonderful phenomena were created by Allah *the Almighty* as a sign of His Omnipotence as well as to serve mankind.

Ayat could also refer to the miracles of the Prophets. When Allah *Glorified is He* sends a messenger or a prophet to his people, Allah *Glorified is He* breaks the laws of nature for him to prove his prophethood to his people. Such miracles were intended for the people who witnessed them with the aim of establishing faith in the hearts of the believers in times of difficulties; when they see a proof for the truthfulness of their Messenger, this helps them strengthen their belief.

Further, the word *ayat* refers to the verses of the Glorious Quran; the miraculous Speech of Allah *Glorified is He* which verifies the prophethood of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* until the Day of Judgment. In the Quran, He *the Almighty* also mentions His miracles concerning the creation of the human being, the heavens, the earth, etc.

Accordingly, *aya* (sign) signifies a marvelous wonder, the miracles of the prophets attesting to their truthfulness and the verses of the Glorious Quran. The miracles with which Allah *Glorified is He* supported Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* are clear before the disbelievers and need no

evidence. Even though he *peace and blessings be upon him* was unlettered, he brought this miraculous Quran from Allah *the Almighty* both in wording and meaning which is a clear self-evidenced miracle.

Furthermore, he *peace and blessings be upon him* prophesised through the divinely revealed Quran about the result of a war which was yet to take place nine years later. Besides, he exposed what was concealed within the hearts of the hypocrites and the disbelievers, predicated some future events, and stated some cosmic laws. Further, the Quran contained all types of scientific, cosmic, and universal miracles. These are all clear signs with which the Quran challenged the disbelievers. They were clear enough that no one rejected them except he who desired to go beyond the path of Allah *Glorified is He* and follow his whims. The signs of the universe, the Glorious Quran and Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* need but an unbiased mind to come to the conclusion that the Quran, being full of linguistic and scientific miracles, was revealed from Allah *Glorified is He* and will remain a miracle for every coming generation.

The disbelievers do not believe in Allah's signs, even if they are conspicuously clear and even if they come on their request, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'And those who have no knowledge say: "Why does not Allah speak to us or a sign come to us?" Even thus said those before them, the like of what they say, "Their hearts are all alike." Indeed, We have made the communications clear for a people who are sure.' (*al-Baqara*: 118) The Glorious Quran was revealed to challenge them regarding to the future events and the mysteries of the human soul. Had the disbelievers used their minds, it would have sufficed them to reach the truth, but they, out of obstinacy, rejected every sign coming to them and demanded another one.

Moreover, the signs brought forth to the disbelievers increased their obstinacy and disbelief. Whenever they demanded a sign, they rejected it and grew in their rejection and stubbornness, even if they knew for certain that such signs were sent down from Allah *Glorified is He* and that it is the mission of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to deliver them, as stated in His saying: 'Even as We have sent among you a Messenger from among you who recites to you Our communications and purifies you

and teaches you the Book and the wisdom and teaches you that which you did not know.' (*al-Baqara*: 151) We should note that the signs are of two types: seen and read ones. The visual signs encompass the whole universe and explain the verses of the Quran, which Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* recited. The verses of the Quran filled the people with wonder, so they were supported by the signs in the universe. He *peace and blessings be upon him* came with recited verses to attract people's attention to the observed signs. Through provoking wonder at the precision of the creation of the universe, the people attain to belief in its Creator.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* did not recite the Quran to draw people's admiration only; rather, he had a spiritual mission, namely, drawing the attention of everyone listening to the Quran to the creation of this astoundingly beautiful universe which comprises marvellous signs. Upon believing in its Creator, he *peace and blessings be upon him* conveys to them the Way of Guidance which best suits the beauty of the universe. Furthermore, He *peace and blessings be upon him* was sent to recite Allah's verses to the people to purify them, increase their purity and decency, and teach them the Book and the wisdom. The Revelation used to be sent down to him *peace and blessings be upon him* with some verses and in some occasions with two or three *rub`* (quarters). When the revelation departed, he *peace and blessings be upon him* used to recite what was revealed to him to his Companions so that they would record and recite it in exactly the same way they heard it. Some of them memorised the whole Quran by heart, for they were the *ummah* of narration and strong memory.

In the verse in question, the Arabic verb *tala/yatlu* (to recite) is used in the passive form because the reciter in this case, i.e. Prophet Muhammad, is well known and the focal point here is what the disbeliever would do when Allah's verses are recited to him. Many disbelievers described Allah's verses as: '...ancient fables.' (*al-Qalam*: 15) Among such disbelievers was An-Nadr ibn Al-Harith, the ally of Banu Abu Ad-Dar, who used to frequently visit Al-Hira to listen to the rhymed prose and speech of its people. When he came to Mecca and heard the Quran and the speech of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* he said, 'We have heard indeed; if we pleased,

we could say the like of it ;⁽¹⁾ this is nothing but the stories of the ancients.’ He also said, ‘This is but the rhymed prose of the people of Al-Hira.’

Likewise, Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira was among the disbelievers who labelled the Quran as ‘ancient fables’. He also used to mock Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and that is why the following verses were revealed about him: ‘When our revelations are recited to him, he says, “These are just ancient fables.” We shall brand him on the snout!’ (*al-Qalam*: 15-16)

Al-Walid was a man of wealth, power, and children, but he turned away and scoffed at the Quran, thereby Allah *Glorified is He* inflicted him with an exemplar punishment. *Asatir* (fables) means something composed of wonders and magical events. Describing the Quran as ‘ancient fables’ is a sign of the disbelievers’ failure; after they labelled it once as magic, another time as soothsaying, they now call it ‘ancient fables’!

Being the people of eloquence and rhetoric, they perceived the greatness of the Quran, and were fascinated by its eloquent styles, and yet they described it as ‘ancient fables’. As they mistakenly thought that the Quranic orders were difficult for them, they were not willing to abide by it. Thus, the fables signify the legends and myths such as ‘One Thousand and One Nights’, ‘The Iliad’ and other books of legends. Some people contend that *asatir* (legends) has two singular forms, but the meaning is the same in either case. The legends refer to the fabricated speech which has no origin, but not to the speech which did not take place at its specified time, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘And those who disbelieve say: “This is nothing but a lie which he has forged, and other people have helped him at it”; so indeed they have done injustice and (uttered) a falsehood. And they say: “The stories of the ancients—he has got them written; so these are read out to him morning and evening.”’ (*al-Furqan*: 4-5)

So, the disbelievers alleged that the Quran comprised the legends and the stories of the ancients which Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had them written, that is, he ordered someone to write them. Out of their hesitation and confusion, they levelled such accusations against him

(1) See *Ath-Tha`alibi, Al-Kashf Wa Al-Bayan*, 4/350.

peace and blessings be upon him while he was unlettered, and claimed that such legends were read out to him morning and evening so that he could memorise them. Baffled by their negligence, they accused him *peace and blessings be upon him* of learning from a man in Mecca, whereas the Quran makes it clear that the man whom they regarded as his teacher was a foreigner, not an Arab. In this regard, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...the tongue of him whom they reproach is barbarous, and this is a clear Arabic tongue.’ (*an-Nahl*: 103) Out of their arrogance, they did not believe in the Hereafter.

Further, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘And when it is said to them, what is it that your Lord has revealed? They say: “Stories of the ancients.”’ (*an-Nahl*: 24) It is surprising, though, that they did not deny Allah’s Existence and Lordship; when asked What your Lord has revealed, they answered: ‘Stories of the ancients.’ (*an-Nahl*: 24) Their answer described what was revealed but did not deny the Revelation. Had they been consistent with themselves, they would have rejected Allah’s Divinity and the Revelation as well. As for the pious believers, when they were asked this question: ‘What your Lord has revealed?’ (*an-Nahl*: 30), they answered: ‘Good...’ (*an-Nahl*: 30). This reveals the difference between the believers and the disbelievers. When Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* called upon his people to believe in Allah, the One, Who revealed to him Guidance in a miraculous Book, his news spread all over the Arabian Peninsula, and every tribe sent an envoy to find out more about him *peace and blessings be upon him*. To divert people away from him, the disbelievers of Quraysh divided themselves into four groups to stand at the four entrances of Mecca. Whenever asked by the tribes’ envoys, ‘What has Your Lord, Who sent you a Messenger, said?’ they answer, ‘He (Prophet Muhammad) is but a liar and a fabricator’, with the aim of turning the envoys of the tribes away from him.

Allah *Glorified is He* tells Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* of what the disbelievers said to the envoys who came to find out about him and how they gave them misleading answers. Giving the same answer on the four entrances of Mecca indicates that it is previously prepared and agreed upon by those who stood on such entrances to hinder the envoys from listening to him *peace and blessings be upon him*. They drew a parallel

between the Divine Revelation and what was related to them of the stories of the former people by An-Nadr ibn Al-Harith, which are similar to the stories of `Antra and Abu Zayd Al-Hilali related nowadays.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* threatens anyone uttering such saying about the Quran, saying:



We shall brand him on the snout! [16]
(The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 16)

Branding him on the snout means to be hit by the sword on his nose, leaving a mark on top of it. This mark was found on the nose of Al-Walid after he was hit at the Battle of Badr. Allah *Glorified is He* communicated this prophecy through Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* at an earlier time and it came true later on. When this prophecy was fulfilled, those who believed in Allah *the Almighty* and the Quran became more affirmed about the truthfulness of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in everything he said and more willing to trust what is told to them of the matters of this worldly life and the Hereafter.

Similarly, on hearing the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: ‘Soon shall the hosts be routed, and they shall turn (their) backs’ (*al-Qamar*: 45), ‘Umar Allah be pleased with him said, ‘Which host shall be routed⁽¹⁾ while we cannot protect ourselves?’ He also commented in the same way regarding Allah’s saying: ‘We shall brand him on the snout!’ (*al-Qalam*: 16) Then, the Battle of Badr took place assuring him of the truthfulness of this prophecy. Surprisingly, this verse was revealed at a time when the Muslims could hardly

(1) In his *Tafsir*, ‘Abd Ar-Raziq relates that ‘Umar Allah be pleased with him said, ‘When this verse: “Soon shall the hosts be routed, and they shall turn (their) backs.”’ (*al-Qamar*: 45), was revealed, I kept wondering which assembly was this. I realised what it meant as Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was reciting it on the Battle of Badr, while putting on his armour.’ In other books of exegesis, ‘Umar Allah be pleased with him is narrated to have said, ‘When the verse: “Soon shall the hosts be routed, and they shall turn (their) backs.”’ (*al-Qamar*: 45), was revealed, I did not know its interpretation until the day when the Battle of Badr took place as I saw Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* reciting it.’ See ‘Abd Ar-Raziq, *Tafsir*, 3069.

defend themselves. That is why there was no possibility of such expectation, for their predicament at that time inspired no hope of victory. However, it is Allah *Glorified is He* Who declared it. So, they did witness Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira marked on his nose after he was struck on it. This is because the One Who foretold that is the Omnipotent and no force can hinder the fulfilment of what He had prophesised.

When the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'We shall brand him on the snout!' (*al-Qalam*: 16) was revealed about , some Muslims wondered, 'How could we get to him?' Then, the Battle of Badr came and they saw his nose struck by the sword and scarred with a mark. Who had foreseen this future incident? It is Allah *the Almighty* not Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. If you reflect upon these issues, you will conclude that he *peace and blessings be upon him* was only a communicator of the Quran, which is revealed from Allah *Glorified is He* Who is fully Aware of the past, the present and the future, for He is the Owner of time.

Thus, the Quranic verse: 'We shall brand him on the snout!' (*al-Qalam*: 16), was sent down at the time of the Muslim's weakness, prophesising the branding of Al-Mughira's nose which is the sign of his pride and arrogance. Then the Battle of Badr took place so that the Muslims could see the fulfilment of the prophecy. Likewise, every issue brought forth by Allah *the Almighty* is truthful. Indeed, the Quran is a challenging Divine Speech and its recitation is an act of worship.

Allah *Glorified is He* said that about one of the masters of Quraysh when the Muslims were unable to defend themselves and even had to migrate to Abyssinia to protect themselves from the oppression of those masters, and every believer was seeking someone to protect him. At the Battle of Badr, though, this master's nose was branded and Allah's saying: 'We shall brand him on the snout!' (*al-Qalam*: 16) came true. So, who decides on whom would be killed or survive even before fighting takes place? It is Allah *the Almighty* Who knows what will happen in the future.

Astoundingly, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* specified the places where some masters of Quraysh were killed, and it is by Allah's Will that what happened was exactly as what he *peace and blessings be upon him*

had foretold before the battle took place, saying, ‘This will be the place of the falling of so and so.’⁽¹⁾ They even brought the head of Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira and found the mark scarring his nose. So, who is it that controls death? It is only Allah *Glorified is He* Who informed Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* of such news.

Moreover, they did not distinguish Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira from the other killed people except with this mark on his nose. It is worth noting that Allah *Glorified is He* uses the Arabic prefix ‘*sin*’ to refer to the future instead of the particle ‘*sawfa*,’ because the latter means that the action will happen in the distant future, whereas the prefix ‘*sin*’ indicates that it will happen soon in the near future. The semantic distinction between *sawfa* and the prefix *sin* is made clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘Leave them that they may eat and enjoy themselves and (that) hope may beguile them, for they will soon know.’ (*al-Hijr*: 3) ‘But there came after them an evil generation, who neglected prayers and followed and sensual desires, so they will meet perdition’ (*Maryam*: 59) and ‘...you cannot (bear to) see Me but look at the mountain, if it remains firm in its place, then will you see Me...’ (*al-A’raf*: 143). In these verses, the particle *sawfa* is used to denote that there is a longer time before the action takes place or that the interval between the two incidents is extended. By contrast, using the prefix *sin* connotes that the interval between two incidents is short, thereby it will happen soon, as in the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: ‘The fools among the people will say...’ (*al-Baqara*: 142). So, when you say to someone, ‘If you visit me, I will treat you generously’, this means that you treat him in that way shortly after his arrival if the prefix *sin* is used. But if the particle *sawfa* is used, this means that your generosity will take a longer time to be shown.

Regarding the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: ‘We shall brand him on the snout!’ (*al-Qalam*: 16), the prefix *sin* (shall) imply that the punishment is

(1) Anas ibn Malik *Allah be pleased with him* said, ‘The Messenger of Allah showed us the day before where the disbelievers would fall. He said, “This is the place where so-and-so will fall tomorrow, if Allah wills.” By the One Who sent him with the truth! They did not miss those places, then they were placed in a well.’ See Ahmad, *Musnad*, Hadith no. 182, 13296 and 13703; Al-Bazzar, *Musnad*, Hadith no. 222; Ibn Hibban, *Sahih*, Hadith no. 6498; and Abu Dawud At-Tayalisi, *Musnad*, Hadith no. 40.

soon to be inflicted on him. His punishment was branding his nose so as to be a permanent mark and feature of him, lucidly clear to one and all. The nose represents the face which is the most honourable organ of a human, and even when someone finds an arrogant proud person, he says, 'I want to break his nose', i.e. to put an end to his arrogance and pride.

The snout could allude to the human being's nose, and thus the verse refers to what happened to Al-Walid at the Battle of Badr, whereas others maintain that this punishment will be in the Hereafter where he will be tortured in the hellfire with a fire placed on his nose.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِنَّا بَلَوْنَهُمْ كَمَا بَلَوْنَا أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ إِذْ أَقْسَمُوا لَيَصْرُنَّهَا مُصْبِحِينَ ﴿١٧﴾

We have tried them as We tried the owners of a certain garden, who swore that they would harvest its fruits in the morning [17] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 17)

Here, Allah *the Almighty* relates to us the story of the brothers who had a garden, and once they prevented the rights of the poor, the needy and the orphans, He *the Almighty* destroyed the fruits of their garden and burnt its trees. Allah *Glorified is He* punished them for their injustice. However, would not we find a person who has not wronged himself, and yet was afflicted by a calamity? We can see that in our daily life and if this person be patient and thankful, He *the Almighty* will grant him a reward from Him. Allah *Glorified is He* may destroy the money of someone because he has earned it unlawfully due to negligence. Regarding the believer, the calamity either brings a reward or purifies one's money. As for the disbeliever who does spend out for the sake of Allah *the Almighty* he will get no rewards and no one can guarantee the permanency of the bounties he has.

Additionally, if you analyse any of the favours in which you play a role to bring it about, you will find that even your role is accredited to and gifted from Allah *Glorified is He*. Even after the plants grow and yield, you cannot feel secure that they will not be affected by blight or stricken by calamity, as He *the Almighty* says: 'If We pleased, We should have certainly made it

broken down into pieces, then would you begin to lament: “Surely we are burdened with debt: Nay! we are deprived.” (*al-Waqi‘a*: 65-67)

As a matter of fact, the people can be tried with blessings as well as with misfortunes. It is not the ‘trial’ itself that arouse fear, but rather, the result of that trial, for if you overcome the tests and the trials successfully, it will be good for you; otherwise you will encounter the bad consequences of failing the test. The trials represent the criteria for choosing the good or the evil and are regarded as a favour from Allah *the Almighty*. So, testing people is not evil in itself, but the evil is to fail in the test. Every trial or calamity is regarded as a test, and no one can claim that the tests are evil except from the perspective of the one who could not bear the burden of striving to achieve success. That is why Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘And as for man, when his Lord tries him, then treats him with honour and makes him lead an easy life, he says: “My Lord honours me.” But when He tries him (differently), then straitens to him his means of subsistence, he says: “My Lord has disgraced me.”’ (*al-Fajr*: 15-16) So, neither wealth is a sign of dignity, nor is poverty a sign of humiliation. But when does wealth become a sign of dignity? Such is the case when the person is guided to give away its dues to the needy. On the other hand, if he does not give its dues, it will be a source of humiliation and abasement. In this case, being a poor person is better than being rich.

Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* states that neither having money is a sign of dignity nor is poverty is a sign of humiliation. Allah *Glorified is He* provides a proof for this fact, saying: ‘Nay! But you do not honor the orphan. Nor do you urge one another to feed the poor. And you eat away the heritage, devouring (everything) indiscriminately.’ (*al-Fajr*: 17-19) How could wealth be a sign of dignity when you do not honour the orphan? Indeed, wealth in this case is a burden. Similarly, how could strip you of such a wealth, with which you do not honour the orphan, be a sign of humiliation? In fact, Allah *Glorified is He* purifies you from this humiliation and relieved you of the responsibility of wealth. Consequently, neither wealth is a sign of dignity, nor is poverty a sign of humiliation.

Even if someone does not possess money to give it out charitably, should he not then spur the wealthy to do so? Such a person is even stingy

in giving advice, as he does not encourage other people to feed the poor. How could he then claim that wealth is a sign of dignity and poverty is a sign of humiliation?

As we had previously said, the trials are not evil by definition, but so are the bad results thereof. This is because the trials are regarded as tests which one may overcome successfully while another fails in them. Further, the people can be tried with the blessings or misfortunes so that Allah *Glorified is He* sees who is patient and who is not.

Regarding the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'We have tried them...' (*al-Qalam*: 17), Allah *Glorified is He* states that He tried the people of Mecca with hunger and tested the polytheists of Quraysh when Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* invoked Him against them, saying: 'O Allah! Be hard on the tribe of Mudar and let them suffer from famine years like that of the time of Yusuf (Yusuf (Joseph)).'⁽¹⁾

So, regarding the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'We have tried them as We tried the owners of a certain garden...' (*al-Qalam*: 17), they were tried as a punishment for them. Similarly, He *the Almighty* says: 'The likeness of what they spend in the life of this world is as the likeness of wind in which is intense cold (that) smites the seed produce of a people who have done injustice to their souls and destroys it; and Allah is not unjust to them, but they are unjust to themselves.' (*Al-Imran*: 117) *Al-Janna* (the garden) refers to the garden that they owned. It is derived from the word *al-jann* (veil), and it signifies a grove planted with trees that if one were to walk through it, he would be veiled by its trees, unlike the groves with short flowers that only give a beautiful sight to behold. Bu contrast, the garden is characterised by tall bushy trees that hide one from sight and it also has everything to suffice your need so that you do not turn to another. When one is deprived of

(1) Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him said, 'When Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* finished recitation in the *fajr* prayer and raised his head from (bowing), he used to say: "Sami`a Allahu Liman Hamidah, Rabbana Wa Laka Al-Hamd." He would, then, invoke Allah saying: "O Allah! Save Al-Walid ibn Al-Walid and Salama ibn Hisham ... O Allah! Be hard on the tribe of Mudar and let them suffer from famine years like that of the time of Yusuf (Yusuf (Joseph))."' See *Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 804, 106 and 2932; and Muslim, Sahih, Hadith no. 294 and 295.*

something, he looks for what meets his need, but the one who has what suffices him is not in need of others. Thus, *al-janna* (garden) denotes veiling and coverage. Further, one of its derivatives is insanity, for it covers to the mind. Additionally, when this word collocates with the word ‘night’, it means that the night is beginning to fall so that you cannot see others nor be seen. Such are the implications of ‘garden’, whose derivatives denote veil and coverage.

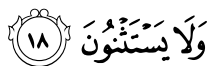
A garden is a place filled with plants, fruits, and tall bushy trees with abundant twisted branches which cover the one entering into it and satisfies him so that he is not in need of other places. It has all the necessities of life; food, fruit, grass, water, greenery, joy, etc.

The owners of the garden inherited it from their father who used to give away in charity a portion of everything it produces to the needy at the time of harvest. However, his sons said that their money was little and their children were many, and thus they could not give in charity as their father did. Then, they decided to deprive the poor of their charity, thereby suffer the consequence of their misdeed, which is mentioned in the Quran.

They swore to harvest the fruits of their palm trees without the poor noticing it, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...who swore that they would harvest its fruits in the morning.’ (*al-Qalam*: 17) So, they agreed to do that in the morning, but they did not say, ‘If Allah wills’, therefore Allah *Glorified is He* destroyed their garden, while they were asleep. In the morning, they went to their garden, saying: ‘Make sure no poor person enters the garden today!’ (*al-Qalam*: 24)

Thus, they blocked their way of obtaining Allah’s Bounty when they deprived the poor. Then Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘But when they saw the garden, they said, “We must have lost our way! No—we are ruined!”’ (*al-Qalam*: 26-27) Afterwards, they realised their fault and came to their senses, saying: ‘But maybe our Lord will give us something better in its place: we truly turn to Him in hope.’ (*al-Qalam*: 32)

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:



**And made no allowance [for the Will
of God] [18] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 18)**

When they were planning to harvest their garden, they did not say, 'If Allah wills'. Therefore, beware of saying that you are going to do something without relating it to Allah's Will because you cannot guarantee your life or the fulfillment of your promise. After all, nothing can happen without His Will, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'And do not say of anything: "Surely, I will do it tomorrow."' (*al-Kahf*: 23)

As a matter of fact, the human being controls neither the time nor the place of an action. He even does not guarantee the presence of the means to do what he wants. All such elements; the action, its doer, time, place and cause are only controlled by Allah *Glorified is He*. Hence, one should shield himself against telling lies or venturing by following His saying: 'and do not say of anything: "Surely I will do it tomorrow."' Unless Allah pleases...' (*al-Kahf*: 23-24). In this way, he keeps away from being a liar because he will not do something unless He *the Almighty* wills.

Further, you cannot guarantee that you will be alive to do something in the future. In fact, the human being does not control the action, its time, place, and cause. Further, he does not have the ability to do it. Out of courtesy, you need to say, 'If Allah wills', and if it did not happen, you would say, 'I said, "If Allah wills", but He did not will it to happen', thereby evading blame and telling lies.

Some scholars, though, contend that the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'And made no allowance [for the Will of Allah].' (*al-Qalam*: 18), means that they would leave nothing of the fruits of their garden trees, i.e. they will not set aside some portion of the harvest to give away to the poor and the needy, as their father used to do.

Allah *Glorified is He* prescribes the *zakat* as a fixed portion of the rich's property for the needy and the poor, as He *the Almighty* says: 'And those in whose wealth there is a fixed portion, for him who begs and for him who is denied (good).' (*al-Ma'arij*: 24-25) Giving alms, nevertheless, is not limited when it comes to the property of the doer of good. In this connection, He *the Almighty*

says: ‘And in their property was a portion due to him who begs and to him who is denied (good).’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 19) The person should not make the benefit of his money confined to himself; rather, the poor and the needy have a share in it. After giving their rights, he can make use of his property. Allah *Glorified is He* does not specify the right in the last verse as fixed, but leaves it unspecified, for only the *zakat* is prescribed as a fixed portion, while the one seeking the rank of the *ihsan* (excellence in faith) gives away of his money to the poor and the needy more than what is prescribed on him. As the Legislator *Glorified is He* ensures this right to the poor, He protects the poor and the rich all the same. He specified the prescribed alms in case of *zakat* in order that no one gives less than what is prescribed.

Some jurists argued that since the *zakat* is the right of the poor in the money of the rich, then if a rich person withholds it from the poor, his hand should be cut off because he has taken the right of the poor. The rich person is responsible for the right of the poor, and this is in the interest of poor. If the rich person does not give him his right on the due date, and then the money gets destroyed, then the rich person guarantees the right of the poor. So, the rich person is a guardian of the poor’s right and should treat him as he likes to be treated. He should not look down on the poor, thereby depriving him of his right.

The owners of the garden devised a plot, but they were overwhelmed by it, as Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...and the evil plans shall not beset any save the authors of it...’ (*Fatir*: 43). Anyone devising evil plans tries to conceal his intentions, so he may show his love while disguising hatred. Harboursing bad intentions is one of the elements of evil planning and needs skill and experience. However, it can be exposed by insight and intuition. Allah *Glorified is He* inflicts His punishment on those who devise evil plans.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

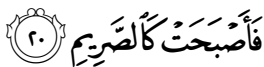
فَطَافَ عَلَيْهَا طَائِفٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ وَهُمْ نَائِمُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

**A disaster from your Lord struck the garden
as they slept [19] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 19)**

Therefore, Allah *the Almighty* punished the owners of the garden by sending a disaster on their garden, encompassing every part of it, and burning its trees.

Such a disaster was sent by His command at night. Allah *Glorified is He* sent on their garden a chastisement from the heaven which burnt it completely, leaving it as black as the dark night.

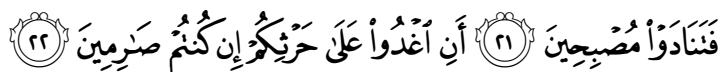
Allah says:



**And by morning it was stripped bare, a
desolate land [20] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 20)**

Sareem refers to the black dust. So, their garden became as black as the dark night. Its fruits were destroyed as though they were cut and reaped. Its owners swore that they would harvest its fruits before the poor coming in the morning to ask for charity. It is as if Allah *the Almighty* says to them, ‘You wanted to reap it and harvest its fruits to keep them for yourselves only, and consequently We destroyed it in order that you do not benefit from it. This is a punishment for your evil plans’.

Allah says:



**Still they called each other at daybreak [21]
Go early to your field if you wish to gather all its
fruits [22] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 21-22)**

In the morning, they called out to each other to go early to reap the fruits, saying: ‘Go early to your field if you wish to gather all its fruits.’ (*al-Qalam*: 22) They were unaware of the fact that their garden was burnt and their fruits were destroyed. They attributed the crops to themselves, saying: ‘Go early to your field...’ (*al-Qalam*: 22). The word ‘field’ here refers to the plants, cultivation, and the cultivated land.

In this vein, Allah *Glorified is He* reminds us, saying: ‘Have you considered what you sow? Is it you that cause it to grow, or are We the causers of growth? If We pleased, We should have certainly made it broken down into pieces, then would you begin to lament: “Surely we are burdened with debt:

Nay! we are deprived.”’ (*al-Waqi‘a*: 63-67); and ‘...as the likeness of wind in which is intense cold (that) smites the seed produce of a people who have done injustice to their souls and destroys it; and Allah is not unjust to them, but they are unjust to themselves.’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 117) Thus, even after the plants grow and flower, one cannot ensure that no blight or calamity would affect them. Hence one should not be proud of his deeds, and if farming is his job, he should not forget that He *the Almighty* is All Powerful over all things. The owners of the garden called one another in the morning to go early to reap the fruits, as was agreed upon, to keep the harvest for themselves. So, they were resolved and decisive in their plan.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

فَانْطَلَفُوا وَهُمْ يَخْفَوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ اَنْ لَا يَدْخُلَهَا الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَسْكِينٌ ﴿٢٤﴾

**And went off, whispering [23] Make sure no
poor person enters the garden today! [24]
(The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 23-24)**

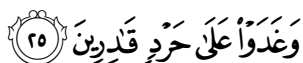
Intalaq (to go off) connotes determination and will power to do something, which, in this case, aimed at preventing the good from the poor people. This is similar to the person described previously as: ‘Hinderer of good...’ (*al-Qalam*: 12). They decided to commit a misdeed and did not want to be noticed. That is why, after calling one another, they lowered their voices as they were setting out. The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...whispering.’ (*al-Qalam*: 23), is an adverbial clause describing their condition as they were going out. They walked in the darkness whispering to one another in lower voices so as not to be heard or noticed.

The Arabic letter ‘*waw*’ of plurality is employed to denote consensus of opinion regarding their plan, and that no one of them was so good as to draw back; rather, all the verbs relating their story connote their determination, resolve and insistence. So, they unanimously agreed to cut their crops hastily and secretly in order not to give anything to the poor. Not only did they decide to deprive the poor of their right in the crops and the fruits, but they also determined to prevent them even from entering the garden, a fact which is clear in their saying: ‘Make sure no poor person enters the garden today!’ (*al-Qalam*: 24)

They would prevent the poor even from entering the garden even if they had to use force, apart from expelling, scolding, closing doors and using every means to drive them out. Affirming their speech, the letter *nun* is used to imply that affirmation in the phrase: 'Make sure no poor person enters...' (*al-Qalam*: 24).

The poor used to enter this garden to take their share as the father of its owners had never prevented them. But the sons were stingy, preventing the good, as their hearts absorbed the love of the worldly life, thereby denying the rights of the others. They prevented the poor people even though they knew how needy they were that they labelled them 'poor', hence admitting that they were in dire need and abject poverty.

Allah says:



They left early, bent on their purpose [25]
(The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 25)

This verse indicates that they had a settled purpose and determination to prevent and withhold. When *hard* collocates with the word 'year' it means that it is a dry one, and when it collocates with the 'she-camel', it means that it does not give milk. They purposefully contrived their plan and agreed to undertake it unjustly with malice aforethought. It indicates that they were not mindful of Allah *the Almighty* during the time of devising their plans, agreeing to it, sleeping, waking up in the morning and setting out. They were focusing on achieving what they agreed to, and went together with the intention of preventing the poor from entering their garden by all possible means. Paying no heed to Allah *Glorified is He* they did not realise that as they planned, He *the Almighty* also planned, and He is the best of planners, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'And they planned and Allah (also) planned, and Allah is the best of planners.' (*Al-Imran*: 54)

Thus, if they planned and plotted, He *the Almighty* has another plan to teach them a lesson so that they would not consider themselves able to do everything. In the same vein, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...until when the earth puts on its golden raiment and it becomes garnished, and its people think that they have

power over it, Our command comes to it, by night or by day, so We render it as reaped seed; produce, as though it had not been in existence yesterday...’ (*Yunus*: 24). Much to their fallacy, some people are deluded to think that they are able to devise plans and plots, neglecting the fact that over them is an Ever-Watchful God Who is not overtaken by slumber or sleep.

He says:

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهَا قَالُوا إِنَّا لَضَالُّونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ بَلْ نَحْنُ مَحْرُومُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾

But when they saw the garden, they said, ‘We must have lost our way! [26] No – we are ruined! [27]’
(The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 26 - 27)

They agreed to cut the crops of their garden in the morning, and did not say, ‘If Allah wills’, so He *the Almighty* destroyed it, while they were asleep. That morning, they set out to their garden whispering to one another: ‘Make sure no poor person enters the garden today!’ (*al-Qalam*: 24) When they deprived the poor, they blocked their way of obtaining the Bounty of Allah *Glorified is He*. At this point, He *the Almighty* says: ‘But when they saw the garden, they said, “We must have lost our way! No—we are ruined!”’ (*al-Qalam*: 26-27) Then, they realised their fault and came to their senses, saying: ‘But maybe our Lord will give us something better in its place: we truly turn to Him in hope.’ (*al-Qalam*: 32)

Standing before their garden in the morning and seeing its burnt fruits, crops and trees, they thought they had lost the way to their garden, and therefore some of them said, ‘We are lost, this is not our garden.’ They left it the day before rich with fruits and that day they found debris, black burnt trees and fruits which they wanted to cut in the early morning so as not to give the poor their rights in the harvest which they used to take at the time of their father.

They found it burnt, nothing was left, and it was as black as night, turned into ashes, thereby doubting it to be their garden of yesterday with its greenery and rich fruits. They thought they lost their way to it and that it was not their garden, but one of them said, ‘No—we are ruined!’ (*al-Qalam*: 27) He ensured that it was actually their garden, and they were not lost; rather, that was

the reality before them. They lost their garden owing to their evil intentions to deprive the poor of their right.

Hence, we should not take great pride in our achievements in the worldly life, as Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Have you considered what you sow? Is it you that cause it to grow, or are We the causers of growth? If We pleased, We should have certainly made it broken down into pieces, then would you begin to lament: "Surely we are burdened with debt: Nay! we are deprived."' (*al-Waqi'a*: 63-67) We do not set beside the seed we plant in the field, pulling it to grow daily. All what you do is to plough the land and cultivate the seeds. Even after the plants grow and flower, one cannot ensure that no blight or calamity would affect them, as stated in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'If We pleased, We should have certainly made it broken down into pieces, then would you begin to lament: "Surely we are burdened with debt: Nay! we are deprived."' (*al-Waqi'a*: 65-67)

The deprived person is the one whose plants, fruits or the offspring of his cattle get destroyed, and hence becomes entitled to a right from any Muslim not afflicted by such calamity. Here is a surprising note; those people became poor and the *zakat* became entitled to them after they were once wealthy by having their garden. They were too rich to ask the people and were themselves required to give the *zakat*.

They became poor and worthy of people's empathy, for they denied the poor their rights in their crops, *zakat* and harvest. So, what should they expect after becoming poor? They were heedless of the wisdom behind the *zakat* and giving the poor of what Allah *the Almighty* gave them. When a weak person finds himself in a society joined in solidarity and the wealthy gives him of his money, he cannot envy such rich people. In the countryside, we find that when the buffalo or any of the animals producing milk, walks around in the neighbourhood, everyone used to ask Allah to bestow blessings upon it. This is because its owner gives away of its milk and butter to his neighbours. Its owner did not have to tie, feed, or worry about it, and whatever it produces was to be distributed among family and relatives. In such a cooperative society, the poor people are helped and supported, and that is why they do not envy the rich ones; rather, they say, 'Their good reaches out to us'.

In addition, the one giving charity feels assured that should he get infirm one day, he would find someone to care for him, given the fact that the ability is changeable and one may be strong today and weak tomorrow. For this reason, we advise those who rise to high ranks of wealth or power to beware when the blessings are perfected for them. This is because when you reach the utmost rank of wealth, influence, health and children, your status is likely to change, and since blessings has been perfected for and reached its utmost, then they are likely to be downgraded. As someone reaches the top, being in a changeable status, he then has to go down, as a poet put it: ‘Whenever something is complete, it is likely to show imperfection; thus, expect it to lack it if it is said to be perfect.’

The bounties of life, including money and wealth, are gained through the movement in life which necessitates the person to have power. But when he lacks such power, how could he subsist? Allah *Glorified is He* ensures his provision through the one who has the ability to earn his provision. He *the Almighty* made the ability one of the fleeting gains in life. Accordingly, one may be able today and unable tomorrow. That being the case, when the able person receives His command to spend on the unable people, he has to realise that his ability is one of the fleeting gains of life, and that he is prone to be unable later, saying to himself, ‘When I am unable, I will find someone to support me’. Is this not true insurance? It is the insurance of the believer who gives away when he has the financial ability so that Allah *Glorified is He* relieves him from the burden of asking people should he become unable. So, he would find people providing for him if confronted straitened circumstances.

In the blink of an eye, the owners of the garden became poor and deprived, in need of *zakat*, charity, and help. Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘And in their property was a portion due to him who begs and to him who is denied (good).’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 19); and ‘And those in whose wealth there is a fixed portion. For him who begs and for him who is denied (good)’ (*al-Ma’arij*: 24-25). Allah *Glorified is He* is Self-Sufficient, above any need for the richest among His servants, as He states: ‘...Allah is Self-sufficient, Forbearing.’ (*al-Baqara*: 263) This is a warning to the wealthy who deprives the poor, as though it is said to him, ‘You prevented none but yourself from Allah’s

rewards'. Allah *Glorified is He* addresses the rich, saying: 'Behold! you are those who are called upon to spend in Allah's way, but among you are those who are stingy, and whoever is stingy is stingy against his own soul; and Allah is Self-sufficient and you have need (of Him), and if you turn back He will bring in your place another people, then they will not be like you.' (*Muhammad: 38*) He *the Almighty* is the Self-Sufficient with His Absolute Omnipotence; He has the Power to bring in the place of the stingy another people who give abundantly of what He *the Almighty* provides for them. Accordingly, the one who is stingy in giving only prevents himself from His Mercy.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* told Anas Allah *be pleased with him*, 'Woe to the rich from the poor on the Day of Judgment. They will say, "O Allah! They prevented us from our rights You prescribed on them", and Allah will reply, "By My Power and Majesty I will bring you closer and drive them far away."' Then, he *peace and blessings be upon him* recited this verse: 'And in their property, was a portion due to him who begs and to him who is denied (good)' (*adh-Dhariyat: 19*).

Further, a man from the people of Yamama had a property which was destroyed by flood, to that one of Prophet Muhammad's Companions said, 'This is the deprived, give him a portion of your charity.' The deprived is opposite to the one given abundant provision. The owners of the garden were deprived of benefitting from the fruit of their effort and hard labour because they wanted to cut the crops without giving the poor their rights. Hence, they were turned from richness to poverty and became deprived people deserving charity and *zakat* on account of their evil intentions.

At that moment, the brothers began to blame one another to evade responsibility for what happened to them. Allah *Glorified is He* says:

قَالَ أَوْسَطُهُمْ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ لَوْلَا تُسَبِّحُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

The wisest of them said, 'Did I not say to you, "Will you not glorify God?"' [28] (The Quran, *al-Qalam: 28*)

Regarding the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'The most moderate of them...' (*al-Qalam: 28*), it indicates that there were two parties; one party, then the

moderate (being in the middle), then the other party. This is because moderation denotes being in the middle of something. To identify the moderate, one needs to recognise both parties first, and then he can determine the moderate as being in the middle of them. It is always the halfway point between two opposing parties, and this means that the other two parties are even since being in the middle necessitates that the distance between both parties and the middle is equal. In fact, moderation is the best policy. The end of both parties is defined from the halfway point being a separator between them; on its right is a party and on its left is the other party. Thus, the exact central point is usually regarded as the middle.

The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘The most moderate of them said...’ means that after observing what happened to their garden, fruits and crops, the brothers were of different opinions. They were of one opinion when they devised their plan to cut the fruits and crops in the early morning before the coming of the poor in order not to give them anything. That is why He *the Almighty* says: ‘We have tried them as We tried the owners of a certain garden, who swore that they would harvest its fruits in the morning and made no allowance [for the Will of Allah].’ (*al-Qalam*: 17-18) and then He says: ‘Still they called each other at daybreak, “Go early to your field if you wish to gather all its fruits”, and went off, whispering, “Make sure no poor person enters the garden today!”— they left early, bent on their purpose.’ (*al-Qalam*: 21-25) Then came the moment when they had different opinions. They wondered whether this was really their garden or they lost their way to it, but some of them knew for certain that it was theirs, and firmly recognised that Allah *the Almighty* deprived them of its fruits. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: ‘But when they saw the garden, they said, “We must have lost our way! No—we are ruined!”’ (*al-Qalam*: 26-27) Those of the first opinion stating that they did not follow the right way to their garden and that the garden was not theirs, whereas those of the other opinion maintained that they were prevented and deprived of it. Yet the most moderate of them tried to inspire hope in Allah’s Mercy, saying: ‘Did I not tell you to glorify Allah?’ (*al-Qalam*: 28) He *the Almighty* describes this opinion as: ‘The most moderate of them...’ (*al-Qalam*: 28) to manifest that He *the Almighty* did not shut the door of mercy on them.

The most moderate of them opined that their problem lay in not glorifying Allah *the Almighty* and not saying Allah willing, but this opinion does not denote disagreement with his brothers over preventing the poor from their fruits. It is rather a comment on the significance of relating their plan to Allah's Will such as when someone tells another to say, 'Allah willing'. Even a thief, in his way to commit theft, would ask Allah *the Almighty* to facilitate it for him, saying, 'O Allah! We put our trust in You, cover us so as not get exposed!' What he said is not a sign of his absolute goodness; rather, it is a sign of underestimating Allah's Greatness and Omnipotence. Yet, it may also be taken as a sign of not totally heedlessness of Allah *Glorified is He* as he, i.e. the most moderate among them was neither completely hostile to the poor nor was he deceiving himself saying, 'We lost the way to our garden for this is not ours'. They also did not lose hope in Allah's Mercy, and realised that they should have said 'Allah willing', and that Allah *Glorified is He* did not utterly deprive them of the good, as there was another chance to make up for their loss in the following year. Accordingly, after much debate they said together: 'but maybe our Lord will give us something better in its place: we truly turn to Him in hope.' (*al-Qalam*: 32)

Here, arises a question, which is, 'Those people were afflicted by blight due to their evil intention and wronging themselves, so are the people who have good intentions and do not wrong themselves saved from such calamities'? We say, 'No, everyone is prone to calamities, as He *the Almighty*: "The likeness of what they spend in the life of this world is as the likeness of wind in which is intense cold (that) smites the seed produce of a people who have done injustice to their souls and destroys it; and Allah is not unjust to them, but they are unjust to themselves." (*Al-Imran*: 117) Those who do injustice to themselves are afflicted by calamities as a punishment for them.

The owners of the garden were afflicted with such a punishment, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'We have tried them as We tried the owners of a certain garden, who swore that they would harvest its fruits in the morning and made no allowance [for the Will of Allah] a disaster from your Lord struck the garden as they slept and by morning it was stripped bare, a desolate land.' (*al-Qalam*: 17-20) Allah *Glorified is He* punished them

for their injustice, but could not we find a person who does not do injustice to himself and yet his plants get destroyed? We see it often in our daily life, and should such a person be patient, he would receive his reward from Allah *the Almighty*. With such a calamity, Allah *Glorified is He* may destroy the money that you earned unlawfully due to negligence. So, regarding the believer, the calamity either brings reward or purifies one's money. To think that you can guarantee the permanency of what you have of bounties is great injustice you commit against yourself, for none can guarantee that for himself or for the others.

Thus, the owner of the two gardens said: 'And he entered his garden while he was unjust to himself. He said: "I do not think that this will ever perish."' (*al-Kahf*: 35) It was not merely by entering his garden that he was unjust to himself, since it was his own and he was entitled to enter it whenever he liked. Rather, the act of injustice here refers to what he thought as he was entering the garden; i.e. superiority with his richness and arrogance with Allah's Blessings, thereby thinking that such blessings and delight would never end or perish.

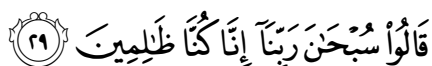
Lawla (why do you not) signifies exhortation, i.e. the wisest one of the brothers said, 'Did I not tell you to glorify Allah?', This implies that he stimulated them to glorify Him *the Almighty*, and to say 'Allah willing' if they intended to carry out their plan, but they did not listen to him. So, his advice was not effective and he even followed their evil plans. Additionally, the word *lawla* implies that they did not glorify Him *the Almighty* nor did they say, 'Allah willing'. Therefore, they did not get what they wanted and did not achieve their objective. *Lawla* means that two things did not happen; one being absent due to the absence of the other, For instance, we say, 'If Zayd were present, I would come to you.' This means that Zayd was not present and as a result the speaker would not go to the addressee. So, it indicates the absence of something as a result of something else being absent.

When *lawla* is followed by a verb, it suggests exhortation, as in Allah's saying: 'Why did the believing men and the believing women, when you heard it, not think well of their own people, and say: "This is an evident falsehood? Why did they not bring four witnesses of it?"' (*an-Nur*: 12-13) If it is followed by a nominal statement, it means the absence of something due to the presence of

something else; for instance, we say, 'Were it not for Zayd, I would come to you'. Accordingly, the speaker would not come because Zayd is present. It may also refer to the absence of something as a result of something else being absent. Yet, when followed by a verb, it suggests exhortation.

The most moderate of them said: 'Did I not tell you to glorify Allah?' (*al-Qalam*: 28) He said that they should have related their oath to Allah's Will, saying, 'If Allah wills'. That is why they should have glorified Allah *the Almighty* and felt remorseful for what they did.

Allah says:



They said, 'Glory be to God, Our Lord! Truly, we were doing wrong!' [29] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 29)

They acknowledged what the most moderate of them said to be true, especially that their garden was burnt and their crops of the year were destroyed. Further, thinking that it was not their garden and that they lost their way to it did not avail them to evade the reality. Hence, they said along with their brother 'Glory is to our Lord', exalting Him to have done injustice to them, and admitting their wrongdoing thereby deserving whatever happened to them. 'Glory is to Allah' represents exaltation to Him *the Almighty* that He is far above any of the attributes of imperfection since Allah *Glorified is He* has all the Attributes of Perfection and His Actions are perfect. Allah *Glorified is He* does not do injustice to anyone, a fact which is clear in His saying: 'Surely Allah does not do injustice to the weight of an atom...' (*an-Nisa*': 40); '...and your Lord is not in the least unjust to the servants.' (*Fussilat*: 46) and 'This is for what your own hands have sent before and because Allah is not in the least unjust to the servants.' (*Al-Imran*: 182) What happens to the people is the consequence of their evil deeds and sins. Allah *Glorified is He* does not permit Himself nor His servants to be unjust, as Allah *Glorified is He* says in a Qudsi Hadith: 'O My slaves! I have made oppression unlawful for Myself and I have made it unlawful among you, so do not oppress one another.' When you cause harm to others, this is called 'evil' and it is an act of injustice to them, while causing harm to yourself is called self-injustice.

It refers to the evil that affects oneself only. It also refers to committing a bad deed and enjoying it for a moment without recalling its ensuing severe punishment in this worldly life and the Hereafter. It is the owners of the garden who were unjust to themselves as a consequence to what they perpetrated, as stated in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...and We did them no injustice, but they were unjust to themselves.’ (*an-Nahl*: 118)

They admitted their fault and said, ‘Surely we were unjust to ourselves because we did not glorify Allah as he ordered us, and we did not exalt Him from imperfection nor did we refer to His Will in what we were going to do. We did injustice to ourselves by preventing the poor from their right’. Interestingly, they said, ‘Glory be to Our Lord...’ (*an-Naba*: 29), instead of saying ‘Glory is to Allah’. They referred to His Lordship rather than His Divinity in pursuit of His Provision. A devout worshipper once said, ‘I do not address Allah as being His servant, but as Being My Lord, which renders me comfortable because He is the Lord of the worlds, and the one having a father caring for him has no worries, so what about the one having the Lord of the world’s supporting and caring for him?’

Allah says:

فَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتْلَوْمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ قَالُوا يَوَيْلَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

And then they turned to each other in mutual reproach [30]

They said, ‘Alas for us! We have done terrible wrong [31]

(The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 30 - 31)

They blamed each other for their negligence, not referring to Allah’s Will in their oath and insisting on preventing the poor from their garden. They mutually accused one another of being the cause of what happened and the one to be blamed, shifting the responsibility onto each other. All of them involved in this plan in one way or another; some drew up the plan, some accepted it, some gave advice and warning and then withdrew and some were silent and content. They entered discussions and debates, levelling accusations against one another; one said to another, ‘You threatened us with poverty’, a second one said, ‘You tempted me to collect money’ and a third one said, ‘You seduced me into withholding charity from the poor and the needy who deserve it’.

The brothers or the people in every community always tend to have different opinions, some towards the right, others towards the left, and yet the others are in the middle. This happened with the brothers of Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) *peace be upon him* when they decided to get rid of him because their father loved him more than all of them. So, they had different opinions over how to do that. Some of them suggested killing him, then, to be less evil; they thought of casting him out to another land that he may be killed unintentionally. Afterwards they decided, making it less evil again, to throw him into the well so that he may be picked up by some travellers. In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* relates that they said: 'Slay Yusuf (Joseph) or cast him (forth) into some land so that your father's regard may be exclusively for you, and after that you may be a righteous people. A speaker from among them said: "Do not slay Yusuf (Joseph), and cast him down into the bottom of the well if you must do (it) (so that) some of the travellers may pick him up."' (Yusuf: 9-10) We find that one of them rejected the suggestion of killing and suggested throwing him into the bottom of the well instead. Further, it is worth noting that the holder of this opinion was not violent or aggressive towards his brothers' suggestion to kill Yusuf (Joseph) or cast him out to another land. Rather, to diffuse their anger, he tried to persuade them not to kill him. So, he did not say, 'Do not kill him'. Instead, he said, '...do not kill Yusuf (Joseph)...' (Yusuf: 10). Through mentioning his name, he tried to excite sympathy for their brother so that they may go back on their plan.

Back to the verse under discussion; the owners of the garden confessed their bad deeds and admitted what they caused to themselves inasmuch as they invoked Allah *the Almighty* against themselves saying, '...woe to us.' (*al-Qalam*: 31) This is like the case of the criminal who, filled with remorse, regretfully says, 'I am guilty, I deserve to go to prison'. This is a condition of being conscience-stricken and a representation of self-criticism. The word 'woe' is used to indicate intense regret for one's negligence of the punishment. In this case, it signifies intense regret at the sight of their destroyed garden, for being in a difficult predicament as there was no way of getting back their fruits which were burnt and turned into debris and ashes. In such situation, they could do nothing but regret, thereby reprimanding themselves and deeming them worthy of punishment. The expression 'Woe to us', is an

invocation of punishment, as one says, ‘Alas, how miserable I am!’ or ‘How afflicted I am!’ With such saying one does not call upon misery or affliction, since he only calls upon what makes him happy. They feel intense regret and great grief for what they did and realised that they deserve what happened to them, thereby blaming themselves. The word ‘woe’ denotes rapid destruction invoked upon themselves, but does anyone seek destruction to be inflicted on him? We say, ‘Yes, when someone perpetrates evil and recognises its bad consequences and encounters the bitter fact, he inclines to torturing himself. Do you not hear someone saying, “I deserve to be punished, this is my recompense?” He says so to blame himself and rebuke it for involving him in a predicament’. They attributed the ‘woe’ to themselves, despite being outside of them; i.e. a punishment inflicted on them, as evidence of being the cause for what happened to them and of being liable to it for good.

Further, Allah *the Almighty* then says: ‘They said, “Alas for us! We have done terrible wrong.”’ (*al-Qalam*: 31) They stated that they went beyond the limits of Allah *Glorified is He* as they prevented the right of the poor and did not refer to Allah’s Will in their planning nor did they glorify Him, the Giver of all Blessings. They said, ‘Our forefathers did not defy Allah with His Blessings; rather, they were thankful and gave the poor their right, and as a result He kept bestowing His Blessings on them and gave them in abundance. As for us, we denied His Favours and did not spare a portion for the poor. Therefore, such was our recompense; that fire destroyed all that we have’.

Allah *Glorified is He* made a reference to the human beings’ transgression against His Blessings, saying: ‘Nay! Man is most surely inordinate because he sees himself free from want.’ (*al-‘Alaq*: 6-7) For example, the person ploughs his land and when it produces crops, he thinks he had made it subservient to him and to his rules so as to produce whatever he likes. The human being thinks that he made everything submissive to him, while it is He *the Almighty* Who made everything subservient to serve him, and established the rules and the regulations. Throughout your life, you have no control over the world; everything changes around you without you having a hand in it. In the beginning of your life, you need your father and even when you grow up and become able to do certain actions, you cannot make this period of youth and strength permanent. As you advance into old age, you need someone to

support and help you even with the simplest things such as food and drink. Hence, from your early childhood until old age you are in need for others. Even in your youth you may get affected by a disease leaving you disabled. If you have true will and power, why do you not drive such disease away from you? Indeed, you cannot.

Allah *Glorified is He* created these variable conditions of the human being to put an end to his arrogance and so that he comes to know that he is strong and able only because He *the Almighty* made the laws of the universe subservient to him. In this way, we acknowledge that all of us are in need of Him, the Omnipotent, the Self-Sufficient. He brings about change, but He is Unchangeable; causes death but is Ever Existing; and ordains weakness after strength, while He is the All Powerful. Further, what is with the people comes to an end, whereas what is with Him is enduring and never runs out. He *the Almighty* is the Lord in the heavens and in the earth. Thus, you have no right to allege that you have submitted the universe with your powers because you cannot even keep to one condition.

Naturally, when the human being finds that he has enough bounties in this worldly life, he may fall in transgression, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'Nay! Man is most surely inordinate because he sees himself free from want.' (*al-'Alaq: 6-7*) One may transgress the limits and behave arrogantly with the people and even with his Lord because he has wealth. In fact, nothing but true faith could get the person out of these situations. Without following His Way of Guidance, the person gets drowned in the sea of arrogance and doubt. On the other hand, living in the light of Allah's Way teaches the person how to observe Him in all conditions. Therefore, if He *the Almighty* bestows upon him wealth, he gives away to the needy.

The worldly means of sustenance may deceive the human being when they respond to him; when he farms the land and it produces fruits, he may be deluded into thinking that these means respond to his power and will. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* reminds him, saying: 'Nay! Man is most surely inordinate because he sees himself free from want.' (*al-'Alaq: 6-7*) It is obligatory to thank Him *the Almighty* for His Blessings and direct them to the good ways. In this way, the person will be successful; otherwise, he will fail the exam. Allah

Glorified is He made it clear that the means have no effect except with His permission; one may plough, plant seeds, irrigates, looks after his plants, and when they are about to ripen, a heat wave or heavy rain may destroy them. The human being is only humiliated when he suffers of an affliction. Conversely, he increases in inordinacy when the blessings are perfected for him. If he is prevented from such blessings, his pride will fade away.

In fact, anyone showing off his strength may hope one day to be able to take some steps, but he may not be able to do that. So, the human being is not to be contended except with what he has intrinsically, not with what is granted to him, and thus he should not be arrogant. Allah, the Giver of Blessings, may withhold His Blessings; for example, He may deprive the human being of health, wealth, and authority. We always see the healthy people becoming ill, the rich getting poor, and the powerful being stripped of their authority. Thus, there is no need for conceit as it is He *the Almighty* Who grants you everything and you have nothing of your own, thereby the incentive for pride is lacking. Given that everything the human being has is a gift from the great Giver *Glorified is He* then He may divest him of His Gifts, and should this happen, he would come to his senses. So, one should not be conceited so as not to easily give in to depravity.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* relates that they said:

عَسَىٰ رَبُّنَا أَن يُبَدِّلَنَا خَيْرًا مِّنْهَا إِنَّا إِلَىٰ رَبِّنَا رَاغِبُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾

**But maybe our Lord will give us something better
in its place: we truly turn to Him in hope [32]
(The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 32)**

When you desire something you love very much, you should follow the way leading you to obtain it. However, some people may desire something, but they do not actually pursue the means to get access to it. This is what happened in the story of the owners of the garden. In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘We have tried them as We tried the owners of a certain garden, who swore that they would harvest its fruits in the morning and made no allowance [for the Will of Allah]; a disaster from your Lord struck the garden as they slept and by morning it was stripped bare, a desolate land.’

(*al-Qalam*: 17-20) They agreed to cut the crops of their garden in the morning and did not say 'Allah willing'. Therefore, He *the Almighty* destroyed it while they were asleep. In the morning, they set out to their garden saying that no poor should enter it. In this way, they deprived themselves as they deprived the poor, as He *the Almighty* says: 'But when they saw the garden, they said, "We must have lost our way! No—we are ruined!"' (*al-Qalam*: 26-27) Then they came to their senses and realised their fault; they asked Him *Glorified is He* to give them a better one, saying: 'But maybe our Lord will give us something better in its place: we truly turn to Him in hope.' (*al-Qalam*: 32)

They are desirous of the way that gets them closer to Allah *Glorified is He* as it is not a matter of love only. That is to say that it is not enough to say, 'I love Allah', for, in fact, true love stimulates you to strive and exert yourself to follow His Way. Accordingly, to prove your love for Him *the Almighty*, you should be desirous of following His Guidance.

'*Aya* (maybe) is used generally to mean that one wishes or hopes for something to happen, but it may happen or not. It has stronger connotations when uttered by the person himself; for instance, he may say, 'I wish I could bring you good'. But it is less strong when it comes from third person, even though the person who made that promise cannot ensure his power or presence so as to bring good to the one he addressed. If someone says, 'I hope Allah grants you happiness', it indicates the highest degree of hope, still the speaker cannot be sure that Allah *Glorified is He* will respond to him, as this is subject to His Will. According to His Will, He *the Almighty* may respond to the person or not; the matter is not depending on the will of the one who wishes or for the one wished.

Similarly, the owners of the garden wish that Allah *Glorified is He* gives them a garden better than the one which was destroyed on account of their evil intentions, saying: 'But maybe our Lord will give us something better in its place: we truly turn to Him in hope.' (*al-Qalam*: 32) He *the Almighty* may or may not respond to their wishing, as inferred from the word 'maybe' which is followed by something we wish for. Knowing that their repentance was sincere and their confession to sins was faithful, Allah *Glorified is He* granted them a better garden. In this connection, 'Abdullah ibn Mas'ud said,

‘I was informed that the owners of the garden were sincere and Allah knew they were truthful. Hence He granted them another garden called *Al-Hayawan*; a mule could only bear a bunch of its grapes.’

The scholars disagree over whether Allah *Glorified is He* changed the condition of their own garden which they owned and turned its debris and destruction into greenery and bloom, or He gave them instead a totally different garden in a different place. The scholars stated that the owners of the gardens were from Yemen which is filled with gardens and groves.

In this vein, He *the Almighty* tells us of the story of the kingdom of Sheba which was in Yemen, saying: ‘certainly there was a sign for Saba’ in their abode; two gardens on the right and the left; eat of the sustenance of your Lord and give thanks to Him: a good land and a Forgiving Lord!’ (*Saba*’: 15) In the kingdom of Sheba, they used to have gardens on their right and on their left, yet they were not grateful to Allah *Glorified is He* for what He granted them of good land and forgiveness, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: ‘But they turned aside, so We sent upon them a torrent of which the rush could not be withstood, and in place of their two gardens We gave to them two gardens yielding bitter fruit and (growing) tamarisk and a few lote-trees.’ (*Saba*’: 16) Allah *Glorified is He* conferred His Blessings on the people of Sheba, but they were not thankful for Him, and that is why they were punished.

They used to brag about their dam which retained the water of rain, and on which they depended for water supply throughout the year. However, this very dam was the disaster that destroyed their planting. The dwellings of the people of Sheba represented a sign of Allah’s Omnipotence; two beautiful gardens on the right and on the left so that they may eat and thank Him for His Provision and Blessings. Nonetheless, they turned away from giving thanks for the abundant provision granted to them, and consequently He *the Almighty* sent upon them the flood of the dam that was destroyed by virtue of one of the lowest and the weakest animals, that is, the rats which made a hole in the dam. Thus, it was destroyed and the flood drowned their property and engulfed their houses.

As for the owners of the garden in the chapter in question, they inherited goodness from their father, and thus they admitted their sins and returning to Allah *the Almighty* in repentance, hoping that it would be accepted. That is

why they said: ‘...we truly turn to Him in hope.’ (*al-Qalam*: 32) It should be noted that they repetitively affirmed Allah’s Lordship, saying: ‘Glory be to Allah, Our Lord!’ (*al-Qalam*: 29); and ‘But maybe our Lord will give us something better in its place: we truly turn to Him in hope.’ (*at-Tariq*: 32) This suggests that they were desirous and hopeful of His favour, for He is their Lord. If the word *raghib* (desirous of) is followed by the preposition ‘*ann*’, it means that the person abandons something, and if used in the passive form followed by the preposition ‘*to*’, it means to pursue something. Being desirous toward Him *Glorified is He* they should not have separated giving in this worldly life from being rewarded in the Hereafter. After all, the worldly life is not everything and so long as the person desires Allah’s reward, He will give him everlasting, boundless bliss in the Hereafter.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

كَذَٰلِكَ الْعَذَابُ وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

Such is the punishment [in this life], but greater still is the punishment in the Hereafter, if only they knew [33] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 33)

The words ‘such’ here is a reference to the chastisement of the people of the garden in this worldly life; they saw their burnt garden and lost their fruits. It is as if He *the Almighty* says, ‘As We did to the owners of the garden, the same will be the case of whoever disobeys My Orders and disbelieves in My messengers. With such worldly chastisement We have punished the one who said that the Quran is nothing but legends of the former peoples’. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: ‘Just because he has wealth and sons, when our revelations are recited to him, he says, “These are just ancient fables.” We shall brand him on the snout!’ (*al-Qalam*: 14-16) It is as though Allah *Glorified is He* mentions the story of the owners of the garden to respond to those who disbelieved in the Quran and rejected to believe that it is a Divine Revelation. Such a person was given wealth and children, and yet he did not believe in Him *the Almighty* just like the owners of the garden who were given ripe fruits and beautiful garden, but were deprived of it on account of disobedience and willingness to prevent the rights of Allah.

Such will be the chastisement to be inflicted on the people of Quraysh. It is said that Quraysh suffered from drought which endured for seven years that they saw smoke, out of extreme hunger, and had to eat the skins of dead animals. Allah *Glorified is He* introduces the story of the owners of the garden with the verse: ‘We have tried them as We tried the owners of a certain garden...’ (*al-Qalam*: 17). This means that He *the Almighty* tried the people of Quraysh as He tried the owners of the garden. Allah *Glorified is He* only gives them wealth and children to test them. However, they used His Blessings to transgress against Him, and to turn people away from His Guidance. Accordingly, their chastisement is similar to that of the owners of the garden, and let it be known that the chastisement of the Hereafter is greater, as He *the Almighty* says: ‘...but greater still is the punishment in the Hereafter, if only they knew.’ (*al-Qalam*: 33)

So, the disbelievers should not think that the worldly chastisement will evade them the chastisement of the Hereafter because the former may affect both the believer and the disbeliever, but the greater punishment of the Hereafter will afflict the disbelievers only. The chastisement in the Hereafter has different attributes, which includes being great, disgraceful, painful and lasting. A great chastisement is inflicted either by ‘means’ or by the causer. The worldly chastisement is always inflicted by ‘means,’ which could be a stick, a whip, or an insult, all of which are different in strength. However, the chastisement in the Hereafter is inflicted by Allah, the Omnipotent. Therefore, if we compare the worldly chastisement to that of the Hereafter, we will surely find that the latter is the greatest of all.

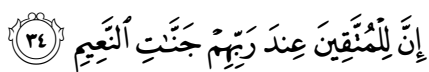
Regarding the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘Then it shall be said to those who were unjust: Taste abiding chastisement...’ (*Yunus*: 52), Allah *Glorified is He* describes the chastisement in the Hereafter as ‘abiding’ meaning that it never ends, whilst chastisement in this worldly life, however humiliating and degrading, is temporary and even petty when compared to the everlasting chastisement of the Hereafter. Thus, the chastisement in the Hereafter is far greater than that in the worldly one, which can never in any way be similar to that of the former, however severe and cruel it is.

In addition, Allah *Glorified is He* calls the Day of Judgment ‘a dreadful day’, saying: ‘...What suffering will come to those who obscure the truth

when a dreadful Day arrives!’ (*Maryam*: 38) The punishment on the Day of Resurrection is witnessed by all people. On the contrary, the chastisement in this worldly life is only witnessed by the present contemporaries, but not by the predecessors or the successors. Moreover, anyone evading the punishment in this worldly life can never escape it in the Hereafter.

Regarding the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...If they only know’ (*al-Qalam*: 32) Allah *Glorified is He* affirms their ignorance and negates their knowledge, given the fact that knowledge which the person does not apply and benefit from is pointless. So, it is as though they knew nothing. Elsewhere, He *the Almighty* say: ‘...most people do not know. They know the outward of this world’s life...’ (*ar-Rum*: 6-7). Allah *Glorified is He* negates that they have true knowledge even though He affirms that they know what is apparent of the worldly life, i.e. the marital worldly knowledge. However, the verse under discussion: ‘...If they only know’ (*al-Qalam*: 32) carries the meaning of negation, that is, they do not know, or wishing, that is, they had better know this reality of this worldly life and the Hereafter. Had they known it, they would have followed the Guidance of their Lord to get the everlasting reward and they would have followed the Path of Faith instead of that of disbelief.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:



There will be Gardens of bliss for those who are mindful of God [34] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 34)

Ittiqa (guarding against/shielding) means to be cautious and refrain from evil, as stated in His saying: ‘O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones.’ (*at-Tahrim*: 6) Here, it means to shield ourselves from the fire and be careful of not falling into it by committing what provokes Allah’s Anger. Hence, one should keep himself away from hellfire by abstaining from disobedience and by doing good deeds.

Taqwa (piety or fear of Allah) is one of the wonders of the Quran since it collocates with ‘Allah’ and the ‘hellfire’. But if we look closely, we will

find that the meaning is the same because with the word ‘hellfire’, it means to draw a barrier between yourself and the hellfire to protect yourself from it. However, when it collocates with the word ‘Allah’, it does not mean to draw a barrier between yourself and Him because a believer is always under His care. Rather, it means to shield yourself from His Attributes of Majesty and their effects, such as the Avenger, the Compeller, and the Subduer. Piety suggests warding off something harmful for you. So, the true piety is that which takes you away from disbelief which admits you to hellfire, rids you of niggardliness and prevents you from committing disobedience. The pious people are those who love to fear Him *Glorified is He* by keeping away from disbelief. Such are the believers of the higher rank.

Thus, piety implies keeping away from an unbearable evil. Similarly, as cannot bear Allah’s Wrath or Mightiness, you should shield yourselves from His Attributes of Majesty and their effects – one of which is hellfire. The basis of piety and fear of Allah *the Almighty* is being mindful of the Day of Resurrection. The pious believer is the one who controls his conduct and refrains from disobedience and following his whims. Piety also indicates evading the troubles and the problems of the worldly life by adhering to the Divine Way of Guidance. Only then one would keep away from troubles. As for the one who turns away from piety, he will lead a miserable life, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: ‘And whoever turns away from My reminder, his shall be a straitened life...’ (*Ta Ha*: 124).

After clarifying what happened to the owners of the garden and how it was burnt and destroyed on account of their determination to prevent the rights of the poor and the needy, Allah *Glorified is He* speaks about the pious servants and what He prepared for them. Owing to their lack of faith, piety, and fear of Allah, Who watches over them, the owners of the garden feared that the owners of rights, i.e. the poor and the needy may see or know what they were plotting. They whispered and lowered their voices, deciding that no poor was to be allowed to enter their garden. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: ‘Still they called each other at daybreak, “Go early to your field if you wish to gather all its fruits,” and went off, whispering, “Make sure no poor person enters the garden today!”’ They feared the people instead of Allah *the Almighty* and were careful not to let anyone see them.

Further, in the verse under discussion, the letter *Nun* of emphasis is used to reassure the pious of their reward which is with their Lord, the Disposer of affairs. It is noteworthy that His saying: '...with their Lord...' (*al-Qalam*: 34) denotes that their reward will never be lost for it is with their Lord Who nourishes and sustains them. On the contrary, when your recompense, for example, is with a human being like you, he may devour it. The true believer considers this matter with certainty, for he knows for sure that his reward is with his Lord Who nourishes him and takes upon Himself to raise him to the required level of perfection. This Quranic phrase: 'with their Lord' (*al-Qalam*: 34) is mentioned in many verses, such as His saying: '...and give good news to those who believe that theirs is a footing of firmness with their Lord...' (*Yunus*: 2); 'Surely those who believe, and those who are Jews, and the Christians, and the Sabians, whoever believes in Allah and the Last day and does good, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and there is no fear for them, nor shall they grieve.' (*al-Baqara*: 62); '(as for) those who spend their property in the way of Allah, then do not follow up what they have spent with reproach or injury, they shall have their reward from their Lord, and they shall have no fear nor shall they grieve.' (*al-Baqara*: 262) and '(as for) those who spend their property by night and by day, secretly and openly, they shall have their reward from their Lord and they shall have no fear, nor shall they grieve.' (*al-Baqara*: 274)

Those who believe and give away in charity shall have their reward with their Lord since they fear Him *the Almighty*, believe in Him, and spend out of what He granted them, being absolutely certain that He watches over them. As for those who deprived the poor and the needy of their rights and plotted to cut the fruits of their garden in secret, in the absence of those entitled to these rights, they have little faith as they mistakenly think that He *the Almighty* does not watch them.

This Quranic phrase: 'with their Lord' (*al-Qalam*: 34) is not limited to the believers, for He *the Almighty* is the Lord of all, the believers and disbelievers, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'And could you but see when the guilty shall hang down their heads before their Lord...' (*as-Sajda*: 12). Thus, He *the Almighty* is the Lord of the disbelievers as well since how could it be that

He leaves them without care or provision after He had brought them into existence. On the Day of Resurrection, they will stand before Him whether they like it or not.

Thus, their reward of the pious people is with Allah *the Almighty* so what did He, the Supreme Lord, prepare for them? Allah *Glorified is He* prepared for them the eternal Gardens of Delight in which neither they die nor the Gardens come to an end. They are not like the garden which was burnt and turned into ashes.

Allah *Glorified is He* mentions the reward for belief and good deeds, saying: ‘...so those who believe and do good will be in gardens of bliss.’ (*al-Hajj*: 56) So, there are many Gardens of everlasting bliss and delight which cannot cease to exist. These Gardens include the following: the Garden of *Al-Firdaws*, the Garden of Eden, the Garden of Bliss, the Garden of Eternity, and the Garden of the Abode of Peace and the Garden of Refuge. There is also the Garden of *‘Illyyun* which is the best of Gardens, and the greatest bliss in it is to see Allah *Glorified is He*.

These gardens are conferred out of Allah’s favour, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: ‘Surely those who guard (against evil) shall be in gardens and fountains. Taking what their Lord gives them; surely they were before that, the doers of good.’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 15-16); and ‘Say: “Shall I tell you what is better than these? For those who guard (against evil) are gardens with their Lord, beneath which rivers flow, to abide in them, and pure mates and Allah’s pleasure; and Allah sees the servants.”’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 15) The gardens in the Hereafter are those of delight and bliss, where a believer can find whatever he desires or comes to his mind and even what does not come to mind.

Furthermore, Allah *Glorified is He* points out that He prepared these gardens for those who are: ‘The patient, and the truthful, and the obedient, and those who spend (benevolently) and those who ask forgiveness in the morning times.’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 17) Such are the attributes of the pious, to whom He *the Almighty* prepared the Gardens. These gardens are graced with rivers and purified mates. Further, the Pleasure of Allah *the Almighty* is the greatest of these blisses.

Giving away in charity is one of the attributes of the pious people to whom Allah *Glorified is He* has prepared gardens graced which rivers flow.

Giving out in charity is meant to protect the weak people whom He created for a certain purpose. Spending out is not taking from others, but a handling which is made clear when considering the fact that whatever is additional to your needs is not yours except with your extra movement in life.

Pursuing the means of sustenance in life requires a mind to plan, limbs to act upon the intellectual plan, and the means by which the plan is undertaken. These means include, for example, a plot to be planted or a machine to be manufactured. In fact, the human being has no role in having these blessings; his mind and energy are gifts from Allah *the Almighty* as we can find someone deprived of the mind which makes plans, and another deprived of the energy which undertakes the plan, and a third deprived of the means helping him to implement his plan. Hence, none of these things are of his own making, for they all are gifts from Him *the Almighty*.

The true believer should trade with Allah *Glorified is He* through giving the rights of the weak. Such right is not taken by Him *the Almighty*, but rather, He made it the right of one's weak brother, and should the rich person be in a similar circumstance, he would be entitled to it. Spending in the Way of Allah, prevented by the owners of the garden, is one of the attributes of the pious since it provides protection for the weak.

Bliss and delight in the paradise is beyond imagination, it is befitting Allah's Perfection, Beauty, and Omnipotence. In this worldly, life the delight enjoyed by the human being is proportional to his perception of delight. For instance, a mayor of some village may want to build a guesthouse, room for the telephone and a terrace; this is considered a delight from his perspective, but how could it be from the perspective of the Creator, Allah *Glorified is He*. For this reason, the Gardens of Delight are abiding; you never die therein nor do they perish.

The pious believers will abide eternally in the Gardens of Delight. Allah *Glorified is He* addresses the people who enjoyed some delight in their life due to His Favours upon them, but they also witnessed some people losing favours and others leaving them by death. Hence, He *the Almighty* reassures the pious people that they will abide eternally in the Garden of the Delight which never ceases to exist nor are they driven away from it. The garden, in the absolute sense, refers to the paradise in the Hereafter, whilst a garden in

this world is liable to get destroyed or to have its trees and plants dried, fallen or burnt—the same as what happened to the owners of the garden. By contrast, the Garden of the Hereafter has everlasting fruits.

This worldly life with whatever it has of delight is proportional to the human being's potentials and perspective, and such delight is threatened by two things. First, the person dies and leaves it, which frequently happens; second, the delight may run out or come to an end. Thus, the true delight is the great attainment, that is, the everlasting, endless, uninterrupted delight of the paradise. In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'How many of the gardens and fountains have they left! And cornfields and noble places! And goodly things wherein they rejoiced, Thus (it was), and We gave them as a heritage to another people. So the heaven and the earth did not weep for them, nor were they respited.' (*ad-Dukhan*: 25-29) Those people were granted many blessings; gardens, fountains, cornfields, and goodly things wherein they rejoiced. However, this was temporal and therefore they left it and departed this life. Then it became the heritage of other people. This is not the true delight, for the true one is only that of the Hereafter which is eternal and abiding.

Additionally, the word 'gardens' signifies the place laid out with a variety of plants and fruits adorning it. The derivatives of this Arabic word denote covering and veiling. Thus, the garden is the place laid out with plants, fruits, and trees with twisted branches and sprigs so that it veils anyone entering it and hides him from sight. It would not make him in need for others.

In the garden, there are all the constituents of life: food, fruits, grass, water, greenery, joy, and everything else, such as the perfect house which includes all the facilities that meet all your needs so that you do not need anything else. Here arises a question, which is, 'Why is it that Allah *Glorified is He* uses the word 'gardens' in the plural, despite using it in the singular in other verses, and yet in some other verses it is used in the dual form?' Mentioning it in the plural does not mean that every believer will enter all of them, but rather, every believer will enter one of these gardens according to his good deeds and his level of faith and obedience.

It is worth noting that a dweller of a higher Garden will not be envied by a dweller of a lower Garden, nor will the dweller of the highest Garden take

pride in it. Rather, everyone feels happy for the rank of the other, as we may find a student, out of purity of soul, feels happy for his successful colleague who, in turn, does not take pride in his success. If this could happen in this worldly life, so what about the Hereafter, where Allah roots out whatever rancour in their breasts? In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘And We will root out whatever of rancour is in their breasts— (they shall be) as brethren, on raised couches, face to face.’ (*al-Hijr*: 47) Undoubtedly, every one of the dwellers of the Garden feels happy for his rank and for those of higher ranks because he will have abundant good from the dweller of the higher rank when he comes to visit him.

Regarding the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘And for him who fears to stand before his Lord are two gardens.’ (*ar-Rahman*: 46), He *the Almighty* states that everyone with a higher rank will get two Gardens; one for his own and another for honouring those lower than him in rank, as if it is prepared for hosting those whom he likes. Thus, the dwellers of the Garden will feel happy for those above them because they will obtain good from them. Thus, there is no rancour, envy, or jealousy among them.

In this connection, it was narrated that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said once to his Companions while they were sitting with him, ‘A man from the dwellers of paradise will appear before you.’ Then a man, known by the Companions, entered, but they wanted to know for which deed he deserved this good news of paradise from Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. So, they asked him about that deed to act upon it and be promised of paradise. The man replied, ‘I pray as you pray, fast as you fast and give *zakat* in the same way, except that I do not envy anyone because of the good that Allah has given them.’ On hearing that, they went to him *peace and blessings be upon him* and told him what the man said, so he said, ‘Is there other reason why paradise is preferred to this worldly life?’ This is further stated in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘Surely those who guard (against evil) shall be in the midst of gardens and fountains. Enter them in peace, secure. And We will root out whatever of rancour is in their breasts— (they shall be) as brethren, on raised couches, face to face.’ (*al-Hijr*: 45-47)

Furthermore, we should know that Allah *Glorified is He* did not create the Gardens for the believers only, nor did He create the hellfire for the disbelievers only; rather, He *the Almighty* created a place in the paradise and in the hellfire for every one of His creation until the Day of Judgment, and. Accordingly, when the Garden is occupied by its dwellers, some other Gardens will be vacant because those for whom it was created entered the hellfire. Then, Allah *Glorified is He* gives them to the believers, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: ‘And this is the garden which you are given as an inheritance on account of what you did.’ (*az-Zukhruf*: 72)

So, following Allah’s Guidance causes one to rejoice at the delight of these Gardens, and gives him eternal life and abiding bliss. These Gardens are not prepared according to people’s abilities, but in proportion to the Omnipotence of Allah *Glorified is He*. Given the fact that His Blessings in the worldly life are uncountable, so what about thinking of His Blessings in the Hereafter?

Further, He *the Almighty* says: ‘They have therein what they wish and with Us is more yet.’ (*Qaf*: 35) Thus, in the Garden, not only will you get what you want or wish once it comes to your mind, but you will be given more than that, i.e. the delight that you did not know before. In fact, the delight in this worldly life is proportional to people’s abilities, whilst in the Hereafter it is proportional to Allah’s Omnipotence. What entitles you to the delight of the Hereafter is doing good deeds and following Allah’s Way of Guidance. Even though this may be physically and mentally burdensome, it is temporal, for in the end you will rejoice at everlasting enjoyment and bliss in the Gardens of Eternity.

There is the ultimate goodness, that is, you are born, grow up, graduate at university, hold eminent posts, then enters paradise where nothing is left but eternity in the delight.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:



Should We treat those who submit to Us as We treat those who do evil? [35] What is the matter with you? On what basis do you judge? [36] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 35 - 36)

In these two verses, there is a rhetorical question the answer to which is known to be ‘No, they should not be treated equally’, as the Muslims who submit to Allah *the Almighty* are not like the guilty. How could the believer who submits himself to Him and follows His Guidance and law be treated as he who defies against His Guidance, rejects it, disobeys, and disbelieves in Him? Certainly, they cannot be equal. In addition, Allah *Glorified is He* gives us many examples of things which are unequal, for equality is sometimes unfair, and Allah *Glorified is He* is far from being unfair.

In this connection, He *the Almighty* say: ‘Have you not considered how Allah sets forth a parable of a good word (being) like a good tree, whose root is firm and whose branches are in heaven, yielding its fruit in every season by the permission of its Lord? And Allah sets forth parables for men that they may be mindful.’ (*Ibrahim*: 24-25) He *the Almighty* gives us the two parts of the parable, being ‘good word’ and ‘evil word’, and the Quranic context leaves us to decide for ourselves. It is as if He states that they are not equal, but leaves it to us to utter the ruling with our own mouths.

Similarly, He says: ‘Allah sets forth a parable: (consider) a slave, the property of another, (who) has no power over anything, and one whom We have granted from Ourselves a goodly sustenance so he spends from it secretly and openly; are the two alike? (All) praise is due to Allah! Nay, most of them do not know.’ (*an-Nahl*: 75) Here, one may ask, ‘There are two parts of the parable, why then does Allah say “are they alike” in the plural form, not in the dual form?’ We say that the parable, even if each of its parties is singular, applies to many, being common among the slaves and among the masters of good provision as well. So He *the Almighty* uses the plural to generalise the parable.

In another verse, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Is he then who is a believer like him who is a transgressor? They are not equal.’ (*as-Sajda*: 18) The words ‘believer’ and ‘transgressor’ are in the singular form, but Allah *Glorified is He*

does not say, 'They are not equal', in the dual form, but instead uses the plural form because He does not speak about specific individuals, but rather about the people in general. The verse might have been revealed regarding specific individuals, yet the generality of the wording, not its specific cause of revelation, is to be considered. Consequently, the context considers the specific cause regarding 'the believer' and 'the transgressor', and considers the generality of the issue when the plural is used 'they are not equal'. As the believer and the transgressor are not alike, the slave, who has no power over anything, cannot be held equal to the one who is free and to whom Allah *the Almighty* grants a goodly sustenance so he spends from it secretly and openly. In the same way, a believer is not equal to the evildoers.

Now, it can be observed that Allah *Glorified is He* compares the Muslim to the evildoers and the believer to the transgressor since the believer is the one who believes firmly with his heart whilst the transgressor is the one whose limbs transgress Allah's Guidance. He does not believe firmly with his heart, and thereby he is opposite to the believer. As for the Muslim, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'A Muslim is the one from whose tongue, and hands the Muslims are safe'. So, Islam is related to controlling one's limbs, including his hands and tongue with which he should not harm others going about with gossip, backbiting, insulting, oppressing or helping the oppressors. Similarly, he should not harm others with his hands by hitting, killing, taking bribes, helping oppressors. Harming others with hands or tongue represents a crime punishable by a prescribed punishment or *ta'zir* (the punishment administrated at the discretion of the judge).

Allah *the Almighty* says: 'and the Book shall be placed, then you will see the guilty fearing from what is in it, and they will say: "Ah! Woe to us! What a book this is! It does not omit a small one nor a great one, but numbers them (all)"; and what they had done they shall find present (there); and your Lord does not deal unjustly with anyone.' (*al-Kahf*: 49) Here, we find that the crimes of these guilty people are recorded by the Angels in specific records and books, and everyone will read it by himself. They thought that nothing was recorded against them and that they will not be punished, owing to their confused faith in the Hereafter and the Day of

Judgment. These criminals may control people's lives and spread mischief in the land, and no one can stand in their way. Such criminals should heed the following Threat of Allah *the Almighty*: '...There shall befall those who are guilty humiliation from Allah and severe chastisement because of what they planned.' (*al-An'am*: 124)

As a matter of fact, the believers are the opposite of the criminals. So, if the way of the criminals is made clear to us, we can distinguish it from the way of the believers. As Allah *the Almighty* clarifies that the way of the criminals ends with cursing and expulsion from His Mercy, then we get to know, by contrast, that the way of the believers is that of Mercy and honour. Regarding the criminals, He *the Almighty* says: '...and His punishment cannot be averted from the guilty people.' (*al-An'am*: 147)

The criminals are also those who disbelieve in Allah's verses, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'Surely (as for) those who reject Our communications and turn away from them haughtily, the doors of heaven shall not be opened for them, nor shall they enter the garden until the camel pass through the eye of the needle; and thus do We reward the guilty.' (*al-A'raf*: 40) Therefore, they deserve this punishment as a result of their misdeeds. They will not enter the paradise, and so they are deprived of the good. Moreover, they enter the hellfire. Therefore, there are two punishments for them: being deprived of the good which is entering paradise, and bringing about harm on themselves by entering the hellfire. So, Allah *Glorified is He* deprived them of the delight owing to their disobedience and disbelief, and admitted them to hellfire as another punishment. Being guilty, they were forbidden to enter the paradise, and their injustice proved them worthy of entering the hellfire and being encompassed by it. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'They shall have a bed of hell-fire and from above them coverings (of it); and thus do We reward the unjust.' (*al-A'raf*: 41)

Thus, injustice is related to committing crimes, and it may be a kind of crimes, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'And certainly We did destroy generations before you when they were unjust, and their apostles had come to them with clear arguments, and they would not believe; thus do We recompense the guilty people.' (*Yunus*: 13)

Thus, the criminal may commit a major sin, i.e. disbelief in Allah *the Almighty* which is meant in His saying: ‘And you will see the guilty on that day linked together in chains.’ (*Ibrahim*: 49) Therefore, you find all criminals gathered together and fettered in shackles which are the chains bounding one’s legs.

There are those whose legs are fettered in shackles, and others bound with chains around their hands and their necks as well. Every group of the criminals committing the same crime will be linked together by one rope, due to the sympathy and affection towards each other in the worldly life.

The criminal is also the one evading the Truth. In this sense, the crime means abandoning the truth for supporting falsehood. The criminals will be distinguished on the Day of Resurrection with their blue faces, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...and We will gather the guilty, blue-eyed, on that Day.’ (*Ta Ha*: 102) The blueness will be the colour of their faces, as you may see someone in blue face because he was inflicted with something. Some scholars explain that the last verse refers to their blindness as the blue water which affects the eyes and causes blindness. Additionally, it is known that blueness of the body only results from strong hits and bruises stimulating harmful interactions under the skin so that it turns blue.

Further, the blue colour indicates ugliness and intimidation. For that reason, the soldiers used to cover their faces in blue to frighten and horrify their enemies in the Middle Ages. Moreover, the people take it as the colour of Satan.

Another sign of the criminals on the Day of Judgment is hanging down their heads, as Allah says: ‘and could you but see when the guilty shall hang down their heads before their Lord: “Our Lord! we have seen and we have heard, therefore send us back, we will do good; surely (now) we are certain.”’ (*as-Sajda*: 12) ‘Hanging down the head’ is a reference to their evil destination. Hence, the one should keep away from disobedience, for whoever is arrogant and raises his head in pride in this worldly life, will, out of humiliation, hang it down on the Day of Resurrection. Besides, Allah *Glorified is He* will inflict on every disobedient in the Hereafter a punishment similar to the crime he used to commit. This is an additional meaning of the expression ‘Hanging down the head’. So, those criminals who are hanging down their

heads in humility and remorse used to commit crimes in the worldly life shamelessly and blatantly.

In this worldly life, the criminals commit their crimes stealthily and manipulate justice to avert the punishment of the man-made laws. If such people were not to be punished in the Hereafter, they would be the winners, and in this way, we would encourage every vicious outlaw. But if the criminal believes that there a Lord observing him, he will recognise that even if he escapes the judgment and punishment on the earth, he will not escape them on the Day of Judgment. In this way, he adheres to the right way. The criminal who lives among us is not only known by his household but also by the people living in the same street and district. Has he ever gone to the grocery to buy something and the grocery refused to buy to him and boycotted him? Or has he greeted someone but did not respond to him? Accordingly, the whole society bears responsibility and is even more evil than the criminal himself. Besides, the crime spread in the society when the people feared the criminals, and flattered them excessively to avoid their danger. Why then should the criminal not increase in committing crimes if this is the case? For this reason, the Most Wise Lawgiver makes the family, not only the murderer, responsible for paying the blood money in case of involuntary manslaughter. Every member of the family is held responsible since they are in charge of disciplining their children and scolding the ill-mannered one. In this way, the society regains its balance.

Regarding the verse under discussion: 'Should We treat those who submit to Us as We treat those who do evil? What is the matter with you? On what basis do you judge?' (*al-Qalam*: 35-36), Allah *Glorified is He* employs a rhetorical question to condemn treating those who submit themselves in the same way as those who are guilty. In another topic, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Has He chosen daughters in preference to sons? What is the matter with you? How is it that you judge?' (*as-Saffat*: 153-154) He *the Almighty* states that He has not chosen daughters in preference to sons, and then rebukes them for lack of fair judgment. In another verse, He *the Almighty* says: '...How is it that you judge?' (*Yunus*: 35) It is as if He *the Almighty* is saying, 'What happened to your minds? How is it that you judge'? Once you hear

‘how is it’ you should know that it expresses a surprising incident which a sound mind does not think it may happen. This is clear in the verse under discussion: ‘...On what basis do you judge?’ (*al-Qalam*: 36) Surprisingly, they treat those who submit themselves as those who are guilty, which should have never happened.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

أَمْ لَكُمْ كِتَابٌ فِيهِ تَدْرُسُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ إِنَّ لَكُمْ فِيهِ لَمَا تَخَيَّرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

**Do you have a Scripture that tells you [37]
that you will be granted whatever you choose? [38]
(The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 37 - 38)**

How do the disbelievers say that both the Muslims and the criminals are equal? In the previous verse, Allah *the Almighty* says about them: 'What is [wrong] with you? How do you make judgment?' (*al-Qalam*: 36) Allah *Glorified is He* discusses the matter with them to prove that they are following their whims, not thinking logically. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* is asking them: 'Or do you have a Scripture in which you learn?' (*al-Qalam*: 37) It is as if He *the Almighty* says, 'Have you made this judgment after reading a Book that equalises between the criminal and the Muslim, the good and the bad, the corrupter and reformer? Has Allah revealed to you a Book that says that both the criminals and the Muslims are equal? Do you have a Book that states this injustice?'

In comparison to the believers at the early time of Islam, the disbelieving masters of the Quraysh were wealthy and powerful. As this was their condition in the worldly life, they mistakenly said, 'If we are to be resurrected as Muhammad and his followers claim, our condition in the so-called Hereafter would be as good as in this worldly life. Additionally, the conditions of Muhammad's followers would not be better than us; in the best case for them, they would be like us!' So, Allah *the Almighty* replies to them: 'Should We treat those who submit to Us as We treat those who do evil? [35] What is the matter with you? On what basis do you judge? [36]' (*al-Qalam*: 35-36) How can Allah *Glorified is He* equalise between the believers and the

disbelievers? How dare they think that Allah *the Almighty* is unfair? He is indeed Fair, for He *Glorified is He* will never equalise between the two parties.

In the same vein, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Not equal are the blind and the seeing, [19] nor is the darkness and the light, [20] nor are the shade and the heat, [21] And not equal are the living and the dead...[22]' (*Fatir*: 19-22); He *the Almighty* also addresses Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* saying: 'Say, 'Not equal are the evil and the good, although the abundance of evil might impress you.' So fear Allah, O you of understanding, that you may be successful ' (*al-Ma'ida*: 100). Thus, the evil and the good are not equal by any means; this is an unquestionable fact – just as the blind and the seeing, and darkness and light are not equal.

Allah *Glorified is He* always gives us examples of well-established facts accepted by even the enemies of Islam. They know that the blind and the seeing, the shade and the heat and the darkness and the light are not equal. This Quranic style is noticed in many verses; for example, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And is one who was dead and We gave him life and made for him light by which to walk among the people like one who is in darkness, never to emerge therefrom?' (*al-An'am*: 122) Logically, the answer to this question, for sure, is that they are not equal.

As a matter of fact, Islam is based on justice and fulfilling the rights of everyone. That is why everyone is regarded according to his or her rightful rank. Not equalising between the believers who do not go out for *Jihad* without acceptable excuse and those who fight in the cause of Allah *the Almighty* with their wealth and lives is a case in point. How can they be equal? That is why He *Glorified is He* says: 'Not equal are those of the believers who sit (at home), except those who are disabled, and those who strive hard and fight in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their lives,' (*an-Nisa*': 95).

When this verse was firstly revealed, Prophet Muhammad ordered Zayd ibn Thabit *may Allah be pleased with him* one of the scribes of the Quran, to write: 'Not equal are those of the believers who sit (at home) and those who strive hard and fight in the cause of Allah...' Thereupon, Ibn Umm Maktum *may Allah be pleased with him* who was blind, asked, 'How about those who cannot fight, O Messenger Muhammad?' This question proves his religious

awareness; he thought that if this verse remained as such, he will not be equal to the believers who strive in the cause of Allah *the Almighty* even though he was blind. That is why he asked about those who cannot fight. At this moment, the revelation descended on Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*. Afterwards, he *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* said to Zayd, 'Write: "Not equal are those of the believers who sit (at home), except those who are disabled, and those who strive hard and fight in the cause of Allah..."' (*an-Nisa'*: 95). That is to say that this exception was revealed to reassure Ibn Umm Maktum and those who are unable to fight concerning this point.

Someone may ask, 'Was the revelation of the verse in its last form depending on Ibn Umm Maktum's comment?' In fact, Allah *Glorified is He* wants to teach every believer when he or she hears a verse to contemplate and see how it is related to him or her. In this case, Ibn Umm Maktum teaches us how to discern our position in every verse we hear. He pondered on the aforementioned verse to see his position, and that is exactly what Allah *the Almighty* wants us to do. Then, Zayd ibn Thabit wrote the verse in its last form.

So, regarding the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Not equal are those of the believers who sit (at home), except those who are disabled, and those who strive hard and fight in the cause of Allah,' (*an-Nisa'*: 95) it means that the two groups are not equal by any means. Here arises a question, which is, 'Was any sane person in the time of Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* thinking that the two groups are equal?' Of course not, but He *the Almighty* wants to state this fact by His Own saying.

Likewise, Allah *Glorified is He* rebuts the point that the disbelievers might have read this equalisation between the Muslims and the criminals in any of His Books. In this regard, He *Glorified is He* says: 'Or have We given them a book before the Quran to which they are adhering?' (*az-Zukhruf*: 21)

Now, why did the disbelievers equalise between the Muslims and the criminals? Were they told that by a Prophet?! Did they study and memorise a Divine Book that states that the obedient and the disobedient are both equal?!


Studying means to try to understand a text using your intellect; it is a necessary process for comprehending a text. It entails giving and taking

information, exactly as when two persons exchange information together, i.e. every one of them says what s/he knows so that they can extract the rules from the text.

So, the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'Do you have a Scripture that tells you [37] that you will be granted whatever you choose?[38]' (*al-Qalam*: 37-38) embodies the following question addressed to the disbelievers, 'Do you have a Divine Book that you read, study, then extract and choose rulings from it?' The Arabic verb *Takhayyarun* (to choose) means to pick the best of something, as if you sift it. There is a letter omitted from the beginning of this verb to show their keenness on selecting in the perfect way.

To sum up, in these two verses, Allah *the Almighty* asks the disbelievers, 'How can you make such a judgment?! Have you lost your mind? Or have you received a Divine Book that gives you the freedom to choose and judge by your own?'

Allah *the Almighty* subsequently says:


 أَمْ لَكُمْ أَيمَنٌ عَلَيْنَا بَلِغَةُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْفَيْمَةِ إِنَّ لَكُمْ لِمَا تَخْتُكُمُونَ

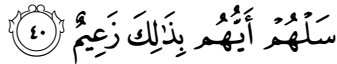
**Have you received from Us solemn oaths, binding to the
Day of Resurrection, that you will get whatever you
yourselves decide? [39] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 39)**

The Arabic word *Yamin* (an oath) literally means 'the right hand'. In the past, when two persons took oaths, every one of them used to shake the right hand of the other; that is why the oath is called *Yameen* (the right hand). This Arabic word also denotes cooperation, that is, the people gather together and agree to do something. Further, this word refers to the 'covenant', as in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'And in case they breach their oaths after their covenant, and discredit your religion...' (*at-Tawba*: 12). The oaths or covenants should be fulfilled, or else they will be useless. That is to say that the one who frequently breaks his/her oaths renders his/her oaths untrustworthy.

So, the word 'oath' refers to the covenant in the saying Allah *Glorified is He*: 'Have you received from Us solemn oaths...' (*al-Qalam*: 39). It is as if He *the Almighty* asks the disbelievers, 'Are We bound by solemn oath that would

never end till the Day of Resurrection to not punish you? Did We take an oath to admit you into the paradise? Did you receive from us a solemn oath to have all what you want, to not be held accountable for your crimes in this worldly life and to get more than the reward of the believers in the Hereafter?!

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* says:



**Ask them [Prophet] which of them will
guarantee this [40] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 40)**

He *the Almighty* commands Prophet Muhammad Allah's peace and blessings be upon him to ask the disbelievers, 'Which one of you guarantees that the criminals will be treated like the Muslims or that they will be saved from the punishment of Allah on the Day of Judgment? Which one among you, Oh people of Quraysh, guarantees that they will get the same reward of the believers?'

Allah *Glorified is He* says about the guardianship of Zakaryya (Zechariah) peace be upon him over Maryam (Mary) may Allah be pleased with her: 'Then, her Lord graciously accepted her with fair acceptance, and caused her to grow a fair growth, and He made Zechariah her guardian...' (*Al-Imran*: 37). The word guardianship here means to take responsibility for all the matters pertinent to bringing her up. In our daily life, the guarantor refers to the sponsor. Zakaryya (Zechariah) peace be upon him was the sponsor of Maryam (Mary) may Allah be pleased with her and was responsible for providing her with food and drink.

Thus, no one of the disbelievers can affirm that they have received a covenant from Allah *the Almighty* that they will have what they decide. So, what is the matter with them? On what basis do they judge?

The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...which of them...' (*al-Qalam*: 40) is really a miraculous expression; Allah *Glorified is He* puts the responsibility over their shoulders. Who among them will guarantee the fulfilment of that judgment which they issued? He *the Almighty* knows best that none of them will do so. Therefore, if none of them dare to announce that s/he guarantees their judgment, then why are they acting arrogantly against their Lord? Why do they falsely say about Him *Glorified is He* what they do not know?!

In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* says about the Jews: 'And they have said, 'The Fire will never touch us except a (few) numbered days.' Say, 'Have you taken to yourselves in the Providence of Allah a Covenant? So, Allah will never fail in His Covenant, or do you say against Allah that which you do not know?' (*al-Baqara*: 80) Thus, He *Glorified is He* advises the people of Mecca not to follow the example of the Jews.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

أَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكَاءُ فَلْيَأْتُوا بِشُرَكَائِهِمْ إِنْ كَانُوا صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

Do they have 'partners' [besides God]? Let them produce their 'partners', if what they say is true [41] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 41)

Allah *Glorified is He* draws their attention by offering a number of questions. First, He *the Almighty* logically asks them: 'Should We treat those who submit to Us as We treat those who do evil? [35] What is the matter with you? On what basis do you judge? [36]' (*al-Qalam*: 35-36) Then, Allah *Glorified is He* asks them if they had based their judgment on a Divine Book, saying: 'Do you have a Scripture that tells you [37] that you will be granted whatever you choose?[38]' (*al-Qalam*: 37-38) Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* discusses the matter of receiving oaths from Him, saying: 'Have you received from Us solemn oaths, binding to the Day of Resurrection, that you will get whatever you yourselves decide?' (*al-Qalam*: 39) It is as if Allah *Glorified is He* asks them, 'Have you been given covenants from Allah by which you guarantee being equalised with the believers and being admitted into the Paradise?'

Now, Allah *the Almighty* asks them about their partners, 'Do they have partners in what they say and claim?' If so, then let them call their partners to witness for them if they are really truthful. So, let them call these witnesses to testify that the believers and the disbelievers will be equal in the Hereafter. This Quranic style aims at refuting their claims, that is, they ought not to say so. That is why He *Glorified is He* challenges them saying: '...if what they say is true ' (*al-Qalam*: 41).

The truth is the opposite of falsehood, and both of them could be relative. Unlike the falsehood, the truth means that your words are consistent with

the reality. Thus, Allah *the Almighty* wants them to prove that their words are harmonious with the reality. If they could not, this means that they are liars. They must bring a proof for the truthfulness of what they say. In another verse, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...produce your proof, if you are truthful' (*al-Baqara*: 111). Allah *the Almighty* asks them to produce their proof if they are certain of what they say, for He *Glorified is He* knows for sure that they are liars.

Then, He *Glorified is He* says:

يَوْمَ يُكْشَفُ عَنْ سَاقٍ وَيُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى السُّجُودِ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

On the Day when matters become dire, they will be invited to prostrate themselves but will be prevented from doing so [42] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 42)

As for His saying: 'On the Day when matters become dire...' (*al-Qalam*: 42), it expresses the horror on the Day of Judgment when those who refused to prostrate, worship and obey Allah *the Almighty* in this worldly life will be called to prostrate. On that day they will not be able to do so. In this regard, 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbas *may Allah be pleased with him* says, 'A great matter will be revealed on that Day; the Arabs were saying that the war uncovered its shin when it becomes fierce.' So, this expression signifies the horror and the hardness of that Day. This time will be the most difficult hour on the Day of Judgment. All the people will be fearfully waiting for what will happen to them. The hardness of that Day, including the Gathering, the Account, and the Scale, will be revealed to them. So, the Arabs used to describe the war as having revealed its shin when the fighting escalates and becomes very fierce and hard. Thus, Allah *the Almighty* describes the horror of that Day with something that the people of Mecca were familiar with.'

The Arabic word *Saq* (shin) could mean the origin of something like the trunk of the tree. In this sense, the origin and reality of everything will be revealed before everyone on that Day. It is mentioned here as indefinite to show how great and horrific it is.

Allah *Glorified is He* tells us about the horror of that Day, saying: 'O mankind, fear your Lord. Indeed, the earthquake of the [final] Hour is a

terrible thing. [1] On the Day you will see it, every suckling female will get distracted away from whatever she has suckled, and every pregnant female will abort her pregnancy, and you see mankind drunken, and in no way are they drunken, but the torment of Allah is strict. [2]' (*al-Hajj*: 1-2) And 'So, in case you disbelieve, how will you protect yourselves against a Day that will make the newborn hoary-headed?' (*al-Muzzammil*: 17) He *Glorified is He* describes the earthquake on that Day as 'great'. It is not 'great' according to our human standards, but rather the One Who is describing it as 'great' is Allah *the Almighty*. So, imagine how great it will be!

The horror of that Day will make every suckling female get distracted away from whatever she is suckling; she will get away from her main job because of the horror she will see. For example, when a servant sees a great and venerable person, he drops whatever in his hands. This distraction happens unintentionally, for the one may be distracted away from something s/he is attached to, either emotionally or instinctively. So, look how the suckling female will be distracted away from her baby and get away from him or her; how great is the horror that stops both her maternal emotion and instinct!

Further, Allah *the Almighty* gives us another picture of the Day of Judgment, saying: 'On the Day when a person will flee from his brother, and his mother, and his father, and his wife and his children,' (*'Abasa*: 34-36). Every person will have his or her own concern that makes them distracted away from knowing or thinking of the destiny of their brother, relatives, mother, father, wife, and children. The horror is much greater than thinking of others; everyone wants to save themselves.

Moreover, Allah *the Almighty* says about the coming of the Hour: '...and you see mankind drunken, and in no way are they drunken, but the torment of Allah is strict ' (*al-Hajj*: 2). The people will be moving randomly as if they are affected by wine that makes them sway to the right and to the left, and fall on the ground. This is how they will be on the Day of Judgment because of the horror and terror of that Day. This will be their state even before they see the punishment, as Allah *the Almighty* says: '...and you see mankind drunken, and in no way are they drunken but the torment of Allah is strict, ' (*al-Hajj*: 2). So, this is only the beginning of the Day that makes them lose their balance.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...they will be invited to prostrate themselves but will be prevented from doing so' (*al-Qalam*: 42). Allah *Glorified is He* will distinguish the believers from the hypocrites by prostration. They are described in this worldly life as: 'And when it is said to them, 'Bow [in prayer], ' they do not bow,' (*al-Mursalat*: 48) 'And when the Quran is recited to them, they do not prostrate [to Allah] ' (*al-Inshiqaq*: 21). In this worldly life, they did not respond to the call of belief; they did not bow to Allah *Glorified is He* except to be seen and heard of by the people; and they did not prostrate except when being forced to. They were not affected by Allah's Verses when being recited; rather, they were blind and deaf to them.

That is why they will not be able to prostrate on that Day. The following statement of Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* gives us a picture of what will happen on that Day: 'In the Day of Judgment, every people will go to what they worshiped in this life except those who worship Allah. They will then be asked, "What are you waiting for?" They will say, "We have not seen our Lord whom we were worshipping." They will be asked, "Will you know your Lord if you see Him?" They will say, "Yes." They will be asked, "How will you know Him and you have never seen Him before?" They will say, "He does not resemble anything." The cover then will be revealed, and they will see Allah and prostrate to Him. A group of people who have like cow horns in their backs will try to prostrate, but they cannot. About them Allah says: "On the Day when matters become dire, they will be invited to prostrate themselves but will be prevented from doing so" (*al-Qalam*: 42).

Prostration is a sign of submission and worshipful servitude, as you put the most honourable part of your body, your face, on the ground five times a day as a sign of submission to Allah *Glorified is He*. So, prostration is the peak of submission to your Lord.

Prostration reminds the human being that he or she is a vicegerent on the earth. All the creatures that glorified Allah *the Almighty* are made subservient to him or her. Thus, even the human being who is served by all these creatures –animals, plants, and inanimate objects –is putting his or her face on the earth in prostration as a sign of submission to his or her Lord.

Therefore, prostration is the sign of submission to Allah *the Almighty* as you put the highest part of your body, 'the head', at the level of the lowest

part of it, 'the foot'. In our colloquial sayings, one may say to the other, 'Do not raise your head over me', i.e. do not be arrogant. This is because 'raising the head' means arrogance, while lowering it down by bowing and prostrating is an act of submission. In fact, prostrating to and worshipping Allah *Glorified is He* is a high form of honour because it protects you from prostrating or being a slave to any of His creation.

But those disbelievers did not submit to Allah *Glorified is He* in this worldly life. They neither bowed nor prostrated and they did not give up their arrogance. That is why they, on the Day of Judgment, will not be able to prostrate, as their backs will be pliable.

Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* gave us an example for this when he saw a man eating with his left hand. He ordered him to eat with his right hand, but the man said, 'I cannot!' So, he *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'Let this be right.' Since then he could not use his right hand anymore.' He became unable to use his right hand because he arrogantly refused to obey Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* and submit to his order.

Allah *Glorified is He* gives more description of the condition of those people, saying:

خَشَعَةً أَبْصَرُهُمْ تَرْهَقُهُمْ ذِلَّةٌ وَقَدْ كَانُوا يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى السُّجُودِ وَهُمْ سَلِيمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

**And their eyes will be downcast and they will be
overwhelmed with shame: they were invited to prostrate
themselves when they were safe [but refused] [43]
(The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 43)**

Out of horror, the disbelievers' eyes will be looking here and there. They will be looking everywhere for what may give them assurance or calm, but they will not find anything other than overwhelming horror. In this regard, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Hearts on that day shall palpitate, [8] Their eyes cast down [9]' (*an-Nazi'at*: 8-9). At the end, their eyes will be cast down, knowing that there is no way out, for only those who did righteous deeds will be saved. This is similar to the clever student who trusts him or herself

and his or her knowledge, and looks forward to answering the exam. On the other hand, the one who did not study will be confused.

Further, Allah *the Almighty* says: '...they will be overwhelmed with shame...' (*al-Qalam*: 43). On the Day of Judgment, their eyes will be cast down in humbleness because fear will be surrounding them from all sides. The Arabic word *Al-Khushu'* (humbleness) is a description related to the heart. It is found either inside the prayer or outside it and is used with the humans and other things, as Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And all voices will be humbled for the Most Beneficent, and nothing shall you hear but a whisper, ' (*Ta Ha*: 108) and '... their eyes will be downcast and they will be overwhelmed with shame, ' (*al-Qalam*: 43). Here, Allah *the Almighty* describes the voices as being humble. Likewise, He *Glorified is He* describes the faces as humble, saying: '[Some] faces, that Day, will be humbled, ' (*al-Ghashiya*: 2).

On the Day of Judgment, the criminals will stand humbly in strict lines. Allah *the Almighty* describes them in this situation, saying: 'On that Day they shall follow the inviter, there is no crookedness in him, and the voices shall be low before the Beneficent so that you shall not hear aught but a soft sound, ' (*Ta Ha*: 108). They will follow the orders in humbleness and will not speak except by whispering to each other.

In our daily life, it is known that the noise in big gatherings cannot be controlled. How about the Gathering on that Day in which all the creatures from Adam *peace be upon him* till the last infant will all be gathered? However, all voices will be humble, a fact which is crystal clear in His Saying: '...and the voices shall be low before the Beneficent so that you shall not hear aught but a soft sound, ' (*Ta Ha*: 108). What happened to these voices that used to be loud before? Due to the greatness of the horror, the situation is different. No one dares to raise his/her voice in such a situation; everyone will be thinking of him or herself and of what will happen to him or her. They will not speak except in whisper, asking what is happening.

Furthermore, their eyes will be humble. In another verse, Allah *the Almighty* describes the eyes, saying: 'And you will see them being exposed to the fire, humbled from humiliation, looking from [behind] a covert glance, ' (*ash-Shura*: 45). They are humble to the extent that they cannot even look

directly, but rather with stealthy glance. That is why when someone tells lies to you, you ask him or her to look directly at your eyes because this eye contact reveals the truth. The truthful one looks confidently, while the other's eyes will try to hide from the light of the truth which will reveal its falsehood.

The faces of the disbelievers will be covered with sadness and blackness. By contrast, the believers' faces will be white after getting up from prostration. As the disbelievers did not prostrate in the worldly life, they will not be able to prostrate in the Hereafter, and that is why their faces will turn black out of sorrow. They will bitterly regret not prostrating to Allah *the Almighty* in their lives, and for being arrogant over it.

That is why Allah *the Almighty* concludes the verse in question, saying: '...they were invited to prostrate themselves when they were safe [but refused], ' (*al-Qalam*: 43). When Allah *Glorified is He* calls them to prostrate on the Day of Judgment, it is not as a form of worship; rather, it is meant to rebuke them for not prostrating in their worldly life. They will not be able to prostrate there because they were arrogant to prostrate in their lives. So, in the Hereafter, the disbelievers: '...will be invited to prostrate themselves but will be prevented from doing so, ' (*al-Qalam*: 42) whereas in the worldly life: '...they were invited to prostrate themselves when they were safe [but refused] ' (*al-Qalam*: 43).

Qatada said, 'I was told that on the Day of Judgment the believers will be ordered to prostrate, and there will be a hypocrite between every two believers. The believers will be able to prostrate, while the hypocrites will not; their backs will not be pliable, and the prostration of the believers will be a kind of rebuke for them.'

The Arabic word *Salimun* (safe) shows that nothing prevented the disbelievers from prostration in their lives, as they were safe and healthy. On the Day of Judgment, however, they will be called to prostrate, while being afraid of their inevitable end. In the worldly life, they heard the caller to prayer saying, 'Come to success, ' but they did not answer the call, although they were healthy. Ka'b Al-Ahbar said, 'By Allah, this verse was not revealed except in reference to those who were not attending the Congregational Prayer.' Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

فَذَرْنِي وَمَنْ يُكَذِّبُ هَذَا الْحَدِيثَ سَنَسْتَدْرِجُهُمْ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

**So [Prophet] leave those who reject this revelation to Me:
We shall lead them on, step by step, in ways beyond their
knowledge [44] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 44)**

Here, Allah *the Almighty* is addressing Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* and his *ummah*, saying: 'So [Prophet] leave those who reject this revelation to Me...' (*al-Qalam*: 44). In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* also says: 'And leave Me and the rejecters, the possessors of ease and plenty, and respite them a little' (*al-Muzzammil*: 12). This means that He *the Almighty* will punish them Himself. Another possible interpretation is to let them, O Prophet Muhammad, do whatever they like of misdeeds so that they shall deserve the punishment. So, the Arabic verb '*Dhar*' means 'leave'. It is mentioned in some other verses as in His saying: 'And leave Me with [the matter of] the deniers, those of ease, [in life]' (*al-Muzzammil*: 11). It is as if Allah *the Almighty* says, 'Leave them to Allah; He is the One Who will punish them, and Who knows how long the punishment should be postponed.'

Hence, Allah *Glorified is He* orders Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* to leave those deniers and not to care about them, for they will return to Him *the Almighty*. This is due to the fact that Prophet Muhammad's role is confined to conveying the Message to them, and then leaving them to Allah *Glorified is He*. Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* should not be affected with their denial, or worried about their planning against him.

In this verse, the Noble Quran is described as 'discourse'. Similarly, He *the Almighty* says in another verse: 'Allah has sent down fairest discourse as a Book, of similar signs (and) oft repeated...' (*az-Zumar*: 23). Indeed, it is the best discourse because it is Allah's Speech which is one of His Attributes. It is the perfect Book which includes the best stories, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'We relate to you, [O Muhammad], the best of stories in what We have revealed to you of this Quran...' (*Yusuf*: 3).

Denying the Noble Quran entails rejecting Allah's signs and verses and denying the truth. The disbelievers are of many kinds; first, some of them believe

in neither a God nor a Messenger. Second, some believe in a God and reject the Messenger. Third, some believe in a God and one of His Messengers, but reject what was revealed to Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*.

Rejecting the Truth is unacceptable and it is the first step towards disobedience. In this regard, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And no sign comes to them from the signs of their Lord except that they turn away therefrom.[4] For they had denied the truth when it came to them, but there is going to reach them the news of what they used to ridicule [5]' (*al-An'am*: 4-5).

As a matter of fact, all the Prophets were faced with the rejection of their people. In this connection, He *the Almighty* says: 'And if they deny you, [O Muhammad] - so, before them, did the people of Noah and 'Ad and Thamud deny [their Prophets] ' (*al-Hajj*: 42). It is as if He *Glorified is He* says, 'If the people of Mecca denied you, O Muhammad, and rejected your Message, remember that you are not an exception; many Prophets before you were rejected as well. But what was the result of their denial? Did Allah leave the disbeliever or seize them with severe punishment? So do not be sad, for their destiny will be like that of the previous nations.'

The previous nations rejected the Messages and were persistent in their disbelief. So, the people of Mecca have been given the warning against the same punishment of the previous nations. In this regard, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And if you [people] deny [the Message] - already nations before you have denied. And there is not upon the Messenger except [the duty of] clear notification ' (*al-'Ankabut*: 18). As the disbelievers of Mecca were not the first nation to disbelieve, they must remember what happened to the disbelievers before them and avoid being exposed to the same punishment that had inflicted upon them.

Sometimes, the rejection happens intentionally, as in the case of the people of the Pharaoh. Allah *Glorified is He* sent upon them diseases, lesions and minor punishment, so that they believe and return to Him. Although they were sure that those signs are from Him *the Almighty* they refused to believe in them. That is why He *Glorified is He* says: 'And they rejected them, while their [inner] selves were convinced thereof, out of injustice and haughtiness. So, see how the end of the corrupters was (*an-Naml*: 14).

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* tells us how He will punish those disbelievers, saying: '...We shall lead them on, step by step, in ways beyond their knowledge,' (*al-Qalam*: 44). If you draw someone to something, you lead him/her gradually to unintentionally admit what he or she did. This is like when the prosecutor interrogates the criminal till he or she leads him or her to a confession.

From this Arabic word '*Istidraj*' the word '*Daraj*' (stairs) is derived. The stairs also give the meaning of gradualism, as in going up and down. It is impossible to go to the fifth floor, for example, directly by one step. Going up must be done step by step according to the normal movement of the human being. Similarly, the disbelievers are taken step by step. They are given one grace after another to be a proof against them. In this regard, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'So when they forgot that by which they had been reminded, We opened to them the doors of every [good] thing until, when they rejoiced in that which they were given, We seized them suddenly...' (*al-An'am*: 44).

When He *the Almighty* wants to punish someone for his or her crimes against other people in this worldly life, Allah *Glorified is He* does not punish him or her directly once the first crime is committed, as the punishment then will be light. Rather, He gives him or her time to indulge more in his or her misdeeds so that his or her punishment becomes great.

When a person tries to gradually draw another one, the latter may intelligently notice the trap he or she would fall in. But if the One Who is drawing is Allah *the All Powerful* the other one will never find a way to escape.

The reason why Allah *the Almighty* says: '...in ways beyond their knowledge.' (*al-Qalam*: 44) is because the humans know the ways of drawing one another gradually. This Arabic word '*Istidraj*' (drawing gradually) is also called '*Imla*' (extending time). In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'And already were [other] messengers ridiculed before you, and I extended the time of those who disbelieved; then I seized them, and how [terrible] was My Penalty, ' (*ar-Ra'd*: 32). So, '*Imla*' means to reprieve; it does not mean to waive the punishment completely. It means to delay it till many other sins are committed. This is like when someone makes a mistake and you leave him or her till he or she makes the second and the third, then you punish him or her in a way he or she cannot expect. If that is what happens in our worldly

life, what would you think of Allah's Infinite Power? Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...We shall lead them on, step by step, in ways beyond their knowledge,' (*al-Qalam*: 44); and: '...let not the disbelievers think that Our Postponing of their punishment is good for them. We postpone the punishment only so that they may increase in sinfulness. And for them is a disgracing torment, ' (*Al-Imran*: 178). This is like when someone sets a trap for his or her enemy.

The beginning of the process of 'drawing' is to open for them the doors of good things, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'So when they forgot that by which they had been reminded, We opened to them the doors of every [good] thing until, when they rejoiced in that which they were given, We seized them suddenly, and they were [then] in despair,' (*al-An'am*: 44). So, Allah *Glorified is He* did not hastily punish them, but rather, He left them till they transgressed in sinning. When they rejoiced in what they were given of wealth, graces, and large numbers of people, the punishment befell them. When the politicians want to destroy their opponents, they let them gain high ranks and remain patient until the enemies' evil behaviour is revealed before the people.

Hence, Allah *Glorified is He* gives them time to take, build, enjoy, and rejoice at what they have taken. Then He opens the doors of everything against them. Opening doors 'against' them is different from opening the doors 'for' them. The former means to drag someone to a humiliating punishment, but to open 'for' him or her means to provide him or her with benefit. The second expression is used in His saying to Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*: 'Surely We have given you an evident conquest' (*al-Fath*: 1).

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَأْمَلِي لَهُمْ إِن كِيدِي مَتِينٌ

**I will allow them more time, for My plan is
powerful [45] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 45)**

The Arabic word *Al-Imla'* means to postpone and delay, Allah *the Almighty* does not punish the disbelievers immediately; rather, He gives them more

time, and then punishes them severely. Do not think that the one who holds his or her enemy and raises him or her up is just joking! He or she raises him or her to throw them from a higher level so that they would suffer more. So, opening the doors of good for the disbelievers and the hypocrites is not for their benefit; rather, it is against them. That is why they should not be happy with that. However, when He *the Almighty* provides abundantly for them, they become more arrogant, and this will be the reason for their punishment.

When the corruptors do more evils in society, the good people tend to do more good. At that time, you hear the people saying, 'If it was not for belief, people would kill each other.' Then, Allah *Glorified is He* clarifies that as He gradually draws and postpones punishment of the disbelievers, they should know that His Plotting is powerful. Plotting here means to take them from where they do not know. It is a hidden process that harms the one who is exposed because they cannot protect themselves from it. If the humans can plot against one another secretly, what about it when Allah *the Almighty* does? Can anyone reveal His Plotting? This is the intended meaning of His saying: 'My plan is powerful, ' (*al-Qalam*: 45). The Arabic word *Mateen* means strong and powerful; it is derived from the word *Matn* (back). The back consists of a backbone and vertebrae surrounded by muscles. If the backbone had consisted of bone only, it would have been broken if anything was carried on it. So, out of His Mercy, those bones are surrounded with two big muscles.

You should beware of thinking that Allah *Glorified is He* is unaware of what the wrongdoers do, as He *Glorified is He* says: 'And never think that Allah is unaware of what the wrongdoers do. He only delays them for a Day when eyes will stare [in horror] ' (*Ibrahim*: 42). In the worldly life, the people witness the crimes of the wrongdoers and whisper to each other, 'Has the injustice of this wrongdoer been forgotten?' Those who ask should remember this verse: 'I will allow them more time, for My Plan is powerful,' (*al-Qalam*: 45). Thus, He *the Almighty* is fully Aware of what they do, but He only delays their punishment, as He also says: '...so I prolonged enjoyment for the disbelievers; then I seized them, and how [terrible] was My Reproach, ' (*al-Hajj*: 44).

The disbelievers continuously plan against the believers and their religion by all means, as they will never leave them with their belief. They exert

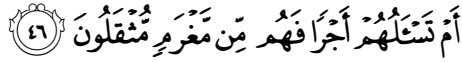
their utmost efforts to corrupt their good conditions by means of deception. Some may corrupt your life without deception, but others prefer to use deception because they do not dare to face you. So if you catch one of them, he or she says, 'I do not know.'

In this vein, we know that the plot of Satan is weak, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...surely the plotting of Satan has (always) been weak ' (*an-Nisa*: 76). This is because he has no power to force us to do something, and he does not have a sound argument with which to convince you. Rather, he just deceives the person to obey him. In fact, the one who resorts to deception is weak.

Plotting requires hidden planning. The Arabic word *Makr* (plotting) originally refers to the branches of the tree when twinned together till you do not know to which branch certain leaves belong. Then this word was used to refer to the hidden planning. The human being can plan secretly against someone like them, but you cannot do this against Allah *the Almighty* as He says: 'Allah is quicker to plan...' (*Yunus*: 21). Undoubtedly, Allah's Planning is more powerful than any human planning, as the latter may be revealed, but how can anyone know anything about Allah's Planning? This is impossible. Moreover, the human planning is new, whilst He *Glorified is He* knows everything before it occurs, and plans eternally for everything. That is why His Reply on their planning is swift.

In the verse in question, Allah *the Almighty* also describes His planning, saying: 'I will allow them more time, for My Plan is powerful, ' (*al-Qalam*: 45). So His plan is strong and no one can avoid it. In this connection, He *Glorified is He* says: 'Indeed, they are planning a plan, [15] But I am planning a plan. [16] So allow time for the disbelievers. Leave them awhile. So allow time for the disbelievers. Leave them awhile, [17]' (*at-Tariq*: 15-17). So, His planning can never be overcome or be revealed; that is why He says: 'But they plan, and Allah plans. And Allah is the Best of planners, ' (*al-Anfal*: 30).

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:



Do you demand some reward from them that would burden them with debt? [46] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 46)

Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* does not ask his people to pay him in return for guidance because he will get his reward from Allah *Glorified is He*. Likewise, He *the Almighty* says to him: 'And you do not ask of them for it any payment. It is not except a reminder to the worlds,' (*Yusuf*: 104) and 'Say, 'Whatever payment I might have asked of you - it is yours. My payment is only from Allah, ' (*Saba*': 47). By so doing, he *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* seeks the higher reward. Instead of being paid by someone with a limited ability of paying, he *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* wants to be paid by the One Whose Power is infinite. It is He *the Almighty* who appointed him as a Prophet to call to His Way of Guidance. Hence, no one can reward Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* except Allah *the Almighty*.

Thus, it is crystal clear that Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* is not asking his people to pay for him, as he will take his reward from Allah *the Almighty* Who clarified this fact in the Noble Quran and he *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* himself told them that. That is why the verse under discussion comes in the form of a question: 'Do you demand some reward from them that would burden them with debt?' (*al-Qalam*: 46) Should he *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* ask them for a payment they cannot pay? He does not.

Now, should they have paid for him *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*? When someone does you a favour, you ought to pay him or her. So, it is as if Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* is saying here, 'I am doing you a favour that you should pay me for, but, out of my kindness, I do not want to be paid.'

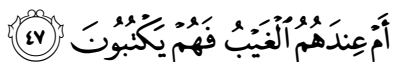
The payment is something that is paid in return for work. It differs according to the difficulty of this work, how long it lasts, the skill of the worker and the dangers surrounding this work. Thus, the paid amount depends on the time, the effort, the difficulty, the dangers and the skill. If this is the

case, we should think of Prophet Muhammad's mission and how beneficial it is! Look how the way of life that he is sent with brings easiness for us and our communities. It maintains your good relationship with your Lord, and protects you from the evils of your souls and of all that of the people.

Hence, Prophet Muhammad's mission was great and required extraordinary effort; if the people wanted to pay for it, they would in fact need to pay a lot! Imagine for example how much will you pay for someone to guard you at night. The Divine Way of Guidance which he *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* came with protects you, your property, your dignity, and everything you have. It protects you not only from a certain group of people, but also from all people. This protection is not only in this worldly life but also in the Hereafter where there will be everlasting protection. Now, try to guess; how much should you pay for such a protection?! However, he *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* does not want to be paid not because he is indifferent to the reward, but because human beings cannot estimate the value of his mission or pay for it. Only his Lord Who sent him knows best how great it is. Thus, whatever the human beings pay for it is little.

Thus, Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* does not want the people at his time to pay for him so that they can calm down and be relaxed. They should not be worried of being burdened by any payment. Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* will take his reward from Allah *Glorified is He* Who says in this regard: '...my reward is only from Allah, and I have been commanded to be of the Muslims,' (*Yunus*: 72); 'And I do not ask you for it any payment...' (*ash-Shu'ara*: 109) and 'Say, 'I do not ask of you for it any payment - only that whoever wills might take to his Lord a way ' (*al-Furqan*: 57). With regard to His saying in the last verse: '...take to his Lord a way, ' (*al-Furqan*: 57), it means to pursue His reward by doing the righteous deeds like fighting for His sake, giving charity, etc. Thus, Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* works hard so that you can get Allah's Reward and exerts effort for benefitting others.

Allah says:



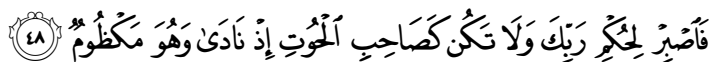
Do they have knowledge of the unseen that enables them to write it down? [47] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 47)

Do the disbelievers have the knowledge of the unseen so that they write it for the people and tell them about it?! Do they have the knowledge recorded in the Preserved Tablet from which they know what will happen in the future and hence write it down and argue with Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* over it? Do they have the knowledge of the unseen that obliged them to disobey him?

The Preserved Tablet is where the future incidents are written. It is unseen because what is written in it is unseen to the people. So how can they write down from it the judgment they made following their whims. This is a rhetorical question because no one in the heavens or the earth knows the unseen except Allah *the Almighty*. Do they claim that they have the knowledge of the unseen and that they write for the people therefrom whatever they like? They know for sure that they do not know the unseen and have no ability over it. They cannot write anything in the Preserved Tablet.

What is the answer to these two questions: 'Do you demand some reward from them that would burden them with debt? [46] Do they have knowledge of the unseen that enables them to write it down? [47]' (*al-Qalam*: 46-47) The answer of both questions is 'No'. So, Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* did not ask them to pay for him, and they have no knowledge of the unseen. If he *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* does not know the unseen, how about those who are less than him? Allah *the Almighty* ordered him to make this clear, saying: 'Say, [O Muhammad], 'I do not tell you that I have the depositories [containing the provision] of Allah or that I know the unseen...' (*al-An'am*: 50). Here, Allah *Glorified is He* says about the disbelievers: 'Do they have knowledge of the unseen that enables them to write it down?' (*al-Qalam*: 47) The answer is 'No'.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* commands him *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* saying:



**Wait patiently [Prophet] for your Lord's Judgment:
do not be like the man in the whale who called
out in distress [48] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 48)**

This verse aims at strengthening and relieving Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*. Allah *the Almighty* clarifies that they have disbelieved in Him, and rejected Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* and the light that has been revealed to him. He *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* may hope that Allah *Glorified is He* punishes them, but Allah *the Almighty* has specified time for everything. He has created the heavens and the earth in six Days. In our daily life, we say to the one who is always in hurry, 'Allah has created heavens, and the earth in six Days, so do not be in a hurry.'

Allah *the Almighty* has been able to create them in a moment, but He has ordered them to 'Be!' and then left them to be formed in six Days. The reason behind this may be to teach us to be patient and not to rush to do things. So, Allah *Glorified is He* orders Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* to be patient and not to be sad, for the Day when those deniers will be punished for their bad deeds will undoubtedly come.

Patience may be easy in some situations and difficult in others, and thus requires more effort. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* sometimes commands us to be patient, while some other times to be extremely patient. So, what should Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* be patient about? He should patiently endure the disbelievers' accusations of being a sorcerer, a poet, a soothsayer, a madman, etc. Furthermore, they described the Noble Quran as a mixture of false dreams and tales of the ancients. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* commands Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* to be patient towards all of that because each of those accusations include the proof of their falsehood. So, he is commanded to leave them, to keep steadfast in his way and be patient towards their hatred, obstinacy, and enmity. Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* as well as his Companions are ordered to be patient for all of that because at the end, they will be the winners. In this connection, He *the Almighty* says:

'So be patient. Indeed, the promise of Allah is truth. And let them not disquiet you who are not certain [in faith], ' (*ar-Rum*: 60). The disbelievers should not make him lose patience or provoke him.

So, with regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Wait patiently [Prophet] for your Lord's Judgment...' (*al-Qalam*: 48), it is as if Allah *Glorified is He* says to Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*: 'Be patient, O Muhammad, till the Decision of your Lord for you and for them occurs, and do not let their rejection and harm prevent you from delivering the Message. Wait for the Judgment of your Lord which is coming for sure, for there is a piece of wisdom behind delaying your triumph over them. Just deliver the Message and bear their harm and the delaying of victory.'

Not only does Allah *Glorified is He* order Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* to be patient about what He ordered him to do, but He also gives him an example with one of the previous Prophets. This is meant for him and his *ummah* to learn a lesson from. So, He *the Almighty* says: '...do not be like the man in the whale who called out in distress, ' (*al-Qalam*: 48). Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* is commanded not to be like Prophet Yunus (Jonah) *peace be upon him* who was impatient with his people. He is also called *Dha Nun*, which means the companion of the Whale. Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'and [mention] the man of the whale, when he went off in anger and thought that We would not decree [anything] upon him. And he called out within the darkness, 'There is no deity except You; Exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers ' (*al-Anbiya*': 87). So, the name of Prophet Yunus (Jonah) *Allah's peace be upon him* is attached to the whale that swallowed him after he left his people in anger because of their disbelief. He ought to endure their harm. Undoubtedly, rejecting the Divine Message is very painful and hard, but the Prophet should be ready to endure the hardness of delivering the Message.

We know that Prophet Yunus (Jonah) *Allah's peace be upon him* was sad and angry because his people rejected the Divine Message. But when they saw clouds and storms in the sky, they thought that this is the beginning of Allah's Punishment for them. Thereupon, they ran away to the wise people among them who said that this is the beginning of the punishment and that

they should obey and believe in Prophet Yunus (Jonah) *Allah's peace be upon him* because he is a Messenger sent by Allah *the Almighty*. By so doing, the punishment will be waived.

All the people then believed in Allah *the Almighty* and went to Prophet Jonah *Allah's peace be upon him* to seek his satisfaction after he returned from his trial of being swallowed by the Whale. After he was satisfied with them, they began to look into the sins they have committed to the extent that one might destroy the wall of his house because he had stolen one of its bricks from his neighbour.

Prophet Yunus (Jonah) *Allah's peace be upon him* left his people angrily and rode a ship. Afterwards, this ship was exposed to a storm and was about to sink. The passengers threw all their goods in the sea, but this did not work. At last, they agreed to throw one of them in the sea, and thus cast lots. The one who was chosen was Prophet Yunus (Jonah) *Allah's peace be upon him*. This story is mentioned in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'And Jonah was most surely of the Messengers. [139] When he ran away to a ship completely laden, [140] So he shared (with them), but was of those who are cast off. [141] So the fish swallowed him while he did that for which he blamed himself [142] But had it not been that he was of those who glorify (Us), [143] He would certainly have tarried in its belly to the day when they are raised, [144]' (*as-Saffat*: 139-144).

So Prophet Yunus (Jonah) *Allah's peace be upon him* lost the lottery and was chosen to be thrown in the sea, and the whale swallowed him, as Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'So the fish swallowed him while he did that for which he blamed himself, ' (*as-Saffat*: 142). It is as if He *the Almighty* said to him, 'It was not right to leave your people for being harmed by them; you ought to be patient and to endure that for the sake of Allah in order that you could deliver the Message.' It is known that you only blame the one whom you love and care for. Likewise, He *Glorified is He* blamed him *Allah's peace be upon him* for something that is not supposed to be done by a Prophet. In fact, blame could be a token of love.

Prophet Yunus (Jonah) *Allah's peace be upon him* could do nothing but pray to Allah *Glorified is He* when he was inside the whale, a fact which is

crystal clear in His saying: '...do not be like the man in the whale who called out in distress ' (*al-Qalam*: 48). The hidden prayer is the best form of supplication which is similar to that of Prophet Zakaryya (Zechariah) *Allah's peace be upon him* about his supplication, Allah *the Almighty* says: '*Kaf Ha Ya Ain Sad*. [1] A mention of the mercy of your Lord to His servant Zechariah. [2] When he called upon his Lord in a low voice, [3]' (*Maryam*: 1-3).

The Arabic word *Kazhm* means to repress something. It originally means to tie the goatskin after filling it with water, thus it seems full as if it is going to explode. This is like the case of the angry person as their blood fills their veins as if they are going to explode. For example, the one who hates to have daughters, if he has a daughter his face turns to black as if he is going to explode out of anger. In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And when a daughter is announced to one of them his face becomes black and he is full of wrath. [58] He hides himself from the people because of the evil of that which is announced to him. Shall he keep it with disgrace or bury it (alive) in the dust? Now surely evil is what they judge [59]' (*an-Nahl*: 58-59).

Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* faced many difficulties on the way of calling to Allah *the Almighty*; his people rejected and harmed him. He went to a city called At-Ta'if to call its people to Allah *Glorified is He*, but they were more cruel to him than the people of Mecca. He returned back dismissed and bleeding, invoking his Lord, 'O Allah, I appeal to You for the weakness in my strength, and my limited power, and the treatment of contempt and humiliation from people. You are the most Merciful of all the merciful ones. You are the Lord of the oppressed, and You are my Lord. Under whose care are You leaving me? To an enemy oppressing me? Or to a friend You have given control of my affair? If You are not Angry with me, I will forever be content. However, Your Blessing is vastly important for me. I seek refuge with the Glory of Your Light by which the heavens and the earth are lit, that Your Anger does not befall on me, nor Your Displeasure descends on me. To you is the supplication until you are pleased, and there is no control or power except by you.'

Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* was in trouble, so he invoked his Lord to ask for support. Was he not pelted by stones in

At-Ta'if till his feet were bleeding? Did the people of Mecca not put the intestines of a camel on his back while he was praying? Were his teeth not broken and his face bleeding during the Battle of Uhud? In fact, Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* was painfully harmed by his people's sayings and deeds. On top of that, his wife was falsely accused of a shameful deed that she had never committed.

So, it is as if Allah *the Almighty* says to him, 'O Muhammad, do not be like Jonah, the companion of the whale, as he went away angrily and was not patient towards his disbelieving people, and called his Lord at the peak of his anger against them.'

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

لَوْلَا أَن تَدَارَكَهُ نِعْمَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ لَنُبِذَ بِالْعَرَاءِ وَهُوَ مَذْمُومٌ ﴿٤٩﴾

If his Lord's grace had not reached him, he would have been left, abandoned and blameworthy, on the barren shore [49] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 49)

If it was not for the Mercy of Allah *the Almighty* Prophet Yunus (Jonah) *Allah's peace be upon him* would have been thrown in a land bereft of plants. Prophet Yunus (Jonah) *Allah's peace be upon him* was deeply sad because of being thrown into the sea and swallowed by the whale and living inside its belly.

Being swallowed by the whale is a blessing in itself. If the whale did not swallow him, he would have been lost in the sea and could not have been able to go out of it. But Allah *Glorified is He* showered him with His Mercy, and made the conditions inside the belly of the whale suitable for remaining alive. Moreover, out of His Mercy, he was thrown into a land while being patient, not being blameworthy, or else he would have been thrown out of Allah's Mercy. In this connection, He *the Almighty* says: 'Then We cast him on to the vacant surface of the earth while he was sick. [145] And We caused to grow up for him a gourd plant, [146]' (*as-Saffat*: 145-146).

Being thrown in an empty land was a Divine Decree, and nobody can escape from their fate. If the human being accepts what Allah *the Almighty* has chosen for them, they will be rewarded and helped to overcome their

difficult conditions. But if he does not accept His Predestination, it will, nevertheless, come to pass and He *the Almighty* will be angry with them, and will never help them overcome it. If they were sincere in accepting Allah's Decree, they will feel Allah's Kindness and Help. His Kindness protects them from what they fear, and His Help facilitates the Decree regarding them.

Prophet Yunus (Jonah) *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* was thrown in an empty land, but Allah *the Almighty* created a tree of gourds for him. In this vein, Abu Hurayra *may Allah be pleased with him* said that Prophet Yunus (Jonah) was thrown in an empty land, and Allah *Glorified is He* made for him a tree of gourds. Allah *Glorified is He* sent some animals to eat from the plants and then go and feed him with their milk in the mornings and the afternoons, till he restored his health.

When Prophet Yunus (Jonah) *Allah's peace be upon him* was showered with the Mercy of Allah *the Almighty* he was chosen to be one of the righteous Prophets, as He *Glorified is He* says:

فَاجْنِبْهُ رَبُّهُ، فَجَعَلَهُ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾

**But his Lord chose him and made him one of the
Righteous [50] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 50)**

Allah *the Almighty* has chosen Prophet Yunus (Jonah) *Allah's peace be upon him* after undergoing all these trials. This selection is the greatest grace in life. Being chosen after passing through a trial is a common incident that all the chosen Prophets went through. For example, Allah *Glorified is He* has chosen Adam *Allah's peace be upon him* to be a Prophet after passing through a trial, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: '...and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so his life became evil (to him). [121] Then his Lord chose him, so He turned to him and guided (him), [122]' (*Ta Ha*: 121-122). Such a trial proves that they are suitable for the prophetic mission and are able to shoulder the responsibility and fulfil what Allah *Glorified is He* wants from them.

We have spoken about the trial of Prophet Yunus (Johan) *Allah's peace be upon him* but Adam *Allah's peace be upon him* went through a similar trial before becoming a Prophet. Many people think that Adam's disobedience

was after becoming a Prophet, and thus they ask, 'how can he disobey Allah although he is a Prophet?' We say that this happened before being a Prophet; he was still a normal human being. That is why Allah *the Almighty* says: '...and Adam disobeyed his Lord, so his life became evil (to him). [121] Then his Lord chose him, so He turned to him and guided (him), [122]' (*Ta Ha*: 121-122). Hence, the selection came after committing the sin, and so was the case with Prophet Yunus (Jonah) *Allah's peace be upon him*. He was chosen after the trial of going away angrily from his people; the trial of what happened in the ship and being thrown into the sea and swallowed by the whale; and the trial of being thrown by the whale on a barren shore.

The One Who has chosen Prophet Yunus (Jonah) *Allah's peace be upon him* is 'his Lord' Whose Mercy outweighs His Harshness. Out of His Lordship, Allah *Glorified is He* gives respite to the sinners and opens the doors of repentance to whoever returns to Him. It is the Lordship of the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful Who does not treat His creatures unkindly.

Allah *Glorified is He* has chosen Prophet Yunus (Jonah), the companion of the whale, and made him one of the righteous people. Here comes a question, 'What is the good deed that made them deserve the rank of righteousness?' We say in our daily life, for example, 'This person is good, this one is good for kingship.' When the good person sees something good, they leave it as it is or makes it better. But the bad one corrupts the good thing and does not do good deeds.

Allah *the Almighty* has mentioned Prophet Yunus (Johan) *Allah's peace be upon him* among a group of righteous Prophets, saying: 'Such was the argument We gave to Abraham against his people— We raise in rank whoever We will— your Lord is all wise, all knowing. [83] We gave him Isaac and Jacob, each of whom We guided, as We had guided Noah before, and among his descendants were David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, and Aaron— in this way We reward those who do good— [84] Zechariah, John, Jesus, and Elijah— every one of them was righteous— [85] Ishmael, Elisha, Jonah, and Lot. We favoured each one of them over other people, [86] (*al-An'am*: 83-86). Prophethood and righteousness are Mercy from Allah *the Almighty* that He bestows on His Prophets. That is why He, says about Prophet Lut (Lot)

Allah's peace be upon him: 'And We admitted him to Our Mercy, truly, he was of the righteous, ' (*al-Anbiya*': 75).

وَإِنْ يَكَادُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَيُزْلِقُونَكَ بِأَبْصَرِهِمْ لَمَّا سَمِعُوا الذِّكْرَ وَيَقُولُونَ إِنَّهُ لَمَجْنُونٌ ﴿٥١﴾

**The disbelievers almost strike you down with their looks when they hear the Quran. They say, 'He must be mad!' [51]
(The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 51)**

The disbelievers were mocking and making fun of Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*. They had a fierce enmity towards him, and they used to give him looks of pure hatred. When he read the Noble Quran, they were looking at him with enmity as if they would strike him down with their gazes.

The Arabic word '*Zalaq*' means to fall. You sometimes find that the one who dislikes another gives them a look of hatred, wishing to strike them down with their eyes. It is said, 'He eats him with his eyes!'

Some scholars have said that the Arabic word '*Izlaaq*' refers to the harm that is caused by the enviers' eyes. In the past, when the Arabs wanted to harm someone, they bring a man and deprive him of food for two or three days. Then, they make the sheep and camels pass in front of him. When he looks at them and says, 'I have never seen such beautiful animals, ' some of them would be found dead after a while. Similarly, the disbelievers tried to strike Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* down with their looks and brought that man to do the same thing. By observing the two opinions, you feel that the first opinion is closer to the truth because the envier looks with admiration, while the verse indicates that they look with hatred and enmity.

The disbelievers hated to hear about the Noble Quran, the one to whom it was revealed and the One Who has sent it down to him. That is why their evil gazes were directed to him *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* when he was reading the Noble Quran, as He *the Almighty* says: 'The disbelievers almost strike you down with their looks when they hear the Quran...' (*al-Qalam*: 51).

The Arabic word *Dhikr* (Reminder) refers to the Noble Quran. This point is mentioned in many verses of the Quran, as in the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*:

'Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian,' (*al-Hijr*: 9) '...and We have revealed to you the Reminder that you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them, and that haply they may reflect,' (*an-Nahl*: 44) and 'This We recite to you of the communications and the wise reminder' (*Al- 'Imran*: 58).

Allah *Glorified is He* says to Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*: 'And most surely it is a reminder for you and your people...' (*az-Zukhruf*: 44). The Noble Quran is a great honour for him and his *ummah*; it will keep their remembrance till the Day of Judgment. Likewise, He *the Almighty* says: 'We have certainly sent down to you a Book in which is your mention. Then will you not reason?' (*al-Anbiya*: 10) So, the Noble Quran is an honour and remembrance for them. It is also a record for their history. As a matter of fact, the dignity of the *ummah* is derived from the Quran and its remembrance, and it will remain forever, for Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'S-a-d, I swear by the Quran, full of admonition,' (*Sad*: 1).

When the disbelievers of Mecca heard the Noble Quran, they did not speak badly about it; rather, they insulted the one who was reciting it, i.e. Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* and accused him of being mad. This shows how stupid they are. In another verse, He *the Almighty* says: 'And they say: O you to whom the Reminder has been revealed! you are most surely insane' (*al-Hijr*: 6). Claiming this reveals how stupid they were! If they admitted that the Noble Quran was revealed to him, how could they then accuse him of being mad? They admitted that the Quran was revealed to him and that it is not his own words. So, how could he be mad? This shows that they were liars and stupid. How can he *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* be insane while none of the unreasonable actions of the insane people appeared on him? The mad person behaves without logic; they cry, laugh, and hit other people purposelessly. Undoubtedly, Prophet Muhammad's actions are in line with the reason and logic.

At the beginning of this chapter, we notice that Allah *the Almighty* refutes this allegation, saying: 'By the pen! By all they write! [1] Your Lord's grace does not make you [Prophet] a madman: [2] you will have a never-ending reward—[3] truly you have a strong character, [4]' (*al-Hijr*: 6). Then, He

Glorified is He concludes the chapter with refuting the same accusation, saying: 'The disbelievers almost strike you down with their looks when they hear the Reminder. They say, 'He must be mad!' (*al-Qalam*: 51).

Allah then adds:



**But truly it is nothing other than a Reminder
for all peoples [52] (The Quran, *al-Qalam*: 52)**

The style here is called *Qasr*; it consists of a negation 'it is nothing' followed by an exception 'other than'. This style is frequent in the Noble Quran; for example, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And you do not ask them for a reward for this; it is nothing but a reminder for all mankind ' (*Yusuf*: 104). The word 'reminder' makes you feel that the sound human natural disposition should have made the people keep remembering Allah *the Almighty*. However, out of the distracting incidents, He *Glorified is He* has revealed the Noble Quran as a reminder.

The word *Al-'alamin* (worlds) is the plural of the word '*Alam* (the world). The worlds are everything other than Allah *Glorified is He*. There are: the world of the Angels, the world of the jinn, the world of the humans, the world of the animals, the world of the plants and the inanimate objects. Some of these worlds have no Messengers because they do not have the freedom of choice.

the chapter of

al-Haqqqa

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

The chapter of *al-Haqqa*⁽¹⁾:



**The Inevitable Hour! [1] What is the Inevitable Hour? [2]
What will explain to you what the Inevitable Hour is? [3]
(The Quran, *al-Haqqa*: 1-3)**

The Arabic word *al-Haqqa* (the inevitable Hour) refers to the Day of Judgment. It is the reality about which there is no doubt. It is one of the names of the Last Day. It is the Day of the inevitable Event after which there is no event; the Day of the deafening Blast that deafens the ears that were incurious about it in this worldly life; the Day of the overwhelming Calamity; and the Day of Recompense and Judgment.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And We certainly sent into every nation a Messenger, [saying], 'Worship Allah and avoid the false deities.' And among them were those whom Allah guided, and among them were those upon whom straying was [deservedly] decreed...' (*an-Nahl*: 36). The Arabic word *Haqqat* (decreed) in this verse means they fairly deserved their punishment due to their misdeeds.

Likewise, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And when We decide to destroy a town, We (first) send a definite order (to obey Allah and be righteous) to those among them who are given the good things of this life. Then, they transgress therein, and thus the word (of torment) is justified against it (them),' (*al-Isra*': 16).

(1) This chapter of *al-Haqqa* was revealed in Mecca after the chapter of *al-Mulk* and before that of *al-Ma'arij*. It consists of 52 verses and is the chapter number 77 with regard to the arrangement of the Meccan chapters in Mecca. According to the Quranic order, it is the chapter number 69. In his 'Ulum Al-Quran, Abu Qasim says, 'All its verses are clear, containing no abrogating or abrogated verses.' See Abu Qasim, 'Ulum Al-Quran, 1/18.

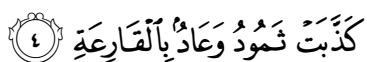
The punishment was justified against them, for the one who commits a sin deserves a punishment. Similarly, Allah's Decree has become justified against the disbelievers because of their ongoing disobedience and disbelief.

Al-Haqqa (The inevitable Hour) is the time when the deserved punishment for the disbelievers' misdeeds and the deserved reward for the believers' good deeds become due. It is the reality that must be believed in, for all its events are real and will inevitably occur.

Then the question comes: 'What is the inevitable Hour?' (*al-Haqqa*: 2) The question in this verse shows how great and mighty it is. It is the time when everyone will get what he deserves. It urges the listener to exert his/her utmost efforts to reach to its reality. Then, Allah *the Almighty* says that no one knows how great and terrible the Hour is. None can reach its reality either by knowledge or imagination. It is beyond imagination.

The Arabic word *Idrak* (realisation) means to know everything about something. You see the sun, for example, but you cannot claim that you know everything about it. In fact, realising the existence of something is different from knowing everything about how it exists. There are many things that exist in this worldly life and fulfil their functions, but we do not realise the reality of their existence. This does not mean, however, that they do not exist.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* refers to the previous nations saying:



The people of Thamud and 'Ad denied that the crashing blow would come [4] (The Quran, *al-Haqqa*: 4)

The people of Thamud asked Prophet Saleh *Allah's peace be upon him* to bring them a she-camel out of the rock as a sign of his truthfulness. But after this miracle occurred, they disbelieved in it and that is why Allah *Glorified is He* punished them severely. He *Glorified is He* has shown them the Right Path, but they chose the wrong path of disbelief. They disbelieved in Prophet Saleh (Shelah) *Allah's peace be upon him* and killed the she-camel. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'And as to Thamud, We showed them the right way, but they chose error above guidance...' (*Fussilat*: 17).

Allah *Glorified is He* has told us the stories of the previous Prophets with their people and how they disbelieved in them and thus were seized with punishment. He *Glorified is He* makes mention of the stories of Prophet Nuh (Noah), Prophet Hud (Eber), Prophet Saleh (Shelah), Prophet Shu'aib (Jethro) and Prophet Lut (Lot) *Allah's Peace be upon them* with their people.

The remnants of the cities of the people of Prophet Saleh (Shelah) *Allah's peace be upon him* are still there in Saudi Arabia. The people of Prophet Saleh (Shelah) *Allah's peace be upon him* used to carve their homes inside the mountains. Allah *Glorified is He* says about their civilisation: 'And [with] Thamud, who carved out the rocks in the valley?' (*al-Fajr*: 9)

All the previous nations used to deny the Message, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'Like the striving of the people of Pharaoh and those before them; they rejected Our communications, so Allah destroyed them on account of their faults; and Allah is severe in requiting (evil)' (*Al-Imran*: 11). They used to disbelieve in the Message, and thus they deserved Allah's Punishment. Further, He *the Almighty* tells Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* that he should not be sad because of his people's disbelief, as many Prophets before him were denied. In this regard, He *Glorified is He* says: 'But if they reject you, so indeed were rejected before you Messengers who came with clear arguments and scriptures and the illuminating book,' (*Al-Imran*: 184).

Allah *Glorified is He* gathered in many verses between the people of 'Ad and the people of Thamud; for example, He *the Almighty* says: 'But if they turn aside, then say: I have warned you of a scourge like the scourge of 'Ad and Thamud,' (*Fussilat*: 13). The people of 'Ad denied their Messenger, as Allah *the Almighty* says: 'They said: O Hud! You have not brought to us any clear argument and we are not going to desert our gods for your word, and we are not believers in you,' (*Hud*: 53).

'Ad and Thamud denied the Messengers and the miracles that were sent to them. They also disbelieved in the Crashing Blow, as mentioned in this verse. So what does the Arabic word *Qari'a* (Crashing Blow) mean? It means to strongly strike something which is quiet and motionless. From this word, the word *Qar' Al-Bab* (pounding on the door) is derived. There is difference between 'knocking' on the door and 'pounding' on it.

The Crushing Blow pounds on the hearts, the ears, and other senses. It strikes their hearts with its horror and terror. It also strikes Allah's enemies with punishment and overwhelms their hearts with fear. Thus, the people of 'Ad and the people of Thamud denied the Day of Judgment, the Resurrection, and the Gathering.

When you reflect on this chapter, you find something wonderful; it starts with: 'The Inevitable Hour! [1] What is the Inevitable Hour? [2] What will explain to you what the Inevitable Hour is? [3]' (*al-Haqqa*: 1-3) However, when Allah *the Almighty* speaks about the denial of 'Ad and Thamud, He does not say that they denied the Inevitable Hour. Rather, He says that they denied the Crushing Blow. So, He *Glorified is He* mentioned another name of the Day of Judgment to gather the two meanings which describe the Day of Judgment as the inevitable Hour and the Crushing Blow. That is the Day when the deserved recompense of both the believers and the disbelievers will be due. Moreover, that Day will strike the hearts and the whole universe with horror.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:



Thamud was destroyed by a deafening blast [5]
(The Quran, *al-Haqqa*: 5)

Allah *Glorified is He* mentions first the disbelief of the people of 'Ad and the people of Thamud in the Last Day, saying: 'The people of Thamud and 'Ad denied that the crashing blow would come,' (*al-Haqqa*: 4). Their crime is the same, but their punishment is different. He *the Almighty* mentioned first some details about the punishment of Thamud. In this verse, He *Glorified is He* says that they were punished with the deafening blast. Another verse states that they were punished by a violent storm: '...on whom We sent down a violent storm...' (*al-Ankabut*: 40), or they were punished by an earthquake. This punishment affected them and kept them on their positions; standing, sitting, or lying down. Yet, He *the Almighty* states that they were also punished by a blast: 'If they turn away, say, 'I have warned you about a blast like the one which struck 'Ad and Thamud,' (*Fussilat*: 13). All those four terms give

the meaning of the overwhelming event and the inescapable punishment to the extent that they fell on their knees and faces motionlessly.

Allah *Glorified is He* has described their condition after sending the Blast that struck them with terror as: '...We released a single mighty blast against them and they ended up like a fence maker's dry sticks...' (*al-Qamar*: 31). They became like the dry branches of a tree after being smashed. The farmer uses these branches to make a fence to surround their sheep. Ultimately, they become dry, fall on the ground and the sheep smash them.

The Arabic word *Taghiya* means what trespasses the limits. So, the blast with which the people of Thamud were punished exceeded the limits that the human being can bear.

Then, Allah *the Almighty* says:

وَأَمَّا عَادٌ فَأُهْلِكُوا بِرِيحٍ صَرْصَرٍ عَاتِيَةٍ

'Ad was destroyed by a furious wind [6]
(The Quran, *al-Haqqa*: 6)

The Arabic word *Sarsar* means the strong and cold wind that has strong voice. It was also mentioned in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...as the likeness of wind in which is intense cold...' (*Al-Imran*: 117). The wind spreads the cold and makes it stronger. If it is not for the wind, the cold will remain in one area without being spread out. The wind moves the cold from one area to another, and causes more harm. It also may be disastrous.

The wind that is described as '*Sarsar*' is a cold, violent wind that has a strong sound. We know in our villages that the hoarfrost may destroy some plants. Thus, the *Sarsar* is harmful wind.

The people of 'Ad were arrogant towards Prophet Hud (Eber) Allah's *peace be upon him* and those who believed in him. They felt that they were the strongest people and thus denied the signs of Allah *the Almighty*. So, what was their destiny? Allah *Glorified is He* has sent on them wind with strong sound during some horrible days to make them taste the humiliating torture. Allah *Glorified is He* says about the people of 'Ad: 'As for 'Ad, they were arrogant upon the earth without right and said, 'Who is greater than us in strength?'

Did they not consider that Allah who created them was greater than them in strength? But they were rejecting Our signs. So We sent upon them a screaming wind during days of misfortune to make them taste the punishment of disgrace in the worldly life; but the punishment of the Hereafter is more disgracing, and they will not be helped,' (*Fussilat*: 16). The days are described to be that of misfortune. Thus, the wind was violent and evil, bereft of any good at all. That is why He *the Almighty* says afterwards:

سَخَّرَهَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَبْعَ لَيَالٍ وَثَمَنِيَةَ أَيَّامٍ حُسُومًا فَتَرَى
الْقَوْمَ فِيهَا صَرْعَى كَأَنَّهُمْ أُعِجَزُوا بِخُلٍّ خَاوِيَةٍ ﴿٧﴾

**That God let loose against them for seven
consecutive nights, eight consecutive days, so that
you could have seen its people lying dead like
hollow palm-trunks [7] (The Quran, *al-Haqqa*: 7)**

Allah *the Almighty* says about this violent wind: '...Nay! It is what you sought to hasten on, a blast of wind in which is a painful punishment, [24] Destroying everything by the command of its Lord... [25]' (*al-Ahqaf*: 24-25). The Arabic word *Ar-Rih* (the blast of wind) expresses the destructive power of the air because when the wind blows powerfully from one direction, it becomes destructive. But if it is faced with another wind, balance is achieved.

That is why this word is only used in the Noble Quran to refer to destruction. But when Allah *the Almighty* speaks about the useful wind, He uses the word *Riah* (winds). This is because when the winds blow from different directions, the balance in this life is achieved. When He *the Almighty* wants the wind to be destructive, He makes it blow from one direction. The wind then will not be faced with another one from the opposite direction and that is why its power will be destructive.

This violent and destructive wind that left nothing behind was sent to destroy the people of 'Ad. It lasted for seven successive nights and eight successive days, without stopping. Allah *Glorified is He* describes this wind as *Husuman*, that is, it did not leave anything behind. Everything had completely come to an end.

It was narrated that Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'The wind that was sent over the people of 'Ad has got out from a place at the size of a ring. It passed by the Bedouin in the desert, it carried them together with their animals and property. It made them hang between the heavens and the earth. When the people of the city saw this strong wind, they thought that it is coming with rain. At this point, the Bedouin and their animals were thrown over them.'

Allah *Glorified is He* describes this wind as '*Husuma*' because it killed and destroyed them all. The word *Hasm* means cutting down. It was narrated that an old woman entered a place to escape from this wind, but the wind followed her and killed her in the eighth day. Afterwards, the torture stopped.

As the violent wind lasted unremittingly for seven successive nights and eight successive days, He *the Almighty* describes it in another verse, saying: "'Ad treated (the truth) as a lie, so how (great) was My Punishment and My warning! [18] Surely We sent on them a tornado in a day of bitter ill-luck, [19]' (*al-Qamar*: 19). It is as if the eight days with their seven nights are like one day, as the torture was continuous without stopping. They are like one horrible destructive day that lasted till it destroyed them all.

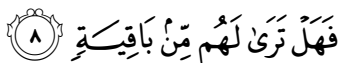
The wind was strong to that it was throwing them away together with their belongings, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Tearing men away as if they were the trunks of palm-trees torn up,' (*al-Qamar*: 20). It was uprooting them from their places and houses and throwing them away, just like the palm tree when being uprooted.

So, with regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...so you would see the people therein fallen as if they were hollow trunks of palm trees,' (*al-Haqqa*: 7), the word 'see' is miraculous. It makes the listener or the reader feels as if looking at the punishment that fell upon those people and watching what happens to them.

Not only does Allah *Glorified is He* address Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* but also everyone who reads the Noble Quran. This style is used in His saying: 'And the Book shall be placed, then you will see the guilty fearing from what is in it, and they will say: Ah! Woe to us! What a book is this! It does not omit a small one or a great one...' (*al-Kahf*: 49).

There you see the people of 'Ad in the seven consecutive nights and the eight consecutive days killed and thrown as if they were hollow trunks of palm trees thrown everywhere. None of them or of their offspring were left behind.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:



**Can you see any trace of them now? [8]
(The Quran, *al-Haqq*: 8)**

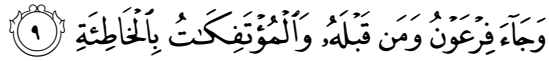
Allah *Glorified is He* is still addressing Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*. He *the Almighty* reveals to him the scene of this destructive storm and its impact on the people of 'Ad. They were lying dead, just like the hollow trunks of palm trees. Can anyone see any remnants of them?! The wind of *Dabur*⁽¹⁾ destroyed them all. He *the Almighty* says about the punishment of the previous nations: 'And how many have We destroyed before them of generations? Do you perceive of them anyone or hear from them a sound?' (*Maryam*: 98) You can say nothing but to answer, 'No, I cannot perceive of them anyone, neither can I hear from them a sound!'

It is as if He *the Almighty* is saying, 'O Muhammad, can you find any remains of the people of 'Ad? Is there one soul remaining? None of them or of their offspring were left.' In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'Destroying everything by the command of its Lord, so they became such that naught could be seen except their houses...' (*al-Ahqaf*: 25) and 'So We delivered him and those with him by mercy from Us, and We cut off the last of those who rejected Our communications and were not believers,' (*al-A'raf*: 72). According to the last verse, the believers were the only survivors. Further, Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'I was granted victory with *As-Saba*⁽²⁾ and the nation of 'Ad was destroyed by *Ad-Dabur* (westerly wind).'

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

(1) A wind that blows from the west towards the east.

(2) A gentle wind which blows from the east



**Pharaoh, too, and those before him, and the ruined
cities: these people committed grave sins [9]
(The Quran, *al-Haqqa*: 9)**

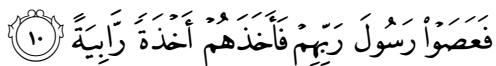
Allah *Glorified is He* starts the stories of the previous nations with mentioning the people of Thamud and the people of 'Ad. They all were destroyed long time ago, and none of their offspring remained, though their power was great.

Pharaoh, the nations before him and the people of the ruined cities committed grave sins. The Arabic word *Al-Mu'tafikat* (the ruined cities) refers to the villages of people of Prophet Lut (Lot) *Allah's peace be upon him*. It means something that is turned up side down. Their villages were turned up side down, a fact with is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'And the overthrown cities did He overthrow, [53] So there covered them that which covered [54]' (*an-Najm*: 53-54).

The Arabic word *Ifk* (falsehood) means also to turn something away from its reality, as the people of Prophet Hud (Eber) *Allah's peace be upon him* said to him: 'Have you come to us to turn us away from our gods; then bring us what you threaten us with, if you are of the truthful ones,' (*al-Ahqaf*: 23). Thus, those villages were turned up-side-down, as He *the Almighty* says: 'So when Our Decree came to pass, We turned them upside down and rained down upon them stones, of what had been decreed, one after another' (*Hud*: 82). They were five villages: Sadum, Dadoma, Da'ghuh, 'Amura, and Qutm. All of them were turned upside down completely.

Thus, the verse means that Pharaoh of Egypt, the nations before him, and the people of Lut (Lot) committed the grave sin. What was that sin? It is the greatest sin ever, i.e. disbelief. It also refers to other grave sins; the people of Thamud killed the she-camel, the people of 'Ad denied their Prophet Hud (Eber) *Allah's peace be upon him* ; Pharaoh disbelieved and claimed divinity and the people of Lut (Lot) *Allah's peace be upon him* committed the obscenity that no one had committed before them.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:



**And disobeyed the messenger of their Lord, so He
seized them with an ever- tightening grip [10]
(The Quran, *al-Haqqa*: 10)**

Each of these people disobeyed the Messenger of Allah who was sent to them. For example, the people of Pharaoh disobeyed Prophet Musa (Moses) *Allah's peace be upon him*; the people of Thamud disobeyed Prophet Saleh (Shelah) *Allah's peace be upon him*; and the people of Prophet Lut (Lot) disobeyed him *Allah's peace be upon him*.

Someone may ask, 'Why did He say in this verse that they disobeyed the 'Messenger', not 'Messengers'? This is because all the Messengers were sent with one Message, that is, to believe in Allah as one God and Lord, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'And certainly We raised in every nation a Messenger saying: Serve Allah and shun the false deities. So there were some of them whom Allah guided and there were others against whom error was due; therefore travel in the land, then see what was the end of the rejecters,' (*an-Nahl*: 36). The verse in question may also mean that they disbelieved in the Message of their Lord.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...so He seized them with an ever-tightening grip,' (*al-Haqqa*: 10). They were taken severely, with more power than the nations before them. That is why it was an excessive punishment. It was named *Rabiya* (excessive) because it increased and escalated by itself.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:



**But when the Flood rose high, We saved you in
the floating ship [11] (The Quran, *al-Haqqa*: 11)**

The Arabic verb *Tagha* means to trespass limits. Allah *the Almighty* has made limits that should be observed for everything in this universe. If you followed the way that He *Glorified is He* directed you towards, your life will be ideal. When something trespasses limits, it causes corruption in the worldly

life, even if it is the water from which everything was created. Water is the main cause of life. However, if the water trespasses its limits, it floods and destroys everything. That is why He *the Almighty* says: 'But when the Flood rose high, We saved you in the floating ship,' (*al-Haqqa*: 11).

When the water trespasses the limits, this entails its refusal to be subject to the human being, for it does not serve us except by Allah's Order. The creatures, in fact, do not serve you because of yourself. If so, why can you not control them when they exceed the limits?

The water may overflow, the wind may turn into a storm, the earth may quake and the volcanoes may erupt. All of that is meant for the human being to realise that we cannot control the universe that we live in.

The water overflow is expressed in the Noble Quran with the word 'flood'. Water is the main cause for life, but it may also be a cause of destruction. The creatures do not act by themselves; rather, it is the Creator Who directs them. He *Glorified is He* punishes with water as He punishes with fire, though they are the opposite of each other. None can do this except the One Who created them *Glorified is He*.

The stories of the drowning of the people of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* and the people of Sheba made the Arabs afraid of water. If they needed water, they would go far away to fill their goatskins. That is because they knew the inescapable danger of the flood.

The flood means that the water exceeds the needs of the people and turns from being a cause of life into a cause of death. Allah *the Almighty* reminds all people about His Grace, saying: 'But when the Flood rose high, We saved you in the floating ship' (*al-Haqqa*: 11). In this case, the water went far more than quenching thirst, to become destructive.

Allah *Glorified is He* says about the story of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* and the flood: '[So it was], until when Our Command came and the oven overflowed, We said, 'Load upon the ship of each [creature] two mates and your family, except those about whom the word has preceded, and [include] whoever has believed.' But none had believed with him, except a few' (*Hud*: 40). He *Allah's peace be upon him* was ordered to carry a male and female of each plant and the animal to maintain life after being saved from

the flood. Allah *Glorified is He* has kept the life on earth by saving everything that is needed for life on the ark. The Arabic word *Jariya* in this verse means the ship. The plural of this word is *Jawary* (ships), as mentioned in His saying: 'And His are the ships reared aloft in the sea like mountains,' (*ar-Rahman*: 24). It was named *Al-Jariya* because it runs into the sea. The ark of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* was a titanic one; it carried a male and a female from all creatures so that the life on earth would be maintained.

Allah *Glorified is He* has mentioned the ships as one of His signs, saying: 'Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day, and the ships that run in the sea with that which profits men...' (*al-Baqara*: 164). But how do the ships that run into the sea be one of Allah's signs? The human being knows that the buoyant nature of the water is what makes the ships able to sail above it. Before inventing the steam motors, the wind was the only thing that moved the ships, that is why He *Glorified is He* says: 'If He willed, He could still the wind, and they would remain motionless on its surface...' (*ash-Shura*: 23). If it was not for the wind, the ship would stay motionless. This was before the invention of the steam motors.

If Allah *Glorified is He* wills, He can stop the power that moves anything. The ship needs the wind to move, if it was not running into the river. The water of the river runs from the outflow to the inflow. If we want the ship to move in the opposite direction, we need the wind.

Allah *Glorified is He* has subjugated ships to the people to facilitate their travels and interests, as He *the Almighty* says: '...and He has made the ships subservient to you, that they might run their course in the sea by His command, and He has made the rivers subservient to you,' (*Ibrahim*: 32).

Someone may say, 'We do not need the wind now for moving the ships, for now they move by machines and motors.' To reply to this, we say that the wind here has a broader meaning. It does not mean the power that pushes the ships above water; rather, it means the power by which it moves, whether it is wind, steam, electricity, etc.

The word 'you' in the verse in question refers to the ancestors who were carried with Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* on the Ark. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* has carried people's ancestors in the ship.

Allah *Glorified is He* addresses those to whom the Noble Quran was revealed, telling them that He saved their ancestors, i.e. Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* and the believers with him. Those who were addressed by this verse are their offspring. Hence, carrying the ancestors is considered carrying for their offspring as well. This is a Favour from Him *the Almighty* because they were the reason for their birth.

Hence, the pronoun in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...We saved you...' (*al-Haqqa*: 11) refers to the ancestors, i.e. Prophet Nuh (Noah) and those who believed with him. In fact, everyone on the earth is the offspring of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* and his three children who were with him in the ship. If the ship mentioned here refers to any ship, the pronoun 'you' in the verse then will refer to everyone.

If you reflect on the word *Al-Jariya* (the running ship), you find that the Ark of Noah was named *Al-Fulk* (ship) while it was being made, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'And make the ark before Our eyes and (according to) Our revelation...' (*Hud*: 37). After being made, He *the Almighty* named it *Safina* (ark), saying: 'So We delivered him and the inmates of the ark...' (*al-'Ankabut*: 15). When it became ready for running into the sea, He named it *Al-Jariya* (the floating ship), saying: '...We saved you in the floating ship' (*al-Haqqa*: 11).

Allah *the Almighty* subsequently says:

لِنَجْعَلَهَا لَكُمْ تَذْكِرَةً وَتَعِيَهَا أُذُنٌ وَعَيْنٌ ﴿١٢﴾

**Making that event a reminder for you:
attentive ears may take heed [12]
(The Quran, *al-Haqqa*: 12)**

Allah *Glorified is He* saved the Ark of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* to make it a reminder, a sign and an instruction. He *the Almighty* says: 'Surely this is a reminder, so whoever pleases takes to his Lord a way' (*al-Insan*: 29). So, the annihilation of the people of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* is an admonition for the people. We should remember their story and avoid being like them. Besides, we should heed this with attentive ears.

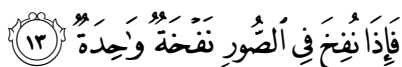
The attentive ear is that which keeps the instruction that it hears. Qatada ibn An-Nu'man *may Allah be pleased with him* said that the conscious ear is an ear that listens, understands and takes heed.

The one who has a conscious ear safeguards themselves from the punishment of the previous people by keeping away from sins. Their ear listens and their heart becomes aware and works according to what they knew. Consequently, they will be saved.

The ear also keeps what it perceives to be a lesson whose benefit will come later. It is described to be conscious although consciousness is related to the heart. That is meant to express how attentive it is. It may be also because the ear transfers what it hears to the heart that then becomes conscious of it.

Consciousness means to keep something inside your mind or heart, and to make use of what you have heard by working according to it. So, the conscious ear understands and benefits from what it has heard.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:



**When the Trumpet is sounded a single time [13]
(The Quran, *al-Haqqā*: 13)**

This verse turns our attention to the Last Day and its horrors, as the chapter starts with the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'The Inevitable Hour! [1] What is the Inevitable Hour? [2] What will explain to you what the Inevitable Hour is? [3]' (*al-Haqqā*: 1-3) The chapter starts with speaking about the Last Day, then the worldly punishment that inflicted those who rejected it, let alone the punishment that is waiting for them in the Hereafter. They were denying the Day of Judgment, but they will find themselves facing its obvious reality. It will be a surprise for them although they were warned by their Messengers against it.

Regarding the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'When the Trumpet is sounded...' (*al-Haqqā*: 13), it starts with the Arabic word *Fa-Idha* (when) which expresses the suddenness. Blowing the Horn is a sign for the beginning of something.

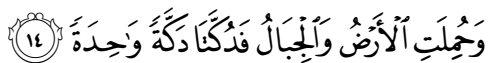
With the first Blow, all living things will die; and with the second blow, all the dead will be resurrected.

The second blow is a call for all the creatures to come out of their graves, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'On the day when He will call you forth, then shall you obey Him, giving Him praise, and you will think that you tarried but a little (while)' (*al-Isra'*: 52). When Allah *Glorified is He* calls them, they will get up with obedience and submission. None will be arrogant or lazy. That was in this worldly life, not in the Hereafter. This will happen after the second Blow. The first one stuns everything, while the second is the blow of resurrection. In this connection, Allah *the Almighty* 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; then it shall be blown again, then lo! They shall stand up awaiting, ' (*az-Zumar*: 68). The one who will blow the Horn is the Angel Israfil.

Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* once said to his Companions, 'When Allah has created heavens and earth, He has created *As-Sur* (the horn) and given it to Israfil. Since then, Israfil is putting it on his mouth, and looking to the Throne of Allah, waiting for His Order.' Abu Hurayra asked Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* 'What is *As-Sur*?' He said, 'It is the Horn.' He *Allah be pleased with him* asked, 'How does it look?' He *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'By the One that my soul is in His Hands, it is really great.' The circle that is put on the mouth is as wide as the heavens and earth. Allah will order Israfil to blow in the horn three times; the first one is the blow of horror, the second one is the blow of death, and the third one is the blow of Resurrection.'

When the disbelievers are taken by surprise with the blow of the horn and the Hour in which they were disbelieving, they will be speechless. That is out of surprise when they see what they had disbelieved in happening before their eyes.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:



**When the earth and its mountains are raised
high and then crushed with a single blow [14]
(The Quran, *al-Haqqā*: 14)**

The earth will be carried with all that is on it; its water, trees, and all other objects. The mountains will also be carried up from their places and crushed on earth. Hence, both will be crushed. The earth will be at one level, as He *the Almighty* says: 'Nay! When the earth is made to crumble to pieces,' (*al-Fajr*: 21).

Allah *the Almighty* has given us an example of this crushing in this worldly life, saying: '...but when his Lord manifested His glory to the mountain He made it crumble and Moses fell down in a swoon...' (*al-A'raf*: 143).

Allah *Glorified is He* reminds us with the collapse of the mountain when Musa (Moses) Allah's peace be upon him asked to see Him *the Almighty*. When Allah *Glorified is He* appeared to the mountain, it fell down and turned to dust out of fear of Him. Similarly, the mountains and earth will be crushed and will turn to dust. Despite the hardness, strength, and stability of the mountain, it turned to dust. The Arabic word *Dakka* means to press the top of something to make it at the level of another thing lower than it. The righteous king Dhu Al-Qarnayn built a dam composed of iron and copper, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Bring me blocks of iron; until when he had filled up the space between the two mountain sides, he said: Blow, until when he had made it (as) fire, he said: Bring me molten brass which I may pour over it,' (*al-Kahf*: 96). It is a hard and high barrier made of molten iron and copper. Dhu Al-Qarnayn described it as a mercy, saying: 'This is a mercy from my Lord...' (*al-Kahf*: 98). So, no one should think that the hardness of that barrier is eternal; it will only remain in this worldly life. When the Last Hour is due, He *the Almighty* will make it at one level with the earth. That is for its people not to be arrogant or oppress others after being oppressed before by Gog and Magog.

Thus, not only will the mountains that consist of rocks, fall, but also the barriers that are made of iron and steel, as if they are made of paper. As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...' for the saying of Allah, the blow,' (*al-Haqqā*: 14), it means that the earth and mountains will be crushed with a

single movement; it will be one thing. It is not important to know how this will happen. It will inevitably happen, whether you believed or not. Whether this will happen by the great earthquake on the Last Day, or by the violent wind that is strong enough to carry the earth and mountains, or by one of the Angels, there is no difference as the ultimate result is one. These are all Allah's Soldiers.

Someone may ask, 'Will the mountains be crushed or blasted or be like carded wool or dispersing dust or mirage, for the Noble Quran mentions all of these descriptions?' All these are different cases for the mountains. They will be first crushed, then be like carded wool, as He *the Almighty* says: 'The day on which men shall be as scattered moths, [4] And the mountains shall be as loosened wool, [5]' (*al-Qari`a*: 4-5). After being crushed, they will be on the earth like the carded wool, and then they will be like the dispersing dust when the wind disperses their dust everywhere. After this, the wind will take the dust away, as He *the Almighty* says: 'When the earth shall be shaken with a (severe) shaking, [4] And the mountains shall be made to crumble with (an awful) crumbling, [5] So that they shall be as scattered dust, [6]' (*al-Waqi'a*: 4-6).

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

﴿١٥﴾ وَأَنْشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَهِيَ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاهِيَةٌ ﴿١٦﴾

On that Day the Great Event will come to pass [15]

The sky will be torn apart on that Day, it will be so frail [16]

(The Quran, *al-Haqqa*: 15 - 16)

The Arabic word *Waqat* (the event) is used literally to express that something fell from a high place, and no one can stop it. This word is used when speaking about some great events. For example, Allah says: 'And when the word befalls them, We will bring forth for them a creature from the earth speaking to them, [saying] that the people were, of Our verses, not certain [in faith],' (*an-Naml*: 82). The word 'befall' here is not a normal falling; rather, it means returning to Allah *the Almighty*. It shows that they will suffer from problems and hardships.

The Arabic word *Waqat* (to befall) in the Quran always comes when speaking about hardships, except in the following verse: '...and whoever emigrates for

the cause of Allah will find on the earth many [alternative] locations and abundance. And whoever leaves his home as an emigrant to Allah and His Messenger and then death overtakes him - his reward has already become incumbent upon Allah...' (*an-Nisa'*: 100). The meaning here is that Allah *Glorified is He* makes their reward an obligation on Himself.

Hence, the Arabic word *Waqea'at* is used with the inevitable events and it is one of the names of the Last Day. The Last Day has many names; each one of them shows one side of this great and horrible Day. It is named the Catastrophe, the Reality, the Striking Calamity, the Deafening Blast, and the Event. The Last Day gathers all these descriptions at the same time. It will occur certainly, and when it does, nobody can deny it, as Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'There is no belying its coming to pass,' (*al-Waqi'a*: 2).

After Allah *Glorified is He* mentions what will happen on the earth on that horrible Day, saying: '...when the earth and its mountains are raised high and then crushed with a single blow,' (*al-Haqqa*: 14), He mentions here what will happen to the sky as well. By contemplating, you find that His saying: 'On that Day the Great Event will come to pass,' (*al-Haqqa*: 15), came after mentioning the earth and before mentioning the sky. It is in the middle between them. It is as if He *the Almighty* is putting the human being between them. The earth that they live on will be destroyed, and its mountains will crash. So, they should not think that there is a way out for them because even the sky above them will split and turn to pieces. Can you imagine anything more?

The sky will not split by itself; rather, it is out of its submission to Allah's Order, as He *the Almighty* says: 'When the heaven bursts asunder, [1] And obeys its Lord and it must [2]' (*al-Inshiqaq*: 1-2). As soon as the sky listens to His Order, it obeys directly and bursts asunder. Then the time of the Account comes. As soon as the sky splits, the sun is wrapped up and the stars fall. Not only does the sky listen to Allah's Order, but it also fulfils it quickly, without delay. So, His Order is directly fulfilled.

As for the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: '...it will be so frail' (*al-Haqqa*: 16), it means that the sky on that Day will be weak and split, as the Arabic word *Wahiya* means weak.

After being very firm, the sky will become weak. In this regard, Allah *Glorified is He* tells us about the strength of the creation of the sky, saying: 'Are you the harder to create or the heaven? He made it. [27] He raised high its height, then put it into a right good state, [28]' (*an-Nazi'at*: 27-28); 'I swear by the heaven full of ways' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 47); 'And the heaven, We raised it high with power, and most surely We are the makers of things ample' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 7). Its atoms are joined together, that is why you find it strong and firm. This strong building will be weak on the Last Day. It will have sides and edges. That is why He *the Almighty* then says:

وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ عَلَىٰ أَرْجَائِهَا وَيَحْمِلُ عَرْشَ رَبِّكَ فَوْقَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ ثَمَنِيَّةٌ ﴿١٧﴾

The angels will be on all sides of it and, on that Day, eight of them will bear the throne of your Lord above them [17] (The Quran, *al-Haqqa*: 17)

The Angels will be at the edges and sides of the sky. When the Day of Judgment comes, Allah *Glorified is He* will order the lower sky to split; the Angels will be at its edges, then they descend to the earth and surround all what is on it.

However, some scholars said that the pronoun in His saying: '...on all sides of it...' (*al-Haqqa*: 17) refers to the earth. They surmise that Allah *Glorified is He* will order the Angels of the lower heaven to stand in lines on the edges of the earth, and then He orders the Angels of the second heaven to stand after them, and so on. Everyone from the jinn and mankind will find the earth surrounded.

He *the Almighty* then says: '...eight of them will bear the Throne of your Lord above them,' (*al-Haqqa*: 17). The Arabic word '*Arsh* (Throne)' is used also to refer to the thrones of kings in this worldly life. Allah's Throne is mentioned in the Noble Quran in many verses, as in His saying: '...and His Dominion (Throne) (extends) on the water...' (*Hud*: 7); '...glory be to Allah, the Lord of the Throne, above what they attribute (to Him),' (*al-Anbiya*: 22); and 'So exalted be Allah, the True King; no god is there but He, the Lord of the honorable Throne,' (*al-Mu'minun*: 116). Here, the Throne of Allah *the Almighty* is a sign that the matter has been settled and the whole universe is under His Control; nothing can disobey His Order.

Allah *Glorified is He* describes His Throne as great. When you hear about a great throne, you think of those great thrones that we see in this worldly life, like the throne of the Queen of Sheba which the hoopoe bird described, saying: '...she has a great throne,' (*al-Mu'minun*: 27). It is great according to the human standards. As for the Throne of Allah, it is beyond what humans can imagine; nothing resembles it. He *the Almighty* describes it, saying: '...and He is the Lord of the honorable Throne,' (*at-Tawba*: 129). Abu Dharr Al-Ghifari *Allah be pleased with him* said, 'I asked Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* about the Chair, and he said, 'O Abu Dharr, the seven heavens and the seven earths compared to the Chair are no more than a ring thrown into a vast desert. And the favour of the Throne upon the Chair is like the favour of the desert upon this ring.'

The Arabic word '*Arsh* (Throne) entails the meaning of highness, that is why it refers sometimes to the ceiling and to the bed as well. In this connection, He *the Almighty* says: 'And he raised his parents upon the throne...' (*Yusuf*: 100).

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

يَوْمَذِ تُعْرَضُونَ لَا تَخْفَى مِنْكُمْ خَافِيَةٌ ﴿١٨﴾

**On that Day you will be brought to judgment and
none of your secrets will remain hidden [18]
(The Quran, *al-Haqq*: 18)**

Nothing is hidden from Allah *Glorified is He* as He says in another verse: 'They conceal [their evil intentions and deeds] from the people, but they cannot conceal [them] from Allah, and He is with them [in His knowledge] when they spend the night in such as He does not accept of speech. And ever is Allah, of what they do, encompassing,' (*an-Nisa*: 108). The Arabic word *Muhit* (encompassing) means to encompass something so that it cannot escape in either the present or the future. In this sense, Allah's Knowledge encompasses everything; nothing is concealed from Him *Glorified is He*. Allah *the Almighty* is not distracted by a specific sound or sight from knowing the rest of the sounds and sights, for His sight and knowledge are All-Encompassing and Subtle. That is why the reward He gives goes in accordance with this subtle Knowledge.

Hence, you should never overlook the fact that your Lord is seeing and observing you and that nothing of what you do is concealed from Him.

Allah *Glorified is He* has told us about being presented before Him, saying: 'And they will be presented before your Lord in rows, [and He will say], 'You have certainly come to Us just as We created you the first time. But you claimed that We would never make for you an appointment,' (*al-Kahf*: 48). Presentation means to display all the items of the presented subject in an organised way. This is like the soldiers who display themselves to the leader in a military show, so that s/he can see every one of them standing in lines.

We will be presented in front of Allah *the Almighty* in a systematic way; no one can hide or escape. Every line will not hide the one that follows it, so all of them are apparent. We will return to Him *the Almighty* naked as we were first created; we will have nothing even to cover ourselves with, a fact which is clear in His saying: 'And they will be presented before your Lord in rows, [and He will say], 'You have certainly come to Us just as We created you the first time...' (*al-Kahf*: 48). Every secret will be revealed then, for nothing is concealed from Him *the Almighty*.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says:

فَأَمَّا مَنْ أَوْفَىٰ كِتَابَهُ بِيَمِينِهِ ۖ فَقُولُ هَآؤُمۡ أَقْرَأُوا كِتَابَهُ ۝١٩
إِنِّي ظَنَنْتُ أَنِّي مُلَاقٍ حِسَابِيَهٗ ۝٢٠ فَهُوَ فِي عِيشَةٍ رَّاضِيَةٍ ۝٢١
فِي جَنَّةٍ عَالِيَةٍ ۝٢٢ قُطُوفُهَا دَانِيَةٌ ۝٢٣
كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا أَسْلَفْتُمْ فِي الْأَيَّامِ الْخَالِيَةِ ۝٢٤

Anyone who is given his Record in his right hand will say, 'Here is my Record, read it [19] I knew I would meet my Reckoning' [20] and so he will have a pleasant life [21] in a lofty Garden [22] with clustered fruit within his reach [23] It will be said, 'Eat and drink to your heart's content as a reward for what you have done in days gone by' [24] (The Quran, *al-Haqqa*: 19 - 24)

Allah *the Almighty* is Supreme and All Powerful over all things. He will give every one of us his/her own record on the Day of Judgment. In this connection,

He *Glorified is He* says: 'The Day every soul will find what it has done of good present [before it] and what it has done of evil, it will wish that between itself and that [evil] was a great distance...' (*Al-Imran*: 30). He *Glorified is He* does not hold the people accountable except for their deeds written in their record which they will read themselves to be a proof against them.

The recording is not as what we imagine, for even the voices and breaths are recorded. On the Day of Judgment, everyone will find that all that they did is written and they will be ordered to read it themselves, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Read your book; your own self is sufficient as a reckoner against you this Day,' (*al-Isra*': 14). This shows that when the human being sees what was written in their record, they will recognise all of it. In our worldly life, some people record everything against their enemies so that none can deny it when they read it. It is as if Allah *the Almighty* leaves the account of everyone to themselves. Everything is recorded, and one's record will come to them on that Day and they will be the reckoner against themselves. Everything done in this worldly life is preserved, for the Angels are writing down all of our deeds, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'And most surely there are keepers over you [10] Honorable recorders, [11] They know what you do [12]' (*al-Infitar*: 10-11).

Some people deny the possibility of writing and recording the deeds. For those people we say, 'Look at what the human mind invented today; the people now can record pictures, voices, fingerprints, etc. These are the human abilities, what do you think then of the infinite Ability of the Creator?'

The record in which your deeds are recorded is yours; that is why Allah *the Almighty* says here: 'Anyone who is given his Record in his right hand...' (*al-Haqq*a: 19). Taking the Record with the right hand is a glad tiding that the person will be saved from the hell and will have an easy Account. Their face will become bright. In this connection, Allah *the Almighty* says: '...then whoever is given his book in his right hand, these shall read their book; and they shall not be dealt with a whit unjustly,' (*al-Isra*': 71). After receiving this glad tiding, they will hasten to read their Record and then show it to the people and take pride in it. This is the reward of the one who followed Allah's Way of Guidance and did not blindly follow the paths of error. They will proudly show the people their Record because it contains nothing of which

they are ashamed. This is like the case of the student who shows their high marks to the people.

One the other hand, the one who is given their Record in their left hand will say: 'If only I had never been given any Record [25] and knew nothing of my Reckoning. [26] How I wish death had been the end of me. [27] My wealth has been no use to me, [28] and my power has vanished, [29]' (*al-Haqqa*: 25-29). Hence, we should be careful in order not to be in that critical situation on the Day of Judgment. We will be faced with a Book that records everything, however small it is. This is a reminder for us while we still have time, so we should repent to Allah *the Almighty* and maintain our relationship with Him.

Regarding the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...Here is my Record, read it,' (*al-Haqqa*: 19), the last word of this verse ends with the Arabic letter *Ha'*, which is called *Ha' As-Sakt* (stopping). It shows the hardness of that Day, for even the happy person stops at the end of every sentence to take breath. So, what about the other miserable people?

Then Allah *Glorified is He* relates that the one who is given his/her Record in his/her right hand will say: 'I knew I would meet my Reckoning,' (*al-Haqqa*: 20). The Arabic word *Zhann* here means that they were certain, it does not mean to doubt the Reckoning, or else they would not be a believer, nor will they take their Record with their right hand. They were sure that they will be accounted, and will find their reward on the Day of Judgment. In this vein, He *the Almighty* says: 'Who know that they shall meet their Lord and that they shall return to Him' (*al-Baqara*: 46). This verse shows that even if the one is not completely certain about meeting their Lord, they should adhere to His Way of Guidance and do righteous deeds. So, what if they are completely certain about that?

Further, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'The chiefs of those who disbelieved from among his people said: Most surely we see you in folly, and most surely we think you to be of the liars,' (*al-A'raf*: 66). So, the Arabic word *Zhann* can mean certainty, as in the verse in which He *the Almighty* speaks about the criminals, saying: 'And the criminals will see the Fire and will be certain that they are to fall therein. And they will not find from it a way elsewhere' (*al-Kahf*: 53).

Then Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And so he will have a pleasant life,' (*al-Haqqā*: 23). They will live a satisfactory life. They will never be dissatisfied in it. This is because in paradise there is no death, poverty, illness, fear, or madness. They will be safe from any fear or poverty. Not only will they be satisfied, but paradise will also be satisfied with them and yearn for the admittance of its dwellers. It is the pleasure that makes the faces bright, as Allah *the Almighty* says: '(Some) faces on that day shall be bright, [22] Looking to their Lord, [23]' (*al-Qiyāma*: 22-23); and 'You will recognise in their faces the brightness of bliss' (*al-Mutaffifin*: 24). The happiness appears on their faces and features and everyone can see it.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* tells us about the place of this pleasant life, saying: 'In a lofty Garden' (*al-Haqqā*: 22). The word *Janna* (Garden) entails the meaning of covering. It is a Garden with high trees that cover whoever walks among them. It is unlike the gardens with short flowers that only give pleasure to the eyes. It has high, dense trees that cover the people with their shadows and fruits. This Garden is sufficient for anyone, as they will not need anything else. The one who suffers insufficiency looks forward to what makes them self-sufficient, but the one who is self-sufficient is not in need of anything else.

In another verse, He *the Almighty* says: '(Other) faces on that day shall be happy, [8] Well-pleased because of their striving, [9] In a lofty Garden [10]' (*al-Ghashiya*: 8-10). It is high in status, and high in its degrees. It is mentioned sometimes in plural 'Gardens' because it has many different levels. There are the Garden of *Al-Firdaws*, the Garden of *Eden*, the Garden of the Bliss, the Garden of *Eternity*, the Garden of Peace, the Garden of Refuge, and the Garden of *Illyyun*, which is the highest one.

Then Allah *the Almighty* describes this lofty Garden, saying: 'with clustered fruit within his reach,' (*al-Haqqā*: 23). He *Glorified is He* makes the fruits near to His servant in order not to make them tired. Elsewhere He says: 'And close down upon them (shall be) its shadows and its fruits shall be made near (to them), being easy to reach,' (*al-Insan*: 14). The fruits will descend to where they are and they can easily reach it, whether standing, sitting, or lying down. They descend to them regardless of their position. In this vein, Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'The Paradise was presented in front of

me, if I stretched my hand, I could reach its fruits.' That is because they are near to the believers, whatever was their position. Further, Al-Bara' ibn 'Azib *may Allah be pleased with him* said, 'One can reach the fruits while lying down.' Qatada also said, 'Neither thorns nor far distance prevent them from reaching to the fruits.' Thus, if they want to eat from the fruits, they descend down till they eat as much as they like. It reaches to their mouth directly if they like.

Then Allah *the Almighty* says: 'It will be said, 'Eat and drink to your heart's content as a reward for what you have done in days gone by' (*al-Haqqa*: 24). The beginning of this verse was repeated in many verses, as in His saying: 'Eat and drink of the provisions of Allah and do not act corruptly in the land, making mischief,' (*al-Baqara*: 60) and '... eat and drink until the whiteness of the day becomes distinct from the blackness of the night at dawn...' (*al-Baqara*: 187). These two verses speak about this worldly life. The first one orders us to eat and drink without corrupting the earth. So, eating and drinking is conditioned by not causing corruption. The second one speaks about the time for eating and drinking before Fasting: '...and eat and drink until the whiteness of the day becomes distinct from the blackness of the night at dawn...' (*al-Baqara*: 187).

As for the verse under discussion, it speaks about the Hereafter. Eating and drinking there are unconditional. If the worship was difficult for you, you should remember the easiness and the good reward you will get in the Hereafter. That is why Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Eat and drink to your heart's content as a reward for what you have done in days gone by,' (*al-Haqqa*: 24). The verse mentions both the deed and its reward. The deed is the good actions in this worldly life, and the reward is the eating and drinking to the heart's content in the paradise. The Day of Judgment is the time for the reward that will be ever lasting. It is a reward for what they have done. They have been exposed to oppression and torture for the sake of Allah *the Almighty* and thus their reward is to have ever lasting happiness in the Hereafter.

The food and drink are delicious and satisfying while eating. The food in this worldly life may be delicious, but may cause health problems. By contrast, in the paradise, they will not fear any illness or harm from food. They will eat and drink even without urination or defecation. Moreover, they will eat from the fruits of paradise, and drink from its rivers and springs. Besides, they will drink unaltered water, purified honey, and milk whose taste never changes.

Allah *the Almighty* describes for us the drink of the people of paradise and even the pots and cups in which it is served, saying: 'Trays of gold and cups will be passed round them, (there will be) therein all that the one's inner-selves could desire, all that the eyes could delight in, and you will abide therein,' (*az-Zukhruf*: 71); and 'They will be served by immortal boys, [17] With cups, and jugs, and a glass from the flowing wine[18], Wherefrom they will get neither any aching of the head, nor any intoxication, [19]' (*al-Waqi'a*: 17-19). They will not exert any effort; these things will be passed around to them. The drink is poured from jugs into cups, and the food is served in trays of gold. It is the utmost welfare. They are not just filling their stomachs; the mere sight of these is an enjoyment. What do you think then of the taste? They will eat whatever they desire. This is like when a dear guest visits you and you ask him/her, 'What do you like to eat?' This is because you want to serve them the best food their soul desires. The believers will receive such a great reward for what they have done in the previous days of good deeds, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'There shall every soul become acquainted with what it sent before...' (*Yunus*: 30); and 'Eat and drink pleasantly for what you did' (*at-Tur*: 91). In this connection, Qatada said, 'Your current days will go, but they lead to everlasting days, so work hard and do good during these days as much as you can.'

Then Allah *the Glorified and Exalted* tells us about the other party who is given their Record in their left hand, saying:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِشِمَالِهِ فَيَقُولُ يَلَيِّنِي لَمْ أُوتِ كِتَابِيَّةَ ۖ وَلَمْ أَدْرِ مَا حِسَابِيَّةَ ﴿٢٦﴾
يَلَيِّنَهَا كَأَنَّ الْقَاضِيَةَ ﴿٢٧﴾ مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنِّي مَالِيَّةَ ﴿٢٨﴾ هَلَكَ عَنِّي سُلْطَانِيَّةَ ﴿٢٩﴾

**But anyone who is given his Record in his left hand will say,
'If only I had never been given any Record [25] and knew
nothing of my Reckoning [26] How I wish death had been
the end of me [27] My wealth has been no use to me [28] and
my power has vanished [29] (The Quran, *al-Haqq*: 25 - 29)**

The one who is given his Record in their left hand is the opposite of the one who takes it with their right hand. In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And as to him who is given his book behind his back [10] He shall call for

perdition, [11]' (*al-Inshiqaq*: 10-11) 'And the Book shall be placed, then you will see the guilty fearing from what is in it, and they will say: Ah! Woe to us! What a book is this! It does not omit a small one or a great one, but numbers them (all); and what they had done they shall find present (there); and your Lord does not deal unjustly with anyone' (*al-Kahf*: 49).

The one who will take their record with their right hand will be happy and proud to show it to the people because they have nothing to be ashamed of. On the contrary, the one who will take it with their left hand will be ashamed of what was written in it. Everything he did will be written, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'On the Day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil, it shall wish that between it and that (evil) there were a long duration of time...' (*Al-'Imran*: 30). They will hope to be as far as possible from their bad deeds and will be trembling with fear. He *the Almighty* shows them how the scene will be and warns them when they still have time to rectify their actions. On that Day, their hearts will be struck with fear, then they will say in despair: '...Woe to us...' (*al-Kahf*: 49).

Allah *Glorified is He* then relates that such a miserable person will say: 'How I wish death had been the end of me' (*al-Haqqa*: 27). They wish to die or that there is no Resurrection after death. They wish that they were not resurrected to see their evil deeds in front of them. Thus, the worst thing they hated in this worldly life, i.e. death will be their most desired wish because it will save them from facing their punishment for their bad deeds.

In the chapter of *az-Zukhruf*, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And they will cry: 'O Malik (Keeper of Hell)! Let your Lord make an end of us.' He will say: 'Surely you shall abide forever,' (*az-Zukhruf*: 77). The people of hell will ask for death to get rid of their eternal punishment. They will wish to die first when they receive their Records in order not to suffer the consequences of their bad deeds, but this does not work. They will ask for death again after being thrown into hell, but this will not work either. How can they die then? The death will be brought in a place between the Paradise and Hell, in the form of ram, and will be slaughtered in front of them all, and it will be said, 'O people of Paradise, eternity for you, and no death. O people of Hell,

eternity for you and no death.' Their hope will be shattered. The disbelievers wished to die to be relieved from their punishment, but He *the Almighty* puts an end to their hopes by causing death itself to come to an end. Thus, no one will die, for death is dead.

As for their saying: 'My wealth has been no use to me,' (*al-Haqqa*: 28) it means that their great wealth will not avail them, or lessen some of their torture. It will be of no use as it will not make them exempted from suffering the consequences of their evil deeds. That is because they did not fulfil the right of Allah *Glorified is He* regarding it nor made use of it to establish good relations with their relatives. On the Day of Judgment, even if they offers it as a ransom, it will not be accepted, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Surely, those who disbelieve and die while they are unbelievers, the earth full of gold shall not be accepted from one of them, though he should offer to ransom himself with it...' (*Al- 'Imran*: 91). Thus, He *the Almighty* will not accept their ransom, even if they offered the whole earth full of gold as a ransom. However, they will not find that gold because on that Day they will have nothing. In another verse, He *Glorified is He* says: 'And if those who did wrong had all that is in the earth entirely and the like of it with it, they would [attempt to] ransom themselves thereby from the worst of the punishment on the Day of Resurrection. And there will appear to them from Allah that which they had not taken into account' (*az-Zumar*: 47). They will say, 'Take from us all what we own and let us be saved,' but this will not be accepted.




Allah *the Almighty* then relates that they will say: 'And my power has vanished' (*al-Haqqa*: 29). The authority is the power that forces the person to do something. It is either the power of convincing or the power of forcing. Thus, there are two kinds of authority; convincing authority and forcing authority. The difference between them is that the former persuades you to do something, and, consequently, you become convinced of what you do. As for the forcing one, it forces you to do something without being convinced. Further, the forcing authority affects the body, while the convincing authority affects the mind and thoughts. So, the force can control the body, but it can never control the heart. You can force somebody to prostrate unwillingly; but by convincing, he will do this willingly.

Both meanings are possible in the verse in question. It could mean that their convincing argument in the worldly life has vanished, or their authority and power over people had gone and they became humiliated and despised. Now, they are alone, without excuses or power.

When we ponder over the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'But anyone who is given his Record in his left hand...' (*al-Haqqa*: 25), along with His saying: 'And as to him who is given his book behind his back,' (*al-Inshiqaq*: 10) we find something wonderful; how can this happen? Some scholars tried to understand this. Some of them said, 'They will put their left hand behind their back while receiving their record, while their right hand will be tied to their neck'.

Some others held that those who will take their Records with the left hand are the believers who had committed great sins; while those who will take the Records behind their backs are the disbelievers because the verses continue: 'He shall call for perdition, [11] And enter into burning fire. [12] Surely he was (erstwhile) joyful among his followers. [13] Surely he thought that he would never return, [14]' (*al-Inshiqaq*: 11-14). This is because they do not want to see their horrible misdeeds when they are given their Records. In this way the two verses are reconciled.

With regard to the verses: 'But anyone who is given his Record in his left hand will say, 'If only I had never been given any Record [25] and knew nothing of my Reckoning. [26] How I wish death had been the end of me. [27] My wealth has been no use to me, [28] and my power has vanished, [29]' (*al-Haqqa*: 25-29) you can feel the sad tone that shows their great sadness and regret. Nothing will stop this sad tone except the following Supreme, horrible Order:



خُذُوهُ فَغُلُّوهُ ۝ ثُمَّ الْجَحِيمَ صَلُّوهُ ۝
ثُمَّ فِي سِلْسِلَةٍ ذَرْعُهَا سَبْعُونَ ذِرَاعًا فَاسْلُكُوهُ ۝


**Take him, put a collar on him [30] lead him to burn in
the blazing Fire [31] and [bind him] in a chain seventy
metres long [32] (The Quran, *al-Haqqa*: 30 - 32)**

How horrible this situation is! Allah *the Almighty* will order the Angels to tie their hands or feet into their neck, then to drag them on their face. When

they hear the Order, seventy thousand Angels will hasten to implement it. They will be tied by the heavy chains. How horrible this end is! After long waiting for Account, and for reading the Record which includes the misdeeds of disbelief and disobedience, Allah *the Almighty* issues this horrible verdict against them. They will hear it themselves, and see the Angels who hasten to implement it. The shackle is a piece of iron that gathers the hands to the neck to make them unable to move. This is another form of humiliation for them. In this connection He *the Almighty* says: 'These are they who disbelieve in their Lord, and these have chains on their necks, and they are the inmates of the fire; in it they shall abide,' (*ar-Ra'd*: 5). As for the word *Asfad*, it means the shackles of feet.

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Lead him to burn in the blazing Fire,' (*al-Haqqa*: 31) it means to drive them to the hellfire to taste its torture. The same meaning is repeated in His saying: 'Save him who will go to Hell,' (*as-Saffat*: 16) and 'None shall enter it but the most unhappy' (*al-A'la*: 15). The Arabic word *Al-Jahim* (hell) means the great fire. They were arrogant in front of people before, as they said that they lost their authority. On the Day of Judgment, they will be driven to the greatest fire so that their punishment will be from the same kind as their sin.

Then, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And [bind him] in a chain seventy metres long' (*al-Haqqa*: 32). The chain consists of regular rings and its length is seventy cubits. Every cubit consists of seventy *Ba's* which is longer than the distance between Mecca and *Kufa*. The chain will be entered into their vent and come out from their nose so that they will not be able to stand on their feet. The chains are mentioned in many verses, as in His saying: 'Surely We have prepared for the unbelievers chains and shackles and a burning Fire,' (*al-Insan*: 4); and 'When the fetters and the chains shall be on their necks; they shall be dragged,' (*Ghafir*: 71).

Everything that is continuing after in a systematic way is said to be *Musalsal* (chained). The chain will surround their body from all sides so that they can never move, as if they are inside it.

إِنَّهُ كَانَ لَا يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَا يَحْضُ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمَسْكِينِ ﴿٣٤﴾

**He would not believe in Almighty God [33]
he never encouraged feeding the hungry [34]
(The Quran, *al-Haqqa*: 33 - 34)**

Such a disbeliever who will be given their Record in their left hand did not believe in the Oneness and the Greatness of Allah *Glorified is He*. He *the Almighty* does not wrong them, for they are punished because of their disbelief. He *Glorified is He* made injustice forbidden for Himself. It is as if He says to the keepers of hell, 'Take them to the hell as a recompense for their disbelief in Allah in the worldly life.'

These are the reasons for His Judgment, and the reasons are always mentioned after the judgment. For instance, when a judge delivers a verdict, there must be reasons for such a verdict, which represent the legal justifications for the punishment or innocence. A judge states that whereas such and such happened, then under the provisions of article such and such of such and such law, the verdict is such and such, i.e. whereas such and such happened, or did not happen, then such and such is the verdict. Hence, the reasons or the grounds of a verdict signify the judge's justifications for issuing it.

Now, regarding the one who is given their Record in their left hand, the reasons for chastising them is their disbelief in the Oneness and the Greatness of Allah *the Almighty*. Thus, they are punished in this way on account of their disbelief in Him *Glorified is He* in the worldly life.

However, why does Allah *Glorified is He* use His Most Beautiful Name 'the Almighty'? Allah *Glorified is He* is the Almighty, and owing to His Almightyness, He bestowed some of His Attributes on His Creation. For example, the strong person has the power to help the weak, but Allah *Glorified is He* has the absolute Mighty Power. Moreover, Allah *the Almighty* grants His Creation out of His Wisdom, His Withholding, His Expansion and His Richness, but all the Beautiful Attributes belong to Him and are granted to us from Him. Unlike the human beings, His Attributes are intrinsic and eternal.

Out of His Greatness, all Grandeur belongs to Him. Knowing this, the people will not be arrogant to one another, and only the one who neglects this fact

acts arrogantly. On the contrary, the one evoking the Greatness and Grandeur of Allah *the Almighty* is always humble and humiliates themselves at His Grandeur and feels ashamed of behaving arrogantly with other people. Had the disbelievers recalled the Greatness of their Lord, they would have believed in Him, His Oneness, His Right to be worshipped Alone and His Guidance to be followed. Their problem lies in their disbelief in Allah *the Almighty* and in His Existence. Even if they claimed they are Muslims, you find that they displease Him on account of disregarding His Greatness. Additionally, they do not have sympathy for the poor and the needy around them, just as they does not call the Greatness of Allah *Glorified is He*. The verse in question states: 'He never encouraged feeding the hungry,' (*al-Haqqa*: 34); and in another verse, He *the Almighty* describes such a people as: 'Nay! But you do not honor the orphan, [17] Nor do you urge one another to feed the poor, [18]' (*al-Bayyina*: 17-18). Neglecting the rights of the weak in one's money brings forth evil and bad consequences. On hearing that, the rich knew what they should do. Some people, however, said, 'We do not possess money to feed the poor.' It is as though the following verse specifically addresses them: 'Nor do you urge one another to feed the poor,' (*al-Bayyina*: 18). It shows them the way of giving, i.e. by urging others to give the poor. Thus, the one who does not have enough money to give the poor should urge the rich to give them. In fact, 'urging' contributes to this act of giving.

The heart of the one who does not believe in Allah *the Almighty* is dead, ruined, barren and devoid of faith and light. Further, it has no mercy towards the people, especially the poor people who are in a dire need for mercy. They neither pay attention to the needy people nor urge others to feed them, even though this is a social duty that the believers are commanded to do. Thus, abstaining from urging and exhorting one another to feed the poor is deemed evil and abhorrent. If the disbeliever had believed in Allah *the Almighty* recalled His Greatness, accepted Recompense as true, and had the reality of belief established in their heart, they would not have treated the orphan with harshness or disinclined to urge others to feed the poor.

The reality of belief in Allah *Glorified is He* and the Recompense is not mere lip service. Rather it changes one's heart, stimulating the person to do

good to their fellow humans who are in need of care and protection. This inspires us to believe undoubtedly that feeding or urging others to feed the poor and caring for the needy are intimately related to belief in Allah, the Great, and certainty of His Oneness. They even forget that, in order that their money does not turn into a nemesis, they should feed the poor people or urge one another to feed them, since how could such money be blessed when it brings about evil on its owner.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

فَلَيْسَ لَهُ الْيَوْمَ هُنَا حَمِيمٌ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَلَا طَعَامٌ إِلَّا مِنْ غِسْلِينٍ ﴿٣٦﴾
لَا يَأْكُلُهُ إِلَّا الْخَاطِئُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

**So today he has no real friend here [35] and the only
food he has is the filth [36] that only sinners eat [37]
(The Quran, *al-Haqqa*: 35 - 37)**

Such a disbeliever neither believes in Allah *the Almighty* in the worldly life, nor do they urge others to feed the poor. They abandoned the people and did not help them at the time of their need. As they disbelieved in Him *the Almighty* how could they then find a helper? On the Day of Judgment, they will neither find Him *Glorified is He* on their side, nor will the people help them, even their own limbs will abandon them and bear witness against them. In the Hereafter, they will not be protected from Allah's punishment by even their intimate friend to whom they used to show affection and care and whom they protected from whatever affliction they had in the worldly life. So, they will have no friend to save them or experience the chastisement on their behalf. Therefore, they will have no good friend or relative to intercede for or benefit them, for on that Day a relative will flee from their own relative and the lover will flee from their beloved.

Even if they had a friend who used to help them and stand on their side in the worldly life, they will abandon them and be their enemies, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'The friends shall on that day be enemies one to another, except those who guard (against evil),'

(*az-Zukhruf*: 67). On the other hand, the righteous people spur one another to obedience and you find one of them saying to another, 'You used to encourage me to obey Allah, and you guided and reminded me when I was negligent.' So, love grows between them, whereas the disbelievers curse each other for deluding one another. When they meet, those who were friends for the sake of Allah *the Almighty* rejoice at each other, as they protected one another from disobedience. By contrast, the disbelievers who used to commit disobedience together curse each other. On the Day of Resurrection, they will find no one to rescue them from Allah's Chastisement, given that a relative will flee from their own relative and the lover will flee from their beloved.

Not only will they be deprived of friends and supporters, but they will also be deprived of food, except for 'the filth', as Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And the only food he has is the filth,' (*al-Haqqa*: 36). The Arabic word *Al-Ghisleen* (filth) signifies the bloody rotten discharge of foul scum and filthy pus exuding from the bodies of the people of hell. They will have nothing else to feed on but this repugnant rotten waste. In this way, they will be afflicted by two calamities: having no helper and feeding on the bloody rotten discharge of foul scum and filthy pus exuding from their bodies, which is the worst and the filthiest food. Ibn 'Abbas *may Allah be pleased with him* said, 'Filth is what exudes from their veins and what melts from their bodies.'⁽¹⁾ Further, Ibn 'Abbas *may Allah be pleased with him* disclosed how appalling their food is, saying: 'Were a drop of this filth to fall on earth, it would spoil people's life.'⁽²⁾

In another verse, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'They shall have no food but of thorns [6] Which will neither fatten nor avail against hunger, [7]' (*al-Ghashiya*: 6-7). In the hellfire, there are trees similar to the thorns; they are more bitter than aloe and more rotten than a corpse. This is the most evil and the most repugnant food. Moreover, when they have to eat it, it chokes them, as stated in His saying: 'Surely, with Us are heavy fetters and a flaming Fire, [12] And food that chokes and a painful punishment, [13]' (*al-Muzzammil*: 12-13). Hence,

(1) In his *Tafsir*, As-Samarqandi relates this narration on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas *Allah be pleased with him*. See As-Samarqandi, *Bahr Al-'Ulum*, 3/491.

(2) In his *Tafsir*, Al-Wahidi narrates this narration on the authority of Mujahid ibn Jabr. See Al-Wahidi *An-Naysaburi*, *Al-Wasit Fi Tafsir Al-Quran Al-Majid*, 4/348.

whether this food is filth, thorn or *Zaqqum*, it can barely be swallowed; it chokes and blocks their throats. This is because such food is extremely repulsive and revolting, even to the animals, so how can a human being eat it? Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'That only sinners eat,' (*al-Haqqa*: 37). This food is especially prepared for and restricted to the sinners who used to commit sins intentionally. Those who deliberately commit sins and acts of disobedience will not be showered with Allah's Mercy and Forgiveness because they used to commit such misdeeds openly and blatantly. In this regard, Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Every one of my followers will be forgiven except those who expose (openly) their wrongdoings.'⁽¹⁾ The wrongdoers are also those who disbelieved in Allah *the Almighty* and ascribed partners to Him.

The Arabic word *Khahti* ' (wrongdoer) is an active participle of the verb 'to do wrong' which means to do something wrong deliberately, whereas the *Mukhti* ' (mistaken) is the one who intends to do the good but does evil unintentionally. This can be inferred from the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...and there is no blame on you concerning that in which you made a mistake...' (*al-Ahzab*: 5). This verse shows that there is no blame on one concerning that in which they made a mistake unintentionally, while their true intention was to do good. However, the wrongdoers rebel against Allah *Glorified is He*, reject His Way of Guidance and place obstacles in the way of applying His *Shari'a*. Therefore, they turn away from Truth. He *Glorified is He* describes those rebellious people, saying: 'Pharaoh, too, and those before him, and the ruined cities: these people committed grave sins' (*al-Haqqa*: 9). This means that they committed sins and acts of disobedience or that they were evil.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

(1) In his book, *Al-Bazzar* (d. 292) narrates this Hadith on the authority of Abu Hurayra with the ending: '...and an example of such disclosure is one who commits a sin in secret, then publicises it.' It is also narrated by *Al-Khara'iti* on the authority of Ibn 'Umar *Allah be pleased with him* with a slightly different wording. See *Al-Bazzar*, *Musnad*, Hadith no. 8096; and *Al-Khara'iti*, *Makarim Al-Akhlaq*, Hadith no. 403.

فَلَا أَقْسِمُ بِمَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَمَا لَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

**So I swear by what you can see [38]
and by what you cannot see [39]
(The Quran, *al-Haqq*: 38 - 39)**

Allah *Glorified is He* swears by the seen as well as the unseen things which are veiled from us. Allah *Glorified is He* swears by that which we can see of His excellent and perfect creation as an evidence of His Absolute Omnipotence, Greatness and Perfection. The Arabic word *La* (no) in this verse does not denote negation; rather, it affirms the oath. That this fact is so lucidly clear that it needs no oath, but if He *the Almighty* were to take an oath, He would swear by such and such. The oath here encompasses what we see and what we do not see. What we can see refers to the worldly life, while what we cannot see refers to the Hereafter. It could also mean all what is visible and invisible in the heavens and the earth. Another possible interpretation is that the seen things refer to the physical beings and the unseen ones refer to the spirits. Further, what we can see may refer to the human beings and what we do not see are the Jinn and the Angels. Allah states:

إِنَّهُ لَقَوْلُ رَسُولٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَمَا هُوَ بِقَوْلِ شَاعِرٍ قَلِيلًا مَّا تُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٤١﴾
وَلَا بِقَوْلِ كَاهِنٍ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

**This [Quran] is the speech of an honoured messenger [40]
not the words of a poet – how little you believe! [41]
nor the words of a soothsayer – how little you reflect! [42]
(The Quran, *al-Haqq*: 40 - 42)**

The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'This [Quran] is the speech of an honoured messenger,' (*al-Haqq*: 40), is mentioned twice in the Quran: in the chapter in question, referring to Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* and in the chapter of *at-Takwir*: 'This is the speech of a noble messenger, [19] who possesses great strength and is held in honour by the Lord of the Throne [20] he is obeyed there and worthy of trust, [21]' (*at-Takwir*: 19-21) in which the word 'messenger' refers to the Archangel Jibril (Gabriel) *Allah's peace be upon him*. Thus, the Messenger is sometimes from mankind, and at

other times from the Angels, and in both cases his duty is but to clearly convey the Message, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: '...and nothing rests on the Messenger but clear delivering (of the Message)' (*an-Nur*: 54). Neither did the Archangel Jibril (Gabriel) *Allah's peace be upon him* nor Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* contrive the Quran. Rather, it was revealed from Allah *the Almighty* with truth, without their interfering in it. So, Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* recited and conveyed the Quran from Allah *the Almighty* but has absolutely no hand in it.

Hence, this Quran is the Divine Speech brought by a messenger honoured by Allah, i.e. Jibril (Gabriel). However, when it is said that it is the word of an honoured Messenger, then it refers to Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*. The honoured messenger is the one worthy of regard with Allah *the Almighty*. His saying: 'This [Quran] is the speech of an honoured Messenger,' (*al-Haqqa*: 40) represents a response to the oath in His saying: 'So I swear by what you can see [38] and by what you cannot see [39]' (*al-Haqqa*: 38-39).

Regarding the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Not the words of a poet...' (*al-Jathiya*: 41), they claimed that Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* was a poet. Had such a claim been leveled by others who do not know him *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* or by those who are not acquainted with eloquence and rhetoric, it would have been acceptable, given that the people of Mecca knew poetry, prose, oratory and writing. This is why we find some of them, with a fairly pure nature, saying that it can never be the word of a poet. Surprisingly, the disbelievers of Mecca accused him *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* of being a poet, for they were people of eloquence, oratory and rhetoric. They were highly experienced in distinguishing the good styles with rhythmic patterns that they used to assign markets solely for poetry, such as Dhu Al-Majaz, Dhu Al-Majanna and 'Ukazh, and hung the best of their poems on the curtains of *Ka'ba*, yet they could not distinguish between poetry and the Quranic style!

In fact, they knew the difference very well, but they labeled him as a poet for a certain purpose stated in the following verse: 'Or do they say: A poet, we wait for him the evil accidents of time,' (*al-Jathiya*: 30). With 'poetry', they meant the sweet words which attract attention and arouse emotions. Allah

Glorified is He decided on this matter, saying: 'And We have not taught him poetry, nor is it meet for him; it is nothing but a reminder and a plain Quran,' (*Ya Sin*: 69). He *Glorified is He* did not teach Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* poetry, nor should he have learnt it. But what is the reason for this? This is because the Arabs know that the best of poetry is the most filled with lies. So, He *the Almighty* wants to inform the people that even though he *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* is not experienced in rhetoric and literary styles, he surprises the entire world with the best of all rhetorical styles, declaring it to be from Allah *Glorified is He*.

Further, he *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* lived among them for a long period, but no one had ever heard him composing poetry. Therefore, everything he brought was revealed from Allah *the Almighty* and should not be attributed to him *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*.

Regarding His saying: 'And We have not taught him poetry, nor is it meet for him; it is nothing but a reminder and a plain Quran,' (*Ya Sin*: 69) it means that learning poetry is not befitting for him *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* though he was qualified to do so, and Allah *Glorified is He* could have taught him poetry and rhetoric styles. For this reason, when some people alleged that the Quran is Prophet Muhammad's own words, Allah *Glorified is He* tells him to reply to them, saying: 'Indeed I have lived a lifetime among you before it; do you not then understand?' (*Yunus*: 16) He *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* lived among the people of Mecca for forty years during which he did not compose a single verse of poetry.

Furthermore, Allah *Glorified is He* did not want him *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* to be a poet. In this regard, we should note that there is a distinction between negating one's ability to do a certain action and negating the fact that it is befitting for them. When Allah *Glorified is He* affirms that he *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* is not a poet and is not intended to be so, one may think that he *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* cannot compose poetry due to lacking the required tools, such as the linguistic skills, sensibility, etc. However, Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* can compose it, but it is not befitting for him to do so. As poetry is based on imagination, Allah *Glorified is He* kept him *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*

from it in order for people not to think that what was revealed to him was merely poetic imaginations. Yet, his nature was not too respectable to compose it; rather, he was extremely delicate and sensitive.

Regarding the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...how little you believe,’ (*al-Haqqa*: 41), it means that they did not believe at all, for this style is used in Arabic to indicate that something does not happen at all. Another possible interpretation is that they swiftly go back to disbelief after embracing Islam. Little do they believe in the Quran and its Divine Authorship! The Arabic particle *Ma* in the verse is, perhaps, used to utterly negate their faith. However, it may be a verbal noun describing their faith as little.

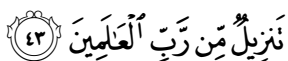
Then, Allah *Glorified is He* states: ‘Nor the words of a soothsayer– how little you reflect!’ (*al-Haqqa*: 42) The Quran is neither the words of a poet nor that of a soothsayer. This is because the devils inspire the soothsayers to be evil and misleading, whilst Allah *the Almighty* has purified and guarded the Quran against soothsaying. So, Prophet Muhammad *Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him* is neither a soothsayer, nor is the Quran inspired from soothsaying. A soothsayer is the one who forges lies and alleges that he can foresee the future. It is the astrologer who tells the people about certain things which are mostly untrue and claims to be able to guide the people to their lost properties and unseen things; they are paid for that. They claim to be informed by the Jinn, and may resort to astrology, the zodiac or astronomical calculations.

The Glorious Quran has nothing to do with soothsaying composed in a rhymed prose which the people of Mecca were familiar with. We should also note that Prophet Muhammad *Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him* forbade such rhymed prose.⁽¹⁾ ‘Utba ibn Rabi’a *may Allah be pleased with him* said, ‘By Allah, I heard the soothsaying, poetry and eloquent speeches, but found nothing comparable to the Quran.’ In addition, Allah *the Almighty* states in another verse: ‘Therefore continue to remind, for by the grace of your Lord, you are not a soothsayer or a madman’ (*at-Tur*: 29). So, Prophet Muhammad *Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him* has nothing to do with soothsaying, which entails

(1) Saj’ Al-Kuhhan refers to highly structured and alliterated styles of language intended to attract attention. See *Al-Qamus Al-Fiqhi*, 1/326.

fortune-telling and claiming to know the unseen. It used to allure people with the little of truth and the much of falsehood which they forged to mislead them thereby. They were highly influential and the people used to consult them in all their religious and mundane affairs.

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...how little you reflect,' (*al-Haqqā*: 42), it means that they hardly mind or receive admonition. This Quranic phrase is mentioned in many verses in the Quran. For example, He *the Almighty* says: 'Follow what has been revealed to you from your Lord and do not follow guardians besides Him, how little do you mind,' (*al-A'raf*: 3); and 'Or, Who answers the distressed one when he calls upon Him and removes the evil, and He will make you successors in the earth. Is there a god with Allah? Little is it that you mind!' (*an-Naml*: 62) If they thought and reflected, they would know that Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* is neither a poet nor a soothsayer, and that what he brought from Allah *the Almighty* is not poetry nor the rhymed prose of the soothsayers, but rather, it is as what Allah *the Almighty* says afterwards:







**This [Quran] is a message sent down from the Lord
of the Worlds [43] (The Quran, *al-Haqqā*: 43)**

In fact, the Quran is a revelation from the Almighty, the All Wise. 'Sending down' here denotes consecutive revelation of parts of the Quran. This is because it was sent down in its entirety to the lower heaven, and then was revealed gradually by the Angel Jibril (Gabriel) *Allah's peace be upon him* to Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*. Allah *Glorified is He* revealed it consecutively, verse after verse, so that one of its noble verses may be received by a pure heart, and then instills belief in it. Not only the Quran but also all the previous Scripture were revealed from Allah, the Lord of the worlds. These previous Scriptures brought forth the laws of a specific Messenger, but they were not the miracles attesting to the truth of what they communicated from Allah *the Almighty*. By contrast, the Quran is the Way of Guidance as well as the miracle of Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*. All the Arabic derivatives of the word 'sending down'

suggest that it came from a higher to a lower place, as though you receive something from a higher authority, and that is why no one should seek any other authority.

In this verse, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'This [Quran] is a message sent down from the Lord of the Worlds,' (*al-Haqqa*: 43). As Allah *Glorified is He* is the Lord of the worlds, the entire universe belongs to Him and nothing goes beyond His Control, so let the people be assured in this worldly life that their Lord has not created them in vain, nor has He left them without aim, since He sent down to them a guidance to lead them to the Path of Truth.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* states:

 وَلَوْ نَقُولُ عَلَيْنَا بَعْضُ الْأَقَاوِيلِ
 لَأَخَذْنَا مِنْهُ بِالْيَمِينِ
 ثُمَّ لَقَطَعْنَا مِنْهُ الْوَتِينَ ۚ فَمَا مِنْكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ عَنْهُ حَاجِزِينَ

**If [the Prophet] had attributed some fabrication to Us [44]
 We would certainly have seized his right hand [45]
 and cut off his lifblood [46] and none of you could have
 defended him [47] (The Quran, *al-Haqqa*: 44 - 47)**

This is a threat and a warning to Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*. Had the Quran been made up by him, he would not have included this verse. Yet, it is a revelation from Allah *Glorified is He* and he *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* did not conceal a single letter thereof, as it is sent down from the Lord of the Worlds. He *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* was endowed with absolute honesty and truthfulness, and that is why he did not conceal anything of the revelation. His people should have thought of this aspect of his character and reflected upon his truthfulness when he told them about personal matters which they did not know. Is this not a conclusive proof of his truthfulness?

Therefore, be assured that the Book within your hands is the Words of Allah *the Almighty* revealed from the Preserved Tablet which Allah *Glorified is He* describes as: '...a book that is protected [78] None shall touch it save the purified ones, [79]' (*at-Talaq*: 78-79). Then, the Trustworthy Spirit, i.e. Jibril (Gabriel), brought it down. As he is trustworthy, he made no changes in it.

Afterwards, it was brought down upon the heart of Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* about whom, He *Glorified is He* says here: 'If [the Prophet] had attributed some fabrication to Us, [44] We would certainly have seized his right hand [45]' (*al-Haqq*: 44-45).

Hence, the Quran is guarded in the Preserved Tablet, was preserved through the honesty of the Archangel Jibril (Gabriel) *Allah's peace be upon him* who brought it down from heaven, and through Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*. So, no one has the right to question the authenticity of the Quran because it has been divinely preserved in all possible ways. Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* could have concealed the verses wherein Allah *the Almighty* admonishes him, such as His saying: 'O Prophet! Why do you forbid (yourself) that which Allah has made lawful for you; you seek to please your wives; and Allah is All Forgiving, All Merciful,' (*at-Tahrim*: 1) and 'Allah pardon you! Why did you give them leave...' (*at-Tawba*: 43). Nevertheless, he was honest in communicating what was revealed to him. Thus, the Quran we have today is the same as it was revealed from Allah *the Almighty* and not a single letter of it has been changed. It will remain preserved under Allah's Care until the Day of Judgment.

As for the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'If [the Prophet] had attributed some fabrication to Us,' (*al-Haqq*: 44), 'to fabricate' means for him *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* to bring something from his own accord which was not revealed to him, nor was he permitted to communicate, something which never happened. Had he made up a single word from himself which was not revealed to him, Allah *the Almighty* would have seized him by the Right Hand, i.e. with Power and Might, as the 'right hand' for Arabs is stronger than the left one. However, both of the Hands of my Lord are Right and Blessed, but He gave this symbol to help us understand the meaning. 'Fabrications' refer to the forged lies which cannot be anything more than untruthful sayings. In the chapter of *at-Tur*, Allah *Glorified is He* states: 'Or do they say: He has forged it. Nay! They do not believe' (*at-Tur*: 33).

The disbelievers accused Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* of forging and making up the Quran. But if he had forged it, why did they not bring an announcement like it? If it were poetry, then they were more

knowledgeable and experienced in composing it, and if it were soothsaying, then they knew it as well! Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* challenges them, saying: 'Then let them bring an announcement like it if they are truthful' (*at-Tur*: 34). They should know then that he *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* cannot make up anything that was not revealed to him in the Quran; otherwise Allah *Glorified is He* would have rightfully taken him with power and might, that is, taking revenge from him.

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'And cut off his lifeblood,' (*al-Haqqa*: 46) it means that no one would be able to defend Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* should He *the Almighty* want to seize him with power or cut off his lifeblood because this is not within the ability of anyone. One may ask, 'Why is it that Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'None of you...' (*al-Haqqa*: 47), in the singular, then follows it by the plural form: '...could have defended him,' (*al-Haqqa*: 47)? We answer, 'He *the Almighty* says: '...could have defended him,' (*al-Haqqa*: 47) in the plural form because it is a description of 'none,' considering the general meaning, that is, if there are many individuals, since 'none' in Arabic refers to singular, dual and plural.' In fact, there is no one, however powerful or mighty they are, that could have withheld or prevented Him *the Almighty* from punishing him *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* if he had forged anything in the Quran. The word 'none' here indicates affirmation, i.e. not any one person, whoever they are.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* states:

وَإِنَّهُ لَنَذِكْرٌ لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَإِنَّا لَنَعْلَمُ أَنَّ مِنْكُمْ مُّكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾
وَإِنَّهُ لَحَسْرَةٌ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَإِنَّهُ لَحَقُّ الْيَقِينِ ﴿٥١﴾

This [Quran] is a reminder for those who are aware of God [48] We know that some of you consider it to be lies [49] this will be a source of bitter regret for the disbelievers [50] but it is in fact the certain Truth [51] (The Quran, *al-Haqqa*: 48 - 51)

The Noble Quran is neither poetry nor the words of soothsaying; it is rather: '...a message sent down from the Lord of the Worlds' (*al-Haqqa*: 43). It was not revealed purposelessly or just for recitation or narratives; rather, it

is surely a reminder. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'This [Quran] is a reminder for those who are aware of Allah' (*al-Haqqā*: 48). 'Nay! It is surely an admonition. [54] So whoever pleases may mind it, [55]' (*al-Muddaththir*: 54-55) and 'We have not revealed the Quran to you that you may be unsuccessful. [2] Nay, it is a reminder to him who fears [3]' (*Ta Ha*: 2-3).

This guides us to the purpose and wisdom behind the revelation of the Quran. Allah *Glorified is He* did not send it down to Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* to distress him; rather, He revealed it as a reminder and admonition for those are fearful and mindful of Him *Glorified is He*. Hence, the Quran is a reminder for the pious people. He *Glorified is He* affirms this fact using the particle *Inna* and the letter *Lam*, both of which denote emphatic affirmation. It is a reminder for the pious people who stand in awe of their Lord and fear His chastisement. Whether it is a glad tiding or a warning, the admonition affects them and they respond to it; that is why He *the Almighty* says: 'And continue to remind, for surely the reminder profits the believers' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 55). Reminders and admonitions remind the pious people who safeguard themselves against His punishment by observing the obligations and abstaining from the prohibitions. Thus, they protect themselves from Allah's punishment by being obedient to Him.

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'We know that some of you consider it to be lies,' (*al-Haqqā*: 49). Allah *Glorified is He* uses again the particle *Inna* and the letter *lam*, both of which denote emphatic affirmation. He *the Almighty* does not only know those who disbelieve publicly and blatantly, but also those who harbour disbelief and rejection secretly in their hearts. They disbelieved in Allah *Glorified is He* and in the Hereafter; otherwise they would have believed and followed Allah's Guidance. This is a threat and a warning to the disbelievers that He *Glorified is He* knows those who reject the Quran despite being miraculous, calling it poetry, soothsaying and legends of the former peoples; such are the ones who lie about Him *the Almighty*. Some scholars maintain that the phrase '...some of you...' (*al-Haqqā*: 49), in the verse under discussion: 'We know that some of you consider it to be lies,' (*al-Haqqā*: 49), refers to the Muslims, suggesting that those rejecters were among them, namely, the hypocrites. However, the chapter of *al-Haqqā* was revealed before *Hijra*, and

there were no hypocrites at that time. Thus, the phrase: ‘...some of you...’ (*al-Haqqa*: 49) does not imply that they were among the believers or the pious, but it refers to the people of Mecca.

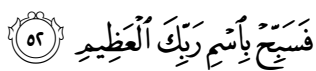
As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘This will be a source of bitter regret for the disbelievers,’ (*al-Haqqa*: 50) the word ‘this’ refers to their disbelief inferred from the previous verse. However, the demonstrative pronoun ‘this’ in His saying: ‘This [Quran] is a reminder for those who are aware of Allah,’ (*al-Haqqa*: 48) refers to the Quran revealed to Prophet Muhammad *Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him* from Allah, the Lord of the worlds. In the verse in question, He *the Almighty* uses the same linguistic tools for emphatic affirmation. ‘Regret’ signifies pain in one’s heart that one only feels when a misfortune, from which there is no deliverance, befalls him/her, as He *Glorified is He* says: ‘And those who followed shall say: Had there been for us a return, then we would renounce them as they have renounced us. Thus will Allah show them their deeds to be intense regret to them, and they shall not come forth from the Fire,’ (*al-Baqara*: 67).

The one who loses his/her worldly life and the Hereafter by disbelieving in Allah *the Almighty* and rejecting Prophet Muhammad *Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him* and the Noble Quran, lives in grief and pain for what they have lost in the worldly life. Moreover, on seeing the punishment in the Hereafter, it will be their greatest grief and their bitterest regret, but it will be too late for them to repent. In this regard, He *Glorified is He* states: ‘They are losers indeed who reject the meeting of Allah; until when the hour comes upon them all of a sudden they shall say: O our grief for our neglecting it! And they shall bear their burdens on their backs; now surely evil is that which they bear’ (*al-A’raf*: 31). Unable to stifle their grief, they say, ‘O our grief for our negligence, heedlessness and extravagance in our affairs.’ Therefore, disbelief in Allah *Glorified is He* and the Quran, revealed to Prophet Muhammad *Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him* will be a source of bitter regret to the disbelievers because they will find what they rejected right before their eyes, and He *the Almighty* will punish them for their rejection and disbelief.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* states: ‘But it is in fact the certain Truth’ (*al-Haqqa*: 51). The certain Truth will come to pass when the disbeliever

enters the hellfire and feels its heat, as He *the Almighty* says: 'And if he is one of the rejecters, the erring ones, [92] He shall have an entertainment of boiling water, [93] And burning in Hell. [94] Most surely this is the certain Truth. [95] Therefore glorify the name of your Lord, the Great [96]' (*at-Talaq*: 92-96). Additionally, we have the 'certain knowledge', i.e. perceiving the abstract image of hellfire, and the 'eye of certainty' in the Hereafter when we pass on the *Sirat* (bridge set over hellfire) and see hellfire with our own eyes. As for the 'certain truth', it comes when the disbelievers are thrown into hellfire, experience it and taste its heat and flames. The 'certain truth' is that which entertains no doubt. The word 'certain' is a modifier of the word 'truth' and denotes emphatic affirmation. There is no doubt that the Quran is revealed from Allah *the Almighty*; this is certainly true.

At the end of the chapter, Allah *Glorified is He* says:



**So [Prophet] glorify the name of your Lord,
the Almighty [52] (The Quran, *al-Haqq*: 52)**

Glorify and highly exalt Him *the Almighty* above having a partner in the affairs of creation and for being the Great in His Omnipotence, His Mercy, His Wisdom, His Self-subsistence, His Rewards and His Recompense.

the chapter of

al-Ma'arij

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

The chapter of *al-Ma'arij* ⁽¹⁾.
Allah *Glorified is He* states:

سَأَلَ سَائِلٌ بِعَذَابٍ وَاقِعٍ ﴿١﴾ لِلْكَافِرِينَ لَيْسَ لَهُ دَافِعٌ ﴿٢﴾

**A man [mockingly] demanded the punishment [1]
It will fall on the disbelievers — none can deflect it [2]
(The Quran, *al-Ma'arij*: 1-2)**

An-Nadr ibn Al-Harith, one of the disbelievers of Mecca, demanded that a chastisement befall him and his people. When Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* warned them against Allah's punishment, he, i.e. An-Nadr ibn Al-Harith said with ridicule and mockery: 'O Allah! If this is the truth from You, then rain upon us stones from heaven or inflict on us a painful punishment' (*al-Anfal*: 32). Completely failing and incapacitated, they said, 'If the Quran is the truth from you, then rain upon us stones from heaven or inflict on us a painful punishment.' Is this demand not a clear proof of their stupidity?! Had they had good understanding, logic and intellect, they would have asked for guidance, instead of foolishly invoking death and punishment. Such is the supplication of a brainless, for if they had reason, they would have said, 'O Lord, if this is the truth from You, then guide us to it or let us believe in it.' Due to their excessive grudge and misguidance, they wished for punishment rather than belief in the Truth, and this reveals how brainless they are. Had Allah *Glorified is He* responded to their supplication, it would have brought about bad consequences. Among those who uttered this supplication were: Al-'As ibn Wa'il As-Sahmi, Al-Aswad ibn 'Abd Al-Muttalib and Al-Aswad

(1) The chapter of *al-Ma'arij* is the seventieth, according to the order of the chapters in the *Mushaf*, with 44 verses. It was revealed after the chapter of *al-Haqq* in Mecca, and thereby it is agreed on that it is a Meccan chapter. See Al-Qurtubi, *Jame' Ahkam Al-Quran*, 18/278.

ibn 'Abd Yahud. They were firstly confused when they accused him *Allah's peace be upon him* of being a sorcerer, and again when they said that the Quran is mere poetry, whereas it is not. Additionally, they tried to accuse him *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* of insanity to discredit the Quran, and thereby reject it. Moreover, they accused him of being a soothsayer, but this was also of no avail. Consequently, with disturbed minds, they invoked Allah *the Almighty* to inflict His Chastisement upon them, saying: 'O our Lord! Hasten on to us our portion before the Day of Reckoning,' (*Sad*: 16). This portion is the recompense for the deeds, i.e. they said with ridicule and mockery, 'O our Lord! Hasten on to us our portion of chastisement with which you threaten us, and do not defer it until the Day of Reckoning.'

Regarding the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'It will fall on the disbelievers—none can deflect it,' (*al-Ma'arij*: 1) it means that a chastisement will inevitably befall them. It is a punishment which is especially prepared for the disbelievers, and will not affect the believers. The letter *lam* prefixed to the Arabic word *Kafirin* (disbelievers) conveys the meaning of the preposition 'on' which denotes that the chastisement will be inflicted on the disbelievers. Further, no one will be able to prevent or ward it off, and no one from them will avert it.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* states:

مِنْ اللَّهِ ذِي الْمَعَارِجِ ﴿٣﴾ تَعْرُجُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
وَالرُّوحُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ خَمْسِينَ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ ﴿٤﴾

**From God, the Lord of the Ways of Ascent [3] by which the
angels and the Spirit ascend to Him, on a Day whose length
is fifty thousand years [4] (The Quran, *al-Ma'arij*: 3 - 4)**

This chastisement is to be inflicted on the disbelievers by Allah, the Lord of the Ways of Ascent, which are the stairways through which the Angels rise from one heaven to another. So, they are ascents through which the Angels move between the heavens. This is like the verse wherein Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...and the stairs by which they ascend,' (*az-Zukhruf*: 33). His saying here: 'From Allah, the Lord of the Ways of Ascent, [3] by which the Angels and the Spirit ascend to Him...[4]' (*al-Ma'arij*: 3-4), arouses fear and awe in

the hearts of the disbelievers, since all the creatures are under His Control, and among these creatures are the Angels who ascend to Him by the Ways of Ascent.

The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...and the Spirit...’ (*al-Ma'arij*: 4) refers to the Archangel Jibril (Gabriel) *Allah's peace be upon him*. Allah *Glorified is He* mentions him specifically after the Angels because mentioning the specific after the general gives it more significance and distinction.

We should note that the Angels ascend to Him *Glorified is He* in the same way as the souls of the humans ascend to Him at the time of death. The pronoun *Ha'* (Him) suffixed to the Arabic word *Ilayhi* (to Him) refers to Allah *Glorified is He*. Some exegetes, however, believe this pronoun refers to the place where none has dominion except Him *the Almighty* so He made their ascension to this place as if it is ascension to Him. Similarly, Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) *Allah's peace be upon him* said: ‘I will go [where I am ordered by] my Lord’ (*as-Saffat*: 99); this means that he *Allah's peace be upon him* will go to the place ordained by his Lord.

To know what is intended by the word ‘Day’ in the verse: ‘By which the Angels and the Spirit ascend to Him, on a Day whose length is fifty thousand years,’ (*al-Ma'arij*: 4), we should pay attention to the other verse where Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘And they ask you to hasten on the punishment, and Allah will by no means fail in His promise, and surely a day with your Lord is as a thousand years of what you can number’ (*al-Hajj*: 47). He *Glorified is He* is the Creator of time, therefore He can create a day with a span of only one hour, a day with a span of twenty four hours such as the days of this worldly life, a day with a span of a thousand years, a day with a span of fifty thousand years and a day with a span of million years because everything is subject to Allah’s Will. Time is multiple and variable, and differs according to the unit of measurement, and changes from one planet to another. Thus, what Allah *the Almighty* reveals about time in the Quran suggests difference rather than contradiction.

When speaking of ascension, Allah *Glorified is He* explains that it is on a Day whose measure is fifty thousand years, but He *Glorified is He* may shorten this period to a Day whose measure is a thousand years, as in His saying: ‘He regulates the affair from the heaven to the earth; then shall it ascend to Him in a day the measure of which is a thousand years of what you count,’ (*as-Sajda*: 5).

This is because the time on the Day of Judgment slows down so that the disbelievers find it extremely prolonged and fatiguing, to the extent that they wish to leave it even if they would go to hellfire.

Similarly, living in luxury shortens time that one feels it passing in the blink of an eye. When asked about the span of the Day in the verse: 'To Him ascend the angels and the Spirit in a day the measure of which is fifty thousand years,' (*al-Ma'arij*: 4) Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'By Him in Whose Hand my soul is! It is lightened to the believer until it becomes shorter than the time during which he used to perform prescribed prayer in the worldly life.'⁽¹⁾

As for the believer, the Day of Judgment is lighter than performing a prescribed prayer in the worldly life, as if it is a quarter of an hour. By contrast, it is as fifty thousand years for the disbeliever. One may ask, 'Do the Angels need fifty thousand years to ascend to their Lord?' Scholars said that this period of time is considered one day according to the Angelic counting, whereas it is as long as fifty thousand years of what we count. In other words, it takes the humans fifty thousand years to do what the Angels do in one day.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* states:

فَاصْبِرْ صَبْرًا جَمِيلًا ۝ إِنَّهُمْ يَرَوْنَهُ بَعِيدًا ۖ وَنَرَاهُ قَرِيبًا ۝ (٧)

So be patient, [Prophet], as befits you [5]

The disbelievers think it is distant [6]

but We know it to be close [7]

(The Quran, *al-Ma'arij*: 5 - 7)

Allah *Glorified is He* orders Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* to be graciously patient and endure what the disbelievers inflict on him of harm, and not to let it divert or inhibit him from conveying the

(1) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri *Allah be pleased with him*. In his Tafsir, Ibn Kathir narrates it from the narration of Imam Ahmad on the authority of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri as well. In his Tafsir, As-Suyuti attributes it to Ahmad, Abu Y'ala, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Hibban and Al-Baihaqi in *Al-Ba'th Wa An-Nushur*, all on the authority of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri. See *Ath-Tha'labi, Al-Kashf Wa Al-Bayan*, 10/36; Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Al-Quran Al-'Azhim*, 6/107; and As-Suyuti, *Ad-Durr Al-Manthur*, 8/280.

Message of his Lord. It is as if He *the Almighty* says to him, 'Be patient, as befits you; do not rush or hasten. You should also endure their mocking and stubborn demand of the chastisement which will for sure befall them.' Their demand indicates that they deem the Day of Judgment and the punishment befalling them therein far-fetched. Hence, He *the Almighty* says: 'It will fall on the disbelievers--none can deflect it,' (*al-Ma'arij*: 2).




It is He *the Almighty* Who will inflict them with this chastisement on a severe Day prolonged to the disbelievers. 'Gracious patience' is also mentioned when speaking of Prophet Jacob *Allah's peace be upon him* as he said to his sons: 'Nay, your souls have made the matter light for you, but patience is good...' (*Yusuf*: 18). However, patience is always painful, so how could it be good? It is so when it is devoid of complaining and impatience. There is also gracious avoidance which entails no backbiting, gossip or dispute, as stated in Allah's saying: 'And bear patiently what they say and avoid them with a becoming avoidance,' (*al-Muddaththir*: 10).

Allah *Glorified is He* orders Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* to be patient with his people in many verses, as in His saying: '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); and 'Bear patiently what they say, and remember Our servant David, the possessor of power; surely he was frequent returning (to Allah)' (*Sad*: 17). He *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* is ordered to be patient and to glorify Allah *Glorified is He* as though his exaltation and glorification of Allah *the Almighty* make his patience gracious because when he glorifies Allah *Glorified is He*, he does not regard their rejection and false accusations, but only considers Allah, thereby glorifying and exalting Him.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* speaks of the Day of Judgment and the punishment befalling the disbelievers, which they mockingly demanded and could not wait for because they thought it to be far off. This does not mean that they believe it will happen in the distant future; rather, they deemed it implausible and unlikely to take place. So, the verse indicates their disbelief and outright rejection from the outset. Accordingly, He *the Almighty* says: 'The disbelievers think it is distant, [6] but We know it to be close, [7]'

(*al-Ma'arij*: 6-7). It will happen and take place without doubt. They deem it unbelievable, whilst He *the Almighty* sees it impending, and therefore it is soon to come. On the other hand, those who reject it find it as far as possible, but the true believers should firmly believe it will be near.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* tells us of the horrors of the Day of Judgment, stating:


 وَتَكُونُ الْجِبَالُ كَالْعِهْنِ 
 يَوْمَ تَكُونُ السَّمَاءُ كَالْمُهْلِ
 وَلَا يَسْأَلُ حَمِيمٌ حَمِيمًا 

**On a Day when the heavens will be like molten brass [8]
and the mountains like tufts of wool [9] when no friend will
ask about his friend [10] (The Quran, *al-Ma'arij*: 8 - 10)**

As for the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: ‘On a Day when the heavens will be like molten brass,’ (*al-Ma'arij*: 8), it means that, on the Day of Judgment, the heaven will burst and split asunder, with its colour changing from blue to red. The Arabic word *Al-Muhl* (molten brass) refers to the murky oil at the bottom of its container, or the molten metal such as copper, lead and iron. The Quran affirms that these major universal events will occur on that Day extending for fifty thousand years. Due to these events, the settings of the planets, stars and galaxies as well as their rings will be displaced.

Regarding the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘And the mountains like tufts of wool,’ (*al-Ma'arij*: 9) it means that the mountains will be like carded wool, as stated in His saying: ‘And the mountains shall be as loosened wool’ (*al-Qari'a*: 5). They will be blasted and scattered as carded wool. After being hard and mighty, they will turn into this condition on the Day of Judgment, as though they have not existed.

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘When no friend will ask about his friend,’ (*al-Ma'arij*: 10), it means that one will have no friends or relatives to defend or feel sorry for them. Rather, they will flee and turn away from them, being defenceless themselves. Everyone will be only concerned with them; no one will ask about their friend or relative, even if they see them in the worst condition. They cannot even utter a single word to ask about their

conditions owing to the horror and severity of that Day. Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* states:

يَبْصُرُونَهُ يَوْمَ الْمَجْزِمِ لَوْ يَفْتَدِي مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِئِذٍ بَيْنِيهِ ۝۱۱
وَصَاحِبَتَهُ وَأَخِيهِ ۝۱۲ وَفَصِيلَتِهِ الَّتِي تُتَوَكَّلُ ۝۱۳ وَمَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ يُنْجِيهِ ۝۱۴

Even when they are within sight of one another. The guilty person will wish he could save himself from the suffering of that Day by sacrificing his sons [11] his spouse, his brother [12] the kinsfolk who gave him shelter [13] and everyone on earth, if it could save him [14] (The Quran, *al-Ma'arij*: 11-14)

Regarding the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘Even when they are within sight of one another...’ (*al-Ma'arij*: 11), it means that they see and know each other, but for being occupied with themselves they do not ask about each other because they find this pointless. This is the case with the unjust transgressing sinner who went beyond the limits, disbelieved in Allah *the Almighty* and was too proud to worship Him. Therefore, He *the Almighty* says ‘...the guilty person will wish he could save himself from the suffering of that Day by sacrificing his sons. [11] His spouse, his brother, [12] the kinsfolk who gave him shelter, [13] and everyone on earth, if it could save him [14]’ (*al-Ma'arij*: 11). As they were a polytheist and guilty, they want to be delivered from Allah’s punishment inflicted on them, to the extent that they wish to be ransomed by their own children, whom they invoked Allah *the Almighty* to give in the worldly life, or by their spouse who shared their life, and even by their brother, family, relatives, kin and whoever is on earth entirely. They are willing to sacrifice everyone else so that they could redeem themselves from Allah’s chastisement. They desire that they could own and have them under their control so as to offer them as a sacrifice for themselves, thinking that in doing so, they will be saved from the punishment. However, Allah *Glorified is He* shatters the hope of the disbelievers, polytheists, oppressors and the guilty regarding escaping His punishment by offering sacrifices, as He *Glorified is He* states in another verse: ‘Surely, those who disbelieve and die while they are unbelievers, the earth full of gold shall not be accepted from one of them, though he should offer to ransom himself with it, these it is who shall have a painful chastisement, and they shall have no helpers’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 91).

Likewise, He *the Almighty* says in this chapter:

كَلَّا إِنَّهَا لَأُظَىٰ ۖ (١٥) نَزَاعَةٌ لِّلشَّوَىٰ ۖ (١٦) تَدْعُو أَمَّنْ أَدْبَرَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ ۖ (١٧) وَجَمَعَ فَأَوْعَىٰ ۖ (١٨)

But no! There is a raging flame [15] that strips away the skin [16] and it will claim everyone who rejects the truth, turns away [17] amasses wealth and hoards it [18] (The Quran, *al-Ma'arij*: 15-18)

This is truth uttered through the verse: ‘But no! There is a raging flame,’ (*al-Ma'arij*: 15). Thus, the possibility of their salvation is a false assumption; no way could they possibly escape punishment. In answer to the supplicant’s demand for punishment, Allah *Glorified is He* states: ‘But no! There is a raging flame,’ (*al-Ma'arij*: 15). The Arabic word *Kalla* (But no) indicates deterrence and reproof to the guilty or the disbeliever that they should not wish for it; the sacrifice will neither avail nor redeem them from the chastisement. It is hellfire with its blazing flames ‘that strips away the skin,’ (*al-Ma'arij*: 16). It chastises and tortures the disbelievers and the sinners severely and mercilessly. It scalds them with its flames and blazes so that they burn in it. Further, He *the Almighty* says: ‘(As for) those who disbelieve in Our communications, We shall make them enter fire; so oft as their skins are thoroughly burned, We will change them for other skins, that they may taste the chastisement; surely Allah is Mighty, Wise,’ (*an-Nisa*: 56).

The Arabic word *Lazha* (flaming Fire) is one of the names of the hellfire, which has flames set ablaze. Allah *the Almighty* describes it elsewhere, saying: ‘Walk on to the covering having three branches, [30] neither having the coolness of the shade nor availing against the flame [31]’ (*an-Nazi'at*: 56). These branches of hellfire signify the flames that, as it burns fiercely, it gets divided into three branches, As for His saying: ‘That strips away the skin,’ (*al-Ma'arij*: 16), it means that the hellfire takes away the limbs such as the hands and legs leaving no flesh or skin without burning it. The Arabic word *Shawa* refers to the limbs such as hands, legs, finger tips and head skin. It is the most severe punishment, with flames melting the head and the flesh of the legs, whereas their heart is alive, feeling the pain and torment. Their head, skin and limbs are melted by the blazing flames in hellfire while they are alive, feeling that painful punishment.

Then Allah *the Almighty* says about the hellfire: 'And it will claim everyone who rejects the truth, turns away, [17] amasses wealth and hoards it' (*al-Ma'arij*: 17-18). This is a further report about hellfire; in addition to having blazing flames, it invites those who turned away from the Truth and obedience. Its invitation is metaphorical, as in His saying: 'Until the war lays down its burden' (*Muhammad*: 4). It is not the war which shall lay down its burden in reality, but the warriors who fight in it.


Likewise, hellfire invites the disbelievers and the guilty who attempted to flee from it. Further, it claims the rich who used to hoard gold and silver and did not spend it in the Way of Allah *the Almighty* preventing the right of the poor. Some scholars are of the opinion that hellfire invites and calls those who rejected belief and truth with their own names, saying, 'Come to me O disbeliever. Come to me O hypocrite!'

Ibn 'Abbas *may Allah be pleased with him* said, 'It calls the disbelievers and the hypocrites pronouncing their own names with a fluent tongue, then picks them up just as a bird picks up a food-grain.'⁽¹⁾ So, who are those who will be called and invited by hellfire? It calls upon: '...everyone who rejects the truth' (*al-Ma'arij*: 17-18). It calls those who turned their back on faith and disbelieved in the Prophets' call to worship Allah *the Almighty* Alone. Further, it invites and calls whosoever turned their back on truth, rejected obedience to Him and went away from belief in the Scriptures and the Prophets.

On what then did they spend their time in the worldly life? They rejected the truth because they preferred the worldly life to the Hereafter; therefore they: 'amasses wealth and hoards it' (*al-Ma'arij*: 18). In addition to their disbelief, transgression and hypocrisy, they collect money from all possible sources, and then hoard it. While doing so, they earn money through lawful and unlawful means, and do not give Allah's Right in it. He *Glorified is He* states elsewhere: 'Who amasses wealth and considers it a provision (against mishap); [2] He

(1) *This narration is from Al-Khazen. In his Tafsir, Ibn Abu Hatim narrates that Qatada narrated, through a Mursal narration, that Ka'b used to say, 'Some of the fire will come out in the shape of a long neck on the Day of Judgment. It will say, 'I have been left in charge of three: the honoured and the noble, every obstinate oppressor and everyone who called upon a deity besides Allah, then it picks them up just as a bird picks up a food-grain.' Al-Khazen, Lubab At-Ta'wil, 4/341; and Ibn Abu Hatim, Tafsir, 1774.*

thinks that his wealth will make him immortal [3]' (*al-Humaza*: 2-3). Their money and wealth made them transgress that they looked with contempt and disdain to the poor, thinking that their wealth will grant them immortality. However, their money will not avail them, nor will hoarding wealth deliver them from the punishment, a fact which is clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Nay! He shall most certainly be hurled into the crushing disaster, [4] And what will make you realize what the crushing disaster is? [5] It is the fire kindled by Allah, [6] which rises above the hearts. [7] Surely it shall be closed over upon them, [8] In extended columns [9]' (*al-Humaza*: 4-9). Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* states:

 إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا  إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا 
 وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا 

**Man was truly created anxious [19] he is fretful when
misfortune touches him [20] but tight-fisted when good
fortune comes his way [21] (The Quran, *al-Ma'arij*: 19 - 21)**

The Arabic word *Hal'u* (anxious) is an exaggeration form indicating intense caution and lack of patience; therefore the human being is bored and volatile, seeking only their whims and lusts. It also denotes impatience when affected by evil or fear of something. In addition to their anxiety and greed, they are miserly and stingy; when Allah *the Almighty* provides them with wealth, they withhold it. If they are short of money and suffer from poverty, they become impatient. When they obtain money and wealth, they withhold it and become miserly in spending out in the Way of Allah. Further, they do not give the right of the poor.

'Man' here refers to the human beings in general, and in reference to their attributes, Allah *the Almighty* states in another verse: 'And if We make man taste mercy from Us, then take it off from him, most surely he is despairing, ungrateful,' (*Hud*: 9). When He *Glorified is He* wills to bestow a blessing on the human being and then it is taken away from them, they become worried, disappointed, exasperated and impatient. However little the blessing is, it appeals to the human being, but if it is withdrawn from them, they become despairing and ungrateful. This despairing ungrateful person is the same one who is excessively anxious, impatient and miserly. All these attributes are

referring to the one who is intensely impatient and niggardly, vehement in their disbelief in Allah *the Almighty* and despairing of His Mercy and Blessings.

Reflecting on this verse, we will find that the word *Massahu* (to touch him) is used, whereas in the chapter of *Hud* the word *Adhaqna* (to make him taste) is used. 'To taste something' means to perceive its flavour, not to eat it. When you buy fruits, the buyer may ask you to taste one to perceive its flavour. Tasting something could be by letting your tongue touch it to test its quality. This is the meaning of touching, i.e. getting closer to something gradually to touch it. This perception may last for only one second.

This impatient person, lacking faith which could have provided them with tranquility, peace of mind and acceptance of the inconstancy of life, becomes swiftly impatient, anxious and frightened at the very moment they get afflicted by poverty, need, calamity or evil. Moreover, when they are granted a blessing, whether small or great, they deny Allah's Favour and Provision, withholding the good that has from people. Therefore, they do not give Allah's Right upon them because they do not believe in Him. For this reason, Allah *Glorified is He* states in the following verses:

إِلَّا الْمُصْلِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾
وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ لِلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ ﴿٢٥﴾

**Not so those who pray [22] and are constant in their prayers [23]
who give a due share of their wealth [24] to beggars and the
deprived [25] (The Quran, *al-Ma'arij*: 22-25)**

In the aforementioned three verses, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Man was truly created anxious: [19] he is fretful when misfortune touches him, [20] but tight-fisted when good fortune comes his way [21]' (*al-Ma'arij*: 19-21). However, He *Glorified is He* makes an exception here saying: 'Not so those who pray' (*al-Ma'arij*: 22). When we read the Noble Quran carefully, we find that every account about the human being, as isolated from Allah's Guidance, denotes evil, as in His saying: 'I swear by the time, [1] Most surely man is in loss [2]' (*al-'Asr*: 1-2). The human beings, generally, are in loss. So, who among them will be delivered from loss? Here comes the answer: 'Except

those who believe and do good, and enjoin on each other truth, and enjoin on each other patience' (*al-'Asr*: 3). Every Quranic account of the human being, in the absolute sense, speaks about and warns against the evil aspect, yet what is it that saves them? It is Allah's Way of Guidance.

He *Glorified is He* lays down His Guidance starting from His saying: 'Not so those who pray,' (*al-Ma'arij*: 22) until the verse reading: 'And are steadfast in their prayers' (*al-Ma'arij*: 34). The first element of this Divine Guidance is: 'Not so those who pray [22] and are constant in their prayers [23]' (*al-Ma'arij*: 22-23). Observing the prayer that He *the Almighty* made obligatory comes first. Prayer only emanates from belief in Him, Messenger Muhammad and His Book. Therefore, there was no need to mention faith. Besides, He *Glorified is He* specifies the elements of the applicable Way of Guidance, whereas faith is a doctrinal matter that should do with the heart.

So, the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Not so those who pray [22] and are constant in their prayers, [23]' (*al-Ma'arij*: 22-23) refers to those who observe prayer in its prescribed times, leaving no prescribed prayer at night or at daytime; rather, they perform it once it is called for. Further, they perform it duly and rightfully, not turning to the right or to the left; they do not turn their faces from the direction of the prayer. They are constant in their prayer, and establish it carefully without wasting or getting distracted from it. This constancy depicts stability and continuity, as their prayer is not interrupted by squandering or negligence. In this regard, we should note that the acts most pleasing to Allah *Glorified is He* were the most regular, constant ones, given the fact that constancy indicates stability in one's relation with Him *Glorified is He*.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* gives us another attribute and pillar of His Guidance, stating: 'Who give a due share of their wealth' (*al-Ma'arij*: 24). Allah *Glorified is He* speaks here of the believers who believed in Him and His Book, and thus He says: '...a due share...' (*al-Ma'arij*: 24). This due share in the wealth of the believers is the *zakat*. As regards *Ihsan* which signifies a higher rank than faith, this share is not specified, as He *the Almighty* says: 'And in their property was a portion due to him who begs and to him who is denied (good)' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 19). Thus, with regard to those who reached the rank of *Ihsan*, it is in the interest of the poor that there is no specific portion to be

paid out. This is because a believer, who reached the rank of faith, may give away according to or a bit more than the specified portion of the *zakat*. However, there is no limit to what they give in the Way of Allah *the Almighty* if they have reached the rank of *Ihsan*.

Allah *Glorified is He* wants to unleash people's faithful potentials, so whoever gives in abundance, they will have their reward with Him *the Almighty*. If we contemplate His saying: '...of their wealth,' (*al-Ma'arij*: 23) we will find it wondrous; Allah *Glorified is He* attributes wealth to the people, whilst He is the Owner of wealth and gives it to anyone He wills. That is why Allah *the Almighty* has the right to prescribe a fixed portion in it. Likewise, He *Glorified is He*, says: 'Take alms out of their property, you would cleanse them and purify them thereby, and pray for them; surely your prayer is a relief to them; and Allah is Hearing, Knowing' (*at-Tawba*: 103). The phrase 'their wealth,' with the third person pronoun, is mentioned thirty-one times in the Quran, whereas the word 'your wealth,' with the second person pronoun, is mentioned fourteen times. This is to mean that the ownership of the wealth is attributed to them, for the mere fact that He *Glorified is He* states so, but it is not theirs in reality because Allah *Glorified is He* can take it away if He wills and they will have no means to prevent that.

Given that wealth belongs to Allah *the Almighty* in reality, then He has the right to prescribe a due share in it. But does the 'due share' in this verse refer to the prescribed *zakat* with its fixed portions? We say, 'No, because this verse was revealed in Mecca, whereas the *zakat* was prescribed in Medina.' Accordingly, what is intended here is the specific portion the believers obligated upon themselves to draw near to Allah *Glorified is He*. It is something that a person obligates upon themselves, to give in the Way of Allah at certain times as a recommended action. Consequently, He *the Almighty* does not mention here those who deserve the *zakat*, who are mentioned in His saying: 'Alms are only for the poor and the needy, and the officials (appointed) over them, and those whose hearts are made to incline (to truth) and the (ransoming of) captives and those in debts and in the way of Allah and the wayfarer; an ordinance from Allah; and Allah is knowing, Wise' (*at-Tawba*: 60). Thus, the *zakat* was made obligatory in Medina after the state of Islam was established

and gained strength. Following that, some receivers of *zakat*, other than the poor and the needy, were specified including the officials appointed over it, and those whose hearts are made to incline to truth, the ransoming of captives, those in debts and in the Way of Allah.

As for the due share in the chapter of *al-Ma'arij*, it was prescribed by the person upon themselves out of feeling sympathy and compassion to the poor. So, they allocate a portion of their money to benefit them and satisfy their need.

When Ibn 'Umar *may Allah be pleased with him* was asked as to whether it is the *zakat* which is intended in this verse: 'Who give a due share of their wealth [24] to beggars and the deprived, [25]' (*al-Ma'arij*: 24-25) he answered, 'You have other obligations than it.' Ibn 'Abbas, the scholar of the *ummah* and the interpreter of the Noble Quran, said, 'It is a right other than the *zakat* with which one maintains good relations with kin, generously serves a guest, bears people's burden or helps one who is deprived.' For this reason, Allah *Glorified is He* states: 'Who give a due share of their wealth [24] to beggars and the deprived [25]' (*al-Ma'arij*: 24-25).

Two categories of people deserve this right: the beggars and the deprived. The beggar is the one who begs people, whereas the deprived is the one who is poor yet abstains from begging to the extent that people think them to be rich. Thereby, they do not give them despite their dire financial need. Allah *Glorified is He* recommends giving the beggar, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'And as for him who asks, do not chide (him),' (*ad-Duha*: 10).

Other denotations were inferred from the word 'the deprived', apart from the poor who abstains from begging. Some scholars suggest that 'the deprived' is the one whose wealth does not grow, their business remains slack or perishes or they do not earn what meets their needs. So, they live in straits and are not able to earn in the way that makes their life better. Others said that 'the deprived' is the one whose wealth is perished; their plants and fruits are destroyed with blight or calamity; their cattle and birds catch a fatal disease; or their car by which they earn a living gets stolen. In other words, they had a blessing of which they were deprived on account of a calamity affecting it. In the same vein, upon seeing it burnt, the owners of the garden said: 'We must have lost our way! [26] No- we are ruined! [27]' (*al-Haqqa*: 27) One may ask,

‘Does the phrase ‘their wealth,’ (*al-Ma'arij*: 24) refer to money, gold or silver only? We say, ‘No, the wealth can be in the form of plants, cattle or food, i.e. it is everything that could be a medium of exchange, but we use the word to refer to something which could be used to obtain any property, i.e. money.’ This is the common use of the word, but the original meaning encompasses everything that could be used as a medium of exchange.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* mentions other attributes of those whom He excepted from the punishment, stating:

وَالَّذِينَ يُصَدِّقُونَ بَيِّنَاتِ اللَّهِ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّهِمْ مُشْفِقُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾
 إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّهِمْ غَيْرُ مَأْمُونٍ ﴿٢٨﴾

**Who believe in the Day of Judgment [26]
 and fear the punishment of their Lord [27]
 none may feel wholly secure from it [28]
 (The Quran, *al-Ma'arij*: 26 - 28)**

Belief in the Day of Judgment is the cornerstone of religion, given the fact that the one who does not believe in it does whatever they like, bearing in mind that there will be no Hereafter, or Reckoning. So, what should they be afraid of then? Why should they restrict their freedom in life? Religion, with its entire acts of obedience and guidance, is based on the concept of Reckoning in the Hereafter, and the belief that we will stand before Allah *Glorified is He* one Day so that Allah *Glorified is He* will punish the disobedient and reward the obedient. This is the criteria of our faithful conduct.

If there were no Judgment Day, the unjust people would be the most fortunate ones. Given the fact that they caused mischief in the land, they may escape the punishment in this worldly life. However, they will not escape Allah's Justice. The Day of Judgment is the Day of Recompense for acts of obedience and disobedience. In the verse under discussion, He *the Almighty* does not say: ‘Those who believe in the Judgment Day,’ but rather states: ‘Who accept the truth of the Judgment Day’ (*al-Ma'arij*: 26). This means that they firmly and wholeheartedly believe in it; this is a higher rank than mere belief. Further, Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* said,

'Faith is what takes root in the heart and shows in one's actions.'⁽¹⁾ They confirm their belief by their deeds, exert themselves and spend their money on the beggars and the deprived, hoping to get the reward in the Hereafter.

So, the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Those who accept the truth of the Judgment Day,' (*al-Ma'arij*: 26) means that they wholeheartedly believe in the Last Day, Reckoning and Recompense, and then they do good hoping for rewards and fearing punishment. Even though belief with one's heart and declaration to it with their tongue delivers them from eternally abiding in hellfire, their belief must be confirmed by deeds. In fact, the believer gradually gets firmer in their belief until they become one of the truthful. Abu Bakr *may Allah be pleased with him* is a case in point; he used to deeply believe in everything Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* said. The disbelievers said to him, 'Your friend (i.e. Prophet Muhammad) claims that he went to the *Al-Aqsa* Mosque and came back in one night, whereas we travel long distances taking months to reach it.' Thereupon, Abu Bakr *may Allah be pleased with him* said, 'If he has said it, then he has spoken the truth.'⁽²⁾ His sole reason for belief was the mere fact that 'Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* said that.' This is the true believer, whenever he *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* uttered a word, Abu Bakr *may Allah be pleased with him* hastened to believe in it and did not wait for revelation to come down confirming what he said. Once he *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* declared that he was a Messenger, Abu Bakr *may Allah be pleased with him* believed and affirmed what he said, and thereby was a firm believer in the truth.

(1) Al-Hasan Al-Basri said, 'Faith is not by wishful thinking nor by appearance, it is what takes root in the heart and shows in one's actions.' See Ibn Taymiyya, *Kitab Al-Iman*, 1/230.

(2) 'Aisha *Allah be pleased with her* said, 'When Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* was taken by night to the *Al-Aqsa* Mosque, he awoke and spoke to the people about it. Some of those who had faith in him and believed him renounced it. They sought Abu Bakr and said, 'Have you heard your friend's claim that he was taken by night to the *Al-Aqsa* Mosque?' Abu Bakr said, 'Did he say that?' They said 'Yes.' Abu Bakr said, 'If he has said it, then he has spoken the truth.' They said, 'Do you believe he went by night to *Al-Aqsa* Mosque and he returned before morning?' He said, 'Yes. Indeed, I believe him for what is even more astonishing than that. I believe he has received news from Heaven for everything he does.' For this reason, Abu Bakr was named 'the truthful.' Al-Hakim graded this Hadith as authentic. See Al-Bayhaqi, *Dala'il An-Nubuwwa*, 2/361; and Al-Hakim, *Mustadrak*, 3/62.

Accepting the truth of the Judgment Day comes as a result of the following attribute: 'And fear the punishment of their Lord,' (*al-Ma'arij*: 27). In spite of establishing prayer constantly and paying a fixed portion from their wealth for the beggars and the deprived, and despite their fervent belief in the Last Day, they are fearful of Allah's Chastisement.

The believers fear and stand in awe of Allah *the Almighty*. Moreover, the Arabic word *Ishfaq* (fear), as mentioned in the verse, denotes that fearing Him is accompanied by caution and awe. Likewise, the believers' fear of the Hour is accompanied by caution that it may come before being fully prepared for it in a way that makes them happy with His Reward when they meet with Him.

They are fearful of Allah's Punishment, and the reason is declared in His saying: 'None may feel wholly secure from it' (*al-Ma'arij*: 28). No one can say for sure that they fulfilled their obligations perfectly or abstained from prohibitions completely, for they must have had shortcomings in either aspect. Moreover, no one feels wholly secure from His punishment except those who are deluded by wishful thinking that their deeds will rescue them, whilst Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'None amongst you will enter paradise because of his deeds alone. They said, 'Allah's Messenger, not even you?' Thereupon he said, 'Not even I.'⁽¹⁾ The human being's sins in this worldly life are many; they may be unjust when they judge, have bad thoughts of people, tell lies and stray from truth if they are called for witness and backbite others.

As a matter of fact, no one among us can attribute perfection to themselves, even those who exert themselves in obedience do not reach perfection, given the fact that perfection belongs to Allah *Glorified is He Alone*. In this regard, Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'All the sons of Adam are sinners, but the best of sinners are those who repent often.'⁽²⁾

(1) Abu Hurayra *Allah be pleased with him* narrated that Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Observe moderation in deeds (and if it is not possible, try to be near moderation) and understand that none amongst you can attain salvation because of his deeds alone. They said, 'Allah's Messenger, not even you?' Thereupon he said, 'Not even I, but that Allah should wrap me in His Mercy and Grace.' See Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, Hadith no. 43 and 1151; Muslim, *Sahih*, Hadith no. 785; Ibn Maja, *Sunnan*, Hadith no. 4238; and At-Tirmidhi, *Sunnan*, Hadith no. 3037.

(2) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Anas ibn Malik *Allah be pleased with him*. See Ibn Maja, *Sunnan*, Hadith no. 4251; Abu Mohamed Al-Kashi, *Al-Muntakhab*, Hadith no. 1197; Al-Bazzar, *Musnad*, Hadith no. 7236; and Ar-Ruyani, *Musnad*, Hadith no. 1366.

Further, Allah *Glorified is He* states: 'But none feels secure from Allah's Plan except the people who shall perish' (*al-A'raf*: 99). 'To feel secure' is to be assured of an issue in a way which does not arouse fear or troubles. The one who feels secure of Allah's Plan is the loser. In addition, one should not feel secure of the punishment in hellfire, which is why they should not underestimate the matter since no one can guarantee anything.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* clarifies another attribute, stating:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَفْوَاجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ
فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾ فَمَنِ ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

Who guard their chastity [29] from all but their spouses or their slave-girls — there is no blame attached to [relations with] these [30] but those whose desires exceed this limit are truly transgressors [31] (The Quran, *al-Ma'arij*: 29 - 31)

Allah *Glorified is He* orders us to keep our private parts to the purpose for which they are created, and one is supposed to adhere only to what He *the Almighty* made lawful in this regard. He *Glorified is He* does not want a man and a woman to be together except in accordance with His Guidance and *Shari'a* because He is the Creator of mankind, and He knows best what reforms them. They should be together according to His *Shari'a* openly and overtly, and not to meet secretly in the darkness of sin to commit the forbidden matter (i.e. adultery) causing confusion of lineage and dissolution of the society.

Regarding the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Who guard their chastity,' (*al-Ma'arij*: 29) the Arabic word *Hafizhun* indicates guarding and protection, and it comes in the form of the active participle which denotes constancy and continuity. To find out the distinctive denotation of this form of the word, we should look into the verse related to prayer in which He *Glorified is He* states: 'And are steadfast in their prayers' (*al-Ma'arij*: 34). In this verse, another form of this word is used but is less in denoting constancy and continuity since one may perform prayers but defer them from due time or may not pray in the mosque sometimes due to emergent circumstances. However, guarding and protecting private parts from committing indecent crimes, like adultery,

must be a constant attribute, however alluring the temptations is. This is because it is a matter that should do with people's honor, and hence this guarding of the private parts shall include everyone except for two categories of women, mentioned in His saying: 'From all but their spouses or their slave-girls—there is no blame attached to [relations with] these' (*al-Ma'arij*: 30-31). This verse means that the command of guarding the private parts does not include the wives made lawful in marriage. This entails the prohibition of temporary marriage, for in this case the woman is neither a wife nor a slave-girl.

Here arises a question, which is 'Why does Allah *Glorified is He* use the preposition 'Ala (on) instead of 'An (from), although 'An is more appropriate for the general meaning of the verse?' We say, 'The preposition 'Ala here conveys the meaning of 'An, and it is possibly related to an omitted part that befits the general meaning.'

Two exceptions are made here: the wives and the slave-girls. Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Guard your private parts except from your wife.'⁽¹⁾ It is obligatory that one must guard his private parts except from his wife and slave girl, and it is not allowed to take in marriage two sisters or a woman and her paternal or maternal aunt simultaneously. This verse and its counterpart in the chapter of *al-Mu'minun* are concerned with men, for women are not allowed to have sexual relationships with their male slaves. It happened at the time of 'Umar *may Allah be pleased with him* that a woman had intimacy with her male slave. When this was mentioned to 'Umar, he asked her, 'Why did you do it?' She answered, 'I thought that I am allowed to do it the same as men with their slave girls.' Whereupon, he consulted with the Companions of Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* who said, 'She interpreted the Book of Allah in the wrong way, thereby no prescribed punishment is to be inflicted upon her.' This is because wrong interpretation waives the punishment. Consequently, 'Umar *may Allah be*

(1) *This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Bahz ibn Hakim who said that his father told him on the authority of his grandfather that he said to Prophet Muhammad Allah's peace and blessings be upon him 'O Messenger of Allah, from whom should we conceal our private parts and to whom can we show? He replied, 'Conceal your private parts except from your wife and slave-girls.' See Abu Dawud, Sunnan, Hadith no. 4017; Ibn Maja, Sunnan, Hadith no. 1920; and Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 20034 and 20040.*

pleased with him forbade her from marrying a freeman and ordered the slave not to approach her.

Thus, one is ordered to guard his chastity, apart from his wife (or wives) and slave-girls who were made lawful. Yet, slavery no longer exists since there is no slavery anymore, unlike the case before the advent of Islam. Hence, this is a suspended ruling having no sphere of application. There is a distinction, however, between suspending a ruling due to the absence of its sphere of application and abolishing a ruling. The ruling related to slave girls is not abolished; it is present, but its subject is absent; thus it comes into effect once its subject exists in practice. Some people attempt to arouse doubts about Islam and the Quran, saying: 'If Islam really wanted to free the human being from slavery and bondage, why does the Quran mention slavery in some verses and does not abrogate them as was the case with other verses addressing other issues?' We say, 'Islam fought slavery and bondage and came to free slaves by laying down the rulings of expiation for committing sins by way of freeing slaves. For instance, a slave must be freed as expiation for killing a believer by mistake, a fact which is clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...and whoever kills a believer by mistake, he should free a believing slave, and blood-money should be paid to his people...' (*an-Nisa*: 92).

Breaking a deliberate oath can be expiated by freeing a slave, as Allah *the Almighty* says: '...so its expiation is the feeding of ten poor men out of the middling (food) you feed your families with, or their clothing, or the freeing of a neck...' (*al-Ma'ida*: 89). Likewise, freeing a slave is one of the means of expiation for someone who says to his wife, 'You are as forbidden to me as (the back of) my mother,' as He *Glorified is He* states: 'And (as for) those who put away their wives by likening their backs to the backs of their mothers then would recall what they said, they should free a captive before they touch each other...' (*al-Mujadala*: 3).

Accordingly, Islam handled the issue of slavery and bondage, even by the permissibility of having slave-girls, as it was a solution to the phenomenon of bondage, for it honours the women who used to be taken as captives in wars. Before the advent of Islam, the captive women had no rights and were taken by the victorious warriors who did whatever they liked to them, such as raping

or even gang raping and then killing them in the end. In Islam, however, a woman taken as a captive during wars used to be entrusted to someone to provide food, drink and attire for her in return for her service to him. If she conceived after intimacy with him, she would become a mother of a son, and would be freed for giving birth to him. For this reason, he had to make sure at first that she had not been pregnant.

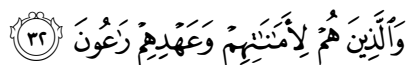
Taking women as captives were subject to the law of the warriors at that time, so *Shari'a* Law was laid down to confront this deep-rooted tradition. It may be enforced at other times which we do not know, therefore there must be a law regulating this matter. This shows the greatness of the Noble Quran and its eternity until the Hour is established. Accordingly, the way Islam addresses slavery should be regarded as one of its merits, not the other way around.

Back to the verse in question, Allah *Glorified is He* states: '...there is no blame attached to [relations with] these' (*al-Ma'arij*: 30). This means that they are not to be blamed for not guarding their private parts with their wives and slave-girls, but they are to be blamed in other cases. In addition, mentioning the word denoting pudendum at the beginning of the verse indicates that such blame is to be placed on that person who has anal intercourse with his wife; not in the normal place created and prepared for intercourse and giving birth to children. However, they are not blameworthy or sinners for doing what Allah *the Almighty* made lawful. Rather, they are blamed for transgressing the limits and committing what is forbidden.

Accordingly, Allah *Glorified is He* states in the following verse: 'But those whose desires exceed this limit are truly transgressors' (*al-Ma'arij*: 31). The Arabic word *Ibtagha* (to desire) has the meaning of seeking something persistently, and this is possibly because it goes beyond the normal limits. In this case, such a people are striving to commit what He *the Almighty* made unlawful by seducing a woman who is neither his wife nor a slave girl. The Arabic word *Wara'* (beyond) is used in the Quran with different meanings; however, it here means 'beyond,' with a more profound denotation. Although a man may have a wife or wives and slave-girls under his possession, he may seek what is beyond that, i.e. goes after what is made forbidden despite having what is made lawful. Likewise, he may have anal intercourse with his

wife though it is not the organ prepared for that matter. So, the word *Wara'* (beyond) has two meanings here: 'beyond' and 'above.' Describing those seeking what is beyond the limits, He *Glorified is He* states: 'But those whose desires exceed this limit are truly transgressors' (*al-Ma'arij*: 31). This means that these are the adulterers who transgress the limits of what He *the Almighty* permitted or forbade and who turn from the lawful matters to the unlawful ones.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* states:



**Who are faithful to their trusts and
their pledges [32] (The Quran, *al-Ma'arij*: 32)**

Trust represents whatever you are entrusted with, and the first thing you were entrusted with is the covenant of faith taken upon you, while you were in Adam's back. One should be faithful to the trust belonging to Allah *Glorified is He* as well as to those belonging to the people that should be paid back to their owners perfectly and faithfully. As for the word '*Ahd* (pledge), it refers to what the human being takes upon themselves to do, and is obligatory on them to fulfil so long as it is not an act of disobedience. This is because when you make a covenant with someone, their activities in life depend on fulfilling your promise to them. If you break your covenant and promise to them, you free yourself and behave as you please while restraining them, wasting their interests and spoiling their day, and hence Islam affirms that one should keep their promise.

Trust also denotes what you are entrusted with regarding people's rights, which you have to pay back, but you can deny having it if you wish. For example, one might say, 'I entrusted so and so with a trust.' But if there is a check or witnesses to it, then it is not called 'trust.' On this basis, 'trust' means to put something into the care of someone and leave their conscience determines whether to acknowledge it on your demand or to deny it. In this regard, 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) and 'Surely Allah commands you to make over

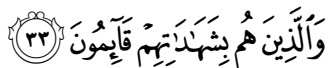
trusts to their owners...' (*an-Nisa'*: 58). Moreover, Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Pay the trust to him who deposited it with you, and do not betray him who betrays you.'⁽¹⁾

Paying the trusts back to their owners is one of the best acts of obedience that brings one closer to Allah *the Almighty*. Therefore, one should keep the trusts and protect them until they give them back to their owners. Further, they must not contrive a plot to appropriate them or consume them unjustly. Such plots corrupt the covenants and trusts, and in this way no one will trust another regarding deposits, promises and covenants, leading to the disturbance of the society and the lack of confidence among its members. It is noted that He *Glorified is He* attributes the trusts and covenants to those entrusted with them, stating: 'Who are faithful to their trusts and their pledges' (*al-Ma'arij*: 32). This means that so long as the person takes the responsibility for bearing a trust, then they are bound to pay it back completely undiminished when requested or becomes due. It is as though Allah *Glorified is He* says to them, 'It is your duty to fulfill them even if there is no proof or document obliging you to do so.' Furthermore, He *Glorified is He* describes them as keepers of His Covenant and of people's trusts, fulfilling their covenants and appropriating nothing of the people's rights.

If we reflect on this verse: 'Who are faithful to their trusts and their pledges,' (*al-Ma'arij*: 32), and the preceding ones: 'Who guard their chastity [29] from all but their spouses or their slave-girls—there is no blame attached to [relations with] these, [30] but those whose desires exceed this limit are truly transgressors, [31]' (*al-Ma'arij*: 29-31) we can find them intimately related since the private parts, the covenants and the trusts should be properly kept guarded, and anyone who does not keep the trusts and the covenants is as guilty as the one who does not guard their private parts. Furthermore, whoever seeks the illicit sexual intercourse is a transgressor as is the one betraying trusts and breaking covenants and promises.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* states:

(1) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayra *Allah be pleased with him*. See Abu Dawud, *Sunnan*, Hadith no. 3535; Al-Bazzar, *Musnad*, Hadith no. 9002; At-Tabarani, *Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat*, Hadith no. 3595; and Al-Hakim, *Mustadrak Hadith* no. 2296.



Who give honest testimony [33]
(The Quran, *al-Ma'arij*: 33)

The verses clarifying Allah's Way of Guidance begin with those who are constant in their prayer, those pious people who neglect no prescribed prayer but rather offer supererogatory prayers and night prayers. Further, they observe all the acts of worship which show that they reached the rank of *Ihsan*. They also feel sympathetic and affectionate towards the poor and the needy beggars and the deprived people by giving them charity and allocating a portion of their wealth to them, only out of fearing Allah *the Almighty* keeping away from hellfire and being fearful of His Chastisement. They also guard their private parts, preserve their chastity, shun the forbidden matters, and keep their private parts except from their wives and slave girls-under their possession. In addition, they protect the property entrusted to them and fulfil the covenants they take upon themselves.

Such attributes turn one into a sincere worshipper, having the feature of the true believers. But what is more important is the practical application of Allah's Guidance, namely, saying the truth and bearing witness to it, as Allah *Glorified is He* states: 'Who give honest testimony' (*al-Ma'arij*: 33). Bearing witness entails getting engaged in society to see and know what happens. As for giving witness, it means to tell what you have seen. The judge asks the witnesses because they saw the incident while it occurred, so they relate what they have witnessed. In fact, when someone gives testimony on an incident they witnessed, it is as though they let the people who did not see it witness what happened. But the one giving false testimony changes the reality of the situation despite the fact that Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'You who believe! Be maintainers of justice, bearers of witness of Allah's sake, though it may be against your own selves or (your) parents or near relatives; if he be rich or poor, Allah is nearer to them both in compassion; therefore do not follow (your) low desires, lest you deviate; and if you swerve or turn aside, then surely Allah is aware of what you do' (*an-Nisa'*: 135).

When you give honest and just testimonies, no unjust person will go to excess in their injustice, for what encourages them to go too far in their

injustice is those who manipulate justice, conceal their defects and deceive the people. If one finds those who guide them to the way of justice, they will not commit injustice. However, the unjust one likes those who conceal and give false testimony about their crimes. This unjust person says to themselves, 'So and so committed the same crime with impunity.'

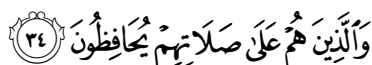
Thus, false testimonies lead to disturbance in society, but if the people in society give upright and just testimonies, everyone will be deterred from committing injustice, and the unjust ones will be punished and made an example for others to be deterred as well. A believer is required to stand out firmly for Allah *the Almighty* by reforming themselves, and they are also required to give just and upright testimonies to reform others. Allah *Glorified is He* orders us to establish testimonies exceedingly, i.e. we should leave no chance of giving upright and just testimonies so that everyone takes their rights. By so doing, the strong will not oppress the weak as they will be supported by people's just testimonies.

To establish testimony means to bear witness to the truth with no transgression or injustice, and to deliver it properly and justly. Just testimony requires two things: first, the presence of the witness at the time the incident occurred; second, delivering the testimony truly and honestly. Accordingly, no one should give witness to something they did not witness or attend, but if someone saw something, they should relate it truly and honestly without changing it; for the false testimony causes the rightful owner to lose their right and interest. Moreover, no one should refrain from it if called for witness, for the heart of the one who conceals it is surely sinful. Thus, if you are called as a witness, you should give it truly and honestly in such a way that pleases Allah *Glorified is He*.

As a matter of fact, giving false testimonies is one of the main reasons of corruption in all societies, because it makes the people worried about their rights. It incorporates the causes of doing injustice and destroys the value of truth in society. Additionally, giving false testimonies changes the reality and harms the society since it causes the rights to be taken from their rightful owners and be given to others, leading to disturbance of the proceedings of life and rendering the people insecure of the fruit of their effort. Thus, this hinders the people from working and striving, considering that it, i.e. work will be in vain due to false testimonies. It is narrated that Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Should I not inform you about the

most grievous of the grave sins? They are associating partners with Allah, disobedience to parents and false testimony. He was reclining, then he sat up, and repeated it so many times that we wished that he should become silent.⁽¹⁾

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* states:



**And are steadfast in their prayers [34]
(The Quran, *al-Ma'arij*: 34)**

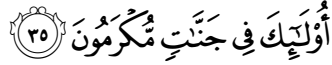
The verses speaking of Allah's Guidance start with mentioning prayer: 'Not so those who pray [22] and are constant in their prayers, [23]' (*al-Ma'arij*: 22-23) and end with prayer as well: 'And are steadfast in their prayers' (*al-Ma'arij*: 34). This is meant to highlight its significance as a declaration of faith performed five times a day. Through prayer, which is the foundation and cornerstone of religion, we leave everything in this worldly life and direct ourselves to Allah *the Almighty*. It is the main pillar of Islam, comprising all other pillars and represents a permanent loyalty of worship to Him *Glorified is He*. It grants assurance to the believers, and constitutes a token of humiliation to Him *Glorified is He*. Further, it makes the believer in conformity with His Way of Guidance, and prevents them from transgressing and defying Him. On the other hand, neglecting prayer signifies defiance against the declaration of worship and loyalty to Him *the Almighty*.

'To be steadfast' in prayer means to perform it at its due time; to perfect ablution, bowing down and prostration; to fulfil its conditions and complete its obligatory and recommended acts. This is different from being constant in prayer which means not to neglect it until its due time passes, as mentioned in the Hadith wherein Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'When you see a man frequenting the mosque, testify that he is a believer.'⁽²⁾

(1) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Abu Bakr *Allah be pleased with him*. See Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 20385; Al-Bukhari, Al-Adab Al-Mufrad, Hadith no. 15; and Al-Bazzar, Musnad, Hadith no. 3629.

(2) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudari *Allah be pleased with him*. See Ibn Maja, Sunnan, Hadith no. 802; Al-Haythami, Mawarid Ath-Tham'an, Hadith no. 310; and Al-Bayhaqi, Shu'ab Al-Iman, Hadith no. 2680 and also As-Sunnan Al-Kubra, Hadith no. 4988.

Allah states:



**They will be honoured in Gardens of bliss [35]
(The Quran, *al-Ma'arij*: 35)**

The pronoun 'they' here refers to the believers who are constant in their prayer, give charity, accept the truth of the Judgment Day, fear Allah's chastisement, guard their private parts except in the case of their wives or slave-girls, fulfil their trusts and covenants, give upright testimonies and keep guard of their prayer. All those believers '...will be honoured in Gardens of bliss' (*al-Ma'arij*: 35). Allah's saying: '...in Gardens...' (*al-Ma'arij*: 35) is a predicate informing that they will be in Gardens, and '...honoured...' (*al-Ma'arij*: 35) is a second predicate. But it may be that His saying: '...in Gardens...' (*al-Ma'arij*: 35) is an adverb of place for the word 'honoured,' denoting that the place where they are honoured will be the Gardens of Bliss and the word 'honoured' is the predicate. In this way, the verse would mean that they will be honoured in Gardens. The word 'honoured' is mentioned thrice in the Quran; on one occasion it refers to the Angels, as Allah *Glorified is He* states: 'And they say: The Beneficent has taken to Himself a son. Glory be to Him. Nay! They are honoured servants [26] They do not precede Him in speech and (only) according to His commandment do they act [27]' (*al-Anbiya'*: 26-27). This means that the Angels are honoured for the purity of their worship to their Lord, their sincerity and absolute obedience to Him.

The word 'honoured' is also mentioned twice to refer to those whom He *the Almighty* deservedly honoured, as He *the Almighty* states: 'Save the servants of Allah, the purified ones. [41] For them is a known sustenance, [42] Fruits, and they shall be highly honoured, [42] In gardens of pleasure, [43]' (*as-Saffat*: 40-43); and 'They will be honoured in Gardens of bliss' (*al-Ma'arij*: 35). Is there more honour for the believers than resembling the Angels in that they are honoured with their faces full of radiance of pleasure, where no blackness or humiliation will cover them?!

Allah *Glorified is He* expounds on the aspects of honouring and rewarding, saying: 'On thrones, facing each other. [44] A bowl shall be made to go round

them from water running out of springs, [45] White, delicious to those who drink. [46] There shall be no trouble in it, nor shall they be exhausted therewith. [47] And with them shall be those who restrain the eyes, having beautiful eyes. [48] As if they were eggs carefully protected, [49]' (*as-Saffat*: 44-49). Honouring them is not confined to this, it rather extends to encompass 'bounties which no eye has seen, no ear has heard and no human heart has ever perceived.'⁽¹⁾

Not only will the believer be equal to the Angels if they conform to the Guidance of their Lord, but they may also be better than them. This is because they, i.e. the Angels are made subservient, whilst the human being is endowed with the freedom of choice, so they will be better than the Angels if they prefer to keep to the Divine Way of Guidance. Consequently, the believers will have an honourable entrance into paradise wherein an honourable reward has been prepared for them. The honourable entrance should be befitting to the one who grants it; how could it be then when it is granted by Allah *the Almighty*? Allah *Glorified is He* is All Generous in His Rewards, and it is He, the Generous Lord, Who prepared it. Moreover, describing the reward itself as honourable and generous indicates that Allah *Glorified is He* honoured it Himself that it becomes honoured. The reward and high rank in paradise are confined to the followers of His Way of Guidance. So, what about those who disbelieved in Allah *the Almighty* Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* and the Quran? The answer is given in the following saying of Allah *the Almighty*

(1) *This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayra who narrated that Prophet Muhammad Allah's peace and blessings be upon him said, 'He who would get into paradise (would be made to enjoy such an everlasting) bliss that he would neither become destitute, nor would his clothes wear out, nor his youth would decline. There will be bounties which no eye has seen, no ear has heard and no human heart has ever perceived.' See Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 8827; Ibn Hibban, Sahih, Hadith no. 369; and At-Tabarani, Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat, Hadith no. 200.*

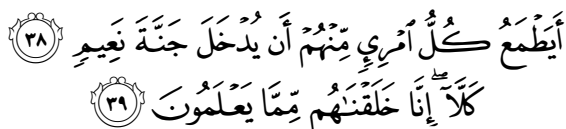
فَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا قِبَلَكَ مُهْطِعِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾ عَنِ الْيَمِينِ وَعَنِ الشِّمَالِ عِزِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

What is wrong with the disbelievers? Why do they rush to peer at you [Prophet] [36] from right and left, in crowds? [37] (The Quran, *al-Ma'arij*: 36 - 37)

The Arabic word *Muhtia'* refers to the one who hastens exceedingly that their neck seems longer than normal, so the word signifies a tall person. The general meaning would be that the disbelievers hastened away from Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* and turned their backs on his call in rejection and denial. In this connection, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'What is then the matter with them that they turn away from the admonition?' (*al-Muddaththir*: 49)

Here, Allah *Glorified is He* gives us an account of how the disbelievers were dealing with Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*. This verse was revealed concerning a group of them who used to gather around him *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* listen to his speech, and then mock and call him a liar. So, in the two verses in question, He *the Almighty* describes their deeds and position regarding Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*. Those disbelievers turned away from Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* and yet used to gather around him in circles and separate groups, not facing him, but rather some sitting on his right, while others on his left. All what they did was to stretch their necks towards Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* to mock and scoff at him instead of listening to him. It is as if they were saying, 'What does this man say?' They did not hasten to listen to what he *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* said, nor did they rush to follow guidance, but it was only to look in surprise and then turn away in separate groups on his right and left hands.

Then Allah *the Almighty* says:



Does every one of them expect to enter a Garden of bliss? [38]

No! We created them from the substance they know [39]

(The Quran, *al-Ma'arij*: 38 - 39)

Every one of the disbelievers falsely hopes that they will be admitted to the paradise at the end. However, how could it happen when they did not believe in Allah *the Almighty*, Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* and the Noble Quran? Further, they did not abide by the Divine Way of Guidance, for they rejected and defied Allah's Commands. What is it then they hope for? In this regard, Allah *Glorified is He* states: '(This) shall not be in accordance with your vain desires nor in accordance with the vain desires of the followers of the Book; whoever does evil, he shall be requited with it, and besides Allah he will find for himself neither a guardian nor a helper' (*an-Nisa'*: 123). Vain desires signify the human being's ambition to have something joyful but without pursuing it. In the case of the disbelievers, what good deeds and faith did they offer to have the paradise as their reward?

The Arabic word *Tama'* (wished) means to expect to have something transcending, even the vain desires, as in the case of the one about whom Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Leave Me and him whom I created alone, [11] And give him vast riches, [12] And sons dwelling in his presence, [13] And I adjusted affairs for him adjustably; [14] And yet he desires that I should add more! [15]' (*al-Muddaththir*: 11-15) Allah *Glorified is He* gave him everything; after creating him lonely and penniless; He *Glorified is He* granted him abundant wealth and as many children as he wanted. They used to attend the gatherings of his people with him and to run his business. Despite all these bounties, he desired for more blessings, power and wealth.

One hoping for something necessarily needs to have qualifications to gain it, for how could they desire or wish for something without employing the means to obtain it or having what makes them worthy of it? Allah *Glorified is He* mentions the hopes of some believers, stating that they used to say: 'Surely, we hope that our Lord will forgive us our wrongs' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 51). They

further clarify the reason for such hope as to be: '...because we are the first of the believers' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 51). As for those who were obstinate and persisted in their disbelief, they vainly desire to be admitted to the Garden of Bliss. It is noteworthy that the Arabic verb *Yudkhal* (to be admitted into) in the verse under discussion is used in the passive form to indicate that they knew for sure that they did not offer anything rendering them worthy of entering paradise, so they want someone to let them enter it.

Then, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'No! We created them from the substance they know' (*al-Ma'arij*: 39). So, the disbelievers mocked at Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* and scoffed at the Quran saying mockingly that if there were a paradise, they would enter it along with those who believed. No, they should have no hope to enter the paradise since they will have no share in it, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'Surely (as for) those who reject Our Communications and turn away from them haughtily, the doors of heaven shall not be opened for them, nor shall they enter the garden until the camel pass through the eye of the needle; and thus do We reward the guilty' (*al-A'raf*: 40). Therefore, what is it that they mock and scoff at when they were created from what they know, i.e. from contemptible water, as He *Glorified is He* says: 'Was he not a small seed in the seminal elements' (*al-Qiyama*: 37)? Further, Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* spat in his palm and said, 'Allah *Glorified is He* says, 'Do you think you can escape from My Punishment, O son of Adam, when I have created you from something like this?'⁽¹⁾

Furthermore, Allah *Glorified is He* states: 'Did We not create you from contemptible water?' (*al-Insan*: 20) As they know what they were created from,

(1) *Al-Baghawi narrated through the chain of narrators of Ath-Tha'labi on the authority of Yusr ibn Jahhash who narrated that Prophet Muhammad Allah's peace and blessings be upon him spat in his palm then pointed to it with his finger and said, 'Allah Glorified is He says, 'Do you think you can escape from My Punishment, O son of Adam, when I have created you from something like this, and when I have fashioned you perfectly and made you complete, you walk wearing your two garments and the earth makes a sound (beneath your feet). You collected money but do not give away in the Way of Allah; then when your soul reaches the throat, you say, 'I want to give in charity, ' but it is too late for charity. See Al-Khazen, Tafsir, 4/342; Ibn Maja, Sunnan, Hadith no. 2707; and Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 17842.*

there is no way of denying the Creator who created them, as Qatada said regarding this verse, 'You were created from filth, O son of Adam, so fear Allah.'⁽¹⁾ Man is created from contemptible water, so why do they then behave arrogantly and turn away from Guidance? Further, He *the Almighty* says: 'Were they created from nothing or are they the creators of themselves' (*at-Tur*: 35). Neither could they say that they were created out of nothing, nor would they say that they are the creators of themselves. For this reason, He *Glorified is He* poses a third question for them, saying: 'Have you considered the seed? [58] Is it you that created it or are we the creators? [59]' (*at-Talaq*: 58-59) They could not also claim to be the creators of that.

How could the disbelievers claim that they will enter the Garden of Bliss, that they will surpass the true believers and that they will be gathered with them in paradise? In this way, they, in fact, do not show respect to Allah *the Almighty* accusing Him of injustice, for how can He *the Almighty* assemble them as well as the believers in paradise while they are not equal?

Then, He *Glorified is He* says:

فَلَا أُقِيمُ رَبِّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ إِنَّا لَقَدِيرُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾
عَلَى أَنْ نُبَدِّلَ خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَسْبُوقِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

**And, by the Lord of every sunrise and sunset, We have
the power [40] to substitute for them others better than
they are – nothing can prevent Us from doing this [41]
(The Quran, *al-Ma'arij*: 40 - 41)**

Every place on the earth has a sunrise and a sunset; when the sun rises in a place, it sets in another and vice versa. So with every sunrise, there is sunset and accordingly there are two sunrises and two sunsets. Thus, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'He is Lord of the two risings and Lord of the two settings' (*ar-Rahman*: 17). Furthermore, the sunrise and the sunset differ from one day to another, and there is a sunrise and a sunset every second. Hence, He *Glorified is He* swears

(1) This narration is narrated on the authority of Bishr ibn Yazid, who narrated it from Sai'd. See 'Abd Ar-Razzaq, *Tafsir*, 3332; *At-Tabari, Jame' Al-Bayan*, 23/621; and *Al-Karmani, Gharai'b At-Tafsir*, 2/1245.

with Himself as Being the Lord of every sunrise and sunset, as they differ over the year.

Thus, the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'And, by the Lord of every sunrise and sunset, We have the power,' (*al-Ma'arij*: 40) is a reference to the different settings of the sun and its daily motion in addition to the benefits of the sunrise and sunset to mankind and the living beings. Some scholars expanded on this issue; Al Baghawi⁽¹⁾, for example, said, 'Allah *Glorified is He* added that He created three hundred and sixty skylights in the East and sixty skylights in the West which is the number of days a year. The sun rises and sets in each skylight on a particular day and does not rise or set from this skylight until it is the same day of the following year. This refers to the sunrises and sunsets.'⁽²⁾

With regard to His saying: 'And, by the Lord of every sunrise and sunset, We have the power,' (*al-Ma'arij*: 40) there are emphatic linguistic devices employed to further affirm the meaning. Here, the pronoun 'We' refers to Allah *Glorified is He* and indicates His Greatness. The general meaning of the verse is that He *the Almighty* is fully Able to destroy them and bring forth people who are better, more obedient and more pleasing to Him than them.

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'We have the power [40] to substitute for them others better than they are, [41]' (*al-Ma'arij*: 40-41) it gives rise to a question, which is, 'Did Allah *Glorified is He* bring people better than them?' Some Scholars state that He *the Almighty* substituted for them *Al-Ansar* (The Helpers) and *Al-Muhajirin* (The Emigrants), and others maintain that He *Glorified is He* replaced some of the disbelievers by turning them into believers. However, the other scholars hold that Allah *the Almighty* did not bring others instead of them, as this only happens by way of destruction. It was just a threat for them to believe.

(1) *Al Baghawi is Abu Mohamed Al-Husayn ibn Mas'ud Al-Farra' or Ibn Al-Farra'. He was dubbed Muhyi As-Sunnah (the one reviving the Sunna). He was a jurist, a Hadith scholar and an exegete. He was attributed to Bagha, a village in Khurasan located between Herat and Marw. He was born in 436 A.H. and passed away in 510 A.H. at the age of 74. His books include At-Tahdhib in Shafi' Fiqh, Sharh As-Sunna in Hadith and Lubab At-Ta'wil Fi Ma'ani At-Tanzil in Quranic exegesis. See Az-Zirikli, Al-A'lam, 2/259.*

(2) *See At-Tabari, Jame' Al-Bayan, 23/283; see also Ath-Th'alabi, Al-Kashf Wa Al-Bayan, 8/139; and Al-Baghawi, Lubab At-Ta'wil, 4/26.*

Similarly, Allah *Glorified is He* threatens those who turn away from giving in charity, saying: ‘...and if you turn back He will bring in your place another people, then they will not be like you’ (*Muhammad*: 38). He *Glorified is He* is Self-sufficient and has Absolute Omnipotence to replace those miserly people with others who are generous in giving out in His Way out of what He provided for them. As a matter of fact, the one refraining from giving only deprives themselves of mercy. Moreover, the one committing apostasy will be replaced, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: ‘O you who believe! Whoever from among you turns back from his religion, then Allah will bring a people, He shall love them and they shall love Him, lowly before the believers, mighty against the unbelievers...’ (*al-Ma‘ida*: 54). Thus, those who renounce Islam will be replaced by good people unlike them.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that the one withholding money from charity or the apostate will be destroyed; rather, they may have more wealth, power, publicity and followers. Replacement here means that they were expelled from Allah’s Mercy and there is no hope that they will return to the Way of Guidance. This is like the case of someone you advised many times, but they insist on seeking the wrong path. So, someone else says to you, ‘Leave them alone.’ ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn Al-‘As *may Allah be pleased with him* narrated that he heard Prophet Muhammad *Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him* saying, ‘If you see my *ummah* were afraid to confront an oppressor and tell him, ‘You are an oppressor’, then it is finished.’⁽¹⁾

Regarding the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...nothing can prevent Us from doing this,’ (*al-Ma‘arij*: 41) it means that He *Glorified is He* could be neither unable nor overpowered, for nothing He wants shall be unfulfilled, nor can anyone be protected from Him. Allah *the Almighty* is fully Able to replace the disbelievers with others unlike them. No one can go beyond His Will or prevent it from pursuing its aim since He *Glorified is He* is the Lord of every sunrise and sunset. This is not only confined to the earth on which we live, as it represents only one of nine planets in the solar system, and there are

(1) *This Hadith is narrated on the authority of ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Amr ibn Al-‘As may Allah be pleased with him. See Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 6521 and 67842; Al-Bazzar, Musnad, Hadith no. 2374 and 2375; and At-Tabarani, Al-Mu‘jam Al-Kabir, Hadith no. 14314 and 14351.*

millions of other solar systems in the galaxies of this vast cosmos. Every solar system has a sun rising and setting, and Allah *Glorified is He* is the Lord of the entire universe, not only the Lord our planet and solar system. Accordingly, He is the Omnipotent Whom nothing can overcome and: '...the Lord of every sunrise and sunset...' (*al-Ma'arij*: 41). Then, Allah *the Almighty* says:

فَذَرَّهُمْ يُخَوِّضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّى يُلَاقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾

**So leave them to wallow in idle talk, until they
come face to face with their promised Day [42]
(The Quran, *al-Ma'arij*: 42)**

This verse conveys an order to leave them alone, and the Arabic verb *Dhar* (to leave) is used in the present form, and was used in the past form only once in the Hadith wherein Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Leave the Yemenis so long as they leave you.' *Da'* (leave) is another verb with the same meaning, and it is alleged that the Arabs neglected the past form of this verb as well as the verb *Dhar* except in the verse reading: 'Your Lord has not forsaken you, nor has He become displeased' (*ad-Duha*: 3). It is as if Allah *the Almighty* says to Prophet Muhammad, 'Leave them to Me so that I punish them and do what I please with them.' The meaning could be to let them do whatever they like to deserve the punishment and have the chastisement inflicted on them.

Regarding His saying: 'So leave them to wallow in idle talk...' (*al-Ma'arij*: 42) the Arabic word *Yakhud* (to wallow) gives a clear physical meaning because it literally means to get into a liquid, such as getting into water or mud. This word gives the feeling of entering deep water which covers what is beneath the feet of the one entering it so that they do not know where their feet are taking him, and they may fall into a hole. By contrast, the way of the one who is not walking in water is clear before them and they know where to step, without getting any harm.

The Arabic word *Tal'abu* means to engage in something useless. So the disbelievers' efforts cannot stand in the face of the Call to Islam since it is going on in its way and they will never overcome it. This is because all what they do is idle talks and amusement that have no effect in reality; it is only a matter of amusement. Likewise, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'What! Do the people

of the towns feel secure from Our Punishment coming to them in the morning while they play?' (*al-A'raf*: 98) Their daytime is marked with futile, profitless motion that is none but a play in this worldly life and their night is marked with lacking motion or indulging into obscenity, depravity and perversion. In fact, anyone not following Allah's Way of Guidance spends their night asleep, distracted or committing acts of disobedience, and gets involved in play during their daytime. So, He *Glorified is He* states: 'What! Do the people of the towns feel secure from Our Punishment coming to them in the morning while they play?' (*al-A'raf*: 98) This means that they neither pay attention to Him nor show regard for Him. They did that intentionally, recommending and even urging one another to do it.

Afterwards, He *the Almighty* says: '...until they come face to face with their promised Day' (*al-Ma'arij*: 42). This means to leave them in their amusement, negligence and blindness until they encounter the promised Judgment Day. We can note that He *Glorified is He* says: '...come face to face with...' (*al-Ma'arij*: 42) which means that it is they who seek to see that Day despite their hatred, denial and running away from it. In addition, in His saying: '...with their promised Day,' (*al-Ma'arij*: 42), we note that the Day is attributed to them. So, they cannot escape or flee from it; it is waiting for them to be punished for their disbelief, and they inevitably will come to their destination. They were warned by all the Prophets of that Day of Reckoning and Recompense. Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* states:

يَوْمَ يُخْرِجُونَ مِنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ سِرَاعًا كَانَتْهُمْ إِلَىٰ نُصْبٍ يُوفُضُونَ
خَشِيعَةً أَبْصَرُهُمْ تَرَهِفُهُمْ ذَلَّةٌ ذَٰلِكَ الْيَوْمِ الَّذِي كَانُوا يُوعَدُونَ

**The Day they will rush out of their graves as if rallying to a flag [43]
eyes downcast and covered in shame: that is the Day of which they
were warned [44] (The Quran, *al-Ma'arij*: 43 - 44)**

What will occur on that promised Day against which they are warned? Allah *the Almighty* provides the answer, saying: 'The Day they will rush out of their graves' (*al-Ma'arij*: 43). In this Day, the trumpet will be blown for the second time so that all people come out of their graves. Likewise, He *the Almighty* says: 'And the trumpet shall be blown, when lo! From their graves they shall

hasten on to their Lord' (*Ya Sin*: 51). Consider how magnificent the Quranic description of that scene is, as stated: 'And the trumpet shall be blown, when lo! From their graves they shall hasten on to their Lord. [51] They shall say: O woe to us! Who has raised us up from our sleeping-place? This is what the Beneficent promised and the Messenger told the truth. [52] There would be naught but a single cry, when lo! They shall all be brought before Us [53]' (*Ya Sin*: 51-53). This is the truth which the disbelievers always belied until they died and were buried with the certainty that they would not be raised. They believed that there would be no Day when they shall raise up from their graves and get back to life again. Then, all of a sudden, their graves are laid open to find themselves alive against their will, and they will start screaming and invoking woe against themselves, since it is vividly clear that they were in falsehood. Once they say: 'O woe to us! Who has raised us up from our sleeping-place?' (*Ya Sin*: 52) Allah *the Almighty* or the Angels reply to them, saying: '...this is what the Beneficent Allah promised and the Messengers told the truth' (*Ya Sin*: 52).

You can observe how great the might of bringing them forth against their will is by reflecting on His saying: 'There would be naught but a single cry, when lo! They shall all be brought before Us' (*Ya Sin*: 53). The verb 'be brought' is used in the passive form to indicate that they will be forced to be present and to stand before Allah *Glorified is He* and no one will escape since He *the Almighty* says: '...they shall all be brought before Us' (*Ya Sin*: 53). Allah *Glorified is He* describes their coming forth from graves as unraveling cloth because they come out very swiftly.

Then, He *Glorified is He* adds another account to make the description clearer, stating: '...as if rallying to a flag,' (*al-Ma'arij*: 43). The Arabic word *Nusub* refers to something erected, and it occurs in the Quran as singular and as plural. It originally signifies stones erected around the *Ka'ba* where the polytheists used to slaughter animals as sacrifices to their false gods. So, it refers to an erected flag to which the worshippers hasten. This is like their hastening and coming forth from graves, which entails their worry and concern regarding their final destination. But do they hasten on happily and cheerfully with delighted faces that they will meet with their Lord in Whom they believed?! No, they were not among the believers; rather, they disbelieved

in Him *Glorified is He* rejected His commands and denied and rebelled against His Way of Guidance. Furthermore, they stood against the believers, and killed the prophets and their heirs, i.e. scholars and callers to Allah *the Almighty*. In this regard, Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'The scholars are the heirs of the Prophets.'

At the outset, they come out terrified with their eyes growing wild out of fear and turning to discover the place around them, still not believing that they were raised from their graves. They are in a horrible situation; billions of corpses come out from graves and no one knows what their destination will be. Such are the moments regarding which Allah *Glorified is He* states: '...they fear a day, in which the hearts and eyes shall turn about' (*an-Nur*: 37). This indicates that their hearts tremble with fear, disturbed beats and high pounding. Similarly, their eyes turn around here and there, seeing the horror which frightens them so that they overturn seeking something that gives assurance or relieves the pain they experience. But they will even undergo more grievous and dreadful horror when they get assured of their fateful destination.

Then, you find them humiliated and disgraced, and here comes their description in His saying: 'Eyes downcast and covered in shame...' (*al-Ma'arij*: 43-44). The disbelievers' eyes are downcast in humiliation since there is no escape or way out for them. Further, shame and ignominy will cover their faces when they become assured of the punishment befalling them. Allah *Glorified is He* says about these people: 'These are they who have lost their souls, and what they forged is gone from them' (*Hud*: 21).

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* ends the chapter of *al-Ma'arij* with His saying: '...that is the Day of which they were warned' (*al-Ma'arij*: 44). He *the Almighty* repeats that the Day of Judgment is the one against which they were warned by His Prophets, from Adam *Allah's peace be upon him* until Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* the last of the Messengers. Consequently, the disbelievers have no excuse since they were warned against that Day and that situation, but they did not respond to such threats, nor did they believe in the Divine Revelation, thereby they wronged themselves. Here, they are now on the Day of Judgment encountering what they used to deny and reject.

the chapter of

Nuh

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

The chapter of *Nuh* ⁽¹⁾.

Allah *Glorified is He* states:

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ أَنْ أَنْذِرْ قَوْمَكَ
مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١﴾

**We sent Noah to his people: ‘Warn your people,
before a painful punishment comes to them’ [1]
(The Quran, *Nuh*: 1)**

The story of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah’s peace be upon him* is mentioned frequently in the Quran, as is the case with the story of Prophet Musa (Moses) *Allah’s peace be upon him*. Astonishingly, the scenes of this story occur in many Quranic chapters, whereas the chapter under discussion, named after Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah’s peace be upon him* does not contain many of the main incidents of the story; rather, it deals with other scenes. It is mainly concerned with his persistence on calling his people, and that he did not fall short in admonishing them day and night, in secret and in public. However, whenever Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah’s peace be upon him* admonishes them, they turned away from him. The story of the Ark and the flood are not mentioned in this chapter as well, though they are the main incidents in his story. Likewise, his story with his son which is mentioned in the chapter of *Hud* is not related here.

Accordingly, every scene of the story is placed for a certain purpose, and thus we find that the chapter of *Nuh* does not encompass important elements of the story which are explained in the chapters of *Hud* and *al-A’raf*. Allah

(1) The chapter of *Nuh* is the seventy-first according to the order of chapters in the *Mushaf*, and it was revealed in Mecca, i.e. before *Hijra*, and contains no abrogated or abrogating verses. It is composed of 28 verses, and it was revealed after the chapter of *an-Nahl* and before the chapter of *Ibrahim*.

Glorified is He ends the chapter of *al-Ma'arij*, which precedes the chapter of *Nuh* under discussion, affirming that He *Glorified is He* has threatened and warned the people against the Day of Judgment, and that it will undoubtedly come. Given that warning, He *Glorified is He* introduces this chapter with an example of such warning, conveyed by one of His Prophets and Messengers, i.e. Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him*. Thereby, He *the Almighty* dedicates a chapter for him *Allah's peace be upon him*.

Allah *Glorified is He* commences this chapter by emphasising the fact that He sent Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* to his people to warn and alert them before a painful chastisement befell them. This punishment could be the flood that occurred in this worldly life, or it is possibly the punishment of the Judgment Day on which all people will be assembled. Regarding His saying: 'We sent Noah to his people...' (*Nuh*: 1) it indicates that the Message of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* was directed only to his people, as were the Messages of other Prophets, like Ibrahim (Abraham) Lut (Lot), Shu'aib (Jethro) and Saleh (Shelah) *Allah's peace be upon them*. All these Messages were meant to be practiced at particular times until the Noble Quran comes to encompass the comprehensive Guidance of Allah *Glorified is He*.

Monotheism was revealed to Prophet Nuh (Noah) and all Prophets, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'We have sent revelation to you [Prophet] as We did to Noah and the prophets after him, to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon- to David We gave the book [of Psalms]' (*an-Nisa*': 163).

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Warn your people, before a painful punishment comes to them,' (*Nuh*: 1) it means that Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* was commanded to warn his people and alert them before a painful torment would be inflicted upon them; either it is an immediate one such as the flood which afflicted them, or a deferred one, which is the chastisement of the Hereafter inflicted upon those who die without repenting from disbelief and returning to Allah *the Almighty*. However, why is he ordered 'to warn' them in this verse? We say that Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* lived among his people for nine hundred and fifty years calling them to Allah *the Almighty* until he came to a dead-end, and

there were only thirteen men and a woman who believed in him after these long years. His people reached the pinnacle of denial, rejection, obstinacy and misguidance in such a way that makes warning the most befitting term to summarise his Message.

He even went so far as to invoke Allah *the Almighty* against his people, as mentioned at the end of this chapter, saying: 'Lord, do not leave any of the disbelievers on the earth ' (*Nuh*: 26). Thus, Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* invoked Him *the Almighty* to destroy the disbelievers completely. The most acceptable view is that the painful chastisement here refers to the flood and drowning water because He *the Almighty* used the phrase 'come to them', which properly refers to the flood. But when speaking of the punishment of the Judgment Day, He *the Almighty* states in the chapter of *al-Ma'arij*: 'So leave them to wallow in idle talk until they come face to face with their promised Day' (*al-Ma'arij*: 42). The disbelievers will 'encounter' the chastisement of the Hereafter; it will not 'come to them', whilst the flood comes to them, enters their houses and drowns them and their lands, taking down whatever comes in its way of their cattle and wealth except what Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* took with him on the board of the Ark. It is a painful punishment for them, as it caused them to lose everything; their souls, wealth, children, cattle and land.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* states:

قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اِنِّى لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٢﴾ اَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ وَاتَّقُوْهُ وَاَطِيعُوْٓنِىْ ﴿٣﴾

And so he said, 'My people, I am here to warn you plainly [2]

Serve God, be mindful of Him and obey me [3]

(The Quran, *Nuh*: 2-3)

Allah *Glorified is He* assigned Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* to communicate the Message and to warn his people, so he called them, as did other Prophets, saying, 'O my people.' The Arabic word *Qawm* (people) refers to a particular community and conveys the meaning of standing which is the most active condition of the human being. 'People,' as used in the verse, refers to a group of persons, especially men because they take upon themselves

to perform tasks, and whenever this word is mentioned in the Quran, it signifies a group of persons bound together. It also signifies men in particular because they are the ones receiving the Message at first hand, unlike women who stay at home and the Message passes to them from a father, a brother or a husband.

Further, it is stated in the Quran: 'O you who believe! Let not to a people ridicule [another] people; perhaps they may be better than them; nor let women ridicule [other] women; perhaps they may be better than them,' (*al-Hujurat*: 11). In the verse in question, the women are not included under the word 'people', since it refers to those confronting any Messenger and who cause troubles, reject the Message and typically wage war against the Prophet and his followers.

Addressing his people, Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* said: 'My people, I am here to warn you plainly. [2] Serve Allah, be mindful of Him and obey me,' (*Nuh*: 2-3). He started with giving a warning, whereas in the chapter of *al-A'raf* he started with the objectives of his Message then warned them, as Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Certainly We sent Noah to his people, so he said: O my people! Serve Allah, you have no god other than Him; surely I fear for you the chastisement of a grievous day, ' (*al-A'raf*: 59).

Thus, Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* wanted to draw the attention of his people to the significance of what he delivers to them, saying: 'My people, I am here to warn you plainly' (*Nuh*: 2). According to one of the recitations of this verse in question, the letter *Hamza* has the diacritical mark *Kasra* and in another recitation it has *Fatha*; in the recitation where the *Kasra* is used the meaning is that Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* came with the Message and communicated it to his people, saying: 'My people, I am here to warn you plainly' (*Nuh*: 2). However, in the recitation where the *Fatha* is used, the meaning is that the content of the Message is that he is a plain warner to them, as though the first recitation implies a narration of how he conveyed the Message, but the second defines its content, namely, that he was a plain warner to them.

We have previously explained that a warner tells of something evil whose time has not come yet so that the listener gets ready for it. It is directed to the disobedient or the disbeliever, while a believer is given good news to get prepared for it and receive it with a reassured soul. Then, Allah *the Almighty*

relates that Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* said to his people: 'Serve Allah, be mindful of Him and obey me' (*Nuh*: 2). Thus, his Message comprised three issues: offering worship to Allah, piety and obeying His Commands. The command of offering worship to Allah *the Almighty* follows the explanatory particle *Anna* as in His saying: 'We revealed to the mother of Moses...' (*al-Qasas*: 7). But what is it that which was revealed? It is: '...suckle him...' (*al-Qasas*: 7).

Worship signifies obedience to Allah *Glorified is He* by performing what He commands and abstaining from what He prohibits. So, it means abiding by His Commands. Hence, if someone claims divinity without having a way of worship, we will ask him, 'How could we worship you? Where is your way of guidance? What are your commands and what are your prohibitions?' The people of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* used to worship idols instead of Allah *Glorified is He*. The names of these idols were: Wadd, Suwa', Yaghuth, Ya'uq and Nasr, who had been righteous people, but when they died, people made idols of them to remember their righteousness whenever they saw them. Yet, with the progress of the times, they worshiped them instead of Allah *Glorified is He*.

Therefore, the Message of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* was to: 'Serve Allah, be mindful of Him and obey me' (*Nuh*: 3). This means to worship Him *the Almighty* Alone, not to associate partners to Him and to fear Him and His punishment; this is the meaning of piety. Accordingly, he *Allah's peace be upon him* said to them: '...be mindful of Him...' (*Nuh*: 3). This entails fearing Him *the Almighty* avoiding His punishment and recompense and taking faith as a protection and salvation from His chastisement. Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* then said: '...and obey me,' (*Nuh*: 3). He did not say 'obey Him,' since their obedience to him *Allah's peace be upon him* is obedience to Allah *the Almighty*. So, he said 'obey me' because he warned them against Allah's Punishment and wished them all the good. That is why they should obey him in order that Allah's Punishment would not befall them.

All the Prophets addressed their people with the same speech; for example, Prophet Hud (Eber) *Allah's peace be upon him* said to his people: 'Surely I am a faithful apostle to you; [107] Therefore guard against (the punishment of)

Allah and obey me [108]' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 107-108). Prophet Saleh (Shelah) said the same to his people, as did Prophet Lut (Lot) and Prophet Shu'aib (Jethro) *Allah's peace be upon them all*.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* states:

يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ مِنْ ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُخَخِّرْكُمْ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۖ إِنَّ
 أَجَلَ اللَّهِ إِذَا جَاءَ لَا يُؤَخَّرُ ۚ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

He will forgive you your sins and spare you until your appointed time — when God's appointed time arrives it cannot be postponed. If only you understood! [4]
(The Quran, *Nuh*: 4)

The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'He will forgive you your sins...' (*Nuh*: 4) is the result and the fruit of worshipping Him Alone, observing piety and obedience to Him. This verse, with this word order, is repeated in other verses, as in His saying: 'Their Messenger said: Is there doubt about Allah, the Maker of the heavens and the earth? He invites you to forgive you your faults and to respite you till an appointed term' (*ar-Ra'd*: 10). Addressing the disbelievers, Allah *Glorified is He* does not say, 'forgive your sins,' whilst He addresses the believers, saying: 'O you who believe! Shall I lead you to a merchandise which may deliver you from a painful chastisement?[10] You shall believe in Allah and His Messenger, and struggle hard in Allah's way with your property and your lives; that is better for you, did you but know?[11] He will forgive you your faults... [12]' (*as-Saff*: 10-12). So, He *Glorified is He* addresses the believers in a way which is different from that of the disbelievers.

Regarding His saying: '...and spare you until your appointed time...' (*Nuh*: 4), the appointed time refers to the Judgment Day which indicates the end of this worldly life and the beginning of the Hereafter. So, He *the Almighty* then says: '...when Allah's appointed time arrives, it cannot be postponed. If only you understood!' (*Nuh*: 4) This fact is affirmed by the particle *Inna* of emphasis. The Arabic word *Ajal* (appointed time) is mentioned in many verses, as in His saying: 'And for every nation there is a doom, so when their doom is come, they shall not remain behind the least while, nor shall they go

before, ' (*al-A'raf*: 34); and '...when Allah's appointed time arrives, it cannot be postponed...' (*Nuh*: 4). However, the two appointed times are different regarding man's presence in this worldly life; the first appointed time refers to the end of one's life while the second refers to bringing one to life again to meet with Allah *the Almighty* in the Hereafter. So, they are somehow related.

The term appointed by Allah *the Almighty* be it that which ends life or brings it back, could not be postponed from its due time. So, the term appointed by Allah is recorded in the Preserved Tablet and will not be delayed if its due time comes, that is, none can defer it. As for His saying: '...if only you understand' (*Nuh*: 4), it means 'if they could know how regretful they would be when their term is over, they would believe and hasten on to worship Allah *the Almighty* and observe piety and obedience to Him.'

Due to his people's rejection, Prophet Noah *Allah's peace be upon him* directed his speech to Allah *Glorified is He* saying:

قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي دَعَوْتُ قَوْمِي لَيْلًا وَنَهَارًا ﴿٥﴾ فَلَمْ يَزِدْهُمْ دُعَائِي إِلَّا فِرَارًا ﴿٦﴾

**He said, 'My Lord, I have called my people night and day [5]
but the more I call them, the further they run away [6]
(The Quran, *Nuh*: 5 - 6)**

Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* constantly admonished his people day and night, and was not neglectful in that. He did not conceal guidance and advice from them, but they did not respond, so here he invokes his Lord, saying, 'I have conveyed the Message and I directed myself to You and I am clear of that which they do. I have invited them night and day to monotheism and to worship You and warned them against Your Might and Power.'

Then, Allah *the Almighty* relates that Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* said: 'But the more I call them, the further they run away, ' (*Nuh*: 6). Allah *Glorified is He* uses the letter *Fa'* indicating consecutiveness and insistence, for Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* kept calling his people night and day, in secret and in public for about a thousand years, but they used to turn away from faith. Hence, He *Glorified is He* employs the letter *Fa'* denoting consecutiveness, whereas his nine hundred and fifty years of

consecutive admonition increased them but in disbelief, obstinacy and turning away from faith.

Allah *Glorified is He* then states:

وَإِنِّي كُلَّمَا دَعَوْتُهُمْ لِتَغْفِرَ لَهُمْ جَعَلُوا أَصْبِعَهُمْ فِي آذَانِهِمْ
وَاسْتَغْشَوْا ثِيَابَهُمْ وَأَصْرُوا وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا اسْتِكْبَارًا ﴿٧﴾

Every time I call them, so that You may forgive them, they thrust their fingers into their ears, cover their heads with their garments, persist in their rejection, and grow more insolent and arrogant [7] (The Quran, *Nuh*: 7)

Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* continues complaining to his Lord that whenever he called his people to worship and fear Him *the Almighty* Alone, they used to respond in a way indicating the intensity of their rejection of his call and insistence on disbelief. He *the Almighty* says that: '...they thrust their fingers into their ears...' (*Nuh*: 7). It is axiomatically known that the whole finger cannot enter one's ears, but it is only the fingertip which blocks the auditory opening. The Quran described it by way of exaggeration to reveal their evil and bad attitude towards Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him*. Every one of them wanted to put their whole finger in their ears in order to block out any call. This is a proof of their hatred and a testimony against them since they do not understand that their hearts may soften if they listen to him. This is always the case with the people of falsehood; they do not like to listen to the truth, and the first thing they would do is to block their ears from hearing it or to prevent the people of truth from disseminating their Message or even to kill them.

It once happened that the people of Quraysh urged one another not to listen to the Quran, saying: 'Do not listen to this Quran and make noise therein, perhaps you may overcome' (*Fussilat*: 26). They did so because they believed that if the Quran reached one's ears, it might influence them. So, if the Quran was false, why then did they fear hearing it? Putting their fingers in their ears was not enough! Therefore, they also '...cover their heads with their garments, persist in their rejection, and grow more insolent and arrogant' (*Nuh*: 7). Not only

did they want to ignore Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace be upon him* by blocking their ears, but also by not seeing him. So, they '...thrust their fingers into their ears...' (*Nuh: 7*) so as not to listen to him; and they: '...cover their heads with their garments...' (*Nuh: 7*) so as not to see him.

Allah *Glorified is He* depicts an image related to this context to clarify how the people of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* turned away from his admonition and rejected it, using the word 'their fingers' to imply their rejection and how it was unreasonably exaggerated in their attempt to put their whole fingers into their ears. In addition to this outright rejection by means of blocking their ears, Allah *Glorified is He* shows their rejection to see while talking to them, saying: '...cover their heads with their garments...' (*Nuh: 7*). Yet, they insisted on their rejection to his call as stated: '...and grow more insolent and arrogant' (*Nuh: 7*). Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* used to come to their idols at night and shout at the top of his voice saying, 'There is no god but Allah and I am Noah His Messenger' so that their idols got inverted so they would beat him fiercely and step on his belly until blood came out of his nose and ears.⁽¹⁾

When one of them was about to die, they would instruct their children and take a covenant upon them not to believe in Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* saying, 'O my son, look at this man, my father carried me to him and warned me against believing in him so beware of him not to let you renounce your belief, for he is a magician and a liar.' This happened consecutively over the centuries, for every generation would instruct the following one not to believe in him and to beware of him; grandfathers instructing fathers who in turn instruct their sons and so on. They did insist on their disbelief despite the earnest attempts made by Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* to urge them to believe or even to give themselves a chance to listen to him. However, they: '...grow more insolent and arrogant' (*Nuh: 7*). So, they deserved Allah's chastisement because they denied, were obstinate and took pride in their sins. With such pride they wanted to flee from the commitment to the Guidance brought forth by Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him*. The Arabic word *Takabar* (grow more arrogant) indicates that this arrogance was

(1) See Shihab Ad-Din An-Nuwayri, *Nihayat Al-'Arab Fi Funun Al-Adab*, 13/44-45.

extrinsic; it would swiftly vanish and go away. They were not only proud but they were also excessively arrogant. Thus, this arrogance exceeded the limits and imagination, and thereby they deserved a punishment not inflicted on anyone before or after them, i.e. the flood. Further, Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* stayed among them for nine hundred and fifty years calling them to Allah *the Almighty*, and yet they did not believe. Accordingly, they were worthy of his invocation to eradicate and wipe them out, and He *Glorified is He* responded to his invocation.

Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* only invited them to worship Allah *the Almighty* Alone, to forgive them, saying: 'Every time I call them so that You may forgive them...' (*Nuh*: 7). He did not invite them to do him a personal benefit, but only to be forgiven for their disbelief and denial. In this way, their belief would be for their own good, as they receive Allah's Forgiveness and Mercy, evade His punishment and get many of His Blessings bestowed on the believers.

Allah *Glorified is He* states:

ثُمَّ إِنِّي دَعَوْتُهُمْ جَهَرًا ۖ ثُمَّ إِنِّي أَهْلَنْتُ لَهُمْ وَأَسْرَرْتُ لَهُمْ إِسْرَارًا ۚ فَقُلْتُ اسْتَغْفِرُوا رَبَّكُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ غَفَّارًا ۝

I have tried calling them openly [8] I have tried preaching to them in public and speaking to them in private [9] I said, "Ask forgiveness of your Lord: He is ever forgiving [10] (The Quran, *Nuh*: 8 - 10)

Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* clears himself of committing shortcomings in calling his people or of having neglected what Allah *the Almighty* commanded him to convey. So, despite their rejection and putting their fingers in their ears so that they do not hear him and covering themselves with their garments so as not to watch him, and in spite of their excessive insolence and arrogance, he went on with his calling, as he says: 'I have tried calling them openly,' (*Nuh*: 8). This shows that Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* invited them publicly in their markets and roads, not fearing their mockery or aggression. The word 'openly' means calling and announcing to

them loudly and clearly to the top of his voice, not lowering it or murmuring. Rather, he was shouting with the warnings supposed to be delivered to them, given the fact that Allah *Glorified is He* sent him *Allah's peace be upon him* to warn his people and he declared this Message and delivered it to them loudly and publicly. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'We sent Noah to his people: 'Warn your people, before a painful punishment comes to them' (*Nuh: 1*).

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'I have tried preaching to them in public and speaking to them in private. 'Then surely I spoke to them in public and I spoke to them in secret' (*Nuh: 9*), it shows that Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* tried with them all possible means and ways of calling the notable people publicly and the individuals secretly. The Arabic word *Israr* (in secret) is a verbal noun indicating emphasis, and the Arabic word *Lahum* (to them) draws our attention to the fact that Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* desired and was very cautious that his people would believe. So, this word is repeated to denote his insistence on attracting them to belief, for he had them in mind all the time. Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* even went beyond that as to wish for them to be forgiven, so he enticed them to ask Allah *Glorified is He* for forgiveness. But how could it happen when they did not believe in Him *the Almighty* as the only God worthy of worship, and ascribed to him idols which neither benefit nor harm, and which neither hear nor see?

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'I said, 'Ask forgiveness of your Lord: He is ever forgiving,' (*Nuh: 10*) it shows how merciful Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* was towards his people, as he encouraged them to ask for forgiveness, which signifies repentance and admitting one's bad deeds. If Allah *Glorified is He* did not legislate repentance and forgiveness, the one who committed a sin would get expelled from His Mercy. So, what would the attitude of such a sinner in the society be? They would inflict all evil on the society out of losing hope in themselves and then they become more aggressive and increases in committing sins and evil deeds. Thus, forgiveness represents confession of one's sins and shortcomings, and the moment you ask for forgiveness from Him *Glorified is He*, this expresses your declaration of faith and acknowledgement that His obligations are the true ones. Having asked for forgiveness, the repentant should never commit the sin

again, and should be cautious to keep away from acts of disobedience and sins. We should consider that we ask for forgiveness from 'our Lord' Who created and brought us into and He nourishes us with His Provision and Care. Therefore, if you ask Him for forgiveness, He will not let you down.

Regarding His saying: '...He is ever forgiving, ' (*Nuh*: 10) the Arabic word for *Ghaffar* (ever forgiving) represents the highest form of exaggeration, for it is mentioned in the active participle form elsewhere in His saying: 'The Forgiver of the faults and the Acceptor of repentance...' (*Ghafir*: 3). Allah's most beautiful Attributes include both forms, namely *Ghafir* (Forgiver) and *Ghafour* (forgiving). The exaggerated form may also be used to denote the recurrence of the act, i.e. Allah *Glorified is He* forgives His servants many times for their numerous sins. So, Allah *the Almighty* is Forgiver in the case of one sin, and He is permanently Ever-Forgiving at all times and for all sins, however many they are. In Arabic, the verse: '...He is ever forgiving, ' (*Nuh*: 10) is put in the past tense to indicate that He is most Forgiving even before there was anyone in need of forgiveness since Allah *Glorified is He* is not confined to the boundaries of time. So, no one should mistakenly think that the past tense is employed to indicate that it happened in the past and no longer in the present.

Allah states:

يُرْسِلُ السَّمَاءَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِدْرَارًا
وَيُمَدِّدُكُمْ بِأَمْوَالٍ وَبَنِينَ وَيَجْعَلُ لَكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ وَيَجْعَلُ لَكُمْ أَنْهَارًا

**He will send down abundant rain from the sky for you [11]
He will give you wealth and sons; He will provide you with
gardens and rivers [12] (The Quran, *Nuh*: 11-12)**

In fact, asking for forgiveness and repentance to Allah *the Almighty* opens the doors of heaven with rain, as He says here: 'He will send down abundant rain from the sky for you' (*Nuh*: 11). This means that despite their disbelief in Him *Glorified is He* He will not deprive them of His Bestowal of Lordship especially if they ask for forgiveness and repentance. The Arabic word *Irsal* (sending) denotes that sending down the rain from heaven is constant, whereas 'sending down,' as mentioned in other verses, indicates that rain would fall

only once. For this reason, He *Glorified is He* states: '...We send down pure water from the cloud ' (*al-Furqan*: 48). This is because rain does not fall all the time, whereas sending implies continuity. Moreover, He *Glorified is He* states: 'And We send the winds fertilizing...' (*al-Hijr*: 22). So when continuity is intended, He *Glorified is He* uses the Arabic word *Irsal* 'sending,' and the evidence is that as He describes the coming of the flood, stating: 'Therefore We sent upon them the flood...' (*al-A'raf*: 133).

In this vein, when Prophet Hud (Eber) *Allah's peace be upon him* wanted to encourage the people of 'Ad, to ask for forgiveness, repent and renounce disbelief and disobedience, he said to them: 'And, O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord, then turn to Him; He will send on you clouds pouring down abundance of rain...' (*Hud*: 52). Allah *Glorified is He* makes sending rain dependent on their asking for forgiveness, and this is also the case with the people of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'I said, 'Ask forgiveness of your Lord: He is ever forgiving. [10] He will send down abundant rain from the sky for you [11]' (*Nuh*: 10-11). Someone may ask, 'How can asking forgiveness be related to a universal phenomenon such as rain?' We say, 'The universe has a Sovereign Who possesses everything in it, its inanimate things, plants and animals. He, the Omnipotent, is fully Able to change the nature of the created beings. For example, if there is a cloud and it is likely to rain, He *the Almighty* can prevent its falling, as He *Glorified is He* states elsewhere: 'So when they saw it as a cloud appearing in the sky advancing towards their valleys, they said: This is a cloud which will give us rain. Nay! It is what you sought to hasten on, a blast of wind in which is a painful punishment ' (*al-Ahqaf*: 24). Therefore, we should not think that things occur randomly; rather, there is a Lord Who manages the affairs of everything and Who orders that a thing should or should not happen. Likewise, Allah *the Almighty* may order the sky to withhold its rain so that land gets dry and barren with no plants in it, and in turn there will be no animals, and consequently mankind will find no plant or meat to consume.

In the verse in question, the abundant rain is that which pours down in abundance without causing harm, as it may fall in a way that causes damage and destruction, whereas the 'abundant rain' here does not harm. Rather, it brings

about benefits. When the rain falls in such benefitting and continuous way, the land will be full of greenery and befitting for living and will increase our power.

In fact, water is the most essential element for people's lives and strength, and thereby Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'He will give you wealth and sons; He will provide you with gardens and rivers' (*Nuh*: 12). Here, four things, which constitute a source of power, come down from heaven following asking for forgiveness and repentance: wealth, children, gardens and rivers. Provisions are one of Allah's Blessings, along with bringing us into existence and enjoining obligations. Thus, if you love Him *the Almighty* for His Blessings of bringing us into existence and granting us provisions, you should also love Him for the Blessing of enjoining obligations. In fact, Allah *Glorified is He* is fully Able to bring into existence and to provide, and He brought the people into existence and gave them the provision of wealth and children which keep increasing.

Regarding His saying: '...He will provide you with gardens and rivers,' (*Nuh*: 12) this verse has unlimited meanings since it is Divinely structured by the most Wise, the Omniscient with such beauty and eloquence that if one ponders over it, they will conclude that it can never be produced or imitated by a human being. Here, arises a question which is, 'Why does Allah *Glorified is He* mention the rivers before the gardens, in spite of the latter being a cause to the former?' We say, 'The answer to this question reveals the greatness of the Quranic structure. In the preceding verse, Allah *the Almighty* states: 'He will send down abundant rain from the sky for you' (*Nuh*: 11). So it is more suitable to mention the gardens after it which grow naturally on rain water.'

Allah *Glorified is He* says about the heavens: 'Who created the seven heavens one above another; you see no incongruity in the creation of the Beneficent; then look again, can you see any disorder?' (*al-Mulk*: 3) The word 'heaven' generally refers to whatever covers you; however, does heaven signify the sun, the moon or the stars, all of which is over us? Or does it refer to the planets? This is all untrue, for the planets were made to adorn the heaven, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'Surely, We have adorned the nearest heaven with an adornment, the stars' (*as-Saffat*: 6). Allah *Glorified is He* also created the sun to enlighten the earth at daytime, and the moon to do the same at night when it is full, i.e. in the middle of the lunar month. As for the stars,

they are also made to adorn the heaven and to serve as landmarks guiding people in deserts and seas, as He *the Almighty* says: 'And He it is Who has made the stars for you that you might follow the right way thereby in the darkness of the land and the sea....' (*al-An'am*: 97) Accordingly, the heaven is much greater than all these celestial bodies. He *the Almighty* does not tell us that He created only one heaven, but rather seven heavens, each of which is above the other. In the creation of the heavens, there is greatness in making, fashioning and maintenance as befits Allah's Omnipotence. He created them one above another, as He says in another verse: 'That you shall most certainly enter one state after another' (*al-Inshiqaq*: 19). This may also mean that they are made into identical states above one another.

Then, Allah *the Almighty* says:

مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَرْجُونَ لِلَّهِ وَقَارًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَقَدْ خَلَقَكُمْ أَطْوَارًا ﴿١٤﴾
 أَلَمْ تَرَوْا كَيْفَ خَلَقَ اللَّهُ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا ﴿١٥﴾
 وَجَعَلَ الْقَمَرَ فِيهِنَّ نُورًا وَجَعَلَ الشَّمْسُ سِرَاجًا ﴿١٦﴾

**What is the matter with you? Why will you not fear God's
 majesty [13] When He has created you stage by stage? [14]
 Have you ever wondered how God created seven heavens,
 one above the other [15] Placed the moon as a light in them
 and the sun as a lamp [16] (The Quran, *Nuh*: 13 - 16)**

Here, Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* draws the attention of his people to contemplate what is in the heavens, saying about his Lord: '[He] placed the moon as a light in them and the sun as a lamp' (*Nuh*: 16). Prophet Nuh (Noah) *Allah's peace be upon him* draws their attention to the moon and the sun. Here, Allah *Glorified is He* mentions the moon first, then the sun, but reverses their order in the chapter of *Yunus*, saying: 'He it is who made the sun a shining brightness and the moon a light...' (*Yunus*: 5). The sun is referred to as a lamp and a shining light, whilst in both chapters the moon is depicted as a light. The difference between light and lamp lies in the fact that a lamp produces heat and warmth, so you may need a shade to protect you from its heat. But for a light, one needs no such shade because it does not

emanate heat, which is only produced when the source of the light is self-lightened such as the sun. Concerning the moon, its light is not intrinsic, as it is mere reflection of the sun rays, as when you direct light on a mirror, it reflects it back. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* describes the sun as a lamp which gives light and heat such as the lamp which we turn on to give self-produced heat and light.

Allah states:

وَاللَّهُ أَنْبَتَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ نَبَاتًا ﴿١٧﴾ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُكُمْ فِيهَا وَيُخْرِجُكُمْ إِخْرَاجًا ﴿١٨﴾
وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ الْأَرْضَ بِسَاطًا ﴿١٩﴾ لَتَسْلُكُوا مِنْهَا سُبُلًا فِجَاجًا ﴿٢٠﴾

**God made you spring forth from the earth like a plant [17]
how He will return you into it and then bring you out again [18]
and how He has spread the Earth out for you [19] to walk along
its spacious paths? [20] (The Quran, *Nuh*: 17-20)**

Regarding His saying: 'How Allah made you spring forth from the earth like a plant,' (*Nuh*: 17), it explains the process of planting. The land produces plants, but is not in itself the cause of it. Allah *Glorified is He* may use the verb form and then use the verbal noun form intending the name of it. The phrase 'made you spring forth' denotes that He brings plants for us out of the land. Planting may be used with the meaning of bringing into being, as in His saying: 'And He it is Who has brought you into being from a single soul...' (*al-An'am*: 98). Bringing into being means to create something without help or using other created objects, as stated in His saying: '...He brought you into being from the earth, and made you dwell in it...' (*Hud*: 61).

Allah *the Almighty* brings the human beings into existence through sexual intercourse between the husband and the wife. However, if we trace this creation back to its primary beginning, i.e. Adam, we will find that He *Glorified is He* created him out of the same substance of the earth which is also one of His creatures. The husband's semen and the wife's ovum are composed of the extract of blood produced from the food which in turn comes from the earth. Hence, everything is traced back to the earth whether you refer to the creation of Adam from the earth or the reproduction of the human beings.

The confirmed fact that Allah *the Almighty* originates the human being from the earth points to the unity of the origins of life on the earth and shows that the creation of the human being is like that of the plant. It starts as a seed sowed in the soil and then irrigated, and it needs light, heat and the nutrient that passes from the ground to the leaves through the roots and stems. Thus, the human being consists of the original elements of earth and feeds on them to grow. In this sense, s/he is regarded as a plant.

Then, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘How He will return you into it and then bring you out again.’ (*Nuh*: 18) As we were created from the earth, we will return into it when we die. The dead person's body blends with the earth and its atoms merge with those of the earth. So, no one should question the fact that Allah *Glorified is He* will resurrect the human beings, as their atoms exist in the earth. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: ‘Did We fail in the first creation? But they are in confusion over a new creation.’ (*Qaf*: 15) Thus, He *the Almighty* mentions the first creation as evidence for the possibility of the second creation, i.e. the Resurrection after death. Hence, if you wonder at the fact that you will be raised from the dead, you should call to mind that He *Glorified is He* has originated your bodily parts, atoms and specifications in the first creation out of nothing. So, if He *the Almighty* has created you out of nothing, how can He be unable to re-create you out of something?

The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘How He will return you into it and then bring you out again’ (*Nuh*: 18) means that He *Glorified is He* returns the human beings into the earth—from which they were created and in which their bodies decay. Afterwards, He *Glorified is He* brings them out of the earth and resurrect them. He *the Almighty* emphasizes this fact with the verbal noun *Ikhraja* (bringing out), that is, He will undoubtedly resurrect the people buried in the earth ‘And how He has spread the Earth out for you [19] to walk along its spacious paths’ (*Nuh*: 19-20).

Here, Allah *the Almighty* describes the earth as an expanse or a well-prepared bed. Similarly, He *Glorified is He* says: ‘[He] who made for you the earth a bed [spread out]’ (*al-Baqara*: 22); and ‘[It is He] who has made for you the earth as a bed [spread out]’ (*Ta Ha*: 53). Here *the Almighty* reminds the people of Nuh (Noah) about His Favours and Blessings upon them and all other

creatures. Allah *Glorified is He* spread out the earth for them so that they settle on it and exploit its leveled ways. This is meant for the benefit of all the creation. If the earth were not so, the people would not meet their needs or make use of it. As it is leveled land, we can travel from a place to another. If the earth was not flattened or paved, the human beings could not live on it comfortably and easily; the life would be difficult as is the case with mountain dwellers. For this reason, the great majority of people live in the leveled land like the valleys and around the rivers. Thus, Allah *the Almighty* reminds the people of Nuh about leveling and facilitating the earth as a Blessing in order that they move freely and easily. That is why He *the Almighty* then says: 'To walk along its spacious paths' (*Nuh*: 20). Out of His Grace and Wisdom, Allah *the Almighty* made for us pathways on the earth to follow and tread through. If mountains were mere blocks filling the earth, the earth would not be suitable for living and movement. In another verse, He *the Almighty* says: 'And We placed within the earth firmly set mountains, lest it should shift with them, and We made therein [mountain] passes [as] roads that they might be guided.' (*al-Anbiya*': 31) Here, 'the spacious paths' refer to the wide paths and roadways. In the aforementioned verse, the adverb 'therein' refers to the earth or the mountains because both contain pathways through which the people walk. These pathways exist in mountains in the shape of defiles.

In fact, the wording of the Quran is precise and marvelous; it here says: 'To walk along...?' (*Nuh*: 20), employing the preposition *Min* (along) instead of *Fi* (in). This is because using the preposition 'in' connotes entering deep inside the earth, while the preposition 'along' connotes taking roads and routes on the surface of the earth which may be tortuous. However, Allah *Glorified is He* uses the preposition 'in' in His saying: 'It is He] who has made for you the earth as a bed [spread out] and inserted therein for your roadways.' (*Ta Ha*: 53) These roadways are well-prepared and leveled so that we can smoothly and easily reach our destinations.

The verb *Salak* (walk through) can be transitive, as when it is said, 'So-and-so followed the road.' Similarly, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '[And asking them], 'What put you into *Saqar*?' (*al-Muddaththir*: 42) And 'Insert your hand into the opening of your garment.' (*al-Qasas*: 32) The earth

contains wide pathways and thus one of the early Arabs described the universe, saying, 'A sky with stars and an earth with pathways.' The Arabic word *Fijaj* (wide pathways) is also mentioned in His saying: 'And proclaims to the people the *Hajj* [pilgrimage]; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every distant pass.' (*al-Hajj*: 27) The Arabic word *Fajj* (a path) refers to a road that is as wide as what we now call 'an expressway'. In the previous verse, it means that the pilgrims come from all directions and places. This word also refers to the mountain passes and pathways.

Then Allah *the Almighty* says about Prophet Nuh *peace be upon him*:

قَالَ نُوحٌ رَّبِّ إِنِّهُمْ عَصَوْنِي وَأَتَّبَعُوا مَن لَّمْ يَزِدَّهُ مَالُهُ. وَوَلَدُهُ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٢١﴾

Noah said, 'My Lord, they have disobeyed me and followed those whose riches and children only increase their ruin [21] (The Quran, *Nuh*: 21)

Here, Prophet Nuh *peace be upon him* addresses His Lord and tells Him that his people disobeyed him, though he *peace be upon him* knows for certain that Allah *the Almighty* is fully Aware of what he and his people do even before being sent as a Prophet. He *peace be upon him* was sent to a people who worshipped idols like Wadd, Suwa', Yaghuth, Ya'uq and Nasr besides Allah *Glorified is He*. As long as he *peace be upon him* is sent by his Lord as a Prophet, he is to inform Him of the outcome of his Message to clear himself of falling short in fulfill his responsibility for notifying his people. He said, 'My Lord! I have imparted your Message.' Regarding the Message that Prophet Nuh *peace be upon him* was assigned to deliver to his people, He *the Almighty* says: 'And We had certainly sent Nuh to his people, and he said, "O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him; then will you not fear Him?"' (*al-Mu'minun*: 23) The people of Nuh rejected his Call and saw him as a mere human who craved leadership and mastery, a fact which is clear in His saying: 'But the eminent among those who disbelieved from his people said, "This is not but a man like yourselves who wishes to take precedence over you."' (*al-Mu'minun*: 24)

So, the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Nuh said, "My Lord, they have disobeyed me and followed those whose riches and children only increase their ruin."'

(*Nuh*: 21) means that Prophet Nuh *peace be upon him* states that his people disobeyed him and denied his Call to the right Guidance and Monotheism. Further, the riffraff and the weak followed their leaders and chieftains who possessed wealth and had a lot of children, which made them powerful and influential enough to stand in the way of his Call.

Allah *the Almighty* endowed them with wealth and children, yet their disbelief, wealth and children made them increase in their error and loss in this worldly life and led to their ruin in the Hereafter. As for the weak and riffraff, they followed in the footsteps of their leaders who were deluded by their wealth and children, and that is why they increased their loss in the Hereafter. Being short-sighted, the riffraff followed the wealthy and influential leaders and were dazzled by power and wealth. In fact, this is a common phenomenon, as He *the Almighty* says about Qarun: ‘Indeed, Qarun was from the people of Musa, but he tyrannized them. And We gave him of treasures whose keys would burden a band of strong men; thereupon his people said to him, “Do not exult. Indeed, Allah does not like the exultant.”’ (*al-Qasas*: 76)

However, Qarun did not listen to his people's advice and was beguiled by his wealth and Allah's Favours. Thereupon, He *the Almighty* says: ‘So he came out before his people in his adornment. Those who desired the worldly life said, ‘Oh, would that we had like what was given to Qarun. Indeed, he is one of great fortune.’ (*al-Qasas*: 79) Those who craved the worldly life are those who: ‘...followed those whose riches and children only increase their ruin.’ (*Nuh*: 21)

Both the misleading leaders of the people of Nuh and their followers were drowned by the flood. As regards Qarun, Allah *Glorified is He* caused the ground to swallow him along with his mansion. None backed him or protected him against Allah's Punishment, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: ‘And those who had wished for his position the previous day began to say, “Oh, how Allah extends provision to whom He wills of His servants and restricts it! If not that Allah had conferred favor on us, He would have caused it to swallow us. Oh, how the disbelievers do not succeed!’ (*al-Qasas*: 82) Those who worship deities besides Allah *Glorified is He* reaped nothing but loss and this is the greatest disappointment for them. Their disbelief and denial lead to loss which begins suddenly when the Day of Judgment comes.

The disbelievers among the people of Nuh lost in this worldly life as they were drowned by the flood and will surely lose in the Hereafter as they will go to hell. This loss is irreparable and eternal as there is no room for repentance in its wake.

Allah *the Almighty* clarifies for us what the misguiding leaders, who led their followers astray, did, saying:

وَمَكْرُوا مَكْرًا كَبِيرًا ﴿٢٢﴾ وَقَالُوا لَا نَذَرُنَّ آلِهَتَكُمْ وَلَا نَذَرُنَّ وَدًّا
وَلَا سُوَاعًا وَلَا يَغُوثَ وَيَعُوقَ وَنَسْرًا ﴿٢٣﴾

Who have made a grand plan [22] saying, “Do not renounce your gods! Do not renounce Wadd, Suwa’, Yaghuth, Ya’uq, or Nasr!” [23] (The Quran, *Nuh*: 22 - 23)

The Arabic word *Makr* (plotting) originally refers to the trees whose small trunks and branches mix together that no one can distinguish each tree. Likewise, to plot means to scheme against your opponent secretly. A person who prevaricates is the one who makes an artifice. If plotting is not for the purpose of harm, it is called a trick, ploy, and stratagem and so on. If it is for the purpose of harm, it is called an evil plot. Plotting is based on premeditation and needs intelligence and experience. Thus, plotting is a token of weakness as the powerful person prefers confrontation to scheming.

Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘And they had planned their plan, but with Allah is [recorded] their plan, even if their plan had been [sufficient] to do away with the mountains.’ (*Ibrahim*: 46) The wrongdoers' plot which is powerful and intense enough to demolish the mountains, fails when it is faced by Allah's Plan Who protects His Prophets and righteous servants. He *Glorified is He* discloses the wrongdoers' plots by which they tried to confront the Religion.

In the verse in question, Allah *the Almighty* describes their plotting as immense, and this means that it was great and extraordinary. The plotting was massive because the disbelievers among the people of Nuh plotted to put an end to Allah's Call, to hinder it and to tempt others into disbelief and error. Their plotting to resist the Call of Allah could be verbal or practical and individual or collective. In our modern life, we notice that the mass media are involved

in this immense conspiracy to turn people away from Allah's Call by all possible means, making the believers confused about their Religion.

The people of Nuh used to take their young children to him and warn them, saying, 'Beware of following this man, for he is deviant and deceptive.' This was part of their schemes against Prophet Nuh *peace be upon him* who spent nine centuries and a half preaching to his people. However, the successive generations throughout this period of time were in the habit of advising one another not to believe in him and his Message.

Allah *Glorified is He* refers to the fact that the people of Nuh used to advise one another not to renounce their idolatry, saying: '... "Do not renounce your gods! Do not renounce Wadd, Suwa', Yaghuth, Ya'uq, or Nasr!"' (*Nuh: 23*) They advised one another not to abandon their deities and to keep on worshipping them. Here, the word 'gods' refers to their idols whose names were Wadd, Suwa', Yaghuth, Ya'uq and Nasr. These names belong to some righteous men who had followers. When these righteous men died, their followers said, 'If we sculpt statues for them, this will be better for our worship.' They indeed carved sculptures of these righteous men, and after these followers died and others came, the Satan suggested to them, 'They [your ancestors] worshipped them [these idols] and invoked them for rain.' In this respect, Qatada ibn An-Nu'man points out that the names 'Wadd, Suwa', Yaghuth, Ya'uq and Nasr' belonged to the idols that the people of Nuh worshipped. Afterwards, the early Arabs worshipped them; Wadd was the idol of Kalb tribe at Dumat Al-Jandal, Suwa' was worshipped by Hudhayl tribe, Yaghuth was worshipped by Banu Ghutayf, Ya'uq was worshipped by Hamadan tribe and Nasr was worshipped by Dhu Al-Kala' at Hemyar.

The disbelievers among all the nations invited their followers to the worship of their alleged deities, be they idols, humans or planets. This was common among all peoples, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'And the eminent among them went forth, [saying], "Continue, and be patient over [the defense of] your gods. Indeed, this is a thing intended."' (*Sad: 6*) Here, patience is blameworthy because it is a kind of persistence in polytheism and disbelief. Therefore, He *the Almighty* warns them, saying: 'So [even] if they are patient, the Fire is a residence for them.' (*Fussilat: 24*) So, if the disbelievers persist in idolatry, hell will be their eternal abode.

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* says:

وَقَدْ أَضَلُّوا كَثِيرًا وَلَا تَزِدِ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا ضَلَالًا ﴿٢٤﴾

**They have led many astray. Lord, bring nothing
but destruction down on the evildoers! [24]
(The Quran, *Nuh*: 24)**

The idols and false gods have led a lot of people astray and they made wrongdoers increase in error because they wronged themselves by powerless idols that neither hear nor see. The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...Lord, bring nothing but destruction down on the evildoers!’ (*Nuh*: 24) might have been said by Prophet Nuh *peace be upon him* himself as the verb ‘*Tazid*’ (increase) is an imperfect tense in the jussive mood. So, he *peace be upon him* invoked his Lord to increase his people in error and loss, as they were wrongdoers and transgressors.

Their idols, made out of stones or wood, led them astray because of their thoughtlessness. This also happened in the case of the people of Ibrahim who said about the idols: ‘My Lord, indeed they have led astray many among the people.’ (*Ibrahim*: 36) We should note that He *the Almighty* says here in the chapter of *Nuh*: ‘They have led many astray...’ (*Nuh*: 24) and says in the chapter of Ibrahim: ‘...indeed they have led astray many...’ (*Ibrahim*: 36), using the feminine plural pronoun.. The subject pronoun in the verse in question may refer to the leaders and eminent people who misled a lot of people. However, it may also refer to the idols, but this requires, saying, ‘*Adlalna*’, i.e. the form of the verb should be consistent with the feminine plural pronoun. Nevertheless, the idols did not do so in reality, for it was the dignitaries and the leaders who mislead many people. Likewise, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘And how many a city was insolent toward the command of its Lord...’ (*at-Talaq*: 8). Here, the actions of the city dwellers are attributed to the city itself.

With regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘They have led many astray...’ (*Nuh*: 24), it means that the leaders and eminent people led a lot of people astray to the extent that only a few people believed in Nuh *peace be upon him* throughout nine centuries, a fact which is clear in His saying: ‘...but

none had believed with him, except a few.' (*Hud*: 40) Hence, on the day when the people of Nuh were drowned, only eighty believers⁽¹⁾ were on board the ship with him. This was after nine centuries he *peace be upon him* spent inviting his people to belief. Undoubtedly, some people believed in him and died during this long period before the coming of the flood.

Concerning the reason behind inflicting punishment on the people of Nuh, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

مِمَّا حَطَّيْنَاهُمْ أَغْرَقُوا فَأُذِنُوا نَارًا فَلَمْ يَجِدُوا
لَهُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَنْصَارًا ﴿٢٥﴾

**They were drowned and sent to Hell for their evildoings:
they found no one to help them against God [25]
(The Quran, *Nuh*: 25)**

The people of Nuh were drowned on account of their sins and disbelief. Here, the Quran joins the suffix *Ma* to the preposition *Min* (for) because the Arabs use it to speak about a result of an action, as in their words, 'Wherever you are, I will be; wherever you sit, I will sit.'

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...and sent to Hell for their evildoings...' (*Nuh*: 25), it means that the people of Nuh were thrown into the fire in the Hereafter. Their bodies decayed and vanished in the wake of drowning, while their spirits went to hell. Further, He *the Almighty* says: '...they found no one to help them against Allah.' (*Nuh*: 25) Thus, they did not find supporters to protect them from drowning and entering hell in the Hereafter. Their idols proved unable to prevent Allah's Punishment.

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* says:

(1) In his *Tafsir*, Ibn Abu Hatim narrates on the authority of Zayd ibn Aslam that eighty believers were aboard the ship with Nuh on the day when his people were drowned. Ka'ab Al-Ahbar is narrated to have said, 'Believers were at this time seventy two. Allah caused rain to fall heavily from the sky and the earth burst with springs.' See Ibn Abu Hatim, *Tafsir*, 10878 and 10879.

وَقَالَ نُوحٌ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ مِنَ الْكَافِرِينَ دَيَّارًا ﴿٦١﴾
 إِنَّكَ إِن تَذَرَهُمْ يُضِلُّوا عِبَادَكَ وَلَا يَلِدُوا إِلَّا فَاجِرًا كَفَّارًا ﴿٦٢﴾

And Noah said, ‘Lord, do not leave any of the disbelievers on the earth – [26] if you leave them they will lead Your servants astray and beget only sinners and disbelievers [27] (The Quran, *Nuh*: 26 - 27)

Prophet Nuh *peace be upon him* reached the utmost degree in his Call to his people, as He *the Almighty* says: ‘He said, “My Lord, I have called my people night and day, [5] but the more I call them, the further they run away: [6] every time I call them, so that You may forgive them, they thrust their fingers into their ears, cover their heads with their garments, persist in their rejection, and grow more insolent and arrogant. [7] I have tried calling them openly. [8] I have tried preaching to them in public and speaking to them in private. [9]”’ (*Nuh*: 5-9) He *peace be upon him* spared no effort in calling his people to belief and guidance. However, they stubbornly and strongly disbelieved in Allah *the Almighty* and in what he *peace be upon him* came with. He *peace be upon him* invoked Him *Glorified is He* against his people after he exerted his strenuous efforts and they unbearably harmed and derided him. The grandfathers among his people advised the fathers not to believe in him and so did the fathers with the sons.

It is not only Prophet Nuh *peace be upon him* who invoked Allah *Glorified is He* against his people, but Prophet Musa *peace be upon him* also invoked Him against Pharaoh and his people, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: ‘And Musa said, “Our Lord, indeed You have given Pharaoh and his establishment splendor and wealth in the worldly life, our Lord, that they may lead [men] astray from Your way. Our Lord, obliterate their wealth and harden their hearts so that they will not believe until they see the painful punishment.”’ (*Yunus*: 88)

The Arabic word *Tams* (obliteration) means to remove the physical characteristics of something, as in the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: ‘...before We obliterate faces and turn them toward their backs.’ (*an-Nisa*: 47)

Obliteration here means removing the facial features making it one piece without a forehead, eyebrows, eyes, nose, lips or chin. As for the obliteration of wealth, it means changing its substance. Those who owned ingots of gold found that they turned into pieces of stone; and those who owned precious stones such as diamonds found they became pieces of glass. Hence, wealth was a means of misguidance for them. Prophet Musa *peace be upon him* invoked Allah *the Almighty* to harden the heart of Pharaoh and his people so that they would not abandon disbelief or become believers till they experienced the painful punishment.

Likewise, Prophet Nuh *peace be upon him* invoked Allah *the Almighty* against his people not to leave one of the disbelievers walking on the earth, saying: 'Lord, do not leave any of the disbelievers on the earth.' (*Nuh*: 26) The Arabic word *Dayyar* refers to the man who walks about a lot and a house dweller. So, he *peace be upon him* invoked Him *the Almighty* to destroy every house dweller of the disbelievers on the earth. Thus, all of the disbelievers among his people were destroyed.

Then Allah *the Almighty* relates that Prophet Nuh *peace be upon him* said: 'If you leave them they will lead Your servants astray and beget only sinners and disbelievers.' (*Nuh*: 27) It is as if he *peace be upon him* said, 'If You leave those disbelievers who deviated from the Right Path and rejected the True Call, they will lead astray Your servants whom You guided to belief, and have children who will be transgressors and disbelievers.' In this regard, the fathers used to take their children to Prophet Nuh *peace be upon him* and say to them, 'Beware of this man. He is a liar. My father warned me against him.' Thus, the fathers died while they were disbelievers and their young children followed their advice.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* concludes the chapter of *Nuh* with the supplication of Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* which reads:

رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيَّ وَلِمَن دَخَلَ بَيْتِيَ مُؤْمِنًا وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ
وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَلَا نَزِدِ الظَّالِمِينَ إِلَّا نَارًا ﴿٢٨﴾

Lord, forgive me, my parents, and whoever enters my house as a believer. Forgive believing men and women but bring nothing but ruin down on the evildoers! [28] (The Quran, Nuh: 28)

This verse refers to what is specific and what is general. How often are parents included in this verse? They are included in Allah's saying: '...forgive me and my parents...' (Nuh: 28); '...and whoever enters my house as a believer...' (Nuh: 28); and '...believing men and women...' (Nuh: 28). So, they are included three times in this verse because this is suitable for their position. Prophet Ibrahim *peace be upon him* made a similar supplication saying: 'Our Lord, forgive me and my parents and the believers the Day the account is established.' (Ibrahim: 41) We note that asking for forgiveness includes the parents and the believers.

As we know, the human being's original existence is traced back to Adam while his/her direct existence is attributed to his/her parents. As the parents are the cause of one's coming into being in this life, one should invoke Allah *Glorified is He* to forgive them. The same is true in case they are one's direct role models. Further, one should invoke Him *the Almighty* to pardon the believers because they are his/her coreligionists and good exemplars. They enjoined each other to follow the truth and to be patient. Nuh *peace be upon him* used to supplicate, 'My Lord! Pardon me, efface my sins and forgive my parents.'

The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...and whoever enters my house as a believer. Forgive believing men and women...' (Nuh: 28) refers to those who enter Prophet Nuh's house of worship as a worshipper and also the believing men and believing women. After he *peace be upon him* invoked Him *Glorified is He* to forgive him, his parents, those who entered his house as believers and all the believers, males and females, he invoked Him *the Almighty* saying: '...bring nothing but ruin down on the evildoers!' (Nuh: 28) The Arabic word *Tabara* (ruin) refers to all the different kinds of destruction and punishment befalling those who disbelieved in the Messengers. In the case of the people of Nuh, they were destroyed by the flood.

the chapter of

al-Jinn

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

The chapter of *al-Jinn* ⁽¹⁾ (Demons).

قُلْ أُوحِيَ إِلَيَّ أَنَّهُ اسْتَمَعَ نَفَرٌ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَقَالُوا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا قُرْءَانًا عَجَبًا ﴿١﴾
يَهْدِي إِلَى الرُّشْدِ فَآمَنَّا بِهِ وَلَمْ نُشْرِك بِرَبِّنَا أَحَدًا ﴿٢﴾

Say [Prophet], ‘It has been revealed to me that a group of jinn once listened in and said, “We have heard a wondrous Quran [1] that gives guidance to the right path, and we have come to believe it – We shall never set up partners with our Lord [2] (The Quran, *al-Jinn*: 1-2)

Allah *the Almighty* revealed a whole chapter of the Quran and called it the chapter of *al-Jinn*. He *Glorified is He* also mentioned the Angels in a chapter called *Fatir*. Some scholars even call it the chapter of *al-Mala'ika*, as it starts with: ‘[All] praise is [due] to Allah, Creator of the heavens and the earth, [who] made the angels messengers having wings, two or three or four. He increases in creation what He wills. Indeed, Allah is over all things competent.’ (*Fatir*: 1)

The creatures of Allah *the Almighty* who are destined to dwell on the earth and in the heavens are the humans, the Jinn and Angels. Each type of these

(1) The chapter of *al-Jinn* is the seventy second chapter according to the order of the Noble Quran; it consists of 28 verses. In his book, Abu Qasim Hibat Allah writes, 'This chapter was revealed in Mecca and it contains neither abrogating verses nor abrogated ones. It is called the chapter of *al-Jinn* because it talks about the Jinn. It was revealed after the chapter of *al-A'raf* when Prophet Muhammad *peace be upon him* returned from At-Ta'if, in the tenth year of his mission. This was before the Night Journey and the *Hijra*.' See Qasim Hibat Allah, *An-Nasikh Wa Al-Mansukh*, 1/185.

creatures has characteristics and features that distinguish it from other types. The humans are visible to the Jinn and the Angels, while the humans cannot see them. Regarding the Jinn, He *Glorified is He* says: 'Indeed, he sees you, he and his tribe, from where you do not see them.' (*al-A'raf*: 27) By contrast, the Jinn are invisible to us. From the Arabic word *Jinn*, the word *Janna* (Garden) is derived. This is because it makes a person invisible to others by means of its trees and allows him/her to enjoy its pleasures freely.

The Jinn are characterised by nimbleness and swiftness and are divided into believers and disbelievers; the believers among them are divided into obedient and disobedient. As for the disbelievers among them, they are the devils who rebel against Allah's Way of Guidance. Anyone who rebels against this Divine Way is called a devil, be he of the Jinn or the humans. The Jinn, as a community, are required to adopt the same Divine Messages sent to the humans. There are no Prophets or Messengers who were sent from among the Jinn, and they are divided into Muslims and disbelievers.

The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Say [Prophet], "It has been revealed to me..."' (*al-Jinn*: 1) is directed to Messenger Muhammad *peace be upon him*. The Divine Revelations which he *peace be upon him* used to receive came through the Archangel Gabriel, the Trustee of the Divine Revelations. Whenever it came to him *peace be upon him* he would suffer greatly to the point that he sweated profusely on cold nights.

With regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Say [Prophet], "It has been revealed to me that a group of jinn once listened in..."' (*al-Jinn*: 1), the verb 'to listen' refers to hearing attentively. As for the verb 'to hear' refers to perceiving a sound by chance. For example, while you are walking, you can hear a lot of speech whether it matters to you or not. Unlike eyelids, there is no covering on the ears to impede your hearing. So you hear anything reaching your ears unwillingly. By contrast, the verb 'to listen' means to pay attention to what you hear and the speaker has the option between speaking on and stopping speaking. The same verb connotes preparing one's bodily parts and senses for hearing. Even if one hears with his/her ears, there are other senses that can be distracted from attention. We use the eyes to see, the nose to smell and the tongues to speak. So one should employ all of his/her

senses to hear carefully, understand what she/he hears and carry out what s/he is ordered to do. For example, if you speak to your friend and find him/her paying no attention to you, you say to him/her, 'It seems that you are not with me.' This is because such a person's organs are distracted from hearing you. When a company of the Jinn heard Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* reciting the Quran, they dedicated their hearing and all their senses to listening to his recitation.

The whole account is as follows: 'Once Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and a group of his Companions headed for the market of 'Ukazh, after the devils had been prevented from listening secretly to the heavenly Revelations and shooting stars had been set against them. The devils returned to their leaders and told them that they could not listen to the heavenly Revelations and shooting stars attacked them. The leaders said to them, 'What prevented you from listening secretly to the heavenly Revelations was a serious thing that happened. Go everywhere and find out what kept you away from the heavenly revelations.' These devils indeed set out for Tuhama and found Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* leading his Companions in Dawn Prayer and heard him reciting some Quranic verses. The devils listened carefully to the Quran and said to one another, 'This is what prevented us from listening to the Divine Revelations.' Ongoing back to their leaders, they said: 'We have heard a wondrous Quran, [2] that gives guidance to the right path, and we have come to believe it—We shall never set up partners with our Lord. [3]' (*al-Jinn*: 1-2) Thereupon, Allah revealed to him *peace and blessings be upon him* the verse reading: 'Say [Prophet], "It has been revealed to me that a group of jinn once listened in and said..."' (*al-Jinn*: 1)⁽¹⁾. The aforementioned Hadith shows clearly the difference between 'hearing' and 'listening'; when the Jinn heard the Quran, they listened to it attentively. In the same vein, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And I have chosen you, so listen to what is revealed [to you].' (*Ta Ha*: 13) This is a Divine Command directed to Prophet Musa *peace be upon him* to receive the Revelations with all his senses.

(1) *This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas Allah be pleased with him. See Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 2271; Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 773 and 4921; Abu 'Awana, Mustakhraj, Hadith no. 3794; At-Tabarani, Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir, Hadith no.12449; and Al-Bayhaqi, As-Sunnan Al-Kubra, Hadith no.3068.*

The Arabic word *Nafar* (a group) refers to a group of people whose number ranges from three to nine, and in the verse in question the jinn were nine. Whatever their number, they listened attentively to the Quran directly from Messenger Muhammad's mouth. As soon as they returned to their tribes, they said to them: 'We have heard a wondrous Quran.' (*al-Jinn*: 1) Someone may ask, 'Why did the jinn not say, 'We listened?' The answer is that the verb 'heard' and the phrase 'wondrous Quran' that follows it gives the meaning of listening, since they realised that what they heard was a Book revealed to a Messenger who came after Musa *peace be upon him*. What is more, they describe the Quran as 'wondrous' and this adjective occurs in a number of verses, as the following ones: 'Have the people been amazed that We revealed [revelation] to a man from among them, [saying], "Warn mankind..." (*Yunus*: 2); 'Or have you thought that the companions of the cave and the inscription were, among Our signs, a wonder?' (*al-Kahf*: 9); and 'And it took its course into the sea amazingly.' (*al-Kahf*: 63)

Some scholars said that amazement is a mental state that happens to a person when s/he does not know what the reason for something. A thing that evokes astonishment is called 'a wonder' while a thing that is extraordinary is said to be 'bizarre and weird.' The wondrous thing is that which is too fantastic for a person to grasp, as in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'And [mention, O Muhammad], when We directed to you a few of the jinn, listening to the Quran. And when they attended it, they said, "Listen quietly." And when it was concluded, they went back to their people as warners. They said, "O our people, indeed we have heard a [recited] Book revealed after Musa confirming what was before it which guides to the truth and to a straight path."'" (*al-Ahqaf*: 29-30) With regard to the Quran, it is wondrous because it is noble and matchless regarding its eloquence, veracity, and unique style and composition.

As for His saying: 'That gives guidance to the right path, and we have come to believe it--We shall never set up partners with our Lord' (*al-Jinn*: 2), the Right Path is the way to Salvation. In fact, the Quran guides to Salvation while error leads to destruction. Shedding more light on the Right Path and error, He *Glorified is He* says: 'I will turn away from my signs those who are arrogant upon the earth without right; and if they should see every sign,

they will not believe in it. And if they see the way of consciousness, they will not adopt it as a way; but if they see the way of error, they will adopt it as a way. That is because they have denied our signs and they were heedless of them.’ (*al-A‘raf*: 146)

The arrogant people do not like adopting the Right Path because it constrains their physical pleasures and personal inclinations and prohibits the misdeeds. As they were enslaved by their physical pleasures, they cannot curb them. As for the erroneous way, it gives free rein to their pleasures and desires. The Quran leads to the Right Path and whoever believes in it becomes rightly guided. On the other hand, those who deny it fall prey to error. Anyone who judges according to it is fair in his/her judgment; any haughty tyrant who renounces it will be annihilated by Allah *Glorified is He*; and anyone who seeks guidance in another source will be misguided. Further, it is the firm Rope of Allah, the clear Light and the wise Remembrance. People's whims cannot distort it; it does not lead to contradictory opinions; the scholars never get bored with it; it does not become dull from reciting it repetitively; and its wonders do not come to an end. Whoever learns it is successful; whoever speaks according to it is truthful; whoever acts upon it is rewarded; and whoever calls to it is guided to the Straight Path.⁽¹⁾

The jinn believed in the Right Path and thus they said: ‘...We shall never set up partners with our Lord.’ (*al-Jinn*: 2) They understood from their listening to the Quran that the prerequisite of their belief was monotheism, which is the common denominator of all the heavenly Messages. In this verse, the Arabic word *Ahada* (anyone) leaves no room for polytheism and it alludes to the Christ, the son of Mary. They said: ‘O our people, indeed we have heard a [recited] Book revealed after Musa...’ (*al-Ahqaf*: 29) because Prophet

(1) 'Ali ibn Abu Taleb *Allah be pleased with him* said, 'I heard Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying, 'Indeed there comes a *Fitnah*' So I said, 'What is the way out from it, O Messenger of Allah?' He said, 'Allah's Book. In it is news for what happened before you, and information about what comes after you, and the judgment for what happens between you. It is the Criterion (between right and wrong) without jest. Whoever among the oppressive abandons it, Allah crushes him, and whoever seeks guidance from other than it, then Allah leaves him to stray. See Al-Bizzar, *Musnad*, *Hadith no. 836*.

Musa *peace be upon him* came with a Divine Law while Prophet 'Isa *peace be upon him* came without a Divine Law to be followed. Some Christians worship Prophet 'Isa as a god apart from Allah *the Almighty*; others worship him along with Allah; and some others claim that 'Isa is the third of three. Thus, the jinn declare they do not set up any partner with Allah *Glorified is He* and hold Him in great awe, saying:

وَأَنَّهُ تَعَلَّى جَدُّ رَبِّنَا مَا اتَّخَذَ صَاحِبَةً وَلَا وَلَدًا ﴿٣﴾

**And that He — exalted be the glory of our Lord! — has
neither spouse nor child [3] (The Quran, *al-Jinn*: 3)**

The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'And that He—exalted be the glory of our Lord...' (*al-Jinn*: 3) is attributed to the Divine Revelations if the particle *Anna* (that) is considered. According to another recitation, this saying is attributed to the Jinn as they exalt and glorify Allah *Glorified is He*. To Him belong the Grandeur, Majesty, Command and Power. How can a person allege that He *Glorified is He* has a wife and children? Indeed, He *the Almighty* did not choose from His creatures a wife or a child. He also reassures us, saying: 'And that He—exalted be the glory of our Lord!—has neither spouse nor child.' (*al-Jinn*: 3) It is as if He is saying, 'Be reassured that your Lord has neither a wife that influences Him nor a child to be favoured by Him. The wife and children can be a point of weakness that affects the legislation. Hence all the creatures are equal in the sight of Allah *Glorified is He* and they all are His servants; He does not unjustly favour someone over another.

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* relates that the jinn said:

وَأَنَّهُ كَانَتْ يَقُولُ سَفِيهُنَا عَلَى اللَّهِ شَطَطًا ﴿٤﴾

**Outrageous things have been said about God by
the foolish among us [4] (The Quran, *al-Jinn*: 4)**

The foolish one of the jinn is the Satan who objected to the Command of Allah *Glorified is He* and disobeyed His Order to prostrate himself to Adam. In this regard, Satan said: '...should I prostrate to one you created from clay?' (*al-Isra*: 61) Satan considered his view to be better than Allah's and thus

Satan is considered a foolish. But this does not mean that he is the only foolish one, for he is a symbol of every fool who disobeys Allah's Commands, and does not hold Him in due awe. Thus, this bad trait is attributed to anyone who acts foolishly, and that is why some scholars said this attribute refers to the disbelieving jinn.

With regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Outrageous things have been said about Allah by the foolish among us.' (*al-Jinn*: 4), the Arabic word *Shatat* (outrageous) means transgressing the limits in a statement. It primarily means overstepping the proper limits, but it here denotes a statement that contradicts truth and exceeds the bounds of right.

وَأَنَّا ظَنَنَّا أَن لَّن نَقُولَ الْإِنسُ وَالْجِنُّ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا ۚ
وَأَنَّهُ كَانَ رِجَالٌ مِّنَ الْإِنسِ يَعُوذُونَ بِرِجَالٍ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ فَزَادُوهُمْ رَهَقًا ۚ

**Although we had thought that no man or jinn would [dare to] tell a lie about Him [5] Men have sought refuge with the jinn in the past, but they only misguided them further [6]
(The Quran, *al-Jinn*: 5 - 6)**

Here, the verb 'thought' means to doubt. So, these groups of Jinn had doubted the fact that mankind and the jinn would dare to tell lies and baseless allegation about Allah *the Almighty*. When they ascertained that this allegation was false, they feared that they should hold it and that the Right Path would be ambiguous to them. Thus, they wandered through the earth in the hope of finding the one who could guide them to the Right Path. Then, they found Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and heard him reciting the Quran. According to the verse in question, this group of jinn had believed that Allah *the Almighty* had a wife and children as they heard other jinn and humans claim that. They had deemed this true till they discovered that this allegation was unfounded and those who made such an allegation were untruthful, whereupon they dissociated themselves from them. This proves that the jinn were polytheists till the moment they listened to Messenger Muhammad's recitation.

Allah *Glorified is He* then says: 'Men have sought refuge with the jinn in the past, but they only misguided them further.' (*al-Jinn*: 6) In fact, those who

exploit the jinn suffer from burdens and distress. He *the Almighty* tells us that the devils have close contact with a lot of humans. The men intended in this verse are the sorcerers who seek the jinn's help to break spells and bewitch their opponents. Such people live miserably all their lifetimes. It is true that the sorcerers are able to bewitch other humans, but this overtires them. They die poverty-stricken and unsightly and their children are spoiled. This is because such people exploited a special chance to do much harm to other people unjustifiably. Their facial features carry the marks of sins and anger and they provoke the aversion of anyone who sees them. They lead uncomfortable lives, for even if they earn a lot of money, they live as beggars. Eventually, they die as disbelievers and deprive themselves of Allah's Mercy. As regards their children, they suffer misfortune in their lives.

The Arabic word *Ar-Rahq* denotes 'aberration, error and guilt'. So, the male jinn made male humans increase in sin and error. It is worth noting that Allah *the Almighty* refers to the jinn as men as He does to humankind. This suggests that there are men among the jinn and that they reproduce as the humans do.

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* says:

وَأَنَّهُمْ ظَنُّوا كَمَا ظَنَنْتُمْ أَن لَّن يَبْعَثَ اللَّهُ أَحَدًا ﴿٧﴾ وَأَنَا لَمَسْنَا السَّمَاءَ
فَوَجَدْنَاهَا مُلِئَتْ حَرَسًا شَدِيدًا وَشُهُبًا ﴿٨﴾ وَأَنَا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقْعَدًا
لِّلسَّمْعِ فَمَن يَسْمَعِ الْآنَ يَجِدْ لَهُ شِهَابًا رَّصَدًا ﴿٩﴾

**They thought, as you did, that God would never raise
anyone from the dead [7] We tried to reach heaven, but
discovered it to be full of stern guards and shooting stars [8]
we used to sit in places there, listening, but anyone trying to
listen now will find a shooting star lying in wait for him [9]**

(The Quran, *al-Jinn*: 7 - 9)

The jinn used to think that there would be no Messenger after Jesus, the son of Mary, and so did the humans. Both believed that Allah *Glorified is He* would not send a Messenger to His creatures to invite them to monotheism. He *the Almighty* makes this clear in His saying: 'And they wonder that there

has come to them a warner from among themselves. And the disbelievers say, "This is a magician and a liar. [4] Has he made the gods [only] one God? Indeed, this is a curious thing." [5] And the eminent among them went forth, [saying], "Continue, and be patient over [the defense of] your gods. Indeed, this is a thing intended. [6] We have not heard of this in the latest religion. This is not but a fabrication. [7] Has the message been revealed to him out of [all of] us?" Rather, they are in doubt about my message. Rather, they have not yet tasted my punishment. [8]' (*Sad*: 4-8)

The disbelievers of Quraysh found Jews claiming that 'Uzayr (Ezra) is the son of Allah and the Christians alleging that 'Isa is the son of Allah and that Allah is the third of three. Moreover, the disbelievers of Mecca said, 'We have never heard of monotheism in the latest faiths.' Some of the jinn imitated the Jews; others followed the example of the Christians; and some others were idolaters as the disbelievers of Mecca. They held the belief that Allah *Glorified is He* would not send a Messenger to demolish all these fallacies, saying: '...Allah would never send anyone [as a messenger].' (*al-Jinn*: 7)

The Jinn go on to say: 'We tried to reach heaven, but discovered it to be full of stern guards and shooting stars.' (*al-Jinn*: 8) Before revealing the Quran, the devils used to listen secretly to the news of the heavens. But after sending Messenger Muhammad *peace be upon him* as a Prophet, the devils were deterred from doing this. Thereupon, they concluded that a new Prophet would be sent. The devils were prevented from reaching the news of the heavens because Allah *Glorified is He* did not will them to insert their fallacies into His Way of Guidance. We should ponder on the accurate Quranic expression that reads: 'We tried to reach heaven...' (*al-Jinn*: 8). This indicates that the jinn tried to ascend to the nearest sky to the degree that it was very close to them as if they were about to touch it.

The Arabic word *Al-Lams* (Touching) is also used to denote searching for something or trying to reach something. The devils tried to reach the sky to listen secretly to the news, commands and Divine Revelations coming down from it in addition to any future events, but they failed. They say: 'We tried to reach heaven, but discovered it to be full of stern guards and shooting stars.' (*al-Jinn*: 8)

Thus, the Jinn tried to eavesdrop on the news of the heaven, but they: '...discovered it to be full of stern guards and shooting stars.' (*al-Jinn*: 8) The stern guards are from the Angels who guard the sky from all directions. They prevent the jinn from reaching any spot of the sky or even approaching it. So the sky is guarded against the jinn and devils so that they cannot listen secretly to the Quranic verses being sent down upon Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

Not only is the sky guarded, but it is also full of shooting stars that are known as meteors. So, the jinn found the sky filled with strong Angels and burning meteors that lie in wait for any devil or jinn coming near the sky. These falling, burning stars burn the devils whenever they seek to eavesdrop on whatever comes down from the heaven. Concerning the sky, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And we have protected it from every devil expelled [from the mercy of Allah]; except one who steals a hearing and is pursued by a clear burning flame.' (*al-Hijr*: 17-18)

Before the emergence of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* the rebellious jinn used to eavesdrop on the Divine Revelations descending upon the previous Prophets. After the advent of Prophet Muhammad's Message, things became different, for Allah *the Almighty* willed that the sky should be guarded and that penetrating, burning stars should pursue any devil wanting to approach the sky. The Arabic word *Ash-Shihab* (burning flame) refers to something like a piece of coal that is ablaze.

Allah *the Almighty* then relates that the Jinn said: 'We used to sit in places there, listening, but anyone trying to listen now will find a shooting star lying in wait for him.' (*al-Jinn*: 9) The devils had certain positions to sit therein for eavesdropping on what came down from the heaven. They used to pick up some words from heavenly Revelations and add to them hundreds of lies of their own accord. However, When Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was sent with the Message of Islam, the jinn were expelled from these positions. Concerning these jinn and devils who had certain positions for eavesdropping, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Indeed they, from [its] hearing, are removed.' (*ash-Shu'ara*: 212) So, they are banned from eavesdropping by means of shooting stars and meteors. Further, they were prevented from eavesdropping

on the Divine Revelations and the Angels' discussions on the future events that would take place on the earth like the cases of death and the rainfalls.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: '...but anyone trying to listen now will find a shooting star lying in wait for him.' (*al-Jinn*: 9) According to this verse, some of the jinn tried to eavesdrop on the heavenly realm, but they were confronted with meteors and flaming stars. So, the devils' attempted secret listening to the heavenly news was a kind of eavesdropping and snatches, as Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Except one who snatches [some words] by theft, but they are pursued by a burning flame, piercing [in brightness].' (*as-Saffat*: 10)

Even if the rebellious jinn should manage to snatch some pieces of the heavenly news, they cannot flee with them and communicate them to their allies. This is because: '...they are pursued by a burning flame, piercing [in brightness].' (*as-Saffat*: 10) This means that the flaming stars pounce upon these devils and pierce through space till they hit their targets as quickly and accurately as possible.

Someone may ask, 'Why are the devils not banned from eavesdropping from the beginning?' The scholars say that there is a distinction between preventing the jinn from eavesdropping from the start and letting them snatch some heavenly news without fleeing with and benefitting from them. Allah *Glorified is He* enables them to eavesdrop on some pieces of heavenly news, but meteors attack them immediately from all directions, leading to their distress and sorrow. They suffer unbearably from eavesdropping and they get bitterly sorry for not taking advantage of what they heard.

Allah says:

وَأَنَّا لَا نَدْرِي أَشَرٌّ أُرِيدَ بِمَن فِي الْأَرْضِ أَمْ أَرَادَ بِهِمْ رَبُّهُمْ رَشَدًا
وَأَنَّا مِنَّا الصَّالِحُونَ وَمِنَّا دُونَ ذَلِكَ كُنَّا طَرَائِقَ قِدْدًا

**[so now] we do not know whether those who live on earth
are due for misfortune, or whether their Lord intends to
guide them [10] Some of us are righteous and others less so:
we follow different paths [11] (The Quran, *al-Jinn*: 10 - 11)**

The two abovementioned verses are among the words said by the jinn. They do not know why the sky is guarded by powerful Angels and why the

meteors prevent them from listening secretly to the heavenly Revelations. They wondered, 'Is this something evil for the dwellers of the earth so that they will not know what happens on the earth? Or does Allah will them to be rightly guided?' The devils were confused as they were kept from eavesdropping. Thus, they did not know whether what was sent down from the heaven was good or bad. They do not know the rationale behind guarding the sky and whether this is bad or good for mankind. Evil here can be a punishment inflicted upon the inhabitants of the earth.

As for the Right Guidance here, it refers to sending Prophets from among the humans to guide them to the Truth. But is this evil based on what comes down from the sky or its results? They know that whoever believes in the Messenger and seeks Guidance from him will be on the Right Path. While whoever despise the Messenger and rejects his Guidance will be severely punished. The jinn are undecided whether or not to believe in the Prophet. They describe themselves, saying: 'Some of us are righteous and others less so: we follow different paths.' (*al-Jinn*: 11) As the jinn were hesitant about believing or denying Prophets, they divided: some of them became believers and others split into groups and sects.

Like mankind, there are believers, sinners and pious worshippers among the jinn. Among them are also good individuals who promote righteousness and virtue and those who are righteous but do not encourage others to follow virtue. As regards the rebels among the jinn, they are the devils and demons.

With regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...we follow different paths' (*al-Jinn*: 11), it means that they belong to different and various faiths. Among them are the believers, disbelievers, Jews and Christians. The Arabic word *Tara'iq* means a way or a school of thought. As for the Arabic word *Qidad*, it refers to varieties and different classes. Thus, the jinn were of different classes and groups. In this regard, As Suddi said, 'The jinn are like you [humans]; among them are the Qadaris, Murji'ites, Rafidis and Shiites.'⁽¹⁾ This proves that there are among the jinn those who practice reasoning regarding

(1) In his *Tafsir*, *Al-Wahidi* attributed this narration to *Al-Hasan Al-Basri*. See *Ath-Tha'labi*, *Al-Kashf Wa Al-Bayan*, 10/51; and *Al-Wahidi*, *Al-Wasit Fi Tafsir Al-Quran Al-Majid*, 4/266.

the Quranic verses as well as those who are unable to understand the allegorical verses of the Quran. Thus, they are different sects.

وَأَنَّا ظَنَنَّا أَن لَّن نُّعْجِزَ اللَّهَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَن نُّعْجِزَهُ هَرَبًا ﴿١٢﴾

**We know we can never frustrate God on earth; we
can never escape Him [12] (The Quran, *al-Jinn*: 12)**

The jinn express their certainty and conviction that they can never frustrate Allah on earth. The Arabic word *Mu'jiz* (an imitable thing) refers to that which proves the defeat of one's opponent. To say 'I did something unrivaled to so-and-so' means that so-and-so was unable to do something like it. The jinn believe firmly that they cannot escape from Allah's Punishment and that they are not beyond His Power. What gives the same meaning is the verse reading: 'Never think that the disbelievers are causing failure [to Allah] upon the earth...' (*an-Nur*: 57). The jinn are not able to slip from the reach of Allah *the Almighty*; if He wills to punish them anywhere and anytime, He is fully Able to do so without any impediments or obstacles.

The jinn say: 'We know we can never frustrate Allah on earth...' (*al-Jinn*: 12). They acknowledge that they are powerless to protect themselves against the His punishment whether they inhabit the depths of the earth or its surface.

وَأَنَّا لَمَّا سَمِعْنَا الْهُدَىٰ ءَامَنَّا بِهِ ؕ فَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِرَبِّهِ ۖ فَلَا يَخَافُ بَحْصَ وَلَا رَهَقًا ﴿١٣﴾

**When we heard the guidance we came to believe:
whoever believes in his Lord need fear no loss nor
injustice [13] (The Quran, *al-Jinn*: 13)**

The word 'guidance' here refers to the Quran that the jinn listened to carefully. They regard it as such because it directs to the Right Path. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* says in another verse: 'And what prevented the people from believing when guidance came to them except that they said, "Has Allah sent a human messenger?"' (*al-Isra'*: 94) Guidance means showing the road that leads to your intended destination. For example, the road signs show travelers their roads and help them reach their destinations. Describing the Quran, He *the Almighty* says: 'This is the Book about which there is no doubt,

guidance for those conscious of Allah.' (*al-Baqara*: 2) Undoubtedly, the Glorious Quran is the Right Path of Allah which embodies the spiritual Guidance for those who desire to safeguard themselves from His punishment. It is worth noting that instead of saying 'and when we heard the Quran, ' the Jinn say: 'When we heard the guidance...' (*al-Jinn*: 13) describing it directly as such and using the definite article 'the' which distinguishes the Quran from other sacred Books.

Then, Allah *the Almighty* says: '...whoever believes in his Lord need fear no loss, nor injustice.' (*al-Jinn*: 13) Believing in the Quran means that one believes in the Divine Guidance, and this, at the same time, entails one's belief in the One Who revealed the Quran to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

Your belief in your Lord brings good results, as He *the Almighty* says: '...whoever believes in his Lord need fear no loss, nor injustice.' (*al-Jinn*: 13) The human being fears being deprived of his/her due and being put to burden and hardship. So if one desires not to expose him/herself to either case, s/he must believe in Allah *Glorified is He*.

So, what do the Arabic words *Al-Bakhs* (loss) and *Al-Rahaq* (injustice) mean here? *Al-Bakhs* means depriving a person of his/her rights or giving him/her less than his/her due. Concerning Prophet Yusuf (Joseph) *Allah's Peace be upon him Allah Glorified is He* says: 'And they sold him for a reduced price - a few *dirhams* - and they were, concerning him, of those content with little.' (*Yusuf*: 20); 'And do not deprive people of their due.' (*ash-Shu'ara*: 183) Depriving others of their due is a sinful act and so is denying someone else's whole right or handling it without his/her permission or in a way unacceptable to him/her.

As a matter of fact, Allah *Glorified is He* does not deprive people of their due in any way as He says: 'But he who does of righteous deeds while he is a believer - he will neither fear injustice nor deprivation.' (*Ta Ha*: 112) As for the Arabic word *Al-Hadm* (deprivation), it means diminishing reward and good recompense. The wronged person is s/he who is subjected to this action. He *Glorified is He* never wrongs anyone even by a hair's breadth as He says: 'Indeed, Allah does not do injustice, [even] as much as an atom's weight;

while if there is a good deed, He multiplies it and gives from Himself a great reward.’ (*an-Nisa*: 40)

As regards *Ar-Rahq*, it is here a type of punishment. A person who believes in Allah *the Almighty* does not fear to be deprived of his/her reward for good deeds wholly or partly. Likewise, s/he does not fear to be overburdened with others' sins and errors.



Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمُونَ وَمِنَ الْقَاسِطُونَ فَمَنْ أَسْلَمَ فَأُولَئِكَ تَحَرَّوْا رَشَدًا ﴿١٤﴾
وَأَمَّا الْقَاسِطُونَ فَكَانُوا لِجَهَنَّمَ حَطَبًا ﴿١٥﴾

**Some of us submit to Him and others go the wrong way:
those who submit to God have found wise guidance [14]
but those who go wrong will be fuel for Hellfire [15]
(The Quran, *al-Jinn*: 14 - 15)**

The first of the two aforementioned verses indicates that among the jinn are those who are believers and those who are disbelievers. Allah *the Almighty* says about those who go wrong: ‘[they] will be fuel for Hellfire.’ (*al-Jinn*: 15) So, the unjust people, who deny others their rights, will go to the fire. Here, those who go wrong are the opposites of the Muslims. They wrong themselves by deviating from the worship of Allah *the Almighty* the Right Path and Islam. By contrast, the Muslims are those who submit to Allah *Glorified is He* by obedience to Him.

So, His saying: ‘...those who submit to Allah have found wise guidance.’ (*al-Jinn*: 14) means that those who submit and yield to Allah *the Almighty* by obedience seek the Right Path and aspire to reward. As for the unjust: ‘...[they] will be fuel for Hellfire.’ (*al-Jinn*: 15) The unjust are designed as the firewood of hell so that a believer considers their position and enjoys the bliss in paradise more strongly. For example, a healthy person enjoys his/her well-being more and more when s/he sees someone else who is ill.


 وَالْوَّاسْتَقَمُّوْا عَلَى الطَّرِيْقَةِ لَا سَقَيْنَهُمْ مَّاءَ غَدَقًا

 لِنَفْنِئَهُمْ فِيْهِ وَمَنْ يُعْرِضْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِ يَسْلُكْهُ عَذَابًا صَعَدًا

If they had taken to the right way, We would have given them abundant water to drink [16] a test for them — but anyone who turns away from his Lord's Revelation will be sent by Him to spiraling torment [17] (The Quran, *al-Jinn*: 16 - 17)

Allah *Glorified is He* then directs His Discourse to the disbelievers of Mecca, saying: 'If they had taken to the right way, We would have given them abundant water to drink.' (*al-Jinn*: 16) If the disbelievers of Mecca became believers and followed the Right Path, He *Glorified is He* would confer upon them abundant sustenance.

Al-Hanifiyya is the Straight Path about which Allah says: 'Ibrahim was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was one inclining toward truth, a Muslim [submitting to Allah]. And he was not of the polytheists.' (*Al-'Imran*: 67) What makes a person who follows the Right Path deviate from it and thus distress him/herself? If a person intends to achieve the desired goal directly, s/he must be on the Right Path. As for a person who strays from that Path, s/he does not reach the desired end. As regards a person who adopts the Right Path and the ordained Way, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Then We put you, [O Muhammad], on an ordained way concerning the matter [of religion]; so follow it and do not follow the inclinations of those who do not know.' (*al-Jathiya*: 18)

In the verse in question, the 'abundant water' denotes rain or the great property, as Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'A test for them —but anyone who turns away from his Lord's Revelation will be sent by Him to spiraling torment.' (*al-Jinn*: 17) He *Glorified is He* grants the people abundant sustenance to test. In this respect 'Umar Allah be pleased with him says, 'There are trials and temptations wherever water and wealth exist.'⁽¹⁾ So, the material possessions are but trials and tests. If one is enslaved and seduced by his wealth, high rank or women, he will surely lose and bring down upon himself sheer evil.

(1) See *At-Tabari, Jame' Al-Bayan*, 23/663; *Ath-Tha'labi, Al-Kashf Wa Al-Bayan*, 10/53; *Jame' Ahkam Al-Quran*, 19/18.

Allah *Glorified is He* then says: ‘...but anyone who turns away from his Lord’s Revelation will be sent by Him to spiraling torment.’ (*al-Jinn*: 17) In the previous verse, He *Glorified is He* says: ‘If they had taken to the right way, We would have given them abundant water to drink.’ (*al-Jinn*: 16) This is the reward obtainable by those who believe and adopt Allah's Way of Guidance. As for those who reject and turn away from it, He *Glorified is He* will place them into intense, escalating and permanent punishment. He *the Almighty* gives us an example of this intense, unbearable punishment, saying: ‘I will cover him with arduous torment.’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 17) This verse means He *the Almighty* will force him/her to climb a burning rock with holes that emit blazing wind that make his/her flesh fall off his/her body.

Then, Allah *the Almighty* reminds us about a fact that we must keep in mind, saying:

وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ فَلَا تَدْعُوا مَعَ اللَّهِ أَحَدًا ﴿١٨﴾

**Places of worship are for God alone –
so do not pray to anyone other than God [18]
(The Quran, *al-Jinn*: 18)**

The Arabic word *Al-Masjid* (the house of worship) is the place designed for worshipping and prostrating to Allah *the Almighty* Alone. So when you enter the mosque for the purpose of worship, you get nearer to Allah *Glorified is He* to invoke Him and be under His Care. So, the worshipper should not enter to it while concerning about the worldly matters. One of the Companions of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'We used to forget about our mundane matters the moment we took off our shoes and immediately before entering the mosque.' One should forget about his/her standing when s/he enters the mosque and take into account the extent of his/her belief in Allah *Glorified is He*. Further, one should show his/her devotion and submission towards Him and sit at an unoccupied spot. The worshipper should not pass through the people. Moreover, the one should intend to perform *I'tikaf* at the mosque and should not converse about any worldly matters.

The mosques are the places where the Divine Blessings shower the worshippers and whoever wants to receive Spiritual Light should go there.

One should go to the mosque to perform the prayer and meet his/her Lord and that is why we should not talk about our mundane matters in the mosque. Are the long hours of discussing the mundane affairs outside the mosque not enough so that we cannot dedicate some numbered minutes for our prayer in the mosques?! Thus, we should not drag our worldly affairs into the mosque. Although the whole earth is suitable for performing prayer, when you enter the mosque, you awaken your devotion to Allah *the Almighty* and dedicate all your actions and feelings to Him Alone.

The mosques are for Allah *the Almighty* Who says: '...so do not pray to anyone other than Allah.' (*al-Jinn*: 18) To pray here means to worship.⁽¹⁾ So you must not worship anyone besides Him *Glorified is He*; rather, we should worship Him Alone. Some exegetes state that the mosques refer to the seven bodily parts on which a person prostrates him/herself to Him *the Almighty*: the forehead, the nose, the hands, the knees. These bodily parts are created for Him *Glorified is He*. So, we must not prostrate upon them to anyone other than Him.

Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is narrated to have said, 'I was ordered to prostrate myself with seven bodily parts: the forehead, the nose, the hands and the knees.'⁽²⁾ In fact, the Arabic word '*masjid*' may refer to the places designed for prayer or the bodily parts used for prostration. Concerning the mosques, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'The mosques of Allah are only to be maintained by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day and establish prayer and give *zakat* and do not fear except Allah, for it is expected that those will be of the [rightly] guided.' (*at-Tawba*: 18) His saying: '...and do not fear except Allah...' (*at-Tawba*: 18) indicates that discussing the matters that concern the Muslims and criticising things far removed from the Way of Allah in the mosques do not contradict with the fact that the mosques are intended for worship. So, His saying: '...and do not fear except Allah...' (*at-Tawba*: 18) refers to those who fear none except for Him *Glorified is He*,

(1) *This Hadith is narrated on the authority of An-Nu'man ibn Bashir Allah be pleased with him. See Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 18352 and 18386; 'Abdullah ibn Al-Mubarak, Az-Zuhd Wa Ar-Raqa'q, Hadith no.1298; and Abu Dawud At-Tayalisi, Musnad, Hadith no. 838.*

(2) *This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas Allah be pleased with him. See Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 2777; Abu 'Awana, Mustakhrāj, Hadith no. 1867; Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 812; and Muslim, Sahih, Hadith no. 230.*

speak the truth in public, fulfill the requirements of their belief in Allah *the Almighty* and in the Day of Judgment and worship Him Alone. In fact, believing in Him *Glorified is He* entails fearing Him.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

وَأَنَّهُ لَمَّا قَامَ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ يَدْعُوهُ كَادُوا يَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِ لِبَدًا ﴿١٩﴾

**Yet when God's Servant stood up to pray to Him,
they pressed in on him [19] (The Quran, *al-Jinn*: 19)**

When Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was performing prayer and reciting the Quran, the jinn gathered to listen to the Quran. Here, 'Allah's Servant' refers to him *peace and blessings be upon him* when he was praying and reciting the Quran at a place called Nakhla, between Mecca and At-Ta'if. Due to their great admiration for the Quranic verses, the jinn overlaid one another to the degree that they were about to fall over him *peace and blessings be upon him*. They swarmed in order to listen to the Quran and formed into a compacted mass. The Arabs call the locusts that overlay one another '*Lubda*, ' that is, an overlapping swarm of locusts. This word also refers to the matted hair.

قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَدْعُوا رَبِّي وَلَا أُشْرِكُ بِهِ أَحَدًا ﴿٢٠﴾ قُلْ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا رَشَدًا ﴿٢١﴾ قُلْ إِنِّي لَنْ يُخِيرَنِي مِنَ اللَّهِ أَحَدٌ وَلَنْ أَجِدَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مُلْتَحَدًا ﴿٢٢﴾

**Say, 'I pray to my Lord alone; I set up no partner with Him.' [20] Say, 'I have no control over any harm or good that may befall you.' [21] Say, 'No one can protect me from God: I have no refuge except in Him' [22]
(The Quran, *al-Jinn*: 20 - 22)**

Here, Allah *the Almighty* orders Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to say: 'I pray to my Lord alone; I set up no partner with Him.' (*al-Jinn*: 20) The jinn searched for the true heavenly Message and found the sky filled with strong guards of the Angels. Thus, approaching the sky became destructive for them. So, Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* announces to them his Message clearly and openly: 'I pray to my Lord alone;

I set up no partner with Him.' (*al-Jinn*: 20) This verse means that he worships Allah *Glorified is He Alone*, and this is the Message of monotheism. Nothing should be worshipped besides Him, be it idols, humans, stars or animals, for Allah *Glorified is He* is the only One God.

On the other hand, some exegetes hold the view that the three verses in question respond to the disbelievers of Mecca when they asked Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to renounce his Call. So, he *peace and blessings be upon him* replied to them by the saying of Allah: 'I pray to my Lord alone; I set up no partner with Him.' (*al-Jinn*: 20)⁽¹⁾

Then Allah *the Almighty* says: 'I have no control over any harm or good that may befall you.' (*al-Jinn*: 21) In the chapter in question, we note that He *the Almighty* repeats the word '*Rashad*' (the Right Path) four times. We find this in the verses reading: 'That gives guidance to the right path...[2]' (*al-Jinn*: 2); '...or whether their Lord intends to guide them' (*al-Jinn*: 10); '...have found wise guidance' (*al-Jinn*: 14); and 'I have no control over any harm or good that may befall you.' (*al-Jinn*: 21) Someone may ask, 'Why does He *Glorified is He* not say, "Say, Indeed, I do not possess for you [the power of] harm or benefit"?' The jinn who listened to the Quran and said: 'We have heard a wondrous Quran, [1] that gives guidance to the right path... [2]' (*al-Jinn*: 2) did not strive after any worldly benefits. Rather, they sought the Spiritual Guidance and the Right Path. The word 'guidance' is contrary to the word 'error'.

If we say the same verses in question refer to the disbelievers of Mecca, then Allah *Glorified is He* commands Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to say to the polytheists of the Arabs, 'I am in no position to cause you any harm regarding your religion or worldly life or bring you benefit as it is Allah Alone who is in position to do all that.'

Allah *Glorified is He* then says: 'Say, "No one can protect me from Allah."' (*al-Jinn*: 22) None gives protection except Him *Glorified is He* and no one can be helped against Him. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'Say, [O

(1) See *Al-Khazin, Lubab At-Ta'wil Fi Ma'ani At-Tanzil*, 4/352; *Al-Baghawi, Tafsir*, 5/163; and *Ash-Shawkani, Fath Al-Qadir*, 5/371.

Muhammad], “Have you considered: whether Allah should cause my death and those with me or have mercy upon us, who can protect the disbelievers from a painful punishment?”” (*al-Mulk*: 28) and ‘Say, “In whose hand is the realm of all things - and He protects while none can protect against Him - if you should know?”’ (*al-Mu’minun*: 88)

In this regard, Allah *Glorified is He* relates that Satan said to the disbelievers: ‘...and indeed, I am your protector.’ (*al-Anfal*: 48) A person seeks the protection of someone else who is powerful only when s/he is unable to protect him/herself.

It is as if Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘If I swerve from what Allah sent to me, none can protect me against Him and prevent His punishment. Then he said: ‘I have no refuge except in Him.’ (*al-Kahf*: 27) The Arabic word ‘*Multahada*’ (refuge) is mentioned twice in the Quran. It occurs in the aforementioned verse and in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘And recite, [O Muhammad], what has been revealed to you of the Book of your Lord. There is no changer of His words, and never will you find in other than Him a refuge.’ (*al-Kahf*: 27) It is as if Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘I will not find any refuge in other than Allah if I do not follow what I came with. It is also said that the word ‘*Multahad*’ means a passageway that looks like a vault. The same word is derived from ‘*Lahd*’ which is a rectangular crevice on the side of a grave facing the *Qibla* in which a dead person is buried.

إِلَّا بَلَّغَا مِنْ اللَّهِ وَرِسَالَتِهِ وَمَنْ يَعِصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ، فَإِنَّ لَهُ
نَارَ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدًا فِيهَا أَبَدًا



**I only deliver [what I receive] from God – only His messages.’ Whoever disobeys God and His Messenger will have Hell’s Fire as his permanent home [23]
(The Quran, *al-Jinn*: 23)**

What safeguards Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* from the Punishment of Allah is only conveying the Message revealed to him. That

is all what he should do; he is no in the position to harm or bring benefit to his people, for Guidance and misguidance depends on Allah *the Almighty* Alone.

Some exegetes say that the Arabic word *Ella* consists of two particles: *En* and *la* (unless). Thus, the meaning is that none can protect him *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* against Allah *Glorified is He* if he does not impart His Messages. He *peace and blessings be upon him* is responsible for delivering the Divine Message. So, when the disbelievers of Mecca tried to make a compromise with him, he said to his paternal uncle Abu Taleb, 'My uncle, by Allah, if they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left one (as a compromise) to renounce such a matter, I would never waive it till Allah has made it predominate or caused me to perish in its cause.'⁽¹⁾

Allah *the Almighty* mentions the word 'message' in the plural form, as in His saying in which He praises those who convey His Messages: 'Those who deliver the messages of Allah and fear Him, and do not fear anyone but Allah; and Allah is sufficient to take account' (*al-Ahzab*: 39); 'And he turned away from them and said, "O my people, I had certainly conveyed to you the messages of my Lord and advised you."' (*al-A'raf*: 93) The plural word 'messages' denotes the commands, prohibitions, laws and obligations which constitute the Divine Message.

Then Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger will have Hell's Fire as his permanent home.' (*al-Jinn*: 23) Disobedience here does not denote committing sins. It means the lack of belief in Allah, His Scriptures, Messages and Prophets. Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was narrated to have said, 'All [the members of] my *ummah* except for those who refuse.' The Companions asked, 'Who will refuse, Allah's Messenger?' He said, 'Whoever obeys me will enter paradise, while those who disobey me will refuse.'⁽²⁾

(1) See Ibn Hisham, *As-Sira An-Nabawiyya*, 1/266; Al-Bayhaqi, *Dala'il An-Nubuwwa*, Hadith no. 66; As-Suhayli, *Ar-Rawd Al-Unuf*, 3/10; and Ibn Sayyid An-Nas, *'Uyun Al-Athar*, 1/118.

(2) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him. See Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, Hadith no. 7280; and Al-Muhallib, *Al-Mukhtasar Al-Sahih*, Hadith no. 7280.

Therefore, whoever disobeys Allah *Glorified is He* and Messenger Muhammad Allah's peace and blessings be upon him concerning monotheism: '...will have Hell's Fire as his permanent home.' (*al-Jinn*: 23) This means that those who disobey Him regarding His commands and prohibitions, and disbelieve in Him and in Messenger Muhammad and deny His Messages will abide in hell forever.

In this connection, He *the Almighty* says: 'Indeed, those who disbelieve and die, while they are disbelievers - upon them will be the curse of Allah and of the angels and the people, all together. They will abide eternally therein. The punishment will not be lightened for them, nor will they be reprieved.' (*al-Baqara*: 161-162)

Here, Allah *the Almighty* talks about the disbelievers' punishment in hell. This very punishment is eternal and unceasing. Eternal residence in hell is emphasized only in the verse reading: 'Whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger will have Hell's Fire as his permanent home.' (*al-Jinn*: 23). The adjective 'permanent' gives more meaning than the verb 'abide'. The Quran is the literal Words of Allah *Glorified is He* and every Word therein is exact and meaningful; there is no redundancy or repetition what so ever in the Quran. Thus, the adjective 'permanent' means that abiding in hell is endless.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا رَأَوْا مَا يُوعَدُونَ فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ أَضْعَفُ نَاصِرًا وَأَقَلُّ عَدَدًا ﴿٢٤﴾

When they are confronted by what they have been warned about, they will realize who has the weaker protector and the smaller number [24] (The Quran, *al-Jinn*: 24)

Allah *Glorified is He* asserts in this verse that the disbelievers will see hell. In another verse, He *the Almighty* says: 'And the criminals will see the Fire and will be certain that they are to fall therein.' (*al-Kahf*: 53) However, in another verse He *the Almighty* says: '...and we will gather them on the Day of Resurrection [fallen] on their faces – blind.' (*al-Isra*': 97) The one who ponders on these verses finds that blindness occurs once the disbelievers are resurrected from their graves so that they will be humiliated and confused. Afterwards, they regain their eyesight to experience the forms of punishment

ordained for them. Thus, He *the Almighty* humiliates the disbelievers in the case of their eyesight and blindness. He *Glorified is He* says in another verse: '...until, when they see that which they were promised - either punishment [in this world] or the Hour [of resurrection] - they will come to know who is worst in position and weaker in soldiers.' (*Maryam: 75*)

In the verse in question, Allah *the Almighty* warns the disbelievers against hellfire. When He *the Almighty* makes a threat, He is fully Able to carry it out and nothing can impede its fulfillment, a fact which is clear in His saying: 'Indeed, what you are promised is coming, and you will not cause failure [to Allah].' (*al-An'am: 134*) Thus, none is able to prevent Him *Glorified is He* from fulfilling His Promise or carrying out His threat. No one can overpower Him, for He is the Omnipotent.

With regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...they will realize who has the weaker protector and the smaller number' (*al-Jinn: 24*), it means that they will know who has the weaker helpers; are they the disbelievers of Mecca or the believers? Further, the smaller number means that they have no supporters in the Hereafter. It is worth mentioning that the polytheists used to taunt Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and the believers with the lack of helpers and their small number. So, He *the Almighty* says: '...they will realize who has the weaker protector and the smaller number.' (*al-Jinn: 24*) This is an explicit threat aimed at those who know about the Message of Islam and reject it.

The polytheists compare their might with that of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and rely upon it greatly. In this regard, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Close friends, that Day, will be enemies to each other, except for the righteous.' (*az-Zukhruf: 67*) So, on the Day of Judgment, the close friends will be enemies to one another and dissociate from one another except for the righteous. In the same connection, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '[And they should consider that] when those who have been followed disassociate themselves from those who followed [them], and they [all] see the punishment, and cut off from them are the ties [of relationship], [166] Those who followed will say, "If only we had another turn [at worldly life] so we could disassociate ourselves from them as they have disassociated themselves

from us.” Thus will Allah show them their deeds as regrets upon them. And they are never to emerge from the Fire. [167]’ (*al-Baqara*: 166-167)

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* says:

قُلْ إِن أَدْرِيٓ أَقَرِيبٌ مَّا تُوعَدُونَ أَمْ يَجْعَلُ لَهُ رَبِّيٓ أَمَدًا ﴿٢٥﴾

Say, ‘I do not know whether what you have been warned about is near, or whether a distant time has been appointed for it by my Lord’ [25] (The Quran, *al-Jinn*: 25)

Here, the Arabic particle *en* denotes negation, so the meaning is that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* does not know whether the eternal punishment against which Allah *the Almighty* warns is imminent or distant.

With regard to His saying: ‘...or whether a distant time has been appointed for it by my Lord’ (*al-Jinn*: 25), the Arabic word *Amad* means a distant time. It occurs in the Quran four times, as in the verse reading: ‘...and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened’ (*al-Hadid*: 16); and ‘On the Day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil, it shall wish that between it and that (evil) there were a long duration of time...’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 30).

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

عَلِمُ الْغَيْبِ فَلَا يُظْهِرُ عَلَىٰ غَيْبِهِٗ أَحَدًا ﴿٢٦﴾

He is the One who knows what is hidden [26] (The Quran, *al-Jinn*: 26)

The unseen is all that is known by Allah *Glorified is He* Alone. He is the Knower of the unseen and He only informs those whom He selects from mankind about it. In this vein, He *the Almighty* says: ‘And with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him. And He knows what is on the land and in the sea. Not a leaf falls but that He knows it. And no grain is there within the darkness of the earth and no moist or dry [thing] but that it is [written] in a clear record.’ (*al-An‘am*: 59)

Allah *Glorified is He* does not grant the key of the unseen to any of His creatures. The absolute unseen is what all creatures do not know. As regards the mysteries of the universe, they are not classified as unseen because even if they are hidden from some people, they are known to others. The saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: ‘...and He does not disclose His [knowledge of the] unseen to anyone’ (*al-Jinn*: 26) means that He *Glorified is He* does not let any of His creatures know about the unseen. In this connection, He *the Almighty* says: ‘...and when she informed [another] of it and Allah showed it to him, he made known part of it and ignored a part.’ (*at-Tahrim*: 3) This verse means that He *the Almighty* informed Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* that Hafsa *Allah be pleased with her* told 'Aisha *Allah be pleased with her* about the secret which he confided to her.

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* excepts specific creatures of His from not knowing the unseen, saying:

إِلَّا مَنِ ارْتَضَىٰ مِنْ رَسُولٍ فَإِنَّهُ يَسْلُكُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهِ رَصَدًا ﴿٢٧﴾

He does not disclose it except to a messenger of His choosing.

He sends watchers to go in front and behind [27]

(The Quran, *al-Jinn*: 27)

According to this verse, Allah *Glorified is He* excludes His selected Messengers from not knowing some unseen matters. They did not know about the unseen by themselves; rather, He *the Almighty* informed them of special, unseen things which could function as miracles for them and their followers. So, He *the Almighty* allows His Prophets to know about some unseen things and preserve them with Angels who, in turn, protect these unseen matters from devilish whispers and confusions.

Allah *the Almighty* protects the heavenly Revelations He sends down upon His Prophets from the jinn for two reasons: to prevent the jinn from eavesdropping on the Divine Revelations and conveying them to soothsayers, and to enable the Prophets to communicate these Revelations to people free from the satanic tampering and confusion.

Thus, Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is informed about the unseen, but not a knower of the unseen, as Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Say, [O Muhammad], “I do not tell you that I have the depositories [containing the provision] of Allah or that I know the unseen, nor do I tell you that I am an angel. I only follow what is revealed to me.”’ (*al-An‘am*: 50) So, he *peace and blessings be upon him* disproves his knowledge of the unseen.

Someone may ask, 'What about the future matters and events that he *peace and blessings be upon him* told us about?' The answer is that this is not a form of knowing the unseen, as it is He *the Almighty* Who told him *peace and blessings be upon him* about these future events. An example of this is His saying: ‘That is from the news of the unseen which We reveal to you, [O Muhammad]. And you were not with them when they cast their pens as to which of them should be responsible for Mary. Nor were you with them when they disputed.’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 44) Hence, it is He *Glorified is He* Who informed him *peace and blessings be upon him* of these stories which were among the unseen. This constitutes a penetration into the knowledge of the past. As regards future events, they are hidden from you through the barrier of the future.

Allah *Glorified is He* endows some of His creatures with knowledge about some unseen things. The Quran contains a lot of unseen things that later came true. He *the Almighty* bestowed upon Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* some of the unseen knowledge and specified those who could learn about some unseen things, saying: ‘He does not disclose it except to a messenger of His choosing...’ (*al-Jinn*: 27).

However, this blessing is not exclusive to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* because he is a role model and whoever imitates him will have some of these Divine blessings. When the people notice this, they will know that when a person models him/herself on him *peace and blessings be upon him* Allah *the Almighty* grants him/her special endowments.

Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘And with Him are the keys of the unseen; none knows them except Him...’ (*al-An‘am*: 59). He *Glorified is He* did not give the keys of the unseen to anyone. As for the pious people, they receive their special endowments from Him, but they do not have the keys of the unseen.

Although Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* told us about unseen things, we should not say that he knows the unseen because it is Allah *the Almighty* who informed him about the unseen things. So, no one knows the unseen of his/her own accord.

As for the absolute unseen is what is known by Allah *Glorified is He Alone*. In this regard, once Messenger of Allah *peace and blessings be upon him* was asked about the appointed time of the Hour, he said, 'The one who is asked about it has no idea like the enquirer.'⁽¹⁾

Allah *the Almighty* then says: '...He sends watchers to go in front and behind him.' (*al-Jinn*: 27) He *Glorified is He* protected Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* from the jinn's attempted eavesdropping on the Divine Revelations. The object pronoun 'him' here refers to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Now, why does He *Glorified is He* mention the front and back directions in particular? The answer is that mentioning some of these directions implies the remaining ones. It is said that whenever He *the Almighty* sent a Prophet, Satan used to come to that Prophet in the form of an Angel to make some satanic suggestions to him, whereupon He *Glorified is He* sent a group of the Angels as guards to protect that Prophet from devils and the jinn. Allah *Glorified is He* is in charge of preserving the Quran by guarding the sky with the Angels who used to deter devils from listening secretly to the Divine Revelations.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* concludes the chapter of *al-Jinn*, saying:

لَيَعْلَمَنَّ أَن قَدْ أَبْلَغُوا رِسَالَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَأَحَاطَ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ وَأَخْصَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ عَدَدًا ﴿٢٨﴾

To ensure that each of His messengers delivers his Lord's message: He knows all about them, and He takes account of everything [28] (The Quran, *al-Jinn*: 28)

This verse means that sending watchers is in order for Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to know that the previous Prophets communicated the Messages of their Lord and that Jibril (Gabriel) conveyed to him the

(1) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him. See Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 50 and 4777; and Muslim, Sahih, Hadith no. 8, 9 and 10.

Messages of his Lord as well. But for the guarding Angels, who repelled devils and jinn, they would divulge the Divine Revelations to the soothsayers, and there would be no distinction between them and the Prophets. In this way, the Prophets would not have the advantage of miracles and none would accept their Calls. Thus, the heavenly Messages were conveyed and protected against additions and decreases.

The verse in question is interpreted in many ways. It is said that it means that in order for Satan to know that the Prophets conveyed Allah's Messages protected from his whispers and the insertions of the jinn. Further, the attempts at eavesdropping failed as Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...He knows all about them...' (*al-Jinn*: 28). The jinn have no way out to escape from Allah *the Almighty*. This Attribute of All-encompassing requires Allah's Knowledge and Control over the jinn and devils.

He *the Almighty* knows best all the affairs of the Prophets and nothing concerning them is hidden from Him. His Knowledge encompasses all what is related to the Prophets, Angels and all the creatures. It encompasses the Ordinances and Laws with which the Prophets came with.

As for His saying: '...and He takes account of everything.' (*al-Jinn*: 28), it means that Allah *the Almighty* has enumerated His creatures and knows what He has created. His Knowledge covers even the weights of atoms and mustards and everything is enumerated by Him.

The Arabic word '*Adada*' is put in the accusative as a circumstantial expression or as a cognate accusative. Hence, nothing is hidden from Allah, be it much, little, big or small. He *the Almighty* knows the numbers of the drops of water, grains of sand, tree leaves and the foam of seas. At this point, the chapter of *al-Jinn* comes to an end. It shakes feelings and hearts and talks about the invisible world. We do not care much about the realm of Angels as we can feel secure regarding them. By contrast, we are apprehensive about the world of the jinn. As the chapter illustrates, the jinn search for the True Religion and find it in the Quran which they listen to directly from Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. They immediately become Preachers for their fellow jinn.

the chapter of

al-Muzzammil

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

The chapter of *al-Muzzammil* ⁽¹⁾.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمَرْمِلُ ﴿١﴾ قُمْ أَيْلًا إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿٢﴾
نِصْفَهُ أَوْ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيلًا ﴿٣﴾ أَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْآنَ تَرْتِيلًا ﴿٤﴾

**You [Prophet], enfolded in your cloak! [1] stay up
throughout the night, all but a small part of it [2] half, or a
little less [3] or a little more; recite the Quran slowly and
distinctly [4] (The Quran, *al-Muzzammil*: 1 - 4)**

Allah *the Almighty* addresses Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to get him nearer to Him. A worshipper should stand before Him *Glorified is He* and invoke Him humbly and submissively. But here it is He *the Almighty* Who orders him *peace and blessings be upon him* to spend some period of the night performing acts of worship. In another verse, He *the Almighty* says: ‘And from [part of] the night, pray with it as additional [worship] for you; it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a praised station.’ (*al-Isra*’: 79)

The Arabic word *Hujud* means 'sleep', and the verb '*Tahajjad*' means to stay awake at night. The obligation of performing the late-night acts of worship is peculiar to the Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*, but it is not a religious obligation imposed on the *ummah*. Though this peculiarity concerning him is regarded as an additional religious duty imposed upon him, he had the option of performing it at any time during the night. What is important is that he performs this act of worship.

(1) The chapter of *al-Muzzammil* is the chapter seventy three according to the order of the *Mushaf* and it was revealed in Mecca. According to Ibn 'Abbas and 'Ata', the last verse of this chapter was revealed in Medina. Its verses number 20, and it was revealed after the chapter of *al-Qalam*.

In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And those who spend [part of] the night to their Lord prostrating and standing [in prayer].' (*al-Furqan*: 64) When a person takes refuge in his/her house after a day of hard work and remembers the bestowals of Allah *Glorified is He* upon him/her, s/he turns to Him by giving Him due thanks and prostrating in prayer during the night.

It does not mean that one must spend the whole night performing acts of worship. Rather, one should devote part of the night to the acts of worship when s/he has enough energy to perform them. In this regard, Ibn 'Abbas is narrated to have said, 'Whoever observes two units of prayer or more after the Evening Prayer is like the one who has spent the night prostrating to Allah in prayer.' Allah *the Almighty* wills you to praise and glorify Him before you sleep and contemplate His Favours upon you, thereby you thank Him.

The Arabic word *Al-Muzzammil* refers to the one who wraps himself in clothing. In this regard, Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* wrapped himself in clothing and said, 'Wrap me,' when he met Jibril (Gabriel) for the first time.⁽¹⁾ The word '*Al muzzammil*' also refers to the one who carries the banner of Prophethood. It is as if Allah *the Almighty* says to him *peace and blessings be upon him* 'You, who carry the responsibility of the Islamic Call, fulfill it, for it is a great matter.' He *the Almighty* does not address him *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* here saying, 'O Prophet!' because the address in the verse in question was at the start of the Divine Revelations. Afterwards, he was addressed as a Prophet and a Messenger.

Concerning the reason behind the revelation of this chapter in question, it is related that the people of Quraysh met at their gathering place to plot against Messenger Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*. He heard of their plot and grieved greatly. Then he wrapped himself up with a sheet and slept, whereupon Gabriel came to him with the saying of Allah: 'You

(1) Jabir ibn 'Abdullah *Allah be pleased with him* narrated that Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'While I was walking down, I heard a voice coming from the horizon, whereupon I raised my head upwards and noticed the Angel who came to me in the cave of Hira' sitting on a throne between the heaven and the earth. I was so frightened and returned home saying, 'Wrap me up! Wrap me up.' They covered me with a sheet.' See *Al-Khazin, Lubab At-Ta'wil*, 4/355; *Ibn Al-Jawzi, Zad Al-Masir*, 4/352; and *At-Tabari, Jame' Al-Bayan*, 23/400.

[Prophet], enfolded in your cloak! [1] Stay up throughout the night, all but a small part of it, [2] half, or a little less, [3] or a little more; recite the Quran slowly and distinctly. [4]' (*al-Muzzammil*: 1-4) It is as if He *the Almighty* says to him, 'Do not grieve. You will find solace in your spiritual closeness to Me. Rise and perform prayer to eliminate your sorrow and troubles.'

Therefore, Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* used to say to Bilal, 'Soothe us with it [prayer].' He *peace and blessings be upon him* always found comfort in prayer which used to relieve him of his worries and hardships. Due to his indescribable love for Allah, obedience and devotions became desirable and favourable for him. Those who perform prayer lovingly and with pleasure get rid of their concerns and problems. To have a strong affection for your religious obligations, means that you have tasted the pleasure of your obedience.

Allah *the Almighty* says: 'You [Prophet], enfolded in your cloak! [1] Stay up throughout the night, all but a small part of it, [2]' (*al-Muzzammil*: 1-2). Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was in the habit of offering late-night supererogatory prayers to the point that his feet were swollen. When he was asked why he was doing this though Allah *Glorified is He* forgave him his past and future sins completely, he accounted for this saying, 'Should I not be a grateful servant?'

So, He *the Almighty* asked him to spend part of the night performing prayer and other acts of worship. It is as if He *Glorified is He* said to him *peace and blessings be upon him* 'Leave your bed and your wrapping. Rise, stand before Me, spend two thirds of the night offering supererogatory prayer and sleep for the remaining third.' Here arises a question, which is, 'Is this directive aimed at the Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* alone? Or does it include the Muslim *Ummah* as well?' The directive includes the *ummah* as well.

'Aisha was narrated to have said, 'I used to make a mat for Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in order for him to observe prayer on it during the night. This became on people's lips. People gathered at Messenger Muhammad's house and he got out angrily to meet them. He was merciful towards them and feared that late-night prayer should be prescribed upon them. He said, 'People, do of the acts of worship according to your abilities. Allah

never gets weary of reward so that you feel bored with good deeds. The best deeds are those which last longer.' At this moment, Allah *the Almighty* revealed the verses reading: 'You [Prophet], enfolded in your cloak! [1] Stay up throughout the night, all but a small part of it, [2] half, or a little less, [3] or a little more; recite the Quran slowly and distinctly. [4]' (*al-Muzzammil*: 1-4) People were in the habit of performing night prayer to the degree that a man used to tie a rope and take hold of it. They continued this way for eight months. As people were sincere in their pursuit to gain the pleasure of Allah, He had Mercy on them, kept obligatory prayers mandatory and made late-night prayer optional.⁽¹⁾

He *the Almighty* then says: 'Half, or a little less, [3] or a little more; recite the Quran slowly and distinctly. [4]' (*al-Muzzammil*: 3-4) He *Glorified is He* orders Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to perform supererogatory prayer for half the night, for one third of it or for two thirds of it. So, He *the Almighty* grants him *peace and blessings be upon him* three options: performing night prayer for half the night, doing so for one third of it or for two thirds of it. He *peace and blessings be upon him* had the choice of adopting either of these options.

Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and a group of Muslims used to offer late-night prayer according to these options. This caused them some difficulty to the point that a Muslim sometimes were not aware of how many units of prayer he observed or how much time remained of the night period. They used to spend the whole night performing optional prayer till Allah *Glorified is He* facilitated this act of worship at the end of the chapter in question. Once 'Aisha was asked about Messenger Muhammad's late-night prayer, she said, 'Do you not recite the chapter reading: 'You [Prophet], enfolded in your cloak!' (*al-Muzzammil*: 1)? The enquirer replied, 'Yes.' 'Aisha said, 'Allah imposed night-late prayer at the beginning of this chapter. Messenger Muhammad and his Companions kept offering late-night prayer [according to the chapter] for a whole year. At the conclusion, this act of worship was reduced and late-night prayer became voluntary.'⁽²⁾

(1) *This Hadith is narrated on the authority of 'Aisha Allah be pleased with her. See Ibn Abu Hatim, Tafsir, 19010; At-Tabari, Jame' Al-Bayan, 23/359; and Al-Qasimi, Mahasin At-Ta'wil, 9/345.*

(2) *See Al-Wahid, At-Tafsir Al-Wasit, 1250; Al-Qurtubi, Jame' Ahkam Al-Quran, 19/34; As-Suyuti, Ad-Durr Al-Mathur, 8/312; Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 24269; and Muslim, Sahih, Hadith no. 746.*

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...recite the Quran slowly and distinctly.’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 4), it is a command to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to spend the night performing acts of worship and reciting the Quran slowly and distinctly. It is as if He *the Almighty* is saying to him, ‘Have presence of mind and heart while you are performing prayer and reciting the Quran. Meditate on the truths and meanings of the Quran. Reflect over the promises of reward and paradise made to the believers, the warning against the hell and the bad destination directed to the disbelievers and the stories of the previous Prophets and nations.’ So, the purpose of the slow, measured recitation of the Quran is the presence of mind and heart at the recitation of the Quran.

When ‘Anas ibn Malik *Allah be pleased with him* was asked, ‘How did Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* recite the Quran?’ he said, ‘He used to elongate the sounds.’ Then ‘Anas recited [elongating the sounds] Allah’s saying: ‘In the Name of Allah, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy.’ (*al-Fatiha*: 1)⁽¹⁾

The Quran is not only revealed to be recited, but it is also revealed to endure and remain till the Day of Judgment. It was also revealed so that we understand and comply with its rules, and fulfill our duties towards Allah *the Almighty* and people's duties and rights. The Quran is revealed in order for us to act according to it, heed its warnings, learn its lessons and follow its dos and donots. All of this materializes by contemplating and reciting it in a measured, rhythmic manner. We should recite it leisurely and articulate the sounds distinctly so that listeners can enumerate these sounds. The slow, modulated recitation of the Quran is a must. It is sinful for a person to desist from it.

So, contemplating the Quran is realized by reciting it leisurely and rhythmically. In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘Then do they not reflect upon the Quran, or are there locks upon [their] hearts?’ (*Muhammad*: 24) ‘[This is] a blessed Book which we have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], that they might reflect upon its verses and that those of understanding would be reminded.’ (*Sad*: 29) Therefore, one must comprehend and reflect on the Quran.

(1) See Ahmad, *Musnad*, Hadith no.13050; Al-Bukhari, *Khalq Af'al Al-'Ibad*, 1/73; Al-Hakim, *Mustadrak*, Hadith no. 852; Al Bayhaqi, *As-Sunnan As-Saghir*, Hadith no. 978; and Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, Hadith no. 5046.

Allah *Glorified is He* then says:

إِنَّا سَنُلْقِي عَلَيْكَ قَوْلًا ثَقِيلًا ﴿٥﴾ إِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ اللَّيْلِ هِيَ أَشَدُّ وَطْأً وَأَقْوَمُ قِيلًا ﴿٦﴾
 إِنَّ لَكَ فِي النَّهَارِ سَبْحًا طَوِيلًا ﴿٧﴾

We shall send a momentous message down to you [5] Night prayer makes a deeper impression and sharpens words [6] you are kept busy for long periods of the day [7] (The Quran, *al-Muzzammil*: 5 - 7)

Allah *Glorified is He* prepared Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* for this major mission, namely, bearing the Message of Islam. He *the Almighty* readied him for carrying the banner of Islam by the performance of late-night optional prayer and spiritual closeness. Spending part of the night in optional prayer provided him *peace and blessings be upon him* with the necessary energy to shoulder his great responsibility, namely, the Divine Way of Guidance and notifying people about it. The phrase 'a momentous message' refers to the Divine Revelations. He *Glorified is He* does not say, 'We will reveal to you a momentous message'; rather, He says: 'We will send...' (*al-Muzzammil*: 5) because the verb 'sent' matches the word 'momentous message' and connotes hardship and strength.

Receiving the Divine Revelations was so difficult for Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Sometimes his forehead sweated profusely owing to his reactions.⁽¹⁾ Once the revelation departs, these symptoms end. One of the Companions related that he once was sitting beside Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and placing his knee over his. Thereupon, the Divine Revelations came down upon him *peace and blessings be upon him* and the Companion felt as if his knee was as heavy as a mountain. Even when the Divine Revelations came while he *peace and blessings be upon him* was riding his camel, the camel would kneel down.⁽²⁾

(1) 'Aisha was narrated to have said, 'Sometimes I noticed [divine revelations] being sent down upon him (Messenger Muhammad) while his forehead was sweating heavily.' See *Al-Jawhari, Sharh Al-Muwat'*, Hadith no. 743; *Al-Baghawi, Sharh As-Sunna*, 3737.

(2) Asma' Bint Yazid was narrated to have said, 'While I was holding the rein of Al-'Adba, the she-camel of Messenger Muhammad, the chapter of al-Ma'ida was revealed to him all at once. It was so unbearable for the she-camel that its neck was about to bruise.' See *Ahmad, Musnad*, 6/455; and *Ibn Rahawayh, Musnad*, Hadith no. 2298.

Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* used to get so exhausted after receiving the Divine Revelations. So when he received it for the first time, he returned quickly to Lady Khadija and said to her, 'Wrap me up. Wrap me up,' as if he had a fever.

Since The Divine Revelations were exhausting and difficult for him *peace and blessings be upon him* they stop temporarily in order for him to have some rest and regain his energy. After he became relaxed and found pleasure in the Divine Revelations he received, he longed for more fresh Divine Revelations.

Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Did we not expand for you, [O Muhammad], your breast? And we removed from you your burden which had weighed upon your back.' (*ash-Sharh*: 1-3) The word 'burden' here refers to the burden which Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* used to bear when he received the Divine Revelations. He *Glorified is He* willed to drive away this burden and to comfort him *peace and blessings be upon him*. So, the Divine Revelations stopped temporarily till his nerves were calmed. Afterwards, he used to long for more fresh Divine Revelations after he found solace and pleasure in what he received. Your yearning for something makes you overlook any difficulties in the way of getting it.

The fact that Divine Revelations ceased for some time prompted the polytheists to say, 'Muhammad has been abandoned by his Lord.' So, in the case of the intermission of the Revelation, the polytheists recognized that Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* had a God while in case of receiving it they claimed that he was a liar and a poet. Thereupon the chapter of *ad-Duha* was revealed. It reads: 'By the morning brightness [1] and [by] the night when it covers with darkness, [2] Your Lord has not taken leave of you, [O Muhammad], nor has He detested [you]. [3] And the Hereafter is better for you than the first [life]. [4] And your Lord is going to give you, and you will be satisfied. [5]' (*ad-Duha*: 1-5)

The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'And the Hereafter is better for you than the first [life]' (*ad-Duha*: 4) could mean that the resumption of the Divine Revelations will be better than their beginning. It is as if He *Glorified is He* says to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*, 'This is because you received them for the first time and was exhausted and overburdened by

them. Afterwards you will call for and wait for them longingly. You will be ready for receiving them and able to endure them.' So, when he *peace and blessings be upon him* received Divine Revelations again, his forehead did not sweat profusely as it happened the first time because his longing for them overcame fatigue and stress. The saying of Allah: 'We shall send a momentous message down to you.' (*ad-Duha*: 5) indicates that the Divine Revelations which Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* received need his strenuous efforts to notify, teach and put them into practice. Likewise, He *Glorified is He* describes the Day of Judgment, saying: 'Indeed, these [disbelievers] love the immediate and leave behind them a grave Day.' (*al-Insan*: 27) The Day of Judgment will be a serious Day on grounds of the tremendous events that will occur on it.

Muslim exegetes have other views concerning the meaning of Allah's saying: '...a momentous message...' (*ad-Duha*: 5). They said it is heavy because it contains religious obligations and rules. It is heavy in the Balance on the Day of Resurrection. It is imposing, sublime and sober, not mentioning the trivial matters.

He *the Almighty* then says: 'Night prayer makes a deeper impression and sharpens words.' (*ad-Duha*: 6) Here, He *the Almighty* commands Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to supplicate to Him to receive His Blessings and Mercy at the time when people sleep and rest. Unlike the one who does not wake up to perform late-night prayer, whoever stays awake during the night and imitates him *peace and blessings be upon him* will receive His Blessings and Mercy. So, late-night prayer epitomizes strength of faith and spiritual energy. As Prophet Muhammad's task surpassed all people's tasks, his portion of worship in the late-night prayer was greater. As his burdens were numerous, he was always in dire need for Allah's Help and Care.

The phrase *Nash'at Al-Layl* denotes the night period. Each hour of the night is called *Nashi'a* (an ensuing hour) as it ensues from the one preceding it. Any optional prayer a person performs after the Evening Prayer is called *Nash'at Al-Layl*, that is, the prayer observed during the night.⁽¹⁾ This phrase is

(1) In his *Tafsir*, Mujahid ibn Jabr relates that Al-Hasan said, 'Any optional prayer a person performs after the Evening Prayer is called *Nash'at Al-Layl*.' See Mujahid, *Tafsir*, 1/679.

said to refer to the person who performs optional prayer during the night because s/he does so at any time during the night. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* gives such a person three options, saying: ‘You [Prophet], enfolded in your cloak! [1] Stay up throughout the night, all but a small part of it, [2] half, or a little less, [3] or a little more; recite the Quran slowly and distinctly. [4]’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 1-4) So the person can choose the optimal and more suitable time to observe late-night prayer. Here, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘Night prayer makes a deeper impression...’ (*ad-Duha*: 6). Unlike the daytime, the night period is an opportune time to offer optional prayer and invoking Allah *Glorified is He*. At night, the hearts become purer and serener enough to understand and contemplate the Quran and so are other senses like hearing and eyesight. The Arabic word *Wat’* may mean onerous, burdensome, arduous and so on. In this sense, the late-night prayer is tiring as the night is a time of repose for people.

The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...and sharpens words.’ (*ad-Duha*: 6) means that reciting the Quran in a measured, rhythmic way during the night is better and more effective because of the quietness and silence at that time. Besides, you recite the Quran in a correct way and away from the prying eyes of other people, which helps you avoid showing off.



When you invoke Allah *the Almighty* and recite the Quran during the night, you do so effectively and emotionally as it is calm and there is nothing that occupies you. So any act of worship you perform during the night is more energetic, more sincere and more prosperous than any other act of worship you observe in the daytime. As regards daytime, He *Glorified is He* says: ‘You are kept busy for long periods of the day.’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 7)

Daytime is a long period when you can meet your needs and do your daily routines. The Arabic word *Sabh* primarily denotes running and rotation. It also means swimming, sleep, lying down and stretching. So, the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: ‘You are kept busy for long periods of the day’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 7) means that the person has a protracted daytime period in which s/he can take some rest or sleep. So, s/he should assign the night period to the voluntary acts of worship.

The main daytime task of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* included conveying the Divine Message, teaching Muslims and fighting

against the enemies. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* prepared him for receiving the imposing Words and carrying the tremendous burden, namely, performing the late-night prayer and carrying his mission in the daytime. So, with regard to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* the daytime should be dedicated to doing the daily routines, but a great part of the night should be dedicated to prayer, the praising of Allah *the Almighty* and the measured recitation of the Quran.

Allah *Glorified is He* then says:


 وَأَذْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا

 رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَاتَّخِذْهُ وَكِيلًا

**So celebrate the name of your Lord and devote yourself
 wholeheartedly to Him [8] He is Lord of the east and west,
 there is no god but Him, so take Him as your Protector [9]
 (The Quran, *al-Muzzammil*: 8 - 9)**

Here, Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is commanded to glorify and praise his Lord Who legislated for you and helped you. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says, 'And remember your Lord within yourself in humility and in fear...' (*al-A'raf*: 205); and '...remember Allah with much remembrance.' (*al-Ahzab*: 41) There is a difference between Allah's saying: 'And remember your Lord much' (*Al-Imran*: 41) and 'remember Allah with much remembrance.' The imperative 'remember Allah' denotes religious obligations because He *the Almighty* is the only God whose Commands and Prohibitions are to be followed. As regards the imperative 'And remember your Lord', it reminds a person about the innumerable favours and bestowals which He *Glorified is He* confers upon him/her. So, everyone should glorify Him, for even if you do not love Him through your religious obligations, you have loved Him for His favours bestowed on you.

Glorifying Allah *the Almighty* is in two ways: glorify Him with humility and in awe. This is because you can remember someone else haughtily, but when it comes to Him *the Almighty* you have to glorify Him as a Creator and Benefactor with submission to His Lordship. Second, we should glorify Him

with awe because the more humility you show towards Him, the more honourable you will become. Thus, slavery to anyone other than Him *the Almighty* is detestable by the humans because it connotes enslavement and subjugation. Also a person who enslaves others is loathed because subjugating others is unfair and cruel. A slave's benefits go to his human master while slavery to Allah *the Almighty* enables you to get favours from Him. Therefore, when you perform late-night prayer, glorify your Lord and Creator and stand before Him humbly, sincerely and submissively.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: ‘...and devote yourself wholeheartedly to Him.’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 8) The Arabic word *At-Tabatul* means abstention from physical pleasures and seeking the favours of Allah. So, one should sincerely and devotedly worship Him *the Almighty* without paying attention to the mundane affairs. Therefore, the word *Tabatul* primarily means dedication and refrainment. In this sense, Maryam (Mary) is called *Al-Batul*, that is, ‘the one who dedicated herself to Allah.’

So, Allah’s saying: ‘...and devote yourself wholeheartedly to Him.’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 8) is a command to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to devote himself to the worship of Allah through abstention from physical gratifications. So, it seems that devotion follows abstention from physical pleasures, which needs self-restrain and self-discipline.

The Arabic word *Tabtil* (devotion) is a verbal noun put in the place of the verbal noun *Tabattul* (abstention). One devotes him/herself to Allah *the Almighty* when s/he has a thorough grasp of the fact that He *Glorified is He* is the Lord of the heavens and earth and He is the Owner of everything. Thus, He says afterwards: ‘He is Lord of the east and west, there is no god but Him, so take Him as your Protector.’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 9)

Allah *Glorified is He* is the Lord of the east and west. The recent scientific advancements help us understand the abovementioned verse more profoundly. As we know, every place on the earth has an east and west. We also know that when the sun rises in an area, it sets in another and vice versa. Each sunrise is followed by sunset and each sunset is accompanied by sunrise. Thus, we have two sunrises and two sunsets. More interestingly, every day, the sun has a rise

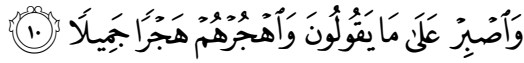
and setting that differ incessantly. In addition, a sunrise and sunset take place in every moment.

Allah *Glorified is He* is the Lord of the east and west and the Lord of night and day. This fact suits the previous verses reading: 'Night prayer makes a deeper impression and sharpens words-[6] you are kept busy for long periods of the day [7]' (*al-Muzzammil*: 6-7). In fact, sunrise and sunset have specific functions in the universe and they are the cause of the existence of the night and day. He *the Almighty* prescribed special tasks in the daytime that differ from that of the nighttime. So, we must act according to the Will of Allah *the Almighty* in this regard.

The verse reading: 'He is Lord of the east and west...' (*al-Muzzammil*: 9) recognizes the Lordship of Allah *Glorified is He*. Then comes His saying: '...there is no god but Him...' (*al-Muzzammil*: 9) to confirm His Oneness. There is no deity worthy of worship but Him. He is the Only God who deserves Lordship, Godhood and devoted worship. So, we should devote ourselves to Him entirely.

As Allah *the Almighty* is the Lord of sunrise and sunset which control the lives of the people and He is the Only One God who is worthy of worship, you have no choice but to take Him as a protector, as He says: '...so take Him as your Protector.' (*al-Muzzammil*: 9) 'And rely upon Allah. And sufficient is Allah as Disposer of affairs.' (*an-Nisa*': 81) Whatever capabilities and means you have, they are nothing if compared with that of Allah *the Almighty*. So you must rely upon Him *Glorified is He Alone* and take Him as a protector. By doing so, you should not be worried because He *the Almighty* protects you. So, you should leave the worldly life and: '...celebrate the name of your Lord and devote yourself wholeheartedly to Him.' (*al-Muzzammil*: 8) He *the Almighty* is the best Disposer of affairs. He is the Lord, the provider and the protector of all creatures, so you should take Him as your protector. You should rely upon Him *Glorified is He Alone*, and when you find yourself unable to accomplish something yourself, the Lord of the east and the west acts on your behalf.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:



**Patiently endure what they say, ignore them
politely [10] (The Quran, *al-Muzzammil*: 10)**

Allah *Glorified is He* prepares Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* for a great mission, namely, inviting his people to the embracement of Islam. He *the Almighty* knows that they will do much harm to him *peace and blessings be upon him* and thus He wills to prepare him Himself.

The Messenger is required to be a servant of Allah *the Almighty* Alone and to worship Him only. He is required to stay awake at night to perform prayer and invoke Him while other people are sleeping. Further, he is obliged to glorify his Lord and devote himself entirely to Him, recognizing that He is the Lord of the east and west and that there is no god but Him. Moreover, he *peace and blessings be upon him* and his *ummah* must rely upon Him as a disposer of their affairs.

Since Allah *Glorified is He* knows that the Messenger Muhammad's people will reject his Call as did the previous nations, He says to him: 'Patiently endure...' (*al-Muzzammil*: 10). He *peace and blessings be upon him* should endure their disbelief and offenses. So, when the Muslims were limited in number and powerless, they were ordered to be patient and tolerant. However, when they became powerful, they were commanded to fight and resist aggression. But the permission of fight does not abrogate the command of pardon and forgiveness. Rather, it is based on the principle that rulings can change according to their changing rationales. A ruling depends upon the presence and absence of its rationale.

So, Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is commanded to endure the disbelief of his people and their allegation that he is a sorcerer, poet, madman and soothsayer. In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And indeed, they do not call you untruthful, but it is the verses of Allah that the wrongdoers reject.' (*al-An'am*: 33) As his people deny that he is a Prophet sent from Allah *the Almighty* and that he receives the Divine Revelations, the previous Prophets met the same fate. This is supported by the verse reading: 'Then if they deny you, [O Muhammad] - so were messengers denied before

you, who brought clear proofs and written ordinances and the enlightening Scripture.' (*Al- 'Imran*: 184)

The previous Prophets came to their peoples with miracles and sacred Books that proved their truthfulness, yet these peoples denied all of this and persisted in their disbelief and denial. Hence, Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is commanded to be patient and not to be sad because of their allegations, slander and ridicule. Further, he is commanded to go on preaching to them and not to stop that whatever happens. In this connection, He *the Almighty* says: 'And certainly were Messengers denied before you, but they were patient over [the effects of] denial, and they were harmed until Our victory came to them. And none can alter the words of Allah. And there has certainly come to you some information about the [previous] Messengers.' (*al-An'am*: 34) The previous Prophets who were sent to specific peoples and in definite periods of time were received with denial and disbelief. As Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is the final Messenger whom Allah sent to all mankind and for all times, he will be confronted with the same denial and disbelief. Thus, he *peace and blessings be upon him* should be patient as He *the Almighty* chooses him to fulfill this huge mission and knows well that he is competent to carry it out. His people made serious accusations against him such as their allegation that he was a sorcerer, a soothsayer, a madman, a poet or a liar. He should not pay heed to these allegations.

Then Allah *the Almighty* says: '...ignore them politely.' (*al-Muzzammil*: 10) It is as if He *Glorified is He* says to him, 'If patience is hard on you, let it be gracious and let your avoidance of them be harmless.' The Arabic word *Hajr* means avoidance and separation. It connotes one's dislike for what causes severance of good relations between Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and his people. It also means that a person passes from a place to another and from a state to another. But here Allah *the Almighty* describes avoidance as 'polite', i.e. he should separate himself from them in a peaceful and harmless way despite their persecutions and harassments.

So, the polite avoidance which Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is to adopt as a policy towards his people at the start of the Islamic Call means to continue being tolerant towards them, not to invoke Allah

against them and to persist in preaching them. The books of Prophet Muhammad's biography assert that he *peace and blessings be upon him* suffered at the hands of his people, yet he said, 'O Allah! Guide my people [to the right path], for they do not know [the consequences of their error].'⁽¹⁾

It is narrated that Jibril (Gabriel) *peace be upon him* came to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and said to him, 'Allah has heard what your people said to you and their response. He has sent you the Angel of Mountains who waits for you to order him to punish them as you like.' The Angel of Mountains called and greeted me and then said, 'Muhammad, Allah has heard the words of your people. I am the Angel of Mountains. Your Lord has sent me in order that you command me to do whatever you like. If you would like me to make the two mountains collapse over them, I will do so.' Thereupon he *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'No, I hope that Allah will beget from them those who worship Allah and set up no partner with Him.'⁽²⁾

This stance is a remarkable token of Messenger Muhammad's mercy towards his people and the whole world, as Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds.' (*al-Anbiya*: 107) His people need his perfect manners, unbounded modesty, lovely behaviour, warm smiles and comforting looks. He *peace and blessings be upon him* should overlook the mistakes of his opponents and not to let himself be provoked by their foolish behaviours.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was deeply affected by the disbelief of his people as he strained every nerve to guide them to the straightway. Thus, Allah *the Almighty* says to him: 'So do not let yourself perish over them in regret. Indeed, Allah knows of what they do.' (*Fatir*: 8)

(1) *After Messenger Muhammad's right lower front tooth was broken and had a face wound at the battle of Uhud, the Companions were outraged and said, 'What about invoking Allah against them [the disbelievers of Mecca]?' Thereupon, Messenger Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said, 'I am not sent so as to curse others, but I am sent as a Caller and mercy. O Allah! Guide my people, for they do not know.' See Al-Bayhaqi, Shu'ab Al-Iman, Hadith no.1375.*

(2) *This Hadith is narrated on the authority of 'Aisha Allah be pleased with her. See Al-Fakahi, Akhbar Makka, 2634; Ibn Khuzayma, At-Tawhid, 1/110; Abu 'Awana, Al-Mustakhraj, Hadith no. 6902; and At-Tabarani, Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat, Hadith no.8902.*

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

وَذَرْنِي وَالْمُكَذِّبِينَ أُولِيَ النَّعْمَةِ وَمَهَلْهُمْ قَلِيلًا ﴿١١﴾

**And leave to Me those who deny the truth and live
in luxury. Bear with them for a little while [11]
(The Quran, *al-Muzzammil*: 11)**

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is commanded to leave the disbelievers of Mecca to Allah *the Almighty*. It is up to Him to punish them. It is He *the Almighty* Who know the deadline set for respiting and the appointed time for punishment. In a similar verse, He *the Almighty* says: 'Let them eat and enjoy themselves and be diverted by [false] hope, for they are going to know.' (*al-Hijr*: 3) The present form of the imperative *dhar* (leave) is *Yadhar* (to leave). Another verb that is used in the same way is *Da'* (leave), but it is said that Arabs no longer use the past form of both of these verbs except in one of the recitation of the verse reading: 'Your Lord has not forsaken you, nor has He become displeased.' (*ad-Duha*: 3)

So, the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'And leave to Me those who deny the truth and live in luxury. Bear with them for a little while' (*al-Muzzammil*: 11) means that it is up to Him *the Almighty* to deal with the disbelievers who lead a life of ease. Very often those who live in luxury and comfort pose a big obstacle in the way of the Islamic Call and the implementation of *Shari'a*. But what is the reason for this? This is because the Way of Allah places restrictions on their immoral lifestyles, and thus they fight relentlessly the preachers and those who call for adherence to the religious teachings. Those who lead comfortable lives are always engaged in disbelief and preventing other people from following Allah's Path. This is corroborated by His saying: 'And thus We have placed within every city the greatest of its criminals to conspire therein...' (*al-An'am*: 123).

Crime sometimes motivates a person to appropriate everything. That is why the powerful, habitual criminals try hard to inflict harm and commit immoralities. Furthermore, they diffuse vices throughout society simply because they cannot live except in milieu of corruption, bribery and wrongdoing. In this respect,

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘And We did not send into a city any warner except that its affluent said, “Indeed we, in that with which you were sent, are disbelievers.”’ (*Saba’*: 24)

Exegetes hold three different views regarding the meaning of: ‘... [those who] live in luxury...’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 11). It may refer to the people of Quraysh who vowed to feed the fighters who took part in the battle of Badr; the children of Al-Mughira ibn ‘Abdullah; or the notables of the people of Quraysh who used to deride Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

Those disbelievers who live luxuriously and disbelieve in the Prophets are the sinful people who commit all forms of corruption. Allah *Glorified is He* threatens them saying: ‘And leave to Me those who deny the truth and live in luxury. Bear with them for a little while.’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 11) This is a fateful, strong threat made against the affluent elite of the people of Quraysh. This is because the opulent elite were behind the frenzied, deviant campaign that was waged against Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and his Call.

He *the Almighty* says here: ‘...Bear with them for a little while.’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 11) Respiteing the disbelievers does not mean neglecting and ignoring them. It means that He *the Almighty* gives some time to them and suddenly inflicts the Punishment on them, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: ‘And for how many a city did I prolong enjoyment while it was committing wrong. Then I seized it, and to Me is the [final] destination.’ (*al-Hajj*: 48) Thus, He *Glorified is He* respites disbelievers and then punishes them. The verb ‘seized’ in the last verse suits Allah’s Power, Might and Avenge. Imagine how grave the Avenge of Allah is. Also, the same verb ‘seized’ connotes severity, vehemence and subdual. In this connection, He *the Almighty* says: ‘But those who deny Our signs - We will progressively lead them [to destruction] from where they do not know. [182] And I will give them time. Indeed, my plan is firm. [183]’ (*al-A‘raf*: 182-183) The Arabic word *Al-Imla’* means ‘respiting’ and this indicates that He *Glorified is He* does not punish the wicked people once they commit a sin. We see them cause a great deal of mischief and depravity in society and He *the Almighty* gives them time to be involved in more wrongdoing. Thus, the moment He decrees that they should be punished, they face an exemplary punishment.

Concerning the saying of Allah: ‘...Bear with them for a little while’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 11), some exegetes say that the respite mentioned here expired at the Battle of Badr because some of the eminent disbelievers of Mecca lived for a short time after this threat and were killed in this battle. Other exegetes state that the disbelievers' respite lasts throughout their lifetime because it is too little, just like an hour of the daytime, if compared with the Day of Judgment. This interpretation is well-founded as Allah *the Almighty* says afterwards:

إِنَّ لَدَيْنَا أَنْكَالًا وَجَحِيمًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَطَعَامًا ذَا غُصَّةٍ وَعَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿١٣﴾

**We have fetters, a blazing fire [12] food that chokes,
and agonizing torment in store for them [13]
(The Quran, *al-Muzzammil*: 12 - 13)**

Although Allah *the Almighty* granted disbelievers respite in this worldly life and then inflicted upon them punishment, like that which they faced at the battle of Badr, the severest punishment awaits them in the Hereafter in return for their denial of the Prophets and their Messages.

Here, He *the Almighty* shows to us the forms of punishment He prepared for disbelievers, saying: ‘We have fetters...’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 12). These fetters are the big, heavy shackles that keep tight. The shackles and fetters are a form of psychological punishment and humiliation for the shackled person. Those who disbelieved in Allah's verses stood in the way of His Religion and combated believers were given respite in the worldly life. But in the Hereafter, they are shackled and chained. They cannot free or save themselves. Hence, He *the Almighty* points out that those chained in hell used to live in ease and comfort in worldly life. But they will be dragged with shackles and chains as a punishment for them.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘We have fetters, a blazing fire.’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 12) The Arabic word *Al-Jahim* is one of the names of hell. It is derived from the word *Al-Jumuh* (excessiveness) and refers to the fire which is extremely flaming that it devoured anything it reached. In this connection, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘But those who disbelieve and deny Our signs - those are the companions

of Hellfire.’ (*al-Ma‘ida*: 10) The moment we read this verse we get very shocked by this kind of company that all of us hate. Company here means that the disbelievers and hell cannot separate from each other.

Allah *Glorified is He* then says: ‘We have... food that chokes.’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 13) Food is among the things that Allah prepared for disbelievers, but it is food that chokes them. Such food is not easy to swallow or force out like *Az-Zaqqum* and *Ad-Dari’* (a poisonous, thorny plant). This food fills with thorns that stick to the throat and are difficult to swallow because it is bitter, rotten and not tasty. Its eater can neither swallow it nor spit it out; rather, it sticks to the throat.

The Followers and the generation that came after them used to be scared of such verses. Khalid ibn Hasan Al-Hajari said, ‘One day Al-Hasan was fasting. When the food was brought for him to break his fast, he remembered the verse reading: ‘We have fetters, a blazing fire, [12] food that chokes, and agonizing torment in store for them.’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 12-13) Thereupon, he withdrew his hand from the food and said, ‘Take this food away.’ The food was removed and the next day he fasted on. When the food was brought for him and he remembered the same two verses, he refused to eat. On the third day the son of Al-Hasan went to Thabit Al-Banani, Yazid Ad-Dabbi, Yahya Al-Bakka’ and others. He said, ‘Save my father. He did not eat for three days. Whenever we brought him the food, he remembered the verse reading: ‘We have fetters, a blazing fire.’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 12) and refused to eat.’ They went to him and forced him to drink a mouthful of *Sawiq* (a food made out of fine wheat flour).’⁽¹⁾

Allah *the Almighty* mentions three types of the food of the dwellers of hell: *Az-Zaqqum*, *Ad-Dari’* and *Ghislin* (The discharge of wounds). *Az-Zaqqum* is a tree that springs out of the bottom of hell. To illustrate its nature, He *the Almighty* says: ‘Is Paradise a better accommodation or the tree of *zaqqum*? [62] Indeed, We have made it a torment for the wrongdoers. [63] Indeed, it is a tree issuing from the bottom of the Hellfire, [64] Its emerging fruit as if it was heads of the devils. [65]’ (*as-Saffat*: 62-65); and ‘Indeed, the tree of *zaqqum* [43] is food for the sinful. [44] Like murky oil, it boils within bellies [45] Like the

(1) See *Ath-Tha‘labi*, *Al-Kash Wa Al-Bayan*, 10/64; *Al-Wahidi*, *At-Tafsir Al-Wasit*, 4/376; *Az-Zamakhshari*, *Al-Kash-shaf*, 4/641; and *Al-Maraghi*, *Tafsir*, 29/117.

boiling of scalding water. [46]' (*ad-Dukhan*: 43-46) So it is the food that the disbelievers eat and suffer from at the same time in hell. It is a form of torment designed for the sinful and disbelievers. As regards *Ad-Dar'*, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'For them there will be no food except from a poisonous, thorny plant.' (*al-Ghashiya*: 6) It is a thorny, sessile plant which the people of Quraysh used to call it *Shabraq*. When it turned yellow, they called it *Dari'*. It is the worst and most hideous food. Concerning it, Ibn 'Abbas *Allah be pleased with him* says, '*Ad-Dari'* is a thorny plant in hell; it is more bitter than cactuses, smellier than carrion and hotter than fire.'⁽¹⁾ It is food, but it does not serve its purpose; that is why Allah *the Almighty* says about it: 'Which neither nourishes nor avails against hunger.' (*al-Ghashiya*: 7) One who eats this food finds it unsavory, and thus s/he remains hungry and has no choice but to eat *Az-zaqqum* or *Ad-Dari'*. As for *Ghislin*, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Therefore he has not here today a true friend, [35] nor any food except refuse [36]' (*al-Haqqa*: 35-36). It is the puss that comes out of the dwellers of hell. It looks as if it is the wash liquid of their wounds. It is also said that *Ghislin* is a tree from which the denizens of hell eat. In this respect, Ibn 'Abbas says, 'If a drop of *Ghislin* fell over the earth, it would spoil the lives of the people.'⁽²⁾

In the verse in question, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...and agonizing torment in store for them.' (*al-Muzzammil*: 13) So, He *the Almighty* prepared fetters, burning fire, and food that makes its eaters choke. What is more, He aggravates the disbelievers' suffering by a painful punishment. So, all the aforementioned forms of punishment have nothing to do with their painful, unburnable punishment. Hence, He *the Almighty* will inflict upon the disbelievers punishment that is painful, hideous and humiliating. Sometimes a person who receives painful punishment shrieks in agony. At times there are those who try to endure pains just because their conceit prevents them from screaming. In this case, their punishment will be debasing. The word agonizing means 'painful, aching, tormenting and grievous.'

(1) See *Al-Khazin, Lubab At-Ta'wil*, (4/420), *Ath-Tha'labi, Al-Kash Wa Al-Bayan*, 10/188; *Al-Wahidi, At-Tafsir Al-Wasit*, 1337; and *Siraj Ad-Din Ad-Diimashqi, Al-Lubab Fi 'Ulum Al-Kitab*, 20/294.

(2) See '*Abdullah ibn Wahb, Tafsir Al-Quran*, 99.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

يَوْمَ نَرْجُفُ الْأَرْضَ وَالْجِبَالَ وَكَانَتِ الْجِبَالُ كَثِيرًا مَّهِيلًا ﴿١٤﴾

On the Day when the earth and the mountains will shake.

The mountains will become a heap of loose sand [14]

(The Quran, *al-Muzzammil*: 14)

The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘On the Day when the earth and the mountains will shake...’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 14) means that the earth will quake, as in His saying: ‘On the Day the blast [of the Horn] will convulse [creation] [6], there will follow it the subsequent [one]. Hearts that Day will tremble [7]’ (*an-Nazi‘at*: 6-7). So, His saying: ‘On the Day when the earth...’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 14) refers to the first Blast into the Horn while the second one is meant in His saying: ‘There will follow it the subsequent [one].’ (*an-Nazi‘at*: 7) So, the earth we live on will quake so violently on the Day of Resurrection, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: ‘When the earth is shaken with its [final] earthquake. [1] And the earth discharges its burdens [2]’ (*az-Zalzala*: 1-2); and ‘Indeed, the convulsion of the [final] Hour is a terrible thing.’ (*al-Hajj*: 1) The convulsion means the intense earthquake that displaces things. He *the Almighty* uses the word *Rajj* (a violent jolt) to refer to the violent shaking of the earth.

This quake that will take place on the Day of Judgment is not like the earthquakes that destroy buildings or annihilates complete villages in this worldly life. Earthquakes that we see are but a minimized picture of what will happen in the Hereafter and draw our attention to the major quake that will take place.

This quake is not general. It is exclusive to the earth by the command of Allah *the Almighty*. So, He describes the convulsion of the Day of Resurrection as ‘a terrible thing’. It will be a terrible quake according to His Standard, not our human standards. The horribleness of this quake is unimaginable. The earth shakes with everything on it, including mountains which He *the Almighty* created to make the earth steady. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: ‘And He has cast into the earth firmly set mountains, lest it shift with you...’ (*an-Nahl*: 15). He *Glorified is He* placed mountains on the earth so that it would not shake. If the earth were created immovable, there would be no need for firmly set mountains to keep it motionless. But the earth is movable and is prone to shake violently.

On the Day of Judgment, everything will differ. Mountains will be blown up, whereupon the earth will quake. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* mentions the mountains side by side with the earth and their disappearance means that they will not perform its function of stabilizing the earth.

Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...the mountains will become a heap of loose sand.’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 14) So, the mountains which contain solid rocks will turn into shifting sand. They will become loose sand dunes. Although mountains are the steadiest and hardest objects in this worldly life, they will change into moving sand. In another verse, He *Glorified is He* tells us that mountains will turn into ‘...dispersed dust’ (*al-Furqan*: 23); and ‘...wool which fluffed up.’ (*al-Qari`a*: 5) These are the stages of the disappearance of mountains; they first are blown up and turn into shifting sand, then resemble fluffed up wool and then turn into dispersed dust. If this is the state of the mountains on the Day of Judgment, what about the humans who are powerless? What will happen to them?

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ رَسُولًا شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ رَسُولًا ﴿١٥﴾

We have sent a messenger to you [people] to be your witness, just as We sent a messenger to Pharaoh [15]
(The Quran, *al-Muzzammil*: 15)

Here, Allah *the Almighty* addresses the people of Mecca who disbelieved in Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* did great harm to him and turned others away from following his Message. He *the Almighty* says to them: ‘We have sent a Messenger to you [people]...’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 15). He *Glorified is He* sent him *peace and blessings be upon him* to convey the heavenly Way of Guidance to them and sent down upon him the Quran, His inimitable Words.

Although he *peace and blessings be upon him* was illiterate, they asked him about specific events that occurred in the past. Thereupon, he *peace and blessings be upon him* received the Revelations that included the details about these events. As for the Quran, it challenges mankind regarding the future events and the secrets of the human soul. This would be enough for them to believe if they employed

their intellectual capabilities properly. But they remained obstinate, and whenever they received a clear sign, they denied it and blatantly asked for another.

Allah *the Almighty* addresses Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying: 'Indeed, We have sent you, [O Muhammad], with the truth as a bringer of good tidings and a warner, and you will not be asked about the companions of Hellfire.' (*al-Baqara*: 119) So, he was sent by Allah *the Almighty* with the truth that remains unchanged. Out of His Mercy, He *Glorified is He* sends Messengers to help the people know the Right Path from the wrong one. He *the Almighty* also says: 'There has certainly come to you a Messenger from among yourselves. Grievous to him is what you suffer; [he is] concerned over you and to the believers is kind and merciful.' (*at-Tawba*: 128) Thus, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* loves his *ummah* and it pains him to see it suffering. He was always concerned about it.

Here in the chapter in question, Allah *Glorified is He* mentions another characteristic of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* that is, he is a witness upon the people. In another verse, He *the Almighty* says: 'O Prophet, indeed We have sent you as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner. And one who invites to Allah, by His permission, and an illuminating lamp.' (*al-Ahzab*: 45) It is as if He *Glorified is He* says, 'We sent you, Muhammad, as a witness over your *ummah* and the previous Prophets to testify that they delivered their Messages.'

He *peace and blessings be upon him* will bear witness that he conveyed to the people the Message of Allah, whereupon some of them believed and some other disbelievers. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is also described as a witness in the verse reading: '...and in this [revelation] that the Messenger may be a witness over you and you may be witnesses over the people.' (*al-Hajj*: 78) It is as if each one of the Muslim *Ummah* is a caller and a messenger. As he *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* will testify that he communicated the Message of Islam, each Caller will do the same. Hence, the aforementioned verse highlights Messenger Muhammad's testimony and that of the Muslim *Ummah*.

He *peace and blessings be upon him* will attest to what the disbelievers of Mecca said and what they did to him and his Companions. This includes their

harm, barring the people from adopting the Way of Allah and their attempted assassination of him.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was not the first Messenger to be disbelieved and opposed by his people. Allah *Glorified is He* sent him to the people as a Messenger as He sent to Pharaoh a Messenger. He *the Almighty* sent Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* as a Prophet to the Pharaoh of ancient Egypt. Here arises a question, which is, 'Why does Allah mention Pharaoh and Prophet Musa in particular?' This is because Pharaoh disdained Musa on the grounds that he was brought up at his palace. Would it make sense for Pharaoh to follow his fosterling? So, he said to Musa *peace be upon him*: 'Did we not raise you among us as a child, and you remained among us for years of your life?' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 18) Pharaoh reminds Musa *peace be upon him* of bringing him up at his palace. However, he *peace be upon him* did not flatter Pharaoh regarding the truth because it was Allah *the Almighty* who took care of him, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: '...and I cast down upon you love from Me, and that you might be brought up before My eyes.' (*Ta Ha*: 39)

The fact that Pharaoh brought up Musa *Allah's peace be upon him* was worthless in the balance of truth. Despite that, he blamed him *peace be upon him* for taking a hostile stand towards him. So, he *peace be upon him* replied to him: 'And is this a favour of which you remind me - that you have enslaved the Children of Israel?' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 22) It is as if he *peace be upon him* said to him, 'Do you remind me of a favour that means nothing, compared with your enslaving and persecuting of the Children of Israel and killing their sons?'

Likewise, Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was rejected by his people on the basis that they envied him his receiving of the Divine Revelations while he was, from their own point of view, not one of their dignitaries. So, they argued: 'And they said, "Why was this Quran not sent down upon a great man from [one of] the two cities?"' (*az-Zukhruf*: 31) They meant Al Walid ibn Al Mughira or 'Urwa ibn Mas'ud Ath-Thaqafi. So, Allah *Glorified is He* replies to them: 'Do they distribute the mercy of your Lord? It is We who have apportioned among them their livelihood in the life of this world and have raised some of them above others in degrees [of rank]...' (*az-Zukhruf*: 32).

Allah *Glorified is He* delivered, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* from the conspiracies of the disbelievers by ordering him to immigrate to Medina. Similarly, He *the Almighty* Allah rescued Prophet Musa *peace be upon him* from Pharaoh who led a huge army to capture him and his followers. Thereupon, He *the Almighty* split the sea in order for Musa *peace be upon him* and his followers to cross it then let it close in on Pharaoh and his soldiers and then drowned them. This represented a crushing defeat against the disbelievers and the tyrants. Likewise, at the battle of Badr, the disbelievers of Quraysh suffered a disastrous defeat that humiliated the leaders and notables of Mecca.

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* says:

فَعَصَىٰ فِرْعَوْنُ الرَّسُولَ فَأَخَذْنَاهُ أَخْذًا وَبِيلًا ﴿١٦﴾

**But Pharaoh disobeyed the messenger and so We
inflicted a heavy punishment on him [16]
(The Quran, *al-Muzzammil*: 16)**

Allah *the Almighty* warns the disbelievers of Mecca against the bad consequences of their disbelief in this worldly life. He quotes the example of Pharaoh who opposed and disbelieved in Prophet Musa and his brother Harun (Aaron) *peace be upon them*.

The word 'Pharaoh' is a proper noun that refers to a title of a position of authority. Each ruler of the ancient Egypt was called a Pharaoh. Besides, we learn from history that dynasties succeeded one another and among them were the kings and top officials who oppressed the believers. Each Pharaonic successor used to mistreat the believers more ferociously than his predecessor. Allah *Glorified is He* sent Musa and Harun *peace be upon them* to Pharaoh and said to them: 'Go, both of you, to Pharaoh. Indeed, he has transgressed. [43] And speak to him with gentle speech that perhaps he may be reminded or fear [Allah]. [44]' (*Ta Ha*: 43-44) 'So go to him and say, "Indeed, we are Messengers of your Lord, so send with us the Children of Israel and do not torment them. We have come to you with a sign from your Lord. And peace will be upon he who follows the guidance. [47] Indeed, it has been revealed to us that the punishment will be upon whoever denies and turns away. [48]' (*Ta Ha*: 47-48)

Allah *Glorified is He* then says:

فَكَيْفَ تَتَّقُونَ إِن كَفَرْتُمْ يَوْمًا يَجْعَلُ الْوِلْدَانَ شِيبًا ﴿١٧﴾

**So if you disbelieve, how can you guard yourselves
against a Day that will turn children's hair grey [17]
(The Quran, *al-Muzzammil*: 17)**

We must take our proper precautions of the Day of Resurrection because it is a mighty Day as He *the Almighty* says: 'O mankind, fear your Lord. Indeed, the convulsion of the [final] Hour is a terrible thing. On the Day you see it every nursing mother will be distracted from that [child] she was nursing, and every pregnant woman will abort her pregnancy, and you will see the people [appearing] intoxicated while they are not intoxicated; but the punishment of Allah is severe.' (*al-Hajj*: 1-2)

How can the disbelievers protect themselves against such a terrible Day which is sure to come, while they persist in their disbelief in Allah *the Almighty* Messenger Muhammad and the Quran? How will they safeguard themselves from the punishment of this Day? In fact, the disbelievers do not dread this Day as they deny it altogether. If they believed in it, they would fear its horrible events and punishment and thus avoid sins.

Allah *Glorified is He* describes this Day, saying: '...a Day that will turn children's hair grey.' (*al-Muzzammil*: 17) Grey hair often exists in old people, not in young children. The grave and terrifying events of this very Day will make young children white-haired.

This day will make young children go grey the moment Adam is ordered to bring forth the group of (the denizens of) hell. He (Adam) will say, 'Who are the denizens of Hell?' It will be said, 'They are out of every thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine.'⁽¹⁾ He (Prophet Muhammad) said, 'It is at this juncture

(1) Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri Allah be pleased with him narrated that Messenger Muhammad peace and blessings be upon him said, 'Allah *Glorified is He* would say, 'O Adam!' and he would say, 'At Your service, at Your Beck and Call, O Lord, and the good is in Your Hand.' Allah would say, 'Bring forth the group of (the denizens of) Fire.' He (Adam) would say, 'Who are the denizens of Hell?' It would be said, 'They are out of every thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine.' He (Prophet Muhammad) said, 'It is at this juncture that every=

that every child would become white-haired and every pregnant woman would abort and you would see people in a state of intoxication, and they would not be in fact intoxicated but grievous will be the torment of Allah.'

Allah *the Almighty* says: '...a Day that will turn children's hair grey.' (*al-Muzzammil*: 17) The Arabic word *Shiban* (white-haired people) is the plural of *Shai'b* (a grey-haired person). Young children do not turn grey on that Day because of old age. Grey hair appears in this worldly life at old age, as Prophet Zakaryya (Zechariah) *Allah be pleased with him* said: 'My Lord, indeed my bones have weakened, and my head has filled with white.' (*Maryam*: 4) The white hair of Prophet Zakaryya *peace be upon him* was due to his old age and weakness. He *Glorified is He* also says: 'Allah is the one who created you from weakness, then made after weakness strength, then made after strength weakness and white hair. He creates what He wills, and He is the Knowing, the Competent.' (*ar-Rum*: 54) Hence, white grey is a stage of the age of a person in this worldly life. Any person's life goes through these stages: weakness, youthful vigor and weakness caused by old age.

On the Day of Judgment, however, grey hair is not an effect of old age. Rather, young children will go grey despite their young age.

Allah *Glorified is He* then says:

السَّمَاءُ مُنْفَطِرٌ بِهِ كَانَ وَعْدُهُ مَفْعُولًا

**A Day when the sky will be torn apart?
God's promise will certainly be fulfilled [18]
(The Quran, *al-Muzzammil*: 18)**

The sky, in spite of its tremendousness, will split and crack on the Day of Judgment. So, what do we think will happen to other creatures? Allah *Glorified is He*

= child would become white-haired and every pregnant woman would abort and you would see people in a state of intoxication, and they would not be in fact intoxicated but grievous will be the torment of Allah.' He (the narrator) said, 'This had a very depressing effect upon them (upon the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad) and they said, 'Messenger of Allah, who amongst us would be (that unfortunate) person (who would be doomed to Hell)?' He said, 'Good tidings for you, Gog and Magog would be those thousands (who would be the denizens of Hell) and a person (selected for Paradise) would be amongst you.' See *Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 3348 and 6530; and Muslim, Sahih, Hadith no. 379.*

informs us that on this horrible Day the sky will split into small parts and stars will fall down.

In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'When the sky breaks apart...' (*al-Infitar*: 1). Despite its sturdiness, the sky will fall into small pieces. Here, He *the Almighty* says: 'A Day when the sky will be torn apart' (*al-Muzzammil*: 18). This verse means that the sky will break apart by Allah's Command. We note that He *the Almighty* uses a masculine form to refer to the splitting of the sky. This is despite the fact that the word sky in Arabic grammar is a figuratively feminine noun. It is put in the masculine form on grounds of the meaning, for it denotes a ceiling as in the His saying: 'And We made the sky a protected ceiling...' (*al-Anbiya*': 32).

Further, Allah *Glorified is He* points to the split of the sky in His saying: 'And [mention] the Day when the heaven will split open with [emerging] clouds, and the Angels will be sent down in successive descent.' (*al-Furqan*: 25) Some exegetes say that the sky will split open with emerging clouds and the Angels will descend from its cracks. The clouds are also mentioned in the verse reading: 'They do not wait aught but that Allah should come to them in the shadows of the clouds along with the angels, and the matter has (already) been decided...' (*al-Baqara*: 210).

The Arabic word *Al-Infitar* (being torn apart) means disordered splitting. With regard to Allah's saying: 'Day when the sky will be torn apart...' (*al-Muzzammil*: 18), it means that the sky will break apart on the Day of Resurrection by Allah's Command. As for His saying: '...Allah's Promise will certainly be fulfilled' (*al-Muzzammil*: 18), it means that His Promise will inevitably come to pass as He is the Omnipotent Who has all the Attributes of Grandeur and Perfection, and He always fulfills His Promises.

Unlike Allah's Promises and Threats, people's promises and threats may not be fulfilled. You may promise someone something good, but you may find yourself unable to keep your promise. Likewise, you may make a threat against somebody, but you are unable to carry it out. As far as Allah *the Almighty* is concerned, nothing hinders the fulfillment of His Promises or Threats. His Promises are definitely fulfilled, while He may not carry out His Threat out of His Benevolence and Grace, unless it has something to do with polytheism.

إِنْ هَذِهِ تَذْكِرَةٌ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٩﴾

This is a reminder. Let whoever wishes take the way to his Lord [19] (The Quran, *al-Muzzammil*: 19)

This verse occurs literally in the chapter in question and the chapter of *al-Insan*, verse number 29. Both come after referring to the terrible Day of Judgment. Here in the chapter of *al-Muzzammil*, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘So if you disbelieve, how can you guard yourselves against a Day that will turn children’s hair grey, [17] a Day when the sky will be torn apart? Allah’s Promise will certainly be fulfilled.’ (*al-Jinn*: 17-18) In the chapter of *al-Insan* He *the Almighty* says: ‘Indeed, these [disbelievers] love the immediate and leave behind them a grave Day. [27] We have created them and strengthened their forms, and when We will, We can change their likenesses with [complete] alteration. [28]’ (*al-Insan*: 27-28) This is a reminder offered to the people so that they will consider Allah’s sayings, fear Him, keep away from wrongdoing and protect themselves against His wrath and punishment.

So, the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘This is a reminder. Let whoever wishes take the way to his Lord’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 19) serves as a reminder of the Day of Judgment and its related events. Whoever desires to be saved on the Day of Judgment must take a Path to His Lord through belief and obedience. It is worth mentioning here that the Qadaris quote this verse to back up their belief that everything is based on man’s free will and choice. But in the chapter of *al-Insan*, Allah *the Almighty* associates the will of the man with His Divine Will, saying: ‘And you will not do except that Allah wills.’ (*al-Insan*: 30) One’s will entirely depends upon the Will of Allah *the Almighty* for all matters are referred to Him. Whatever a person does, it is done by His Will. This does not mean the absence of the human being’s free will. Whoever desires to follow a Path to Allah and enjoy what He *the Almighty* promises him/her in the Hereafter should adhere to obedience and acts of worship. At this point, a person will gain His Mercy and Reward. But if a person does not take a way towards Him and disobeys Him, s/he will inevitably be punished.

The aforementioned verses contain the forms of guidance and right direction. So, whoever wills to believe and follow a path towards Allah’s Pleasure and

Mercy must put the content of these verses into practice. The path is the way leading to the desired destination. In this vein, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'I will turn away from My signs those who are arrogant upon the earth without right; and if they should see every sign, they will not believe in it. And if they see the way of consciousness, they will not adopt it as a way; but if they see the way of error, they will adopt it as a way. That is because they have denied Our signs and they were heedless of them.' (*al-A'raf*: 146)

The Way of Righteousness and Guidance controls and suppresses the physical pleasures and personal inclinations and helps one to shun wrongdoing. But those who are wrongdoers are not able to curb their physical pleasures, as they are enslaved by them. As for the way of error, it gives free rein to physical pleasures. This happens when a person deprives him/herself of belief, which in fact drives him/her to forgo something in return for more precious and greater things.

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* concludes the chapter of *al-Muzzammil*, saying:

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ تَقُومُ أَدْنَىٰ مِنْ ثُلَاثِ أَلَيْلٍ وَنِصْفَهُ، وَتُلْثُهُ، وَطَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الَّذِينَ مَعَكَ
وَاللَّهُ يَقْدِرُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ عِلْمَ أَن لَّنْ نَّخْصُوهُ فَنَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَقْرَءُوا مَا يَنْسَرُ مِنْ
الْقُرْآنِ عِلْمَ أَن سَيَكُونُ مِنْكُمْ مَّرْضَىٰ وَءَاخَرُونَ يَضْرِبُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَبْتَغُونَ مِنْ
فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَءَاخَرُونَ يَقْنِنُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَأَقْرَءُوا مَا يَنْسَرُ مِنْهُ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَأَتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَأَقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوا لِأَنفُسِكُمْ مِن خَيْرٍ نَّحْدُوهُ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
هُوَ خَيْرٌ وَأَعْظَمَ أَجْرًا وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢٠﴾

[Prophet], your Lord is well aware that you sometimes spend nearly two-thirds of the night at prayer — sometimes half, sometimes a third — as do some of your followers. God determines the division of night and day. He knows that you will not be able to keep a measure of it and He has relented towards all of you, so recite as much of the Quran as is easy for you. He knows that some of you will be sick, some of you travelling through the land seeking God's bounty, some of you fighting in God's way: recite as much as is easy for you, keep up the prayer, pay the prescribed alms, and make

**God a good loan. Whatever good you store up for yourselves
will be improved and increased for you. Ask God for His
forgiveness, He is most forgiving, most merciful [20]
(The Quran, *al-Muzzammil*: 20)**

Here, Allah *the Almighty* addresses Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* regarding late-night prayer. The law of reform that He *Glorified is He* set for the lives of the people is based on two foundations: travelling through the land to satisfy our daily needs and fighting for the purpose of the survival of the Call and the Way of Allah *the Almighty*. The first foundation is related to our material needs while the second one is connected with values and virtues.

If the Muslim *Ummah* neglects or desists from either of these two foundations, it will endanger itself and become a coveted object of its enemies. That is why we see that underdeveloped countries are poor and live on the aids of rich countries. This is because such underdeveloped countries did not seek to extract the favour and bounties of Allah *Glorified is He* and desisted from constructing and exploiting the earth.

At the beginning of Islam, Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and believers used to spend half the night performing supererogatory prayer before the five daily prayers were prescribed by Allah. They continued offering late-night prayer for a whole year, which caused them great hardship. Finally, He *Glorified is He* waived this religious obligation. At the beginning of the chapter in question, He *the Almighty* says: ‘You [Prophet], enfolded in your cloak! [1] Stay up throughout the night, all but a small part of it, [2] half, or a little less, [3] or a little more; recite the Quran slowly and distinctly.’ [4] (*al-Muzzammil*: 1-4) This obligation was too hard for Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and believers to observe. Thus, He *the Almighty* lighten this obligation in the last verse of the same chapter, saying: ‘[Prophet], your Lord is well aware that you sometimes spend nearly two-thirds of the night at prayer—sometimes half, sometimes a third—as do some of your followers...’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 20)

Allah *Glorified is He* knows that they would not be able to keep up the late-night prayer. So, He *the Almighty* relented towards all of them, that is, He pardoned and relieved them by commanding them only to recite as much of

the Quran as is easy for them. He *Glorified is He* has not prescribed for them a special time or measure of the late-night prayer; rather, He *the Almighty* made it according to one's capacity.

The period between the revelation of the first part of the chapter of *al-Muzzammil* and the last part thereof was one year. During that period the five daily prayers and the *zakat* were prescribed. That is why Allah *Glorified is He* commands the believers in the verse in question, saying: '...keep up the prayer, pay the prescribed alms...' (*al-Muzzammil*: 20).

The style of the Quran is miraculous, He *Glorified is He* uses the Arabic word *Adna* (nearly) three times with the two-thirds, the half and the third of the night. Here, it means that a worshipper should perform the acts of worship during nearly the third, the half or the two-thirds of the night according to his/her ability to pray or recite the Quran during that time.

Allah *Glorified is He* says here: '...Allah determines the division of night and day...' (*al-Muzzammil*: 20). This means that He *the Almighty* knows their measures, parts and hours. Thus, nothing of what the people do escapes His Knowledge; He *the Almighty* knows how much time they spend at night praying or reciting the Quran as well as the time they spend sleeping during that time.

In fact no one but Allah *Glorified is He* is able to determine the division of day and night, to know their hours and to organize them. For this reason, the subject 'Allah' here is fore grounded in the Quranic arrangement of the words to indicate that the determination of the division of the day and night is confined to Him *Glorified is He*.

He *Glorified is He* then says: '...He knows that you will not be able to keep a measure of it and He has relented towards all of you...' (*al-Muzzammil*: 20) He *the Almighty* knows that the believers will not be able to keep a measure of the night or to spend half, third or two-thirds thereof praying or reciting the Quran. One of them used to pray the whole night lest he cannot perfectly fulfill Allah's Command related to performing the late-night prayer.

Here, the Arabic word *Al-Ihsa'* refers to the ability to do something and to adhere to it. For example, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'If a Muslim persists in two actions, he will enter the Garden. They are

easy, but those who do them are few. That you say “*Allahu Akbar*” (Allah is the greatest) ten times, “*Al-hamdu lillah*” (All praise is due to Allah) ten times, and “*Subhana'llah*” (Exalted is Allah) ten times after every rayer.’ He also said in a Hadith regarding the lofty Names of Allah, ‘Allah has ninety-nine Names, i.e. one-hundred minus one, and whoever knows them will go to paradise.’

Linguistically, the Arabic word *Al-Ihsa'* has two meanings: first, to have comprehensive knowledge of the number and measure of something, as in Allah’s saying: ‘...He has taken account of everything.’ (*al-Jinn*: 28); second, to have the ability to do something, as in His saying here: ‘...He knows that you will not be able to keep a measure of it...’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 20). This means that the Muslims would not be able to continue performing the late-night prayer. Therefore, He *Glorified is He* says: ‘...He has relented towards all of you...’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 20). He *the Almighty* pardoned them by directing their attention towards the obligatory acts of worship and relieving them from doing this supererogatory act, i.e. performing the late-night prayer. They were given the option to do or not to do that.

The Arabic word *Taba* (to relent) has many meanings here. It means that Allah *Glorified is He* has pardoned the believers, which indicates that some of them had left some of what they had been commanded to do. It also means that He *Glorified is He* has relented towards them by not obligating the late-night prayer on them, as they were unable to perform them steadfastly. The Arabic word *Tawba* (repentance) originally means to return. They had been commanded to keep account of the time of the late-night acts of worship through measuring and inquiring into them. Then, Allah *Glorified is He* relieved them because He *the Almighty* knows that they would not be able to keep the measure properly as they had been commanded.

Then, He *Glorified is He* says: ‘...so recite as much of the Quran as is easy for you...’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 20). This means that they should recite of Quran during the late-night Prayer according to their abilities. Therefore, He *Glorified is He* has given them the choice to pray optionally at the night whenever they want, without considering certain times or parts thereof. This was a form of alleviation for them because they had been keeping up the late-night prayer for one year that their feet and shins swelled.

Allah *Glorified is He* then says: '...He knows that some of you will be sick, some of you travelling through the land seeking Allah's bounty, some of you fighting in Allah's way...' (*al-Muzzammil*: 20). So, three kinds of people were the reason for that alleviation: the sick people, those who travel through the land seeking their livelihood out of Allah's Bounty and those who fight in His Way. The sick person cannot perform late-night prayer so Allah *Glorified is He* relieved him/her because of his/her weakness and inability. He *the Almighty* knows that some of the Muslims would have illnesses that make them too weak to pray at night.

Other people were unable to do so for setting out for trade and moving through the lands for gaining provision. It may be hard for them to pray at night as this will make it difficult for them to seek their provision and livelihood by traveling through the land during the daytime. The Arabic word *Al-Darb* (hitting) means to place one of the limbs on something violently and powerfully. Using this word to refer to seeking provision indicates that life is all about moving and interacting. Allah *Glorified is He* has placed all the provision of the people in the earth. So, when they want to extract its bounties, they should provoke it by ploughing it then sowing the seeds and irrigating it. Thus, every movement in the pursuit of seeking provision needs strength and toil. As long as seeking the provision requires traveling through the land, then it needs determination and strength. That is why it is said, 'The earth likes whoever ploughs it.' Therefore, the more powerful the movement of the person in the land is, the more it gives him/her of its bounties.

Those who fight in the Way of Allah *Glorified is He* are the third kind of people who were the reason for the abrogation of the ruling that obligates performing late-night prayer for specific times – the half, the third and the two-thirds of the night. This is because fighting entails suffering, hardship, lying in wait and expecting the enemy's attack. Accordingly, performing the late-night prayer could be a hardship and a burden over the fighters who guard the borderlines of Islamic territories. For this reason, Allah *Glorified is He* has made the matter easier for them by commanding them to pray at night what they can easily offer.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* commands them to do what He has already obligated on them, saying: '...keep up prayer, give prescribed alms...' (*al-Jinn*: 20). He *the Almighty* has combined between prayer and the prescribed alms in many

verses of the Quran. Prayer is the Islamic pillar that can never be waived. So, the person should pay attention to his/her Lord's Call for Prayer when the muedhin loudly says, '*Allahu Akbar* (Allah is the greatest).' This is an invitation to come to Him *the Almighty* at a specific time to stand before Him, in His Presence, and receive His Support.

Making mention of the command of keeping up prayer and giving the prescribed alms after mentioning traveling through the land for seeking Allah's Bounties and fighting in His Way indicates that they should praise Him *Glorified is He* for the bounties and the provision that He has bestowed on them. This also indicates that they should give the prescribed alms out of what He *the Almighty* has bestowed of them to purify their property and spread among the members of the society the virtues of solidarity, cooperation and benevolence towards the poor. Fighting in His Way also requires equipping the fighters with ammunition and weapons. Further, the fighters need to be close to Him *Glorified is He* by keeping up the prayer.

After commanding them to pay the prescribed alms, Allah *Glorified is He* commands them, saying: '...and make Allah a good loan...' (*al-Muzzammil*: 20). The loan is something other than the prescribed or optional alms; your expenditure in His Way is not limited to what He *Glorified is He* prescribed on you or what you optionally give as a charity. Rather He *the Almighty* also commands you to make Him a good loan. Undoubtedly, He *Glorified is He* does not need any loan from you, for your loan in reality goes to the needy. Although the loan goes to such needy people and not to Allah *the Almighty* He commands you to give the loan to Him. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'Who is it that will offer of Allah a goodly gift, so He will multiply it to him manifold, and Allah straitens and amplifies, and you shall be returned to Him.' (*al-Baqara*: 245)

Linguistically, the Arabic word *Al-Qard* (loan) means to bite something with the canine tooth, alluding to holding strictly to something. This indicates that Allah *Glorified is He* measures the reward in proportion to the difficulty of giving a loan. It is a sum of money you give while expecting to take it back. He *the Almighty* reassures the giver of the loan that He will accept and repay it for you. This reward will not be in proportion to the loan; rather, it will be in a profitable and multiplied form. The original money is preserved and invested

to be increased many times according to Allah's Measure, not that of the human beings'.

You will lose nothing of what you store up with Allah *Glorified is He* for yourself. The believer should be contented with the fact that his/her movement in life is considered and He *Glorified is He* will reward him/her for it. Everything you do according to His Way of Guidance will be rewarded. However, this reward is not equal to the good deed; rather, it is multiplied many times. He *Glorified is He* says in another verse: '...what you have runs out but [what] He has endures.' (*an-Nahl*: 96) This verse shows that what He *the Almighty* possesses lasts forever, as His Treasuries are full and never run out. What He *Glorified is He* has is not trivial; it is a great Reward.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...Ask Allah for His forgiveness, He is most forgiving, most merciful.' (*al-Jinn*: 20) He *the Almighty* knows that the children of Adam cannot preserve His Rights as they should be preserved. Inevitably, they will fall short in certain obligations. Thus, He, their Creator, has commanded the believers to ask Him for forgiveness that they may have their sins wiped out. Showing His Mercy and Forgiveness for them indicates that they have committed sins, but He was All-Merciful and All-Forgiving to them when they asked Him for forgiveness. He is All-Merciful towards them as He *the Almighty* does not hastily punish them out of His Compassion for them and desiring that they repent to Him. Thus, He *Glorified is He* is All-Forgiving and All-Merciful even toward the one who falls short and commits sins so that s/he may attain to faith and make up what s/he has lost.

Allah *the Almighty* forgives what the servant has done if the latter tries to make amendments. Further, He *Glorified is He* is All-Forgiving and All-Merciful even before the existence of anyone. The Attributes of Mercy and Forgiveness in their absolute sense belong only to Him *Glorified is He*. They are clearly manifested in accepting the repentance of the offender and having mercy towards his/her victim. He *Glorified is He* has the Absolute Power to forgive and to show Mercy, so beware of saying that so and so does not deserve His Forgiveness and Mercy, for He is the Owner of the heavens and the earth Who gives the human beings what they deserve according to the right of showing mercy to His creation that He obligated on Himself.

the chapter of

al-Muddaththir

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

The chapter of *al-Muddaththir* ⁽¹⁾.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ ﴿١﴾ قُمْ فَأَنْذِرْ ﴿٢﴾ وَرَبِّكَ فَكَبِّرْ ﴿٣﴾ وَثِيَابَكَ فَطَهِّرْ ﴿٤﴾
وَالرُّجْزَ فَاهْجُرْ ﴿٥﴾ وَلَا تَمْنُنْ تَسْتَكْثِرُ ﴿٦﴾ وَلِرَبِّكَ فَاصْبِرْ ﴿٧﴾

**You, wrapped in your cloak [1] arise and give warning! [2]
Proclaim the greatness of your Lord [3] cleanse yourself [4]
keep away from all filth [5] do not be overwhelmed and
weaken [6] be steadfast in your Lord's cause [7]
(The Quran, *al-Muddaththir*: 1-7)**

Allah *Glorified is He* addresses Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying: ‘You, wrapped in your cloak’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 1), and in the previous chapter of *al-Muzzammil*, He *Glorified is He* addresses him, saying: ‘You [Prophet], enfolded in your cloak!’ (*al-Muzzammil*: 1) When he *peace and blessings be upon him* was taking about the time of revelation, he said, ‘While I was walking, I heard a voice from the sky. I looked up towards the sky, and behold! I saw the same Angel who came to me in the Cave of Hira’, sitting on a chair between the sky and the earth, I was so terrified by him that I fell down on the ground. Then I went to my wife and said, ‘Wrap me in garments! Wrap me in garments!’ They wrapped me, and then Allah has

(1) The chapter of *al-Muddaththir* is number 74 in the order of the noble *Mushaf*. The number of its verses is 56. It was revealed in Mecca after the chapter of *al-Muzzammil*. It is a clear chapter and the claim that the verse: ‘Leave Me to deal with the one I created helpless.’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 11) is abrogated by the verse of the sword is false as this verse in question bears a warning for Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira and so there is no reason for abrogation. Further, Al-Walid perished before the revelation of the verse of the sword.

revealed: 'You, wrapped in your cloak, [1] arise and give warning! [2] Proclaim the greatness of your Lord; [3] cleanse yourself. [4]' (*al-Muddaththir*: 1-4)

It is as if Allah *Glorified is He* addresses Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying, 'You, wrapped in your cloak during his sleep.' The Arabic word *Al-Muddaththir* is the one who wraps himself in his cloak when he sleeps, and *Addethar* is the cloak that the person wears on *Ash-She'ar*, which is the garment worn next to the skin of the body. Being wrapped in the cloak could be taken literally, that is, he *peace and blessings be upon him* was wrapped in his cloak and blanket. The verse, however, may have another interpretation; wrapping is not meant to be with a material cloak, but with an abstract one, namely, the cloak of Prophethood and Mission. So, the verse means that he is endowed with great knowledge, noble conduct and complete mercy. He is commanded to arise with determination and steadfastness from his bed to do the mission that Allah *Glorified is He* has sent him to accomplish. The Arabic word *Qiyam* (Arising) could be used for standing with earnestness and determination or just arising to be upright.

Allah *Glorified is He* commands Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to give a warning to the people of Mecca about His punishment and how it befell the previous peoples and how powerful His revenge would be if they did not believe. Likewise, He *Glorified is He* commanded him, saying: 'And warn your nearest kinsfolk.' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 214) After he *peace and blessings be upon him* used to be occupied with worshipping Him *Glorified is He* in the cave of Hira' for many nights, he was commanded to arise and proclaim warning. This command was an instruction for him to end his worship in the cave of Hira' and to fulfill the Mission which was assigned to him, namely, warning and conveying the Message.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Proclaim the greatness of your Lord.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 3) He *the Almighty* commands Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to proclaim the greatness of his Lord over what the idolaters were saying about Him. He is commanded not to be worried about the oppression and tyranny of the disbelievers of Mecca, for He *Glorified is He* is the All Great. Therefore, when he *peace and blessings be upon him* got up from his bed, he said, 'Allah is the All Great!' So, Khadija also proclaimed the

Greatness of Allah *Glorified is He* and knew that he *peace and blessings be upon him* had received the Revelation.⁽¹⁾

Surely, what is meant by glorifying Allah *the Almighty* is not just proclaiming His Greatness by the tongue; rather, glorifying and exalting Him should also be by the heart, for His Greatness in the heart of the believers is greater than anything or anyone. For this reason, *Allah Akbar* (Allah is the Greatest) is the slogan for calling to prayer and starting it. Therefore, you should proclaim His Greatness and make Him greater than anything prone to change. He *Glorified is He* is Greater than any person and that is why you should proclaim His Greatness by prioritizing His commands and prohibitions over any other command or prohibition. By so doing, you will strengthen yourself by His Power which He only gives to those who sincerely worship Him.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: 'Cleanse yourself.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 4) 'To cleanse your garment' means to purify it from dirties and impurities. This does not mean that the garment of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was dirty or impure, for he is a good person from a good lineage. The intended meaning is not to wear a too long garment out of pride like what the leaders of Quraysh used to do. Rather, he should cut its end to avoid the impurities of the ground. Therefore, you should purify yourself, your deeds by sincerity, you are thinking by having good thoughts and your heart by eliminating any feeling of animosity and envy. Thus, what is meant is purifying the soul, the garment and the body. At that time, he *peace and blessings be upon him* was about to call for the Message of Monotheism which requires the purity of the heart from polytheism and the purity of the soul from the impurities. The Arabs used to describe the one who is honest in his dealing, saying: 'He has a pure garment.' We also describe the modest person, saying: 'He has a pure garment, not touched by any impurity.'

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Keep away from all filth.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 4) This means to abandon all the sins and the misdeeds in order to be saved from

(1) See Muqatil ibn Sulayman, *Tafsir*, 4/490; Al-Razi, *Mafatih Al-Ghayb*, 30/697; Al-Qurtubi, *Jame' Ahkam Al-Quran*, 19/62; Abu As-So'ud, *Irshad Al-Uqul*, 9/54; and Ibn 'Agina, *Al-Bahr Al-Madid*, 7/172.

the punishment.⁽¹⁾ He *Glorified is He* also says: 'We sent them a punishment from heaven for their wrongdoing.' (*al-A'raf*: 162) Thus, the command in this verse means to keep away from the idols. Even if the addressee here is Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*, the command is for all Muslims to avoid the worship of idols as in the saying of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon Him*: 'I will leave you, and the idols that you worship besides Allah.' (*Maryam*: 48) The Arabic word *Al-'Tizal* means to leave your companions seeking better ones. He *peace be upon him* did not leave them for seeking provision or abundant livelihood, but rather for the sake of Allah *Glorified is He* and the religious principle for which he was calling.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And do not confer favor to acquire more.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 5) This means that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is forbidden from asking for more than what he was given. In other words, he should not give something to be rewarded with something better. So the person should not give some of his/her money hoping to get more from the pleasures of the worldly life; rather, s/he should seek the reward of the Hereafter. Therefore, you should not give something with the intention to be given more; you should spend money charitably for the sake of Allah *Glorified is He* – not to get the pleasures of the worldly life or more than what you have been given.

This command is different from Allah's saying to Prophet Sulaiman (Solomon) *peace be upon him*: 'This is our gift, so give or withhold as you wish without account.' (*Sad*: 39) Here, He *Glorified is He* tells him *peace be upon him* to give or withhold as he wished without being held accountable for what he has given or withheld. In this verse of the chapter of *Sad*, He *Glorified is He* talks about giving and bestowing with abundance, given the fact that He *the Almighty* gave Sulaiman *peace be upon him* a dominion that He has not given to anyone else.

When Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* arose to warn his people and persisted in avoiding the worship of idols and deities, he was

(1) 'Rigs' is the punishment or the plague. Ibn 'Abbas said that any reference to Rigs in the Book of Allah means the punishment. See *At-Tabari, Jame' Al-Bayan*, 2/118; and *Ibn Abu Hatim, Tafsir*, 592.

faced with stubbornness, rejection, harming, mocking and many attempts of humiliation. For this reason, Allah *Glorified is He* advised him to be steadfast in His cause. So, he *peace and blessings be upon him* should be patient regarding His commands and prohibitions to get His Reward. He should also endure patiently the harm he gets, as he has shouldered the responsibility for a great Mission which requires him to endure people's attacks on the Call of Allah *Glorified is He*. Moreover, he *peace and blessings be upon him* should endure their harming without retaliating against them as He *Glorified is He* is All Sufficient for him as against them. This command indicates that he *peace and blessings be upon him* was about to face very difficult events in which he would be confronted by his people's harming and rejection.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

فَإِذَا نُقِرَ فِي النَّاقُورِ ﴿٨﴾ فَذَلِكَ يَوْمٌ مَّيِّدٌ عَسِيرٌ ﴿٩﴾ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ غَيْرُ يَسِيرٍ ﴿١٠﴾

**When the Trumpet sounds [8] that will be a Day
of anguish for the disbelievers [9] They will have
no ease [10] (The Quran, *al-Muddaththir*: 8 - 10)**

The Arabic word *An-Naqur* is the Trumpet in which Israfil will blow. He will blow twice and what is meant in this verse is the second Blow. Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'How can I be comfortable when the one with the horn is holding it to his lip, his ears listening for when he will be ordered to blow, so he can blow.' It was as if that was very hard upon the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad, so he said to them, 'Say: "Allah is sufficient for us and what a good Protector He is, and upon Allah we rely."⁽¹⁾

The Arabic word *Naqar* means to blow the Trumpet. This verse affects the emotions and the hearts as when Zurara ibn Abu 'Awfa prayed with this saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'When the Trumpet sounds.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 8), he fell down unconscious.⁽²⁾ Allah *Glorified is He* informs the people about the matters of the Hereafter by using what they see in this worldly life as they

(1) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudri Allah be pleased be upon him. See Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 3008, 11039 and 19345; At-Tirmidhi, Sunnan, Hadith no. 2431 and 3243; and Ibn Maja, Sunnan, Hadith no. 4273.

(2) See At-Tirmidhi, Sunnan, Hadith no. 445.

used to blow the trumpet in their travels and wars. Blowing the Trumpet causes fear and panic as if it is saying to the dead people, 'Arise from your death for the time of Resurrection and Account has come.' He *Glorified is He* says in another verse: 'His Word is the truth and all control on the Day the Trumpet is blown belongs to Him.' (*al-An'am*: 73)

Blowing the Trumpet signifies the coming of something; after the first Blow, all the living creatures die; and after the second Blow, all the dead creatures rise from their death. In this connection, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'The Trumpet will be sounded, and everyone in the heavens and earth will fall down senseless except those Allah spares. It will be sounded once again and they will be on their feet, looking on.' (*az-Zumar*: 68)

Blowing the Trumpet is a great and fearful call for the dead to get out of their graves as He *Glorified is He* says elsewhere: 'It will be the Day when He calls you, and you answer by praising Him, and you think you have stayed [on earth] only a little while.' (*al-Isra'*: 52) His saying: '...when Allah calls you...' (*al-Isra'*: 52) refers to the time of the second Blow when He *Glorified is He* commands the people to get out of the graves. Thereupon, they will praise Him, as a sign of obeying His Command and submitting to Him without disdain, negligence or arrogance.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'It will be a Day of anguish.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 9) The Day of the Blow, which is the Day of Judgment, is very hard and difficult. Describing that Day as a difficult one does not mean that it is so for all people; it is hard for a group of people and easy for others. He *Glorified is He* then says: 'They will have no ease.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 10) It will not be an easy Day for the disbelievers, for the punishment will befall them, and that is why it was called a difficult Day. Although it is hard for a group of people, it is easy for others. Part of its hardness, nevertheless, befalls all the creatures and all the people, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'You will think people are drunk when they are not, so severe will be Allah's Torment.' (*Ta Ha*: 2) The word 'people' here includes everyone. Afterwards, the believers will be relieved from the hardships by receiving Allah's Glad Tidings and Bounties. Then, the hardships remain for the rest of the people of the hellfire. So, the Day of blowing the Trumpet will be difficult for the disbelievers but

yet easy for the believers – as easy for the believer as the shortest of his/her prayers. In this regard, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘The Day of Judgment will be made easy for the believer until it becomes easier than one of his prescribed prayers in the worldly life.’⁽¹⁾

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

ذَرْنِي وَمَنْ خَلَقْتُ وَحِيدًا ۖ وَجَعَلْتُ لَهُ مَالًا مَمْدُودًا ۖ
وَبَنِينَ شُهَدَاءَ ۖ وَمَهَّدْتُ لَهُ تَمْهِيدًا ۖ ثُمَّ يَطْمَعُ أَنْ أَزِيدَ ۖ

**[Prophet], leave Me to deal with the one I created helpless [11]
then gave vast wealth [12] and sons by his side [13]
making everything easy for him [14] yet he still hopes I will
give him more [15] (The Quran, *al-Muddaththir*: 11-15)**

It is as if Allah *the Almighty* says, ‘Leave Me, Prophet Muhammad, to deal with the one I have created in the womb of his mother alone without having any property or children. Leave him to Me and I am Sufficient for you as against him.’ This verse was revealed in reference to Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira⁽²⁾ who was tilted the ‘unrivalled’ among his people. So, it is as if He *the Almighty* says, ‘Leave Me alone, Prophet Muhammad, with the one whom I have created alone without any partner as I have created everything Alone. I will punish him on the Day of Judgment Alone just as I have created him Alone.’ This is a frightening and fearful threat. It is as if He *the Almighty* also says, ‘After I have created him, I have not left him in this life without care; rather, I have supported him with provision.’ That is why He *Glorified is He* says about him: ‘Then give vast wealth.’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 12)

All the blessings, pertinent to the bestowals of Allah’s Lordship, are bestowed on all His creatures as He is the Lord of all, the obedient and the

(1) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Abu Sa’id Al-Khudri Allah be pleased with him. See Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 11717; Ibn Hibban, Sahih, Hadith no. 7334; Abu Ya’la, Musnad, Hadith no. 1290; and Al-Baghawi, Sharh As-Sunna, Hadith no. 4318.

(2) Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira is one of the leaders of Quraysh in the pre-Islamic era. He is the father of Khalid ibn Al-Walid. The people of Quraysh called him ‘the unrivalled’ in Mecca. He was one of the richest of the people of Mecca whose trade was equal to one hundred camels.

disobedient alike. He *the Almighty* has created all the creation, believers and disbelievers, and so long as He has created them and brought them into existence, He was not to abandon them. He *Glorified is He* has created the human being and made other creatures subjected to him/her. He *the Almighty* has not created the universe for the believers only; rather, for the believers and the disbelievers. This is because He *the Almighty* confers two kinds of bestowals on them: the bestowal of Lordship and that of Divinity. The bestowal of His Lordship is for all people, as He *the Almighty* is the Lord Who brought both the believer and the disbeliever into the universe and subjected all the means of sustenance to them. The sun, for instance, rises on the believer and the disbeliever. Such bestowals can be given to all the human beings, the believers and the disbelievers alike. As for the bestowal of Divinity, it is represented in 'do and 'do not', that is, following the commandments and refraining from the Prohibitions. It is restricted to the followers of His Way of Guidance.

With regard to the verses under discussion, Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira was the person whom Allah *Glorified is He* created and gave a vast wealth that never runs out, as some forms of his wealth always support the other. He had farming lands, milking cattle, trade and a garden whose fruits never end in either the winter or the summer. The Arabic phrase *Mal Manduda* (vast wealth) is similar to Allah's saying: 'With spreading shade.' (*al-Hashr*: 30) This means that the shade never ceases. In this connection, Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'There is a tree in paradise (which is so big and huge that) if a rider travels in its shade for one hundred years, he would not be able to cross it.'⁽¹⁾ It has a lasting shade that never ends when the sun sets, as is the case with the shade we have in the worldly life.

Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* has bestowed on Al-Walid a vast wealth that continuously increases. That is why it was uncountable and its profits do not stop. All what has a value is considered a property which is divided into two kinds, as follows: what can be used directly like food, drinks, clothes, etc. The one who has any of these makes use of them directly. The second kind of property is the money which ca not be of direct benefit; rather, the person

(1) *This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Sahl Ibn Sa'd As-Sa'idi Allah be pleased with him. See Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 3251, 3252 and 4881; and Muslim, Sahih, Hadith no. 3837.*

uses it to bring what is directly useful. Thus, the property is divided into a direct and indirect provision.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says that not only has He given Al-Walid vast wealth but also sons. In this regard, He *Glorified is He* says: ‘And sons by his side.’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 13); and ‘Wealth and children are the attractions of this worldly life.’ (*al-Kahf*: 46) He *the Almighty* gave Al-Walid a vast wealth that never runs out and also ten sons who stood by his side and were present with him in the gatherings. The Arabic phrase *Banina Shouhuda* (sons by his side) means that they never become absent in a trade or any other activity because they had abundant wealth in Mecca, so he was not obliged to disperse his sons in the lands to accumulate and gather wealth. Rather, he easily gained wealth without any toil and without undergoing the means of accumulating it. Thus, He *Glorified is He* has made Al-Walid enjoy seeing his sons by his side, given the fact that the father’s enjoyment of seeing his children around him is incomparable with anything, especially if they are men who provide him with support.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘I have made everything easy for him.’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 14) This means that He *Glorified is He* has provided Al-Walid with abundant provision and a long lifetime. Moreover He *the Almighty* has provided him with a supreme power and mastery over his people. Thus, He *Glorified is He* has made the ways easy for him to lead a luxurious life by giving him the wealth and the power apparently manifested in his ten sons so that he could manage his affairs. His sons were with him wherever he went and they were an adornment for him in the gatherings and a support for him in managing his affairs.

Allah *Glorified is He* shows His Bounty on His servants, saying: ‘And it is Allah Who has given you spouses from amongst yourselves and through them He has given you children and grandchildren and provided you with good things.’ (*an-Nahl*: 72) The children are the first circle for the continuation of life and the grandchildren are the second circle. For this reason, many people among us love the male children who will be a continuation for the lineage of their fathers.

Despite all of that – the vast wealth, the sons by his side, the empowerment, the power and dignity – he still longs for more, as Allah *Glorified is He* says:

'Yet he still hopes I will give him more.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 14) Al-Walid hopes for more wealth, sons and empowerment even though He *Glorified is He* has given him a wealth more than what He *the Almighty* has given to any one of Quraysh, to the extent that he used to say, 'If I distributed my wealth among the tribe of Quraysh, it would not run out as long as I am alive, so how can you, Muhammad, promise me to be inflicted with poverty?' So, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: 'By Allah, the One Who has given you that wealth can take it back.' This statement affected the heart of Al-Walid, so he decided to count all his wealth; he counted the gold, the silver, the gardens and slaves that he possessed.⁽¹⁾ Despite all that wealth, he still hopes to get more property, sons, power and dignity. But He *Glorified is He* shatters his hope, saying:

كَلَّا إِنَّهُ كَانَ لِآيَاتِنَا عَنِيدًا ﴿١٦﴾ سَأَرْهَقُهُ صُعُودًا ﴿١٧﴾

No! He has been stubbornly hostile to Our revelation [16]

I will inflict a spiraling torment on him [17]

(The Quran, *al-Muddaththir*: 16 - 17)

Allah *Glorified is He* has decisively ended the hope of Al-Walid who rejected His Verses and underestimated His Bounties. He will not be given more wealth or sons over what He *the Almighty* had previously given him. After the revelation of this verse, Al-Walid's position deteriorated as his wealth started to decrease, and he lost his power and authority with the death of some of his sons and the conversion of two of them to Islam, namely, Khalid and Hisham. Thus, his wealth and sons decreased after the revelation of this verse until he perished.

Allah *Glorified is He* uses the particle *Kalla* (No) which decisively indicates that Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira, who was stubbornly hostile to His Revelation, was not an ordinary denier of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and the Quran. He was not just like any disbeliever who rejects the faith; rather, he was stubbornly hostile to His Revelation. He persistently rejected all the signs of monotheism, Allah's Power, the Resurrection and Prophethood. Some scholars hold that Al-Walid's stubborn disbelief was due to the fact that

(1) See Muqatil ibn Sulaiman, *Tafsir*, 4/838.

he did not believe in the truth of Resurrection or that the Quran is a Divine Revelation, not a fabrication of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Here, the Arabic word '*Anida* (stubborn) gives us the indication that the disbelief of Al-Walid was just out of stubbornness, which confirms Allah's saying: 'We know indeed that what they say certainly grieves you, but surely they do not call you a liar; but the unjust deny the communications of Allah.' (*al-An'am*: 33)

The disbelievers knew for certain that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* never tells lies, as they used to call him the truthful and the honest. Undoubtedly, they recognized his truthfulness and the veracity of his Message. However, their whims and desires enticed them to persist in going astray in order that they could cling to the temporal power of this worldly life. In this vein, we find that he *peace and blessings be upon him* left 'Ali *Allah be pleased with him* in Mecca to return the properties that they entrusted to him *peace and blessings be upon him*.

The Arabic word *Al-Juhud* (Rejection) means that the tongue refuses to utter the word of truth. Allah *Glorified is He* knows eternally that some of them inwardly are certain about the truth of the Faith, but they rejected it outwardly. They acknowledged the truth of the Faith but stubbornly and arrogantly rejected it. Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira himself said about the Quran, 'It indeed overflows with sweet clarity; it is fruitful at its lowest and prodigious at its highest, and it is not the words of the humans.'⁽¹⁾ Thus, he was stubbornly hostile to Allah's signs.

The Arabic word '*Ayat* (signs) refers to the proof of one's truthfulness. Allah *Glorified is He* will not give Al-Walid more than which He has already given him; rather, what he possesses will decrease, for He *Glorified is He* will seize what He has previously given him. Accordingly, some of his sons died, his wealth decreased and he lost his power and position.

Moreover, Allah *Glorified is He* has promised Al-Walid to be inflicted with a spiraling torment, as He says: 'I will inflict a spiraling torment on him.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 17) This means that He *the Almighty* will inflict him

(1) See *Al-Bayhaqi, Al-I'tiqad Wa Al-Hidaya*, 1/268; *Al-Tha'libi, Al-Kashf Wa Al-Bayan*, 6/38; *Al-Baghawi, Tafsir*, 1264; and *Al-Maraghi, Tafsir*, 14/130.

with a severe punishment with no relaxation. Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* described this punishment saying, 'As-Sa'ud is a mountain in the hellfire which the disbeliever climbs for seventy years and then falls from it for another seventy years. He remains forever in that state.'⁽¹⁾ Abu Sa'id Al-Khudari *Allah be pleased with him* said, 'As-Sa'ud is a rock in the hellfire. When they put their hands on it, they melt, and when they take them off, they return as normal. Also, if they put their feet, they melt, and if they take them off, they return as normal.' In another verse, He *Glorified is He* says: 'But anyone who turns away from his Lord's Revelation will be sent by Him to spiraling torment.' (*al-Jinn*: 17) The disbelievers will suffer the torment of climbing a mountain of fire that they barely can climb with great difficulty. When they reach its summit, they fall from it. This punishment recurs eternally and there is no relaxation or relief from it.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِنَّهُ فَكَّرَ وَقَدَّرَ ۖ فَقِيلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ۖ ثُمَّ قِيلَ كَيْفَ قَدَّرَ ۖ ثُمَّ نَبَّأَ
ثُمَّ نَبَّأَ ۖ ثُمَّ عَبَسَ وَبَسَرَ ۖ ثُمَّ أَدْبَرَ وَأَسْتَكَبَرَ ۖ ثُمَّ قَبَلَ ۖ ثُمَّ نَزَلَ

**He planned and plotted [18] devilishly he plotted! [19]
ferociously he plotted! [20] and looked [21] and frowned and
scowled [22] and turned away and behaved arrogantly [23]
(The Quran, *al-Muddaththir*: 18 - 23)**

With regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'He planned and plotted' (*al-Muddaththir*: 18), this means that Al-Walid thought, reflected and pondered upon the matter and then arranged and prepared a speech in his mind. This refers to an incident when He *Glorified is He* revealed to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* His saying: 'Ha Mim. [1] This Scripture is sent down from Allah the Almighty the All Knowing [2] ... to Him is the ultimate return. [3]' (*Ghafir*: 1-3) When he *peace and blessings be upon him* stood to pray in the mosque, Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira was close to him listening to his recitation. He *peace and blessings be upon him* knew that Al-Walid was listening,

(1) In his *Tafsir*, Al-Khazin ascribes this narration to At-Tirmidhi in a Hadith narrated on the authority of Abu Sa'id Al-Khudari *Allah be pleased with him*. See Al-Khazin, *Lubab At-Ta'wil*, 4/364.

so he repeated the aforementioned verses. Thereupon, Al-Walid went to the gathering of his people, Banu Makhzum, and said, 'By Allah, I listened to a speech from Muhammad that is neither the word of mankind nor the jinn. It overflows with sweet clarity; it is fruitful at its lowest and prodigious at its highest.' After he went to his home, the people of Quraysh said, 'By Allah Al-Walid converted to Islam and all the people of Quraysh will do the same.' He went to the gathering of his people and said, 'You claim that Muhammad is a madman, but have you ever seen him seized by a bout of madness?' They answered, 'No.' Then he said, 'You claim that Muhammad is a soothsayer, but have you even seen him soothsaying?' They replied, 'No, by Allah.' Then he asked them, 'You claim that he is a liar, but has he ever lied to you about anything?' They answered, 'No, by Allah.' In passing, we should note that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* because of his truthfulness, was called the honest among them, even before the advent of his Prophethood.⁽¹⁾ The people of Quraysh asked, 'So what is he?' Al-Walid thought deeply and this incident is referred to in these verses under discussion: 'He planned and plotted— [18] devilishly he plotted! [19] Ferociously he plotted!— [20] and looked [21] and frowned and scowled. [22]' (*al-Muddaththir*: 18-22)

Their allegations that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is a madman, a soothsayer or a poet have been proven to be false, so Al-Walid kept thinking deeply and planned and plotted devilishly. He thought about the Quran that Allah *Glorified is He* has revealed to him *peace and blessings be upon him* and planned what to say about him *peace and blessings be upon him*. As for His saying: 'Ferociously he plotted' (*al-Muddaththir*: 20), it means that he, i.e. Al-Walid was cursed and deprived of Allah's Mercy because of what he thought about him *peace and blessings be upon him* and what he has plotted.

With regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'And looked [21] and frowned and scowled 22]' (*al-Muddaththir*: 21-22), it means that Al-Walid was thinking deeply until his heart became so straitened that he frowned and

(1) See *Al-Khazin, Lubab At-Ta'wil*, 4/364; *Ath-Tha'libi, Al-Kashf Wa Al-Bayan*, 10/73; *Al-Baghawi, Tafsir*, 2293; *Ibn 'Agina, Al-Bahr Al-Madid*, 7/176; and *Al-Maraghi, Tafsir*, 29/1309.

scowled. After thinking, planning, pondering, frowning and scowling, he said: 'This is just old sorcery.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 24) This was the outcome of his thinking! Then, He *the Almighty* says about him: 'He turned away and behaved arrogantly.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 23) He arrogantly refused and rejected the Faith and considered himself a great person, while he did not have the qualities of greatness. He behaved arrogantly by attributing to himself abilities greater than his real ones, for everyone has limited abilities.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

فَقَالَ إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ يُؤْتَرُ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِنَّ هَذَا إِلَّا قَوْلُ الْبَشَرِ ﴿٢٥﴾

And said, 'This is just old sorcery [24] just the talk of a mortal! [25] (The Quran, *al-Muddaththir*: 24 -25)

Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira ultimately concluded, after deep thinking, that the Quran is just a matter of sorcery. He thought that what Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said and recited is only old sorcery that he related from someone else. Allah *Glorified is He* inserts the cohesive tie *Fa'* before the verb *Qal* (said) in order for us to know that when Al-Walid turned away and behaved arrogantly, he immediately mentioned this misconception, that is, the Quran is sorcery which separates between the husband and his wife, the father and his son and the two brothers.

Claiming that the Quran is old sorcery means that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* took it from someone before him. This could have another interpretation, which is that the Quran influences the people with its sweetness as if it is sorcery, thus shows falsehood in the form of truth. Thus, all the disbelievers of Mecca called him *peace and blessings be upon him* a sorcerer, which was very severe to him. They did not find any argument against the Quran so they called him *peace and blessings be upon him* a sorcerer. But does the bewitched have any will against the sorcerer? That is to say that if he *peace and blessings be upon him* was a sorcerer, why did not he bewitch all the people of Quryash?! Their persistence in a state of stubborn disbelief is evidence that he is not a sorcerer and that their claim is false. If what he *peace and blessings be upon him* brought was sorcery and he was a sorcerer who

bewitched the slaves and the weak people and made them convert to Islam by his sorcery, then why did he not bewitch those who rejected Islam as well?!

Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira did not only describe the Quran as sorcery, but he also said: ‘Just the talk of the mortal.’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 25) The mortal that he means here is Yasar Abu Fukayh. Al-Walid claimed that Yasar brought and dictated the Quran to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* from Musaylama Al-Kadhdhab. But the disbelievers forget, or claimed to forget, that if the Quran was the speech of the mortal, they could bring something similar to it! So, why were they unable to do that?!

Allah *Glorified is He* challenged them to bring something similar to the Quran, or ten of its verses, saying: ‘Bring then ten chapters forged, like unto it.’ (*Hud*: 13) When they failed, He challenged them to bring only one chapter thereof. Accordingly, He *Glorified is He* reduced the difficulty of the challenge, saying: ‘...then produce a chapter like it...’ (*al-Baqara*: 23). Then He *Glorified is He* conclusively and decisively settled the matter, saying: ‘Say, “Even if all mankind and jinn came together to produce something like this Quran, they could not produce anything like it, however much they helped each other.’’ (*al-Isra*: 88) Thus, how can they say that the Quran is the talk of the mortal?!

Allah says:

سَأُصْلِيهِ سَقَرَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا سَقَرٌ ﴿٢٧﴾ لَا بُقْيَ وَلَا نَذْرٌ ﴿٢٨﴾
لَوْ آتَاكَ لِلبَشَرِ ﴿٢٩﴾ عَلَيْهَا تِسْعَةَ عَشَرَ ﴿٣٠﴾

I will throw him into the scorching Fire [26] What will explain to you what the scorching Fire is? [27] It spares nothing and leaves nothing [28] it scorches the flesh of humans [29] there are nineteen in charge of it [30]
(The Quran, *al-Muddaththir*: 26 - 30)

Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘I will throw him into the scorching Fire.’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 26) This means that He *the Almighty* will throw Al-Walid in one of the gates of the hellfire called *Saqar*. It can also be one of its various levels. He *the Almighty* says about this fire: ‘And neither you nor what you worship can lure away from Allah [162] any except those who will burn in Hell [163]’

(*as-Saffat*: 161-162); and 'Therefore I warn you of the fire that flames [14] in which none but the wicked one will burn. [15]' (*al-Layl*: 14-15)

Allah *the Almighty* then says: 'What will explain to you what the scorching Fire is?' (*al-Muddaththir*: 27) It is as if He *the Almighty* says, 'How can you know, O Prophet Muhammad, what *Saqar* is,' that is, how great its difficulty, hardship and earnestness are! The Arabic word *Saqar* comes from the root *Saqarat* which refers to the sun when it burns the skin of someone's face.

Then Allah *the Almighty* says about *Saqar*: 'It spares nothing and leaves nothing.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 28) It does not leave anyone who deserves the punishment except that it seizes him/her and leaves nothing of the flesh until it burns and ruins it. It neither leaves those who are inside it to live peacefully nor to die; rather, whenever their bodies are burned, they will be renewed and returned back.

The fire of *Saqar* also scorches the flesh, as Allah *the Almighty* says: 'It scorches the flesh of humans.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 29) It burns the skins of the tortured people and blackens their colour. It scorches the skin and leaves it blacker than the darkness of the night.

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'There are nineteen in charge of it.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 30) There are nineteen Angels, Malik and eighteen other Angels, who are in charge of the Fire of *Saqar*; they are its keepers. It has been narrated that Ibn 'Abbas, the interpreter of the Quran, said that the keepers of the hellfire have a countless number of assistants. He also said that six of these keepers lead the disbelievers to the hellfire and another six beat them with iron whips and fire. Malik is the greatest keeper who orders them according to what Allah *Glorified is He* commands him.⁽¹⁾ He *Glorified is He* describes these Angels in another verse as: 'Stern and strong angels who never disobey Allah's Commands to them, but do as they are ordered.' (*at-Tahrim*: 6) Thus, they are very stern, powerful and strong over the people of the hellfire. One of these Angels can throw with one push seventy thousands to the hellfire from among those whom He *Glorified is He* has not shown Mercy.

(1) See *Al-Maturidi, Tafsir*, 10/313; *An-Nasafi, Madarik At-Tanzil*, 3/565; and *Ibn 'Agina, Al-Bahr Al-Madid Fi Tafsir Al-Quran*, 7/179.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا أَصْحَابَ النَّارِ إِلَّا مَلَائِكَةً وَمَا جَعَلْنَا عِدَّتَهُمْ إِلَّا فِتْنَةً لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِيَسْتَفِيقَ
الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَيَزْدَادَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِيمَانًا وَلَا يَرْنَابَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ
وَلِيَقُولَ الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ مَرَضٌ وَالْكَافِرُونَ مَاذَا أَرَادَ اللَّهُ بِهَذَا مَثَلًا كَذَلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَن يَشَاءُ
وَيَهْدِي مَن يَشَاءُ وَمَا يَعْلَمُ جُنُودَ رَبِّكَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَمَا هِيَ إِلَّا ذِكْرَى لِلْبَشَرِ ﴿٣١﴾

none other than angels appointed by Us to guard Hellfire—and
We have made their number a test for the disbelievers. So
those who have been given the Scripture will be certain and
those who believe will have their faith increased: neither those
who have been given the Scripture nor the believers will have
any doubts, but the sick at heart and the disbelievers will say,
‘What could God mean by this description?’ God leaves
whoever He will to stray and guides whoever He will – no one
knows your Lord’s forces except Him – this [description] is a
warning to mortals [31] (The Quran, *al-Muddaththir*: 31)

Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘None other than angels appointed by us to guard Hellfire.’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 31) The companion is the one who has affection towards his companion, and loves to sit and spend his best times with him. Here, the companions of the hellfire are not meant for those who are tortured in it; rather, it refers to its nineteen keepers because they never leave it unguarded. He *Glorified is He* attributes the hellfire to them as if they are its owners who are entitled to choose who goes to the hellfire.

Some of the people of the hellfire will beg *Malik*, its keeper, saying: ‘Ask your Lord to lessen our suffering for one day.’ (*Ghafir*: 49) Those who are being punished in the hellfire will ask its keepers to call Him *Glorified is He* for them to lessen the suffering for one day, but it will be said to them: ‘Did your messengers not come to you with clear evidence of the truth?’ They will say, ‘Yes they did,’ and the keeper will say, ‘you can plead, then, but the pleas of disbelievers will always be in vain.’ (*Ghafir*: 50) Thus, He *Glorified is He* has appointed Angels, not human beings, to guard the hellfire. As the keepers are not from the species of the tortured, they will show no kindness or mercy towards them.

Allah *Glorified is He* then says: ‘...and We have made their number a test for the disbelievers. So those who have been given the Scripture will be certain and those who believe will have their faith increased...’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 31). He *Glorified is He* has not made the number of the keepers of the hellfire, which is very few in the disbelievers’ opinion, except as a test and a trial to lead them astray, as they said, ‘How can this few number torture all those who are in the hellfire?!’ Even Abu Jahl said, ‘Muhammad has only nineteen soldiers! Can each ten of you not defeat one of them?’ Then he called the tribe of Quraysh and mocked at Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying: ‘O people of Quraysh, Muhammad claims that the soldiers of Allah who will torture and imprison you in the hellfire are nineteen and you are more in number. So, can each one hundred among you not defeat one of them?!’⁽¹⁾ Thereupon, He *Glorified is He* revealed His saying: ‘None other than angels appointed by us to guard Hellfire and we have made their number a test for the disbelievers.’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 31) The number of the Angels was a test that led them astray because they did not believe in Allah’s Power and Greatness. On the contrary, the one, who truly believed, reflected on His signs and thus increased in Faith.

Then Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘...So those who have been given the Scripture will be certain...’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 31). The people of the Book who converted to Islam are certain about their belief because they found in their Book that *Malik* is the master of the other eighteen Angels guarding hellfire. So, it has become clear to them that what Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said comes from a Divine Revelation. As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...and those who believe will have their faith increased...’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 31), it means that they will increase in their belief in Allah *Glorified is He* and what He has revealed to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. The people of the Book will have their original faith and belief increased when they find that what he *peace and blessings be upon him* told them about the number of the keepers of the hellfire is in conformity with their Book.

(1) This narration is narrated by Ibn Abu Hatim on the authority of Mohamed Ibn Ishaq. See Ibn Abu Hatim, *Tafsir*, p. 15196; see also Ibn Hisham, *As-Sira An-Nabawiyya*, 1/313; and *As-Suhayli, Al-Rawd Al-Unuf*, 3/106.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: ‘...neither those who have been given the Scripture nor the believers will have any doubts.’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 31) The place of doubt is the heart as He *Glorified is He* says in another verse about the hypocrites: ‘...and their hearts are in doubt, so in their doubt do they waver...’ (*at-Tawba*: 45). Their faith wavers between the mind and the heart. The Arabic word *Al-‘irtiyab* does not mean just having doubt, but it is a doubt with an accusation: ‘...but the sick at heart and the disbelievers will say, “What could Allah mean by this description?”’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 31)

Actually, those who are sick at heart have weak faith; they are Muslims in the time of ease but renege in the time of hardship. They are not hypocrites, but they are weak in their faith as Allah *Glorified is He* makes a distinction between them, saying: ‘The hypocrites and those who have sickness in their hearts said, “These people [the believers] must be deluded by their religion.”’ (*al-Anfal*: 49) Further, He *Glorified is He* differentiates here between those who are sick at heart and the disbelievers, even they both said, ‘What could Allah *Glorified is He* mean by this description?’ This saying is similar to their words in the following verse: ‘Allah does not shy from drawing comparisons even with something as small as a gnat, or larger: the believers know it is the truth from their Lord, but the disbelievers say, ‘What does Allah mean by such a comparison?’ Through it He makes many go astray and leads many to the right path. But it is only the rebels He makes go astray.’ (*al-Baqara*: 26) The disbelievers deny the parable and thereby increased their error, while the believers believed in the parable and recognised that it is the truth.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘...Allah leaves whoever He will to stray and guides whoever He will...’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 31). He *the Almighty* has shown us the Way of Guidance and the way of error. Thus, one can choose either ways: to believe and receive the Guidance, or to follow the way of disbelief and wrongdoing, and thus deprives him/her of the Guidance. If someone argues with you and said that He *Glorified is He* says: ‘...Allah leaves whoever He will to stray and guides whoever He will...’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 31), you should say, ‘Allah *Glorified is He* has explained the way of those He wills to be guided and the way of those whom He leaves astray. Therefore, it is up to the person to follow either of the two ways.’

We have said previously that there are two kinds of Guidance. The first is common for all the people while the second is especially for the believers, which Allah *Glorified is He* clarifies in His saying: 'Allah has increased the guidance of those who follow the right path, and given them their awareness [of Him].' (*Muhammad*: 15) This means that He *Glorified is He* will help the believers to follow His Way of Guidance as He makes it easy for them to obey Him and make it difficult for them to disobey. If the believer adhered to His Way of Guidance and obeyed Him *the Almighty*, He will expand his/her heart and make the obedience dearer to his/her heart, and thus s/he will increase his/her obedience. Besides, when s/he is about to commit a misdeed, He *Glorified is He* will cause him/her to dislike it and to be difficult for him/her until s/he abandons that sin.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: '...No one knows your Lord's Forces except Him...' (*al-Muddaththir*: 31). So, you should not only rely on your power and measure how proportional it is to your enemy. You should leave these measures and just do your best in pursuing the means and the worldly causes and then leave the matter for the heavenly causes. It is as if He *the Almighty* says, 'The least Force of your Lord, O Muhammad, is to strike panic into your enemies' hearts, which is sufficient for you.' It is narrated that during one of the Islamic battles, the smell of the Muslims' mouths changed and they felt a bitter taste due to the long period of fighting. So, they cleaned their teeth and purified their mouths with their *Siwaks*. Upon seeing them doing so, the disbelievers said, 'They are sharpening their teeth to eat us.' Thus, He *Glorified is He* stuck panic in their hearts from an unexpected source.

Then, He *the Almighty* says: '...this is a warning to mortals.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 31) The administrative pronoun here refers to the fire, that is, it is a warning for the mortals and an admonition to the people. The fire of *Saqar* is referred to in His saying: 'I will throw him into the scorching Fire. [26] What will explain to you what the scorching Fire is? [27]' (*al-Muddaththir*: 26-27) It is the fire guarded by nineteen stern and powerful Angels whose number is a test for the disbelievers. The disbelievers, the people of the Book, the believers and those who are sick at heart all differed about this fire. Every group has a different stance about it and about the number of the Angels guarding it.

Some exegetes, however, maintained that it is the Quran here which is meant to be the warning and the admonition for the people, not the fire. The context, nevertheless, gives precedence to the view that it is the fire which is the warning for the people.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

كَلَّا وَالْقَمَرَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَالَّيْلِ إِذَا أَذْبَرَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَالصُّبْحِ إِذَا أَشْفَرَ ﴿٣٤﴾

**Yes — by the moon! [32] By the departing night! [33] By the shining dawn! [34]
(The Quran, *al-Muddaththir*: 32-34)**

Allah *Glorified is He* says that the disbelievers mistakenly think that they can defeat the Angels of the Fire, for they, being deceived by their ignorance, think that the number of these Angels is only nineteen. They forget that these Angels are just the keepers of the hellfire who control it. They are not of the guards of the hellfire who are numbered in thousands and who get the orders from the nineteen keepers. All of them do what they are ordered and they never disobey Him *the Almighty* or favour anyone. So no one will escape the punishment ordained by Him *Glorified is He*.

Afterwards, He *the Almighty* swears by the moon, the night and the morning, saying: ‘No — by the moon! [32] By the departing night! [33] By the shining dawn!’ [34] (*al-Muddaththir*: 32-34) It is He *the Almighty* Who created these creatures and they belong to Him. So, He *the Almighty* swears by whatever He wants about whatever He wants. He once swears, saying: ‘By the morning brightness [1] and by the night when it grows still. [2]’ (*ad-Duha*: 1-2) Further, He *the Almighty* swears by the wind, the brightness of morning, the night and the Angels; He *Glorified is He* even swears by the life of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying: ‘By your life [Prophet], they wandered on in their wild intoxication.’ (*al-Hijr*: 72) Moreover, He *the Almighty* swears by the star when it sets. He *the Almighty* is the Great Creator Who knows best what He has created and how great His creation is. He *the Almighty* also knows the function of every creature He has created. He commanded us, however, not to swear except by Him because we are ignorant about the complete truth of the things.

In these verses, Allah *Glorified is He* swears by what is watched by the people like the moon and the night. After the night, the day comes, but He *Glorified is He* swears by the early time of the day, the dawn because it has some features not shared by other times of the daytime. Allah *Glorified is He* swears in another verse, saying: 'By the dawn that softly breathes.' (*at-Takwir*: 18) Here, He *the Almighty* swears by the shining dawn. The shining of the dawn comes after the end and the departure of the night. The Arabic word *Isfar* refers to the time when the light appears after the darkness of the night. It is used to refer to the woman who unveils her face. When the dawn shines with light, you find serenity and fresh air. In another verse, He *Glorified is He* metaphorically portrays the dawn as having a breath like the human beings, saying: 'By the dawn that softly breathes.' (*at-Takwir*: 18) Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Pray the dawn for its reward is great.' This means to pray the dawn until the light appears in the sky. *Al-'isfar* of the dawn, therefore, is its shining.

Subsequently, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِنَّهَا لِأَحَدَى الْكُبَرِ ۚ نَذِيرًا لِلْبَشَرِ ﴿٣٦﴾
لِمَنْ شَاءَ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ يَتَقَدَّمَ أَوْ يَتَأَخَّرَ ﴿٣٧﴾

**It is one of the mightiest things [35] a warning to
all mortals [36] to those of you who choose to go
ahead and those who lag behind [37]
(The Quran, *al-Muddaththir*: 35 - 37)**

The Arabic word *Al-Kubar* (the mighty) is the plural of *Kubra*, as is clear in the saying of Allah: 'A revelation from the One Who created the earth and the high heaven.' (*Ta Ha*: 5) In this verse, we find the word *Al-'Ula* (high) which is the plural of *U'lia*. Thus, the fire of *Saqar* is one of the mightiest punishments. The torment in the hellfire has many forms and *Saqar* (The scorching Fire) is one of the seven levels that the hellfire has. These levels are The Hell, the flaming Fire, the Crusher, the Burning Fire, the Scorching Fire, the Hellfire and the Abyss. The saying of Allah: 'It is one of the mightiest things...' (*al-Muddaththir*: 35) is the predicate of His Swear: 'By the moon.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 32)

Allah *the Almighty* says about the hellfire that it is: ‘A warning to all mortals.’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 36) In this regard, Al-Hasan Al-Basri said, ‘Allah has never warned by something more difficult than the hellfire.’⁽¹⁾ The mention of the hellfire here alludes to its levels, punishment, keepers and guards; all of these are a warning for the mortals. Some scholars interpret this verse as referring to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* as He *Glorified is He* commands him at the beginning of this chapter, saying: ‘Arise and proclaim warning.’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 2) It is as if He *the Almighty* says to him, ‘You, Prophet Muhammad, is the warner for the humans against Allah’s Punishment, which is the burning fire.’ Thus, he *peace and blessings be upon him* is a warner for all people.

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘To those of you who choose to go ahead and those who lag behind.’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 37) The one has the choice to go ahead, by excelling someone else in doing good deeds and obeying Allah’s Commands, or to lag behind. Going ahead or lagging behind can be pertinent to the matter of obedience and disobedience, the good and the evil or entering the paradise and the hellfire. This is similar to His saying: ‘Say, “Now the truth has come from your Lord: let those who wish to believe in it do so, and let those who wish to reject it do so.”’ (*al-Kahf*: 29) You have the choice to believe or disbelieve, but the benefit of belief will be for you. Indeed, He *Glorified is He* neither benefits from one’s belief nor is harmed by his/her disbelief.

Subsequently, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ ﴿٣٨﴾ إِلَّا أَصْحَابَ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٣٩﴾
فِي جَنَّاتٍ يَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ عَنِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

**Every soul is held in pledge for its deeds [38]
but the Companions of the Right will stay [39]
in Gardens and ask [40] about the guilty [41]
(The Quran, *al-Muddaththir*: 38 - 41)**

All the souls of the disbelievers are held in the fire wherein they will be punished for their misdeeds. Every disbeliever is imprisoned in the hellfire for his/her sins. Linguistically, the Arabic word *Al-Rahn* (Pledge) refers to the

(1) See *Al-Khazin, Lubab At-Ta'wil*, 4/366.

fixation, continuation and holding of something. Thus, they are held in the fire for their misdeeds and sins as every soul will be held accountable for its deeds on the Day of Judgment. Everyone is held in pledge for his/her deeds, and no one bears the sins of anyone else, whether a father or a son. The human being will only have the reward of what s/he has done of god deeds. Thus, the disbelievers will be imprisoned eternally in the Fire of *Saqar* and no intercession will be useful for them. Everyone will be concerned with him/herself and the consequences of his/her deeds. Everyone has the choice to go forward or lag behind, to dignify his/her soul or to humiliate it, for the soul is held in pledge for its deeds.

Allah *Glorified is He* excludes the Companions of the Right from those imprisoned in the hellfire for their misdeeds and sins, saying: 'But the Companions of the Right...' (*al-Muddaththir*: 39). They, i.e. the Companions of the Right will not be imprisoned for their sins in the hellfire, as He *Glorified is He* will forgive their sins. They released themselves by their good deeds as when the mortgagor releases his/her mortgage by repaying what s/he has borrowed. The Companions of the Right are those '...given their Records with their right hands.' (*al-Haqq*: 19) Thus, He *Glorified is He* has excluded them from those held in prison in the hellfire, which is why 'Ali ibn Abu Taleb *Allah be pleased with him* thought that the Companions of the Right are the children of the Muslims.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: '[They] will stay in Gardens and ask [40] about the guilty. [41]' (*al-Muddaththir*: 40-41) The Companions of the Right will ask about the guilty people whom they saw in the worldly life and suffered their criminality and wrongdoing, or they will ask about their sinful companions' destination. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'They will turn to one another with questions: [50] one will say, "I had a close companion [51] on earth who used to ask me, "Do you really believe [52] that after we die and become dust and bone, we shall be brought for judgment?" [53] Then he will say, "Shall we look for him?"'" [54] He will look down and see him in the midst of the Fire [55]' (*as-Saffat*: 50-55) meaning that they, i.e. the Companions of the Right used to turn to one another to ask about this sinful person's destination, and they will find him/her in the midst of the fire in the Hereafter.

Subsequently, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرٍ ﴿٤٢﴾ قَالُوا لَمْ نَكُ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَلَمْ نَكُ نُطْعِمِ الْمَسْكِينِ ﴿٤٤﴾
وَكُنَّا نَحْوُ مَعَ الْخَائِضِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَكُنَّا نَكْذِبُ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿٤٦﴾ حَتَّىٰ أَتَانَا الْيَقِينُ ﴿٤٧﴾

‘What drove you to the Scorching Fire?’ [42] [they will ask] and they will answer, ‘We did not pray [43] we did not feed the poor [44] we indulged with others [in mocking the believers] [45] we denied the Day of Judgment [46] until the Certain End came upon us [47] (The Quran, *al-Muddaththir*: 42 - 47)

The Companions of the Right will reproachfully ask the guilty, ‘What drove you to the Scorching Fire?’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 42) They asked them about the reason for entering the Fire of *Saqar* which is one of the levels of the hellfire. They will answer, ‘We did not pray.’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 43) This entails that they were disbelievers. Someone may ask, ‘How can they pray while they are disbelievers?!’ Their saying that they did not pray is meant to be a confession that they are disbelievers, not praying to Allah *Glorified is He*. Driving them into the Fire of *Saqar* means casting them into it like when the thread passes through the eye of the needle. Thus, the disbelievers admit that they were not praying to Him *Glorified is He* in the worldly life.

Allah *the Almighty* then relates that the guilty will say: ‘We did not feed the poor.’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 44) They will also admit that they did not feed the needy or give charity to the poor. But does refraining from giving charity alone entail getting into the Fire of *Saqar*? Of course not! They neither believed in the prayer nor performed it, and they neither believed in the prescribed alms nor in the right of the needy in their properties. So, they did not give the prescribed alms to them.

The guilty will also say: ‘We indulged with others in mocking the believers.’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 45) They used to indulge in falsehood with those who mocked Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* the Muslims and the Quran. In this regard, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘As He has already revealed to you [believers] in the Scripture, if you hear people denying and ridiculing Allah’s revelation, do not sit with them unless they start to talk of other things, or else you yourselves will become like them: Allah will gather all the hypocrites and the disbelievers together into the hell.’ (*an-Nisa*: 140) The Arabic word *Nakhud* (to indulge) gives a clear allegorical meaning, as the

root of the word *Khawd* (indulgence) means to dip into a liquid such as water or mud. When you go through a liquid, it does not disperse and let the way open for you to go; rather, once you walk into it, the liquid mixes once again and it will be impossible to have a clear way for yourself. Here, this word means to indulge in falsehood or fruitless talk. Indulging in such talks makes you unable to distinguish between the good and the bad matters, as is the case with indulging in falsehood or aimless playing. Those guilty people used to indulge with others in mocking the Messengers, the Books of Allah and the believers, and that is why they deserved being punished in the Fire of *Saqar*.

The guilty people will also say: 'We denied the Day of Judgment.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 46) They denied the Day of Recompense when the people will be held accountable and get rewarded or punished for their deeds. They did not believe in the reward, the punishment or the Account until the certain end came upon them. Moreover, they did not try to repent or to seek and follow the truth. Instead, they denied what the Messengers came with from Allah *Glorified is He* and stubbornly kept on disbelieving until death seized them.

The Arabic word *Al-Yaqin* (certainty) is the fixed matter that is firmly rooted in the reality so that it is not open for change or reconsideration. In fact, nothing is more certain in the reality than death which everyone sees and recognizes. The people may disagree about the Existence of Allah *Glorified is He*, but they cannot disagree about the inevitability of the human being's death. Thus, those guilty people did not pray or give the prescribed alms yet kept on disbelieving and denying the Day of Judgment until death suddenly overtook them before repenting to Allah *Glorified is He*.

Subsequently, He *Glorified is He* says:

فَمَا نَنْفَعُهُمْ شَفَعَةُ الشَّافِعِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ فَمَا لَهُمْ عَنِ التَّذْكَرَةِ مُعْرِضِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

No intercessor's plea will benefit them now [48] What is the matter with them? Why do they turn away from the warning [49] (The Quran, *al-Muddaththir*: 48 - 49)

The Intercession of any intercessor will not be useful for the guilty people. The Arabic word *Al-Shafe'un* (The intercessors) is the plural of *Shafe'* or

Shafi (Intercessor). In this vein, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘Guard yourselves against a Day when no soul will stand in place of another, no Intercession will be accepted for it, nor any ransom; nor will they be helped.’ (*al-Baqara*: 48) And ‘Beware of a Day when no soul can stand in for another. No compensation will be accepted from it, nor Intercession will be of use to it, nor will anyone be helped.’ (*al-Baqara*: 123) The intercession requires the presence of an intercessor, someone to intercede with, another one to be interceded on behalf and the subject of the intercession. These are the four elements in that process of intercession. The one interceded with is Allah *Glorified is He* and the subject of the intercession is the sins. He *Glorified is He* does not accept the intercession from anyone, for He accepts it from the one He approves his/her speech, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: ‘That Day, intercession will be useless except from those to whom the Lord of Mercy has granted permission and whose words He approves.’ (*Ta Ha*: 109)

As for His saying: ‘What is the matter with them? Why do they turn away from the warning?’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 49), it is similar to the verse reading: ‘So why do they not believe?’ (*al-Inshiqaq*: 20) Logically, they should have believed instead of rejecting the admonition. They should have dealt with the matter wisely by giving prevalence to what they should do. But their poor thinking about the consequences of their deeds indicates that they are unwise people. In the same connection, He *the Almighty* says: ‘We have given them Our signs, but they turned their back.’ (*al-Hijr*: 81) They arrogantly rejected Allah’s Way of Guidance with which the Messengers came. Here, the Arabic word *Al-I’rad* means to turn your back on something, get away from it and not to move forward towards it. If they have moved forward to faith, they would have found that good for them.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

كَانَهُمْ حُمُرٌ مُّسْتَنْفِرَةٌ ۖ فَرَّتْ مِنْ قَسْوَرَةٍ ﴿٥٠﴾

Like frightened asses [50] fleeing from a lion? [51]
(The Quran, *al-Muddaththir*: 50 - 51)

Here, the plural of the Arabic word *Hemar* (Ass) is *Humur* (Asses). In this verse, they are described as frightened asses escaping from the powerful

hunters. The Arabs called all what is big and powerful *Qaswara*; it can also refer to the lion from which the frightened asses try to escape. Thus, the asses are either escaping from the archers and the hunters or from a lion. How fast they will then run to escape! Therefore, you should be wondering how those guilty people are fleeing from following the Call, the Religion and the Messengers of Allah *Glorified is He* as if they were asses fleeing from the hunters in the wild land.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

بَلْ يُرِيدُ كُلُّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ أَنْ يُؤْتَىٰ صُحُفًا مُّثَشَّرَةً ﴿٥٢﴾
 كَلَّا بَلْ لَا يَخَافُونَ الْآخِرَةَ ﴿٥٣﴾

**Each one of them demands that a scripture be sent
 down to him and unrolled before his very eyes [52]**

No! Truly they have no fear of the life to come [53]

(The Quran, *al-Muddaththir*: 52 - 53)

Every one of those disbelievers and polytheists asked for unrolled Scripture from Allah *Glorified is He* to be beside him/her when s/he gets up in the morning. That is to say that they demanded to be sent a scripture that states that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is the Messenger of Allah whom they should follow. They used to say, ‘When a man of the children of Israel sins, he finds his sins and its expiation written beside him in the morning. So, can you [Muhammad] show us the like of these signs if you are truly a Messenger as you claim?!’ Gabriel said, ‘If you [Muhammad] wanted, we could have done to them like what we have done to the Children of Israel, and charged them with what we have charged the Children of Israel.’ But he *peace and blessings be upon him* disliked that.⁽¹⁾ Surprisingly, they demanded the revelation of a special Scripture to each one of them, to command them to believe in Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* while they do not believe in Allah *the Almighty*.

(1) See Muqatil ibn Sulaiman, *Tafsir*, 4/500; Al-Khazin, *Lubad At-Tanzil*, 4/268; and Al-Baghawi, *Tafsir*, 5/180.

Afterwards, He *the Almighty* says: ‘No! Truly they have no fear of the life to come.’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 3) As far as the disbelievers are concerned, they do not really want a Scripture or scrolls to be sent down, for if they were sent down to them, they would not believe, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: ‘Even if We had sent down to you [Prophet] a book inscribed on parchment, and they had touched it with their own hands, the disbelievers would still say, ‘This is nothing but blatant sorcery.’ (*al-An‘am*: 7) So, they, under no circumstances, will believe. These are just lame excuses which they make, so that they do not believe. Even if what they demanded was fulfilled, they would not also believe because they want to flee from the Resurrection, the Account and the Last Day. They do not want to adhere to any Way of Guidance, commands or prohibitions.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

كَلَّا إِنَّهُ تَذَكُّرٌ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَمَنْ شَاءَ ذَكِّرْهُ ﴿٥٥﴾
وَمَا يَذْكُرُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ هُوَ أَهْلُ التَّقْوَى وَأَهْلُ الْغَفْرِ ﴿٥٦﴾

But truly this is a reminder [54] Let whoever wishes to take heed do so [55] they will only take heed if God so wishes. He is the Lord who should be heeded, the Lord of forgiveness [56] (The Quran, *al-Muddaththir*: 54 - 56)

In the texts of the Quran, you find something wonderful; for example, two similar texts differ in meaning according to the context of each. Here, Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘But truly this is a reminder. Let whoever wishes to take heed do so.’ In another verse, He says: ‘No indeed! This [Quran] is a lesson from which those who wish to be taught should learn.’ (*Abasa*: 11, 12) And ‘This is a reminder. Let whoever wishes, take the way to his Lord.’ (*al-Insan*: 29) This is one kind of similarity between the verses of the Quran and that is why He *Glorified is He* says: ‘When We have recited it, repeat the recitation.’ (*al-Qiyama*: 18) Therefore, the similarity between the verses is not just a matter of fixed forms or mechanical processes, for it is the words of the All Wise Lord. The Quran is a reminder and a great admonition. It is not old sorcery or the talk of the mortals, as the disbelievers claim; rather, it is a reminder from Him *Glorified is He* for His Creation.

He *the Almighty* says: 'Let whoever wishes to take heed do so.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 55) The one who wishes to be admonished will be rewarded for his/her action. So you should comply with Allah's Commands and Prohibitions, which are found in His Book. No one is prevented from or forced to do anything, for the human being has free will. So anyone who is heedless of the admonition is responsible for the consequences of his/her action as s/he preferred something over the Quran and turned away from its admonition.

Then Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'they will only take heed if Allah so wishes. He is the Lord who should be heeded, the Lord of forgiveness.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 56) If He *Glorified is He* wishes guidance for them, they will take heed and be admonished, for no one is able to do anything except with Allah's Predestination and with the power He bestowed on him/her. He *Glorified is He* concludes the chapter of *al-Muddaththir* by praising Himself, for He deserves to be held in awe by His servants. They should fear His punishment, believe in Him and obey Him as He is fully able to forgive their previous disbelief and sins. Anas ibn Malik narrated that Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said regarding this verse, 'Allah *Glorified is He* said, 'I deserve to be held in awe and I will forgive whoever fears Me provided that s/he does not associate any deity with Me.'⁽¹⁾

(1) See Ahmad, *Musnad*, Hadith no. 12442 and 13349; Ibn Maja, *Sunnan*, Hadith no. 4399; Ibn Abu 'Uasim, *As-Sunna*, Hadith no. 969; At-Tabarani, *Al-Mu'jam Al-Awsat*, Hadith no. 8515; and Al-Hakim, *Mustadrak*, Hadith no. 3867.

the chapter of

al-Qiyama

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

The chapter of al-Qiyama⁽¹⁾ (The Final Judgment Day).

Allah *Glorified is He* says:

لَا أَقْسِمُ بِيَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ ۖ وَلَا أَقْسِمُ بِالنَّفْسِ اللَّوَّامَةِ ﴿٢﴾

**By the Day of Resurrection [1]
and by the self-reproaching soul! [2]
(The Quran, *al-Qiyama*: 1-2)**

Here, He *Glorified is He* literally says ‘I do not swear’ as He wants to make it clear that the disbelievers have no right to deny the Day of Resurrection; so it is not proper that He swears in order to affirm this reality, but if He were to swear, He would swear by so and so. Thus, the meaning of ‘I do not swear’ is that the matter is very plain and clear that He *the Almighty* is not in need to swear, but if He were to swear, He would swear by the Day of Resurrection. He *Glorified is He* only swears by something great, given the fact that the person swears by what s/he appreciates. So, what do you think about the greatness of the Day of Resurrection if the One Who swears by it is Allah *Glorified is He* Himself?!

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* swears another time by the self-reproaching soul which stimulates the person, by virtue of its goodness, to do good after committing something evil. It whispers to the person when s/he commits something wrong, saying, ‘Allah has not commanded you to do that.’ Thereupon, s/he returns to the right course by repenting and seeking His Forgiveness.

(1) *The chapter of al-Qiyama* is number 75 in the order of the *Mushaf*. It was revealed after the chapter of *al-Qari'a* and before *al-Humaza*. Its order according to the revelation is 30. It was revealed in Mecca, i.e. before the *Hijra*, and its verses are 40.

The person may commit a sin, but his/her soul regains its awareness of Allah's Way of Guidance because s/he has the cell of faithful immunity inside him/her. He *Glorified is He* has divided the human souls into three kinds: self-reproaching, evil-inciting and the peaceful soul. The mission of the self-reproaching soul is to confront what the evil soul commands the human being to do. But if the self-reproaching soul does not do its part, the evil soul will keep on inciting evil and nothing will deter it.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ نَجْمَعَ عِظَامَهُ، بَلَىٰ قَدَرِينَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُسَوَّىٰ بَنَانُهُ،

Does man think We shall not put his bones back together? [3] In fact, We can reshape his very fingertips [4] (The Quran, *al-Qiyama*: 3 - 4)

Does the disbeliever think that Allah *Glorified is He* will not put his/her bones back together even after they disjoined each other, decayed and mixed with dust which the wind blows far away?! The Arabic verb *Hasiba* (to think) is in the present form and indicates something that will happen in the future. It here refers to the Second Blow in the Trumpet. This verb is mentioned in the past tense in His saying: 'Do people think they will be left alone after saying 'We believe' without being put to the test?' (*al-'Ankabut*: 2) So, do the people think that they can just say, 'We believe' without being tested? In fact, they have already been put to the test.

Al-Akhnas ibn Shurayq Al-Thaqafi said to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* 'O Muhammad, tell me about the Day of Resurrection and how it will be like.' When he *peace and blessings be upon him* told him, 'Uday ibn Rabi'a, the ally of Banu Zuhrah and the relative of Al-Akhnas said: 'Even if I saw that Day, I would believe neither in you nor in your Message. How can Allah put the bones back together?!' Thereupon Allah *Glorified is He* revealed His saying: 'Does man think We shall not put his bones back together? [3] In fact, We can reshape his very fingertips. [4]' (*al-Qiyama*: 3-4) He *Glorified is He* is fully Able to put the bones back together and to shape them as He has formed them in the first time. Moreover, He is fully Able to do what is greater than this, namely, to reshape people's very fingertips.

However, some of the exegetes said that the Arabic word ‘*Nusawwi*’ means flattening the fingers with the palm until they become like the hoof of the camel so that such a person who denied resurrection cannot make use of his/her hands for the rest of his/her life. Qatada said, ‘If Allah has willed, He could have made his fingers like the hoof of the cow or the cattle. So he would not be able to eat except with his mouth like the rest of the cattle. This is a punishment for denying the Resurrecting.’ He *Glorified is He* has made the fingers of the human beings separated, so that s/he can eat with his/her hand and be able to withhold or stretch it as s/he wishes.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

بَلْ يُرِيدُ الْإِنْسَانُ لِيَفْجُرَ أَمَامَهُ، ۝٥ يَسْتَلْ أَيَّانَ يَوْمُ الْقِيَمَةِ ۝٦

**Yet man wants to deny what is ahead of him [5]
he says, ‘So, when will this Day of Resurrection be?’ [6]
(The Quran, *al-Qiyama*: 5 - 6)**

This person who denied and disbelieved in the Resurrection wants no one to command him/her to do the right and not to do the wrong. S/he just wants to freely disobey Allah *the Almighty* and to commit sins and terrible misdeeds. However, if s/he believed in the Resurrection, s/he would be obliged obey Him *Glorified is He*. S/he commits the sin and delays the repentance daily, saying, ‘I will repent tomorrow,’ but s/he never does that. His/her soul does not let him/her repent until s/he dies while committing the evil deeds. S/he stubbornly keeps on sinning and transgressing without being deterred; rather, s/he always seeks the worldly life and forgets death. It is as if He *Glorified is He* says, ‘Do not pay heed to the words of someone who denies the Resurrection as s/he only does so in order to live in this worldly life without a Way of Guidance prescribing what to do and what not to do.’ In the same vein, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘He asks, “When will this Day of Resurrection be?”’ (*al-Qiyama*: 6); and: ‘They ask you [Prophet] about the Hour, “When will it happen?”’ (*al-A’raf*: 187) This disbelieving person asks about the time of the Day of Resurrection with a tone of denial.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

فَإِذَا بَرِقَ الْبَصَرُ ۖ وَخَسَفَ الْقَمَرُ ۗ وَجُمِعَ الشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ ۚ
 يَقُولُ الْإِنْسَانُ يَوْمَئِذٍ إِنِّي الْمَفْرُ ۖ

**When eyes are dazzled [7] and the moon eclipsed [8]
 when the sun and the moon are brought together [9]
 on that Day man will say, ‘Where can I escape?’ [10]
 (The Quran, *al-Qiyama*: 7-10)**

In this worldly life, the disbeliever questions the coming of the Day of Resurrection, but in the Hereafter, when the Day of Resurrection overtakes him/her, s/he will come to know for certain that s/he has wasted his/her lifetime in denying the Truth. When his/her eyes are dazzled due to the hardship of the Day of Resurrection, s/he will know that s/he has made a fatal mistake.

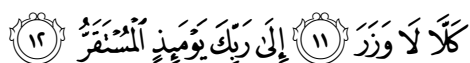
As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘When the eyes are dazzled.’ (*al-Qiyama*: 7), it means when his/her eyes are widely-opened for being dazzled with panic, shock and fear from what s/he sees. This is similar to His saying: ‘He only gives them respite until a Day when their eyes will stare in terror’ (*Ibrahim*: 42), and ‘When the True Promise draws near, the disbelievers’ eyes will stare in terror’ (*al-Anbiya*: 97) meaning that their eyes will stare in terror without turning right or left for the calamities they are watching. When someone gets into a panic and fear, you see how his/her facial expressions change. Thus, on the Day of Resurrection, fear will overwhelm the people that they do not turn away from that frightening scene.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: ‘And the moon eclipsed.’ (*al-Qiyama*: 7-10) A lunar eclipse takes place and the moon's light goes out. When the moon eclipses, it loses its light and the darkness befalls. Here, the verb ‘eclipse’ is used in the passive voice. The sun and the moon will be brought together when they lose their lights and He *Glorified is He* will make them shrouded in darkness. Therefore, the sun will join the moon, after being separated from each other, and the precise system of the universe will consequently collapse.

In the midst of all this – the eclipse of the moon, the shrouded sun, the universal darkness and the unlimited panic – you will find the arrogant and haughty person saying, ‘Where can I escape?’ (*al-Qiyama*: 10) Can you imagine how

fearful and frightened s/he is?! S/he cannot return to the worldly life, nor does s/he have any refuge, friend or helper. S/he feels that s/he is besieged, so s/he will say: ‘Where can I escape?’ (*al-Qiyama*: 10) Such a people, mentioned in the chapter of *al-Muddaththir*, used to flee from the admonition and the reminding in this worldly life, as He *the Almighty* says: ‘Why do they turn away from the warning, [49] like frightened asses [50] fleeing from a lion? [51]’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 49-51) In the chapter under discussion, when they face the event of the Day of Judgment and become certain about its truth which they refused to admit, they will say, ‘Where can We escape?’ (*al-Qiyama*: 10) He *Glorified is He* decisively ends their hope of finding a way out, saying: ‘Where will they go?’ (*at-Takwir*: 26)

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:



**Truly, there is no refuge [11] they will all
return to your Lord on that Day [12]
(The Quran, *al-Qiyama*: 11-12)**

When Allah *Glorified is He* wants to frighten the people from the Hereafter, He says: ‘Truly, there is no refuge: [11] they will all return to your Lord on that Day. [12]’ (*al-Qiyama*: 11-12) On that Day, there is no refuge or helper except Him *Glorified is He*. As for the disbelievers, He *the Almighty* states that there is no helper or supporter for them. They will all return to Him in the Hereafter which will last forever. The Arabic word *Al-Mustaqar* (return) is the place wherein you stay. In fact, the ultimate stay, returning and destination will be in the Hereafter. Therefore, the return of all the creatures will be to Him *the Almighty*. In this connection, ‘Abdullah ibn Mas‘ud said, ‘To Allah is the return and the destination.’ They will return to their Lord to stay eternally in either the Paradise or the Hellfire.

Subsequently, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

يُنَبِّئُ الْإِنْسَانَ بِمَا قَدَّمَ وَأَخَّرَ ﴿١٣﴾ بَلِ الْإِنْسَانُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ بَصِيرَةٌ ﴿١٤﴾
وَلَوْ أَلْقَى مَعَاذِيرَهُ ﴿١٥﴾

**On that Day, man will be told what he put first and
what he put last [13] Truly, man is a clear witness
against himself [14] Despite all the excuses he may put
forward [15] (The Quran, *al-Qiyama*: 13 - 15)**

On the Day of Resurrection, when the sun and the moon will be brought together and shrouded, the human being will be informed about what s/he has put first and what s/he has put last. This is similar to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘We shall bring out a record for each of them, which they will find spread wide open, [13] Read your record. Today your own soul is enough to calculate your account. [14]’ (*al-Isra*: 13-14) The human being will be told about what s/he has done of good and bad deeds as well as his/her good or bad practices that the people followed after his/her death. Allah *Glorified is He* will inform him/her about the good deeds s/he has done and also about what s/he has not done.

Then He *the Almighty* says: ‘Truly, man is a clear witness against himself. [15]’ (*al-Qiyama*: 14) There are witnesses against the human within him/herself; they actually witness and watch what s/he does. These witnesses are his/her hearing, sight and limbs. The word *Basira* (witness) implicitly indicates that the human being is a clear witness against him/herself, as you see nothing better than yourself. This confirms His saying: ‘Today your own soul is enough to calculate your account.’ (*al-Isra*: 14) This means that your soul is enough to witness against you. He *Glorified is He* has made a clear witness within the human against him/herself as when you say to someone, ‘You are the evidence against yourself.’

He *the Almighty* says: ‘Truly, man is a clear witness against himself, [14] despite all the excuses he may put forward [15]’ (*al-Qiyama*: 14-15). Even if the human being puts forward all the excuses and argued for him/herself, this will not benefit him/her as a witness from within him/herself bore witness against him/her. Allah *Glorified is He* clarifies some of their excuses, saying: ‘By Allah, our Lord, we have not set up partners beside Him’ (*al-An'am*: 23), and ‘On the Day Allah raises them all from the dead, they will swear before Him as they swear before you now.’ (*al-Mujadala*: 18)

Subsequently, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

لَا تُحَرِّكْ بِهِ لِسَانَكَ لِتَعْجَلَ بِهِ ۚ (١٦) إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا جَمْعَهُ وَقُرْآنَهُ (١٧)
فَإِذَا قَرَأَهُ فَاتَّبِعْ قُرْآنَهُ (١٨) ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا بَيَانَهُ (١٩)

[Prophet], do not rush your tongue in an attempt to hasten [your memorization of] the Revelation [16] We shall make sure of its safe collection and recitation [17] When We have recited it, repeat the recitation [18] And We shall make it clear [19] (The Quran, *al-Qiyama*: 16 - 19)

Allah *Glorified is He* reassures Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* that the Quran will be preserved because when the revelation was sent down to him, he used to repeat it word for word, lest he forgets anything thereof. For instance, when the saying of Allah: ‘Say [Prophet], ‘It has been revealed to me...’ (*al-Jinn*: 1) was revealed to him, he used to repeat that inwardly after Gabriel lest he forgets it. This was out of his carefulness and eagerness to preserve the Quran. Accordingly, He *Glorified is He* prohibits him from rushing, saying: ‘[Prophet], do not rush to recite before the revelation is fully complete.’ (*Ta Ha*: 114) This means that he should not rush or pre-occupy himself with repeating and rehearsing for nothing of what he is assigned to memorise will escape his memory. In another verse, He *the Almighty* says: ‘[Prophet], We shall teach you [the Quran] and you will not forget.’ (*al-A‘la*: 6) In the verse under discussion, Allah *Glorified is He* prohibits him *peace and blessings be upon him* from rushing to recite it, that is, when Jibril (Gabriel) completes the recitation of the verses, he *peace and blessings be upon him* can recite them as he wishes.

Some quarters or even complete chapter used to be sent down all at once to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. When the revelation departs him, he repeats them exactly as they have been revealed. If the chapter is completely revealed all at once, it would be easier than being revealed in separated verses. One of the wonders of the Quran is that he *peace and blessings be upon him* was able to repeat the recitation of a whole chapter dictated to him, while no one of us can repeat his verbatim words after talking for five minutes, for instance. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* reassures him *peace and blessings be upon him* that he will not forget anything from the Quran. He

should wait until the recitation of the verse ends, and then he can repeat it without missing one letter.

He *the Almighty* says: 'We shall make sure of its safe collection and recitation. [17] When We have recited it, repeat the recitation.' (*al-Qiyama*: 17-18) He *the Almighty* causes the Quran to be collected in Prophet Muhammad's chest that he forgets nothing from it. Afterwards, he *peace and blessings be upon him* should apply its commands and prohibitions. He should listen first and then recite it as Gabriel dictated to him. Then, it is upon Him *Glorified is He* to clarify, explain and interpret it. It is as if He *the Almighty* says: 'After you, Prophet Muhammad, memorise and recite it as We have taught you, We will explain and clarify its meaning and interpretation. We will illustrate the lawful and the unlawful that the Quran contains.'

He *Glorified is He* addresses Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in another verse, saying: 'We have revealed to you the Reminder that you may make clear to men what has been revealed to them...' (*an-Nahl*: 44). Thus, He *Glorified is He* has clarified the Quran to him *peace and blessings be upon him* and he, in his turn, clarified it to the people. So, it is upon Him *the Almighty* to make clear what is lawful and unlawful and to illustrate the Quranic injunctions and rulings. The Arabic word '*Alayna* (upon us) gives the indication that He *Glorified is He* has obliged Himself to collect the Quran in Prophet Muhammad's chest and to clarify its general rulings, be they obligatory acts, norms or Islamic Pillars.

Subsequently, He *Glorified is He* says:

كَلَّا بَلْ تُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ ۖ وَتَذَرُونَ الْآخِرَةَ ﴿٢٠﴾

**Truly you [people] love this fleeting world [20]
and neglect the life to come [21]
(The Quran, *al-Qiyama*: 20 - 21)**

The people love the fleeting worldly life, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'If anyone desires [only] the fleeting life, We speed up whatever We will in it, for whoever We wish; in the end We have prepared hell for him in which to burn, disgraced and rejected.' (*al-Isra*': 18)

And if ‘...anyone strives for the rewards of this world, We will give him some of them. If anyone strives for the rewards of the Hereafter, We will give him some of them: We will reward the grateful.’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 145) Thus, the one who wants the rewards of this worldly life gets the reward of his/her work even if s/he is a disbeliever. The disbelievers take the rewards of the fleeting worldly life, while the believers receive the endless reward of the Hereafter.

The reward of the fleeting world is its bounties, pleasures, gratifications, luxury and prosperity. So whoever wants the reward of this fleeting world, Allah *Glorified is He* will give him/her such pleasures. They love the fleeting world, as Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘Do you [Believers] prefer this world to the life to come?’ (*at-Tawba*: 38) and ‘Those who love this world’s life more than the Hereafter...’ (*Ibrahim*: 3). The Arabic word *Istahabba* (preferred) means that their love for the worldly life transcended the natural limit. However, if someone loves it because it helps him/her to achieve the religious duties and to get the reward of the Hereafter, this will benefit him/her in the Hereafter. This is a pursuit of the worldly life for the sake of the Hereafter.

In the verse under discussion, we do not find those who love the worldly life for the sake of the Hereafter; rather, we find those who prefer the worldly life to the Hereafter. They hasten to achieve the worldly pleasures by every possible way, even if it is unlawful. They turn others from Allah’s Way and do not adhere to it, mistakenly thinking that there is no accountability in the Hereafter. For this reason, they neglect the Hereafter; they do not believe in its truth and thus abandon working for its sake. Instead, they, as most of the people do, prefer the worldly life to the Hereafter. This verse addresses the disbelievers for they were working for the sake of the worldly life and not for the Hereafter. Their violent love for the fleeting worldly life stimulated them to deny the Day of Resurrection and disbelieve in what Allah *Glorified is He* has revealed to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. They are going astray in this worldly life and are distracted from the Hereafter.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:



**On that Day there will be radiant faces [22]
looking towards their Lord [23]
(The Quran, *al-Qiyama*: 22-23)**

The Arabic word *Al-Nadara* means beauty, whiteness and radiance. On the Day of Judgment, the believers' faces will be as bright as light. Their faces will be beautiful and manifest their happiness due to the pleasure they enjoy in the Hereafter. This word also means smoothness and exultation. Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* describes their faces as radiant with happiness out of what He has bestowed on them, as He *the Almighty* says: 'You will recognize on their faces the radiance of bliss.' (*al-Mutaffifin*: 24) In this regard, Al-Suddi said, 'When the people of the paradise are admitted to it, they will find a tree by its door. The trunk of the tree is two fountains. When they drink from one of them, the hatred will be taken away from their chests; this is the Pure Drink. When they bathe by the other fountain, the radiance of bliss will appear on their faces so they will never become ugly.'⁽¹⁾ Thus, the radiance of the bliss will be on their skins and they will enjoy various kinds of pleasure.

With these radiant faces, they will look towards their Lord Who has bestowed His Blessings on them, as He *the Almighty* says: 'On that Day there will be radiant faces, [22] looking towards their Lord. [23]' (*al-Qiyama*: 22-23) The measures on the Day of Resurrection are different from that we have in this worldly life. In this life, your laws and body cannot make it possible for you to see Allah *Glorified is He*. In the Hereafter, however, your constitution and body will make it possible for you to see Him *Glorified is He*. This is the utmost bliss in the Hereafter. In this worldly life, you live with Allah's Omnipotence, but in the Hereafter, the believers will lead the life of the one who looks towards Him *Glorified is He*.

The believer will enjoy the greatest pleasure of Allah *Glorified is He* that is, seeing his/her Lord. Al-Hasan Al-Basri said, 'Allah will beautify the faces that look at Him. These faces must become radiant while they are looking to

(1) See *Al-Khazin, Lubab At-Ta'wil*, 2/201; and *Al-Baghawi, Tafsir*, 3/230.

their Lord *Glorified is He*.⁽¹⁾ This is the greatest Pleasure that He *Glorified is He* bestows on them. However, the believers' sight cannot encompass Him because He is the Greatest Who encompasses them, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'No vision can take Him in, but He takes in all vision. He is the All Subtle, the All Aware.' (*al-An'am*: 103) Besides, Prophet Muhammad said, 'You will see your Lord with your eyes as you see the moon.'⁽²⁾

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وُجُوهُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِآسَرَةٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ تَنْظُرُونَ أَن يُفْعَلَ بِهَا فَاقِرَةٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

**And on that Day there will be the sad and
despairing faces [24] of those who realize that
a great calamity is about to befall them [25]
(The Quran, *al-Qiyama*: 24 - 25)**

While the faces of the believers will be radiant and smooth, expressing the bliss of the paradise, the disbelievers' faces will be frown, sad and black. They are devoid of any trace of bliss or happiness. Allah *Glorified is He* says in another verse about Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira: 'and frowned and scowled.' (*al-Muddaththir*: 22) The verb *Basara* means that his face frowned and scowled for the concerns he has. Therefore, the disbelievers' faces will be frowned, despairing, dark and dust-stained as stated in His words: 'but some faces will be dust-stained [40] and covered in darkness: [41] those are the disbelievers, the licentious. [42]' (*'Abasa*: 40-42) So, their faces will be dust-stained and covered in darkness. The Arabic word *Al-Qatar* is the air full with the smoke of roasted meat. A good smell may waft from it, but it blackens the colour of the one who exposes him/herself to it.

Then Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Those who realize that a great calamity is about to befall them.' (*al-Qiyama*: 25) At that time, the disbelievers will have certitude that a great punishment will befall them. As for the Arabic word

(1) See Mujahid ibn Jabr, *Tafsir*, 687; Al-Tabari, *Jame' Al-Bayan*, 34/72; and Al-Baghawi, *Tafsir*, 8/284.

(2) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Jarir ibn 'Abdullah Al-Bajli. See Al-Humaydi, *Musnad*, Hadith no. 817; Ahmad, *Musnad*, Hadith no. 19190; Ibn Maja, *Sunnan*, Hadith no. 177; and Abu 'Uwana, *Mustakhraj*, Hadith no. 1112.

Al-Faqira, it refers to the great calamity and the serious matter. It is said that it refers to entering the fire, or it means that their faces will not see Allah *Glorified is He*. Other exegetes interpreted it as the kinds of punishments they will suffer in the fire. Al-Kalbi said, '*Al-Faqira* is that the faces will be prevented from seeing their Lord and will not look at Him.'⁽¹⁾

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

كَلَّا إِذَا بَلَغَتِ التَّرَاقِيَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَقِيلَ مَنْ رَاقٍ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَظَنَّ أَنَّهُ الْفِرَاقُ ﴿٢٨﴾

**Truly, when the soul reaches the collarbone [26]
when it is said, 'Could any charm-healer save him
now?' [27] when he knows it is the final parting [28]
(The Quran, *al-Qiyama*: 26 - 28)**

The Arabic word *Al-Taraqi* refers to the bones between the air gap of the collar and the neck wherein the sound is produced. These verses refer to the state when the Spirit comes up to the throat. The veins of the neck are also called *At-Taraqi*. So, reaching *Al-Taraqi* is the time when the soul reaches the collarbone which is at the front of the throat above the chest. The soul ascends to it at the time when the death rattle happens. The Spirit of the human being is taken from the feet's toes, then from the ankles, then the two legs and thereupon the shins cool down after the Spirit goes through them up to the thighs and then up to the collarbone. Thereupon, death rattle is heard and it only takes moments until s/he dies. The sight will follow the Spirit after its departure.

Meanwhile, the dying person's family members are around him. They will mistakenly think they can save his/her life and say to each other, 'Could any charm-healer save him now?' (*al-Qiyama*: 29) Some will say, 'Call a physician to treat him/her and save him/her from what befell him/her.' They called for the healers, but they can do nothing for him/her against Allah's Decree. It is said that the Angels who witness the death of someone say to each other, 'Who will ascend with his/her Spirit when it comes out?' Then, either the Angels of mercy or punishment ascends with it.

(1) *Al-Sa'ib*, like *Al-Kalbi*, said that the word *Faqira* means that the faces of the disbelievers will be prevented from seeing their Lord. See *Ar-Razi*, *Mafatih Al-Ghaib*, 30/733.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: ‘When he knows it is the final parting.’ (*al-Qiyama*: 28) The dying person knows for sure that it is the time of his/her departure when s/he leaves his/her children, friends and those who love him/her. Further, s/he leaves what s/he has earned in his/her worldly life, be it money or real estate. At this point, death is certain. Death entails leaving the worldly life, the property, the family and the children.

When s/he becomes certain that inevitably s/he will leave the worldly life and die, the doctor can do nothing for him/her. At that time, s/he despairs of the worldly life and its people; s/he is about to depart from this life and to pay farewell to his family and friends. Afterwards, s/he moves to the world of graves. S/he leaves everything s/he kept in his/her worldly life, including his/her position, prestigious life, car, spouse, children, family and beloved ones. In other words, s/he will leave the worldly life and all what it has. It is the moment of departure when the human being's life and story on earth, with all its events, end. It is a moment in which the eyes of the true lovers shed tears for the one who suffers the agony of death. On the contrary, it is a moment when his/her enemies, who dislike him/her and wish him/her death, are happy.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَالْفَتَى السَّائِى بِالسَّائِى (٢٩) إِلَى رَبِّكَ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمَسَاقُ (٣٠)

**When his legs are brought together [29] on that
day he will be driven towards your Lord [30]
(The Quran, *al-Qiyama*: 29 - 30)**

The one who ponders over these verses and thinks about this moment of death finds that this human being leaves the worldly life with all what it has to go to another life where s/he does not know what will happen to him/her. The person performing the ritual bathing to the dead person turns him/her to the right or the left. In order to avoid the falling of the dead person's legs, s/he puts the right leg over the left and brings the two legs together. Some interpreted this verse to refer to the state when the hardship of the death comes together with that of the Hereafter, as the day of one's death is the last day in his/her worldly life and the first in the Hereafter. It is said, ‘No person dies except

that his/her legs are brought together because of the hardship of the death s/he is suffering from.' Thus, the hardships and the agony of the death are combined with that of the Day of Judgment. S/he moves from the calamity of death into another one in the Hereafter if s/he was not an obedient believer in Allah *Glorified is He*. Expressing the difficulty of something, the Arab people used the idiom '*Ala Saq*' which is used in the verse under discussion. Similarly, 'to express the difficulty of the war', the Arabs said, 'The war among us was fierce.' The hardship of departing the worldly life itself is compounded with the hardship of leaving the household, the children, the property and the position. When someone dies, his/her legs become rigid and stick to each other.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: 'On that day he will be driven towards your Lord.' (*al-Qiyama*: 30) On the Day of Judgment, the slaves will return to Allah *Glorified is He* and will be driven towards Him in order that He judges between them. So, no one should think that s/he will return to anyone else. The Angels will drive his/her spirit to where He *Glorified is He* has ordered them, either to the paradise or the hellfire. When you find the Arabic word *Yawma'idhin* (On that day), you should know that there is an ellipsis which is more than one sentence; it is: when the Day of Judgment comes, they will be driven to their destination.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

فَلَا صَدَقَ وَلَا صَلَّى (٣١) وَلَكِنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّى (٣٢) ثُمَّ ذَهَبَ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ يَتَمَطَّى (٣٣)

**He neither believed nor prayed [31] but denied
the truth and turned away [32] walking back to
his people with a conceited swagger [33]
(The Quran, *al-Qiyama*: 31- 33)**

Some people of Quraysh did not believe in Allah *Glorified is He*, but rather rejected the Faith and denied Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. This is what the leaders of the tribes of Quraysh, like Abu Jahl, Abu Lahb and Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira, had done. Accordingly, the exegetes maintained that this verse refers to Abu Jahl and other disbelieving leaders of Quraysh. These scholars said, 'Abu Jahl neither believed in the Quran nor

prayed to Allah *Glorified is He*. He believed neither in what has come from Allah nor in the truthfulness of Messenger Muhammad.⁽¹⁾

However, neither Abu Jahl nor Al-Walid is meant by this verse, but rather the human beings in general, as the beginning of the chapter confirms: ‘Does man think We shall not put his bones back together?’ (*al-Qiyama*: 3) Thus, the word ‘man’ here is a generic, used to refer to all people. Such people did not believe in Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* the Quran or the Resurrection. Further, they did not pray but rather denied the truth and turned away from obedience.

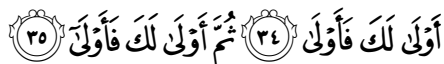
The Arabic word *Saddaq* (to believe) can mean *Tasadaqa* (To give alms) which is the root of *sadaqa* (charity). So the meaning could be that such people did not give alms to the poor and did not feed the needy. They did not worship Allah *Glorified is He* by doing any good deed, but rather denied the Resurrection, the Quran and Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Further, they turned away from them.

Afterwards, He *the Almighty* says: ‘Walking back to his people with a conceited swagger.’ (*al-Qiyama*: 33) Such a disbeliever walked back to his/her people with a conceited swagger and strut. In this regard, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said: ‘The hostility would provoke between my *ummah* if they walked with strut and served the children of the Persian and the Romans.’

Thus, after his/her denial, s/he turned away and walked with a swagger, strut and arrogance. The Arabic word *Yatamatta* means stretching the back; the word *Al-Matiyya* refers to the camels which can be ridden upon. This word wonderfully indicates the relation between the sound of the letters and the image that Allah *Glorified is He* wants to portray. We can imagine the image of the one who stretches his/her muscles by considering the strength of the letter *Ta'* followed by letter *Alif* with its long sound. It exemplifies the stretching of the limbs with swagger and strut.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

(1) See *Muqatil ibn Sulaiman, Tafsir*, 4/513.



Closer and closer it comes to you [34] Closer and closer still [35] (The Quran, *al-Qiyama*: 34 - 35)

The cause of the revelation of this verse is that Abu Jahl threatened to kill Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying, ‘Go away from me, for neither you nor your Lord can do anything to do. The people of Quraysh know that I am the most honourable and respected person. So how can you threaten me, Ibn Abu Kabsha, [Prophet Muhammad]?’ Afterwards, Abu Jahl went to his home and Allah *Glorified is He* has referred to this incident, saying: ‘He walked back to his people with a conceited swagger. [33] Closer and closer it comes to you. [34] Closer and closer still. [35]’ (*al-Ahzab*: 33-35) Thereupon, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* seized him by the throat and hit him on his chest and said, ‘Closer and closer it comes to you; Closer and closer still.’ This statement is said to the one who is about to be inflicted with a calamity or has already been inflicted with it. Subsequently, Abu Jahl said, ‘How can Muhammad threaten me even though no one living between the two mountains of Mecca is more honourable and respected than me?!’ Accordingly, He *Glorified is He* revealed His saying: ‘Taste this, you powerful, respected man!’ (*ad-Dukhan*: 49)

Someone may ask, ‘Why does Allah *Glorified is He* repeat the verse: “Closer and closer it comes?”’ (*al-Qiyama*: 34)’ The answer is that the punishment could be twice; one in the worldly life by getting killed and cursed and the other when he dies. There will be a punishment for him when he is resurrected and when he enters the hellfire. For this reason, Allah *Glorified is He* uses the cohesive tie *thumma* (Then) to indicate that there is a long period between the two punishments. The Arabic particle *Fa’*, on the contrary, indicates that the second action shortly follows the first. An example for the usage of the cohesive tie *thumma* (Then) is found in the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: ‘Even if they come out to fight you, they will soon turn tail; then they will get no help.’ (*Al-Imran*: 111) When we look closely to the literal understanding of this verse, someone may think that it should be formed in a different way; that is to say that after they turn tail, they will get no help. If the particle *Al-Fa’*

were used, this would indicate that they will not defeat the Muslims at the early time of the Message. But using the cohesive tie *thumma* in the verse means that they will not defeat the believers even if they prepared an army once again after a while for another battle. Thus, the particle *thumma*, unlike *Al-Fa'*, is used to connect two actions separated by a long period of time. An illustrative example for *Al-Fa'* is the saying of Allah: 'Then He causes him to die and be buried.' ('*Abasa*: 21) Thus, if there is a long period between the two actions, the particle *thumma* is used, but if the second action shortly takes place after the first, the particle *Fa'* is used. Thus, Abu Jahl will suffer two punishments, one in this worldly life and another in the Hereafter.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَ سُدًى ﴿٣٦﴾

Does man think he will be left alone? [36]
(The Quran, *al-Qiyama*: 36)

Does this disbelieving person think that Allah *Glorified is He* has created him/her in vain, and will leave him/her without holding him/her accountable and punishing him/her?! Indeed, every action the human being does in this worldly life is recorded and s/he will be held accountable for it on the Day of Judgment. Thus, no one should think that s/he will escape from Allah *the Almighty*, or His punishment in the Hereafter. No one should mistakenly think s/he will be left alone, for He *the Almighty* says: 'Did you think We have created you in vain, and that you would not be brought back to Us?' (*al-Mu'minun*: 115)

Had Allah *the Almighty* left us without any account, the deviant people who availed themselves of the gratifications of this worldly life would be more fortunate than those who adhered to the Straight Path. Everything is created for a purpose, not in vain. The Arabic word *Al-'Abath* (Vain) is the purposeless and fruitless action; people say to the one who is doing something fruitless, 'What are you doing?' The opposite of the Arabic word *Al-'Abath* (vain) is purposefulness. Thus, He *the Almighty* negates the purposelessness of creation because He has created the creatures for a planned objective, and laid down for them the Law they should follow to reach that objective. No one other

than the Creator should set that Law. Thus, He *Glorified is He* has not created the human being to be left alone without being commanded, prohibited, assigned with religious obligations in this worldly life, and held accountable in the Hereafter. Some scholars interpreted this verse, saying, 'Does the human being think that s/he will be left in his/her grave forever and will not be resurrected?' No one thinks so except the disbeliever who does not believe in the Resurrection after death, the Account, the Reward, the Paradise and the Hellfire.'

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:


 ثُمَّ كَانَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقَ فَسَوَّى 
 أَلَمْ يَكْ نُطْفَةً مِنْ مَنِيٍّ يُُمِنِّي 
 فَجَعَلَ مِنْهُ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَى

**Was he not just a drop of spilt-out sperm [37] which became
 a clinging form, which God shaped in due proportion [38]
 fashioning from it the two sexes, male and female? [39]
 (The Quran, *al-Qiyama*: 37 - 39)**

The Arabic word *An-Nutfa* (sperm-drop) originally means the drop of sweet water and the quintessence of something. The process of burning and destructive metabolism happens continuously in the body, leading to the discharge of wastes. Thus, the urine, the excrement, the sweat, the tears and the wax of the ears are the wastes caused by the burning of the food inside the body so that it can extract its nourishment and turn it into the blood. Out of this extraction, the sperm-drop, by which the pregnancy happens and the fetus is formed, is taken. It is as if Allah *the Almighty* has clarified and purified the sperm because it will be the essence of the most honourable creature, the human being. He *the Almighty* has created Adam from clay and made his descendants from the sperm he placed in Eve. In this way, all the human beings were produced. It is as though everyone of us has an iota from his/her greatest father, Adam. This iota is in the sperm which descended to the person through his/her father and it is the purest thing that lies in the man.

The sperm, lying in the semen, is the essence of man's creation, and that is why He *the Almighty* says: 'Was he not just a drop of spilt-out sperm?' (*al-Qiyama*: 37) *An-Nutfa* is the sperm which joins the female ovum in the

womb to produce the *Al-'Alaqa* (the clinging form). As a matter of fact, one drop of the man's semen may contain enough sperms to create millions of people. The eye cannot see one sperm due to its extreme subtlety. Allah *Glorified is He* wills that only the strongest sperm joins the ovum to emphasize the fact that the most suitable shall remain. Thus, if the sperm carries the genetic qualities of a female, the fetus will be a female. Similarly, if the genetic qualities are that of a male, the foetus will be a male. The scientists call the sperm the XXY. The sperm of the man carries the qualities of both the male and the female. In another verse, He *the Almighty* describes the sperm as a spurting fluid: 'Man should reflect on what he was created from. [5] He is created from spurting fluid, [6] then he emerges from between the backbone and breastbone.' (*at-Tariq*: 5-7)

Was this denier of Allah's Omnipotence to resurrect the dead not a drop of sperm in a man's backbone?! S/he was just an underrated sperm that the man puts in his wife's vulva, such as the water that he discharges when he urinates. In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* describes the sperm as: 'Underrated fluid.' (*al-Mursalat*: 20) Despite that, the human being, honoured by Allah, is brought to existence by it. Creating the human being from the sperm spurted in the woman's womb indicates his/her lower status as s/he was created from the impure sperm discharged from the same source of the urine. Thus, it is not proper for him/her to rebel against obedience to Allah *the Almighty*.


Allah *Glorified is He* then says: 'Which became a clinging form, which Allah shaped in due proportion.' (*al-Qiyama*: 38) The very Arabic word *Al-'Alaqa* (clinging form) indicates its mission which is to cling to the uterine wall as modern science has confirmed. He *Glorified is He* also says: '...We made the clot a lump of flesh, then We made (in) the lump of flesh bones...' (*al-Mu'minun*: 14). The scientists say that the sperm turns into a clinging form after forty days. They call this clinging form 'zaygote' which refers to the fertilized ovum that starts to take its nourishment from it.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...which Allah shaped in due proportion.' (*al-Qiyama*: 38) This means that He *Glorified is He* has created, shaped and proportioned the human being. Then He has blown the Spirit into him/her, perfected his/her limbs and made him/her able to listen, see and speak. He *the Almighty* also made him/her symmetric and upright. Thus, He *the Almighty*

made him/her a human being who can walk, move, speak, hear, see and think after s/he was just a fluid in his/her father and mother, and then became a clinging form that sticks to the uterine wall, and then s/he became a piece of flesh. Afterwards, He *Glorified is He* shaped his/her limbs in his/her mother's womb and brought him/her into life.

Allah *Glorified is He* then says that He fashions from the sperm the two sexes, male and female. *Al-Zawjayn* here means the two sexes, as the woman can bear a male or a female only, two males and one female, two females and one male or other than that according to Allah's Decree.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:


 أَلَيْسَ ذَلِكَ بِقَدِرٍ عَلَىٰ أَنْ يُحْيِيَ الْمَوْتَىٰ

**Does He who can do this not have the power
to bring the dead back to life? [40]
(The Quran, *al-Qiyama*: 40)**

This chapter is called *al-Qiyama* (The Resurrection) and it revolves around proving the Resurrection and the Judgment Day. It started with: ‘By the Day of Resurrection [1] and by the self-reproaching soul! [2] Does man think We shall not put his bones back together? [3]’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 1-3)

Then, Allah *the Almighty* mentions the events of the Day of Judgment: ‘When eyes are dazzled and the moon eclipsed, when the sun and the moon are brought together.’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 7-9) Then the chapter clarifies that the one who neither believed nor prayed will inevitably die, as He *the Almighty* says: ‘Truly, when the soul reaches the collarbone; when it is said, ‘Could any charm-healer save him now?’ When he knows it is the final parting, when his legs are brought together.’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 26-29)

Further, this chapter tells us that the human being should beware of thinking that Allah *Glorified is He* has created him/her in vain and that He will leave him/her alone without commanding, prohibiting, rewarding or punishing?. Then it directs our attention to the fact that the human being was only a sperm that one's father placed in his/her mother's womb, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: ‘Was he not just a drop of spilt-out sperm which became a

clinging form, which Allah shaped in due proportion, fashioning from it the two sexes, male and female?’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 37-39) For this reason, one should not disdain the command of his/her Lord. Then He *the Almighty* concludes the chapter, saying: ‘Does He who can do this not have the power to bring the dead back to life?’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 40)

Those who deny the Resurrection said: ‘What? When we have disappeared into the earth, shall we really be created anew?’ (*as-Sajda*: 10) They do not believe that the One Who formed them in the first time is fully able to bring them back. For this reason, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘Does He Who can do this not have the power to bring the dead back to life?’ (*al-Muddaththir*: 40).

the chapter of

al-Insan

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

The chapter of *al-Insan* ⁽¹⁾.
Allah *Glorified is He* says:

هَلْ أَتَى عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ حِينٌ مِّنَ الدَّهْرِ لَمْ يَكُنْ شَيْئًا مَّذْكُورًا ﴿١﴾

**Was there not a period of time when man was
nothing to speak of? [1] (The Quran, *al-Insan*: 1)**

Allah *the Almighty* has created the universe, its worlds and all what it contains. He mentions in detail all these worlds, as He *Glorified is He* says: ‘We have missed nothing out of the Book.’ (*al-An‘am*: 38) As He *the Almighty* mentions the man in this chapter and even names it *al-Insan* (man), He mentions the jinn in another chapter and calls it *al-Jinn* (Jinn). Further, He *Glorified is He* mentions the Angels in the chapter of *Fatir* wherein He *the Almighty* says: ‘Praise be to Allah, Creator of the heavens and earth, who made angels messengers with two, three, four [pairs of] wings. He adds to creation as He wills: Allah has power over everything.’ (*Fatir*: 1)

As He *the Almighty* mentions these three worlds – mankind, the jinn and the angels– He mentions what is in the universe wherein the human being lives, including the earth, the heaven, the mountains and the rivers. For example, He *the Almighty* mentions the sun, the moon and the stars and dedicated

(1) The chapter of *al-Insan* is called *Ad-Dahr* (Time) for it is mentioned in this chapter: ‘Was there not a period of time when man was nothing to speak of?’ (*al-Qiyama*: 1) Some scholars held that it was revealed in Mecca (i.e. before *Hijra*), while others maintained it was revealed in Medina (after *Hijra*). The number of its verses is 31. It was also called the chapter of *Hal Ata*. In his *A‘lam Ad-Din*, As-Sakhawi said that there are no abrogated verses in it; it was revealed after the chapter of *al-Qiyama* and before that of *al-Mursalat*. See As-Sakhawi, *Jamal Al-Qurra' Wa Kamal Al-Ighra'*, 1/492.

complete chapters to speak about, *ash-Shams* (The sun), *al-Qamar* (The moon) and *an-Najm* (The star), respectively.

He *Glorified is He* dedicated a complete chapter to speak about man, to give us an account about him/her from his/her origin and beginning up to his/her ultimate destination. This chapter tells us about that creature whom He *Glorified is He* has created to be His Vicegerent on earth and whom He has placed in a universe prepared for him/her. He *the Almighty* had prepared for the human beings the requirements of life even before the creation of Adam, the first man ever; He had prepared for them the earth, the heaven, the water, the air, and the provisions hidden and stored in the earth that never end until the Day of Judgment. He *Glorified is He* has created these blessings, and then the human being came to a perfectly and completely prepared universe which has all the requirements for his/her living and continuation.

In this vein, there is no distinction between the believer and the disbeliever because the latter exactly as the former is created by Allah *Glorified is He*; He *Glorified is He* has brought him/her to the world after preparing their places therein. Thus, before the creation of the human being, He *Glorified is He* had prepared for him/her the universe wherein s/he will live. He *the Almighty* has prepared the earth, the sun, the moon, the heaven, the planets and the stars, and then the human being came to the universe to find everything prepared and subjected to serve him/her. That is why you will find no species that refuse to serve the human being. The land, for example, does not refuse to grow crops if it was farmed, nor do the animals refuse to serve man.

Allah *Glorified is He* has created the heavens and earth for us and decreed the provisions before creating us. If you reflect on your creation, you find that the macrocosm is reduced in you, as He *Glorified is He* says: ‘And in yourselves too, do you not see?’ (*adh-Dhariyat*: 21) One should ponder on his/her life as a fetus in the womb of his/her mother wherein He *the Almighty* has prepared his/her special life for him/her. He *the Almighty* has prepared for him/her the umbilical cord which supports him/her with nourishment from the sustenance that his/her mother eats and thus turns into blood full of all the required nutritional elements. During that time, the fetus is not in need to seek

provision or to chew and swallow the food; rather, it receives its nourishment through the umbilical cord.

Even after it comes into existence, a new world, which Allah *the Almighty* has prepared for it, receives it with happiness. Therefore, He *Glorified is He* has brought the human being to the earth which He has prepared before man's getting down to it. He *the Almighty* has prepared rivers of sweat water sprung out from beneath the mountains and the valleys where the human beings live. Also, He *the Almighty* has prepared fruits and crops and taught him/her how to make use of what surrounds him/her.

Further, Allah *Glorified is He* has created things which benefit the human being without being subjected to him/her. These Blessings are provided by Allah *Glorified is He* for him/her effortlessly. One of His Blessings for which He *the Almighty* should be praised is that He *Glorified is He* had bestowed His Blessings on the human being before his/her existence, given that these blessings were already existent when the human being was created. Before the creation of Adam, the father of all the humans, the paradise was already created, so he lived therein without tiredness or misery. He found what he eats, drinks, enjoys and keeps his life already existent and prepared before him. Afterwards, when Adam and Eve got down to the earth, the blessings preceded them, so they found what they eat, drink and keep their lives. If the blessings had not preceded man's existence and were created after him, he would have perished while waiting for their coming.

Thus, the universe existed before man's existence, when he was nothing to speak of. For this reason, Allah *Glorified is He* asks a question while knowing that neither the believer nor the disbeliever can answer except in the affirmative form. Yes, there was a period of time when the human being was nothing to speak of. Allah *Glorified is He* does not only say: 'Was there not a period of time when man was nothing?' (*al-Insan*: 1) but rather adds: '...nothing to speak of?' (*al-Insan*: 1) This is because the human being was something, yet a valueless thing; he was a mixture of dust and water. Although He *Glorified is He* has created the first man, Adam, from water and dust which turned into clay, He has created his descendants from underrated fluid, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'He has begun the creation of man from clay.' (*as-Sajda*: 6) Afterwards,

He *the Almighty* brought Adam's descendants into being through reproduction and multiplication. For this reason, He *Glorified is He* says: 'Then He made his progeny of an extract of water held in light estimation.' (*as-Sajda*: 8) Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* has created the human from clay; then He *Glorified is He* prescribed marriage for the reproduction of the man and the woman.

Allah *Glorified is He* has created Adam from the best elements and kinds of clay which are the quintessence of mud. If you hold a handful of mud and pressed it with your fingers, the quintessence, which is the best kind of clay, escapes and only the remnants of sand and rough objects remain. Allah *Glorified is He* created man's descendants from the sperm of the man and the ovum of the woman, which later forms the clinging form. This sperm is the underrated fluid that the man spurts from his sexual organ into that of his wife. So how can a man created by such process be arrogant?!

Some scholars maintain that the word 'man' in the verse in question refers to Adam *peace be upon him*. Accordingly, the verse in question means that a period of time has come when Adam was nothing spoken of. This period was forty years when he was in the form of clay. Anas ibn Malik narrated that Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'When Allah fashioned Adam in paradise, He left him for a period of time He determined. Then Satan kept roaming round and looking at him. When he found him hollow from within, he recognized that he can easily be seduced.' Some scholars narrated that Adam remained as mud for forty years and then remained as altered clay for another forty years and then became clay like that used for pottery for another forty years. Thus, He has completed his creation in one hundred and twenty years. He remained during that period as a creature that was unspoken of, that is, his name and purpose were unknown. Only Allah *Glorified is He* knows the purpose of the human being's creation.

The Arabic word *Al-Dahr* (The long period of time) attracts our attention and indicates that Adam remained as clay for a long time that can really reach one hundred and twenty years. One of the names of this chapter is *Al-Dahr* (Time) and also *Hal Ata*. Adam was not something spoken of either in the heavens or the earth. He was thrown out clay before blowing the Spirit into him.

Subsequently, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِنَّا خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ أَمْشَاجٍ نَبْتَلِيهِ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا ﴿٢﴾

**We created man from a drop of mingled fluid to put him to the test; We gave him hearing and sight [2]
(The Quran, *al-Insan*: 2)**

When Allah *the Almighty* takes about an action that needs all His Perfect Attributes, He uses the pronoun 'We'. So, when He *the Almighty* uses the pronoun 'We' concerning any action He has done, we should understand that this action was not undertaken by only His Power, Knowledge, Wisdom or Mercy; rather, such Action is undertaken with all His Perfect Attributes. The use of the pronoun 'We' attracts our attention to this fact to clarify the perfectness of His Attributes, as the person may be powerful but lacks knowledge or vice versa. Also, someone may be knowledgeable but lacks the attribute of wisdom. Thus, the integration of the attributes is required. Every Action done by Allah *Glorified is He* entails a set of Attributes: the Knowledge, the Will, the Power, the Wisdom, Withholding, Giving, Honoring, Humiliating, Subjecting and Mercy. Here, He *the Almighty* glorifies Himself because He brought the universe into existence and sustains it, which required a set of Perfect Attributes. For this reason, He *Glorified is He* uses the pronoun 'We'.

Allah *the Almighty* has created the human beings, who are the descendants of Adam, from a drop of the male's semen which is combined with that of the female in the womb of the female. Man's sperm is thick and white as they form the muscles, bones and power. The water of the woman, however, is fine and yellow and forms the flesh, the blood, the hair and nails. Both of the two fluids are combined together. Some maintained that the word *Amshaj* are the veins which exist within the sperm. *Al-Mashj* also means mixing the two fluids of the man and woman to form the clinging form.

Allah *the Almighty* has created the human from a sperm which is the mixture of the semen of the man and the woman in order to test and examine him/her afterwards when s/he attains puberty. '*Amshaj*' may refer to the formation of the fetus from the semen of the male and the ovum of the female after fertilization. It may also refer to the genes that lie in the sperm which carry the

distinguishing characteristic of the human species in general and the genetic characteristics of the family of the fetus in particular. These mixed genetic characteristics are what make the human being distinguished in his/her conduct, behavior and way of thinking. His/her reaction gathers between the sadness and happiness, laughing and crying, and sanity and insanity.

Although Allah *the Almighty* starts the chapter in question with focusing on a material matter, He then turns our attention to the spiritual side. He *Glorified is He* says: 'Was there not a period of time when man was nothing to speak of.' (*al-Insan*: 1) He begins with the material matter of creating the human being of a drop of mingled fluid; the fluids of the man and woman mingle to be a clinging form which follows certain stages until the human being is totally formed. Allah, however, says afterwards: 'We created man from a drop of mingled fluid to put him to the test...' (*al-Insan*: 2). Thus, after discussing a materialistic matter related to the creation, He *the Almighty* draws our attention to a spiritual matter, that is, examination and testing. He *the Almighty* has not created the human being vainly, purposelessly or for amusement; rather, He brought him/her into existence to be put to test when s/he is prepared for it.

As Allah *the Almighty* puts him/her to test, He gives him/her the hearing and sight. Thus, the human is put to test after being given the means to perceive the material things. The most important of these perceptive means are hearing and seeing. He *Glorified is He* shows His Favour on the human being who was dust mixed with water and then became clay and remain in that state for a long time during which he was not something spoken of. He *Glorified is He* has bestowed His Favour on this new creature by giving him/her some of His Attributes: The Hearing and Seeing. Had not He *Glorified is He* willed to give him/her the hearing and sight, s/he would have remained deaf and blind clay, not perceiving anything around him/her. S/he would have been a valueless thing which never becomes valuable. By giving Adam the hearing and sight, He *Glorified is He* has taught him all the names and made him able to hear and see. Thus, Adam and Eve realized each other's existence and from them all the human beings came into existence. This is the story of the man who was nothing spoken of.

By using the hearing and sight, the information is acquired and stored in the human being's mind. His/her means of perceiving knowledge are the hearing,

sight, tasting, touching and smelling. They give knowledge to the one who was ignorant, as Allah *Glorified is He* says: ‘It is Allah who has brought you out of your mothers’ wombs knowing nothing, and has given you hearing and sight and minds so that you might be thankful.’ (*an-Nahl*: 78) In fact, the ear, the eye and all the organs are means of perception. Everyone has numerous faculties, be they perceptive or psychical ones. The perceptive faculties are that which perceive the sensuous matters, like the hearing, sight, smelling and tasting. All of these are means for sensuous perception by which the abstract notions are formed to become, in their turn, creeds. The means of perception receive the pieces information given by the sensuous world and then store them in the mind of the human being so that s/he behaves accordingly. The perceived information constitutes what s/he knows.

Allah *the Almighty* has given the human being the hearing and the sight and has not left them to be guided or misguided, to believe or disbelieve, or to know his/her Lord or not, as He *the Almighty* says:

إِنَّا هَدَيْنَاهُ السَّبِيلَ إِمَّا شَاكِرًا وَإِمَّا كَفُورًا

We guided him to the right path, whether he was grateful or not [3] (The Quran, *al-Insan*: 3)

The Arabic word *Al-Sabil* means the way and path. The Straight Path of Allah *Glorified is He* is to worship Him Alone. He *the Almighty* guides the people to that Straight Path, saying: ‘This is My Path, leading straight, so follow it, and do not follow other ways: they will lead you away from it —‘This is what He commands you to do, so that you may refrain from wrongdoing.’ (*al-An‘am*: 153)

As long as there is a path for every aim, then we should define that aim first. Defining the aim leads to clarifying its path before the person who follows it, to reach his/her aim. The Path of Allah *Glorified is He* is the Straight One. Any curved path lengthens the distance for the person, as the straight line is the shortest one to reach the destination. The word ‘Way’ and ‘Path’ are sensuous objects which we see and perceive, and He *Glorified is He* uses them to clarify the abstract creeds. When there is a cross road and you want to reach a certain destination, but deviated by one millimeter from the beginning of the road, you will go far away from that destination; the more you walk, the

wider the distance becomes. He *Glorified is He* has only one Way of Guidance and whoever deviates from it will be the loser as He *the Almighty* says about him/her: '...We shall leave him on his chosen path and burn him in Hell.' (*an-Nisa'*: 115) For this reason, 'going astray' means to take a path that does not lead to the aim and takes you far away from it.

The Guidance in this verse means guiding the human being to the path leading to the paradise. It is not the guidance of support as Allah *Glorified is He* says afterwards: '...whether he was grateful or not...' (*al-Insan*: 3). He *Glorified is He* has bestowed His Blessings on the human being by creating them out of nothing and preparing the universe to receive them. He *the Almighty* also prepared the means of provision that are beyond our control. All of these blessings deserve out gratefulness and thankfulness. Out of His Mercy upon us, He *Glorified is He* has made thanking Him simply done by uttering two words: *Al-Hamdu Lillah* (All Praise be to Allah). Even teaching us this formula is one of the manifestations of His Mercy, for if He had not specified the formula of praising Him, it would have been difficult for the people to find a suitable formula to praise Him for His Divine Perfection. Even if some people are eloquent and have the ability of expression, they will not be able to find the formula of praising, which suits the Supremacy of the All Giver Who deserves to be praised for both His Giving and Depriving. Also, His Existence and His Entity deserve our praising. Expressing one's gratitude to Him *Glorified is He* takes away his/her conceit and thus s/he cannot be deluded by the worldly means. Moreover, the servant of Allah *Glorified is He* should thank Him for the Blessings of teaching him/her and putting him/her to trial.

The believers knew that Allah *Glorified is He* deserves their thankfulness for His Blessings. He *Glorified is He* links between thankfulness and belief, saying: 'Why should He make you suffer torment if you are thankful and believe in Him?' (*an-Nisa'*: 147) So what is the relation between thankfulness and belief? To answer this question, we should know first what Thankfulness means. It signifies expressing gratitude to the Giver by the one who received His Blessings. It is to say to someone who has done you a favour, 'Thank you'. As for belief, it is to have certitude that He *Glorified is He* is One God. He *the Almighty* shows the human being the Straight Path, a fact which is crystal

clear in His saying: 'We guided him to the right path, whether he was grateful or not.' (*al-Insan*: 3) Thus, if the human being believes that He *Glorified is He* guides him/her to the Right Way, and so s/he believes in His Books and Messengers, then s/he has thanked Him *Glorified is He* for His Blessings. Thankfulness comes first and then belief follows as the former is a general gratefulness and the latter is a particular one. Thankfulness is relating to the blessings, while belief is relating to the Entity that gives the blessings. Thus, the human should believe in and thank the Giver of the Blessings.

If the people had understood that, they would have thanked the Prophets and Messengers for the Way of Guidance that they conveyed from Allah *Glorified is He* as it guides them to manage their worldly life perfectly and, more importantly, guides them to the paradise. Allah *Glorified is He* mentions disbelief as the opposite of Thankfulness, saying: 'If you are thankful, I will give you more, but if you are thankless, My punishment is terrible indeed.' (*Ibrahim*: 7) He *Glorified is He* wills to give the people the choice to thank Him or not; He has not coerced them to express gratitude to Him.

He *the Almighty* describes Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* saying: '...he was of the thankful servants.' (*al-Isra*': 3) The Arabic word *Shakur* (Thankful) indicates hyperbola. Here, Allah *Glorified is He* does not use the word *Shakir* as it means thanking for only one time, but *Shakur* refers to the one who habitually and continuously thanks Him *Glorified is He*. As there are grateful people, there are also ungrateful ones. The Arabic word *Kafur* (ungrateful) also expresses hyperbola because such ungrateful people disbelieved and incited other people to disbelieve. Further, they always show ungratefulness.

Subsequently, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِنَّا أَعْتَدْنَا لِلْكَافِرِينَ سَلَاسِلًا وَأَغْلَالًا وَسَعِيرًا ﴿٤﴾

**We have prepared chains, iron collars, and blazing Fire
for the disbelievers, but [4] (The Quran, *al-Insan*: 4)**

Allah *the Almighty* has already prepared the paradise and it is already existent. Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said when he was talking about the paradise, 'The paradise was presented to me and I stretched my

hand to pick some of its fruits.' So, it is already existent and is not under preparation. It is He *the Almighty* Who has prepared it with His Power and Omnipotence. In another verse, He *the Almighty* says: 'We have prepared a Fire for the wrongdoers that will envelop them from all sides.' (*al-Kahf*: 29) So, the matter has been previously settled as the Paradise and Hellfire are already prepared; they will be prepared in the future. This is the Preparation of the Omnipotent, Wise Lord. He has prepared the paradise to include all the believers and also prepared the hellfire to include all the disbelieving people. If some of the people believed and others disbelieved, the believers spared their room in the hellfire and the disbeliever spared their room in the paradise.

Allah *the Almighty* mentions some details about what He has prepared for the disbelievers, saying: 'We have prepared chains, iron collars and blazing fire for the disbelievers.' (*al-Insan*: 4) He *Glorified is He* clarifies here three means of punishing the disbelievers and the wrongdoers: the chains, iron collars and blazing fire. They will be tied up by chains in the hellfire and their hands will be tied to their necks. They will be driven to the hellfire with the chains in their hands and they will be tied up with iron collars.

The Arabic word *As-Salasil* (Chains) is the plural of *Silsila* which is a series of metal rings joined together. As for *Al-Aghlal*, it is the plural of *Ghil* which is the iron collar that brings the hands and the neck together to impede the movement. One side of the iron collar is tied to the hand and another one is tied to the neck to impede the movement of the hand as a kind of additional humiliation. As for *Al-Asfad* (fettters), it is the plural of *Safad*, as in Allah's saying: 'You [Prophet] will see the guilty on that Day, bound together in fettters.' (*Ibrahim*: 49) It is the fetter that is put around the feet like the anklet. So, fettters will be put around their feet, and their hands and necks will be tied up with chains. Thus, the disbelievers will be punished by fettters, chains, shackles and iron collars in the blazing and burning Fire. *As-Sa'eer* is the name of the blazing fire that burns all what is thrown into it.

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* mentions the opposite of disbelievers who are the believers in Allah, His Books and Messengers. He *Glorified is He* describes them as the righteous and mentions what He has prepared for them, saying:

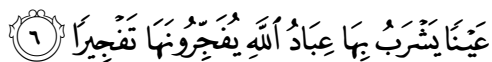
إِنَّ الْأَبْرَارَ يَشْرَبُونَ مِنْ كَأْسٍ كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا كَافُورًا ﴿٥﴾

**The righteous will have a drink mixed with *kafur* [5]
(The Quran, *al-Insan*: 5)**

The righteous people are the opposite of the transgressors as Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘The good will live in bliss, [13] and the wicked will burn in the Fire. [14]’ (*al-Infitar*: 13-14) Just as Allah *Glorified is He* mentions the punishment of the wicked, He clarifies the happy destination and the reward of those who are pleased with their faith. Combining the two opposites increases the believer's happiness and the disbeliever's sorrow and grief. The righteous are the Prophets and the true believers who obey their Lord by doing the obligations and avoiding the prohibitions.

The reward of those righteous, pious believers is to have drinks mixed with *Kafur*, which is the name of a fountain in the paradise. In fact, paradise only shares the names of the things with the worldly life. Even if the fountain were really of camphor, it is not like the camphor of the worldly life; rather, it is a sweet one. The Arabic word *Al-Ka's* means a cup filled with a drink. Here, Allah *Glorified is He* mentions the cups and how it is filled with a drink mixed with *Kafur* without specifying the drink itself, as He says: ‘The righteous will have a drink mixed with *kafur*.’ (*al-Insan*: 5) Afterwards, He *Glorified is He* says: ‘And they will be given a drink infused with ginger.’ (*al-Insan*: 17) Every cup mentioned in the Quran is that of wine, but the wine in the paradise will not intoxicate the minds and has no bad effects like the wine of this worldly life, as He *the Almighty* says about it: ‘...a delight for those who drink it.’ (*as-Saffat*: 46) It will be sweet like *Kafur* or bitter like ginger. A container of a drink only called *Ka's* (cup) when it is filled otherwise it is called a glass or pitcher.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:



**A spring for God's servants, which flows abundantly
at their wish [6] (The Quran, *al-Insan*: 6)**

Some scholars said that His saying: 'A spring for Allah's servants...' (*al-Insan*: 6) means that the righteous people drink from the spring of *Kafur* in the paradise. In the chapter of *al-Mutaffifin*, Allah *the Almighty* also says: 'A spring from which those brought near will drink.' (*al-Mutaffifin*: 28) There is secret in using the Arabic preposition *Ba'* (By) instead of *Min* (From) as Allah *Glorified is He* could have said that His servants drink from, not by, that spring. In the previous verse, He *Glorified is He* says that the righteous people drink from a cup, but when He mentions the spring, He says that they drink by it. This could mean that they drink the wine mixed with *Kafur*, whether its substance or fragrance. Some other scholars said that *Ba'* is added to the object pronoun so the meaning is that the servants of Allah *Glorified is He* will drink 'from' that spring.

Allah *Glorified is He* describes those who drink from that spring mixed with *Kafur* as His servants, saying: '...a spring for Allah's servants...' (*al-Insan*: 6). So, who Are Allah's servants? They are those who submitted their choice and will to the Will of their Lord; they sacrificed their choices to achieve the obligation that He *the Almighty* wants from them. For this reason, He *Glorified is He* differentiates between the word *Al-'Ibad* (servants) and *Al-'Abid* (slaves), saying: 'The servants of the Lord of Mercy are those who walk humbly on the earth, and who, when the foolish address them, reply, 'Peace'; [63] those who spend the night bowed down or standing, worshipping their Lord, [64] who plead, 'Our Lord, turn away from us the suffering of Hell, for it is a dreadful torment to suffer! [65]' (*al-Furqan*: 63-65)

In these verses, Allah *the Almighty* gives the descriptions of the believers and called them 'servants', but when He talks about all the human beings in general, He uses the word 'slaves'. There is a difference between the slaves and the servants as the former submit to Allah *Glorified is He* in any element of their lives and cannot enforce their choice against what He *Glorified is He* forcibly decrees on them. As for the servants, they are those who submit their

right to choose and are satisfied with what He *Glorified is He* has commanded them to do or not to do. Thus, the slaves are subjected to Him *Glorified is He* in what He decrees on them, but the servants are those who are satisfied with what He *Glorified is He* decrees and their choice complies with what He *the Almighty* is pleased with. They willingly submit themselves to Him *Glorified is He*, while the slaves are subservient to Him forcibly.

Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘A spring for Allah's servants, which flows abundantly at their wish.’ (*al-Insan*: 6) This verse describes what the righteous people who drink from that spring do. They spring it out easily wherever they wish in their dwellings. Some narration state that this spring is in Messenger Muhammad's dwelling in the paradise and it springs out to the dwellings of the Prophets.

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* describes His servants, saying:

يُوفُونَ بِالنَّذْرِ وَيَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا كَانَ شَرُّهُ مُسْتَطِيرًا ﴿٧﴾

**They fulfil their vows; they fear a day of
widespread woes[7] (The Quran, *al-Insan*: 7)**

The Arabic word *Al-Nadhr* (vow) means to obligate yourself to do some acts of worship that are beyond the obligatory ones prescribed by Allah *the Almighty*. For example, if you vowed to pray a certain number of units of prayer, then it is a vow to do something subcategorized under what He *Glorified is He* has legislated, given the fact that He *Glorified is He* has legislated prayer and made it obligatory five times a day. When you vow to do more than what is obligatory, this is what is called *Al-Nadhr*. It is a proof that the worshipper has loved and felt the sweetness of the worship. It proves that s/he almost recognizes the greatness of His Lord and that He *the Almighty* deserves to be worshipped by more than what He has obligated.

Allah *Glorified is He* shows His Mercy towards us through what He has obligated on us, for if He had obligated us to worship Him as He deserves, no one would have been able to fulfil this obligation. Therefore, when the believing servant vows to obey Allah, s/he obligates him/herself to do more than the obligatory acts of worship. You have the choice to take that vow or not, but if you take it, you should keep it, as it is you who obligated it on yourself. In

this regard, the pious people say to the one who breaks his/her vow, 'Have you tried your Lord and found Him unworthy of your love to Him?' No one dares to do that because He *Glorified is He* deserves the strongest of our love. Thus, it is better for the person to think deeply before taking a vow.

Those righteous believers necessarily fulfil their vows that they have obliged themselves to do. The formula of the vow is to say, 'For the sake of Allah, I oblige myself to give charity, pray, fast, perform the minor or major pilgrimage or any other act of worship on condition that Allah, for example, heals my patient or that my absent relative returns.' But if s/he vowed to do a sin, s/he should not fulfil this vow. 'Aisha *Allah be pleased with her* narrated that Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'The one who vows to obey Allah should fulfil his vow.'⁽¹⁾ As fulfilling the vow is obligatory, the person should fulfil it on behalf of his father or mother if they died before fulfilling it. In this regard, Ibn 'Abbas narrated that Sa'd ibn 'Ubada asked Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* about a vow that his mother took, but then died before fulfilling it. He ordered him to fulfil it on her behalf.⁽²⁾

Thus, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'They fulfil their vows; they fear a day of widespread woes.' (*al-Insan*: 7) The believing servants of Allah fear this great Day and they firmly believe that it will come. As Allah *the Almighty* mentions the fear and sorrow of the disbelievers on the Day of Judgment, He also mentions the fear of the believers. The difference is that the believers fear the Day of Judgment, while they are still in the worldly life, doing good deeds and fearing that He *the Almighty* will not accept their good deeds or their repentance from the sins. On the contrary, the disbelievers are heedless of the Hereafter and when they realize the reality of the punishment, they will be struck with panic and fear. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'You will see the evildoers fearful because of what they have done: punishment is bound to fall on them' (*ash-Shura*: 22). They will be fearful when they see the

(1) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of 'Aisha *Allah be pleased with her*. See Ahmad, *Musnad*, Hadith no. 24075; and Ibn Maja, *Sunnan*, Hadith no. 2636.

(2) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of 'Aisha *Allah be pleased with her*. See Ahmad, *Musnad*, Hadith no. 3506; Abu 'Uwana, *Mustakhraj*, Hadith no. 5831; At-Tabarani, *Al-Mu'jam Al-Kabir*, Hadith no. 5372 and 5375; Abu Ya'la, *Musnad*, Hadith no. 2383; Al-Bukhari, *Sahih*, Hadith no. 6959; and Muslim, *Sahih*, Hadith no. 1638.

punishment with their eyes, but the believers are fearful in the worldly life, as He *the Almighty* says: ‘When we were still with our families on earth we used to live in fear.’ (*at-Tur*: 22) The believers fear a Day of widespread woes that spread like the fire and the light of the day when it spread in the sky.

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘Neither the *Adhan* of Bilal nor the whiteness (of the pillar) of dawn should make you think that the Dawn has come. It is not the whiteness of the true dawn, but that of the false one which is vertical like a pillar. You can eat food till the streaks of whiteness spread like it.’ The difference between the true and the false dawn is that the false one’s whiteness appears in the horizon but then fades away. Then, the true dawn appears and spread in the horizon.

On the Day of Judgment, the fear will overwhelm the people of the heavens and earth. It spreads in the heavens which will be ripped apart. The stars will be scattered, the Angels will be in a panic, the sun and the moon will be shrouded in darkness, the mountains will be torn apart, the water will go down and everything on earth – including the mountains, the buildings and trees – will be destroyed. Thus, the woe of that Day will spread to include the heavens and earth.

Subsequently, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَيُطْعِمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا وَأَسِيرًا ﴿٨﴾

**They give food to the poor, the orphan, and
the captive, though they love it themselves [8]
(The Quran, *al-Insan*: 8)**

Thus, the servants of Allah *Glorified is He* used to fulfil their vows perfectly without any falling short and to give the food, though they love it themselves, to the poor, the orphan and the captive. Despite their love for his/her food, property and provision earned by the sweat of his/her brow, the righteous servant gives them in charity for the sake of Allah *Glorified is He*. He *Glorified is He* describes *Al-Birr* (Goodness), saying: ‘Goodness does not consist in turning your face towards East or West. The truly good are those who believe in Allah and the Last Day, in the angels, the Scripture, and the prophets; who

give away some of their wealth, however much they cherish it, to their relatives, to orphans, the needy, travelers and beggars, and to liberate those in bondage...' (*al-Baqara*: 177). This verse means that Goodness does not mean to dispute about changing the *Qibla*; there should be no problem with the matter of changing the *Qibla* to the direction of the *Ka'ba*, the Sacred House, the east or the west. The true Goodness is to believe in Allah, the Last Day, the Angels, the Scripture, and the Prophets; all of these are creedal issues.

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* follows them by mentioning practical Commands related to people's life and the society they live in, saying: '...who give away some of their wealth, however much they cherish it.' (*al-Baqara*: 177) Giving wealth entails spending in many ways; it can be optional charity, prescribed alms or a good loan. The Arabic expression '*Ala Hubihi* (however much he cherishes it) can have many meanings. We can understand it to mean giving the wealth that s/he loves or that s/he gives it because s/he loves to give the part of the wealth he cherishes to apply the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'None of you will attain true piety unless you give out of what you cherish.' (*Al-Imran*: 92) We can elevate the meaning to be giving away the wealth because s/he loves and is satisfied with giving away of his/her wealth, as Allah *the Almighty* says: 'None of you will attain true piety unless you give out of what you cherish.' (*Al-Imran*: 92)

The servants of Allah *the Almighty* give food to the poor, the orphan and the captive. These are the three kinds of people that He *Glorified is He* mentions out of caring for them. This is due to the fact that they are the weakest kinds of people and need food and help more than others. As for the poor, s/he is not the one who does not possess anything at all to sustain his/her life, as He *Glorified is He* says: 'The boat belonged to some needy people who made their living from the sea.' (*al-Kahf*: 79) He *the Almighty* tells us that the poor person has some possessions, but does not have all what suffices him/her. For this reason, He *Glorified is He* has prescribed a rightful share in the *zakat* for both the needy and the poor.

The Arabic word *miskeen* (the poor) refers to any needy person. The wayfarer, for example, is considered a needy person because he is a stranger and may not have a provision to sustain his life. In his country, he might have

been rich, but the distance he travelled separated him from his property and possessions. Besides, his money could be stolen during his travel, and therefore, he needs people's help. Such a person becomes similar to the needy and the poor who deserve charity.

You should beware of saying that you have nothing to do with the needy. You should know that being in need is something circumstantial and may happen to you as well. So, you should not think you will always give the needy; rather, you should think you may be inflicted with a calamity that makes you in need of people's charity. Taking care of those who are weak and unable to work—who are not lazy and do not taking begging as a job—is the responsibility for believers as Allah *Glorified is He* makes the strong person responsible for and required to help the weak one.

The righteous also give food to an orphan who lost his father who was responsible for his maintenance and protection. He becomes broken-hearted because he lost his father and became without a helper. If members of a Muslim society take care of an orphan as his father, no one will be anxious about his children if he were to die and leave them. The care of the society for an orphan guarantees that his rights are protected. If an orphan is rich, some people will lust for his property as he is not strong enough to protect it. Furthermore, the social solidarity eliminates the grudge between members of a society and makes every father reassured about his children.

An orphan who possesses property should have an executor to manage his affairs. Allah *the Exalted* commands us to give of the wealth we love to orphans themselves and not to anyone related to them. This is because there could be some orphans who do not have property that necessitates guardianship. Therefore, to have the qualities of the righteous, we should give of our wealth to the orphans or to their executors to spend on them.

The matter of giving wealth to an orphan is not only related to his need for sustenance, for he also needs to be compensated through the religious solidarity for the loss of his father. This solidarity will prevent him from harboring a grudge against children whose fathers are still alive. When an orphan finds that all believers treat him like his father, he will experience the solidarity that compensates him for the lost fatherly kindness. Moreover, he

will not give looks of hate to his peers whose fathers are still alive. Thus, solidarity eliminates the grudge and envy from his heart.

So, you should feed an orphan and preserve his property if it is entrusted to you. You should not consume it, for the one who consumes the property of an orphan is as if he fills his belly with fire. That is to say that what he has consumed will lead him to the fire. This punishment could happen in the worldly life because the one who consumes the properties of orphans could be inflicted with diseases in his belly that burn his bowels. As for the Day of Judgment, believers will see the traces of consuming the properties of orphans on their consumers, given that smoke will come out of their mouths.

Those who fear to die and leave helpless offspring should be benevolent to orphans. If an orphan is dealt with benevolently in a paternalistic and religious atmosphere, anyone of us will not be anxious about leaving his little child if he were to die. Furthermore, since he will realize that the society is full of goodness, he will receive Allah's Decree, namely death with a satisfied heart and without any anxiety. Hence, He *the Most High* says: 'Let those who would fear for the future of their own helpless children, if they were to die, show the same concern [for orphans]; let them be mindful of Allah and speak out for justice.' (*an-Nisa'*: 9)

Thus, if one sees the members of the society taking care of other people's orphans, he will be reassured that they will take care of his children if he were to die. Such a person will not preoccupy himself with thinking about the matter of death. On the other hand, if someone sees a neglected orphan, he will cling to the means of life and desire to bring the whole worldly pleasures to his child. So, one should work for the sake of his children by giving for the sake of Allah *the Exalted* what he wants to save for them, for the Creator is more worthy of trust than the created beings.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* mentions that righteous people give food to the captive. The captive's movement is restricted after being taken captive in a war which entails fighting and confronting the enemy. In a battle, each one of the two camps wants to kill his enemy. It is as though Allah *Glorified is He* wants to protect the people from the truculence of their souls during the fight. This is why He *the Most High* commands believers to take their enemies captives

and not to kill them except in the case of necessity. This is in the interest of believers because they will take the ransom from captives. Moreover, this is one of the His merciful Legislations, for if taking captives had not been permissible, each of the two fighters would have had to kill his enemy in the battle. Therefore, Allah *Glorified is He* commands believers to take captives unless their existence constitutes a danger to a believers' life.

Anyone who criticizes Islam for the issue of the captives should know that the one taken captive in a battle could have been killed after being seized by believers if the Divine Legislation had not intervened to make a captive a slave to a believer. It prevented bloodshed and achieved a benefit for a believer when the family of a captive pays his ransom or when the captive serves him. Allah *Glorified is He* prevented believers from shedding the blood of captives or humiliating them. In this regard, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Your slaves are your brothers. Allah has placed them under your authority. He who has his brother under him should feed him from whatever he eats, dress him with whatever he wears and do not burden them (assign burdensome task to them) beyond their capacity, and if you burden them. Then help them.'⁽¹⁾ How kindly Islam deals with the captive! It prevented shedding his blood, honored him as a brother, respected his humanity and treated him well. Furthermore, Islam opened the doors of releasing a captive. If there is only one way for having slaves in Islam, there are many ways for freeing them. For example, expiation for one's sins is one way of freeing slaves. Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِنَّمَا نَطْعُمُكُمْ لَوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكْرًا ﴿٩﴾

saying, 'We feed you for the sake of God alone:
We seek neither recompense nor thanks from you [9]
(The Quran, *al-Insan*: 9)

Those who give food to the poor, the orphans and the captives did not say, 'We feed you for the sake of Allah alone. We seek neither recompense nor

(1) See *Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 530; Muslim, Sahih, Hadith no. 1661; Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 21432; and Al-Bayhaqi, Al-Adab, Hadith no. 52.*

thanks from you' (*al-Insan*: 9) when they did such charitable acts. Rather, Allah *the Exalted* knows what is in their hearts, so He praises them for their sincerity and good intentions. That is why He *the Most High* mentions their good deeds.

Righteous people have given the food while knowing that those who received such charity can neither recompense nor thank them, for they will not be able to repay what they have given them. It is said that the verse under discussion was revealed in reference to a man from *Al-'Ansar* called Abu Ad-Dehdah. He was fasting on one day and when the time of breakfast came, a poor person, an orphan and a captive came to him. Thereupon, he fed them three loaves and only one loaf was left for him and his household.

Giving food should be for the sake of pleasing Allah *Glorified is He*. For this reason, we should put the sincerity first before doing any action. Two people may do the same action before people, yet one of them is rewarded while the other is punished, given the fact that what is important is to do the action sincerely for the sake of Allah *Glorified is He*. Someone may say, 'Sincerity lies in the heart, and as long as the person does not hurt anyone or commit evil deeds, it is not necessary for him to pray.' We reply, 'The matter is not all about intentions, for actions are necessary as well. In this connection, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'Actions are but by intentions.'⁽¹⁾ Thus, the good intentions should be accompanied by righteous actions.

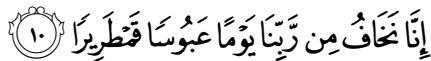
The benefit of one's intention is confined to him, whereas the benefit of his good actions extends to people. Let us offer an example to illustrate this point; if you intend to give alms and you actually do so, the poor will benefit from your money. However, if you do not have the intention to do something good, yet you do it for seeking reputation or for pleasing someone, the poor will benefit from your money, but you will not get the reward of giving alms. Allah *the Almighty* wants your action to be accompanied by sincere intention. A good action is an activity in life, and intention is the criterion for being given and deprived of the reward thereof.

(1) *This hadith is narrated on the authority of 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab Allah be pleased with him. See Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 1; Al-Bayhaqi, Sunnan, Hadith no. 181 and 1013; and Ibn Majah, Sunnan, Hadith no. 4227.*

Sincerity means to purify the creedal issues and the outward actions from what corrupts and renders them insincere and imperfect. Sincerity is an inward action. However hard the person tries to be sincere in his actions and do them for the sake of Allah *Glorified is He* he should not be reassured that they will not be stained with showing off and reputation. Prophet Muhammad, the infallible, said, 'O Allah, I seek Your Forgiveness for every action I have done for Your sake, but something else mixed with it.'⁽¹⁾ An accepted good deed is what is done sincerely for the sake of Allah *the Exalted* and its reward is in proportion to the degree of sincerity.

Righteous people seek neither recompense nor thanks from those whom they have given food. The Arabic word *Al-Mujaza* is the recompense for what they have given, whereas *Ash-Shukr* (thanks) means to be praised for that. Thus, a righteous people seek neither the need's recompense in the worldly life nor their reward in the Hereafter. *Ash-Shukur* (thanks) is an infinitive like *Al-Qu'ud* (sitting), *Ad-Dukhul* (entering) and *Al-Khuruj* (getting out). Thus, the righteous people seek neither the needy's recompense nor their thanks to them before the people.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:



**We fear the Day of our Lord — a woefully
grim Day [10] (The Quran, *al-Insan*: 10)**

Thus, righteous servants give food to a poor person, an orphan and a captive for the sake of Allah *Glorified is He* and not to be recompensed, praised or thanked. In fact, they only do that for Allah's Pleasure and fearing a Day of woeful grim.

(1) Ibn 'Umar narrated that Prophet Muhammad used to say to them, 'O, my Companions, what prevents you from having your sins forgiven by uttering simple words?' They asked, 'O, Messenger of Allah, what are these words?' He replied, 'Say like the words of my brother, Al-Khidr.' We asked, 'What did he say?' He replied, 'He used to say, "O, Allah, I seek Your Forgiveness for the sin from which I repented to You, but I then returned to it. I also seek Your Forgiveness for what I have dedicated to You, but I did not fulfill it."' See *Ad-Daylami, Kanz Al-'Umal*, 2/701.

On that Day, disbelievers will frown and scowl due to the hardship they suffer; they will be neither happy nor delighted. Their faces will be darkened as Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'On the Day of Resurrection, you [Prophet] will see those who told lies against Allah with darkened faces. Is there not ample punishment for the arrogant in Hell?' (*az-Zumar*: 60) In addition to their blackened faces, disbelievers will frown out of anger. Ibn 'Abbas *Allah be pleased with him* said, 'On that Day, a disbeliever will frown until something like the pitch flows⁽¹⁾ from between his eyes.' Frowning can be attributed to the Day itself; it will frown like the man because it is a grim and pitch dark Day. Allah *Glorified is He* describes it according to the hardship that people suffer.

So, righteous people fear the punishment on a Day when the faces of disbelievers will frown because of its hardship and prolonged calamities. The Arabic word *Al-Qamtarir* (distressfulness) refers to what is hard and difficult. Therefore, the calamities of disbelievers on that Day will be very difficult and lingering. For them, it is a long woeful Day. They will show their frowns with their lips, forehead and eyebrows.

Subsequently, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

فَوْقَهُمُ اللَّهُ شَرَّ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمِ وَلَقَّاهُمْ نَضْرَةً وَسُرُورًا ﴿١١﴾

**So God will save them from the woes of that
Day, give them radiance and gladness [11]
(The Quran, *al-Insan*: 11)**

Thus, Allah *the Almighty* will save righteous people from the Day of woeful grim about which they are fearful and anxious. He *the Most High* will keep them safe from its difficulty and guard them against its woes. They used to invoke Him *the Almighty* to save them from the punishment, the woe, the long standing and the Account of that Day. They said in the worldly life, 'Our Lord! You have not created all this without purpose—You are far above that!—so protect us from the torment of the Fire.' (*Al-Imran*: 191) They invoked Him to deliver them from the torment of the fire and when they

(1) See *At-Tabari, Jame' Al-Bayan*, 23/547; *Ath-Tha'libi, Al-Kashf Wa Al-Bayan*, 10/97; and *Al-Qurtubi, Jame' Ahkam Al-Quran*, 19/125.

endured patiently, gave alms, devoted themselves to the worship and spent in His Way, they deserved to be safeguarded from that fire and from a woefully grim Day.

The demonstrative pronoun 'that' in the verse in question refers to the Day mentioned in two previous verses where Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'They fulfil their vows; they fear a day of widespread woes' (*al-Insan*: 7), and 'We fear the Day of our Lord—a woefully grim Day.' (*al-Insan*: 10) If we ponder on the verse under discussion, we find that the word 'Day' in employed the singular form. So, how long is that Day? He *the Most High* provides the answer, by saying: 'By which the angels and the Spirit ascend to Him, on a Day whose length is fifty thousand years.' (*al-Ma'arij*: 4) He *the Almighty* is the Creator of time, so He can create a day whose span is one hour or twenty-four hours like the days of our worldly life. Furthermore, He can create a day whose span is one thousand, fifty thousand and one million years, as all of that is subjected to His Will.

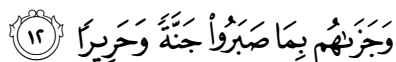
The times are numerous and vary according to the reckoning and the planets. Thus, in one verse Allah *Glorified is He* states that the Day of Judgment is one thousand years: 'He runs everything, from the heavens to the earth, and everything will ascend to Him in the end, on a Day that will measure a thousand years in your reckoning.' (*as-Sajda*: 5); or it is fifty thousand years: 'By which the angels and the Spirit ascend to Him, on a Day whose length is fifty thousand years.' (*al-Ma'arij*: 4) Therefore, that Day is different from our days as He *the Almighty* measures the days of this worldly life and the Day of the Hereafter differently.

The Day on which the people will be judged is long and difficult, but Allah *Glorified is He* will save the righteous people from that woeful, difficult Day and will give them radiance and gladness, a fact which is ever so clear in His saying: 'So Allah will save them from the woes of that Day, give them radiance and gladness.' (*al-Insan*: 11)

The Arabic word *laqqahum* (give them) originally entails an encounter between two people, but it is used metaphorically to give the meaning of receiving good or evil. The righteous will be given radiance in their faces and gladness in their hearts. Instead of the frown and sadness of the transgressors, Allah *the Almighty* will give them radiance and gladness. Thus, radiance will be

in the face of the righteous, while the faces of disbelievers will be sad and despairing, a fact which is quite clear in His saying: 'On that Day there will be radiant faces.' (*al-Qiyama*: 22), and 'on that Day there will be the sad and despairing faces.' (*al-Qiyama*: 24)

As a matter of fact, what is inside the soul appears on the body. A black man, for example, may have a radiant face which manifests gladness, illumination, brightness and charisma. On the contrary, a man may have a white face, yet his soul is dark. Gladness means the satisfaction of the heart when the faculties are satisfied and the soul is peaceful. In fact, one's reactions and feelings appear on his face. So, if he is sad, the frown and the signs of sadness appear on his face. Likewise, if he feels happy, the gladness and happiness appear on his face. So, the face reflects the sentiments of the soul whether they are stemming from happiness, gladness and brightness or stemming from unhappiness, resulting in a frown and scowl. Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:



**And reward them, for their steadfastness,
with a Garden and silken robes [12]
(The Quran, *al-Insan*: 12)**

The righteous will receive their reward from Allah *the Most High* with a Garden and silken robes. Therefore, the subject of the Arabic verb *jaza* (to reward) is Allah *the Almighty*. He rewards them for their steadfastness in obedience and keeping away from disobedience. Thus, they are rewarded with a Garden to dwell in and silken robes to wear and spread out.

When Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* was asked about steadfastness, he replied, 'Steadfastness is of four kinds: steadfastness at the first stroke of a calamity, steadfastness in regard to performing an obligatory act, steadfastness in regard to avoiding a prohibition of Allah and steadfastness in regard to an affliction.'⁽¹⁾

(1) See *Ath-Tha'ibibi, Al-Kashf Wa Al-Bayan*, 10/97; *Al-Qurtubi, Jame' Ahkam Al-Quran*, 19/136; and *Az-Zuhayli, At-Tafsir Al-Munir*, 29/293.

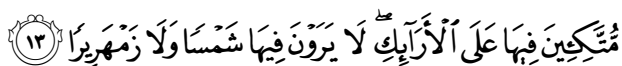
Allah *Glorified is He* rewards them with a Garden which has all what they desire of food and drinks that their eyes have never seen and their ears have never heard. He *the Most High* informs us about the drinks of the people of the paradise by saying: 'The righteous will have a drink mixed with *kafur*.' (*al-Insan*: 5) He *the Almighty* mentions afterwards another mixed drink, saying: 'And they will be given a drink infused with ginger.' (*al-Insan*: 5)

Allah *Glorified is He* mentions one kind of the robes of the people of the Garden, namely silken robes. He *the Almighty* particularly mentions silken robes because He talks about their steadfastness, which includes their steadfastness regarding prohibitions. One of these prohibitions is wearing the silken robes with regard to the Muslim men who follow Prophet Muhammad's saying, 'Whoever wears silk (clothes) in this life will not wear them in the Hereafter.' Thus, steadfastness in abstaining from wearing silken robes in the worldly life is rewarded with wearing them in paradise.

Wearing silken clothes manifests the pleasure and the luxurious life that the dwellers of paradise lead, given that silk is the smoothest kind of textiles. In the chapter of *al-Hajj*, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... there they will have silken garments ...' (*al-Hajj*: 23). They did not wear the silk clothes in this worldly life, so they wear it in the Hereafter. This is because they adhered to the Limits that Allah *Glorified is He* has set and to the order of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* who said, 'Do not drink in silver or gold utensils, and do not eat in plates of such metals, for such things are for them (disbelievers) in this worldly life and for you in the Hereafter.'⁽¹⁾ Since righteous believers did not wear silk in this worldly life, they were rewarded with silken robes in paradise.

Subsequently, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

(1) *This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Hudhayfa ibn Al-Yaman Allah be pleased with him. See Abu 'Uwana, Mustakhraj, Hadith no. 8446; Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 5426; and Muslim, Sahih, Hadith no. 2067 and 2069.*



**They will sit on couches, feeling neither scorching
heat nor biting cold [13] (The Quran, *al-Insan*: 13)**

The Arabic word *Al-'Ittika'* means to sit relaxingly. As for the couches, they are the beds adorned with some ornaments like, for instance, the mosquito net. In order to understand the meaning *Al-'Ittika'* and how it indicates luxury and pleasure, we should consider the case of someone who stands for a long time without rest. You will see him disturbed and bothered. For this reason, sitting on couches is one of the manifestations of luxury and pleasure in both this worldly life and the Hereafter, as in the saying of Allah *Glorified is He* regarding Zulaykha, the governor's wife: 'She prepared a banquet for them.' (*Yusuf*: 13). Thus, sitting on couches is one of the means of relaxation.

Allah *Glorified is He* mentions the couches of the people of paradise in another verse by saying: 'So today [the Day of Judgment] believers are laughing at the disbelievers as they sit on couches, gazing around. Have disbelievers [not] been repaid for their deeds?' (*al-Mutaffifin*: 34-36) Believers will sit and rest on the couches of paradise while waiting to see the destination of disbelievers. They will ask, 'Have the disbelievers [not] been repaid for their deeds?' (*al-Mutaffifin*: 35) In another verse, Allah *Glorified is He* describes how they are occupied by saying: 'The people of paradise today are happily occupied—they and their spouses—seated on couches in the shade. There they have fruit and whatever they ask for. "Peace", a word from the Lord of Mercy.' (*Ya Sin*: 55-58) This is the pleasure that the Lord of Might has promised the pious for their steadfastness. So, the Arabic word *Al-'Areeka* refers to a bed located in a tent and covered with clothes brocaded with pearls and rubies. Therefore, the righteous will be rewarded with a Garden that contains their food and drinks. Furthermore, they will wear the smoothest, silken robes. Moreover, they will have high tents with curtains inside which they sit on couches.

The bliss of paradise is not only confined to the aforementioned pleasures as they will also feel neither scorching heat nor biting cold. It is Allah *Glorified is He* Who has prepared their homes so that they live luxuriously, feeling neither heat nor cold. They will not feel a scorching sun whose heat hurts them and

makes them sweat. Therefore, they will be neither harmed by the heat of the sun nor the biting cold which would force them to leave their couches to enter their homes. Rather, they will be sitting on such couches without being bothered by anything.

Allah *the Almighty* says: 'They will sit on couches, feeling neither scorching heat nor biting cold.' (*al-Insan*: 13) The one who ponders on this verse finds something wonderful. Does feeling no scorching sun mean that there is no sun at all in paradise? Or is there a sun whose heat does not hurt whoever exposes himself to it? Some scholars said that paradise is illuminated without a sun or a moon so they interpreted the word *Zamharira* as referring to the moon and so did Az-Zamakhshari. The verse can either mean that they will not feel a scorching sun or that they will have no suns at all, as paradise is self-illuminated and needs neither a sun nor a moon that used to illuminate the worldly life.

When we put this verse side by side with Allah's saying in another verse, 'But the companions in the Garden will have a better home on that Day and a fairer place to rest,' (*al-Furqan*: 24) we should ask, 'How is there a *qaylola* (resting time) in paradise, while there is no heat, cold or moon?' The Arabic word *Al-Maqil* is the time of resting when the weather is very hot. Thus, how could there be a resting time in paradise, while there is no heat? We reply to this question by stating that the Arabic word *Al-Qaylola* means the time of rest as Allah *Glorified is He* has made it one of the times for which the permission to come in must be sought. He *the Most High* says: '... and when you lay your garments aside in the midday heat ...' (*an-Nur*: 58). So, the children are commanded to ask for permission at that time because it is one of the times of privacy, resting and relaxation. It is a special time when you lay your garments and free yourself from formalities.

Regarding paradise, there is neither scorching heat nor biting cold. Its shady branches spread above its people. For this reason.

Allah *Glorified is He* says:



**With shady [branches] spread above them and
clusters of fruit hanging close at hand [14]
(The Quran, *al-Insan*: 14)**

Allah *Glorified is He* rewards believers for their steadfastness with a Garden whose shades spread over them. They will feel neither scorching heat nor biting cold. The branches of the trees of paradise are so close to their people that their shades cover them. This proves that there is a sun in paradise which only illuminates it, as He removes its heat so that no one in paradise feels it.

The Arabic word *Az-Zhill* (shade) originally means to be covered from the sun. In this regard, Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... We shall admit them into cool refreshing shade.' (*an-Nisa*': 57) Therefore, the heat and the hot simooms cannot penetrate that shade which protects from both heat and winds. This means that the trees of the Garden have piled up branches that no heat or simooms can pass through.

The one who reflects on this verse will realize the meaning of the previous verse where Allah *the Almighty* says: 'They will sit on couches, feeling neither scorching heat nor biting cold.' (*al-Insan*: 13) This verse made some scholars maintain that there is no sun or moon in paradise. The one who reflects on these two verses and puts them side by side with the saying of Allah *Glorified is He* 'We shall admit them into cool refreshing shade' (*an-Nisa*': 57), will realize that the people of paradise will neither see the sun nor feel its effect. They will enjoy the cool refreshing shade of the trees' branches and leaves that cover them from the sun as if it is not existent. The cool refreshing shade does not leave a space or a hole through which hot or cold air can pass to the one who sits under it.

The shady trees of paradise do not only shade from the sun, but they are also fruitful. So, they do not force the one sitting on the couches to exert any effort to get fruits from other trees. For this reason, Allah *Glorified is He* then says: '... clusters of fruit hanging close at hand.' (*al-Insan*: 13) He *the Almighty* wants to relieve His believing servant who was steadfast in his faith in the worldly life in spite of all the hardships and the temptation to commit sins.

Besides, He wants to give rest to him for his steadfastness in obedience and refraining from disobedience. Thus, the servant will receive a doubled reward.

Even after mentioning all these kinds of pleasure in the previous verses, Allah *Glorified is He* mentions another kind of pleasure appreciated by anyone thinks deeply about it. He makes fruit closer to a believer so that he does not feel tired while trying to get them, as He *the Almighty* says: 'With clustered fruit within his reach' (*al-Haqqā*: 23) and 'Clusters of fruit hanging close at hand.' (*al-Insan*: 13) These verses mean that the clusters of fruit hang near them. The fruit will descend to wherever a believer is, whether he is standing or sitting, as the fruit is at hand. Furthermore, if he were lying, the clusters of fruit will get closer to him so that he can eat at any time or position. The Arabic word *Al-Edna*' (closeness) means to make something closer to another, as in the verse where He *the Almighty* describes of the fruit of paradise by saying: 'With clustered fruit within his reach.' (*al-Haqqā*: 23) Thus, the fruits are closer to the people of paradise, and they can easily pick them.

Allah *the Almighty* mentions that the closeness is confined to the shades of the trees, while the subjecting is related to the clusters of fruit as if they are subservient to a believer by saying, 'Pick us.' It is as though he lives between the fruit and finds them at hand at all times. It is worth mentioning that the fragrance of these fruits is incomparable with that of the worldly life.

There is another meaning we can comprehend from the word *dhullilat* (to be subjected); it is as if the fruit gets closer and hang in subjection, waiting for the moment when a believer stretches his hand to pick them. Allah *the Exalted* subjects the fruit to His believing servant as if He says to them, 'You are specially prepared for My servant.' Thus, they keep hanging in subjection, waiting for the one who believed in Him and strove in His Way to pick them. Therefore, paradise as well as its fruit longs for believers.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* directs our attention to another kind of pleasure in paradise by saying:

وَيُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِغَائِيَةٍ مِّنْ فِضَّةٍ وَأَكْوَابٍ كَانَتْ قَوَارِيرًا ﴿١٥﴾
 قَوَارِيرًا مِّنْ فِضَّةٍ قَدَّرُوهَا تَقْدِيرًا ﴿١٦﴾

**They will be served with silver plates [15]
 and gleaming silver goblets according to their
 fancy [16] (The Quran, *al-Insan*: 15 - 16)**

These verses mention other pleasures and gratifications of paradise. Allah *the Almighty* will not abandon the believers; rather, He *the Almighty* provides them with everlasting youths to serve them with silver plates and goblets. They are filled with drinks that delight the eyes, the tongues and the mouths. The vessels in which the drinks are served are goblets and cups without handles to hold them with because believers will not need them. A person in this worldly life needs the handle to avoid the heat of the hot drinks. In paradise, nevertheless, they will not find what bothers them or anything to take precaution against. Therefore, goblets and cups are without handles in paradise.

Interestingly, these goblets gather between two qualities; they are made of silver, yet they are as pure as glass that one can see the drink in the goblet if it is far away from him. So, while the goblets of the worldly life are made of glass, which is made of sand, the goblets of paradise are made of silver. However, they are as pure as glass, and this is why one should not fear that they will break or harm him. Thus, the jugs and the goblets are pure and transparent even though they are made of silver. However, is there a difference between the jugs and the goblets? We say, 'Yes, the jugs are large containers of the drinks which are poured into the goblets.' Allah *Glorified is He* makes a distinction between them by saying: 'They will be served with silver jugs and gleaming silver goblets according to their fancy.' (*al-Insan*: 15-16)

However, does this mean that the jugs are made of silver so they are not transparent, while the goblets are as pure and transparent as glass through which one can see the drink inside them? This is something possible, and accordingly, only the goblets are similar to glass in its transparency even though they are made of silver. If we reflected on that matter, we will realize a beautiful meaning. When one sees the jug which is not transparent, he will long to know what kind of drink it contains and when it is poured into the

transparent goblet, he will be much happier. Even the structure of these verses is exciting as Allah *the Almighty* says: 'They will be served with silver plates and gleaming silver goblets according to their fancy.' (*al-Insan*: 15-16) Thus, one will be much surprised about goblets of glass made of silver and not of sand.

Furthermore, one will also wonder that those who pour the drink in his own goblet will pour an amount exactly in proportion to what he needs to quench his thirst. The drink in the goblet will neither be less than one's need, so he would not ask for more, nor will it be more than his need so that he would be puzzled where to put the remnants of the drink. How did the one who pour the drink know exactly one's need? Did they measure the goblets or the drinks in the goblets? If they measured the goblets, this means that everyone has a special goblet or goblets according to what quenches his thirst. However, if the drinks are measured, this means that they will be poured into the goblet in proportion to what quenches one's thirst and satisfy his need. Interestingly, the one who pours the drink knows exactly the measure that quenches the thirst of everyone in paradise. Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* spoke the truth when he narrated in a Sacred Hadith that the Lord of Might said, 'I have prepared for My pious worshipers such things as no eye has ever seen, no ear has ever heard of and nobody has ever thought of.'⁽¹⁾

So, what are the kinds of drink that the jugs and the goblets contain? Allah *Glorified is He* provides the answer in the following verses by saying:

وَيُسْقَوْنَ فِيهَا كَأْسًا كَانَ مِزَاجُهَا زَنْجَبِيلًا ﴿١٧﴾ عَيْنًا فِيهَا تُسَمَّى سَلْسَبِيلًا ﴿١٨﴾

**And they will be given a drink infused with ginger [17]
from a spring called *Salsabil* [18]
(The Quran, *al-Insan*: 17-18)**

We notice that Allah *the Almighty* also uses the passive voice in this verse. He *the Most High* says in a previous verse that the fruits will be made near to the dwellers of the paradise, while He could have said that He made the fruits near to them. This is to say that He could have used the active voice instead

(1) This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him. See *Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 3244; and Muslim, Sahih, Hadith no. 2824.*

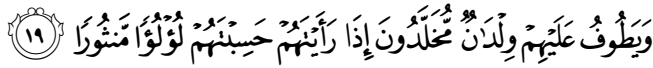
of the passive one. He also says: 'They will be served with silver plates' (*al-Insan*: 15); 'And they will be given a drink ...' (*al-Insan*: 17). In the verse under discussion, He *the Almighty* could have used the active voice saying that He gives them a drink. However, He wants to say to the human being by whose name this chapter is titled that paradise is different from the worldly life in which he has endured patiently its sufferings and hardships. The worldly life was tiring for him because it confronted him for his steadfastness in belief and obedience to Allah *Glorified is He*. So, He has prepared paradise to serve such a human being and subjected it completely to do what he desires even before he asks for it. Thus, the good human being should not be concerned about or grieve for what he suffers in this worldly life as the outcome is for the righteous.

Allah *Glorified is He* addresses the human being according to his desires and hopes. If he desires an eternal life of pleasure, he should only believe in and obey Him and be steadfast in obedience and in refraining from disobedience. Accordingly, He *the Most High* will reward him for his steadfastness with a blissful life in paradise in which everything obeys his commands.

In this verse, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'They will be given a drink infused with ginger.' (*al-Insan*: 17) Thus, the people of paradise will not prepare what they desire by themselves; rather, the drinks will be prepared and given to them without any intervention on their part. In this verse, it is not important to know the one who serves the drinks to them but to know what they are drinking. For this reason, He *the Almighty* uses the passive voice by saying: 'They will be given a drink infused with ginger.' (*al-Insan*: 17)

They will be given a drink infused with ginger. Any goblet in the Quran refers to that of wine. However, it is not like the wine in this worldly life which intoxicates the minds and makes the person unconscious about what he is doing. The wine in the Hereafter will be infused with many things, and this verse mentions that it is infused with ginger. Another verse in this chapter states that it is mixed with *Kafur*: 'The righteous will have a drink mixed with *kafur*.' (*al-Insan*: 5) The tastes of these drinks in paradise are different, and the flavours are numerous even if the drink is the same. The wine will be infused with only little ginger because everyone knows the bitterness of ginger in this worldly life. However, ginger in the Hereafter is different.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: 'from a spring called *Salsabil*.' (*al-Insan*: 18) The drink will be from a spring in paradise called *Salsabil*. This drink will be infused with ginger. Ibn Al-A'rabi said, 'I did not hear the word *Salsabil* except in the Quran. It is a spring from which this drink easily spurts, and it will flow in a riverbed without banks.' The word *As-Salsabil* means the good taste and delicious flavour. Its drink moves smoothly and easily to the pharynx, and both the pharynx and the tongue will find its taste sweet. The sweet water of this spring will easily flow to believers' perpetual Gardens. Thus, the word *Salsabil* could be the name of that spring or a description of its water. Some scholars maintained that the word *Salsabil* is not one word; rather, it is a sentence consisted of two words: *sal* (ask) and *sabil* (way). The first word *sal* is an imperative means to ask. The subject of the verb is implicit and it could be the pronoun 'you' or Muhammad. The second word *sabil* is the object.



**Everlasting youths will attend them — if you
could see them, you would think they were
scattered pearls [19] (The Quran, *al-Insan*: 19)**

In this verse, Allah *Glorified is He* uses the active voice by saying: 'Everlasting youths will attend them ...' (*al-Insan*: 19). In a previous verse, He *the Almighty* tells us about the drinks that will be served for the righteous people, but here He tells us those who serve and attend them with the jugs by saying: 'Everlasting youths will attend them ...' (*al-Insan*: 19). These everlasting youths never age or grow old, for they will remain in the same state without changing or aging. They all have the same age. We notice that Allah *Glorified is He* says they are *wildan* (young boys), but He says in another verse: 'The Day [of Judgment] will turn children's hair grey.' (*al-Muzzammil*: 17) It is known that going grey due to the calamities of the Day of Judgment will not only inflict young boys but also young girls. The Arabic word *Al-Wildan* refers to those who are close to the time of their delivery, namely the one who was born recently. This word includes boys and girls, a male and a female.

Likewise, in the verses discussing the rules of inheritance, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Parents inherit a sixth each if the deceased leaves children; if he

leaves no children and his parents are his sole heirs, his mother has a third.' (*an-Nisa'*: 11) Although the meaning of 'youths' may include a male and a female, another verse limits its meaning to the boys: 'Devoted boys like hidden pearls wait on them.' (*at-Tur*: 24) Therefore, the word 'youths' in the verse under discussion refers only to boys, given that only the boy is called '*ghulam*'.

Allah *Glorified is He* describes these youths as everlasting even though immortality is not a special quality for them as all the people of paradise are immortal, and they neither go grey nor age. For this reason, some exegetes said that *mukhalladun* in His saying: 'Everlasting youths will attend them ...' (*al-Insan*: 19) means that they wear earrings or wristlets as a manifestation of pleasure and luxury. The Arab people call the earring which is worn in the ears *Qirt* or *kildah* (earring). So, according to this interpretation, He says that these youths are wearing earrings.

Allah *Glorified is He* then says: '... if you could see them [the youths], you would think they were scattered pearls.' (*al-Insan*: 19) This verse is one of the wonders of the Quran. The scattered pearls are the hidden pearls with which Allah *Glorified is He* describes the boys, saying: 'Devoted boys like hidden pearls wait on them.' (*at-Tur*: 17) The hidden pearls are those concealed and preserved in a certain place. Allah *the Exalted* even describes the beautiful-eyed maidens in paradise as 'Beautiful companions like hidden pearls.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 22-23) They are like the pearls preserved in the seashell so no one can take them. In this regard, Ibn Jubayr said, 'Nothing but the beautiful, expensive and precious things are preserved, hidden and saved.' That is why the pearls are preserved and not touch by any trifler.

The saying of Allah *the Almighty* 'Devoted boys like hidden pearls wait on them' (*at-Tur*: 17), and 'Everlasting youths will attend them ...' (*al-Insan*: 19) emphasizes the fact that the boys serving the people of paradise are exclusive to them. They do not generally serve everyone there. Thus, every one of the people of paradise has serving boys exclusive to him. Besides, there are boys who generally serve food and drinks.

If we understand this matter, we can realize the difference between the boys mentioned in the chapter of *at-Tur* and the youths mentioned in the chapter of *al-Insan*. In the chapter of *at-Tur*, Allah *the Almighty* describes them

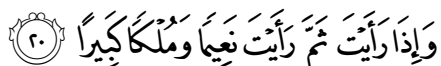
by saying: 'Like hidden pearls.' (*at-Tur*: 24). However, here in the chapter of *al-Insan*, He says: 'If you could see them, you would think they were scattered pearls.' (*al-Insan*: 19) The scattered pearls shine everywhere as if these youths are serving generally, so they are scattered everywhere. The verse of the chapter of *at-Tur* gives a familial atmosphere for those youths, and that is why they are hidden and preserved. He *the Most High* says: 'They are comfortably seated on couches arranged in rows; 'We pair them with beautiful-eyed maidens. We unite believers with their offspring who followed them in faith.' (*at-Tur*: 20-21) As long as He mentions the beautiful-eyed maidens and that the offspring of believers will follow them, then it is a familial atmosphere that requires private boys for each family. The matter here in the chapter of *al-Insan*, however, is different. The verses are talking about the public gatherings of believers where boys will be waiting on in a general manner like the endlessly scattered pearls. For this reason, they are not exclusive to anyone.

You can see the verses from another angle; there is no discrepancy between the hidden and the scattered pearls. We notice that Allah *Glorified is He* says in the verse under discussion: 'If you could see them, you would think they were scattered pearls.' (*al-Insan*: 19) According to another interpretation, it is as if He *the Almighty* commands you to see the view of the people of paradise while they are enjoying its pleasures. One would see believers sitting and resting on their couches in high tents. Furthermore, he would see them living under shady trees with fruits hanging near, from which they eat as they desire. A believer will have his offspring and beautiful-eyed maidens with him. Furthermore, boys or youths will wait on him with kinds of drinks and food. If you could look at these high tents, which are exclusive to believers, you will imagine that these youths who are waiting on them are like the scattered, shining pearls. One would see their shining, brightness and illumination while each one, in reality, is hidden in the tent, serving one of the believers. So, He *the Almighty* says: 'If you could see them, you would think they were scattered pearls.' (*al-Insan*: 19) In reality, they are hidden pearls.

One may ask, 'Why does Allah *Glorified is He* especially mention pearls.' This is because the pearl is precious and clear like the rubies and corals in their

brightness and preciousness. Since pearls have a white colour, He *the Most High* describes these youths and boys as pearls for the whiteness of their faces.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:



**And if you were to look around, you would see bliss
and great wealth [20] (The Quran, *al-Insan*: 20)**

As a matter of fact, the pleasure in this worldly life is proportional to the abilities of the people. On the contrary, the pleasure in the Hereafter is proportional to the Omnipotence of Allah *Glorified is He*. In other words, the measures in this life are different from those in the life of the Hereafter. In this worldly life, one cannot see Allah *the Exalted* with his constitution and body. In the Hereafter, however, one's constitution and body will make it possible for him to see Allah *the Almighty*. This is the climax of pleasure in the Hereafter. In this worldly life, you are living in the traces of Allah's Omnipotence, but in the Hereafter you will enjoy seeing Him.

There are many kinds of pleasures and gratifications in this worldly life, but they are limited and come to an end as a person will not also live forever to enjoy them. His potentialities to enjoy the worldly pleasures are limited. By contrast, the potentialities of the pleasure of the Hereafter are proportional to the Omnipotence of the Creator Who provides by His absolute Power and vast Mercy. The pleasure in the Hereafter is endless; no one can prevent or stop. On one hand, the pleasure of the worldly life is imperfect as the changing circumstances of this life will inevitably disturb a person. On the other hand, the reward of those believing in Allah *Glorified is He* is the everlasting pleasure and the great reward.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Their Lord gives them the good news of His Mercy and Pleasure, Gardens where they will have lasting bliss.' (*at-Tawba*: 21) *Ar-Ridwan* (Pleasure) is a reward greater than any other bliss the people of paradise will have. However, why is the 'lasting bliss' mentioned after the Gardens? Does the bliss not exist in the Gardens? The Garden was only brought into existence to be the blissful reward of a human being. Its pleasure

is eternal and everlasting, so it does not come to an end. Furthermore, one will not stop enjoying that pleasure by perishing or death. It is as if the bliss in paradise is greater than one's ability. For this reason, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And if you were to look around, you would see bliss and great wealth.' (*al-Insan*: 20) This means that if you were to see what is there in paradise, you would see bliss and great wealth.

Arabs sometimes omit the relative pronouns like 'which', 'that', 'who' and 'what' and only mention their relative clauses. The saying of Allah *Glorified is He* 'This is where you and I part company' (*al-Kahf*: 78), is a case in point. This verse means that this is the departure which is between them. Another illustrative example is His saying: 'All the bonds between you have been severed.' (*al-An'am*: 94) This verse shows that all that which bonds between them have been severed. Thus, it is as if He *the Almighty* says in the verse in question, 'If you, Prophet Muhammad, were to see and glance what righteous people have been given of bliss in paradise, you would see pleasure and great dominion.'

This verse mentions the bliss and then the great dominion. Thus, bliss is something other than a great dominion. Allah *Glorified is He* tells us about that bliss by saying: 'And reward them, for their steadfastness, with a Garden and silken robes. They will sit on couches, feeling neither scorching heat nor biting cold, with shady [branches] spread above them and clusters of fruit hanging close at hand. They will be served with silver plates and gleaming silver goblets according to their fancy, and they will be given a drink infused with ginger from a spring called *Salsabil*. Everlasting youths will attend them—if you could see them, you would think they were scattered pearls.' (*al-Insan*: 12-19) All of these are the elements of bliss which the righteous will enjoy. It is the everlasting and eternal bliss that never ends, never changes or ceases to exist. Allah *Glorified is He* mentions the word 'bliss' as an indefinite noun because this bliss is innumerable and countless and no one except Him knows it. How can we know it, while within each kind of bliss there are many forms of pleasures?

What is more than all this bliss? Allah *Glorified is He* then mentions the great dominion which is to own all this bliss forever. Neither one's life nor his bliss will come to an end. We should note that there is a difference between

Al-Maalik (owner) and *Al-Malik* (king). An owner is the one who possesses a garment, a house, etc., but a king owns and controls owners and their possessions. Thus, the real bliss lies in having a dominion. If we ponder on that issue, we understand Allah's saying: 'And if you were to look around, you would see bliss and great wealth.' (*al-Insan*: 20) Thus, if one is deprived of having a dominion in this worldly life, he will have it in the Hereafter. One will have the dominion over the pleasures around him and also over the boys, youths and beautiful-eyed maidens.

So, a believer will have dominion in paradise. Someone may live amidst pleasure, abundant provision and luxury, but he does not have dominion over those who serve him. In paradise, however, the righteous will have a dominion, high position and power to the extent that angels will seek their permission to come into their places to greet them. How great this bounty is! Al-Kalbi said, 'The great dominion means that one of angels comes as a messenger from Allah with a bounty like clothes, food and drinks to one of the righteous. The angel seeks his permission to come into his home that Allah has prepared for him.' Is there a greater bliss and dominion than that? The Arabic word *Al-Mulk* (dominion) may also refer to the vastness of the dominion of every pious and righteous believer inside paradise as it was narrated that the lowest of the people of paradise in position will explore his dominion in one thousand-year journey.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

عَلَيْهِمْ ثِيَابٌ سُنْدُسٌ خُضْرٌ وَإِسْتَبْرَقٌ وَحُلُّوا أَسَاوِرَ
مِنْ فِضَّةٍ وَسَقَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ شَرَابًا طَهُورًا ﴿٢١﴾

**They will wear garments of green silk and brocade;
they will be adorned with silver bracelets; their Lord will
give them a pure drink [21] (The Quran, *al-Insan*: 21)**

The word '*Allyahum*' indicates highness and supremacy as the garments of the faithful are that of richness, dignity, supremacy, glory and splendour. Whether the splendid garments are those of the people of paradise themselves or of those who serve them, these garments are included in the great dominion. Some scholars maintained that the word '*Allyahum*' means that the garments are on

their bodies and touch them, but this is not necessarily applicable. Let us ponder on Allah's sayings: 'Do they not see the birds above them spreading their wings? (*al-Mulk*: 19); and 'We made the mountain tower high above them.' (*an-Nisa*': 154) So, the word *fawqahum* (above them) does not entail touching; rather, it means highness. The letter *Alif* in the word '*Allyahum* gives an additional meaning of supremacy. It is an adverb for the place covered with garments, curtains and robes. Some other scholars maintained that the word '*Allyahum* is an adverb modifying the word 'youths'. So, the garments of green silk and brocade are theirs. It indicates the great dominion whether it is an adverbial modifier for the word youths, the people of paradise or a description of the silk garments which are placed on their tents and couches.

The Arabic word *As-Sundus* (silk) is the fine, smooth silk, while *Al-Istabraq* (brocade) is the thick and rough kind of silk. *As-Sundus* may be weaved with golden threads. Allah *Glorified is He* mentions both smooth and rough silk by saying: 'They will sit on beds upholstered with brocade, the fruit of both gardens within easy reach.' (*ar-Rahman*: 54) Thus, as the inner covering of the beds are of brocade, the couches on which the people of paradise recline is covered with fine silk.

The first part of this verse discusses the garments of the people of paradise, so what about their adornments? Allah *Glorified is He* says: '... they will be adorned with silver bracelets.' (*al-Insan*: 21) 'There they will be adorned with bracelets of gold (*al-Kahf*: 31), and '... they shall be made to wear therein bracelets of gold and pearls, and their dress therein shall be silk.' (*Fatir*: 33) Thus, the bracelets are either of gold, silver or pearls. We notice that Allah *Glorified is He* uses the passive voice by saying: '... they will be adorned ...' (*al-Insan*: 21) in the three verses of the chapters of *al-Insan*, *al-Kahf* and *Fatir*. This means that the people of paradise will not adorn themselves; rather, others will adorn them after they wear the garments themselves. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'There they will wear green garments of fine silk and brocade.' (*al-Kahf*: 31) He uses the active voice because the action of wearing their garments is attributed to them.

The bracelets are worn around the wrist. The adornment is an extra pleasure that the people of paradise enjoy. An example of the adornments in this

worldly life is the man who prepares his daughter for her marriage. He brings the requirements of life and then brings some luxuries and adornments like the carpets, the chandeliers, etc.

After the righteous wear their garments and are adorned with bracelets of gold, silver and pearls, Allah *Glorified is He* mentions their drinks, saying: '...Their Lord will give them a pure drink.' (*al-Insan: 21*) He *the Most High* immediately gives them their drinks. Since it is He Who gives them this drink, it deserves to be described as a pure one. Unlike the wine of the worldly life, the wine of paradise is free from all impurities, and neither touched by hands nor defiled by legs. Out of the purity of that drink, it does not turn into impure urine; rather, it comes out of their bodies as perspiration.

When Suhayl ibn 'Abdullah was praying *Al-'Isha'* Prayer, he recited the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'Their Lord will give them a pure drink.' (*al-Insan: 21*) He kept moving his mouth as if he was sucking something. When he finished his prayer, he was asked, 'Were you drinking or reciting?' He replied, 'By Allah, if I did not find the sweetness of the drink when I recite the verse mentioning it, I would not have recited it.'

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِنَّ هَذَا كَانَ لَكُمْ جَزَاءً وَكَانَ سَعْيُكُمْ مَشْكُورًا ﴿٢٢﴾

[It will be said], 'This is your reward.
Your endeavours are appreciated' [22]
(The Quran, *al-Insan: 22*)

The reward of the righteous is the unlimited bliss and the great dominion for what they have done in days gone by. When one does an act of obedience, it could be difficult for him. Thus, one should remember the recompense he gets for such good deeds, namely the eternal relaxation and the good reward. He *the Almighty* says: 'This is the way Allah rewards the righteous people.' (*an-Nahl: 31*) It is an everlasting and eternal reward for believers who suffered in the cause of their faith and were oppressed and tortured. So, they deserve Allah's eternal happiness in the Hereafter. They also deserve to be thanked by Him, as He *the Almighty* says to them: 'Your endeavours are

appreciated.' (*al-Insan*: 22) This is Allah's discourse to those who deserved His reward and recompense. The endeavour is the movement leading to the objective. Every creature in the universe has a distinctive endeavour, as Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'The ways you take differs greatly.' (*al-Layl*: 4) So, people's endeavours are different because everyone has his mission, way and movement.

We should note that the endeavour can be praiseworthy or blameworthy. An example of the blameworthy one is that mentioned in Allah's saying: 'Who could be more wicked than those who prohibit the mention of Allah's Name in His places of worship and strive to have them deserted?' (*al-Baqara*: 114) This verse shows that it is a blameworthy endeavour to prevent the mention of Allah *the Exalted* in His mosques and to strive to have it deserted in every possible way. These ways of destroying the mosques include taking some procedures to make them deserted by its people by the following: neglecting them, setting restriction on those who come to them, striving to destroy and burn them and making them purposeless and without any relation to the people.



Another example of a blameworthy endeavour is found in the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'When he leaves, he sets out to spread corruption in the land, destroying crops and livestock. Allah does not like corruption.' (*al-Baqara*: 205) Therefore, his movement, endeavour, effort and time were aimed at causing mischief in the land and destroying crops and livestock.

As for the praiseworthy endeavour, whose goodness cannot be denied, it is like the endeavour of a father to feed and maintain his children. Likewise, it is a praiseworthy endeavour to seek the Hereafter and not the worldly life, taking the latter a means to get the reward in the former. The worldly life with all its endeavours, tiredness and effort is not the objective after which a person should strive. Rather, a person should strive to get the pleasure in the Hereafter which is far more superior to the worldly life.

One has the choice to go to the house of worship or to go to the gatherings of drinking intoxication and corruption as Allah *Glorified is He* has made a human being's limbs subjected to His Will in this worldly life. They do not disobey him regarding something good or evil. He has the choice to transgress or to spend money on the needy.

Thus, seeking the Hereafter is an endeavour and whoever strives after it will have his endeavour appreciated. Regarding this, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'If anyone desires the life to come and strives after it as he should, as a true believer, his striving will be thanked.' (*al-Isra':* 19) It is known than thanking Allah *the Almighty* entails getting more blessings, as He says: 'If you are thankful, I will give you more.' (*Ibrahim:* 7) So, what do you think if the One Who thanks the servant for his obedience is Allah *the Almighty*?

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* directs our attention to the Quran by saying:

 إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ تَنْزِيلًا
 فَاصْبِرْ لِحُكْمِ رَبِّكَ وَلَا تُطِعْ مِنْهُمْ ءَائِمًا أَوْ كَفُورًا

**We Our self have sent down this Quran to you [Prophet] in
gradual revelation [23] Await your Lord's Judgment with
patience; do not yield to any of these sinners or disbelievers [24]
(The Quran, *al-Insan:* 23-24)**

In this verse, Allah *the Exalted* talks about an action that requires His perfect Attributes. Similarly, He *the Almighty* says: 'We have sent down the Quran, and We will guard it.' (*al-Hijr:* 9) However, when He speaks only about His Divinity or worshipping Him alone, He uses the singular pronoun as in His saying: 'I am Allah; there is no god but Me. So worship Me.' (*Ta Ha:* 14) The revelation of the Quran was not undertaken by only Allah's Omnipotence, Knowledge, Wisdom or Mercy; rather, this Action was done by all His perfect Attributes. Thus, the revelation of the Quran is a great action because it is sent down with Allah's Attributes of Wisdom, Knowledge, Sight, Lordship, Withholding and Giving.

The Arabic word *nazzalna* indicates the continuous and successive revelation of the Quran. It was revealed at once from the Preserved Tablet and then revealed gradually according to incidents. Accordingly, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'It is a recitation that We have revealed in parts so that you can recite it to people at intervals; We have sent it down little by little' (*al-Isra':* 106) and 'We gave it to you in gradual revelation.' (*al-Furqan:* 32) The Quran was revealed in parts and gradually; it is a set of verses used to be revealed

successively. This gradual way of revelation made it easy for the companions to memorise, understand and apply the Quranic verses.

In the same respect, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'The disbelievers said, "Why was the Quran not sent down to him all at once?" We sent it in this way to strengthen your heart [Prophet]; we gave it to you in gradual revelation.' (*al-Furqan*: 32) He *the Almighty* has revealed the Quran in this way in order to strengthen the heart of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and that of believers. If it were revealed at once, it would only bear a fixed set of obligations despite the fact that the events of the Call of Islam are numerous and believers need to have their heart strengthened at all times. For this reason, He *Glorified is He* revealed the Quran gradually to strengthen the heart of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and that of believers.

Allah *Glorified is He* commands Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* by saying: 'Await your Lord's Judgment with patience ...' (*al-Insan*: 24). Everyone adheres to the Quran will inevitably be inflicted with calamities that require great patience. He *the Almighty* commands him *peace and blessings be upon him* to be steadfast regarding His Decree of revealing the Quran to him. This Command indicates that the Prophet *peace and blessings be upon him* will be inflicted with what requires steadfastness and patience.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* prohibits Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* from yielding to any of disbelievers and sinners, saying: '...do not yield to any of these sinners or disbelievers.' (*al-Insan*: 24) 'Utba ibn Rabe'a and Al-Walid ibn Al-Mughira both said to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* 'If you have done that (calling to Islam) for gaining women and wealth, then abjure this matter.' 'Utba then said, 'I will give you (Muhammad) my daughter in marriage without a bride-gift.' Al-Walid also said, 'If you abjured such matter, I will give you money from my wealth till you are satisfied.' Thereupon, Allah *Glorified is He* revealed the verse under discussion.

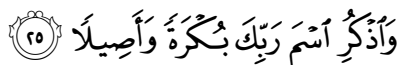
Although Allah's Prohibitions of yielding to sinners and disbelievers was revealed in reference to the disbelievers of Mecca, the verse is not exclusive to them. We have to consider the generality of the wording and not the specificity of the cause of revelation. Even if the address is directed towards

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* the *ummah* (the followers of Islam) is included in this address. So, all the Muslims should not yield to any sinner or disbeliever.

A sinner is a disobedient person who commits sins and misdeeds. This does not necessarily mean that he is a disbeliever. As for a disbeliever, he is a sinful one who commits the major sin of disbelieving as well as the minor sins and misdeeds. This disbeliever has no discipline to control his behaviour as he does not believe in any Book, any Messenger or in the Day of Judgment. If he does not believe in these issues, why should he adhere to the Straight Path? Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* makes a distinction in the verse in question between a sinner and a disbeliever with the particle 'or', i.e. one should not obey a sinner or a disbeliever whether singly or in pairs.

The Arabic word *Al-Kafir* (disbeliever) expresses hyperbola and refers to the stern kind of disbelief. Such a disbeliever stubbornly adheres to his disbelief; he denies and rejects anything related to faith. He stubbornly disbelieves, calls other people to disbelief and bars them from the Way of Allah *Glorified is He*. A normal disbeliever is one who disbelieves but neither calls others to disbelief nor bars them from the Way of Allah *Glorified is He*. He may disbelieve in something and believe in another, but a stern disbeliever is the one whose disbelief transcends the limits.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:



**Remember the name of your Lord at dawn and
in the evening [25] (The Quran, *al-Insan*: 25)**

Remembering Allah *Glorified is He* means glorifying and exalting Him, as He *the Almighty* says: '[Prophet], glorify the name of your Lord *the Most High* Who created [all things] in due proportion, Who determined their destinies and guided them.' (*al-A'la*: 1-3) How does a human being, who is a master in this universe, not glorify Him *Glorified is He* while all other created beings in the universe do so? He should be ashamed that all the created beings in the universe glorify Him, while he does not. So, he should add his glorification of

Allah *Glorified is He* to that of all these created beings. One should remember his Lord so that He *the Almighty* remembers him in the exalted assembly of angels, as He *Glorified is He* says: 'So remember Me; I will remember you.' (*al-Baqara*: 152)

Thus, Allah *Glorified is He* wants His servants to remember Him often, and the more they remember and thank Him, the more He thanks them and gives them of His Bounties. He *the Most High* says in a Sacred Hadith: 'I am as my slave expects me to be, and I am with him when he remembers Me. If he remembers Me inwardly, I will remember him inwardly, and if he remembers Me in an assembly, I will remember him in a better assembly (i.e., in the assembly of angels).'

So, the meaning of His saying: 'And remember the name of your Lord ...' (*al-Insan*: 25) is that one should remember Him for everything: His Bounties, Bestowals, covering up one's faults, Mercy and accepting repentance. This verse is a reminder about the Creator's Bounties bestowed on us. He *the Almighty* raises you up and gives you of His innumerable and countless Blessings. Therefore, you should remember the Name of your Lord, for if you do not love Him for His religious Obligations, you have already loved Him for the bounties He has given you.

In this verse, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And remember the name of your Lord at dawn and in the evening.' (*al-Insan*: 25) In another verse, He *the Most High* says: 'Believers, remember Allah often and glorify Him morning and evening.' (*al-Ahzab*: 41-42) It is as though He wants us to remember and glorify Him by uttering His Name during the night, at the beginning of the day and at its end.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَاسْجُدْ لَهُ، وَسَبِّحْهُ لَيْلًا طَوِيلًا ﴿٢٦﴾

**Bow down before Him, and glorify Him at length
by night [26] (The Quran, *al-Insan*: 26)**

Allah *the Exalted* does not want to overburden believers by assigning to them what they cannot bear. Thus, He *the Almighty* does not command them to spend all the night worshipping, bowing and prostrating to Him. Rather, He commands them to spend only some part of the night praying to Him. In another verse,

He says: 'And during the night wake up and pray, as an extra offering of your own.' (*al-Isra'*: 79) Thus, He does not command believers to pray all the night, and He *the Almighty* even does not command Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to do so. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'You [Prophet], enfolded in your cloak! Stay up throughout the night, all but a small part of it, half, or a little less, or a little more; recite the Quran slowly and distinctly.' (*al-Muzzammil*: 1-4) In this verse, Allah *Glorified is He* commands him to pray throughout the night except for a small part thereof.

Bowing down to Allah *the Almighty* is the sign of submission and servitude to Him because you put the most honourable part of your body, namely your face, on the ground. This is a manifestation of your submission and humbleness. Thus, bowing down is the ultimate sign of submission, and it is an honour for a believer by which he elevates his position. Such a believer does not bow down to his peer or another creature; rather, he bows down to his Creator *the Almighty*.

Then, Allah *Glorified is He* commands Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* saying: '... and glorify Him at length by night.' (*al-Insan*: 26) Glorification means to exalt Him over what does not befit Him. Therefore, glorification should be a continuous action that never ceases. You find something wonderful in this verse. In the beginning of this verse, He commands believers to bow down and pray to Him only a part of the night, not all of it. However, when He commands them to glorify Him, He *the Almighty* says: 'And glorify Him at length by night.' (*al-Insan*: 26) Thus, one's glorification should not cease.

In fact, the entire universe is glorifying Allah *the Exalted* so you should not delay reaching the procession of the glorifiers. The chapter we are discussing is called *al-Insan* (man). It clarifies the way of a human being's success in the Hereafter. He *Glorified is He* says in another verse: 'Celebrate the praise of your Lord when you rise. Glorify Him at night and at the fading of the stars.' (*at-Tur*: 48-49) This is a command to keep glorifying Him until one rises to pray at night, saying, '*Subhan Allah* (Glory is to Allah), *Al-Hamdu lillah* (Praise is to Allah) and *Allahu Akbar* (Allah is the Greatest).'

When Lady 'Aisha *Allah be pleased with her* was asked about the words by which Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* would begin his supererogatory prayer at night, she replied, 'You ask me about a thing of

which no one asked me before you. When he stood up, he uttered the *Takbir* (Allah is the Greatest) ten times, and uttered 'Praise be to Allah' ten times, and uttered 'Glory be to Allah' ten times, and uttered 'There is no god but Allah' ten times, and sought forgiveness ten times and said, 'O Allah, forgive me, guide me, give me sustenance and keep me well.' He sought refuge in Allah from the hardship of standing before Allah on the Day of Judgment.'

After doing so, one should '... glorify Him at night and at the fading of the stars.' (*at-Tur*: 49) So it should be a lasting and continuous glorification you utter with your tongue until the stars fade away, the night ends and the signs of the dawn come. Afterwards, you pray the dawn prayer and remember and praise Allah *the Exalted* until sunrise.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ يُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ وَيَذَرُونَ وَرَاءَهُمْ يَوْمًا ثَقِيلًا ﴿٢٧﴾

**These people love the fleeting life. They put
aside [all thoughts of] a Heavy Day [27]
(The Quran, *al-Insan*: 27)**

The demonstrative pronoun 'these' in this verse refers to disbelievers about whom Allah *Glorified is He* says at the beginning of this chapter: 'We guided him to the right path, whether he was grateful or not. We have prepared chains, iron collars, and blazing Fire for the disbelievers.' (*al-Insan*: 3-4) We notice that He *the Most High* does not mention them after the fourth verse. Instead, He *the Almighty* mentions the righteous people's deeds and their reward. Then, in the verse number twenty-four, He *the Almighty* says: 'Await your Lord's Judgment with patience; do not yield to any of these sinners or disbelievers.' (*al-Insan*: 24) Thus, the word 'these' in the verse in question refers to either sinners or disbelievers.

Allah *Glorified is He* describes these disbelievers and sinners by saying: 'These people love the fleeting life.' (*al-Insan*: 27) He *the Almighty* describes the worldly life as fleeting because its pleasure is fleeting and short. These disbelievers love and strive for this fleeting worldly life that will come to an end instead of striving after the Hereafter. Therefore, a human being should

not only think about his fleeting life in this world and its desires, but he should also prepare himself for the coming events of the Hereafter. If one loves the fleeting worldly life and does not think about the life to come, he does a great wrong to himself. What is the benefit of a fleeting and limited pleasure if compared with the unlimited punishment in the Hereafter? The problem does not lie in those who want to enjoy this worldly life lawfully; rather, it lies in those who want to enjoy it unlawfully. They love the fleeting pleasure and forget about the life to come. In this regard, He *Glorified is He* says: 'Seek the life to come by means of what Allah has granted you, but do not neglect your rightful share in this world.' (*al-Qasas*: 77)

Allah *Glorified is He* gives you innumerable blessings and provides you according to your share in this worldly life. So, if you seek this worldly life by what He *the Almighty* has provided you, this provision will run out. However, if you take it with you to the Hereafter, it will last as an eternal pleasure that never ceases to exist. When you love, embrace and cling to the pleasure of this worldly life, you should know that your pleasure will not last forever. Either you will leave it when you depart the whole worldly life or it will cease, rendering you a needy person. If you love and adore the wealth, for instance, and you want to have it forever, you should take it with you to the eternal life to be a lasting pleasure that never departs you. So, you should hastily try to make it precede you to the Hereafter.

Although Allah *Glorified is He* advises us to seek the Hereafter, this does not mean that we neglect our shares in this worldly life. Your share in this life constitutes the good deeds that will benefit you in the Hereafter. It is as if your share in this worldly life benefits your share in the Hereafter. In other words, one's worldly life serves his life to come.

The problem is that disbelievers, transgressors and evildoers mistakenly think that there is no punishment or Account. They do not think about Allah's Punishment and that is why you find them putting aside and neglecting to think of a heavy, difficult Day. They do not believe in that Day and are not concerned about its coming; they totally neglect it. The Day of Judgment is very heavy upon disbelievers. It is the Day when they will be gathered to stand for the Account. Polytheists love living for a long time in the worldly life while

neglecting to work for the Hereafter to be saved from the punishment. Therefore, they neither believe nor work for the Day of Judgment.

Someone may ask, 'Why does Allah say that disbelievers put behind them the Day of Judgment, while it will come in the future?' Some scholars said that they put aside working for that heavy Day and neglect to do good deeds for the Hereafter. The Arabic word *wara* means the hardship which occurs in the past or the future. The Day of Judgment is pursuing them even if they lived for a long time. They neglect that Day and do not work for it, whereas it pursues them, and they will not escape from it. It will inevitably seize them when they find it before them to be held accountable and punished.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

نَحْنُ خَلَقْنَاهُمْ وَشَدَدْنَا أَسْرَهُمْ وَإِذَا شِئْنَا بَدَّلْنَا أَمْثَلَهُمْ بَدِيلًا ﴿٢٨﴾

**Yet We created them; We strengthened their constitution;
if We please, We can replace such people completely [28]
(The Quran, *al-Insan*: 28)**

In this verse, Allah *Glorified is He* mentions the manifestations of His Omnipotence to disbelievers and deniers by saying: 'Yet, We created them; We strengthened their constitution ...' (*al-Insan*: 28). Their strong joints and power are included in their strengthened constitution. He *the Most High* has created them precisely and has given them the senses of sight, hearing, taste and smell. He *the Almighty* has enabled them to move their hands and legs and given them living hearts and working systems inside their bodies. Furthermore, He *the Almighty* has given them skin that enables them to feel and nerves that transmit the feeling of desire or pain to the mind. Then, it perceives all that and orders the limbs to do certain actions. Allah *Glorified is He* has strengthened their joints with nerves, veins and skin so that their joints are not harmed during movement. Moreover, He *the Almighty* has strengthened their private parts so that their excrement and urine do not flow except when they want to relieve themselves or when they are inflicted with a disease.

Then Allah *the Almighty* says: '... if We please, We can replace such people completely.' (*al-Insan*: 28) If He *the Exalted* pleases, He can cause disbelievers

to perish and replace them with other people who would be different in their deeds. They would not neglect the Day of Judgment and would work for it.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

إِنَّ هَذِهِ تَذْكِرَةٌ ۖ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ سَبِيلًا ﴿٢٩﴾

This is a reminder. Let whoever wishes, take the way to his Lord [29] (The Quran, *al-Insan*: 29)

Allah *Glorified is He* says in another verse: 'It was not to distress you [Prophet] that We sent down the Quran to you but as a reminder for those who hold Allah in awe.' (*Ta Ha*: 2-3). Thus, He has sent down the Quran as a reminder to those who fear Him out of glorifying Him.

In this verse, Allah *the Almighty* says: '... Let whoever wishes take the way to his Lord' (*al-Insan*: 29). This verse means that whoever wants to benefit from that reminder should take a way that leads him to his objective, namely receiving guidance through the verses of the Quran. Defining the objective is meant to clarify the way before a human being to take the right way leading to the objective. When you ponder on this verse, you find that He *the Exalted* mentions 'the way' as an indefinite pronoun because the ways of goodness are numerous like praying, fasting, paying the prescribed alms or helping the needy. As long as you have followed the Way of belief in Allah *the Almighty* and Prophet Muhammad, you should take the way of goodness and obedience. In fact, the Way of Allah *the Most High* is safer and easier than the ways leading to the punishment of the hellfire.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا ﴿٣٠﴾

But you will only wish to do so if God wills – God is all knowing, all wise [30] (The Quran, *al-Insan*: 30)

As Allah *Glorified is He* affirms the free will of a human being, saying: 'Let whoever wishes take the way to his Lord.' (*al-Insan*: 29) He *the Almighty* affirms in this verse that human will is dependent on His Divine Will. So, if

He *the Most High* does not will something to happen, we cannot will it, as He *the Almighty* says: 'But you will only wish to do so if Allah wills ...' (*al-Insan*: 30). Therefore, no one can go against His Will, and every action belongs to Him as He *the Almighty* is the Creator of people's will. Only what Allah *Glorified is He* wishes takes place in the universe. Thus, a disbeliever's choice to disbelieve was not made against Allah's Will, for He *the Almighty* has created this choice for him.

In fact, a human being is coerced to do certain actions and free in others. So, neither the poor can become rich, nor the sick can be healed except by Allah's Will. Also, the weak cannot become stronger against His Will. For this reason, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Do not say of anything, "I will do that tomorrow", without adding, "Allah willing."' (*al-Kahf*: 23-24) So, you should beware of saying, 'I will do something', without referring it to the Will of Allah *the Exalted* as you do nothing except by His Will. Thus, you should not promise someone except with saying, 'Allah willing.'

Allah *the Almighty* affirms that He is eternally All Knowing, All Wise. He is unchangeable, and as long as He is All Knowing and All Wise from eternity, He will remain so forever. If any of His Attributes was preceded by the linking verb 'to be' in the past form was, you should not think that it is a description of something happened in the past; rather, we should say that He was and still is All Knowing and All Wise. This is because He *the Almighty* is All Knowing from eternity before the existence of something to be known. Likewise, He *the Exalted* is All Wise before the existence of anything needing Wisdom. A wise person is necessarily knowledgeable; otherwise, how can he wisely manage what he does not know?

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* concludes the chapter by saying:

يُدْخِلُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ وَالظَّالِمِينَ أَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيمًا ﴿٣١﴾

**He admits whoever He will into His Mercy
and has prepared a painful torment for the
disbelievers [31] (The Quran, *al-Insan*: 31)**

Allah *Glorified is He* admits whomever He wishes into His Mercy, which is His Religion or His paradise. Embracing His religion entails getting His paradise

according to His Will. Thus, there is no contradiction between interpreting His Mercy here as embracing His religion or entering His paradise. Believers enter paradise only by His Mercy and Will, not only by their deeds. Thus, entering paradise is due to His Benevolence and Grace, not due to believers' deeds.

The matter is dependent on the Will of Allah *Glorified is He*. He *the Most High* has not wished to admit to His Mercy the one whom He knows he would choose the way of misguidance. On the contrary, He *the Almighty* has wished to admit to His Mercy whom He knows would choose the Way of Guidance.

Allah *Glorified is He* says: '...and has prepared a painful torment for disbelievers.' (*al-Insan*: 31) He *the Almighty* has prepared a painful and severe punishment in the hellfire for those who wronged themselves by their disbelief and polytheism. He *the Almighty* details this punishment in the verses of the chapter of *al-Insan*. It is He Who has prepared a painful punishment for them. Every action derives its strength from that of its doer. Therefore, if an act of punishing is attributed to Allah *Glorified is He* with His absolute Power and Omnipotence, then the punishment will be unbearable and the wrongdoer will not find a deterrent against it.

the chapter of

al-Mursalat

In the Name of God,⁽¹⁾ the Most Merciful, the Dispenser of Mercy

The chapter of *al-Mursalat*.
Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَالْمُرْسَلَاتِ عُرْفًا ۝ (١) فَالْعَصْفَاتِ ۝ (٢) وَالنَّشْرِتِ نَشْرًا ۝ (٣)
فَالْفَرْقَتِ فَرَقًا ۝ (٤) فَالْمُلْقِيَتِ ذِكْرًا ۝ (٥) عَذْرًا أَوْ نَذْرًا ۝ (٦)

**By the [winds] sent forth in swift succession [1]
violently storming [2] scattering far and wide [3]
separating forcefully [4] delivering a reminder [5]
as a proof or a warning [6] (The Quran, *al-Mursalat*: 1-6)**

In this verse, Allah *Glorified is He* swears by the wind, saying: 'By the [winds] sent forth in swift succession' (*al-Mursalat*: 1). He *the Almighty* sends it successively like the mane of the horse. Sometimes it is sent as a mercy to bring about prosperity and welfare to the people, as He *the Most High* says: 'It is Allah Who sends the winds, bearing good news of His coming Grace, and when they have gathered up the heavy⁽²⁾ clouds, We drive them to a dead land where We cause rain to fall, bringing out all kinds of crops.' (*al-A'raf*: 57) This is the wind which comes with prosperity and good news about Allah's Grace.

(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 Arabic word *Ath-Thiqal* means the clouds full with abundant water. We find their colour grey because of the water they carry. See *Al-Qamus Al-Qawim* 1/108.

As for the wind coming with evil, Allah *the Almighty* describes them as violent storms which blow very strongly and violently. These storms are not like the light and gentle winds; rather, they are strong ones beating what confronts them. We see the like of these storms in desert roads. When a storm blows there, it covers the roads with sands and impedes the transportation until this layer of sand is removed from the road. If it blows on an ocean, it causes a tsunami in which the waves get very high, and the storm beats the big ships. Subsequently, ports are closed, and the movement of the ships and hunting are prevented.

Allah *Glorified is He* also swears by saying: 'scattering far and wide' (*al-Mursalat*: 3). It is a wind that spreads the heavy clouds to bring rain. Scattering is the opposite of folding. Some recited the word *nashran* (far and wide) as *bishra* (good news). Their argument is that the winds bear the good news as in the saying of Allah: 'Another of His signs is that He sends out the winds bearing good news.' (*ar-Rum*: 46) Thus, the winds bring the glad tidings of the falling of the rain.

The winds of mercy are of three kinds: first, the one that scatters the wind far and wide; second, the wind that bears good news; third, the wind of mercy that blows to everything in the world.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: 'separating forcefully' (*al-Mursalat*: 4). These winds forcefully disperse the clouds so each part goes to a different side of the horizon. Thus, these storms are very strong that they uproot trees and destroy homes. Meanwhile, people feel great awe in their hearts and take refuge with Allah *Glorified is He*. As this storm made them remember Him, then it is as if they have delivered a reminder to the hearts.

Therefore, winds illustrate the bounties of Allah *Glorified is He*. They drive these bounties, presented in the clouds carrying water to a people whose land had dried. Thereupon, they cause welfare and prosperity, and thus, they remember the Grace of Allah bestowed on them. In this regard, He *the Most High* says: 'It is Allah Who sends the winds, bearing good news of His coming Grace, and when they have gathered up the heavy clouds, We drive them to a dead land where We cause rain to fall, bringing out all kinds of crops.' (*al-A'raf*: 57)

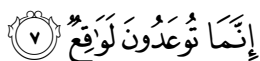
We notice that Allah *Glorified is He* mentions some descriptions in the verses of *al-Mursalat* that can be an argument for those who maintained that these verses refer to the wind. These descriptive words are sending which refers to the wind: bearing good news, according to one of the recitations, along with calling for reflection and delivering a reminder. Thus, wind affects the one who reflects on it as a sign of Allah *Glorified is He* and thereupon he mentions and praises Him for His Grace.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: 'as a proof or a warning.' (*al-Mursalat*: 6) Thus, these winds are a form of Allah's establishment of argument against the people. The Arabic word '*izar*' means wiping out the faults. Its root comes from giving excuses in order to be free from a sin as in Allah's saying: "They said, "In order to be free from your Lord's blame.'" (*al-A'raf*: 164) Here, the callers admonished them in order to be free from Allah's blame after they had delivered the Message. Then, no one has an excuse that it had not reached him. These winds are sent as a warning and a proof as the reminder includes both of them.

We have contextualized these verses as descriptions for the winds sent by Allah *Glorified is He*. This is because they are beating violating, scattering and dispersing the clouds in every direction to reach far countries. Also, they remind about the graces and the calamities ordained by Him *the Most High*. If the wind is a good one, it blows with graces, but if it is an evil one, it blows with calamities.

Although all these descriptions are related to the wind, some scholars interpret all these verses differently as referring to angels. Other scholars maintained that some verses refer to the wind and the rest of them refer to angels. Some other scholars also said that these verses refer to prophets. Some others still believed that they refer to the Quran as its verses which are sent down successively and violently strike the hearts with its reminder. It also spreads the light of guidance and knowledge to the hearts of believers. Furthermore, the verses of the Quran differentiate between the truth and falsehood. Moreover, they deliver faith, light and love of obedience to the heart of the believers as a proof and argument against Allah's servants.

After these verses by which Allah *the Almighty* swears, He mentions what He swears about by saying:

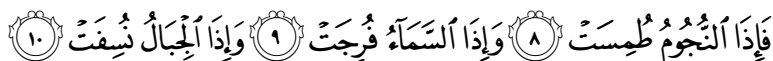


**What you are promised will come to pass [7]
(The Quran, *al-Mursalat*: 7)**

Allah *Glorified is He* says in another verse: 'What you are promised is sure to come ...' (*al- An'am*: 134). What He promises to come to pass will inevitably happen and be a reality. It will take place in the real world, and people will see it themselves. Moreover, in another verse, He *Glorified is He* says: 'What you [people] are promised is true.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 5) Thus, what He has promised the people is true and will occur. Whether He *the Almighty* swears by the wind, prophets, Quran or angels, swearing by all of these verses indicates the mightiness of the Day of Judgment about which He has sworn. We should take into account that He only swears by what is great about something great.

The Arabic word *waqi'* (will come to pass) has a strong impact on the ears and the hearts and causes the hearts to tremble. For this reason, the Day of Judgment is called *Al-Waqi'a* (The coming Hour), which is also the name of one of the Quranic chapters. Al-Hasan Al-Basri stated, 'When 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab *Allah be pleased with him* recited: '[Prophet] your Lord's punishment is coming—it cannot be put off.' (*at-Tur*: 7-8), he fell ill for twenty days during which the visitors came to see him.'⁽¹⁾

Subsequently, Allah *Glorified is He* says:



**When the stars are dimmed [8] and the sky is torn apart [9]
when the mountains are turned to dust [10]
(The Quran, *al-Mursalat*: 8 - 10)**

The first thing that happens of the events of the Day of Judgment is the dimming of the stars which adorn and illuminate the sky. Then, the world will darken and be in a pitch of darkness. Dimming of the stars means that their light and illumination ceased to exist. When someone wants to strike fear in

(1) See Ibn 'Atyya Al-Andalusi, *Al-Muharrir Al-Wajiz Fi Tafsir Al-Kitab Al-'Aziz*, 1/38; Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Al-Quran Al-'Azhim*, 7/430; and Ath-Tha'alibi, *Al-Jawahir Al-Hisan*, 1/130.

the hearts of people, he makes the place dark so that they cannot see what is around them. This would be difficult for them as they do not know where to go. Similarly, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'If it had been Our Will, We could have taken away their sight. They would have struggled to find the way, but how could they have seen.' (*Ya Sin*: 66) So, the first thing that will happen to them is that Allah *Glorified is He* will take away their sight so they will not see anything. Afterwards, they will struggle to find the way like blind people who collide with each other and do not know where to go. Thus, the dimming of the stars is the first scene of the Day of Judgment when the sky and the earth will be in a pitch of darkness.

As for the sky, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'and the sky is torn apart' (*al-Mursalat*: 9). This means that the sky will split apart. Another possible interpretation is that the sky will be opened for the coming down of angels. This second meaning is referred to in the next chapter *an-Naba'*, where He *the Almighty* says: 'The sky will open up like wide portals.' (*an-Naba'*: 19) Thus, the opening up of the sky is meant for the coming down of angels for the Account. They will go down and surround the earth which will be turned into another earth. So, when the sky is torn apart, angels will surround the earth from all its sides, a fact which is quite clear in His saying: 'On that Day the Great Event will come to pass. The sky will be torn apart on that Day, it will be so frail. The angels will be on all sides of it and, on that Day.' (*al-Haqq*: 15-17)

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'when the mountains are turned to dust.' (*al-Mursalat*: 10) We notice that He *the Almighty* mentions the mountains which are the most powerful and firm manifestations in the world. Otherwise, there are many other powerful and firm things like high buildings and skyscrapers. Therefore, if He will turn the mountains to dust and will eliminate them from the surface of the earth, other things will necessarily be eliminated. A human being looks at the mountains with awe and magnification out of their power and firmness. People also talk about the power, the height and the firmness of the Alps, the Himalaya, Atlas and Taurus.

These mountains will turn into dust and the earth we are living on will be destabilized. So what will human beings do? Where will they go? The sky above us will be torn apart and opened up for angels to get down in order to

fulfil the Promise and the Warning of Allah *Glorified is He*. Now, how can a human bring disbelief? The mountains will turn to dust and will be like the tufts of wool. They will be like scattered grains of dust that the winds blow.

Subsequently, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَإِذَا الرُّسُلُ أَقْبَتَتْ ۖ لِأَيِّ يَوْمٍ أُجِّلَتْ ۚ (١١)
لِيَوْمِ الْفَصْلِ ۚ (١٢) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ ۚ (١٣)

**And the messengers given their appointed time [11]
for what Day has all this been set? [12]**

**The Day of Decision [13] What will explain to you what the
Day of Decision is? [14] (The Quran, *al-Mursalat*: 11-14)**

Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And the messengers given their appointed time.' (*al-Mursalat*: 11) Messengers will be given an appointed time that no one knows except Allah *Glorified is He*. It is the appointment of Resurrection, the Gathering, the Account and the Punishment. The Arabic word *Uqqitat* is derived from *Al-Miqat* (appointment) and *Waqt* (time). In this connection, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Say [Prophet], "The earliest and latest generations will all be gathered on a predetermined Day."' (*al-Waqi'a*: 49-50) Thus, all the earliest and latest generations will be gathered on the Day of Judgment.

Whoever ponders on the Quran will find wonders. In the verse of the chapter of *al-Waqi'a*, Allah *Glorified is He* talks about the Day of Judgment by saying: 'The earliest and latest generations will all be gathered on a predetermined Day.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 49-50) However, regarding the gathering of the sorcerers of Pharaoh, He *Glorified is He* says: 'The sorcerers were [to be] assembled at the appointed time on a certain day.' (*ash-Shu'ara*: 38) In the first verse, He says: '*Ila Miqat*' (on a predetermined Day) but in the second He says: '*Limiqtat*' (to the appointed time). Regarding the assembly of the sorcerers of Pharaoh, He *the Exalted* uses the proposition *Al-Lam* (at) to indicate that the assembly will take place shortly. As for the Day of Judgment—promised to come from the beginning of the creation—He *the Almighty* uses the preposition *Ila* (to) which indicates that it will take a long time to happen. In fact, the increase in the wording entails an increase in the meaning. Although the Day of

Judgment will happen after a long time, it will inevitably come to pass, as He *the Almighty* says: 'What you are promised will come to pass.' (*al-Mursalat*: 7)

Then Allah *Glorified is He* asks a question that He certainly knows its answer: 'for what Day has all this been set?' (*al-Mursalat*: 12) This is a question about the time until which the Day of Judgment or the Hour has been postponed. It is meant to show the greatness of that Day in which the judgment and the reward will take place. The Day in this verse refers to the appointed time.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: 'The Day of Decision.' (*al-Mursalat*: 13) This is the Day on which He *the Almighty* will judge between the differing and disputing people. He is fully able to judge fairly between them. When will this time of Decision or Judgment happen? Is it in this worldly life? No. This is because the worldly life is not prepared for the Account, Recompense and Judging on the issues of faith. The Judgment between the people will be on the Day of Resurrection which all the people will attend.

In this connection, He *Glorified is He* says: 'Allah will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning their differences.' (*al-Baqara*: 113) Thus, it is Allah *the Exalted* Who will judge between the people. He *the Almighty* does not have any interest or desire to incline towards a certain person in His Judgment. In fact, the judgment between people should be devoid of any inclination. The fair judgment is to stand in the middle without any inclination or prejudice.

Allah *Glorified is He* emphasizes the greatness of the Day of Judgment by saying: 'What will explain to you what the Day of Decision is?' (*al-Mursalat*: 14) One does not really comprehend the might and the calamities of the Day of Judgment. How could he know the mightiness of that Day while it is incomparable in its difficulty and greatness? Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is the most honourable creature, but he does not fully comprehend the difficulties of that Day. He *peace and blessings be upon him* does not know the details of its hardships even if he knows them in general.

Subsequently, Allah *Glorified is He* says:



**Woe, on that Day, to those who denied
the truth! [15] (The Quran, *al-Mursalat*: 15)**

This verse is mentioned ten times in this chapter, starting from this verse in question. This entire chapter is a strong warning and threat to deniers of the Day of Judgment. The Arabic word *wayl* (woe) means the perdition and punishment. It is also used when human beings show regret for neglecting the punishment as in Allah's saying: 'They said, "Woe to us! What a record this is! It does not leave any deed, small or large, unaccounted for!"' (*al-Kahf*: 49) and 'Woe to us! We were not aware of this at all. We were wrong.' (*al-Anbiya*': 97) These woes express their regret when they see the punishment. It is said that *Al-Wayl* is a valley in the hellfire in which human being falls for forty years—we take refuge with Allah *Glorified is He*.

When you see the word *yawma'idhin* (on that Day), you should know that it compensates for an omitted phrase which is the following: when the Day of Judgment comes. On that Day, 'those who disbelieved and disobeyed the Prophet will wish that the earth could swallow them up; they will not be able to hide anything from Allah.' (*an-Nisa*': 42) Thus, it is a mighty Day when everyone will stand before the Lord of the Worlds. Allah *Glorified is He* calls that Day a dreadful Day, saying: 'What suffering will come to those who obscure the truth when a dreadful Day arrives!' (*Maryam*: 37)

It will be witnessed by all people unlike the punishment in this worldly life, which is only seen by those who are present, and no one from the earlier or later generations witnesses it. The punishment of the Hereafter, on the contrary, will be the dreadful scene seen by all people. Allah *Glorified is He* says about those who denied the truth: 'But if he is one of those who denied the truth and went astray, he will be welcomed with scalding water. He will burn in Hell. This is the certain truth.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 92-95)

Every denier who is going astray will be inflicted with scalding water, be burnt in the Hell and suffer its punishment; this is the certain truth. When they suffer the punishment for their denial of the truth, they will say: 'If only we could be sent back, we would not reject the revelations of our Lord, but be amongst the believers.' (*al-A'raf*: 27)

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

أَلَمْ تُهْلِكِ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ ثُمَّ نَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْآخِرِينَ ﴿١٧﴾
كَذَلِكَ نَفْعَلُ بِالْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿١٩﴾

Did We not destroy the first [of them]? [16]

**We shall make the last follow them [17] this is how We deal
with the guilty. [18] Woe, on that Day, to those who denied
the truth! [19] (The Quran, *al-Mursalat*: 16 - 19)**

The Arabic word *Al-Awalun* (the early generations) are the previous nations that denied Allah's Faith, the Books and the Messengers. In this verse, He *the Most High* asks the people of Mecca who did not believe in Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: 'Did we not destroy the first [of them]?' They had known about the punishment of the previous nations and what happened to them because of their denial and disbelief in the truth. He *the Almighty* has destroyed them after denying His messengers: some by the shriek, causing the land to swallow them or defaming them. The early generations are the people of Nuh (Noah), 'Ad and Thamud who are the ancient nations. As for the latter nations, they are the people of Pharaoh, Lut (Lot) and others who are closer to the time of Prophet Muhammad's Mission.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: 'this is how We deal with the guilty.' (*al-Mursalat*: 18) He *the Most High* could inflict the same punishment on the disbelievers of Quraysh who denied Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* disbelieved in Allah *Glorified is He* and barred others from believing in Him. Their disbelief and denial of the truth are the major crimes they committed besides other minor legal and religious crimes. As long as one disbelieves and denies Allah's Way of Guidance, you can expect that he will do all the major sins like murder, adultery and theft. So, he leads his life to satisfy his desires and lusts. For this reason, He *Glorified is He* warns such disbelievers and wrongdoers against the woes by saying 'Woe, on that Day, to those who denied the truth!' (*al-Mursalat*: 19)

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* reminds them that He has created and brought them into existence by saying:

أَلَمْ نَخْلُقْكُمْ مِنْ مَّاءٍ مَهِينٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ فِي قَرَارٍ مَكِينٍ ﴿٢١﴾ إِلَى قَدَرٍ مَعْلُومٍ ﴿٢٢﴾
فَقَدَرْنَا فَنِعْمَ الْقَدِرُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَيَلَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

**Did We not make you from an underrated fluid [20]
which We housed in a safe lodging [21] for a determined
period? [22] We determine [it]: how excellently We
determine! [23] Woe, on that Day, to those who denied
the truth! [24] (The Quran, *al-Mursalat*: 20 - 24)**

Why does the person disbelieve and behave arrogantly with Allah *Glorified is He*? Why does he deny His messengers, while He has created him from underrated fluid? Here, He describes the fluid by which He has created human beings as underrated because it flows in the channel of the urine and goes to the same end if it was not placed in the womb. The sperm is also described as weak. Despite the weakness of the origin of a human being, He has given him the hearing, sight, mind and ability to think. He *the Almighty* has strengthened him, his muscles, nerves and bones. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'Yet, We created them. We strengthened their constitution; if We please, We can replace such people completely.' (*al-Insan*: 28)

Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'which We housed in a safe lodging.' (*al-Mursalat*: 21) He *the Almighty* has housed this underrated fluid, which is the sperm, in a safe lodging by paving a way for it to get to the womb. This realizes His Will to create a human being. He *Glorified is He* calls the womb 'safe lodging' because the sperm of the man stays therein for nine months or less after the fertilization of the ovum. It is a safe lodging that He *Glorified is He* has made suitable for the dwelling of the sperm in order to be a clinging form and then a piece of flesh which later becomes bones garmented with flesh. Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* will make him into another form by giving him the hearing and sight. Thus, the sperm is preserved in a lodging place which is the womb that Allah *Glorified is He* created in a special form and protected by the bones of the pelvic. This made it suitable to receive the sperm and preserve it.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: 'for a determined period' (*al-Mursalat*: 22). The sperm stays in the womb for a determined period which is the period of pregnancy when a woman bears her fetus in her womb. It is a well-known

period after which a woman delivers a baby at the time determined by Allah *Glorified is He*. In this verse, the Arabic word *Al-Qadr* is the place and time appointed to something.

Allah *Glorified is He* then says: 'We determine [it]: how excellently We determine!' (*al-Mursalat*: 23) He *the Almighty* is fully able to create a human being perfectly. He has made him upright, not walking on four legs like cattle. Furthermore, He *the Almighty* has made His creation suitable for living in any environment as you can see one living in a hut, a tent, a cave or even a skyscraper. Some recited the word *qadarna* (to be able to) as *qaddarna* (to determine), as in the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'We have determined phases for the moon until finally it becomes like an old date-stalk.' (*Ya Sin*: 39) Some other scholars preferred the recitation of *qadarna* as Allah *Glorified is He* then says '*Na'ma Al-Qadirun*' (How Powerful we are) and does not say *Al-Muqadirun*. Both of these interpretations are possible because the One Who is fully able to create something in good form is truly great in His Power, Determination and Knowledge.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: 'Woe on that Day to those who denied the truth!' (*al-Mursalat*: 24) If He *the Almighty* is eternally able to create a human being from an underrated, weak fluid—which He houses, when it spurts out of the man, in a safe lodging until a time determined by Him—why do disbelievers deny the truth?

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* reminds them about the earth they are living on by saying:

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ كِفَاتًا ﴿٢٥﴾ أَحْيَاءَ وَأَمْوَاتًا ﴿٢٦﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا رُوسًا
شَمَخَاتٍ وَآسَقَيْنَاكُمْ مَاءً فُرَاتًا ﴿٢٧﴾ وَبَلَّ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾

Did We not make the earth a home [25] for the living and the dead? [26] Did We not place firm, lofty mountains on it and provide you with sweet water? [27] Woe, on that Day, to those who denied the truth! [28] (The Quran, *al-Mursalat*: 25 - 28)

Allah *Glorified is He* has assigned the earth to contain and include people whether they are alive or dead. It contains living beings when they live on its

surface, and it contains the dead in its belly. The one who ponders the meaning of the word *kaft* (to contain) will find it wonderful. The workers use the bricks to build their homes. They stick bricks together with cement and use trees to make the roofs of their homes. All these materials come from the earth.

In this verse, we can note a point alluding to the gravity of the earth. The earth includes human beings and does not leave them. It is as if they are connected to it; if they fall down, it will embrace them, and they never get out of it. The earth also contains the dead in their graves and does not abandon them except on the Day of Resurrection as Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'When graves turn inside out' (*al-Infitar*: 4) and 'Does he not know that when the contents of graves burst forth?' (*al-'Adiyat*: 9)

Allah *Glorified is He* then says: 'Did We not place firm, lofty mountains on it [the earth]?' (*al-Mursalat*: 27). He *the Almighty* has preserved the earth for created beings by placing mountains that stabilize it and do not make it shake or shift with them. Regarding this, He *the Almighty* says: 'He has made mountains stand firm on the earth to prevent it shaking under you.' (*an-Nahl*: 15) If the earth had been created in a firm form, we would not have needed firm mountains to stabilize it. However, the earth was created as moveable being which is exposed to shaking. So, if the mountains had not existed, the earth would not have lasted.

The Arabic word *Al-Shamikhat* refers to the high, lofty mountains. Every high thing is called *shamikh* (lofty). We notice that Allah *the Exalted* describes mountains with one of their descriptions, namely their loftiness. Thus, while any human being is created from the sperm of the man which is placed in the woman's womb, He has created the mountains which are bigger, higher and loftier than him. They have been created in order that human beings live on the stable earth.

Allah *Glorified is He* then says: '... and provide you with sweet water?' (*al-Mursalat*: 27) This verse raises a question, which is, 'Why does Allah *Glorified is He* mention the sweet water after the mountains?' The reason is that the heavy rains fall on the summits of the high, lofty mountains and then descend on the surface of the earth to flow in the rivers. All the rivers come through this way. The Nile River, for example, comes from the summits of

the mountains of Abyssinia from which water descends and gathers together to form the Nile River. The Arabic word *Al-Furat* refers to the sweet and palatable water that man, cattle and plants use to quench their thirst. He *Glorified is He* says about such water: 'The two bodies of water are not alike: one is palatable, sweet and pleasant to drink, while the other salty and bitter.' (*Fatir*: 12) Someone may ask, 'Are there sweet water or rivers in the Arabian Peninsula?' Of course not! However, they are around the Arabian Peninsula in Iraq, Syria and Egypt. The people of Mecca knew these rivers, but they were bringing the water from wells.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: 'Woe, on that Day, to those who denied the truth!' (*al-Mursalat*: 28) Are disbelievers still denying, disbelieving and rejecting the truth? One should know that the earth will turn into another earth, the mountains will turn to dust and the sweet and palatable water will become salty and bitter. Thus, He *the Almighty* says: 'Woe, on that Day, to those who denied the truth!' (*al-Mursalat*: 28)

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

أَنْطَلِقُوا إِلَى مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ أَنْطَلِقُوا إِلَى ظِلٍّ ذِي ثَلَاثِ شُعَبٍ ﴿٣٠﴾
لَا ظِلِّيلٍ وَلَا يَغْنِي مِنَ الْهَبِّ ﴿٣١﴾ إِنَّهَا تَرْمِي بِشَرَرٍ كَالْقَصْرِ ﴿٣٢﴾
كَأَنَّهُ جُمُلَتِ صُفْرٌ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾

They will be told, 'Go to that which you used to deny! [29]
Go to a shadow of smoke!' It rises in three columns; [30]
no shade does it give, nor relief from the flame; [31] it shoots
out sparks as large as tree- trunks [32] and as bright as
copper. [33] Woe, on that Day, to those who denied the
truth! [34] (The Quran, *al-Mursalat*: 29 - 34)

Despite disbelievers' denial of the Resurrection, the Account and the Punishment, they will face them as a reality and a truth; their denial will not negate that truth. Allah *the Almighty* has warned them and affirmed this matter to them, but they did not believe in it. On the Day of Judgment, they will face what they used to deny and mistakenly think it will not come to pass. Regarding this, He *the Almighty* says: 'They will be told, "Go to that which you

used to deny!'" (*al-Mursalat*: 29) They will rush out of their graves, as He *the Almighty* says: 'On the Day when the earth will be torn apart, letting them rush out.' (*Qaf*: 44) So, they will be commanded to go to what they used to deny. The Arabic word *Al-Intilaq* in this verse means to run fast like when the horse is released from its bond.

Allah *Glorified is He* then says: 'Go to a shadow of smoke!' (*al-Mursalat*: 30) This is a command for disbelievers to go to a shadow of black smoke and burning fire. When the smoke of hellfire grows up, it will be divided into three columns. They will be commanded to go to one of them until the end of the Account. On the contrary, the righteous will be under the shade of Allah's Throne. It has been said that a spark will get out of the fire and will be divided into three columns: one before the disbelievers, the second on their right and the third on their left.

It is the scorching and hot shadow of smoke. It is called a shadow sarcastically because 'no shade does it give, nor relief from the flame.' (*al-Mursalat*: 31) It is not a real shadow as it neither protects from the heat of the fire nor relieves from its flame. On the other hand, Allah *the Almighty* gives the people of paradise a cool and refreshing shadow. It is not a normal shadow; rather, it covers those who sit under it from the sun, the air, the heat and cold. By contrast, the shade in hellfire is not shady as it does not relieve from the flames. This is why the heat of the fire will reach the faces of disbelievers and burn them. Thus, what do we think about their sufferings in the fire when they are cast into it?

Allah *the Almighty* then says: 'The Fire shoots out sparks as large as tree trunks.' (*al-Mursalat*: 32) Let us imagine that situation when a denier will see the fire burning and sparkling to the extent that some parts thereof are burning the others. He will be standing in the shade that he mistakenly thinks will protect from the flames. Then the fire will shoot out sparks which strike those waiting to be thrown into it. These sparks will be as large as the trees trunks. It is a mighty spark like the palace in its greatness and big size. What is meant here by the Arabic word *Al-Qasr* is the trunks of the trees that exist in the desert. When winter comes, the branches of these trees are cut, and their trunks remain. They will look like the camel when it sits in the desert. The verse could possibly refer to the well-known great palaces.

The fire shoots out sparks as bright as copper as Allah *the Almighty* says: 'and as bright as copper.' (*al-Mursalat*: 33) The sparks will be like the big yellow camels scattered in the desert. Some interpreted *Sufur* as black, but the sparks are yellow like the pieces of copper that spark when they are burnt. However, some maintained that due to the blackness and darkness of the fire, its sparks will be black and yellowish.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: 'Woe, on that Day, to those who denied the truth!' (*al-Mursalat*: 34) Whatever the colour of the spark is, it is a burning flame. So why do disbelievers deny the truth and land themselves in trouble? Why are they exposing themselves to be thrown into this bottomless valley in the fire called *Wayl*?

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

هَذَا يَوْمٌ لَا يَنْطِقُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَلَا يُؤْذَنُ لَهُمْ فَيَعْنَدُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَيَلْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

On that Day they will be speechless, [35] and they will be given no chance to offer any excuses. [36] Woe, on that Day, to those who denied the truth! [37] (The Quran, *al-Mursalat*: 35 - 37)

On that mighty Day, they will recognize that they had denied the truth in the worldly life. This is why they will not say anything beneficial to them. Moreover, Allah *Glorified is He* will not grant them the permission to offer any excuses or apologies. They will be unable to say anything to help them regarding the punishment waiting for them. They will not say anything that benefits them in their difficult position; rather, they will only blame each other and disown themselves from the rest. However, this will not be useful.

In this regard, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'On the Day when every soul will come pleading for itself.' (*an-Nahl*: 111) He *the Almighty* also says in another position: 'And halt them for questioning.' (*as-Saffat*: 24) Some people may mistakenly think that these verses are contradictory as there are verses which show that they will be allowed to speak, and others negate their ability to speak. We should understand that the kind of speech that wicked people will be unable to speak is the beneficial one. Some of them will utter sophistic and useless speech like blaming each other. He *Glorified is He* mentions some of

their useless speech in His saying: 'The disbelievers will say, "Our Lord, show us the jinns and men who misled us, and we shall trample them underfoot so that they may be amongst the lowest of the low."' (*Fussilat*: 29) This kind of speech is of no avail for the one who utters it. Thus, the forbidden speech for the wicked is the beneficial speech.

Moreover, the conditions on the Day of Judgment are different. Sometimes they can speak, and other times they become speechless. Therefore, in the verses under discussion, disbelievers become speechless after the sentence was issued against them. They are not in the position of the accountability where they are allowed to speak; rather, they are being gathered to be cast into the fire. So, what would they say? The matter has been settled, and they will not be given the permission to offer any excuse or apology, for this will not benefit them. They have said everything when they were held accountable. Thus, when the sentence that they are the people of the fire is issued, no speech or apology will be allowed.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* says:

هَذَا يَوْمُ الْقَصْلِ جَمَعْتَكُمْ وَالْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَإِنْ كَانَ لَكُمْ كَيْدٌ فَكِدُونِ ﴿٣٩﴾
وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾

[They will be told], 'This is the Day of Decision: We have gathered you and earlier generations. [38] If you have any plots against Me, try them now' [39] Woe, on that Day, to those who denied the truth! [40] (The Quran, *al-Mursalat*: 38 - 40)

The Day of Judgment is the Day that Allah *Glorified is He* has appointed for the Resurrection, Gathering and Account. It is the Day on which wrongdoers will be recompensed for their disbelief and denial of Allah's messengers and Books. He *Glorified is He* says about this Day: 'And the messengers given their appointed time, for what Day has all this been set? The Day of Decision.' (*al-Mursalat*: 11-13) In the verse in question, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'This is the Day of Decision. We have gathered you and earlier generations.' (*al-Mursalat*: 38) The Arabic word *Al-Hashr* means gathering disbelievers along with the very early generations. No one will be absent from amongst

them as He *Glorified is He* promised to bring them all on the Day that they used to deny and disbelieve in.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: 'If you have any plots against Me, try them now.' (*al-Mursalat*: 39) If disbelievers schemed against righteous believers and harmed them, let them try all their schemes against Allah *Glorified is He* on the Day of Judgment. If they have a plan to save themselves from His punishment, let them try it, for all their schemes will fail. Thus, they will surrender and become speechless.

Afterwards, Allah *Glorified is He* describes the reward that the people will get if they believe, have piety and do not deny the truth.

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي ظِلِّ زَلَّلٍ وَعُيُونٍ ۖ وَفَوْكَهَ مِمَّا يَشْتَهُونَ ۚ
كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا هَنِيئًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۚ إِنَّا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِينَ ۚ

But those who took heed of God will enjoy cool shade, springs, [41] and any fruit they desire; [42] [they will be told], 'Eat and drink to your hearts' content as a reward for your deeds [43] this is how We reward those who do good' [44] (The Quran, *al-Mursalat*: 41 - 44)

Allah *Glorified is He* has given the human being the choice between the opposite stances: belief or disbelief, piety or transgression, guidance or misguidance, pleasure or punishment and Paradise or Hellfire. For this reason, He *the Almighty* mentions the punishment and the recompense of disbelievers and deniers, and then He mentions the reward of the pious who believed in the truth. He says that those who take heed of Him will enjoy cool shade and springs. They will have leafy shades in beautiful Gardens, unlike the shadows of the smoke that do not relieve from the flame of the fire. They will not only have shades in paradise but also springs, rivers and pleasures. These springs, from which the water flows, are not wells; rather, they are holes like the fountains from which the water springs forth. This is more delightful for them.

We call the streams in which the water of the springs used to flow *Majra Al-'Uyun*. In this regard, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Be mindful of Him Who has provided you with everything you know. He has given you livestock,

sons, gardens and springs.' (*ash-Shu'ara'*: 132-134) Thus, even though the people of 'Ad used to have flowing springs, they were buried under the ground.

The righteous will also have any fruit they desire. Allah *the Exalted* does not give them any kind of food or drink; rather, He *the Almighty* bestows upon them the fruits that they desire. They will be given the fruits that delight them, fearing no harms from eating them. They will have all kind of fruits which He *the Most High* describes as: 'And abundant fruit, neither intercepted nor forbidden.' (*al-Waqi'a*: 32-33) He *the Almighty* negates all the defects of the worldly fruits from that of paradise. The fruits in this worldly life come only at a certain season and are forbidden until you pay their price. Furthermore, unlike the fruits of paradise, the fruits of this worldly life have many defects.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: 'they will be told, "Eat and drink to your hearts' content as a reward for your deeds."' (*al-Mursalat*: 43) In this verse, there are actions along with their recompense. The actions here are the righteous deeds that pious believers had done in the days gone by. The recompense is the reward of having good food and drinks in the Hereafter. This verse is similar to His saying: 'Eat and drink to your heart's content as a reward for what you have done in days gone by.' (*al-Haqq*: 24) The reason for their pleasure is that they suffered and were oppressed and tortured many times in the worldly life. Thus, the reward for their torture in the worldly life is to be delighted in the Hereafter. They will eat and drink to their hearts' content without being harmed or resorting to the medicine of digestion. The food and drinks are delicious, and they will enjoy it. They will get all that reward because of what they have done in the worldly life.

The Arabic word *'amila* (to do) is different from *sana'* and *fa'ala* though they all can mean doing something. The Arabic word *Al-'Amal* includes the action of the limbs like the hand, the leg, the eye, etc. It also includes the action of the heart like belief, sincerity and tolerance. Thus, they will be rewarded for all what they have done. No one should think that his reward will be only for the actions of his heart, for He *the Exalted* will also reward him in the Hereafter for the actions of his limbs. Such people will be told to: 'Eat and drink to your heart's content as a reward for what you used to do.' (*al-Mursalat*: 43)

Allah *the Almighty* then says: 'This is how We reward those who do good.' (*al-Mursalat*: 44) So, if someone does good deeds and believes in Allah, His Books and messengers, Allah will reward him benevolently. This reward includes the best shades, springs and fruits as well as delightful food and drink.

The verses then direct our attention to what is waiting for the deniers of truth. Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾ كُلُوا وَتَمَتَّعُوا قَلِيلًا إِنَّكُمْ تُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾
وَيْلٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

**Woe, on that Day, to those who denied the truth! [45]
[You may] eat and enjoy yourselves for a short while,
evildoers that you are. [46] Woe, on that Day, to those who
denied the truth! [47] (The Quran, *al-Mursalat*: 45 - 47)**

Allah *Glorified is He* tells us that the deniers of truth eat and enjoy themselves in this worldly life until the end of their lifetime. They have disbelieved in Him and denied His messengers, the Resurrection, Paradise and Hellfire. He *the Most High* nevertheless, is their Creator Who has not deprived them of the Bestowal of His Lordship. Despite their disbelief, He *the Almighty* took it upon Himself to provide them with sustenance in the worldly life.

Disbelievers eat and drink in this worldly life like the cattle as Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Disbelievers may take their fill of pleasure in this world, and eat as cattle do, but the Fire will be their home.' (*Muhammad*: 12) Their pleasures and gratifications in this worldly life are little, and they will leave it by death or when the pleasure runs out. Thereupon, they will become poor, weak and ill after being rich, strong and healthy.

Allah *Glorified is He* describes them as evildoers. In fact, He has assigned to every heavenly Message an enemy which is the evildoers. He *the Almighty* does not intervene until the evil-doing becomes irresistible. Likewise, He *the Exalted* has assigned to every prophet an enemy, namely evildoers who seduce the people. The weak incline towards them, mistakenly thinking that these evildoers will be the victorious. They do not know that evildoers' apparent victory is temporal because they will be inflicted with a woe on the Day of

Resurrection. Since they used to deny that Day, they will be punished for their denial. Subsequently, Allah *the Almighty* says:

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ارْكَعُوا لَا يَرْكَعُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَيَلَّيْ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾
فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَهُ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾

When they are told, 'Bow down in prayer,' they do not do so [48]

Woe, on that Day, to those who denied the truth! [49]

In what revelation, after this, will they believe? [50]

(The Quran, *al-Mursalat*: 48 - 50)

Disbelievers were evildoers and deviated from the Path of Islam and Faith. When they were ordered to bow down in prayer to Allah *the Almighty* they refused to bow down to their Creator Who has bestowed His Grace upon them. In fact, prayer is the sign of submission and humbleness to Him *the Exalted*. However, some scholars like Ibn 'Abbas said, '[Ordering them to bow down] will be said on the Day of Judgment when they are called to bow down, but they would not be able' to do so. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'They will be invited to prostrate themselves but will be prevented from doing so, and their eyes will be downcast and they will be overwhelmed with shame; they were invited to prostrate themselves when they were safe [but refused].' (*al-Qalam*: 42-43) So, if disbelievers who denied the truth refuse to prostrate, bow, pray and worship Him *the Almighty* then 'Woe, on that Day, to those who denied the truth!' (*al-Mursalat*: 49)

Allah *the Almighty* says: 'In what revelation, after this, will they believe?' (*al-Mursalat*: 50) The Arabic word *ba'dahu* (after it) refers to the Quran, the Book of Allah. Therefore, in what revelation after the Quran and its verses will they believe? This is similar to His saying: 'If they deny Allah and His revelations, what Message will they believe in?' (*al-Jathiya*: 6) In this respect, when Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* recited: "In what revelation, after this, will they believe?" (*al-Mursalat*: 50), he said, 'I believed in Allah and what He has sent down.'⁽¹⁾

(1) See *Abd Ar-Raziq, Tafsir*, 3654; and *At-Tabari, Jame' Al-Bayan*, 24/536.

There is no revelation more truthful and eloquent than the Quran, the last Revelation. Thus, believing in the Quran is the last chance they have. They should believe in it before the coming of the Day of Resurrection that they had denied and disbelieved in. If they believed, they should do the actions that save them from the mighty Day of Judgment. For this reason, it is suitable that the chapter of *an-Naba'* follows the chapter in question. He *Glorified is He* says: 'In the name of Allah, the Lord of Mercy and the Giver of Mercy. What are they asking about? The momentous announcement about which they differ, they will find out. In the end they will find out' (*an-Naba'*: 1-5).

the chapter of

an-Naba'

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

The chapter of *an-Naba'* ⁽¹⁾.

Allah *Glorified* is He says:

عَمَّ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿١﴾ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢﴾ الَّذِي هُمْ فِيهِ مُخْلِفُونَ ﴿٣﴾

**What are they asking about? [1] The momentous
announcement [2] about which they [3]
(The Quran, *an-Naba'*: 1-3)**

We are meeting today to derive some lessons from the Quran and to explain some of my reflections on *Juz' 'Amma*. I invoke Allah *the Almighty* to make you attentive to these reflections and to bestow success on us in everything we do or abstain from. My brothers have suggested dedicating our reflections today to interpreting *Juz' 'Amma*, the last *Juz'* in the Quran. It is an acceptable suggestion because this *Juz'* includes the short chapters that people repeatedly recite in their prayers. Moreover, many people start their memorization of the glorious Quran with these chapters. Thus, if we explain our reflections on this *Juz'*, we will, undoubtedly, be shedding light on all the objectives of the Quran.

Allah *the Almighty* has ordered His Words in the Quran and made *Juz' 'Amma* the last one in order that the last part of the Quran would pay the

(1) The chapter of *an-Naba'* is the chapter number 78 in the Quranic order. It was revealed in Mecca. Its verses are 40 in number. Its main topic is the Resurrection on the Day of Judgment and it is the last chapter to be revealed in Mecca before the *Hijra*, as Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* migrated on the day following its revelation. It is a clear chapter, containing no abrogating or abrogated verses. Some scholars called it the chapter of *at-Tasau'l*. It is also called '*Amma* and *al-Mu'sirat*. It was revealed after the chapter of *al-Mursalat*.

listener and the reader's attention to all the Islamic fundamental creeds, rules and objectives.

There is a semantic and contextual correlation between the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'What are they asking about?' (*an-Naba'*: 1) in this chapter in question and the chapter of *al-Mursalat*, which precedes it and which starts with the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*, 'By the [winds] sent forth in swift succession, [1] violently storming, [2] scattering far and wide, [3] separating forcefully, [4] delivering a reminder, [5] as a proof or a warning: [6] what you are promised will come to pass. [7]' (*al-Mursalat*: 1-7) It is crystal clear from these verses, that this chapter of *al-Mursalat* begins with many Divine Oaths regarding the coming of the Last Day that the polytheists disbelieved in. In response, He *the Almighty* clearly states: 'What you are promised will come to pass.' (*al-Mursalat*: 7)

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* mentions, also in the chapter of *al-Mursalat*, the signs of the coming of the Day of Judgment, saying: 'When the stars are dimmed [8] and the sky is torn apart, [9] when the mountains are turned to dust [10] and the messengers given their appointed time —[11] for what Day has all this been set? [12] The Day of Decision. [13] What will explain to you what the Day of Decision is? [14] Woe, on that Day, to those who denied the truth! [15]' (*al-Mursalat*: 8-15) It is natural then that the chapter following *al-Mursalat* should explain the Day of Decision. It is the momentous, mighty event that we should be heedful of and prepared for.

Furthermore, we should reflect on the consistency between the styles of both chapters. For example, the exclamatory interrogation indicates hyperbole in both the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'What will explain to you what the Day of Decision is?' (*al-Mursalat*: 15); and 'What are they asking about? [1] The momentous announcement. [2]' (*an-Naba'*: 1-2)

When He *the Almighty* says to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: 'What will explain to you what the Day of Decision is?' (*al-Mursalat*: 15), He *Glorified is He* explains to him *peace and blessings be upon him* that he has no knowledge of that Day because he had not yet received any revelation about it; however, he would later receive some revelations in that regard. So, when He *the Almighty* says to him *peace and blessings be upon him*: 'What will explain

to you what the Day of Decision is?' (*al-Mursalat*: 15), this indicates that He *the Almighty* would explain to him *peace and blessings be upon him* the matter in a coming revelation.

Another aspect of harmony between the chapter of *al-Mursalat* and that of *an-Naba'* is that both chapters discuss universal matters and some phenomena relating to the human being. In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Did We not destroy the first [of them]?' (*al-Mursalat*: 16); 'Did We not make you from an underrated fluid.' (*al-Mursalat*: 20); 'Did We not make the earth a home' (*al-Mursalat*: 25) and 'Did We not make the earth smooth, [6] and make the mountains to keep it stable? [7]' (*an-Naba'*: 6-7) Thus, the two chapters share the same context.

Moreover, we find a wonderful harmony between the chapter of *al-Mursalat* and the chapter of *al-Insan*, which is also called *Ad-Dahr* (the Time). Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Was there not a period of time when man was nothing to speak of?' (*al-Insan*: 1) The chapter of *Ad-Dahr* mentions in detail many kinds of pleasures that the righteous people will enjoy in the paradise. By contrast, it does not expound on the punishment of the disbelievers; it makes only a passing reference, stating: 'We have prepared chains, iron collars, and blazing fire for the disbelievers.' (*al-Insan*: 4) Afterwards, He *the Almighty* mentions the kinds of pleasures awaiting the believers, saying: 'The righteous will have a drink mixed with *Kafur*.' (*al-Insan*: 5) By contrast, the chapter of *al-Mursalat* makes mention of many kinds of punishments that He *the Almighty* has prepared for the disbelievers in the Hereafter. With regard to the reward of the righteous people, it mentions only one kind of the pleasures that they will enjoy, stating: 'But those who took heed of Allah will enjoy cool shade, springs.' (*al-Insan*: 41) The chapter of *al-Mursalat* is followed by the chapter of *an-Naba'* that mentions in detail the recompense of both the believers and the disbelievers, as we will see.

Allah *the Almighty* says: 'What are they asking about?' (*an-Naba'*: 1) This question indicates that what they are asking about is a great and mighty event. That is why He *the Almighty* then says: 'The momentous announcement.' (*an-Naba'*: 2) This quick answer means that the matter about which the disbelievers ask and are doubtful is: 'The momentous announcement.' (*an-Naba'*: 2) We

should note that the Arabic word *an-Naba'* (announcement) is different from *Al-Khabar* (a piece of news) because the former refers to only the important news. Besides, this announcement is described here as 'momentous'. As human beings, we describe things as 'great' according to our understanding of greatness. So what would we think about an announcement described by Allah *the Almighty* as 'momentous'?! This description is in proportion to His Divine Omniscience.

Allah *the Almighty* expresses the greatness of the Day of Judgment by using the Arabic particle *Ma*; by calling it 'announcement', not an ordinary piece of news; and by describing it as 'momentous'. There is no doubt that all the objectives of the religion depend on believing in that Day because it is the ultimate destination where we will find the outcome of our deeds. It is the Day on which every human being will be held accountable for everything s/he has done, be it good or evil. Thus, it is the greatest event in the life of the human being. That is why it is not acceptable that s/he forgets that Day or be heedless of it. This explains the reason why the question in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'What are they asking about?' (*an-Naba'*: 1) carries the meaning of condemnation. It is as if He *Glorified is He* says, 'The matter of the Day of Judgment is so clear that no one should ask about it or question its coming, for all the rational and logic proofs confirm it.'

The problem lies in the disbelievers' way of thinking; they wanted to discuss secondary creedal issues, while no wise person would do that before discussing the main pillar of the Islamic creed, that is, belief in Allah *the Almighty*. That is to say that we did not believe in the Day of Judgment and then believed in Allah *the Almighty*; rather, our belief in Him *Glorified is He* came first. Consequently, when He *the Almighty* told us about the Day of Judgment, we believed in it. Thus, the discussion should not be about the coming of the Day of Judgment and whether it is possible or not. Rather, it should be about the main pillar of the Islamic creed, that is, belief in Allah *the Almighty*. If one believes in Him *Glorified is He* s/he should believe in what He says; however, it is not important to believe in what He *the Almighty* says if the person does not believe in Him *Glorified is He* in the first place.

Moreover, belief in the Angels, the Heavenly-revealed Books, the Messengers, the Last Day and the Pre-destination, be it good or evil, entails having faith in

unseen matters. No one can believe in them unless a truthful person tells him/her about them. So, if one's mind does not comprehend the reality of the Day of Judgment, this does not mean that it will not come to pass.

In the story of Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him*, we have explained the difference between the occurrence of an event and how it will take place. In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And when Ibrahim said, "My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead," He said, "Do you not believe, then?" "Yes," said Ibrahim, "but just to put my heart at rest..."' (*al-Baqara*: 260). He *peace be upon him* does not question Allah's Ability to give life to the dead, as he *peace be upon him* firmly believes in that. Rather, he asks about the way of giving life to the dead. That is why he *peace be upon him* did not say, 'My Lord, do you give life to the dead?!' but rather said: 'My Lord, show me how You give life to the dead...' (*al-Baqara*: 260).

When Allah *Glorified is He* asks Ibrahim *peace be upon him*: '...Do you not believe, then?' (*al-Baqara*: 60), he said, '...Yes...' (*al-Baqara*: 60). As a religious obligation, every servant of Allah is required to give this answer. That is to say, we all should believe that He *the Almighty* gives life to the dead. As for the way of bringing the dead back to life, the servant is not required to know it. After all, you may make use of something without comprehending its reality and essence. Let us give an example to illustrate this point; the illiterate, the Bedouin and the farmer may benefit from electricity without comprehending its reality.

The Arabic verb *Tasa'la* (asked one another) is different from the verb *Yas'alu*, which means that only one party poses the questions. As for the verb *Tasa'la*, it means that two parties of the conversation exchange questions. It was the deniers of the Resurrection who posed the following questions: 'When will this threat come about, if you are truthful' (*Yunus*: 48), and 'What! Does he threaten you that when you are dead and become dust and bones that you shall then be brought forth?' (*al-Mu'minun*: 35) The disbelievers exchanged these questions among themselves or posed them to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and the believers.

When we say, 'Amr and Zayd asked each other,' this means that both of them participate in the action. However, we call one of them a subject and the

other an object, even though both of them can be simultaneously called a subject and an object. For example, a poet said,

The snakes made peace with his foot;

They bite it not, nor does it trample over them.

The snakes and the foot are both the subject and the object. The Arabic word *Hayyat* (snakes) is in the nominative state because it is considered the subject whose object is the word *Qadam* (foot). The meaning is that the snakes did not bite the foot, nor did the foot trample on them.

Undoubtedly, the disbelievers' questions about the momentous announcement were a means to express their rejection to the Day of Judgment and to make it an object of ridicule. Every one of them posed a question indicating his/her disbelief in that Day. Here arises a question, which is, 'If all of them actually disbelieve in the Day of Resurrection, why does the Quran state that they differ about it?!' This difference is recorded in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'About which they differ.' (*an-Naba'*: 3) So, what is the aspect of their difference if they all deny the Resurrection?! Scholars said that they differed with respect to the degree of their disbelief in the Day of Judgment- some categorically denied it; others doubted it; and still some others were ambivalent about it. Another possible interpretation is that the different stance was between Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and the believers on one side and the disbelievers on the other side; the former group believes in the Resurrection, while the latter denies it.

Allah *the Almighty* then responds to the disbelievers' questions, saying:



They will find out [4] In the end they will find out [5]
(The Quran, *an-Naba'*: 4 - 5)

The Arabic word *Kalla* (Nay) is a particle used for reproaching. It is as if Allah *the Almighty* says to the disbelievers, 'Watch your words and stop denying the clear truth. Your denial will be of no avail, and it is better for you to refrain from it.' In fact, the disbelievers do believe in the main pillar of faith, that is, they acknowledge that Allah *the Almighty* is the Creator, a fact

which is crystal clear in His saying: 'And if you ask them who created the heavens and the earth, they will certainly say: Allah...' (*Luqman*: 25); and 'And if you should ask them who created them, they would certainly say: Allah...' (*az-Zukhruf*: 87). If this is the case, how do they deny a secondary creedal matter, i.e. the Resurrection?!

Moreover, the Quran records the disbelievers' belief that Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is a Messenger sent by Allah *the Almighty*. In this connection, He *the Almighty* says: 'We know indeed that what they say certainly grieves you, but surely they do not call you a liar; but the unjust deny the communications of Allah.' (*al-An'am*: 33) They alleged that the Quran is sorcery, poetry or soothsaying; however, they contradicted themselves, saying: '...Why was this Quran not revealed to a man of importance in the two towns?' (*az-Zukhruf*: 31) Thus, the disbelievers recognized that the Quran is flawless, but they objected that it was revealed to a poor man, not to a man of importance in Mecca and Medina.

Likewise, they made contradictory statements, saying: '...If we follow the guidance with you, we shall be carried off from our country...' (*al-Qasas*: 57). So, they acknowledged that Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* came with guidance, but they feared that the people would sweep them from their land. Consequently, Allah *the Almighty* responds to their statement with simple words: '...Have we not established for them a safe sanctuary to which are brought the fruits of all things as provision from Us?' (*al-Qasas*: 57)

The disbelievers are doubtful and ambivalent about the Day of Judgment, which is an unsound action on their part. Therefore, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'They will find out.' (*an-Naba'*: 4) This verse means that on the Day of Judgment the disbelievers will know for sure that they were mistaken, as all the facts will be clear to them. With regard to the repetition in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'They will find out. [4] In the end they will find out. [5]' (*an-Naba'*: 4-5), the exegetes state that it is meant for emphasis. However, I firmly believe that there is no repetition in the verses, as the 'literal emphasis' usually comes without a conjunction separating the two statements. As for the two verses in question, they are separated by the Arabic conjunction *Thumma*, and thus the two statements imply that there are two ways by which the disbelievers will find out the truth that they rejected.

We have explained that there are three ranks of knowledge: the certain knowledge, the eye of certainty and the true certainty. One has certain knowledge of something when a truthful person tells him/her about it. When s/he sees it with his/her eyes, this is called the eye of certainty; and when s/he interacts with it, this is called the true certainty. Let us give an example to illustrate this point; our knowledge about paradise is now at the rank of certain knowledge; when we see it, this will be the eye of certainty; and when we enter it and taste its pleasures, it becomes the true certainty. The second and the third ranks are mentioned in the chapter of *at-Takathur* wherein Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Striving for more distracts you [1] until you go into your graves. [2] No indeed! You will come to know. No indeed! In the end you will come to know. [4] No indeed! If only you knew for certain. [5] You will most definitely see Hellfire, [6] you will see it with the eye of certainty. [7] On that Day, you will be asked about your pleasures. [8]' (*at-Takathur*: 1-8) As for the rank of the true certainty, it is mentioned in His saying: 'And if he is one of the rejecters, the erring ones, [92] He shall have an entertainment of boiling water, [93] And burning in hell. [94] Most surely this is the true certainty. [95]' (*al-Waqi'a*: 92-95) The last verse mentions the rank of the true certainty because such evil people, described in these verses, have already been thrown in the hell and tasted its burning fire.

Thus, the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'They will find out. [4] In the end they will find out [5]' (*an-Naba'*: 4-5) means that the disbelievers will find out that the Resurrection, which they denied, is true while they are still in the worldly life. They will realise this fact in stages. The first stage is when the agonies of death overtake them at the dying moment, when they are about to move to the Hereafter that they denied. During these difficult times, a part of the truth will be unveiled to them. That is why He *the Almighty* says: 'You paid no attention to this [Day]; but today We have removed your veil and your sight is sharp.' (*Qaf*: 22) This verse means that what was invisible to the person became visible. At the moment of death, some of the affairs of the heavenly world appear to the dying person. The traces of seeing such affairs appear on the dying person's face. Some people, at the time of death, see some kinds of the pleasures of the paradise, while others see the punishment

of the hellfire. It is claimed that these affairs are fictitious, but this is not right, for the facial expressions of the dying person indicate what s/he really sees. This is the first stage in which the deniers of the Day of Judgment will realize the truth. After being resurrected in the Hereafter, they reach the rank of the true certainty.

Another possible interpretation of the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'They will find out. [4] In the end they will find out [5]' (*an-Naba'*: 4-5) is that the believer and the disbeliever hold different stances on Resurrection, and thus both of them will find out his/her position in the Hereafter and that of the other party. When we compare between their positions, we will find that the disbeliever experiences deep regret, while the believer is filled with great happiness. The disbeliever suffers the painful punishment and his/her suffering increases when s/he sees the believer enjoying the pleasures of the paradise. Conversely, when the believer sees the disbeliever suffering the punishment in the Hereafter, his/her happiness for being saved from such a punishment increases

The Quranic context then turns our attention from the momentous announcement to some universal signs. A quick thinking about this fact may conclude that talking about these signs takes us away from the momentous announcement. However, when we reflect on these universal signs which call for belief in the Creator *Glorified is He* and what He *the Almighty* told us about, we, consequently, believe in the momentous announcement. Thus, the Quranic context here does not take us away from the main topic of the chapter, that is, the momentous announcement, for the universal signs constitute the proof of its coming.

As a matter of fact, the unseen issues are naturally controversial. So, how does Allah *the Almighty* present such issues? He *the Almighty* brings an indisputable issue and uses it as a basis for proving the controversial one. This is a common way in the glorious Quran. We have previously given an example by the issue of life and how it has begun when He *Glorified is He* brought the creation into existence. Unquestionably, we have not seen that matter, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'I did not make them witnesses of the

creation of the heavens and the earth, nor of the creation of their own souls; nor could I take those who lead (others) astray for aiders.' (*al-Kahf*: 51) Indeed, no one has seen that event, and we came to know about it through what Allah *Glorified is He* had told us. In fact, the human mind stands disabled before this matter, for there is no empirical evidence to prove it. One should not follow the ignorant people who overburden their minds to think about this matter which is beyond reason. Such people should have listened attentively to the Words of Allah *the Almighty* that tell them how the creation was brought into existence.

Allah *the Almighty* did not make us witness the creation, but He *Glorified is He* made us witness the matter of death. In this way, He *the Almighty* uses a tangible proof to substantiate the truthfulness of an unseen matter. It is well known that death is antithetical to life and that destruction is antithetical to construction. What has been constructed firstly will be the last thing to be destructed, and what has been constructed lastly will be the first thing to be destructed.

The last stage in the creation of the human being was breathing the Spirit into him. As we see in our worldly life, this will be the first thing to be destructed. Afterwards, the body stiffens, changes, goes rotten, decomposes and then turns into dust. So, when Allah *the Almighty* tells us that He *Glorified is He* created man out of dust, an altered black mud and clay like that of pottery, and then breathed the Spirit into him, we have, on the basis of the process of destruction of life that we witness, to believe in that. In this connection, He *the Almighty* says: 'Exalted is He who holds all control in His hands; who has power over all things; [1] who created death and life...[2]' (*al-Mulk*: 1-2). He *Glorified is He* mentions death first because it is the perceivable sign that guides us to believe in the unseen matter of creation. Likewise, He *the Almighty* speaks in the chapter in question about the momentous announcement, which is unseen to us. Therefore, He *Glorified is He* mentions some perceivable universal signs as a proof of the unseen matters.

Consequently, He *the Almighty* says:

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهْدًا ﴿٦﴾ وَالْجِبَالَ أَوْتَادًا ﴿٧﴾ وَخَلَقْنَاهُ أَزْوَاجًا ﴿٨﴾
وَجَعَلْنَا نَوْمَكُمْ سُبَاتًا ﴿٩﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا ﴿١٠﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا النَّهَارَ مَعَاشًا ﴿١١﴾

Did We not make the earth smooth [6] and make the mountains to keep it stable? [7] Did We not create you in pairs [8] give you sleep for rest [9] the night as a cover [10] and the day for your livelihood? [11] (The Quran, *an-Naba'*: 6 - 11)

In these verses in question, Allah *the Almighty* makes mention of tangible matters in the universe that are related to the human being and his/her livelihood on the earth. ‘Making the earth smooth’ means that it is even and prepared for living on it, like a bed prepared for a baby. Afterwards, the verses mention the loftiness of the mountains. It is as if their loftiness completes the smoothness of the earth, given the fact that they, i.e. mountains stabilize the earth.

The Arabic word *Awtad* (stakes) indicates that the earth continuously moves, and that the mountains were created only to stabilize it. This is supported by the fact that Allah *the Almighty* after mentioning the earth, said: ‘And the mountains as stakes?’ (*an-Naba'*: 7); ‘And He has cast great mountains in the earth lest it might be convulsed with you...’ (*an-Nahl*: 15). If the earth had been created in a motionless state, there would have been no need for mountains. The earth, however, is prone to convulse and shake.

In the verse in question, Allah *Glorified is He* gives the Arabs an example from their surroundings, as they used to live in tents, which need stakes to stabilize them. Therefore, the Arab person who receives the Quran is familiar with the similitude mentioned in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘And the mountains as stakes’ (*an-Naba'*: 7). Here, the mountains are described as stakes despite the fact that the former is lofty and great, while the latter is small and low. In the same connection, one of the proverbs of the Arabs reads, ‘So-and-so is lower (in rank) than a stake.’ Here arises a question: ‘Why does He *Glorified is He* liken a great thing to a small one, while it should be the other way around?!’ This similitude draws our attention to the reality of the stakes used to stabilize a tent. So, the question to be asked here is: ‘Were the mountains created to stabilize the earth or to fasten something on it?’ The stakes cannot stabilize the tent on their own, which is why the tent poles are

also needed to fulfil this task. Likewise, the mountains do not stabilize the earth on their own. So, what is the thing that the mountains fasten on the earth and helps, in turn, to stabilize the earth thereby? In order to have a complete similitude between the mountains and the stakes, we should search in the universe for something comparable to the tent poles. The scientific advancement made it easy to find out that thing. The findings of modern sciences concluded that the atmosphere, which surrounds the earth, is the first component needed for sustaining the life on the surface of the earth. For this reason, Allah *the Almighty* says about the earth: 'Say, 'Travel through the land...'' (*al-An'am*: 11). He *Glorified is He* does not say, 'Travel on the land.' This is due to the fact that the atmosphere in which we live, and the airplanes fly is a complementary part of the earth. In actuality, if this atmosphere had not encompassed the earth and protected it from the harmful rays, the living beings would have perished.

Now, what is that force which makes this aeriform mass attached to the earth? There must be a force that attracts the air to the earth. So, what is that force? It is the force of gravity; the mass of the earth attracts the mass of the air. The bigger the mass of the earth is, the stronger it attracts the air to it. Thus, the massive mass of the mountains increases the gravity of the earth which, in turn, increases the force of attracting the atmosphere. Thus, we can say that 'gravity' is comparable to the tent poles, yet it is an invisible force. In this way, drawing a similitude between the mountains and the stakes is understandable. Moreover, this helps us understand the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'It is Allah who raised up the heavens with no visible supports...' (*ar-Ra'd*: 2).

The Quran did not discuss these scientific matters in details because it was revealed among an illiterate people. Their culture did not enable them to comprehend such matters. The Quran, however, calls for the intellectual activity and the scientific research. This is due to the fact that to whatever extent the human mind advances, the Book of Allah will be in line with it; the Quran will neither contradict nor hinder the sound mind. We have said that the bestowals of the Quran will extend to the coming of the Hour. This explains why Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* did not interpret the Quran, because his interpretation, if done, would not have been in line with the intellectual abilities of the people who witnessed its revelation. Such an

interpretation would have also fixed the understanding of the Quran at a certain level that accepts no additional contributions and prevents the minds from engaging in a deeper understanding of the Quran. If this had happened, the validity of the Quran for every place and time would have been lost. As for the necessary Quranic rulings, Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* explained them because every Muslim from his *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* time up to the coming of the Hour needs them. The universal signs which are subjected to the mental activity and deduction were generally discussed in the Quran in order that every people would make use of them according to the scientific development it has achieved. Thus, the Quran explains everything and its reader benefits from it according to his/her intellectual abilities.

There is another remark in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Did We not make the earth smooth?' (*an-Naba'*: 6) In this aforementioned verse, the negative interrogation is employed instead of the normal declarative sentence, that is, we made the earth smooth. This is due to the fact that confirming the facts with the negative interrogation is more eloquent than using a declarative sentence. It is as if He *the Almighty* entrusted the answer to that question to us because the correct answer undoubtedly affirms that it is He *the Almighty* Who made the earth smooth. This style is employed because He *the Almighty* wants to say to the people, 'If you acknowledge that it is Me Who made the earth smooth, why do you not believe in Me?!'

Moreover, the negative interrogation in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Did We not make the earth smooth?' (*an-Naba'*: 6) is meaningful; if the interrogation is employed, the question may carry the answer to the questioned person. For example, when you say to a child, 'I gave you such and such, did I not?' you implicitly tell him/her to answer affirmatively. By contrast, when you say to him/her, 'I did not give you such and such,' and s/he answers affirmatively. In such a way, it is as if Allah *the Almighty* wants us to answer affirmatively by employing the negative interrogation. When He *the Almighty* says: 'Did We not make the earth smooth, [6] and make the mountains to keep it stable? [7]' (*an-Naba'*: 6-7), He *Glorified is He* tells us that it would have been reasonably acceptable to deny the Resurrection if He *the Almighty*

had not actually made such great actions. However, as He *Glorified is He* had already made them, provided us with the necessary elements of life and showed us the signs of His Creative Power, we must believe in His Omnipotence, All-Profound Wisdom and Infinite Mercy. In other words, as He *the Almighty* is Omnipotent, All-Wise and All-Merciful, we should believe everything He *Glorified is He* tells us about.

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Did We not create you in pairs?' (*an-Naba'*: 8), it means that He *Glorified is He* has created us as males and females so that each two spouses would feel mutual kindness, tranquility and mercy to each other. This is a miraculous aspect of the creation. Surprisingly, some philosophers claim that man was created by chance. Monnet, the French philosopher, refuted their claim, saying, 'They were heedless of the fact that the routine is one of the antitheses of chance.' In other words, it is not a coincidence to daily meet someone at the same time and place. This encounter depends on one's daily routine, while chance depends on the law of possibility. Some scholars opine that the ratio of the possibility of the creation by chance is one to two hundred million. For example, the ratio of the possibility that a random usage of a typewriter composes a book of verses written by Shakespeare is one to two hundred million. Monnet added, 'The claim that the universe was created by chance is impossible. If chance created man, it would be inconceivable that the same chance created a female, sharing the same genus and differing in the gender in a way that if they have sexual intercourse with each other, they produce another male or female. Chance cannot do that.'

Thus, the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Did We not create you in pairs?' (*an-Naba'*: 8) indicates that the creation came into existence purposefully and precisely. So, we thank Monnet for drawing our attention to one of the verses of the Quran, which is: 'And one of His Signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them...' (*ar-Rum*: 21).

After Allah *Glorified is He* had created the earth and prepared it for the life of the human beings, He *Glorified is He* created them all from a male and a female. He *the Almighty* made the human being reproducible in order to settle in the earth and reform it. This life needs some basic elements in order to be sustained. These elements are explained in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*:

‘Did we not give you sleep for rest, [9] the night as a cover, [10] and the day for your livelihood? [11]’ (*an-Naba'*: 9-11) People’s bodies restore their energy after working hard through restful sleep. Sleeping should be during the night because it covers the people with its darkness. By contrast, the daytime is the time of working and seeking provision. Therefore, the basic elements of life are not food and drink, as some people wrongly think. Rather, sleep for resting is the first basic element of life.

In fact, sleeping puzzled the scientists and the philosophers; they could not recognize its reality or cause. How does it overtake the human being? Why cannot s/he resist it? The scientists carried out many experiments in this regard. They concluded that sleeping is a self-deterrent for the human being. This is due to the fact that the human being may work hard until s/he gets tired and try, though, to bear this tiredness to continue work until s/he uses up all his/her energy. Sleep, however, overtakes him/her after s/he gets tired. Sleeping is important to such a person to regain his/her energy and continue his/her work with more power. Thus, sleeping is a restful process. If we get tired out of work and did not sleep for a couple of hours to regain our energy, we would not be able to continue our work. Consequently, sleeping is one of Allah’s signs in the creation of the human being. It is also one of His great Blessings as it is a necessary daily process. That is why He *the Almighty* says about sleeping: ‘And one of His signs is your sleeping by night and (by) day...’ (*ar-Rum*: 23); and ‘Say: Tell me, if Allah were to make the night to continue incessantly on you till the day of resurrection, who is the god besides Allah that could bring you light? Do you not then hear? [71] Say: Tell me, if Allah were to make the day to continue incessantly on you till the day of resurrection, who is the god besides Allah that could bring you the night in which you take rest? Do you not then see? [72]’ (*al-Qasas*: 71-72)

Sleeping is called *Subat* (disconnection) because it disconnects the sleeping person from the course of life. Allah *the Almighty* also considers sleeping a kind of death, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: ‘Allah takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that do not die [He takes] during their sleep.’ (*az-Zumar*: 42) The disconnection with the worldly life during sleep ends after waking up. In the case of death, however, one’s connection to the worldly life ends permanently. Losing our consciousness during sleeping is

one of Allah's Bounties. When someone suffers the pain of a wound, s/he does not feel such a pain during his/her sleep; but once s/he wakes up, s/he feels it again. So, it is the soul that feels the pain and not the wounded organ. Thus, sleep is a manifestation of Allah's Mercy towards us.

As one loses his/her own consciousness during sleep, s/he may move in a way or another. That is why Allah *the Almighty* covered us during sleep with the darkness of the night. In this regard, He *Glorified is He* says: 'Did We not make the night as a cover?' (*an-Naba'*: 10) So, sleeping is covered by the darkness of the night. As for the daytime, it is dedicated to seeking livelihood, as He *the Almighty* says afterwards: '[Did We not make the day for your livelihood?]' (*an-Naba'*: 11) Therefore, the day is the time of movement and activity after having a restful sleep at night.

No one has ever opposed the facts that Allah *the Almighty* presents in the verses under discussion. Thus, as no one has claimed that s/he is the owner of the bestowals mentioned in these verses, it is a well-established fact that He *Glorified is He* is the Owner of these bestowals and bounties. This categorically refutes the divinity of any deity except Allah *the Almighty*. This is due to the fact that He *the Almighty* is the One Who created the creatures and made the earth smooth and the mountains as stakes. Moreover, He *Glorified is He* created us in pairs and gave us sleep for rest, the night as a cover and the day for our livelihood. If a deity, other than Allah *the Almighty* did all of these actions, would s/he let someone else claim these actions?! Would s/he keep silent to such claims?! Would s/he not defend him/herself?! We have previously explained that the action is attributed to the one who claims it if no one else opposed that. As Allah *the Almighty* told us that He *Glorified is He* has done all the aforementioned actions and no one objected to that, then He *the Almighty* must have been the true God, and we must totally accept His Truthful Words.

In the verses in question, Allah *the Almighty* gives us tangible examples of some phenomena which are unquestionably attributed to Him. It is as if He *Glorified is He* says to us, 'If We had not given you such and such blessings, it would have been reasonable that you do not believe Me, but We have already given you such blessings which confirms our Omniscience and Infinite Mercy towards you. The creation of these blessings is unprecedented. Thus, when

We tell you about the Last Day, the Recompense and the Resurrection, you should believe Us especially so because the Resurrection is easier than the creation.' In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'And it is He who begins creation; then He repeats it, and that is [even] easier for Him...' (*ar-Rum*: 27).

Had there been no Last Day, standing for the Account and Recompense, the sinful and lustful people- who wronged other people, appropriated their properties and violated their honour- would have been fortunate. Likewise, the loss would have been for the obedient, righteous people- who followed the Straight Path in the worldly life- if that had been the case. This case is logically and reasonably, let alone religiously and legally, unacceptable. Even if there had not been a Day of Judgment and Allah *the Almighty* had not told us about it, the just and wise people would have called for its implementation in this worldly life. How would the people be left without returning to a destination where the good people are rewarded for their good deeds and the evil ones are punished for their misdeeds?

It is noted that the chapter under discussion presented one of the ways of proving the truth which can be established by either a proof, or a testimony or an oath. In this regard, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'The burden of proof is upon the plaintiff and the taking of oath is upon the defendant.'⁽¹⁾ Allah *Glorified is He* claimed the creation of all the creatures and provided the proof in His saying: 'Did We not make the earth smooth, [6] And the mountains as stakes? [7] Did We not create you in pairs, [8] give you sleep for rest, [9] the night as a cover, [10] and the day for your livelihood? [11]' (*an-Naba'*: 6-11) These verses produce the proof that He *Glorified is He* is the Creator Who fashioned the creatures wonderfully with His Power and organized them wisely so that every creature perfectly accomplishes its function for which it was created.

He *the Almighty* also proved this fact by bearing witness to it, as He *the Almighty* says: 'Allah witnesses that there is no deity except Him, and [so do]

(1) *This Hadith is narrated on the authority of 'Abdullah ibn 'Amr ibn Al-'As Allah be pleased with them. See Ibn Muqri' Al-Asbahani, Mu'jam, Hadith no. 616; and Al-Bayhaqi, As-Sunnan As-Sughra, Hadith no. 3103. It is also narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Abbas and Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with them. See Al-Bayhaqi, Ma'rifat As-Sunnan, Hadith no. 20253; and Ad-Daraqutni, Sunnan, Hadith no. 3190.*

the angels and those of knowledge - [that He is] maintaining [creation] in justice...' (*Al-'Imran*: 28). Furthermore, He *Glorified is He* proved it by taking an oath, saying: 'Then by the Lord of the heaven and earth, indeed, it is truth - just as [sure as] it is that you are speaking.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 23) Thus, He *Glorified is He* used all the ways of proving the truthfulness of His Divinity. So, is there an excuse for anyone who denies this fact?

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

وَبَيْنَنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعًا شَدَادًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا ﴿١٣﴾ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا ﴿١٤﴾ لِنُخْرِجَ بِهِ حَبًّا وَنَبَاتًا ﴿١٥﴾ وَجَنَّاتٍ أَلْفَافًا ﴿١٦﴾

Did We not build seven strong [heavens] above you [12] and make a blazing lamp? [13] Did We not send water pouring down from the clouds [14] to bring forth with it grain, plants [15] and luxuriant gardens? [16]
(The Quran, *an-Naba'*: 12 - 16)

So many verses of the Quran indicate clearly that the 'seven strong' are nothing but the seven heavens which are created as layers, one upon the other. In fact, people cannot comprehend or realize the essence of the heaven and its massive body. Some people, however, tried to express the meaning of the heaven with perceivable qualities, especially after the emergence of many impressive scientific theories.

Those who sincerely wanted to draw the religion of Islam closer to the realities of life tried hard to make the religious matters, especially the unseen ones, easily perceivable by the people. In the modern age, Sheikh Mohamed 'Abdu⁽¹⁾ may Allah be merciful to him was a prominent example of such people. He was the leader of the rationalistic school of thought which tried to draw the unseen matters of the religion closer to people's minds. This shows their zealotness for Allah's Religion. The harm of this approach, however,

(1) Imam Mohamed 'Abdu ibn Hasan Khayr Allah, belonging to At-Turkumani, was the Mufti of Egypt and one of the figures of reform and renewal in Islam. He was born in Shanra, one of the villages of Al-Gharbiyya governorate, in 1849. He grew up in Mahillat Nasr in Al-Buhyra governorate. He supported the 'Urabi Revolution and died in 1905 at the age of 56.

overweighs its benefit. This is due to the fact that the unseen matters should be believed in as such; it is not necessary to fully comprehend them.

We have said that there is a main pillar of faith, which is to believe in Allah *the Almighty*. If we willingly believed in Him *the Almighty* we had consequently to believe in everything He *Glorified is He* tells us about the unseen matters, be it reasonable or beyond our reason. Besides, the tangible matters, which we perceive, confirm the truthfulness of the unseen matters. A lot of things were unperceivable by our means of perception, but, with the scientific advancement, we became able to perceive them. Let us give an example to illustrate this point; in the past, the human being did not know about or see the microbes and some other tangible matters like the stars. However, with the scientific development and the invention of the microscope and the telescope, we could see them. Thus, if some matters are unperceivable to your means of perception, this does not necessarily mean that they do not exist. So, the mind should not hesitate to believe in the unseen matters especially so because it is Allah *Glorified is He* Who told us about them. Moreover, science keeps unveiling what was previously unperceivable. Thus, we should use the tangible matters as a proof of the unseen ones.

Furthermore, believing in the unseen as such is one of the distinctive qualities of the believer, as Allah *the Almighty* describes the believers, saying: 'Who believe in the unseen...' (*al-Baqara*: 3). After all, believing in the perceived matters is not a privilege, for both the believers and the disbelievers are equal in this regard. It is normal to believe in the perceivable matters that convince the mind and are perceived by the means of perception.

When the rationalists saw that the essence of the heavens is not subjected to perception or experiment, they hold that 'the heaven' refers to everything over you. Accordingly, the planets, the stars, the sun and the moon constitute the heaven. During their time, only seven planets were discovered, so they claimed that these planets are the seven heavens. Afterwards, it was discovered that the planets are more than seven. When Imam Mohamed 'Abdu interpreted the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'And [by] the earth and He who spread it.' (*ash-Shams*: 5); and 'Did We not build seven strong [heavens] above you?' (*an-Naba'*: 12), he said, 'To build means to make something firm and solid.'

In the process of construction, for example, we put a brick on another and use cement to stick them together. So, how can we imagine the construction of the heaven if it consists of the planets, the stars, the sun and the moon? Mohamed 'Abdu answered, 'Allah made these heavenly bodies solid that they do not fall on each other or run off their orbit. They are controlled by the law of gravity discovered by Newton in the seventh century. The Quran is compatible with the scientific facts and does not contradict them.'

However, we say to Imam Mohamed 'Abdu, 'The Quran should not be interpreted as separate verses; rather, its verses explain each other.' For example, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'When the stars are dimmed [8] and the sky is torn apart. [9]' (*al-Mursalat*: 8-9), these verses show that the heaven is not the stars. Moreover, in the chapter of *al-Infitar*, He *the Almighty* says: 'When the sky breaks apart [1] and when the stars fall, scattering. [2]' (*al-Infitar*: 1-2) It is thus crystal clear that the heaven is different from the planets. Likewise, the heaven is not the sun or the moon, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying: 'Do you not consider how Allah has created seven heavens in layers [15] And made the moon therein a [reflected] light and made the sun a burning lamp? [16]' (*Nuh*: 15-16) Therefore, the Quran precisely mentions these heavenly bodies and makes it clear that they are different from the heaven and its body. This fact is amply illustrated by mentioning the heaven along with these heavenly bodies.

Furthermore, the Quran distinguished between the star and the planet; the former's light is intrinsic, while the latter's light is derived from an external source. For this reason, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Indeed, We have adorned the nearest heaven with an adornment of stars.' (*as-Saffat*: 6); 'And We have certainly beautified the nearest heaven with lamps...' (*al-Mulk*: 5). Both the stars and the lamps are the adornment of the heaven, but they are not the heaven itself. Now, is there anything other than the sun, the moon, the stars and the seven planets in the heaven? Yes, of course. The scientists have discovered other planets in our galaxy, like Neptune and Pluto.

Therefore, we can note that Imam Mohamed 'Abdu, with his rationalistic school of thought, imagined that the whole universe is confined to the solar system. However, this solar system is a tiny thing in the creation of Allah

Glorified is He. In this regard, scientists believe that the sun light takes eight light minutes to reach the earth. Sirius, which gives light and heat estimated by twenty-six-fold that of the sun, is fourteen light years away from the earth. Thus, how can we confine Allah's vast universe to that which we perceive of it? We should not say that the earth is the centre of the universe, as the Greek did. The earth is so tiny to be the center of a universe about which He *the Almighty* says: 'And the heaven, We raised it high with power, and most surely We are the makers of things ample.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 47)

Therefore, the universe is so massive that no one can fully conceive it. As for those who claim that the heaven is the sun, the moon and the stars, and that gravity holds its structure, we advise them to reflect on the Quran and the way it expresses the construction of the heaven. When Allah *the Almighty* talks about the heaven, He *Glorified is He* uses the Arabic word *Bina'* (construction), whereas the word *Bunyan* (building) is used for the constructions established on the earth. In this connection, He *Glorified is He* says: 'they said: Build for him a furnace, then cast him into the burning fire.' (*as-Saffat*: 97); 'Is he, therefore, better who lays his foundation on fear of Allah and (His) good pleasure, or he who lays his foundation on the edge of a cracking hollowed bank, so it broke down with him into the fire of hell...' (*at-Tawba*: 109); and 'The building which they have built will ever continue to be a source of disquiet in their hearts...' (*at-Tawba*: 110). In the verse in question, He *the Almighty* says: 'Did We not build seven strong [heavens] above you.' (*an-Naba'*: 12) There is a great difference between the process of building on the earth and building of the heaven. Unlike the heaven, we build on the earth by sticking bricks together and we can still be able to distinguish each one from the other. With regard to the creation of the heaven, He *the Almighty* says: '...then look again, can you see any disorder?' (*al-Mulk*: 3) This verse means that there are no flaws in the heaven because it is a solid, precise construction that no one sees any cracks in it. Afterwards, He *Glorified is He* says: 'Then turn back the eye again and again; your look shall come back to you confused while it is fatigued.' (*al-Mulk*: 4) This clearly indicates that the sight cannot penetrate into the heaven; when we look at it, we see it one solid construction. By contrast, one can see something like stains in the sun and the moon.

Moreover, how can we accept the rationalistic school's interpretation of Allah's saying: '...seven strong [heavens]' (*an-Naba'*: 12) as referring to the planets, the stars, the sun and the moon? This is totally unacceptable, especially if we referred to the Night Journey and Ascension, which we firmly believe in. We know that the Archangel Jibril (Gabriel) ascended along with Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* to the nearest heaven. When he requested for the gate to be opened, it was opened. They kept ascending until they reached the seventh heaven. Thus, these seven heavens are different from the sun, the moon, the planets and the stars.

We agree with the rationalistic school on the fact that Islam does not contradict science, yet, what kind of science does Islam not oppose? It is the correct science that mounts to/tells the truth. After all, Allah *Glorified is He* is the One Who revealed the Quran and created the universe. So, how can there be a contradiction between them? The problem is with some people who hastily connect the new scientific theories with the unseen matters mentioned in the Quran before even studying and examining the veracity of such theories. Indeed, such people are sincere in their endeavour to serve Allah's Religion, but their hasty actions may prove harmful to the Islamic *Da'awa* (Call).

It is not important to rationalize all the religious matters so that the human mind fully understands them. What is really important is that the religion raises the mind to its proper level. As we have said previously, the unseen matters should be believed in as it is; it is not important to know their essence; they are beneficial to us even if we do not fully comprehend them.

Furthermore, what would the mind of the twentieth century leave for the mind of the thirtieth or the fortieth century to discover? So, we should not hastily follow the scientific theories or overstep the natural development of the human mind. In fact, Allah *the Almighty* does not bestow the secrets of the universe on us all at once; everyday He *Glorified is He* gives us some of such bestowals and unveils to us some of the secrets. In this connection, He *the Almighty* 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). New signs will be unveiled until the Day of Judgment. This is one of Allah's Universal Laws. There is no need for hastiness to convince the

contemporary minds that the Quran is compatible with the scientific theories. What would we do if we connected the Quran with a scientific theory, claiming that the Quran discovered it first, and then we find out that the theory is wrong? There are many incidents in which scientists prove some theories wrong after being thought correct.

To recap, the seven strong heavens are in layers over us. The heaven is not the planets, nor the stars, nor the sun nor the moon; all of these bodies are different from the lower heaven and have nothing to do with it. When we find out the distance between the earth and the lower heaven, we then might think of knowing and realizing its reality.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: 'And make a blazing lamp?' (*an-Naba'*: 13) He *Glorified is He* tells us about the sun, the blazing lamp, which illuminates the earth. The Arabic word *Wahhaj* (blazing) refers to the bright thing that twinkles and is full of heat. Thus, the sun intrinsically gives us light and heat. That is why its light has bright rays, while the light of the moon is pure. This is due to the fact that the light of the moon is extrinsic; it is derived from the sun and that it is why it is a pure, tranquil light. Thus, the sun gives us both light and heat.

As for the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'Did We not send water pouring down from the clouds?' (*an-Naba'*: 14), the Arabic word *Al-Mu'sirat* refers to the clouds which pour down abundant water. When we reflect on the relation between the blazing lamp, the sun, and the falling of water from the clouds, we firmly believe that it is Allah *the Almighty* Who revealed these verses. He *Glorified is He* created the universe and organized its affairs perfectly on the basis of the cause and the effect law. We have explained this relation, saying, 'The heat of the sun makes the sea water evaporate forming thereby clouds filled with fresh water which will later fall on a certain country to be used for drinking and irrigation.' In this regard, He *Glorified is He* says: '...then send down water from the cloud so We give it to you to drink of...' (*al-Hijr*: 22).

Linguistically, the Arabic word *Al-Mu'sirat* (clouds) refers to the girl that has just begun her first menstruation period, so she can give birth to children. In this regard, a poet said,

I was protected from my fears

By disguising among three young girls (two full breasted female companions and one adult female)

Likewise, a cloud is called *Mu'sir* if it is filled with fresh water. Then, its water pours down once it passes over a cool area, especially over the summits of the lofty mountains which are extremely cold. In this regard, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'Did We not make the earth a home [25] for the living and the dead? [26] Did We not place firm, lofty mountains on it and provide you with sweet water? [27]' (*al-Mursalat*: 25-27) Thus, the sweat water is connected, with regard to its fall, with lofty mountains. A scientist called vit Jim produced an Encyclopedia on the Snow Line in which he discussed the places where the snow remains during the whole year. He noted that this line starts from the equator up to the tropic of Cancer and ends with the equator and the sea level. He found out that the highest summit in the equatorial region is 16 to 17 thousand feet (from the sea level); 13 thousand feet in the tropic of Cancer at 23°, 6 thousand feet at latitude 50; 4 thousand feet at latitude 60; and at latitude 70, the snow line reaches the sea level. Thus, the further the snow line is from the hot regions, the lower it gets. We know that the summits of the mountains are covered with snow in sub-zero temperatures. Once it is above zero by a quarter or a half of a degree, the snow melts and descends down from the mountains.

As for the wind, it passes by the snow line region and drops the water it carries at zero degrees therein. Afterwards, it blows on the other regions without water. This means that the regions not belonging to the snow line receive no rain.

Allah *the Almighty* explains this process of sending down the rain, saying: '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) We may ask, 'Do all the clouds carry water?' Scientist replied, 'No,' because the clouds need positive and negative electric charges. When they meet together, they produce rain. We used to interpret the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'And We send the winds fertilizing...'
(*al-Hijr*: 22), saying that the winds are used in fertilizing the plants. With the advancement of science, however, we discovered that the winds fertilize each other.

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* describes the function of rain, which is poured down abundantly, saying: ‘To bring forth with it grain, plants, [15] and luxuriant gardens [16]’ (*an-Naba'*: 15-16), we should ponder on how these verses are precisely expressed. This precision can only be attributed to Allah *Glorified is He* Who is fully Aware of His creation. The grain is the source out of which the plants grow, whereas the latter forms the gardens. Thus, He *the Almighty* advises those who want to see His signs in the creation, saying: ‘Say: Travel in the earth, then see...’ (*an-Naml*: 69). ‘The earth’ here refers to the lands which are farmed by Allah’s Power, without any human intervention. The true nature of these lands remains as long as they are away from the human intervention. In such lands, one finds many of Allah’s signs in creation, including: trees, plants and fruits. Who planted them? The human being makes use of what s/he had seen in nature by growing the like of these plants and trees.

Thus, the grains give us the plants and trees, and when the trees grow in size and in number, they constitute the luxuriant gardens the branches of which intermingle due to the fertility of the soil. In Arabic, it is called *Janna* (a garden) because it covers the one walking inside it.

After telling us about some of the manifestations of Allah’s Power, Wisdom and Creativity, the Quran draws our attention to the main topic and objective of the chapter, that is, the Day of Judgment or the momentous announcement that the disbelievers deny and differ about.

Allah *the Almighty* says:

إِنَّ يَوْمَ الْفَصْلِ كَانَ مِيقَاتًا ﴿١٧﴾ يَوْمَ يُفْعَلُ فِي الصُّورِ فَنَأْتُونَ أَفْوَاجًا ﴿١٨﴾
وَفُتِحَتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ أَبْوَابًا ﴿١٩﴾ وَسُيِّرَتِ الْجِبَالُ فَكَانَتْ سَرَابًا ﴿٢٠﴾

**A time has been appointed for the Day of Decision: [17]
a Day when the Trumpet will sound and you will come
forward in crowds [18] when the sky will open up like wide
portals [19] when the mountains will vanish like a mirage [20]
(The Quran, *an-Naba'*: 17 - 20)**

Allah *Glorified is He* mentions the Day of Decision after the perceivable universal signs to say to the disbelievers, ‘You should not have denied the

Day of Judgment after witnessing these universal signs which you clearly acknowledge that they are attributed to Allah Alone. How will you then meet Him *Glorified is He* on that Day of Decision? What will you say to Him *the Almighty* after denying and opposing His Way of Guidance?

The Day of Judgment is called 'the Day of Decision' because Allah *the Almighty* judges among His servants on it. This word 'decision' indicates that the two parties are disputing about certain issues. In the worldly life, the people differ about the truth and the falsehood; some people are wrongdoers, while others are wronged. Everyone is fully convinced of his/her point of view and argues for it until Allah *Glorified is He* judges between the people on the Day of Judgment, for all the disputing people will be gathered together before Him *the Almighty*.

The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'A time has been appointed...' (*an-Naba'*: 17) means that the time of the Day of Judgment is precisely set; it will neither come earlier or later. Being an appointed time, it is clear why Allah *Glorified is He* does not respond to the calls of those who want Him *the Almighty* to bring it earlier than its due time. Such people asked: 'When will this threat come about, if you are truthful?' (*Yunus*: 48) He *the Almighty* is not subjected to the will of His creation because He *Glorified is He* is Unchangeable; no one can reject His Command or repel His Decree. Moreover, He *Glorified is He* is not subjected to the hastiness that overtakes the human beings because they are imperfect, with limited intellectual abilities. By contrast, He *Glorified is He* is Perfect; His Anger with the disbelievers and the disobedient people does not make Him hasten to hold them accountable before the due time set for that.

Allah *the Almighty* says: 'A Day when the Trumpet will sound and you will come forward in crowds.' (*an-Naba'*: 18) This is because the Day of Judgment starts with blowing the Trumpet. This verb *Yunfakhu* (to be blown) is in the passive voice; it does not show the one who will blow the Trumpet. Scholars believe that Israfil will blow the Trumpet for the first time to resurrect the people, and that he will do it again to gather them (for accountability).

The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...you will come forward in crowds.' (*an-Naba'*: 18) means that the people will come in groups according to their religious state in the worldly life, a fact which is crystal clear in His saying:

‘(And remember) the Day when We shall call together all human beings with their (respective) Imam...’ (*al-Isra'*: 71). Thus, there will be a leader for those who devoured usury, the adulterous, those who devour what is unlawful, etc. The people with similar sins will be gathered together.

With regard to the saying of Allah: ‘A Day when the Trumpet will sound and you will come forward in crowds’ (*an-Naba'*: 18), there is a Hadith⁽¹⁾ narrated by Ibn Mardawayh on the authority of Mu‘adh ibn Jabal *Allah be pleased with him* in which he, i.e. Mu‘adh asked Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* about this verse, whereupon he said, ‘You have asked about a great matter. After looking at the sky, he *Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him* said, ‘Allah *Glorified is He* distinguished ten kinds of people from the Muslim *Ummah* and changed their images; some would be in the images of apes, while others would be in the images of pigs. Some would hang down their heads with their legs over their heads; they would be dragged on their heads. Some people would be blind, deaf or dumb. Some others would chew their tongues which would hang down to their chests; the pus would issue from their mouth like saliva, which would disgust the gathered people. The hands and legs of some others would be cut off. Some others would be crucified on trunks of fire. Others’ smell would be worse than that of a corpse, disgusting all the people. Another kind of people would wear cloaks made of pitch, attaching to their bodies.’

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* then explained these kinds of people. As for those who have the image of apes, they are the backbiters who go about with calumnies among the people to arouse hostilities. With regard to those in the images of pigs, they are the ones who devour what is unlawful and earn their provision illegally. As for those who will hang down their heads with their legs over their heads and who will be dragged on their heads, they are the ones who devour usury. As for the blind people, they are the unjust rulers. As for the deaf people who do not have a sound mentality,

(1) *This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Mu‘adh ibn Jabal Allah be pleased with him. In his Tafsir, As-Suyuti attributes it to Ibn Mardawayh while Ath-Tha‘labi attributes it to Ibn Fanjawayh on the authority of Al-Bara’ ibn A‘zib. See As-Suyuti, Ad-Durr Al-Manthur, 8/393; Ath-Tha‘labi, Al-Kashf Wa Al-Bayan, 10/115; and Az-Zamakhshari, Al-Kashshaf, 4/687.*

they are the conceited people who boast about their deeds. We said that some people will chew their tongues and the pus will issue from their mouth as saliva; those are the evil scholars who say what they do not do. As for those whose hands and legs are cut off, they are the ones who harm their neighbours. With regard to those who will be crucified on trunks of fire, they are the ones who expose other people to the ruler. As for those whose smell is worse than that of the corpse, they are the followers of their whims and lusts. With regard to the people who will wear cloaks made of pitch, attaching to their bodies, they are the self-conceited and arrogant people.

This is how Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* interpreted the word *Afwaj* (in crowds). However, scholars who scrutinize the authenticity of the Hadiths opine that the context indicates that the Hadith is about those who deny the Resurrection, yet the text of the Hadith refers to a group of the Muslims, which is why Ibn Hajar said, 'I think this Hadith is not quoted in the right context or it is fabricated.'

With regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'When the sky will open up like wide portals' (*an-Naba*': 19), we said that the heaven is constructed perfectly; one cannot see any flaws or cracks in its construction. By contrast, in the Hereafter, the heaven will be torn apart and will open up like wide portals, after being a perfect construction.

Both the heaven and the earth will be affected by the coming of the Hereafter, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'On the day when the earth shall be changed into a different earth and the heavens (as well)...' (*Ibrahim*: 48). Thus, the earth and the heaven of this worldly life are qualified for humans' living, but the earth and the heaven of the Hereafter are undoubtedly different. The earth in the worldly life depends on causes and effects, whereas that of the Hereafter depends on the Ultimate Causer *Glorified is He Alone*.

Allah *the Almighty* explained the meaning of His saying: 'When the sky will open up like wide portals.' (*an-Naba*': 19) in other verses, saying: 'When the heaven becomes cleft asunder' (*al-Infitar*: 1); and 'On the Day when the heaven shall move from side to side.' (*at-Tur*: 9) All of this leads to the perishing of the worldly heaven so that the new heaven of the Hereafter replaces it.

Allah *the Almighty* then adds: 'When the mountains will vanish like a mirage.' (*an-Naba'*: 20) This is another scene on the Day of Judgment. The mountains which are the most firm and solid phenomena will vanish on the Day of Judgment. They will crack, break up and vanish like a mirage.

The topic of the destruction of the mountains was discussed at length in the Quran. The state of the mountains is mentioned in twenty-nine verses in twenty-nine chapters of the Quran, like the verse in question. In this regard, Allah *the Almighty* says in the chapter of *at-Takwir*: 'When the sun is covered, [1] And when the stars darken, [2] And when the mountains are made to pass away. [3]' (*at-Takwir*: 1-3) In the chapter of *al-Kahf*, He *the Almighty* says: 'And the day on which We will cause the mountains to pass away...' (*al-Kahf*: 47); in the chapter of *at-Tur*: 'On the Day when the heaven shall move from side to side [9] And the mountains shall pass away passing away (altogether) [10]' (*at-Tur*: 9-10); and in the chapter in question: 'When the mountains will vanish like a mirage.' (*an-Naba'*: 20) These are four positions mentioning the removal of the mountains, but three of them do not mention what happens to them afterwards. In the chapter in question, however, He *the Almighty* says: 'When the mountains will vanish like a mirage.' (*an-Naba'*: 20) Thus, the mountains will be like a mirage. First, they will move and turn into very tiny fragments. For this reason, He *the Almighty* says: 'When the mountains are turned to dust.' (*al-Mursalat*: 10) This verse means that they will no longer exist.

In the chapter of *al-Muzzammil*, Allah *the Almighty* gives us another picture of the destruction of the mountains; they are described as heaps of sand: 'On the day when the earth and the mountains shall quake and the mountains shall become (as) heaps of sand let loose.' (*al-Muzzammil*: 14) The Arabic word *Katheeb* refers to the fine sand which broke up after being solid. This is one of the stages of the destruction of the mountains where they will turn into heaps of sand. Likewise, He *the Almighty* says in the chapter of *al-Waqi'a*: 'When the earth shall be shaken with a (severe) shaking, [4] And the mountains shall be made to crumble with (an awful) crumbling, [5] So that they shall be as scattered dust. [6]' (*al-Waqi'a*: 4-6) These aforementioned verses collectively tell us that the removal of the mountains is synonymous with its vanishing. Ultimately, they will cease to exist.

In the same connection, Allah *the Almighty* says in the chapter of *al-Ma'arij*: 'On the day when the heaven shall be as molten copper [8] And the mountains shall be as tufts of wool. [9]' (*al-Ma'arij*: 8-9); and in the chapter of *al-Qari'a*, He *Glorified is He* says: 'And the mountains shall be as loosened wool.' (*al-Qari'a*: 5) Thus, the mountains will vanish, and then break up and turn into heaps of sand. Afterwards, they will turn into a mirage and then totally vanish, for there is no function for them anymore. Their function was to stabilize the earth, but in the Hereafter the earth has changed into another one.

Then Allah *the Almighty* then says:

إِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ كَانَتْ مِرْصَادًا ﴿٢١﴾ لِلظَّالِمِينَ مَأْبَا ﴿٢٢﴾ لَيْثِينَ فِيهَا أَحْقَابًا ﴿٢٣﴾
لَا يَذُوقُونَ فِيهَا بَرْدًا وَلَا شَرَابًا ﴿٢٤﴾ إِلَّا حَمِيمًا وَغَسَّاقًا ﴿٢٥﴾ جَزَاءً وَفَاقًا ﴿٢٦﴾

Hell lies in wait [21] a home for oppressors [22] to stay in for a long, long time [23] where they will taste no coolness nor drink [24] except one that is scalding and dark [25] a fitting requital [26] (The Quran, *an-Naba'*: 21-26)

These verses mention the ultimate destination of the deniers of Resurrection: 'Hell lies in wait.' (*an-Naba'*: 21) First, Allah *the Almighty* threatens them, saying: 'They will find out. [4] In the end they will find out. [5]' (*an-Naba'*: 4-5) Then, He *Glorified is He* asserted that the Day they denied will come to pass, saying: 'A time has been appointed for the Day of Decision.' (*an-Naba'*: 17) Afterwards, He *the Almighty* gives them some descriptions of what will happen in the universe on the Day of Judgment including the collapse of many universal phenomena. So, what then? It is the Recompense according to the deeds, be they good or evil.

Now, Allah *the Almighty* tells us about the punishment awaiting the disbelievers and the deniers who oppose His Way of Guidance. Then He *Glorified is He* shows us the reward of the pious believers, saying: 'For those who were aware of Allah there is supreme fulfilment.' (*an-Naba'*: 31) In this way, He *the Almighty* gives us a complete account about the destination of both groups in order that we might draw an effective comparison between them.

Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Hell lies in wait.' (*an-Naba'*: 21) This means that the hellfire expects and lies in wait for the disbelievers to grab them inside it. So, it is not heedless of them; rather, it yearns for them, like a person lying in wait to seize his/her opponent. Elsewhere in the Quran, He *the Almighty* says: 'Almost bursting for fury...' (*al-Mulk*: 8). So, the fire is filled with anger against the disbelievers. Not only the hellfire but also the whole universe hates the disbelievers who violate Allah's Way of Guidance. All the creatures yearn for a chance to revenge against the disbelievers. For this reason, the hellfire calls for more of them to be burned inside it, a fact which is clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'On the day that We will say to hell: Are you filled up? And it will say: Are there any more?' (*Qaf*: 30) With regard to the attitude of the inanimate objects towards the disbelievers, He *the Almighty* says: 'So the heaven and the earth did not weep for them, nor were they respited.' (*ad-Dukhan*: 29) This is due to the fact that the whole universe is subjected to Allah *the Almighty* and glorifies Him. It fulfils its function as prescribed by Him *the Almighty* and feels angry at the human being if s/he violates the Divine Way of Guidance. In the same connection, we mentioned the Sacred Hadith which reads, 'The oceans say, 'My Lord, give me the permission to drown the son of Adam.' The earth says, 'My Lord, give me the permission to swallow the son of Adam...'. Thus, the whole universe, including the heaven and the earth, is angry at the man who violates Allah's Way of Guidance. Surprisingly, the human being is the only creature that may disobey Him *the Almighty*. The human beings are divided into believers and disbelievers; obedient people and disobedient ones. It suffices here to cite the following verse: 'Do you not see that Allah is He, Whom obeys whoever is in the heavens and whoever is in the earth, and the sun and the moon and the stars, and the mountains and the trees, and the animals...' (*al-Hajj*: 18). This means that the creatures mentioned in the previous verse unanimously worship Allah *the Almighty*. As for the human being, the master of the universe, s/he breaks this rule, as is clear in the saying of Allah: '...and many of the people; and many there are against whom chastisement has become necessary...' (*al-Hajj*: 18).

Thus, the hellfire is correctly acting when it lies in wait for the disbelievers and yearns to punish them. He *the Almighty* then says: 'A home for oppressors.'

(*an-Naba'*: 22) This means that the hellfire is the ultimate destination of the oppressors. How evil that destination is!

The Arabic word *Ma'aba* (returning home) implies that someone will return to a place after leaving it. Here arises a question, which is, 'How can the hellfire be the *Ma'ab* (home) of the disbelievers while they had not been thrown into it before?!' Scholars opine that the human being during his/her presence in the worldly life enjoys freedom of choice between two states of subjection; the first one is that s/he was created out of nothing and then given the ability to choose. Accordingly, the disbelievers will be forced to dwell in the hellfire. In other words, they will have no choice to decide on this matter, exactly as they had no choice to decide on the time of their birth or death or their morals, etc.

Moreover, the last destination of the disbelievers will grow worse because it is permanent and endless, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'To stay in for a long, long time.' (*an-Naba'*: 23) The singular form of the Arabic word *Ahqaba* is *Hiqba*, which, according to the exegetes of the Quran, refers to a period of time estimated by eighty years. As these periods of time are eternally consecutive, then the disbelievers will dwell in the hellfire forever. With regard to the disbelievers, staying for a long, long time in the hellfire does not indicate that they will get out after the end of that time. In fact, their stay in it is endless, as He *the Almighty* says elsewhere: '...they will abide therein forever.' (*al-Jinn*: 23)

Here arises a question, which is, 'Why does Allah *the Almighty* say that the disbelievers will stay for a long time in the hellfire, while they will abide eternally therein?!' Some scholars opine that He *the Almighty* wants to add another kind of punishment for the disbelievers. After torturing them for a particular period of time, He *Glorified is He* will command the Angels to get them out of the hellfire and to take them to the direction of the paradise, a matter that will consequently raise the disbelievers' hopes to be, at least, saved from the hellfire. However, the Angels will be commanded to take them back to the hellfire, which will humiliate and torture the disbelievers' souls because it shatters all their hopes of salvation. Furthermore, it increases the amount of punishment which they already suffer from, for if the torment

were continuous, it would be easier. A poet⁽¹⁾ once portrayed shattering one's hope, saying,

Like a rainy cloud (that) appears to a thirsty people

But once they see it, it vanishes

Another poet⁽²⁾ also says,

Now I have become deprived of Layla

As if I was holding water with my fingers

Shattering the hopes along with its consequent disappointment is a kind of punishment still employed even in today's prisons. For example, the jailer makes the prisoner grow thirsty, and when the former draws water nigh to the latter's mouth, s/he spills it before allowing him/her to drink. In this way, the jailer gives the prisoner the hope of quenching his/her thirst, but then shatters that hope completely. This punishment tortures the soul; after being in a state of happiness, the prisoner turns into the antithetical state.

In this connection, there are many descriptions of the punishment prepared for the disbelievers. It is described as great, severe, painful, humiliating, and so on. Every kind of these punishments is prepared for a particular group of sinful people. May Allah *the Almighty* protect us from His punishment and from the evil of His servants!

The verses continue to describe the hellfire and its punishment. Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Where they will taste neither coolness nor drink [24] except one that is scalding and dark. [25]' (*an-Naba'*: 24-25) These verses clearly show another kind of punishment for the disbelievers; Allah *the Almighty*

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- (1) He is Kuthayyir A'zza Al-Khuza'i, Abu Sakhr. He was a poet of the people of Medina, but stayed for a long time in Egypt. He was extremely short and ugly. Using poetry, he was the best defender of Islam at his time, which is why people preferred no other poet to him in this regard. He died in Medina in 105 A.H. See Az-Zirikli, *Al-A'lam*, 5/219.
- (2) Majnun Layla is Qays ibn Al-Mulawwah Al-'Amiri; he was from Najd. He was not mad but was called so for his overwhelming love for Layla Bint Sa'd. They grew up together, and when she became mature, her father prevented him from seeing her. So, Qays became deeply sad; he used to be seen sometimes in Ash-Sham and other times in Najd until he was found dead among some stones. His body was taken to his people in 68 A.H. See Az-Zirikli, *Al-A'lam*, 5/208.

actually mocks at them, for they will taste no coolness in the hellfire, and thus its heat will not be dissipated, nor will they have any drink by which they could quench their thirst.

The word 'except' raises the hope of the disbelievers. They will wrongly think that what follows is good for them. However, it is followed by nothing but another kind of more painful punishment: 'Except one that is scalding and dark.' (*an-Naba'*: 25) The Arabic word *Hamima* refers to the extremely hot water. As for the Arabic word '*Ghassaq*', it is the pus issued from the bodies of people of hellfire. This is actually the drink they will get in the hellfire. For this reason, some Companions of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* believe that this verse is the most difficult one in the Book of Allah.⁽¹⁾ As such, the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Where they will taste neither coolness nor drink [24] except one that is scalding and dark. [25]' (*an-Naba'*: 24-25) tells us about some kinds of punishment prepared for the disbelievers. The word 'except' could indicate that there is a hope of alleviation for the disbelievers; however, the punishment that follows it is severer than what precedes it.

As for the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'A fitting requital' (*an-Naba'*: 26), it means that He *the Almighty* neither wronged the disbelievers nor exceeded the fitting requital. Thus, their punishment is in proportion to their crimes, sins and violations of His Way of Guidance. In the same connection, He *the Almighty* says: '...and We did them no injustice, but they were unjust to themselves.' (*an-Nahl*: 118)

By contrast, He *Glorified is He* says afterwards about the reward of the righteous people: 'A reward from your Lord, a fitting gift.' (*an-Naba'*: 36) Therefore, the reward of the righteous people is not in proportion to their deeds; rather, it is greatly increased out of Allah's Benevolence. On the other hand, the punishment for an evil deed is in proportion to it, a fact which is

(1) *In their books of Tafsir, Al-Khazin and Ath-Tha'labi mention that the severest verse in the Quran is the saying of Allah the Almighty: 'Taste this: all you will get from Us is more torment.'* (*an-Naba'*: 30) *This is according to a Hadith narrated on the authority of Abu Barza Al-'Aslami. See Al-Khazin, Lubab At-Ta'wil, 2/263; Ath-Tha'labi, Al-Kash Wa Al-Bayan, 10/117; Al-Qurtubi, Jame' Ahkam Al-Quran; 19/182 and Ibn Kathir, Tafsir Al-Quran Al-'Azhim, 8/311.*

crystal clear in His saying: ‘And the recompense of evil is punishment like it, but whoever forgives and amends, he shall have his reward from Allah...’ (*ash-Shura*: 40). So, concluding the verses in question with His saying: ‘A fitting requital’ (*an-Naba'*: 26) prevents the foolish sympathy that overtakes some people when they listen to the verses describing the punishment of the oppressors. Out of this so-called sympathy, some even go far to describe Allah’s Requital as severe, not fitting the disbeliever’s crimes. As such, it is as if He *Glorified is He* responds to those people, saying, ‘There is no severity, injustice or transgression in the requital prepared for the disbelievers. This is the punishment they deserve for their evil deeds and crimes.’ Afterwards, He *the Almighty* mentions the reasons why the people should believe that His Requital is fair and befitting, saying:

إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا لَا يَرْجُونَ حِسَابًا ۖ وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كِذَابًا ۚ
وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ أَحْصَيْنَاهُ كِتَابًا ۚ فَذُوقُوا فَلَنْ نَزِيدَكُمْ إِلَّا عَذَابًا ۚ

**For they did not fear a reckoning [27] and they rejected Our
messages as lies [28] We have recorded every- thing in a
Record [29] ‘Taste this: all you will get from Us is more
torment’ [30] (The Quran, *an-Naba'*: 27-30)**

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘For they did not fear a reckoning.’ (*an-Naba'*: 27), it means that the disbelievers did not believe in the Day of Judgment or the Reckoning. Another possible interpretation is that they believe in Allah *the Almighty*, but they deny the Resurrection and are heedless of the Reckoning.

In fact, all kinds of corruption in the worldly life stem from denying the Day of Judgment and not fearing the Reckoning. What do we expect of some people who do not believe in the Hereafter and the Reckoning, and do not expect any requital for their misdeeds? The one who does not fear the Day of Reckoning follows his/her whims and lusts; s/he transgresses against other people. Thus, belief in the Day of Reckoning does not only guarantee a sound religiosity and good life in the Hereafter but also a good worldly life. Mohamed Iqbal spoke the truth when he said,

Neither there is safety if faith is lost

Nor (is there) a good life in the absence of religion

Thus, the one who expects no requital for his/her actions violates any religious or moral standards. This leads to endless corruption, starting with the corruption of the Creed down to even the simplest deeds. On the other hand, if the members of the society believe in the Reckoning and the Recompense, their righteousness will lead to the reformation of the society and its members. This righteousness stems from believing that everyone will be held accountable before his/her Lord and Creator Who is Ever-Watchful over him/her. He *the Almighty* knows everything; not an atom's weight within the heavens or the earth is absent from Him.

We have previously said that Allah *the Almighty* prescribed deterring factors within the Islamic society in order to prevent the committing of crimes. One of these factors is embodied in the obligation of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. Another factor is the ruler whom Allah *the Almighty* established in this position to implement His Laws and Legally-Prescribed Punishments. In this way, the good people will be rewarded and the wrongdoers will be punished. Another deterring factor is the self-reproaching soul, which rebukes its owner for committing sins, and takes him/her back to the Straight Path.

Now, what would we do if the society is corrupt, having no sound creed and abdicating its responsibility for preventing the crimes? What would we do if the society stopped enjoining what is right and prohibiting what is wrong? How can we deal with the corrupt ruler who is heedless of implementing Allah's Laws and punishing the criminals? Further, how can we reform someone who has lost his/her conscience and his/her soul incites him/her to commit evil?

Scholars opine that the Quran did not neglect the above-mentioned deterring factors. In fact, the religion of Islam paid a great attention to them. However, these factors may suffer corruption, to the extent that the criminal may circumvent the ruler's punishment and the earthly laws. If this happened, there remains the last factor which encompasses all the previous ones; it is the belief that Allah *the Almighty* is Ever-Watchful over man and that He *Glorified is He* will hold him/her accountable for his/her actions; there will be a reward for

the good actions and a punishment for the evil ones. Thus, if the earthly justice was blind to the sinful, the heavenly justice always extends to him/her.

The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...and they rejected Our Messages as lies’ (*an-Naba'*: 28) emphasizes the disbelievers’ rejection of the Divine verses and messages. The word *Kidhdhaba* (rejection) according to the dialect of the people of Yemen is a verbal noun. For example, when a Yemeni asked about the pilgrimage rites, he said, ‘Is it better to shave my hair or to shorten it (*Al-Qisar*)⁽¹⁾?’ In some standard Quranic recitations, the word *Kidh-dhaba* is recited as *Kedhaba*, which also means rejection, and *Kudhdhaba*, which is the plural of a liar.

The verse in question indicates the marvelousness of the Quranic style and its supreme eloquence. If we say, ‘A person charged so and so with telling lies,’ this means that the two people may be liars. That is because the one who calls the other person a liar may be truthful or not. As for the disbelievers, they rejected Allah’s Messages as lies, so they, unquestionably, are liars. The style of this verse indicates that those who belied His Verses are the liars. Thus, He *the Almighty* states that their rejection of His Verses as lies is not based on the reality, given that His Verses cannot be belied. They belied the Quran despite the fact that falsehood does not come to it from before it nor from behind it. Further, they belied Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*, while he is absolutely truthful. Their rejection, however, is blameworthy as they have no right to do it.

The style employed in the verse in question is called *Al-Ihtikak*. It means that one element in each of two sentences is omitted because another element in the other sentence refers to it. In this verse, the second element of the first sentence and the first element of the second sentence were omitted. This is similar to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘Indeed there was a sign for you in the two hosts (which) met together in encounter; one party fighting in the way of Allah and the other unbelieving...’ (*Al-‘Imran*: 13). This verse means that there are two parties: a believing party fighting in the Way of Allah and a disbelieving one fighting in the way of the Satan. The phrase ‘in the way of Allah’

(1) Instead of saying *At-Taqsir*, he said *Al-Qisar*

indicates the omitted phrase, that is, 'in the way of the Satan', while the phrase 'disbelieving party' indicates the 'believing party,' which is also omitted. This is a concise style that depends on the intelligence of the listener. It provokes the mind to understand the meaning and attracts the attention of the reader.

Another example is found in His saying: 'Or do they say: He has forged it? Say: If I have forged it, on me is my guilt, and I am clear of that of which you are guilty.' (*Hud*: 35) Here, Allah *the Almighty* commands Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* to say to the disbelievers, 'If I forged the Quran, then this guilt is on me alone and you are innocent. By contrast, if it is revealed from Allah, then you will bear the consequences of your guilt and I am innocent.' Thus, the elements of both the two sentences indicate the omitted ones in both of them. Likewise, in the verse in question, the verb is mentioned and the verbal noun is omitted in the first sentence. Conversely, the verb is omitted in the second sentence, while the verbal noun is mentioned.

We have explained that 'telling lies' means that one's statement is not consistent with the reality. In fact, one says something only after thinking about it. If his/her statement is about something that has already happened, then this is called a statement; but if it has not taken place yet, this is called a request. Let us give an example to illustrate this point; when someone says, 'Zayd is hard-working,' this is called a statement. If there is really someone called Zayd who is hard-working, then the statement is true. However, if there is no one called Zayd or he is not hard-working, then the statement is false.

In this connection, some people could not fully comprehend Allah's saying: 'When the hypocrites come to you, they say: We bear witness that you are most surely Allah's Messenger; and Allah knows that you are most surely His Messenger, and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are surely liars.' (*al-Munafiqun*: 1) Such people asked, 'Why did Allah call the hypocrites liars, while they had said to Prophet Muhammad, 'We bear witness that you are Allah's Messenger.'?' In other words, the hypocrites' statement is consistent with the reality, so why does He *the Almighty* call them liars? In fact, describing them as liars is not because they said, '...We bear witness that you are most surely Allah's Messenger...' (*al-Munafiqun*: 1); rather, it is because they said, '...We bear witness...' (*al-Munafiqun*: 1). They bore witness with

their tongues what their hearts did not believe in. Thus, they are liars with regard to the sincerity of their witness, as it is not consistent with reality and their belief in Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: 'We have recorded everything in a Record.' (*an-Naba'*: 29) As a matter of fact, everything happening in the universe is recorded including people's sayings, deeds and behaviours. The Arabic verb *Ahsa* means to know something and enumerate it, not only by committing it to memory but also to writing. Thus, He *the Almighty* emphasizes the fact that everything is recorded in a book.

The verse in question confirms that He *the Almighty* does not only know what would happen, but He *Glorified is He* also wrote it down. So, His Enumeration of everything, which leaves nothing at all, be it small or great, is recorded and written down. Why? This is because the record will serve as an argument against the people on the Day of Judgment. It is the Day on which everyone will take his/her record, and it will be said to him/her: 'Read your book; your own self is sufficient as a reckoner against you this Day.' (*an-Nahl*: 14)

Then Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Taste this: all you will get from Us is more torment.' (*an-Naba'*: 30) It is noted here that He *Glorified is He* talks about the disbelievers who deny the Day of Reckoning. The one who ponders on the style of the previous verses will find out that they employ the third person style: 'Hell lies in wait, [21] a home for oppressors [22] to stay in for a long, long time, [23] where they will taste no coolness nor drink. [24]' (*an-Naba'*: 21-24) This style was expected to continue in the verse under discussion, i.e. He *the Almighty* could have said, 'They will taste.' However, He *Glorified is He* changes the manner of address to the second person pronoun, saying: 'Taste this...' (*an-Naba'*: 30). The second person style means that someone talks to attentive addressees. In the previous verses, unseen matters were discussed; that is why the third person style was employed. Here, He *the Almighty* wants the second person style to clearly illustrate the intended meaning. As some people deny the Hereafter because it is unseen, He *Glorified is He* wants to portray it as a factual reality confronting the deniers. It is as if He *the Almighty* says to them, 'You will be taken by surprise when I address you, saying: "Taste this..."' (*an-Naba'*: 30). The unseen matter has become a reality.'

The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...all you will get from Us is more torment’ (*an-Naba*: 30) shatters the disbelievers’ hope of Allah’s Mercy after yearning for alleviating the punishment. When they listen to the Arabic word *Illa* (except) which is a particle of exception, they look forward to alleviating the punishment. The word ‘...torment’ (*an-Naba*: 30), however, strikes their ears and dash their hopes. This strongly and severely humiliates them, as we have explained in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘Where they will taste neither coolness nor drink [24] except one that is scalding and dark. [25]’ (*an-Naba*: 24-25)

The Quranic context talks about the deniers of the Resurrection and Reckoning, and makes mention of the punishment they deserve. In the subsequent verses, He *the Almighty* adds a new kind of punishment for them by mentioning the endless pleasures of their antithetical party, i.e. the righteous people, saying:

إِنَّ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ مَفَازًا ۖ حَدَائِقَ وَأَعْنَابًا ۖ وَكَوَاعِبَ أَزْوَاجًا ۖ وَكَأْسًا دِهَاقًا ۖ
لَا يَسْمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغْوًا وَلَا كِذَابًا ۖ جَزَاءً مِّن رَّبِّكَ عَطَاءٌ حِسَابًا ۖ

**For those who were aware of God there is supreme fulfilment:
[31] private gardens, vineyards [32] nubile, well-matched
companions [33] and an overflowing cup [34] There they will
hear no vain or lying talk [35] a reward from your Lord, a
fitting gift [36] (The Quran, *an-Naba*: 31 - 36)**

In fact, drawing comparisons are one of the features of the Quranic style. It clarifies a certain meaning by giving its opposite, as in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘The good will live in bliss, [13] and the wicked will burn in the Fire. [14]’ (*al-Infitar*: 13-14) This is also intended to spite the disbelievers; in addition to their punishment, their regret increases after seeing the people of the paradise enjoying its pleasures.

The righteous people are the ones who abide by Allah’s Way of Guidance, obeying His Orders and refraining from His Prohibitions. The phrase ‘supreme fulfilment’ has many meanings, as follows: it could mean ‘success,’ that is, the believer’s fulfilment of his/her good objective and achieving of what s/he hopes for; it could also mean to be saved from harm and dangers. In the

Hereafter, 'the supreme fulfilment' refers to both success and salvation because the believer hopes to be saved from the hellfire and to be admitted into the paradise. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'And there is not one of you but shall come to it; this is an unavoidable decree of your Lord. [71] And We will deliver those who guarded (against evil), and We will leave the unjust therein on their knees. [72]' (*Maryam*: 71-72); and 'Then whoever is removed far away from the fire and is made to enter the garden he indeed has attained the object.' (*Al-Imran*: 185) Thus, there are two stages of success: to be saved from the hellfire and to be admitted into the paradise. As a matter of fact, to be saved from the hellfire alone is a sufficient success. So, what would we think of entering the Paradise after being removed far away from the hellfire?! This is indeed the greatest success. It is the ultimate objective that every believer aspires to attain.

In this connection, the Arabs called the perilous desert a *Mafaza* (salvation); hoping, by this naming, to be saved from its dangers, including the beasts, lions and the deadly drought and famine. The desert was so called as a way of raising hope of salvation from the dangers facing those who walk through it.

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* gives us descriptions and examples of the paradise's pleasures, saying: 'Private gardens, vineyards.' (*an-Naba'*: 32) He *Glorified is He* tells us about the paradise according to our familiarity with the gardens in the worldly life. Otherwise, the paradise is an unseen matter. He *the Almighty* says about it elsewhere: 'So no soul knows what is hidden for them of that which will refresh the eyes; a reward for what they did.' (*as-Sajda*: 17) In the same connection, Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* said, 'There will be bounties which no eye has seen, no ear has heard and no human heart has ever perceived.' If the paradise is described as such, then there is no doubt that the words of people's languages in the worldly life cannot describe what is in it. This is due to the fact that using a word for describing something always follows the existence of such a thing. In other words, the meaning shall exist first, that is, before the people form the word that refers to it. So, if no one has ever seen, heard or perceived the pleasures of the paradise, how can there be words describing them?! It is thus clear that there is no word or vocabulary in the various languages of mankind that can

describe what is in the paradise. In fact, Allah *the Almighty* addresses us according to our intellectual abilities and by the language we understand.

He *the Almighty* explains this fact in His saying: 'A likeness of the Garden which the righteous are promised...' (*ar-Ra'd*: 35). He *Glorified is He* does not say, 'The Garden which the righteous are promised,' but rather, He *the Almighty* tells that He is just giving us a likeness of that Garden. So, when we read that the paradise contains rivers of water, milk and honey as well as private gardens and vineyards, we consider them as familiar descriptions, but yet we should take into account that we know nothing about its reality.

The word 'gardens' is the plural of a garden which is the orchard surrounded by a wall, which indicates its privacy. Thus, the pleasure of having privacy exists in the paradise. In more than one place, the Quran refers to such privacy. For example, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'Private gardens...' (*an-Naba'*: 32); 'Pure ones confined to the pavilions.' (*ar-Rahman*: 72); and 'Man has not touched them before them nor jinni.' (*ar-Rahman*: 74) Thus, Allah's Bounties are so great because He *Glorified is He* protects the believer's privacy in the paradise.

Allah *the Almighty* then mentions the most gratifying thing in the gardens, saying: 'Private gardens, vineyards.' (*an-Naba'*: 32) As we have just said, it is not right to compare the pleasures of the Hereafter with that of the worldly life because they only share names like grapes and wine, but they are completely different. That is why He *the Almighty* says: '...and they shall be given the like of it...' (*al-Baqara*: 25). Whenever the people of the paradise are given something of the bounties in the paradise with which they were familiar in the worldly life, they will say: '...This is what was given to us before...' (*al-Baqara*: 25). They would think that what they are given in the paradise is similar to what is in the worldly life, but this is not true. Here arises a question, which is, 'What is the reason for making the pleasurable food of the Hereafter similar in the form to that of the worldly life?' Some scholars opine that being familiar with something encourages the person to have it. For example, if you travelled to a place where you found a certain kind of fruit unknown to you and which does not exist in your surroundings, would you accept having it or not?! Thus, the pleasures of the Hereafter are given in the similar form to that of the worldly life, in order to be familiar to

the people of the paradise. This actually encourages them to unhesitatingly have it as the soul desires it and does not find it repulsive.

Allah *the Almighty* then says: 'Nubile, well-matched companions.' (*an-Naba'*: 33) The beautiful companions, who are the women of the paradise, are the most delighting pleasure in the paradise. He *the Almighty* describes them as 'nubile' which is the attribute of the woman when her breasts grow and become voluptuous, that is, they have not yet gone limp. The breasts take that shape only in the time of youth and it is the best period in the women's lifetime.

With regard to His saying: '...well-matched companions' (*an-Naba'*: 33), the word *Atrab* (well-matched) is the plural of *Tirb* which refers to someone equal in age to someone else. So, the beautiful companions share the same qualities and age of their husbands, in order to prevent them from looking for a woman beyond them. Strangely enough, some people mistakenly believe that there is similarity between the sexual gratification in the paradise and that in the worldly life. They are consequently repulsed by it and find it dirty. We say to such people, 'Why do we try to escape from the reality or be ashamed of it, given that sexual gratification is the nature that Allah *the Almighty* instilled in us? Is this matter not one of the most delightful pleasures in life?' As a matter of fact, such people do not consider the gratification of the sexual process itself, but rather, its disturbing consequences. In actuality, sexual intercourse is unquestionably desired. As for what the person finds repulsive in it, Allah *the Almighty* will remove it in the paradise so that one would have pure enjoyment, free from the disturbances of the worldly life. Likewise, He *the Almighty* will remove from the wine of the paradise the disturbances of its counterpart of the worldly life. Thus, we must not compare the pleasure of the Hereafter to that of the worldly life because they are totally different. Surprisingly, such people who object to the existence of sexual gratification in the paradise are the most salacious people.

With regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'And an overflowing cup.' (*an-Naba'*: 34), it refers to the pure cups which are consecutively given to the people of the paradise and which will be filled with the wine of the paradise. Elsewhere, He *the Almighty* says: 'The righteous will have a drink mixed with *Kafur*.' (*al-Insan*: 5); and 'And they will be given a drink infused with ginger.' (*al-Insan*: 17) Thus, there are different kinds of drinks in the paradise.

We should reflect on the precision and the marvelousness of the Quranic style; He *the Almighty* wants to distinguish between the wine of the worldly life and that of the Hereafter. For this reason, He *Glorified is He* says, after mentioning the 'cup' which refers to the wine of the Hereafter: 'There they will hear no vain or lying talk.' (*an-Naba'*: 35) This is due to the fact that the wine of the Hereafter does not intoxicate the mind or make its drinker talk vainly. On the contrary, wine in the worldly life is one of the causes of losing consciousness, which in turn leads to vain and lying talks and inappropriate behaviour.

The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'There they will hear no vain or lying talk.' (*an-Naba'*: 35) indicates that they, i.e. the dwellers of the paradise will neither utter nor hear vain or lying talk in the paradise. This means that the gathering of the believers in the paradise will be purely enjoyable; they will not be disturbed by hearing one's mockery or vain talk. Further, as no one will speak vainly or mockingly, they will not be harmed by anyone objecting to their talk, as it is free from vanity and mockery. Allah *Glorified is He* tells us that when a group of the believers will have a drink together in the Hereafter, their gathering will be totally different from that of worldly life. This is because He *the Almighty* purifies the former from all the disturbances of the latter.

The verses in question, which make mention of the righteous people's pleasures, are concluded by the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'A reward from your Lord, a fitting gift.' (*an-Naba'*: 36) On the other hand, He *the Almighty* says about the requital of the disbelievers: 'A fitting requital.' (*an-Naba'*: 26) Thus, the disbelievers' recompense is in proportion to their guilt; it is neither an unjust nor an exaggerated requital. By contrast, the reward of the believers is not befitting their good deeds; rather, it is an increased one. Thus, the 'reward' is the recompense for their good deeds, and the 'gift' is a free, extra reward.

In fact, both the reward and the gift will be offered based on a reckoning. The Arabic word *Hisaba* (an accurate reckoning) in the verse entails that the reward shall be in proportion to the good deed. However, when we explore the meanings of the word *Hisab* (reckoning) in the Quran, we find that it has other linguistic connotations; it could mean counting, enumeration, holding someone accountable and sufficiency. An example of the last meaning is when someone says, 'He showered me with his gifts until I said, 'That is enough.'

Allah says:

رَبِّ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الرَّحْمَنُ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ مِنْهُ خِطَابًا ﴿٣٧﴾

From the Lord of the heavens and earth and everything between, the Lord of Mercy. They will have no authority from Him to speak [37] (The Quran, *an-Naba'*: 37)

It is as if He *the Almighty* says to us, 'How cannot I give that generous reward while I am the Lord of the heaven and the earth, and I hold sway over the universe?' He *Glorified is He* decrees a fitting requital for the disbelievers and, by His Grace, gives the believers a generous reward and gifts beyond what they deserve. Further, He *Glorified is He* gives His servant until s/he says, 'My Lord, that is enough.' No Power is over His Power; thus, no power can prevent or stop His Bestowals and Benevolence, as He *the Almighty* says: 'He cannot be questioned concerning what He does and they shall be questioned.' (*al-Anbiya'*: 23) The human being is held accountable for his/her actions, and calculates what s/he gives because the money at his/her disposal decreases. By contrast, Allah's Bestowal does not decrease what He *the Almighty* possesses; that is why He *Glorified is He* gives without account.

Afterwards, He *the Almighty* mentions an Attribute which befits His Continuous Bestowals, saying: '...the Lord of Mercy...' (*an-Naba'*: 37). He *Glorified is He* is the All-Merciful when He *the Almighty* gives, withholds or measures. As we have said before, the human being lives between two states of subjection, one before his/her creation and the other is in the Hereafter. That is why He *the Almighty* then says: '...They will have no authority from Him to speak.' (*an-Naba'*: 37) This means that they will not be able to speak in the Hereafter except with His Permission. In fact, people live in the worldly life according to the causal factors created by Allah *Glorified is He*. That is why these factors may distract him/her from Allah, the Ultimate Causer. This is because pursuing these casual factors is necessary to gain their effects. For this reason, one may wrongly think that the causal factors are what really give him/her. On the other hand, the causal factors will be eliminated in the Hereafter and Allah, the Ultimate Causer, will bestow His Gifts on the people directly without any intermediary. Thus, the gifts in the Hereafter will entirely

depend on His Direct Power; no one would possess anything and no one would speak except with His Permission.

Allah says:

يَوْمَ يَقُومُ الرُّوحُ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ صَفًّا لَا يَتَكَلَّمُونَ
إِلَّا مَن أِذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَنُ وَقَالَ صَوَابًا ﴿٣٨﴾

**On the Day when the Spirit and the angels stand in rows,
they will not speak except for those to whom the Lord of
Mercy gives permission, who will say only what is right [38]
(The Quran, *an-Naba'*: 38)**

The word 'Day' here refers to the Day of Judgment. As for the word 'Spirit', it refers to the Archangel Jibril (Gabriel) *peace be upon him*. The Spirit and the Angels will stand in rows without speaking; they will not ask Allah *the Almighty* to increase someone's reward or to waive someone else's punishment. He *the Almighty* then says: '...they will not speak except for those to whom the Lord of Mercy gives permission...' (*an-Naba'*: 38). Giving permission here is for the sake of allowing the Angels to speak and to intercede. This will be the condition of the honoured Angels who do not disobey Allah's Commands and who do what they are ordered. They will stand in one row, and out of holding Allah *the Almighty* in awe, no one of them will speak. This is because they are obedient by nature and did not commit any violation. Despite that, they respectfully stand in awe of Him *Glorified is He* that no one will speak or intercede except those given the permission to do that by Him *the Almighty*. It is important to note that He *the Almighty* does not grant such permission except to those from whom He *the Almighty* would approve and accept the intercession.

With regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...and say only what is right' (*an-Naba'*: 38), it entails that the one interceded on his/her behalf is a monotheist. In the worldly life, the Angels only said what is right. So, is it conceivable that they will say what is not right in the Hereafter? 'Speaking rightly' means that the speech is consistent with the right and the reality. This is because He *Glorified is He* does not grant the permission to intercede except for those whose intercession is accepted. Thus, granting someone the

permission to intercede is just a declaration of accepting his/her intercession. That is why some people asked, 'What, then, is the benefit of intercession?' We say, 'Intercession is a way of honouring the intercessor and showering Mercy on the one interceded on his/her behalf.'

Allah *the Almighty* subsequently says:

ذَٰلِكَ الْيَوْمُ الْحَقُّ فَمَنْ شَاءَ اتَّخَذْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِ مَآبًا ﴿٣٩﴾

**That is the Day of Truth. So whoever wishes to
do so should take the path that leads to his Lord [39]
(The Quran, *an-Naba'*: 39)**

Here, the demonstrative pronoun 'that' refers to the Day of Judgment. It is the Day of Truth that will undoubtedly come to pass; it is not stained by falsehood. In the worldly life in which both truth and falsehood exist, the human beings are given freedom of choice and casual factors. Every human being has the choice to reform or cause corruption. Unlike the worldly life, on the Day of Judgment, there is no place except for the Truth.

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'So whoever wishes to do so should take the path that leads to his Lord' (*an-Naba'*: 39), it tells plainly that the facts have been presented to the people. He *the Almighty* tells us about the state of the disbelievers and the deniers of the Day of Judgment, and clarifies for us the punishment awaiting them. Further, He *the Almighty* illustrates the position of the believers and the pleasures and success that they will enjoy in paradise. Thus, everyone must choose for him/herself. Allah's saying: 'So whoever wishes to do so should take the path that leads to his Lord.' (*an-Naba'*: 39) means that the one who wishes to achieve success and be saved should take a way leading to Him *the Almighty*. S/he should regard and pre-occupy him/herself with thinking about his/her return to his/her Lord in the Hereafter.

Afterward, Allah *the Almighty* says:

إِنَّا أَنْذَرْنَكُمْ عَذَابًا قَرِيبًا يَوْمَ يَنْظُرُ الْمَرْءُ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاهُ
وَيَقُولُ الْكَافِرُ يَلَيْتَنِي كُنْتُ تُرَابًا ﴿٤٠﴾

We have warned you of imminent torment, on the Day when every person will see what their own hands have sent ahead for them, when the disbeliever will say, ‘If only I were dust!’ [40] (The Quran, *an-Naba’*: 40)

This verse clearly tells that Allah *the Almighty* has threatened the people with an imminent torment. In fact, this punishment is described as such based on the rule that states that ‘everything happening in the future is imminent,’ a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘On the Day they see it, it will seem they lingered [in this life] an evening [at most,] or its morning.’ (*an-Nazi’at*: 46) This is the case if we interpret the verse as referring to the torment of the Day of Judgment; although it is distant, it is imminent!

Another possible interpretation is that the torment here refers to that of the grave, as the disbeliever sees his/her place in the hellfire after his/her death. His/her evil deeds will be presented to him/her, and s/he will remain in that torment until the coming of the Hour. In fact, there are many verses indicating this meaning; Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘And surely those who are unjust shall have a punishment besides that (in the world), but most of them do not know.’ (*at-Tur*: 47) Thus, they will have a punishment lesser than that of the Hereafter. Likewise, He *the Almighty* says: ‘The fire; they shall be brought before it (every) morning and evening and on the day when the hour shall come to pass: Make Pharaoh’s people enter the severest chastisement.’ (*Ghafir*: 46) The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...on the Day when every person will see what their own hands have sent ahead for them...’ (*an-Naba’*: 40) goes hand in hand with His saying: ‘On the day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil, it shall wish that between it and that (evil) there were a long duration of time...’ (*Al-Imran*: 30).

He *the Almighty* concludes the chapter in question, saying: ‘...when the disbeliever will say, ‘If only I were dust!’ (*an-Naba’*: 40) This verse means that when the disbeliever sees the punishment, s/he wishes to be dust, that is, not to be created as a human being but rather remains as dust which is the

origin of the human being. In other words, the disbeliever, upon seeing the punishment of the Hereafter, wishes to be an inanimate object which has no free choice and is not charged with any religious obligations. It could be that the word 'dust' is used as the opposite of 'fire' out of which Satan, who is the source of temptation and aberrance, was created. He boasted about the fact that he was created out of fire, while Adam was created out of dust. So, the disbeliever's saying: 'If only I were dust!' (*an-Naba'*: 40) signifies that s/he wished that s/he had not been arrogant like Satan who tempted him/her. S/he wishes to be dust instead of being severely punished. But these are just wishes that do not benefit their owner:

Are the wishes beneficial in any way?!

If only youth can be sold so that I buy it!

the chapter of

an-Nazi'at

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

The chapter of *an-Nazi‘at*.
Allah *Glorified is He* says:

وَالنَّازِعَاتِ غَرْقًا ۝ وَالنَّاشِطَاتِ شَطًّا ۝ وَالسَّيِّحَاتِ سَبًّا ۝
فَالْمُدَبِّرَاتِ أَمْرًا ۝

**By the forceful chargers [1] raring to go, [2]
sweeping ahead at full stretch [3] overtaking
swiftly [4] to bring the matter to an end [5]
(The Quran, *an-Nazi‘at*: 1-5)**

The chapter of *an-Nazi‘at*, which is also called *As-Sahir‘a* or *At-Tamma*, starts with a Divine Oath: ‘By the forceful chargers.’ (*an-Nazi‘at*: 1) In order to confirm the truthfulness of the Resurrection, the chapter of *an-Naba‘* serves as a testimony while the chapter of *an-Nazi‘at*, using the oath, asserts the reality of the Resurrection. Thus, this reality has not been only confirmed by a testimony but also by an oath. When Allah *the Almighty* takes a Divine Oath, saying: ‘By the forceful chargers’ (*an-Nazi‘at*: 1), He *Glorified is He* thereby wants to confirm the reality of the Resurrection as well as its introductory incidents. The chapter of *an-Naba‘* discusses the Day of Decision and affirms its coming as an unquestionable reality. That chapter, however, does not discuss the introductory incidents that precede the Resurrection on the Day of Judgment. That is why the chapter in question comes to tell us about these incidents and the mighty alteration of the heaven and the earth that would happen along with that Day.⁽¹⁾

(1) The chapter of *an-Nazi‘at* is the chapter number 79 in the Quranic order. It was revealed in Mecca and its verses, which are 46, are clear, including no abrogating or abrogated verses. It was revealed after the chapter of *an-Naba‘* and before that of *al-Infitar*. No=

Thus, there is harmony in placing the chapter of *an-Nazi'at* after that of *an-Naba'* in which Allah *the Almighty* says: 'A time has been appointed for the Day of Decision.' (*an-Naba'*: 17); and which is concluded with His saying: 'We have warned you of imminent torment, on the Day when every person will see what their own hands have sent ahead for them, when the disbeliever will say, "If only I were dust!"' (*an-Naba'*: 40) Then comes the chapter of *an-Nazi'at* to tell us about the great and mighty events of the Day of Judgement: 'On the Day when the blast reverberates [6] and the second blast follows. [7]' (*an-Nazi'at*: 6-7)

In the chapter in question, we experience one of the stylistic features of the Glorious Quran, namely: - the 'oath,' which means to swear. Here, the Oath is taken by Allah *the Almighty*. The necessary elements of an oath include the one who takes it, something to be sworn by and the subject of the oath, which is the matter for which someone swears. These necessary elements also include the formula of the oath and the reason for taking it. Here, it is Allah *the Almighty* Who takes an oath about confirming the coming of Day of Judgment and its mighty incidents. What is sworn by is mentioned after the Arabic letter *Waw* (by). This Oath is directed to the deniers of the Day of Judgment whose denial is the reason for taking it. We should talk about all the elements of the oath, one by one. First, the reason for making an oath about something is to assert it so that the addressee believes it and eliminates his/her doubts about it.

The oath is of two kinds: to take an oath about something that has already happened before swearing or about something that would happen after taking the oath. The example of the former is to say, 'By Allah, I have done such and such,' and the example of the latter is to say, 'By Allah, I will do such and such.' So, every kind of them has a reason for taking it. When one swears about something in the past, s/he wants to confirm to a doubtful person that it has already happened. The way of taking such an oath is to swear by a great, awe-inspiring, mighty and overwhelming thing whose punishment for a false

= other chapter in the Quran is introduced or concluded in the way of this chapter. Besides, no other chapter shares the same number of verses; it was revealed a short time before the *Hijra* and after the Night Journey.

oath is fearful. Likewise, when you swear to do something in the future, you intend to commit yourself to doing it. Such a commitment stems from abiding yourself by a great oath that you fear to break.

If this is the case when the people swear, so how can we understand an Oath taken by Allah *the Almighty* according to either of its kinds? What we have mentioned with regard to the two kinds of oath cannot be attributed to Him *Glorified is He*. So, we have to search for the reason that befits His Names and Attributes, so that we could distinguish His Oath from people's ones. When I swear by Allah to do something, I fear to break the oath because this may incur His punishment upon me. By contrast, when He *Glorified is He* swears by one of His creatures, we cannot describe Him as fearing the power of that creature.

When we reflect on this matter and explore the oaths mentioned in the Quran, we find that He *the Almighty* swears by creatures regarded great by people. Some people may even seek their protection when they see their beneficial effects in their lives. These creatures may attract the people by their intrinsic greatness. Let us give an example to illustrate this point; those who worship the sun on grounds that it is of great benefit and good effect on their life glorified it as an intrinsic object, not paying attention to the fact that it was created by Allah *the Almighty*. In other words, they do not glorify the One Who created and subjected the sun to serve them; rather, they do glorify the created object. By doing so, it is clear that such minds search for the direct causal factors, paying no attention to the Ultimate Causer of everything. Thus, these causal factors tempted and led them astray. Likewise, some people went astray by worshipping the Angels for they reflected on their greatness and not that of their Creator.

When Allah *the Almighty* swears by some objects because they are regarded great by the addressees, He *the Almighty* in actuality, does so in order to direct their attention to the fact that these objects indicate the greatness of their Creator Himself. Yet, He *the Almighty* afterwards mentions something by means of which He proves people's cause of temptation of such an object futile, such as the states of change, alteration and destruction to which these objects might be subjected. For example, when He *the Almighty* swears by the

sun, saying: 'By the sun and its brightness.' (*ash-Shams*: 1), He *Glorified is He* draws our attention to the great, mighty creation of the sun. Then He *the Almighty* says at the end of His Oath: 'And [by] the night when it covers it.' (*ash-Shams*: 4) This means that in spite of the greatness of the sun, it is covered by the night to the extent that we see no trace for it. In fact, the God that deserves to be worshiped should not be unveiled or absent, as Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) *peace be upon him* said when he looked at the sun: '...This is my Lord...' (*al-An'am*: 76); but when it set, he *peace be upon him* said: '...I like not those that disappear.' (*al-An'am*: 76) Likewise, He *the Almighty* swears by the Angels, saying: 'By those [angels] lined up in rows [1] And those who drive [the clouds] [2] And those who recite the message. [3]' (*as-Saffat*: 1-3) These qualities of the Angels may tempt some people to worship them, as the latter frequently, as clearly mentioned in the Quran, remember Allah *the Almighty* and exalt Him. That is why He *the Almighty* then says: 'Indeed, your God is One.' (*as-Saffat*: 4)

Also, Allah *the Almighty* swears by some objects because people no longer pay attention to their benefits out of the fact that they get used to seeing them, which is why He *the Almighty* wants to draw our attention back to reflect on them and be heedful of their benefits. In other words, as long as He *Glorified is He* swears by these objects, their position must be so great but we are heedless of it. For example, He *the Almighty* says: 'By the fig and the olive [1] And [by] Mount Sinai [2] And [by] this secure city [Mecca], [3] We have certainly created man in the best of stature. [4]' (*at-Tin*: 1-4)

Thus, we must differentiate between the reason why people take either of the two kinds of oath and the reason why Allah *the Almighty* takes it. As for Allah *the Almighty* He *Glorified is He* either wants to underestimate a great object so that it does not tempt the people, or to direct people's attention to the benefits of an object that they consider trivial.

The one who reflects on Allah's Oaths finds that He *the Almighty* sometimes swears by His Being and His Lordship, saying: 'And they ask you: Is that true? Say: Aye! By my Lord!' (*Yunus*: 53); 'Say: Aye! By my Lord! You shall most certainly be raised...' (*at-Taghabun*: 7); 'So by your Lord! We will

most certainly gather them together and the *Shayateen*...' (*Maryam*: 68); and 'But nay! I swear by the Lord of the Easts and the Wests...' (*al-Ma'arij*: 40).

He *the Almighty* other times swears by the inanimate objects, by the plants, or by the Angels. As for the reason for the Divine Oath, it is sometimes taken to affirm the reality of something, as in the case when He *the Almighty* wants to affirm His Divinity and Oneness: 'Your God is One.' (*as-Saffat*: 4) Likewise, He *the Almighty* swears to affirm the veracity of the Quran, saying: 'And by the Lord of the heavens and the earth! It is most surely the truth, just as you do speak.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 23) Further, He *Glorified is He* swears to prove the truthfulness of Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in his conveyance of the Message on His behalf. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'Ya Sin. [1] I swear by the Quran full of wisdom [2] Most surely you are one of the Messengers. [3]' (*Ya Sin*: 1-3)

Allah *the Almighty* also swears to shed light on matters relating to people who act haughtily and arrogantly on grounds that all the other creatures are subjected to them. This actually tempts people and causes arrogance to infiltrate into their souls, to the effect that it becomes an intrinsic quality of them. Consequently, they would wrongly think that they have intrinsically existed in the universe. Addressing such deviation of mankind, Allah *Glorified is He* swears, saying: 'I swear by the time, [1] Most surely man is in loss, [2] Except those who believe...' (*al-'Asr*: 1-3). These verses of the chapter of *al-'Asr* refer to all mankind, exactly as in His saying: 'Nay! Man is most surely inordinate, [6] because he sees himself free from want. [7]' (*at-Tin*: 6-7) These verses also refer to people who are inordinate because of not abiding by Allah's Way of Guidance. As for the one who adheres to it, s/he is protected from being inordinate. In fact, we see many people who, despite being rich, are modest and abiding by Allah's Way of Guidance. Whenever such people's properties increase, they remember the Giver of blessings and, consequently, eliminate the impulses of haughtiness and arrogance. Such people acknowledge that they are Allah's servants, and that He *the Almighty* is the One Who bestows bounties on them. Further, they know that their existence and power in the universe are not intrinsic; rather, He *the Almighty* appoints them as vicegerent to benefit from the blessings bestowed on them. They fully recognize that

these blessings are borrowed items which would be eventually returned to their Owner. That is why He *the Almighty* makes an exception in the same chapter of *al- 'Asr*, saying: 'Except those who believe and do good, and enjoin on each other truth, and enjoin on each other patience.' (*al- 'Asr*: 3)

In the chapter in question, *an-Nazi'at*, Allah *Glorified is He* swears by many of ambiguous creatures. This is actually one of the objectives of the Quran, that is, to provoke the minds of people to find out many possible meanings for them. This makes us think about the meaning of *an-Nazi'at*, *an-Nashitat* and *as-Sabihat*, which would be interpreted differently, leading thus to a greater benefit. Thus, every unclear or ambiguous object in the Quran is made as such for certain Divine Wisdom. As for the clear objects in the Quran, they can be interpreted in one way. On the other hand, He *the Almighty* means to make some objects in the Quran unclear or ambiguous in order that we would find many possible meanings for them.

We have explained this fact in our interpretation of the saying of Allah *the Almighty* about the tree of *Az-Zaqum*: 'Its produce is as it were the heads of the devils.' (*as-Saffat*: 65) This tree, which exists in the hellfire, is still unseen to us; we believe in its existence only because He *the Almighty* told us about it. Drawing similitudes entails that we should liken/understand an unknown object to/in the light of a well-known one. So, how does He *Glorified is He* liken an unknown object, the tree of *Az-Zaqum*, to another unknown object, the heads of the devils?! This question is only raised by people with superficial knowledge of the different styles of the Arabic language. By contrast, if we carefully examine the matter, we will find that there are Divine Wisdom and rhetoric secrets behind it, as the Quran is Allah's Absolutely Precise Words. Thus, the mind must deeply think about it to try to deduce such secrets according to its ability.

If Allah *the Almighty* had defined the reality of the tree of *Az-Zaqum*, He *Glorified is He* would have limited the aspect of its ugliness and awfulness to one known thing. However, He *the Almighty* wants to make the aspects of awfulness vague, so that we would give full rein to our minds to imagine such awfulness in different forms and shapes. Undoubtedly, people vary in their imagination of ugliness and awfulness; what you consider awful may not be

viewed so by someone else. That is why it is said, 'What you consider ugly could be seen beautiful by someone else.'

Back to the chapter in question, Allah *the Almighty* swears, saying: 'By the forceful chargers.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 1) Scholars opine that the 'chargers' are the Angels who seize the spirits of the disbelievers at the time of death. So, the intended meaning is that the Angels forcefully and painfully take the disbelievers' spirits, as when a person takes a thorny branch out of the wet wool.

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Raring to go.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 2), they believe that it refers to those Angels who gently take the believers' spirits. As for the word *Nashta* (raring), it is used colloquially to refer to the knot that can be easily untied by pulling one of its sides. It is not tied in a way that makes its untying difficult. Likewise, the Angels handle the spirits of the believers gently and softly; they, i.e. the believers' spirits get out as a drop of water dropping from the mouth of the water carrier.

In such a way, death is easy for the believer and hard for the disbeliever. This is because the disbeliever's fortune is limited to the worldly life because s/he has no share in the pleasure of the Hereafter, as s/he does not believe in it. S/he regards the worldly life as his/her greatest, final opportunity. On the contrary, the believer believes in the Hereafter and works to get the pleasure therein. S/he regards the worldly life as trivial if compared to the Hereafter. Thus, s/he does good in the short period of this fleeting worldly life, yearning thereby to get the pleasure of the everlasting paradise.

For this reason, the dying disbeliever fears death and clings to the worldly life. So, the spirit is taken from him/her forcefully. As for the believer, s/he is looking forward to meeting with His Lord, as s/he believes that death is not his/her last destination; rather, it is none but a gate to a blissful, eternal life. Therefore, s/he may yearn for death and wish for it in order to see the pleasures awaiting him/her. That is why his/her spirit gets out easily and gently. By contrast, the disbeliever's spirit is taken forcefully, which entails his/her resistance to death. Such resistance, however, is in vain.

As for the meaning of the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Sweeping ahead at full stretch.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 3), exegetes of the Quran opine that it refers to those Angels who sweep in Allah's universe to fulfil certain missions. In this connection,

He *Glorified is He* says: 'For his sake there are angels following one another, before him and behind him, who guard him by Allah's Commandment...' (*ar-Ra'd*: 11). Another possible interpretation for this verse in question may also be that the Angels will take out the spirit and thus sweep ahead to return it to the place prepared for it by Allah *the Almighty*.

With regard to His saying: 'Overtaking swiftly.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 4), it means that the Angels swiftly obey Allah's Orders because they, by nature, do not disobey Him *the Almighty*; rather, they do what they are commanded. As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'To regulate the affair.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 4), it means that every Angel is charged with one of the important affairs of the universe: one is charged with the revelation; another with taking the spirits out; a third with people's provision and so on. This is how the universe is managed. Thus, He *Glorified is He* takes these Oaths by these various creatures in their various states, to prove for us that Resurrection, Reckoning and Recompense on the Day of Judgment are perfectly true.

Some other scholars yet believe that the word *an-Nazi'at*, in the first verse, might refer to the planets and the stars, whereas the word *Gharqa* might refer to the fact of exerting great effort while doing a particular work. This is because the planets run in their orbits regularly and continuously, moving from one constellation to another. This linguistic meaning is, in actuality, corroborated with the Arab saying, '*Naz'at Al-Khayl*' or 'The horses galloped.'

These scholars also believe that Allah's saying: 'Raring to go' (*an-Nazi'at*: 2) refers to the planets and the stars which get out from one constellation to another. Arabs say, '*Nashata Ad-Dalwu*,' meaning that it was taken out of the well.' Likewise, the stars get out of one constellation to get into another. Further, they believe that the saying of Allah: 'sweeping ahead at full stretch.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 3) refers also to the planets and the stars which float in the space; they cite in support of their point the saying of Allah: '...They all float, each in an orbit.' (*Ya Sin*: 40) As for His saying: 'Overtaking swiftly' (*an-Nazi'at*: 4), they hold the position that the stars and the planets do not have identical speed, which is why some of them run faster than the others according to the orbit they are travelling in. Thus, we find that the time span of the day differs

from one planet to another. For example, the span of the day in our planet is 24 hours; another planet's day is like a month, while a third is 17 days or one year of ours.

But, if we accept the above-mentioned explanation, there will still be a problem concerning the interpretation of the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'To regulate the affair.' (*an- Nazi'at*: 5) That is to say that if He *the Almighty* in this chapter under discussion, is swearing an Oath by the stars, then how can we understand the regulation of the affairs by the stars?! Answering this question, scholars believe that one aspect of regulation is clear in the fact that the creation of a particular object in a particular form by Allah is a reason for the existence of another. For example, fire is the cause of burning and water is the cause of quenching thirst.

Likewise, the planets and the stars are the cause of bringing and regulating some objects through the characteristics that Allah *the Almighty* placed in them. If one asked, 'What are the things regulated by the planets and the stars?!', we say to him/her, 'You asked this question because you understood that the word 'affair' here is an object and that the planets regulate the affairs without receiving a Divine Order. However, the correct meaning is that the planets and the stars regulate the affairs based on Allah's Order; they are forced by Him *the Almighty* to fulfil this task.'

Regulation is of two kinds, as follows: regulating the affairs of the worldly life and regulating those of religion. So, if the planets and the stars are subjected to regulate the affairs, then how can we understand their regulation for the worldly life and the religion?! Scholars say, 'Does not the sun show us the day and the year? Does not the moon clarify the lunar months and define them for us? Are not the days and the months the times in which the acts of worship are performed? In fact, we know the times of the five daily prayers through the movement of the sun. As for the times of performing pilgrimage, fasting or paying *zakat*, they all are defined by the movement of the moon. This is how the sun and the moon regulate our religious affairs.'

As for the mundane affairs, the sun gives us light which helps us carry out our tasks during the daytime. In addition, it gives us heat and warmth, and

makes the water evaporate. This in turn leads to the falling of the rain later on. Moreover, when the sun sets, the tranquil night comes, allowing us to have rest and recreation. Thus, by Allah's Command, the sun and the moon regulate not only the religious affairs but also the mundane ones of mankind. The problem lies in thinking about the causal factors and forgetting the Ultimate Causer *Glorified is He*.

There is another possible interpretation for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...the forceful chargers.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 1); it could refer to the groups of believers that are fighting in the cause of Allah. They pull the bow forcefully to make the shots of the arrows stronger. The meaning is thus that those believing fighters pull their bows back to the maximal possible way without causing them to break.

As for His saying: 'Raring to go.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 2), it, according to this opinion, refers to the arrows that move fast towards the enemy once they are shot. With regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'sweeping ahead at full stretch.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 3), some scholars explain it as referring to horses, which were the main animals used in the battles of the past. According to this opinion, the verse means that they, i.e. horses run steadily and fast. Their movement is smooth and does not bother the rider. In other words, the rider does not feel unsteadily at the time of their running or stopping. By contrast, today's car driver feels that the car slightly shakes when it starts to move or stops.

As for the Arabic word *As-Sabihat* in the fourth verse, it is derived from the word *Sabh* (swimming), because horses' movement is smooth and continuous. That is why a poet⁽¹⁾ once praised his horse and said:

From time to time I feel happy by

A horse whose swimming fast is self-evident

This means that the horse does not run but swims smoothly, continuously and restfully; it is a linguistic metaphor.

(1) *Abu At-Tayyib Al-Mutanabi is Ahmad ibn Al-Husayn Al-Kindi, the wise poet. He is one of the honourable people in the Arabic literature. He was born in Kinda and grew up in Ash-Sham. He claimed Prophethood in Badiyat As-Samawa. He was killed in An-Nu'maniyya in 353 A.H.*

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘Overtaking swiftly.’ (*an-Nazi'at*: 4), it means that the fighters who are riding these horses are racing to reach to the enemy first. As for His saying: ‘To regulate the affair.’ (*an-Nazi'at*: 5), it means that the horses were created for a certain purpose and are thus one of the reasons for regulating the affairs. They do not however regulate the affairs by themselves; rather, they serve as a means of regulating some affairs, like fighting in the cause of Allah. They are thus regulating that affair by the Command of their Lord.

Thus, using ambiguous creatures to take oaths by is intentionally intended by Allah *the Almighty* in the Quranic style, so as to enable us have various possible interpretations, exactly as is the case with the different explanations given to the previous verses of this chapter in question.

He *the Almighty* then says:

يَوْمَ تَرْجُفُ الرَّاجِفَةُ ﴿٦﴾ تَتَّبِعُهَا الرَّادِفَةُ ﴿٧﴾
 قُلُوبٌ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَاجِفَةٌ ﴿٨﴾ أَبْصَرُهَا خَشِيعَةٌ ﴿٩﴾

**On the Day when the blast reverberates [6] and the
 second blast follows [7] hearts will tremble [8] and eyes
 will be downcast [9] (The Quran, *an-Nazi'at*: 6 - 9)**

We notice that Allah *the Almighty* takes Oaths by five objects of His Creatures. Linguistically, the oath entails mentioning the subject about which it is taken. Logically, the context of these verses mentioned after the previous, various oaths should have referred to that subject, which is confirming the fact that the people will be resurrected on the Day of Judgment. However, He *Glorified is He* leaves the subject of the Oaths and says: ‘Day when the blast reverberates.’ (*an-Nazi'at*: 6)

Here, we stress that the Quranic style should be considered collectively, not to examine someone individually and away from the others. One of these styles is ‘to omit an element which is mentioned in other verses’. For example, He *the Almighty* says with regard to an Oath about the Day of Judgment: ‘I swear by the wind that scatters far and wide, [1] Then those clouds bearing the load (of minute things in space). [2] Then those (ships) that glide easily, [3] Then

those (angels who) distribute blessings by Our Command; [4] What you are threatened with is most surely true, [5] And the judgment must most surely come about. [6]' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 1-6) Here, He *the Almighty* mentions the Oath along with its subject to assert that the Day of Judgment is absolutely true and thus will come for sure to pass. Likewise, He *the Almighty* says in the chapter of *al-Mursalat*: 'By the [winds] sent forth in swift succession, [1] violently storming, [2] scattering far and wide, [3] separating forcefully, [4] delivering a reminder, [5] as a proof or a warning: [6] what you are promised will come to pass. [7]' (*al-Mursalat*: 1-7) Here, the Oaths as well as its subject are also mentioned to prove the coming of the Day of Resurrection.

Thus, when Allah *the Almighty* addresses the same topic in other verses, it is acceptable that He *the Almighty* might omit the subject of the Oath, depending on mentioning it in other verses. This is a kind of rhetorical discourse that takes the intelligence of the listener and the addressee into consideration. For example, He *the Almighty* says in the chapter of *al-Baqara*: '(All) people are a single nation; so Allah raised prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed with them the Book with truth, that it might judge between people in that in which they differed...' (*al-Baqara*: 213). When the Quran mentions some issues which have previously discussed, it omits some details already mentioned previously in other places. As for this verse of *al-Baqara*, the mind should carefully reflect on it, wondering, 'If the people were a single nation, why would Allah *the Almighty* send Prophets? How would the Prophets judge between the people in what they differed in while they were one nation? Are they thus one nation or different ones?!' Apparently, it seems that there is a contradiction in the verse. But, what is the reason for thinking that the verse is self-contradictory? We say that the person who wrongly thinks that the verse is self-contradictory considered it alone, without regarding the other similar verses in the Quran. If s/he had a general overview, s/he would have found out that the Quranic style is absolutely accurate and precise. Indeed, there can be no contradiction in the Quran. The aforementioned verse is similar to the saying of Allah *the Almighty* in the chapter of *Yunus*: 'And people were naught but a single nation, but then they disagreed; and had not a word already gone forth from your Lord, the matter would have

certainly been decided between them in respect of that concerning which they disagree.' (*Yunus*: 19)

The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...so Allah raised prophets...' (*al-Baqara*: 213) is thus not related to His saying: '(All) people are a single nation; so Allah raised prophets as bearers of good news and as warners, and He revealed ...' (*al-Baqara*: 213); rather, it is related to an omitted sentence, which is mentioned in the aforementioned verse of the chapter of *Yunus*.

This verse made some 'Comparative Religion' scholars claim, 'Originally, people were polytheists, but when the intellectual abilities developed, they inclined to monotheism.' This opinion is based on the assumption that the Creator of mankind did not guide them after bringing them into existence. This theory contradicts the religious and the Islamic principle that the Quran plainly clarifies in Allah's saying to Adam, the first human being ever: '...So there will surely come to you guidance from Me, then whoever follows My guidance, he shall not go astray nor be unhappy; [123] And whoever turns away from My reminder, his shall be a straitened life...[124]' (*Ta Ha*: 124). Thus, He *the Almighty* created the mankind and did not leave them without guidance; rather, He *Glorified is He* bestowed His Way of Guidance on them, so that they could run their affairs correctly. If any violation of that Way of Guidance were committed, this would constitute a difference between the people charged with religious obligation after being united. Thus, the verse of the chapter of *Yunus* clarifies the meaning: 'And people were naught but a single nation, but then they disagreed...' (*Yunus*: 19). This verse means that the people differed when they forgot or violated Allah's Way of Guidance. Thus, they were a single nation, but when they differed by violating the Way of Guidance, Allah *the Almighty* out of Mercy, sent Messengers to return them back to the Right Path and the Way of Guidance which unite them.

Therefore, when we read Allah's Book, we must have a comprehensive overview that connects the similar verses together. This is because the verses complete and clarify each other, giving us a clear picture and accurate analysis of a certain issue. As for the one who heedlessly takes a verse and leaves another, s/he may misunderstand the true meaning of the verse.

Accordingly, the saying of Allah *the Almighty* after the Oath: 'On the Day when the blast reverberates.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 6) indicates that: 'On the Day when the blast reverberates.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 6) is a time frame in which the Resurrection takes place. It is as if He *the Almighty* says, 'You will surely be resurrected on the Day when the blast reverberates.' Thus, we understand that His saying: 'On the Day when the blast reverberates.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 6) clarifies the time frame which requires the existence of an event happening during that time. The other similar verses on that topic fully clarify that the event is the Resurrection.

Even if someone does not find similar verses clarifying the omitted element here, or read only the chapter in question, Allah *the Almighty* does not leave him/her without some indications of this omitted element. When He *the Almighty* says: 'On the Day when the blast reverberates [6] and the second blast follows, [7] hearts will tremble [8] and eyes will be downcast. [9] They say, "What? Shall we be brought back to life, [10] after we have turned into decayed bones?" [11] And they say, "Such a return is impossible!" [12]' (*an-Nazi'at*: 6-12), He *Glorified is He* clearly talks about the Resurrection. Thus, the context itself indicates the omitted subject of the Oath. It is as if He *the Almighty* says, 'By the forceful chargers ... you will surely be resurrected on the Day when the blast reverberates.'

Here, we notice that the chapter of *an-Nazi'at* discusses details about the Day of Resurrection more than the chapter of *an-Naba'*, mentioning in details what the latter discusses briefly. In the chapter of *an-Naba'*, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'A time has been appointed for the Day of Decision.' (*an-Naba'*: 17) Then, the chapter of *an-Nazi'at* explains the incidents of that Day. It starts with the mighty universal events and the alteration of the state of the universe. These mighty events, which are seen by people, affect their souls. This effect is manifested in the fear cast in people's hearts and in the humbleness and the astonishment of their eyes.

With regard to what would happen in the universe, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'On the Day when the blast reverberates [6] and the second blast follows, [7]' (*an-Nazi'at*: 6-7); and with regard to what would happen to only the disbelieving souls, He *the Almighty* says: 'Hearts will tremble [8] and eyes will

be downcast. [9] They say, 'What? Shall we be brought back to life, [10]' (*an-Nazi'at*: 8-10).

The meaning of the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'On the Day when the blast reverberate.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 6) is that the earth would violently shake with all what is on it, as in His saying: 'On the day when the earth and the mountains shall quake and the mountains shall become (as) heaps of sand let loose.' (*al-Muzzammil*: 14); and 'And the mountains shall be made to crumble with (an awful) crumbling.' (*at-Talaq*: 4) As a matter of fact, the earth does not shake by itself; rather, it is shaken; this linguistic style used in the formation of this verse in question is actually none but that of the Arabs before the revelation of the Quran. Similar to this is also the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'So he shall be in a life of pleasure' (*al-Haqq*: 21), which means that the believer is pleased with that life. This is a metaphorical expression; it is as if the life is so pleasing that such pleasure extends to it. As such, the life itself would then love and be pleased with the believer. Here, love and pleasure are mutual, and that is this relation is viewed as the strongest one ever. By contrast, in the one-sided love, one loves what does not love him/her. Indeed, this is a kind of misery, as the poet said,

You are the beloved, but I seek Allah's

Protection from being an unloved lover

Likewise, the earth would be violently shaken by Allah's Omnipotence to the extent that it itself would be the cause of shaking. It is as if He *the Almighty* gives it an intrinsic power to shake itself. He *the Almighty* then says: 'And the second blast follows.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 7) The heaven follows the earth because the latter was created first. Likewise, after the alteration happens to the earth on the Day of Judgment, another alteration will happen to the heaven. It will be torn apart and split open. Further, the stars will be shrouded in darkness, and so on. Some scholars say that the Arabic word *Rajifa* refers to the first blow in the Trumpet, while the word *Radifa* refers to the second one. When the earth shakes and the heaven follows it, the deniers of the Resurrection will find out the truth. This happens when they witness the preliminary incidents of the Day of Judgment and come to know the calamities of that Day which they used to deny. How awful their situation would be!

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Hearts will tremble.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 8), it means that the disbelievers' hearts will be confused and in a state of panic. This is because they recalled their denial and disbelief in Allah's Way of Guidance in the worldly life. Following the tremble of the disbelievers' hearts, the eyes will be also affected, as He *the Almighty* says next: 'And eyes will be downcast.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 9) As a matter of fact, fear in the hearts of people might not be obvious to everyone, because its degree differs from one person to another. By contrast, all people are equal with regard to sight; it is the means by which the truth is realized, for by a single look, one can realize whether a person loves, hates, admires, or degrades him/her. Thus, a single look can reveal what the soul conceals; that is why Allah *the Almighty* says: 'He knows the stealthy looks...' (*Ghafir*: 19). Even in the case of the doctors who want to check the soundness of the human blood vessels; they analyze that of the eye because it is the best way to know the real physical state of the patient.

Further, we only know the fear of the disbeliever's heart through their eyes, because such fear causes the eyes to be humble and downcast - after being bright in the worldly life, rejecting Allah's Way of Guidance. Now, the truth has been unveiled and they will suffer the calamities and the hardships of the Day of Judgment. The situation does not allow the person to deceive him/herself, for the event is mighty, and fear is coercive.

When we reflect on the Quranic expression: 'And eyes will be downcast.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 9), we find that the eyes are attributed to the trembling hearts and not to the people. This is due to the fact that when the hearts tremble and be in a state of panic, their states extend to the other organs of body. Thus, it is as if all the organs tremble and in a state in panic, not the heart alone.

That is why that the old poets considered the heart the home of feelings, sensations and sentiments. It is the organ that is affected by the closeness, remoteness or abandonment of the beloved one. The verses of poetry are filled with these meanings. The poet Majnun Layla once said,

The state of my heart when it was said that

Layala Al-A'miryya would travel

Is like a bird trapped in web, and has

No way out; for the wing has stuck
 Another poet was more eloquent when he said,
 My thoughts about you provoke my love
 That I feel them creeping into my heart
 All the organs of mind do love you
 It is as though they are created as hearts

We have said that Allah *the Almighty* takes all the previous Oaths to confirm to the deniers of the Resurrection that it is true. Their denial is represented in the following three statements:

يَقُولُونَ أَءِنَّا لَمَرْدُودُونَ فِي الْحَافِرَةِ ﴿١٠﴾ أَمْ ذَا كُنَّا عِظْمًا نَّخِرَةً ﴿١١﴾
 قَالُوا تِلْكَ إِذًا كَرَّةٌ خَاسِرَةٌ ﴿١٢﴾

**They say, ‘What? shall we be brought back to life [10]
 after we have turned into decayed bones?’ and they say [11]
 ‘Such a return is impossible!’ [12]
 (The Quran, *an-Nazi'at*: 10 - 12)**

Their first utterance is a denial interrogation; they deny the Resurrection and deem it unlikely to happen. The meaning of the Arabic word *Hafira* becomes clear when we cite the following Arabic saying: ‘*Raja' Fulan fi Hafiratih*’ or ‘So and so return to his first home.’ It thus refers to the way on which someone walks; a person may dig a tunnel or pave a way lower than the ground. This is called *Al-Madaq*, which is a way below the level of the ground and which will turn, later on, into something like a channel. Thus, the meaning is that the deniers of the Resurrection will say, ‘Will we return to life once again?!’

In their second utterance, they, i.e. the deniers try to find a proof to justify their denial of the Resurrection, saying: ‘After we have turned into decayed bones?’ (*an-Nazi'at*: 11) ‘The decayed bones’ are the fragile ones that break up when someone touches them. They are in the form of a skeleton, but if someone moves it, the bones break up. As for the Arabic word *Nakhira* (hallow), it means that the inside of the bones are empty because their marrow has decayed. Thus, the deniers will say, ‘How can Allah bring these decayed

bones back to life?!' The bones are called *Nakhira* (hallow) because when the wind blows on it, they produce a sound like snoring.

The deniers' saying: '...then would be a return occasioning loss.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 12) means that if the Resurrection is true, they will lose if brought back to life. The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...a return occasioning loss!' (*an-Nazi'at*: 12) is similar to His saying: '...so their transaction shall bring no gain.' (*al-Baqara*: 12) In fact, it is the traders who gain the profits and not the transaction itself. But as the profit is brought through the transaction, it was attributed to it. Likewise, the 'loss' is attributed to the 'Return' because it is the place of their apparent loss and their awful destination.

Allah *the Almighty* then responds to their statements that they uttered out of denial and mockery of the Resurrection; He *the Almighty* says:

فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ ﴿١٣﴾ فَإِذَا هُمْ بِالسَّاهِرَةِ ﴿١٤﴾

**But all it will take is a single blast [13]
and they will be back above ground [14]
(The Quran, *an-Nazi'at*: 13 - 14)**

It is as if He *the Almighty* says to the deniers, 'You measure the matters according to your human measures, and thus wrongly think that Allah's Actions and Power are like yours. However, this is untrue. What is difficult for you is easy for Him *the Almighty*. It is impossible that you can bring the decayed bones back to life because this is beyond your ability, but it is easy for Allah *Glorified is He*. Thus, you must measure the action according to the power of its doer.' People perform their actions through certain processes, whereas He *the Almighty* do whatever He wants through uttering, 'Be' and it is. Thus, raising all the people from death needs no more than one blast: 'But all it will take is a single blast.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 13) This blast is effortless and does not take time.

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'And they will be back above ground.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 14), it means that the people will rise from their grave up to the ground. The Arabic word *As-Sahir'a* refers to the ground where all the people are gathered. It is a white, even ground with only one colour, unlike the ground of the worldly life which Allah *the Almighty* made colourful

according to the elements forming it. Its colours include the red, the yellow, the brown, the muddy and the sandy. It contains all the necessary elements of life: '...and in the mountains are tracts, white and red of varying shades and [some] extremely black.' (*Fatir*: 27) In the Hereafter, however, life does not depend on the causal factors but rather on the Ultimate Causer. It is said that the ground in the Hereafter is called *As-Sahir'a* because the people staying on it stay up and do not sleep. How can someone seeing the calamities of the Hereafter sleep?! Thus, there is a difference between the earth of the worldly life and that of the Hereafter. Before ending our interpretation of the verse in question, we should discuss the opinion of some philosophers who deny the Resurrection and deem it materialistically impossible. Their strongest argument in this regard has to do with the materialistic elements forming the human body. They say, 'When the human being dies, his/her elements decay and go in the earth. Then it can be a part of another person's elements. If there is Resurrection, to which one of them will the elements go, the first or the second? If they go to one of them, they will be missing from the other.' This is the strongest argument they have. In response to this argument, we say, 'You do not pay attention to how these elements form the human body. The elements themselves are like the raw materials. When Allah *the Almighty* created the human being, He *Glorified is He* formed him from 16 elements. All the human beings are formed from these elements. When someone dies, these elements decay, go in the earth and become part of its elements. With regard to the general formation of the human beings, their elements are the same, but they differ in the proportion of the element, which could be 67% in someone and 67.1% in another. The difference in the characters does not stem from the difference in the elements forming the human being, for they are one. But the reason of difference is the proportion of the element in each character. When the precise proportions of the elements are known, no two people would share the same proportion, as they differ among the people. Difference in the fingerprints is a case in point. In this connection, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'We know what the earth diminishes of them, and with Us is a retaining record.' (*Qaf*: 4) He *the Almighty* knows every atom in these proportions and He *Glorified is He* is fully Able to return the same elemental proportion of someone that formed him/her in the worldly life. When these elements are

proportionally formed, they produce the same person, which is not difficult anyway for Allah *the Almighty*.

You should reflect on the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'We know...' (*Qaf*: 4) because it affirms that He *the Almighty* possesses the precise Omniscience. Moreover, He *the Almighty* says: '...and with Us is a retaining record.' (*Qaf*: 4) This verse signifies that there is a record for everything. This response is enough to refute the philosophers' claim.

Allah *Glorified is He* addresses us in this matter according to our intellectual abilities, saying: 'And He it is Who originates the creation, then reproduces it, and it is easy to Him...' (*ar-Rum*: 27). We should not say that something is easier for Him *the Almighty* than another. However, the verse is formulated in a way suitable for the human understanding and way of expressing this meaning.

Thus, the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'But all it will take is a single blast.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 13) means that this action is effortless and easy for Him *Glorified is He* as it needs no practice or process. As for His saying: 'And they will be back above ground.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 14), it means that a single blast of the Angel Israfil will bring the people out of the ground to its surface.

Afterwards, the Quranic context directs our attention to the story of Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* in order to give us a brief account of his story and a general idea about the Quranic stories. They are not just a historical narrative; rather, they illustrate the lessons and the morals that can be deduced from the incidents. So, the focus is not on the incidents themselves. This is the general feature of the Quranic stories. For example, with regard to the birth of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* the Quran did not tell anything about the day or the time of his birth or the name of his father. It, however, mentions the great events that had an effect on his Call and on those around him. Even in literature, we study the literary structure of the story: the plot and the conclusion. The great events, which form the plot and solve it, also have some lessons besides their excitement.

The account mentioned in the story of Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* is required by the context of this chapter.

Allah *the Almighty* says:

هَلْ أُنْتِكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى ﴿١٥﴾ إِذْ نَادَاهُ رَبُّهُ بِالْوَادِ الْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى ﴿١٦﴾ أَذْهَبَ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَىٰ ﴿١٧﴾ فَقُلْ هَلْ لَكَ إِلَٰهٌ أَن تَزْكَىٰ ﴿١٨﴾ وَأَهْدِيكَ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَتَخْشَىٰ ﴿١٩﴾ فَأَرَاهُ الْآيَةَ الْكُبْرَىٰ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَكَذَّبَ وَعَصَىٰ ﴿٢١﴾ ثُمَّ أَذْبَرَ يَسْعَىٰ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَحَشَرَ فَنَادَىٰ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلَىٰ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَأَخَذَهُ اللَّهُ نَكَالَ الْآخِرَةِ وَالْأُولَىٰ ﴿٢٥﴾ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّمَن يَخْشَىٰ ﴿٢٦﴾

Have you [Prophet] heard the story of Moses? [15] His Lord called out to him in the sacred valley of Tuwa: [16] ‘Go to Pharaoh, for he has exceeded all bounds, [17] and ask him, “Do you want to purify yourself [of sin]? [18] Do you want me to guide you to your Lord, so that you may hold Him in awe?”’ [19] Moses showed him the great sign, [20] but he denied it and refused [the faith] [21] He turned away and hastily [22] gathered his people, proclaiming [23] ‘I am your supreme lord, [24] so God condemned him to punishment in the life to come as well as in this life: [25] there truly is a lesson in this for anyone who stands in awe of God [26]
(The Quran, *an-Nazi‘at*: 15 - 26)

We should ponder over the gentleness and the fineness of the question: ‘Have you [Prophet] heard the story of Musa?’ (*an-Nazi‘at*: 15) Here, Allah *the Almighty* wants to address Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. Undoubtedly, He *the Almighty* had told him about the story of Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him*. Therefore, he *peace and blessings be upon him* knows it well. However, He *Glorified is He* wants to offer solace to him, so He *Glorified is He* mentions this account in the present context. So, what is the context here?

The disbelievers denied the Resurrection and belied, mocked and deeply hurt Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. That is why the revelation frequently was sent down to offer solace to him and to alleviate his grief, a point which is clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘Then maybe you will kill yourself with grief, sorrowing after them, if they do not believe in this announcement.’ (*al-Kahf*: 6) Out of his mercy to mankind, he *peace and blessings be upon him* wanted all of them to believe, attain to guidance and taste the sweetness of faith and obedience. In actuality, he *peace and blessings be upon him*

knew perfectly well the limits of his responsibility; his mission was confined to only delivering the Message. Yet, out of his carefulness for his *ummah*, he overburdened himself to save them from the punishment. This is how he *peace and blessings be upon him* treated the people. The disbelievers, on the other hand, excessively harmed and persecuted him along with his Companions.

Thus, Allah *the Almighty* mentions a brief account of the story of Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* and the punishment that befell Pharaoh, in order to tell the disbelievers that His punishment and Requital would not necessarily be postponed until the Hereafter. In the case of Pharaoh, the punishment was imminent; it afflicted the deniers in their worldly life. This fact is not a theoretical one, for it is a reality confirmed by the story of Prophet Musa (Moses) with Pharaoh. Therefore, in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Have you [Prophet] heard the story of Musa?' (*an-Nazi'at*: 15) He *the Almighty* wants to say, 'Have you, Prophet Muhammad, heard about what happened between Musa (Moses) and Pharaoh? Did not the deniers of the Truth know the awful end of their predecessors, like Pharaoh?'

Pharaoh's excessive transgression reached the maximum level because he said: 'I am your supreme lord.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 24); and '...I do not know of any god for you besides myself...' (*al-Qasas*: 38). Despite his transgression and tyranny, he could not defeat Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* or stop his Call. This is due to the fact that the laws of granting victory to the Messengers and defeating their enemies, however tyrannical and oppressive they are, are well-established Divine Laws. Thus, if Pharaoh was inflicted with a punishment, the disbelievers at the time of Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* were also prone to this punishment. After all, their power was even less than that of Pharaoh. In this regard, He *the Almighty* says: 'And certainly Our Word has already gone forth in respect of Our servants, the apostles: [171] Most surely they shall be the assisted ones [172] And most surely Our host alone shall be the victorious ones. [173]' (*as-Saffat*: 171-173)

Consequently, through mentioning the story of Prophet Musa (Moses), Allah *the Almighty* cast horror in the hearts of the deniers by telling them about the fate of their tyrannical predecessors. Moreover, this story offers solace and tranquility to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and his

Companions through affirming the fact that they would be ultimately victorious. That is why Allah *the Almighty* addresses him *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* saying, 'So be patient, [Prophet], as were those of determination⁽¹⁾ among the Messengers...' (*al-Ahqaf*: 35). It is as if He *the Almighty* was saying to him, 'Do not despair because of the disbelievers' evil deeds and do not be deceived by their stubbornness, for the ultimate victory is for you.'

So, the verse: 'Have you [Prophet] heard the story of Musa?' (*an-Nazi'at*: 15) has two purposes: threatening the disbelievers on one hand, and raising the hope of the believers on the other. This double-purpose style is frequent used in the Glorious Quran. For example, Allah *the Almighty* says about the Jews and their killing of their Prophets: 'And when it is said to them, Believe in what Allah has revealed, they say: We believe in that which was revealed to us; and they deny what is besides that, while it is the truth verifying that which they have. Say: Why then did you kill Allah's Prophets before if you were indeed believers?' (*al-Baqara*: 91)

You should ponder how Allah *the Almighty* establishes the argument against the Jews, refuting and exposing their lies when they said: '...We believe in that which was revealed to us...' (*al-Baqara*: 91). It is as if He *the Almighty* says to them, 'If We conceded that you believe in the Torah, is there a text therein allowing you to kill the Prophets? Thus, you neither believe in the Torah nor in any other Book. If you did not believe in what has been revealed to you, would We expect that you believe in what has been revealed afterwards?!'

The point here lies in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...before...' (*al-Baqara*: 91); it has two meanings. However, a quick overview of this style may conclude that the word 'before' is unnecessary, adding no new meaning. But the one who reflects deeply on that word finds that it has two indications: one is directed to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* and the second to the disbelievers from among the Jews who deny his Call. As their predecessors were in the habit of killing the Prophets, what does prevent the Jews of Medina from thinking about killing Prophet Muhammad

(1) The Arabic word *Al-'Azim* means to determine to do something and pursue the means of doing and fulfilling it. The people of determination from among the Messenger are Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon them*.

peace and blessings be upon him? Thus, the word: ‘...before...’ (*al-Baqara*: 91) shatters their hope of killing him *peace and blessings be upon him*. It tells them that their transgression against the Prophets was possible only in the past, but now they cannot harm him *peace and blessings be upon him*. Despite the fact that the Jews understood this Quranic style, they vainly tried to kill him *peace and blessings be upon him* because He *the Almighty* prevented them from causing any harm to him *Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him*.

Moreover, the word: ‘...before...’ (*al-Baqara*: 91) brings peace and tranquility to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. This is because he knows that the predecessors of the Jews in Medina are the killers of the Prophets and they might think about killing him like other Prophets before him. Thus, this Quranic style constitutes a disappointment for the Jews, and an encouragement and raising his *peace and blessings be upon him* spirit in confrontation with the enemy of his Call.

The brief account of the story of Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* correlates the requirements of the context. It does not mention the details of what happened in the Sacred Valley, as illustrated in other verses. The verse only reads: ‘Have you [Prophet] heard the story of Musa?’ (*an-Nazi‘at*: 15) Then Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘His Lord called out to him in the sacred valley of Tuwa: [16] “Go to Pharaoh, for he has exceeded all bounds. [17]”’ (*an-Nazi‘at*: 16-17) As long as Pharaoh, the ruler, has exceeded all bounties, a new Messenger must be sent to deter him.

We have previously said that Allah *the Almighty* established some deterring factors in the society to deter the tyrants in the case of violating the Divine Way of Guidance. These factors include an inner deterrent, which is the self-reproaching soul and the living conscience, and a societal deterrent, which is enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. But when the society becomes corrupt and abdicates its responsibility, He *the Almighty* must intervene by sending a new Messenger. This is what happened in the story in question; Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* was sent to take Pharaoh back to the Divine Way of Guidance.

The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: ‘...he has exceeded all bounds. [17]’ (*an-Nazi‘at*: 16) indicates that Pharaoh, through his injustice and tyranny, has

overstepped the bounds. Such transgression, supposedly, should be confronted with proportional violence and power to deter and stop it at the appropriate limits. However, the Divine Message confronted such excessive transgression with leniency and gentleness. He *the Almighty* says: 'And ask him, 'Do you want to purify yourself [of sin]?' (*an-Nazi'at*: 18) We should reflect on such a gentle offer and kind persuasion. Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* does not command Pharaoh; rather, he offers the Message to him. This is due to the fact that he is addressing Pharaoh who is excessively tyrannical and oppressive to the extent that he said to his people, 'I am your supreme lord.' Thus, commanding him to accept the Message is not befitting, for he did not get used to being commanded. On the contrary, he was the one who orders and prohibits and his people were obedient to him.

Here, Allah *the Almighty* teaches us one of the etiquettes of delivering the Call to Him *Glorified is He*; He *the Almighty* commands us to confront transgression with gentleness, as He *Glorified is He* says in another verse: 'Then speak to him a gentle word haply he may mind or fear.' (*al-Hajj*: 44) Winning over the heart of a tyrannical person could only be through gentleness, persuasion, wisdom and beautiful preaching. Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* was not sent to punish Pharaoh for his excessive transgression; rather, he was sent to guide him to the Straight Path and the Right Way. If he, i.e. Prophet Musa (Moses) had been sent to punish Pharaoh, he would have confronted his transgression with a deterring power.

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Do you want to purify yourself [of sin]?' (*an-Nazi'at*: 18), it means that Pharaoh should be purified from the filth of transgression, claiming divinity, torturing the children of Israel, killing their sons, and letting their females live. Prophet Musa (Musa) *peace be upon him* did not command him but rather offered this matter to him; he asked him whether he loved to purify himself!

Then Allah *the Almighty* relates that Prophet Musa (Moses) *peace be upon him* said: 'Do you want me to guide you to your Lord, so that you may hold Him in awe?' (*an-Nazi'at*: 19) He *peace be upon him* offered Pharaoh guidance because the latter went astray from the Straight Path by saying to his people, 'I am your supreme lord.' Further, he led the people astray; that is why Moses *Allah's peace be upon him* wanted to guide him to the Way of Allah, his true Lord.

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...so that you may hold Him in awe?' (*an-Nazi'at*: 19), it indicates that the required fear of Him *the Almighty* naturally follows guidance. Guidance leads the person to fully recognize Allah's Greatness and due Position. Consequently, s/he recognizes his/her humility and humbleness to Him *the Almighty*. The one who recognizes the Greatness of his/her Lord can never become arrogant. That is why He *the Almighty* says: '...Only those fear Allah, from among His servants, who have knowledge.' (*Fatir*: 28) This is due to the fact that the scholars know about Allah more than the rest of the people.

As for the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'Musa showed him the great sign.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 20), it means that Pharaoh did not accept the first offer, i.e. he refused to believe in Allah *the Almighty*. This situation required a proof of Musa's (Moses) truthfulness on his Call. The great sign⁽¹⁾ that he showed to Pharaoh was the staff which turned into a snake, snatching the sorcerer's witchcraft. However, after seeing this sign, Pharaoh: '...denied it and refused [the faith]. [21] He turned away... [22]' (*an-Nazi'at*: 21-22). Now, the question to be asked is 'Did he turn away out of fearing the snake or for devising the plot of gathering the sorcerers?'

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '[He] gathered his people, proclaiming, [23] 'I am your supreme lord [24]' (*an-Nazi'at*: 23-24), it means that Pharaoh gathered every learned sorcerer. In fact, he committed two major sins: a sin with regard to the Messenger: 'But he denied it and refused [the faith]' (*an-Nazi'at*: 21); and another sin when he went far to claim divinity, saying to his people: 'I am your supreme lord.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 24) When his transgression reached that maximum limit, his punishment and requital were that: 'Allah condemned him to punishment in the life to come as well as in this life.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 25)

Some scholars opine that the previous verse refers to the Divine Punishment that afflicted Pharaoh, maintaining meanwhile that he deserved it for committing

(1) *A'ta'* said that the great sign is the 'staff' while *Al-Kalbi* and *Muqatil* held that it is the 'hand' because it is more wonderful and greater than the staff. *Mujahid*, however, maintained that the great sign is both the staff and the hand. See *Al-Naysaburi, At-Tafsir Al-Basit*, 23/188; and also *Mujahid, Tafsir*, 1/703.

two sins: claiming divinity, which constitutes transgression against the Position of Divinity, and denying the Messenger. This means that Allah *the Almighty* did not wrong Pharaoh, for there is a punishment suitable for each of his two major sins. In the worldly life, he, i.e. Pharaoh was punished by drowning; and afterwards: 'The Fire; they shall be brought before it (every) morning and evening and on the day when the hour shall come to pass: Make Pharaoh's people enter the severest chastisement.' (*Ghafir*: 64)

Other scholars maintain yet that the verse in question refers to the punishment that will afflict Pharaoh both in the Hereafter and the worldly life. According to this interpretation, transgressing against the Position of Divinity and denying the Messenger are considered one crime; the latter is sub-categorized under the former. This is similar to the case of a thief who steals and then kills someone. In this case, s/he must be killed because the major crime, whose punishment is execution, encompasses the minor one, which is theft. We notice here that Pharaoh transgressed against the Position of Divinity two times on two stages. The first one is when he addressed his people - whom he bluffed, and they obeyed him - saying: 'I do not know of any god for you besides myself.' (*al-Qasas*: 38) However, when he stood before the Messenger in the position of challenge, he claimed plainly: 'I am your supreme lord.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 24) It could be that he did not utter this statement except before those who worshipped him, believing that he was a god.

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'There truly is a lesson in this for anyone who stands in awe of Allah.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 26), it means that the present story offers a lesson and an admonition for those who fear Allah *the Almighty* who hold Him in awe, who estimate Him with the estimation that is due to Him, who fear the consequences of their actions and who take lessons from the fate of their predecessors.

Here, Allah *Glorified is He* addresses the tribe of Quraysh whose members belied Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*. He *the Almighty* admonishes them by mentioning the present story in which the fate of the denier of the Messenger was highlighted. It is as if He *the Almighty* says to them, 'O people who belied Prophet Muhammad, disbelieved in his Call and claimed that the Book with which he was sent is sorcery and soothsaying,

take admonition from the story of Musa (Moses) and Pharaoh. The latter was stronger and more civilized than you, but his fate, as you know, was terrible. Thus, you should shun confronting Messenger Muhammad, for you can neither defeat him nor stop his Call.' The verses shatter the disbelievers of Mecca's hopes because they put them between two positions: either to believe in Prophet Muhammad and his Call or to be seized by a Mighty, Powerful God, like the fate of the previous disbelievers. They will certainly not be able to escape from this fate.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

ءَأَنْتُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمِ السَّمَاءُ بَنَاهَا ۚ رَفَعَ سَمْعَهَا فَسَوَّاهَا ۖ وَأَغْطَشَ لَيْلَهَا وَأَخْرَجَ
ضُحَاهَا ۖ وَالْأَرْضُ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ دَحَاهَا ۖ أَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَاءَهَا وَمَرْعَاهَا ۖ وَالْجِبَالِ أَرْسَاهَا ۖ مَنَعًا لَكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ ۚ

**Which is harder to create: you people or the sky that
He built [27] raising it high and perfecting it [28]
giving darkness to its night and bringing out its morning
brightness [29] and the earth, too, He spread out [30]
bringing waters and pastures out of it [31] and setting firm
mountains [in it] [32] for you and your animals to enjoy? [33]
(The Quran, *an-Nazi'at*: 27 - 33)**

We notice here that Allah *the Almighty* turns the deniers' attention from the field of the Call, which they rejected and resisted, to the universal phenomena that the human being can do nothing but to believe in their existence and thereby fully recognize Allah's Power manifested in their creation. He *the Almighty* knows that the disbelievers' answer to the question: 'Which is harder to create: you people or the sky that He built?' (*an-Nazi'at*: 27) must be according to His Will. In another verse, He *Glorified is He* explains this matter, saying: 'Certainly the creation of the heavens and the earth is greater than the creation of the men, but most people do not know.' (*Ghafir*: 57) Thus, the questioned person can say nothing but that the creation of the heavens and the earth is greater than the creation of mankind. For this reason, He *the Almighty* wants to establish the argument against the deniers of the Resurrection: 'And he strikes

out a likeness for Us and forgets his own creation. Says he: Who will give life to the bones when they are rotten? [78] Say: He will give life to them Who brought them into existence at first, and He is cognizant of all creation. [79] He Who has made for you the fire (to burn) from the green tree, so that with it you kindle (fire). [80] Is He Who created the heavens and the earth not able to create the like of them? Yea! And He is the Creator (of all), the Knower.' (*Ya Sin*: 78-81)

The creation of the heavens and the earth, with all their marvelous phenomena and signs, is greater than the creation of mankind. It is Allah *the Almighty* Who created the heavens and the earth and did not feel tired for their creation; He *Glorified is He* built the precise structure of the sky and raised it without supports; He *the Almighty* spread out the earth in the way that suits people's interests and livelihood. This marvelous creation required Omnipotence, Wisdom and Omniscience. So, is Allah, the All-Powerful Creator, not fully Able to create mankind?! That is why He *Glorified is He* asks the disbelievers while knowing that their answer will be certainly according to His Will: 'Which is harder to create: you people or the sky that He built?' (*an-Nazi'at*: 27) However great their stubbornness is, they will not say but that the creation of the sky is harder and greater than the creation of the human being.

With regard to the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Raising it high and perfecting it.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 28), the Arabic word *As-Samk* refers to the height dimension. So, the verse means that He *Glorified is He* raised the sky too high. 'Perfecting the sky' means to make it even that there are no separations or cracks between its bricks. In our buildings, by contrast, the bricks are separated by a substance like the concrete that sticks the bricks together. With regard to the sky, its structure is absolutely perfect, precise, smooth and even. Further, there are no gaps between its parts: 'You shall not see therein any crookedness or unevenness.' (*al-Hajj*: 107)

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'Giving darkness to its night and bringing out its morning brightness.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 29), it means that He *Glorified is He* made the night dark and the day bright. In fact, the verse in question mentions one of the phenomena necessary for people's life. Time is divided into day, the time of work and seeking provision, and night, the time

of sleep and rest. As a matter of fact, people's life cannot be sound without the alternation of the day and night. If one of them lasted forever, people's life would be ruined.

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* says about the earth: 'And the earth, He expanded it after that.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 30) This verse means that He *the Almighty* spread out the earth and widened it to be suitable for human life. So, what is the meaning of: '... after that' (*an-Nazi'at*: 30)? Does it refer to lateness in time or mention? Lateness in time means that the first incident took place before the second one. By contrast, the lateness of mention does not necessarily mean that the thing mentioned first had happened before the second. Thus, the sky is mentioned before the earth here, but this does not refer to the lateness of the creation of the earth. This style is used for the purpose of showing favours; it is as if He *the Almighty* directs our attention to His Greater signs in the sky, and then mentions His Signs in the earth. This does not mean that the creation of the sky preceded that of the earth.

Allah *Glorified is He* explains this matter, saying: 'Say: What! Do you indeed disbelieve in Him Who created the earth in two periods, and do you set up equals with Him? That is the Lord of the Worlds. [9] And He made in it mountains above its surface and He blessed therein and made therein its foods, in four periods: alike for the seekers. [10] 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 periods...' (*Fussilat*: 9-12). These verses show us that the sky was created after the earth. Thus, the creation of the former was later in time, but mentioned first in the chapter in question. Another possible interpretation is that we should differentiate between the creation of the body of something and preparing it for its function. It is as if Allah *the Almighty* created the body of the earth and then that of the sky. Then He *the Almighty* spread the earth and prepared it for the human life. This is proven by the subsequent verse: 'Bringing waters and pastures out of it.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 31) The elements mentioned in this verse guarantee the sustenance of life.

As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'And setting firm mountains [in it].' (*an-Nazi'at*: 32), it means that He *Glorified is He* established the mountains

on the surface of the earth like the stakes, which are used in putting up the tents. The verse that we yet should deeply reflect on is His saying: 'For you and your animals to enjoy?' (*an-Nazi'at*: 33) Here arises a question, which is, 'What is the relation between people's life and enjoyment on the earth and the creation of the mountains?' We have previously explained that the mountains are the stores of fertilization and provisions on the earth. The aerial and erosion factors break up the outer layer of the stones and then the rains drive them to the valleys and waterbeds, renewing thereby the soil fertility.

Out of Allah's Wisdom, He *the Almighty* made the mountains of hard stones so that they would give us a measure of fertility every year. If they were fragile, they would break up within some years and, consequently, their fertilizing elements would come to an end. Thus, the pleasure of the worldly life comes from the earth that He *Glorified is He* spread out and brought water and pastures out of it. Then, He *the Almighty* established the mountains on it to give it the elements of fertilization and growth. In this way, the sustenance and enjoyment of life are achieved. We have witnessed this phenomenon in the degree of our soil fertility; after the building of the High Dam, the mud settled before the Dam, depriving the agricultural land thereby of the alluvial mud that water used to carry from Abyssinian mountains. Now, water is deprived of these fertilizing elements.

Afterwards, the Quranic context directs our attention once again to the matter of affirming the Resurrection. This is due to the fact that when this matter becomes clear in one's mind, s/he will attain to faith in Allah, the truthfulness of Prophet Muhammad and the Last Day. Consequently, s/he gets closer to Allah *the Almighty* out of love, or out of fear of that Day. It is as if the well-established belief in the Day of Resurrection strengthens one's belief in all the matters of faith.

He *the Almighty* subsequently says:

فَإِذَا جَاءَتِ الطَّامَّةُ الْكُبْرَىٰ ﴿٣٤﴾ يَوْمَ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ مَا سَعَىٰ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَبُرُزَتِ الْجَحِيمُ
لِمَن رَّىٰ ﴿٣٦﴾ فَأَمَّا مَنْ طَغَىٰ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَءَاثَرَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ﴿٣٨﴾ فَإِنَّ الْجَحِيمَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ ﴿٣٩﴾
وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ ﴿٤٠﴾ فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ ﴿٤١﴾

When the great overwhelming event arrives [34] on the Day that man remembers what he has done [35] and Hell is there for all to see [36] for anyone who has transgressed [37] and preferred the present life [38] Hell will be home [39] for anyone who feared the meeting with his Lord and restrained himself from base desires [40] Paradise will be home [41]
(The Quran, *an-Nazi'at*: 34 - 41)

The Arabic word *At-Tamma* is one of the names of the Day of Judgment. It means the thing that overwhelms and covers something else. Thus, it refers to the terrifying, momentous event that causes mankind to forget what happen before it, considering thereby everything else trivial.

Then Allah *the Almighty* shows what happens to the human beings on the Day of Judgment, saying: 'On the Day that man remembers what he has done.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 35) This verse means that on the Day of the overwhelming event, the human being remembers what s/he has done in the worldly life. When that Day overwhelms him/her with its events and calamities, s/he recalls the memories of his/her life. The disbeliever will remember his/her denial of the Messengers, violation of Allah's Way of Guidance, opposing the righteous believers, committing sins and transgressing against him/herself. When the Day of Judgment and its calamities take him/her by surprise, s/he will see the realities previously affirmed by his/her Lord's Way of Guidance and which s/he denied or forgot in the worldly life: '...Allah has recorded it while they have forgotten it.' (*al-Mujadala*: 6) On the Day of Judgment, '...man remembers what he has done.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 35)

Afterwards, Allah *the Almighty* says: 'And Hell is there for all to see.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 36) This verse means that the Hell will be apparent for the beholders who used to deny it and to belie the Messengers' accounts about it. Now, they have witnessed it and seen it with their naked eyes. It will be apparent to anyone who can see, including the good and the evil, the believers

and the disbelievers, the obedient and the disobedient. In this connection, Allah *Glorified is He* says: 'And there is not one of you but shall come to it; this is an unavoidable decree of your Lord.' (*al-Anbiya'*: 71) Undoubtedly, the believers' sight of the hell and the punishment prepared for the disbelievers is a kind of pleasure. This is because when they see the Hell, they praise Allah *the Almighty* for saving them from its punishment and for admitting them into the Paradise, which is another kind of pleasure. That is why He *the Almighty* says: '...Then whoever is removed far away from the fire and is made to enter the garden he indeed has attained the object...' (*Al-'Imran*: 185).

The verses then explain the recompense of the deeds: 'For anyone who has transgressed [37] and preferred the present life [38] Hell will be home. [39]' (*an-Nazi'at*: 37-39) Thus, the one who oversteps the limits through disobedience and prefers the worldly life to the Hereafter will be thrown into the hell. The verses afterwards shed light on the opposite party: 'For anyone who feared the meeting with his Lord and restrained himself from base desires, [40] Paradise will be home. [41]' (*an-Nazi'at*: 40-41) This comparison between the recompenses of the two parties clarifies the meaning, for the matters are clarified by their antitheses. If we ponder on this comparison, that is, between the antithetical recompenses, we find it harmonious. There are two parties and each one of them has two qualities. The first one transgressed and preferred the worldly life, while the second feared the meeting with his Lord and restrained the self from base desires. Therefore, the recompense is according to the deed; the first one's home is the Hellfire while the second one's home is the Paradise.

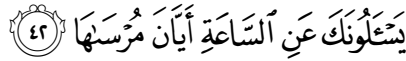
Transgression means to overstep the limits, be excessively unjust and follow the base desires of the soul. It stems from corrupt thoughts and unsound mental abilities, for only the weak people transgress and act haughtily against those with less power. S/he thinks that the power s/he has is intrinsic and forgets that s/he is a very weak creature; that his/her power is given by Allah *the Almighty*; and that s/he may lose it and become, once again, a weak, despised person. By contrast, the believer, who believes in Allah and knows His Due Position, feels humble and does not dare to wrong other people. S/he does not dare to overstep the limits in any religious matter because s/he knows for certain that there is a supreme, great Power Ever-Watching over him/her and will hold him/her accountable for his/her deeds; s/he knows fully well that

Allah's Punishment is unbearable and that s/he cannot endure the fate waiting for the transgressors. That is why such people are humble, shunning arrogance, haughtiness and self-conceit.

Thus, it is one's mind and thought that direct him/her to either of the two behaviours. The faithful people's slogan is always, 'Allah elevates the one who is humble to Him.' This is because the true believer's attitude with his/her Lord is disciplined; s/he respects Him according to His Due Position and Greatness. Consequently, his/her behaviour with the entire universe is disciplined. That is why He *the Almighty* grants such people riches, prestigious rank, awe-inspiring position among the people, as they are trustworthy with regard to such power, sovereignty, position and authority; they do not exploit them to achieve their own interest. The more Allah *the Almighty* gives them, the more they act humbly and recognize His Greatness and Almightyness as well as their weakness, imperfection and humility. How can such a people thus transgress or behave haughtily?! Furthermore, He *Glorified is He* bestows His Blessings on such a people because He *the Almighty* fully knows that they will use them appropriately.

The harmony in the afore-mentioned comparison lies in the existence of two descriptions: transgression, which indicates the corruption of the intellectual ability, and preferring the worldly life to the Hereafter by following the base desires during one's life in the former, which indicates the corruption of the physical ability. Those two abilities, the intellectual and the physical ones, are corrupt because one preferred the fleeting worldly life with its adornments to the Hereafter with its endless pleasure. By contrast, fearing the meeting of Allah *the Almighty* indicates the soundness of the intellectual ability, and restraining from the base desires indicates the soundness of the physical ability. Thus, we are in the presence of a wonderful harmony in the Quranic style. Then, the recompense comes in accordance with the action; in the first case, it is the punishment for the disbelievers: 'Hell will be home.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 39); while it is the reward for the believers in the second: 'Paradise will be home.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 41) The wise person should consider his/her position and pay attention to his/her intellectual and physical abilities so that s/he would hold his/her Lord in awe and recognize His Greatness.

Then, He *the Almighty* says:



**They ask you [Prophet] about the Hour, saying,
‘When will it arrive?’ [42] (The Quran, *an-Nazi‘at*: 42)**

When we explore the word ‘ask’ in the Book of Allah *the Almighty* we find that answers to questions start with the word, ‘Say.’ For example, He *the Almighty* says: ‘They ask you (O Muhammad) concerning alcoholic drink and gambling. Say: “In them is a great sin...”’ (*al-Baqara*: 219); ‘...And they ask you what they ought to spend. Say: ‘That which is beyond your needs...’ (*al-Baqara*: 219); and ‘They ask you as to what they should spend. Say: Whatever wealth you spend...’ (*al-Baqara*: 215). Thus, all the answers to the questions starting with ‘they ask you’ are introduced by the Arabic word *Qul* ‘say,’ except in one verse in which the Arabic prefix *Fa’* was added to the word *Qul* (say). This verse is the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: ‘And they ask you about the mountains. So, say: My Lord will carry them away from the roots.’ (*Ta Ha*: 105) If the question is about some incidents that have already happened, the word *Qul* (Say) is employed, but if the incident has not happened yet, the answer about it is introduced by the word *Fa-qul* (So say). Therefore, there is a difference between answering a question about an incident that has already happened and another that has not yet taken place. On the other hand, when He *the Almighty* says: ‘And when My servants ask you [Prophet] concerning Me...’ (*al-Baqara*: 186), He *Glorified is He* does not say, ‘Say, ‘He is very near.’ This is because the word ‘say’ makes His Nearness long while He *the Almighty* wants to make the answer to the question extremely direct, without an intermediary. In other words, He *Glorified is He* made the answer direct to His servants, though the one who would deliver the answer to them was Prophet Muhammad *Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him* which clearly indicates that man needs no medium to reach his/her Lord.

Here, Allah *the Almighty* says: ‘They ask you [Prophet] about the Hour, saying, ‘When will it arrive?’ [42], but how can you tell [them that]? [43] Its time is known only to your Lord; [44] you are only sent to warn those who fear it. [45]’ (*an-Nazi‘at*: 42-45) In answer to the question about the Hour, He

the Almighty directs His Speech to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*; He *Glorified is He* does not command him, saying, 'say.' The questioners in the verse under discussion are different from those who posed the question in the aforementioned verse. He *the Almighty* says about the question of the latter group: 'And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near; I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me...' (*al-Baqara*: 186). There is a story behind this question; they asked Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*, 'Is your Lord Near that we can invoke Him secretly or Far that we should call Him out loud?'⁽¹⁾

Other questions were posed to him *peace and blessings be upon him* by those who were yearning to apply the religious obligations so that their worship become in the best possible form. Such people wanted to build their lives according to the Islamic System. The questions of those people include: 'They ask you as to what they should spend. Say: Whatever wealth you spend, it is for the parents and the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, and whatever good you do, Allah surely knows it.' (*al-Baqara*: 125) This question about the way of spending money was posed by 'Amr ibn Al-Jamuh⁽²⁾ who was an old man. He said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I have got too much money, so what should I give as charity and on whom should I spend?'⁽³⁾ He was not asking for himself alone but rather on behalf of other believers. Then, the answer was general, not especially given to the

(1) In his *Tafsir, At-Tabari* says, 'Some people said that this verse was sent down in reference to a questioner who asked Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him*: 'O Muhammad, is your Lord Near that we can invoke Him secretly or Far that we should call Him out loud?' Then Allah *the Almighty* revealed: 'And when My servants ask you concerning Me, then surely I am very near; I answer the prayer of the suppliant when he calls on Me...' (*al-Baqara*: 186). See *At-Tabari, Jame' Al-Bayan*, 3/480.

(2) He is 'Amr ibn Al-Jamuh ibn Zayd ibn Haram Al-Ansari As-Sulami, a Companion. In the pre-Islamic period, he was one of the chiefs and dignitaries of Bani Salama, and worshipped a wooden idol in his home. He is the last one to declare his Islam from among the *Ansar*. In his regard, a Prophetic Hadith directed to Banu Salama reads, 'Your master is Al-Ja'd 'Amr ibn Al-Jamuh.' He was martyred at the battle of *Uhud* in 3 A.H. His son, Mu'adh ibn 'Amr witnessed the pledge of allegiance at Al-A'qaba, and the battle of Badr, and was one of those who cooperated to kill Abu Jahl at that battle by cutting his head. He died in 25 A.H.

(3) See *Muqatil ibn Sulayman, Tafsir*, 1/183.

questioner, for it included all the believers. In another verse, He *the Almighty* says: 'They ask you concerning the sacred month about fighting in it. Say: Fighting in it is a grave matter, and hindering (men) from Allah's Way and denying Him...' (*al-Baqara*: 217).

In the verse under discussion, the question is about the Hour; the questioned is Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*; and the questioners are the Jews who asked him about the Hour, the Spirit and Dhu Al-Qarnayn. His answer was in conformity with their Torah. The cause of posing these questions is that they wrongly thought that what he *peace and blessings be upon him* said was idol, vain talk, not revealed from Allah *the Almighty*. However, when his answer was in conformity with the Torah, they came to know that he did not speak out of his own accord.

In this connection, Allah *the Almighty* says in the chapter of *al-A'raf*: 'They ask you about the hour, when will be its taking place? Say: The knowledge of it is only with my Lord; none but He shall manifest it at its time; it will be momentous in the heavens and the earth; it will not come on you but of a sudden. They ask you as if you were solicitous about it. Say: Its knowledge is only with Allah, but most people do not know.' (*al-A'raf*: 187) Thus, the knowledge of the Hour is with Allah *the Almighty* and no one except Him will manifest it at the time of the Day of Judgment. The Arabic particle *Lam* (at) here is called *Lam At-Tawqit* (a particle of time), as in His saying: 'Keep up prayer from the declining of the sun...' (*al-Isra'*: 78). As for the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...it will be momentous in the heavens and the earth; it will not come on you but of a sudden...' (*al-A'raf*: 187), it affirms the fact that no one knows the time of the Hour except Allah *Glorified is He*; the people of the heavens and the earth do not know it at all.

All the people of the earth will be terrified by what happened when the Hour comes. Prophet Muhammad *Allah's peace and blessings be upon him* has illustrated the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...it will not come on you but of a sudden...' (*al-A'raf*: 187). He *peace and blessings be upon him* tells us about the state of the people before the Hour overtakes them, saying, 'The Hour will overtake the people while the man is fixing his sink, watering his cattle,

preparing his goods for the market or weighing something by the scale.'⁽¹⁾
This strikes fear in the hearts of the people.

The saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '...it will be momentous in the heavens and the earth; it will not come on you but of a sudden...' (*al-A'raf*: 187) indicates that the reality of the situation of the Day of Judgment is unbearable and beyond the human capacity. Therefore, the Hour comes suddenly without any expectations or preparations. As for His saying: '...They ask you as if you were solicitous about it...' (*al-A'raf*: 187), the Arabic word *Al-Hafyy* refers to the one who eagerly asks about something, as in the case of the student who does not understand a lesson and thus keeps asking until s/he comprehends it. This word refers to the one who searches for an answer to a question until s/he finds it. So, s/he knows a certain matter because of asking eagerly and continuously about it.

The Archangel Jibril (Gabriel) *peace be upon him* came to Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* in the image of a man dressed in extremely white clothes and with very black hair. No traces of journeying were visible on him. He asked him *peace and blessings be upon him* about the Hour, saying, 'Inform me about the Hour.' He, i.e. Prophet Muhammad consequently said, 'About that the one questioned knows no more than the questioner.' So, he said, 'Well, inform me about its signs.' He said, 'They are that the slave-girl will give birth to her mistress and that you will see the barefooted ones, the naked, the destitute, the herdsmen of the sheep (competing with each other) in raising lofty buildings.'⁽²⁾

In our age, the word 'hour' is a unit used for defining and measuring the time. It is well-known that the day is 24 hours and that the minute and the second are less than the hour, while the day is longer than it. In the future, the human beings may invent machines to measure the parts of the second. The Hour also refers to the coming of the Day of Judgment, for it is the Hour when all the creatures are gathered.

(1) *This Hadith is narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah be pleased with him. Its essential meaning is found in both Al-Bukhari and Muslim. See Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 6506; Muslim, Sahih, Hadith no. 2654; and At-Tabari, Jame' Al-Bayan, 10479.*

(2) *This is a part of a long Hadith narrated on the authority of Abu Hurayra Allah's peace be upon him. See Al-Bukhari, Sahih, Hadith no. 1948; and Ahmad, Musnad, Hadith no. 9501.*

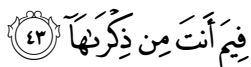
With regard to the people, time is divided into three phases: their lifetime on the worldly life, which is the first phase; the time from their death until the coming of the Hour, which is the life of *Al-Barzkh*; and the time after their Resurrection, which lasts forever. Contrary to the wishes and deceptive hopes, the Hour will inevitably take place; it will come once Allah *the Almighty* commands it saying, 'Be,' and it is!' In our language, no word can describe the imminent coming of the Hour better than 'Be.' In this regard, He *Glorified is He* says: 'Surely, the hour is coming - I am about to make it manifest - so that every soul may be rewarded as it strives.' (*Ta Ha*: 15) The Hour is of two kinds: a special Hour for everyone, which is one's lifetime whose end is unknown to us, and a general Hour for the whole universe, which is the major Hour.

The disbelievers asked about the time of the coming of the Hour, saying: 'When will it arrive?' (*an-Nazi'at*: 42) It is as if they said to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* 'O Muhammad, you claim that the Resurrection and the Day of Judgment are true. Tell us when they will happen to prove your truthfulness to us.' The Arabic word *Al-Irsa'* means to establish something, as in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'And setting firm mountains [in it]' (*an-Nazi'at*: 32). This verse means that He *Glorified is He* established firm the mountains on the earth. Likewise, He *the Almighty* says: '...in the name of Allah be its sailing and its anchoring...' (*Hud*: 41). This verse shows that Prophet Nuh (Noah) *peace be upon him* sought Allah's Help for the sailing of the Ark and for its anchoring.

Ibn 'Abbas *Allah be pleased with him* narrated that Jabal ibn Abu Qushayr and Shamul ibn Zayd said to Messenger Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him*: 'O Muhammad, if you are a Prophet, tell us when the Hour will arrive, for we know its time.'⁽¹⁾ Consequently, Allah *the Almighty* revealed His saying: 'They ask you about the hour, when will be its taking place? ... but most people do not know.' (*al-A'raf*: 187) The Hour is like the ship that anchors after sailing; its coming is similar to the anchor of the ship. It is also similar to the establishment of justice or truth.

Then Allah *the Almighty* says:

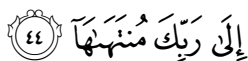
(1) See *Al-Khazin, Lubab At-Ta'wil*, 2/278; and also *At-Tabari, Jame' Al-Bayan*, 15463.



**But how can you tell [them that]? [43]
(The Quran, *an-Nazi'at*: 43)**

It is as if Allah *the Almighty* says, 'O Muhammad, you have nothing to do with the Hour; you do not know the time of its coming because this knowledge is only with your Lord. We did not tell you about its time, so from what source other than Me can you know it? We have confined the knowledge thereof to Us, not telling it to anyone. Thus, leave this matter to Us, for its coming is known only by Us.' In this connection, 'Aisha *Allah be pleased with her* said, 'Prophet Muhammad used to mention the Hour frequently until this verse was revealed.'⁽¹⁾

Allah *the Almighty* subsequently says:

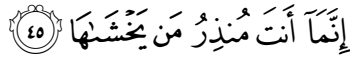


**Its time is known only to your Lord [44]
(The Quran, *an-Nazi'at*: 44)**

The matter of the Hour is only known to Allah *Glorified is He*; no one else knows when it will come to pass. How can they ask about its time while He *the Almighty* did not tell it to any Prophet or Angel? Thus, its knowledge is only with Him *Glorified is He*. Here, the Arabic word *Muntaha* means the end or the highest level of something, as in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: 'At the farthest lote-tree.' (*an-Najm*: 14) This verse means that He *the Almighty* made reaching the lote-tree the highest level of closeness and honour. Thus, the time of the Hour is only known to Him *the Almighty*.

Then Allah *the Almighty* says:

(1) See Mohamed Makki Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Hidaya Ila Bulugh An-Nihaya*, 12/8046; At-Tabari, *Jame' Al-Bayan*, 24/213.



**You are only sent to warn those who fear it [45]
(The Quran, *an-Nazi'at*: 45)**

Prophet Muhammad *peace and blessings be upon him* is commanded to warn the disbelievers against the coming of the Hour; however, they did not believe. So, He *Glorified is He* says about them: '*Qaf*. I swear by the glorious Quran (that Muhammad is the Apostle of Allah) [1] Nay! They wonder that there has come to them a warner from among themselves, so the unbelievers say: This is a wonderful thing. [2]' (*Qaf*: 1-2)

He *peace be upon him* is only a warner and a giver of glad tidings, a fact which is crystal clear in the saying of Allah *the Almighty*: '(Muhammad), you are only a warner. For every nation there is a guide.' (*ar-Ra'd*: 7); '*Alif Lam Ra* (This is) a Book, whose verses are made decisive, then are they made plain, from the Wise, All-aware: [1] That you shall not serve (any) but Allah; surely I am a warner for you from Him and a giver of good news. [2]' (*Hud*: 1-2); and 'So flee to Allah. Indeed, I am to you from Him a clear warner.' (*adh-Dhariyat*: 50) He *peace and blessings be upon him* brought the good news, but when the disbelievers kept on their rejection, they deserved nothing but to be warned.

One may wonder why Allah *Glorified is He* confined those addressed by Prophet Muhammad's warning to those who fear the Hour, saying: 'You are only sent to warn those who fear it.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 43) This is because as long as they fear it, how can we understand the fact that he *peace and blessings be upon him* is a warner to them? In another verse, He *the Almighty* says: 'I am not except a warner and a bringer of good tidings to a people who believe.' (*al-A'raf*: 188) The addressees here are the believers because they benefit from the warnings and the glad tidings. By contrast, the disbelievers and the deniers of the Day of Judgment do not pay heed to Prophet Muhammad's warning; rather, they reject it and stubbornly keep on their denial.

The warner is the one who tells about an evil matter whose time has not yet arrived so that there would be an opportunity to do something to evade such evil. As a matter of fact, warning is a kind of frightening and education;

Prophet Muhammad *peace be upon him* is a warner by the clear Quran. One should fear Allah *the Almighty* and His Attributes of Majesty. Moreover, one should fear his/her evil fate on the Day of Judgment because this makes him/her abide by Allah's Way of Guidance.

Allah *the Almighty* then says:

كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَهَا لَمْ يَلْبَثُوا إِلَّا عَشِيَّةً أَوْ ضُحًى

**On the Day they see it, it will seem they lingered [in
this life] an evening [at most,] or its morning [46]
(The Quran, *an-Nazi'at*: 46)**

We know that the dead do not feel the length of the time before the coming of the Hour. This is due to the fact that such length is only felt by those experiencing the time of the events. For example, the sleeper does not know how many hours s/he slept because s/he was unconscious. The verse that makes it clear for us that our predecessors do not feel the passing of the time is the saying of Allah *Glorified is He*: 'On the Day they see it, it will seem they lingered [in this life] an evening [at most,] or its morning.' (*an-Nazi'at*: 46) Here, He *the Almighty* talks about the people of the grave; when they realize that the Hour has taken place and that they got out of their graves, they think that they remained in their graves for a short time, namely an evening or one morning, that is, only few hours. This is despite the fact that we think they remained for a very long time in their graves. This is because the length of the time is only measured by realizing the events that took place within it. Therefore, it, i.e. the length of the time is not considered if its events are not experienced. This is the case with the sleeper who cannot define how long s/he has been sleeping except according to the normal time that the people spend sleeping. That is why the people of the Cave, who slept for three hundred and nine years, said: '...We have tarried for a day or a part of a day...' (*al-Kahf*: 19).

In another verse, He *the Almighty* says: '...and the matter of the hour is but as the twinkling of an eye or it is higher still; surely Allah has power over all things.' (*an-Naml*: 77) Thus, if the time of the matter of the Hour is compared to Allah's Omnipotence, it is like the twinkling of an eye or it is higher still.

This is just an example to make the matter easier to understand. Otherwise, His Omnipotence does not need time to fulfil an action. In the same connection, He *the Almighty* says: 'He will say: How many years did you tarry in the earth? [112] They will say: We tarried a day or part of a day, but ask those who keep account. [113]' (*al-Mu'minun*: 112-113). In actuality, such people had no consciousness to count the days, so they referred the matter to those who keep account.

Out of Allah's Wisdom, He *the Almighty* concealed the minor Hour, that is, the time of everyone's death. He *the Almighty* also concealed the major Hour of the whole universe, but both of them will inevitably come to pass. The individual's Hour is his/her death, and the Hour of the universe is the coming of the Day of Judgment, Resurrection, Account and Recompense, be it a reward or punishment.

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