# TAFSEER AS-SA'DI

## Juz' 16-18

تفسير السعدي

تيسير الكريم الرحمن في تفسير كلام المنان

'Abdur-Rahmân Nâsir as-Sa'di

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Abdur-Rahmân Nâsir as-Sa'di

Translated by
Nasiruddin al-Khattab

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# Pronunciation and Transliteration Chart

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

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

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

## Diphthongs

| Arabic script | Pronunciation | Trans-literated form |
|---|---|---|
| أو، ـَـو | long 'o', as in *owe*, *boat* and *go* | au, aw |
| أي، ـَـي | long 'a', as in *aid*, *rain* and *say* | ay, ai, ei |

## Diacritical marks (tashkeel)

| Name of mark | Pronunciation | Trans-literated form |
|---|---|---|
| ـَ fatḥah | very short 'a' or schwa (unstressed vowel) | a |
| ـِ kasrah | shorter version of ee or schwa (unstressed vowel) | i |
| ـُ ḍammah | shorter version of oo | u |
| ـّ shaddah | a doubled consonant is stressed in the word, and the length of the sound is also doubled | double letter |
| ـْ sukoon | no vowel sound between consonants or at the end of a word | absence of vowel |

# Arabic honorific symbols

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (ﷻ) | *Subḥânahu wa Ta'âlâ* | The Exalted |
| (ﷺ) | *ṣalla Allâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* | Blessings and peace be upon him |
| (عليه السلام) | *'alayhi as-salâm* | May peace be upon him |
| (رضي الله عنه) | *raḍiya Allâhu 'anhu* | May Allah be pleased with him |
| (رضي الله عنها) | *raḍiya Allâhu 'anhâ* | May Allah be pleased with her |
| (رضي الله عنهما) | *raḍiya Allâhu 'anhumâ* | May Allah be pleased with both of them |
| (رضي الله عنهم) | *raḍiya Allâhu 'anhum* | May Allah be pleased with all of them |
| (رضي الله عنهن) | *raḍiya Allâhu 'anhunna* | May Allah be pleased with all of them (females only) |

# Hadith grade terms

| | |
|---|---|
| Sound: | *ṣaḥeeḥ* |
| Reliable: | *ḥasan* |
| Weak: | *ḍa'eef* |
| Odd: | *ghareeb* |
| Authentic: | includes sound, reliable, or any grade in between |
| Acceptable: | *sakat 'anhu;* the grader of the hadith did not comment on it, meaning that he found nothing unacceptable in it |

# 18.
# Soorat al-Kahf

(continued)

﴿قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُل لَّكَ إِنَّكَ لَن تَسْتَطِيعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٧٥﴾ قَالَ إِن سَأَلْتُكَ عَن شَيْءٍ بَعْدَهَا فَلَا تُصَاحِبْنِي ۖ قَدْ بَلَغْتَ مِن لَّدُنِّي عُذْرًا ﴿٧٦﴾﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٧٥-٧٦)

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

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

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

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

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

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

[1] The meanings of the verses of the Qur'an in this book (with some minor changes to the punctuation) have been translated by the translator. (Editor)

﴿فَٱنطَلَقَا حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَآ أَتَيَآ أَهۡلَ قَرۡيَةٍ ٱسۡتَطۡعَمَآ أَهۡلَهَا فَأَبَوۡاْ أَن يُضَيِّفُوهُمَا فَوَجَدَا فِيهَا جِدَارٗا يُرِيدُ أَن يَنقَضَّ فَأَقَامَهُۥۖ قَالَ لَوۡ شِئۡتَ لَتَّخَذۡتَ عَلَيۡهِ أَجۡرٗا ٧٧﴾ (سورة الكهف: (٧٧

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

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

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

﴿but he﴾ namely al-Khiḍr

﴿repaired it﴾ that is, he fixed it and restored it. Moosâ said to him: ﴿If you wished, you could have obtained some payment for it!﴾ That is, the people of this town did not give us any hospitality, even though that was required of them, but you restored this wall without any payment, when you were able to take payment for it! On this occasion Moosâ did not fulfil the promise he had made, so al-Khiḍr had good reason to part ways with him.

﴿قَالَ هَٰذَا فِرَاقُ بَيۡنِي وَبَيۡنِكَۚ سَأُنَبِّئُكَ بِتَأۡوِيلِ مَا لَمۡ تَسۡتَطِع عَّلَيۡهِ صَبۡرًا ٧٨ أَمَّا ٱلسَّفِينَةُ فَكَانَتۡ لِمَسَٰكِينَ يَعۡمَلُونَ فِي ٱلۡبَحۡرِ فَأَرَدتُّ أَنۡ أَعِيبَهَا وَكَانَ وَرَآءَهُم مَّلِكٞ يَأۡخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِينَةٍ غَصۡبٗا ٧٩ وَأَمَّا ٱلۡغُلَٰمُ فَكَانَ أَبَوَاهُ مُؤۡمِنَيۡنِ فَخَشِينَآ أَن يُرۡهِقَهُمَا طُغۡيَٰنٗا

وَكُفْرًا ﴿٨٠﴾ فَأَرَدْنَآ أَن يُبْدِلَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُ زَكَوٰةً وَأَقْرَبَ رُحْمًا ﴿٨١﴾ وَأَمَّا ٱلْجِدَارُ
فَكَانَ لِغُلَٰمَيْنِ يَتِيمَيْنِ فِى ٱلْمَدِينَةِ وَكَانَ تَحْتَهُۥ كَنزٌ لَّهُمَا وَكَانَ أَبُوهُمَا صَٰلِحًا فَأَرَادَ
رَبُّكَ أَن يَبْلُغَآ أَشُدَّهُمَا وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنزَهُمَا رَحْمَةً مِّن رَّبِّكَ ۚ وَمَا فَعَلْتُهُۥ عَنْ أَمْرِى ۚ
ذَٰلِكَ تَأْوِيلُ مَا لَمْ تَسْطِع عَّلَيْهِ صَبْرًا ﴿٨٢﴾ ﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٧٨-٨٢)

18:78. The man said: This is the parting of the ways between me and you. Now I will explain to you the significance of that which you were unable to bear with patience.

18:79. As for the boat, it belonged to some poor people who made their living on the sea; I wanted to damage it because [I knew that] there was a king ahead of them who was seizing every [sound] boat by force.

18:80. As for the boy, his parents were believers, and we feared that he would grieve them with his rebellion and ingratitude.

18:81. So we desired that their Lord should grant them another in his place, [a child] more righteous and more tender-hearted.

18:82. As for the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys in the town, and there was beneath it a treasure belonging to them. Their father had been a righteous man, so your Lord willed that they should come of age and then extract their treasure – as a mercy from your Lord; I did not do it of my own accord. This is the significance of that which you were unable to bear with patience.

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

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

﴿As for the boat﴾ that I scuttled, ﴿it belonged to some poor people who made their living on the sea﴾ which would prompt one to show kindness and compassion towards them.
﴿I wanted to damage it because [I knew that] there was a king ahead of them who was seizing every [sound] boat by force﴾ that is, their route would take them past that unjust king, and he would seize unlawfully any sound boat, free of defect, that passed by him. So I wanted to scuttle it in order to make it defective, so that they would be safe from that wrongdoer.

﴿As for the boy﴾ whom I killed, ﴿his parents were believers, and we feared that he would grieve them with his rebellion and ingratitude﴾. It had been decreed that if that boy had grown up, he would have grieved his parents with his rebellion and ingratitude; that is, he would have put pressure on them which could have led them to transgress and disbelieve, either because of their love for him, or because of their need for him, or because he would force them to do that. But I killed him, because I had knowledge of that, so as to protect the religious commitment of his believing parents. What benefit can be greater than this? Although it was hard for them to be deprived of their offspring, Allah (*Subḥânahu wa Ta'âlâ* – Glorified and Exalted is He) would give them other offspring who would be better than him. Hence he said:
﴿So we desired that their Lord should grant them another in his place, [a child] more righteous and more tender-hearted﴾ that is, a righteous child who would uphold ties of kinship, for if the boy who was killed had grown up, he would have been very disobedient and cruel to them, and he would have forced them to disbelieve and transgress.

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

﴿so your Lord willed that they should come of age and then extract their treasure﴾ that is, therefore I demolished the wall, took out their treasure that was beneath it, then I rebuilt it for them for free.
﴿as a mercy from your Lord﴾ that is, what I did was a mercy from Allah, that Allah bestowed upon His slave al-Khiḍr.
﴿I did not do it of my own accord﴾ that is, I did not do anything on my own initiative or just because I wanted to do it; rather that was by the mercy of Allah and at His command.
﴿This﴾ that I have explained to you ﴿is the significance of that which you were unable to bear with patience﴾.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

  – and:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Killing is one of the worst of sins, because Moosâ said with regard to the killing of the boy: ﴿You have done a terrible thing!﴾ *(18: 74)*.
- Killing in legal retribution (*qiṣâṣ*)[2] is not an evil deed, because he said: ﴿Have you killed an innocent soul who killed no one?﴾ *(18: 74)*.
- Allah will protect the righteous person himself and will protect his offspring.
- Serving righteous people and anyone who is connected to them is better than serving others, because al-Khiḍr explained the reason why he extracted the treasure of the two boys and rebuilt their wall as being that the father had been a righteous man.
- One should use proper etiquette with Allah (ﷻ) by choosing the proper words. Al-Khiḍr attributed the act of damaging the boat to himself, when he said: ﴿I wanted to damage it﴾ *(18: 79)*. But in the case of good, he attributed it to Allah (ﷻ), because he said: ﴿so your Lord willed that they should come of age and then extract their treasure – as a mercy from your Lord﴾ *(18: 82)*. This is like when Ibrâheem (عليه السلام) said:
  ﴿When I am sick He heals me.﴾ *(ash-Shu'arâ' 26: 80)*
  – and when the *jinn* said:
  ﴿We do not know whether ill is intended for those on earth, or their Lord intends good for them.﴾ *(al-Jinn 72: 10)*
  – even though everything happens by the will and decree of Allah.
- A person should not leave his companion under any circumstances unless he has made clear to him what he should not do, warns him against doing so and explains what he did wrong, as al-Khiḍr did with Moosâ.

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

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

﴿وَيَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَن ذِى ٱلْقَرْنَيْنِ ۖ قُلْ سَأَتْلُوا۟ عَلَيْكُم مِّنْهُ ذِكْرًا ﴿٨٣﴾ إِنَّا مَكَّنَّا لَهُۥ فِى
ٱلْأَرْضِ وَءَاتَيْنَٰهُ مِن كُلِّ شَىْءٍ سَبَبًا ﴿٨٤﴾ فَأَتْبَعَ سَبَبًا ﴿٨٥﴾ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ ٱلشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا
تَغْرُبُ فِى عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ وَوَجَدَ عِندَهَا قَوْمًا ۗ قُلْنَا يَٰذَا ٱلْقَرْنَيْنِ إِمَّآ أَن تُعَذِّبَ وَإِمَّآ أَن تَتَّخِذَ فِيهِمْ
حُسْنًا ﴿٨٦﴾ قَالَ أَمَّا مَن ظَلَمَ فَسَوْفَ نُعَذِّبُهُۥ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِۦ فَيُعَذِّبُهُۥ عَذَابًا نُّكْرًا ﴿٨٧﴾ وَأَمَّا
مَنْ ءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَٰلِحًا فَلَهُۥ جَزَآءً ٱلْحُسْنَىٰ ۖ وَسَنَقُولُ لَهُۥ مِنْ أَمْرِنَا يُسْرًا ﴿٨٨﴾﴾ (سورة الكهف:
٨٣-٨٨)

18:83. They ask you [O Muhammad] about Dhul-Qarnayn. Say: I will tell you something about him.

18:84. Verily We established him in the land and gave him the means to achieve all things.

18:85. He pursued a certain course

18:86. until, when he reached the far west, he found the sun setting in a dark sea, and he found a people nearby. We said: O Dhul-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿ثُمَّ أَتْبَعَ سَبَبًا ﴿٨٩﴾ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا بَلَغَ مَطْلِعَ ٱلشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَطْلُعُ عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ لَّمْ نَجْعَل لَّهُم مِّن دُونِهَا سِتْرًا ﴿٩٠﴾ كَذَٰلِكَ وَقَدْ أَحَطْنَا بِمَا لَدَيْهِ خُبْرًا ﴿٩١﴾ ثُمَّ أَتْبَعَ سَبَبًا ﴿٩٢﴾ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا بَلَغَ بَيْنَ ٱلسَّدَّيْنِ وَجَدَ مِن دُونِهِمَا قَوْمًا لَّا يَكَادُونَ يَفْقَهُونَ قَوْلًا ﴿٩٣﴾ قَالُوا۟ يَٰذَا ٱلْقَرْنَيْنِ إِنَّ يَأْجُوجَ وَمَأْجُوجَ مُفْسِدُونَ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ فَهَلْ نَجْعَلُ لَكَ خَرْجًا عَلَىٰٓ أَن تَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمْ سَدًّا ﴿٩٤﴾ قَالَ مَا مَكَّنِّى فِيهِ رَبِّى خَيْرٌ فَأَعِينُونِى بِقُوَّةٍ أَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًا ﴿٩٥﴾ ءَاتُونِى زُبَرَ ٱلْحَدِيدِ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا سَاوَىٰ بَيْنَ ٱلصَّدَفَيْنِ قَالَ ٱنفُخُوا۟ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا جَعَلَهُۥ نَارًا قَالَ ءَاتُونِىٓ أُفْرِغْ عَلَيْهِ قِطْرًا ﴿٩٦﴾ فَمَا ٱسْطَٰعُوٓا۟ أَن يَظْهَرُوهُ وَمَا ٱسْتَطَٰعُوا۟ لَهُۥ نَقْبًا ﴿٩٧﴾ قَالَ هَٰذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّى فَإِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ رَبِّى جَعَلَهُۥ دَكَّآءَ وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّى حَقًّا ﴿٩٨﴾﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٨٩-٩٨)

18:89. Then he pursued another course

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

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

18:92. Then he pursued another course

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

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

18:95. He said: What my Lord has given me is better [than what you would give me]. But help me with manpower and equipment, and I will construct a fortified barrier between you and them.

18:96. Bring me blocks of iron. Then when he had filled the gap between the two mountain-sides, [he said]: Blow [with your bellows]. Then when he had made it glow like fire, he said: Bring me molten copper to pour over it.

18:97. Thus [Ya'jooj and Ma'jooj] were made powerless to scale it or bore their way through it.

18:98. Dhul-Qarnayn said: This is a mercy from my Lord. But when the time appointed by my Lord comes, He will level it. The promise of my Lord is ever true.

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

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

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

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

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

﴿May we give you some payment﴾ that is, a fee or wages

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

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

﴿and I will construct a fortified barrier between you and them﴾ to prevent them from crossing to you.

﴿Bring me blocks of iron﴾ that is, pieces of iron, which they brought to him

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿...This has been given to me only because of knowledge that I possess...﴾ *(al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 78)*

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

﴿وَتَرَكْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَمُوجُ فِي بَعْضٍ وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَجَمَعْنَاهُمْ جَمْعًا ﴿٩٩﴾ وَعَرَضْنَا جَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَرْضًا ﴿١٠٠﴾ الَّذِينَ كَانَتْ أَعْيُنُهُمْ فِي غِطَاءٍ عَنْ ذِكْرِي وَكَانُوا لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَمْعًا ﴿١٠١﴾﴾ (سورة الكهف: ٩٩-١٠١)

18:99. On that day We will leave them to surge like waves against one another. The Trumpet will be blown, then We will gather them all together.

18:100. On that day We will display hell, plain to see, for the disbelievers,

18:101. those whose eyes were blind to My signs and they could not bear to hear [the message of truth].

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿...Our hearts are covered [and sealed] against that to which you call us...﴾ *(Fussilat 41: 5)*

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

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

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

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

﴿أَفَحَسِبَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوٓاْ أَن يَتَّخِذُواْ عِبَادِى مِن دُونِىٓ أَوْلِيَآءَ ۚ إِنَّآ أَعْتَدْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكَٰفِرِينَ نُزُلًا ﴿١٠٢﴾﴾ (سورة الكهف: ١٠٢)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

– and:

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

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

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

﴿قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْأَخْسَرِينَ أَعْمَالًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ الَّذِينَ ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُونَ صُنْعًا ﴿١٠٤﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَلِقَائِهِ فَحَبِطَتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فَلَا نُقِيمُ

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

لَهُمْ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ وَزْنًا ﴿١٠٥﴾ ذَٰلِكَ جَزَآؤُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ بِمَا كَفَرُوا۟ وَٱتَّخَذُوٓا۟ ءَايَٰتِى وَرُسُلِى هُزُوًا ﴿١٠٦﴾

(سورة الكهف: ١٠٣-١٠٦)

18:103. Say: Shall we tell you who will be the greatest losers in terms of deeds,

18:104. those whose efforts in the life of this world are wasted, while they think that what they do is right?

18:105. They are the ones who reject the signs of their Lord and deny the Meeting with Him. Their deeds will come to nothing and on the Day of Resurrection, We will not give them any weight.[5]

18:106. That will be their recompense, hell, because they disbelieved and made a mockery of My signs and My Messengers.

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

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

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

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

﴿Their deeds will come to nothing﴾ because of that

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[5] That is, they will be of no significance and the Balance will not be set up for them because they will have no good deeds to be weighed. (al-Baydâwi)

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

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

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

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

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

﴿إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنَّٰتُ ٱلْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يَبْغُونَ عَنْهَا حِوَلًا ﴿١٠٨﴾﴾ (سورة الكهف: ١٠٧-١٠٨)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿قُل لَّوْ كَانَ ٱلْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِّكَلِمَٰتِ رَبِّى لَنَفِدَ ٱلْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ أَن تَنفَدَ كَلِمَٰتُ رَبِّى وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهِۦ مَدَدًا ﴿١٠٩﴾﴾ (سورة الكهف: ١٠٩)

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

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

﴿If the sea﴾ in this world

﴿were ink for writing the words of my Lord﴾ that is, and the trees of this world, from the first to the last of them, all the trees in the cities and in the wilderness, were pens

﴿it would dry up﴾ and the pens would break

﴿before the words of my Lord were exhausted﴾. This is a great thing that no one can fully comprehend.

Elsewhere, Allah says:

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

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

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

﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَآ أَنَا۠ بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوحَىٰٓ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَآ إِلَٰهُكُمْ إِلَٰهٌ وَٰحِدٌ ۖ فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا۟ لِقَآءَ رَبِّهِۦ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَٰلِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِۦٓ أَحَدًۢا ﴿١١٠﴾﴾ (سورة الكهف: ١١٠)

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

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

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

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

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

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

This is the end of the commentary on Soorat al-Kahf.
All praise and thanks are for Allah, and may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his family, and his Companions abundantly until the Day of Judgement.

# 19.
# Soorat Maryam

(Madani)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

كٓهيعٓصٓ ﴿١﴾ ذِكْرُ رَحْمَتِ رَبِّكَ عَبْدَهُۥ زَكَرِيَّآ ﴿٢﴾ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُۥ نِدَآءً
خَفِيًّا ﴿٣﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّى وَهَنَ ٱلْعَظْمُ مِنِّى وَٱشْتَعَلَ ٱلرَّأْسُ شَيْبًا وَلَمْ أَكُنۢ
بِدُعَآئِكَ رَبِّ شَقِيًّا ﴿٤﴾ وَإِنِّى خِفْتُ ٱلْمَوَٰلِىَ مِن وَرَآءِى وَكَانَتِ ٱمْرَأَتِى عَاقِرًا
فَهَبْ لِى مِن لَّدُنكَ وَلِيًّا ﴿٥﴾ يَرِثُنِى وَيَرِثُ مِنْ ءَالِ يَعْقُوبَ ۖ وَٱجْعَلْهُ رَبِّ رَضِيًّا
﴿٦﴾ (سورة مريم: ١-٦)

19:1. Kâf. Hâ'. Yâ'. 'Ayn. Ṣâd.[6]

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

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

19:3. When he called upon his Lord privately.

19:4. He said: My Lord, my bones have grown weak and my head glows silver with age, but never, my Lord, has my prayer to You remained unanswered.

19:5. Verily I fear [what] my kinsmen [will do] after I am gone, for my wife is barren.[7] Grant unto me by Your grace an heir,

19:6. who will inherit from me and from the family of Ya'qoob, and make him, my Lord, one with whom You are pleased.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿ يَٰزَكَرِيَّآ إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلَٰمٍ ٱسْمُهُۥ يَحْيَىٰ لَمْ نَجْعَل لَّهُۥ مِن قَبْلُ سَمِيًّا ﴿٧﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لِى غُلَٰمٌ وَكَانَتِ ٱمْرَأَتِى عَاقِرًا وَقَدْ بَلَغْتُ مِنَ ٱلْكِبَرِ عِتِيًّا ﴿٨﴾ قَالَ كَذَٰلِكَ قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلَىَّ هَيِّنٌ وَقَدْ خَلَقْتُكَ مِن قَبْلُ وَلَمْ تَكُ شَيْـًٔا ﴿٩﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ ٱجْعَل لِّىٓ ءَايَةً ۚ قَالَ ءَايَتُكَ أَلَّا تُكَلِّمَ ٱلنَّاسَ ثَلَٰثَ لَيَالٍ سَوِيًّا ﴿١٠﴾ فَخَرَجَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِۦ مِنَ ٱلْمِحْرَابِ فَأَوْحَىٰٓ إِلَيْهِمْ أَن سَبِّحُوا۟ بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا ﴿١١﴾ ﴾ (سورة مريم: ٧-١١)

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

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

19:9. He said: Thus it will be. Your Lord says: That is easy for Me; indeed I created you before, when you were nothing.

19:10. Zakariyâ said: O my Lord, give me a sign. He said: Your sign will be that you will not be able to speak to people for three days, although you are not mute.

19:11. So he came out to his people from the chamber, and signalled to them to glorify Allah in the morning and in the evening.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿يَٰيَحۡيَىٰ خُذِ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ بِقُوَّةٖۖ وَءَاتَيۡنَٰهُ ٱلۡحُكۡمَ صَبِيّٗا ١٢ وَحَنَانٗا مِّن لَّدُنَّا وَزَكَوٰةٗۖ وَكَانَ تَقِيّٗا ١٣ وَبَرَّۢا بِوَٰلِدَيۡهِ وَلَمۡ يَكُن جَبَّارًا عَصِيّٗا ١٤ وَسَلَٰمٌ عَلَيۡهِ يَوۡمَ وُلِدَ وَيَوۡمَ يَمُوتُ وَيَوۡمَ يُبۡعَثُ حَيّٗا ١٥﴾ (سورة مريم: ١٢-١٥)

19:12. [Allah said:] O Yaḥyâ, hold fast to the Book [the Torah] with all your strength. And We granted him knowledge and wisdom when he was still a boy.

19:13. And by Our grace We made him compassionate and righteous; and he was God-fearing

19:14. And dutiful towards his parents, and he was not arrogant or disobedient.

19:15. So peace be upon him the day he was born, the day he dies and the day he will be raised up to life again!

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

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

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

﴿And﴾ he was also ﴿dutiful towards his parents﴾ he did not disobey them or mistreat them; rather he was kind towards them in word and deed.
﴿and he was not arrogant or disobedient﴾ that is, he was not too arrogant to worship Allah, and he did not look down on the slaves of Allah or on his parents; rather he was humble and obedient, always turning to Allah. Thus he combined fulfilling the rights of Allah with fulfilling the rights of people. Hence he was granted well-being by Allah in all his affairs, from start to finish.

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

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

﴿وَٱذْكُرْ فِى ٱلْكِتَٰبِ مَرْيَمَ إِذِ ٱنتَبَذَتْ مِنْ أَهْلِهَا مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا ﴿١٦﴾ فَٱتَّخَذَتْ مِن دُونِهِمْ حِجَابًا فَأَرْسَلْنَآ إِلَيْهَا رُوحَنَا فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَتْ إِنِّىٓ أَعُوذُ بِٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ مِنكَ إِن كُنتَ تَقِيًّا ﴿١٨﴾ قَالَ إِنَّمَآ أَنَا۠ رَسُولُ رَبِّكِ لِأَهَبَ لَكِ غُلَٰمًا زَكِيًّا ﴿١٩﴾ قَالَتْ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لِى غُلَٰمٌ وَلَمْ يَمْسَسْنِى بَشَرٌ وَلَمْ أَكُ بَغِيًّا ﴿٢٠﴾ قَالَ كَذَٰلِكِ قَالَ رَبُّكِ هُوَ عَلَىَّ هَيِّنٌ وَلِنَجْعَلَهُۥٓ ءَايَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَرَحْمَةً مِّنَّا ۚ وَكَانَ أَمْرًا مَّقْضِيًّا ﴿٢١﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ١٦-٢١)

19:16. Recount [O Muhammad] in the Book the story of Maryam, when she withdrew from her family in a place towards the east.

19:17. She screened herself from them, then We sent to her Our Angel [Jibreel], and he appeared before her in the form of a perfect human being.

19:18. She said: I seek refuge in the Most Merciful from you; [do not come near me] if you fear Him!

19:19. He said: I am only a Messenger from your Lord, [to announce] to you the gift of a righteous son.

19:20. She said: How will I have a son when no man has touched me, and I have never been unchaste?

19:21. He said: Thus it will be. Your Lord says: That is easy for Me; We will make him a sign to humankind, and a mercy from Us. It is a matter already decreed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

-- and:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿ فَحَمَلَتْهُ فَٱنتَبَذَتْ بِهِۦ مَكَانًا قَصِيًّا ﴿٢٢﴾ فَأَجَآءَهَا ٱلْمَخَاضُ إِلَىٰ جِذْعِ ٱلنَّخْلَةِ
قَالَتْ يَٰلَيْتَنِى مِتُّ قَبْلَ هَٰذَا وَكُنتُ نَسْيًا مَّنسِيًّا ﴿٢٣﴾ فَنَادَىٰهَا مِن تَحْتِهَآ أَلَّا تَحْزَنِى
قَدْ جَعَلَ رَبُّكِ تَحْتَكِ سَرِيًّا ﴿٢٤﴾ وَهُزِّىٓ إِلَيْكِ بِجِذْعِ ٱلنَّخْلَةِ تُسَٰقِطْ عَلَيْكِ رُطَبًا جَنِيًّا
﴿٢٥﴾ فَكُلِى وَٱشْرَبِى وَقَرِّى عَيْنًا ۖ فَإِمَّا تَرَيِنَّ مِنَ ٱلْبَشَرِ أَحَدًا فَقُولِىٓ إِنِّى نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمَٰنِ
صَوْمًا فَلَنْ أُكَلِّمَ ٱلْيَوْمَ إِنسِيًّا ﴿٢٦﴾ ﴾ (سورة مريم: ٢٢-٢٦)

19:22. So she conceived him and withdrew with him to a remote place.

19:23. The pains of childbirth drove her to the trunk of a palm tree. She said: Would that I had died before this and had been overlooked and forgotten!

19:24. But he[8] called to her from below her: Do not worry, for your Lord has provided a stream close at hand.

19:25. Shake the trunk of the palm tree towards you; it will drop fresh ripe dates upon you.

19:26. Eat and drink, and be content. And if you see any human being, say: I have made a vow of silence to the Most Gracious, and today I will not speak to any person.

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

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

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[8] The speaker may be 'Eesâ or Jibreel. (aṭ-Ṭabari; al-Qurṭubi)

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

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

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

﴿فَأَتَتْ بِهِۦ قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهُۥ ۖ قَالُوا۟ يَٰمَرْيَمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتِ شَيْـًٔا فَرِيًّا ﴿٢٧﴾ يَٰٓأُخْتَ هَٰرُونَ
مَا كَانَ أَبُوكِ ٱمْرَأَ سَوْءٍ وَمَا كَانَتْ أُمُّكِ بَغِيًّا ﴿٢٨﴾ فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ ۖ قَالُوا۟ كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَن
كَانَ فِى ٱلْمَهْدِ صَبِيًّا ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالَ إِنِّى عَبْدُ ٱللَّهِ ءَاتَىٰنِىَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ وَجَعَلَنِى نَبِيًّا ﴿٣٠﴾ وَجَعَلَنِى
مُبَارَكًا أَيْنَ مَا كُنتُ وَأَوْصَىٰنِى بِٱلصَّلَوٰةِ وَٱلزَّكَوٰةِ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا ﴿٣١﴾ وَبَرًّۢا بِوَٰلِدَتِى

وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِي جَبَّارًا شَقِيًّا ﴿٣٢﴾ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيَّ يَوْمَ وُلِدتُّ وَيَوْمَ أَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ أُبْعَثُ حَيًّا ﴿٣٣﴾ ﴾ (سورة مريم: ٢٧-٣٣)

19:27. She came to her people, carrying the infant. They said: O Maryam, indeed you have done something unthinkable!

19:28. O sister of Hâroon,[9] your father was not an evil man, nor was your mother unchaste!

19:29. Thereupon she pointed to the infant. They said: How can we talk to one who is an infant in the cradle?

19:30. 'Eesâ said: Verily I am a slave of Allah; He has given me the Book and made me a Prophet.

19:31. He has made me blessed wherever I may be, and has enjoined on me prayer and *zakâh* as long as I live.

19:32. And He has made me dutiful towards my mother, and not arrogant or unblessed.

19:33. So peace be upon me the day I was born, the day I die and the day I will be raised up to life again!

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

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

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[9] She had a brother called Hâroon who was known for his righteousness.

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

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

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

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

﴿He has given me the Book﴾ that is, He has decreed that He will give me the Book

﴿and made me a Prophet﴾. Thus he informed them that he was a slave of Allah, and that Allah had taught him the Book and made him one of His Prophets. These are attributes of perfection that had to do with 'Eesâ himself.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿ذَٰلِكَ عِيسَى ٱبْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۚ قَوْلَ ٱلْحَقِّ ٱلَّذِى فِيهِ يَمْتَرُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ أَن يَتَّخِذَ مِن وَلَدٍ ۖ سُبْحَٰنَهُۥٓ ۚ إِذَا قَضَىٰٓ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ رَبِّى وَرَبُّكُمْ فَٱعْبُدُوهُ ۗ هَٰذَا صِرَٰطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٣٦﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٣٤-٣٦)

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿Glory be to Him﴾ that is, exalted be He far above having a child or any other shortcoming or imperfection.
﴿When He decrees a matter﴾ that is, no matter, minor or major, is too difficult for Him or is beyond Him.
﴿He merely says to it, 'Be!' and it is﴾. As His decree is always done, in both the upper and lower realms, how can he have a son? When He wills something, He says to it ﴿'Be!' and it is﴾, so how could it be regarded as far-fetched for Him to create 'Eesâ without a father?

Hence 'Eesâ (ﷺ) stated that he was a slave who was subject to Allah's Lordship and control like anyone else, as he said:
﴿Verily Allah is my Lord and your Lord﴾ Who created us and fashioned us, to Whose control and decree we are subject.
﴿so worship Him﴾ that is, devote your worship to Him alone and strive hard to turn to Him. This is affirmation of the oneness of His Lordship and the oneness of His divinity, as he quoted the former as evidence for the latter. Hence he said:
﴿This is a straight path﴾ that is, a path of moderation that leads to Allah, because it is the path of the Messengers and their followers, and any other paths are the ways of misguidance and error.

﴿ فَٱخْتَلَفَ ٱلْأَحْزَابُ مِنۢ بَيْنِهِمْ ۖ فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ مِن مَّشْهَدِ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ أَسْمِعْ بِهِمْ وَأَبْصِرْ يَوْمَ يَأْتُونَنَا لَٰكِنِ ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ ٱلْيَوْمَ فِى ضَلَٰلٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة مريم: ٣٧-٣٨)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[10] That is, when the judgement is over, and the people of paradise and hell have entered their respective abodes. (al-Qurṭubi)

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

﴿وَٱذْكُرْ فِى ٱلْكِتَٰبِ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿٤١﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ يَٰٓأَبَتِ لِمَ تَعْبُدُ مَا لَا
يَسْمَعُ وَلَا يُبْصِرُ وَلَا يُغْنِى عَنكَ شَيْـًٔا ﴿٤٢﴾ يَٰٓأَبَتِ إِنِّى قَدْ جَآءَنِى مِنَ ٱلْعِلْمِ مَا
لَمْ يَأْتِكَ فَٱتَّبِعْنِىٓ أَهْدِكَ صِرَٰطًا سَوِيًّا ﴿٤٣﴾ يَٰٓأَبَتِ لَا تَعْبُدِ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنَ ۖ إِنَّ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنَ

كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَٰنِ عَصِيًّا ﴿٤٤﴾ يَا أَبَتِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَن يَمَسَّكَ عَذَابٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمَٰنِ فَتَكُونَ
لِلشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيًّا ﴿٤٥﴾ قَالَ أَرَاغِبٌ أَنتَ عَنْ آلِهَتِي يَا إِبْرَاهِيمُ لَئِن لَّمْ تَنتَهِ لَأَرْجُمَنَّكَ
وَاهْجُرْنِي مَلِيًّا ﴿٤٦﴾ قَالَ سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكَ سَأَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكَ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِي حَفِيًّا
﴿٤٧﴾ وَأَعْتَزِلُكُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَأَدْعُو رَبِّي عَسَىٰ أَلَّا أَكُونَ بِدُعَاءِ
رَبِّي شَقِيًّا ﴿٤٨﴾ فَلَمَّا اعْتَزَلَهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ وَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ
وَكُلًّا جَعَلْنَا نَبِيًّا ﴿٤٩﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُم مِّن رَّحْمَتِنَا وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ عَلِيًّا ﴿٥٠﴾

(سورة مريم: ٤١-٥٠)

19:41. Recount [O Muhammad] in the Book the story of Ibrâheem. Verily he was a man strong and true in faith, a Prophet.

19:42. When he said to his father: O my father, why do you worship that which can neither hear nor see, nor benefit you in any way?

19:43. O my father, there has come to me some knowledge that did not come to you. So follow me, and I will guide you to a straight path.

19:44. O my father, do not worship the Shaytân, for the Shaytân has ever been disobedient towards the Most Gracious.

19:45. O my father, indeed I fear lest a punishment from the Most Gracious befall you so that you become a companion of the Shaytân.

19:46. His father said: Are you renouncing my gods, O Ibrâheem? If you do not desist, I will surely stone you. Keep away from me for a good long time!

19:47. Ibrâheem said: Peace be upon you. I will pray to my Lord to forgive you, for indeed He has always been very kind to me.

19:48. I will keep away from [and disavow] you and those on whom you call besides Allah, and I will call upon my Lord; perhaps my supplication to my Lord will not remain unanswered.

19:49. After he turned away from them and what they worshipped besides Allah, We bestowed upon him Is-ḥâq and Ya'qoob, and We made each of them a Prophet.

19:50. We bestowed upon them [manifold] gifts by Our mercy, and We granted them a deservedly lofty renown.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Allah tells us how he debated with his father:

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿O my father, do not worship the Shaytân﴾ because whoever worships anything other than Allah has in fact worshipped the Shaytân, as Allah says elsewhere:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿I will pray to my Lord to forgive you, for indeed He has always been very kind to me﴾ that is, I shall continue to pray to Allah to guide you and forgive you, by guiding you to Islam by means of which you will attain forgiveness.
﴿for indeed He has always been very kind to me﴾ that is, He has always been merciful and compassionate towards me, caring for me. He continued to pray to Allah to forgive him, hoping that Allah would guide him. But when it became clear to him that he was an enemy of Allah, and that nothing was going to work with him, he stopped praying for forgiveness for him and he disavowed him.

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

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

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

Leaving one's homeland and everything one is used to, including one's family and people, is one of the hardest things to bear for many well-known reasons, such as being apart from those who are a source of confidence and assurance. However if a person gives up something for the sake of Allah, Allah will compensate him with something better than it. Ibrâheem withdrew from his people, and Allah said concerning him:
﴿After he turned away from them and what they worshipped besides Allah, We bestowed upon him Is-ḥâq and Ya'qoob, and We made each of them﴾ namely Is-ḥâq and Ya'qoob ﴿a Prophet﴾. Thus he was given the gift of these two righteous Messengers who were sent to the people; Allah singled them out for His revelation and chose them from among all others for His message.

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

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

﴿وَٱذْكُرْ فِى ٱلْكِتَٰبِ مُوسَىٰٓ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ مُخْلَصًا وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿٥١﴾ وَنَٰدَيْنَٰهُ مِن جَانِبِ ٱلطُّورِ ٱلْأَيْمَنِ وَقَرَّبْنَٰهُ نَجِيًّا ﴿٥٢﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُۥ مِن رَّحْمَتِنَآ أَخَاهُ هَٰرُونَ نَبِيًّا ﴿٥٣﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٥١-٥٣)

19:51. Recount [O Muhammad] in the Book the story of Moosâ. Verily he was chosen, and he was a Messenger and a Prophet.

19:52. We called him from the right-hand side of the mountain and We honoured him by conversing with him in private,

19:53. And we granted him, by Our mercy, his brother Hâroon, also a Prophet [to assist him].

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

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

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

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

﴿...Blessed is the one who is at the fire and blessed are those who are around it[11]...﴾ *(an-Naml 27: 8)*

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

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

﴿وَٱذْكُرْ فِى ٱلْكِتَٰبِ إِسْمَٰعِيلَ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ صَادِقَ ٱلْوَعْدِ وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿٥٤﴾ وَكَانَ يَأْمُرُ أَهْلَهُۥ بِٱلصَّلَوٰةِ وَٱلزَّكَوٰةِ وَكَانَ عِندَ رَبِّهِۦ مَرْضِيًّا ﴿٥٥﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٥٤-٥٥)

19:54. Recount [O Muhammad] in the Book the story of Ismâ'eel. Verily he was true to his promise, and he was a Messenger and a Prophet.

19:55. He used to enjoin his family [and his people] to establish prayer and give zakâh, and his Lord was well pleased with him.

[11] Moosâ was beside the fire, which was the burning bush, and the angels were surrounding him.

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿ وَٱذْكُرْ فِى ٱلْكِتَٰبِ إِدْرِيسَ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ صِدِّيقًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿٥٦﴾ وَرَفَعْنَٰهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا ﴿٥٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة مريم: ٥٦-٥٧)

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

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

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

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

﴿أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِم مِّنَ النَّبِيِّينَ مِن ذُرِّيَّةِ آدَمَ وَمِمَّنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوحٍ وَمِن ذُرِّيَّةِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْرَائِيلَ وَمِمَّنْ هَدَيْنَا وَاجْتَبَيْنَا إِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُ الرَّحْمَٰنِ خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَبُكِيًّا ۩﴾ (سورة مريم: ٥٨)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

فَخَلَفَ مِنۢ بَعۡدِهِمۡ خَلۡفٌ أَضَاعُواْ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَٱتَّبَعُواْ ٱلشَّهَوَٰتِ فَسَوۡفَ يَلۡقَوۡنَ غَيًّا ﴿٥٩﴾
إِلَّا مَن تَابَ وَءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَٰلِحًا فَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ يَدۡخُلُونَ ٱلۡجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظۡلَمُونَ شَيۡـٔٗا ﴿٦٠﴾ جَنَّٰتِ
عَدۡنٍ ٱلَّتِي وَعَدَ ٱلرَّحۡمَٰنُ عِبَادَهُۥ بِٱلۡغَيۡبِۚ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ وَعۡدُهُۥ مَأۡتِيّٗا ﴿٦١﴾ لَّا يَسۡمَعُونَ فِيهَا لَغۡوًا إِلَّا سَلَٰمٗاۖ
وَلَهُمۡ رِزۡقُهُمۡ فِيهَا بُكۡرَةٗ وَعَشِيّٗا ﴿٦٢﴾ تِلۡكَ ٱلۡجَنَّةُ ٱلَّتِي نُورِثُ مِنۡ عِبَادِنَا مَن كَانَ تَقِيّٗا ﴿٦٣﴾

(سورة مريم: ٥٩-٦٣)

19:59. But after them came generations who neglected prayer and pursued their desires. So they will meet with perdition.

19:60. Except those who repent and believe, and do righteous deeds; they will enter paradise and they will not be wronged in the least.

19:61. [Theirs will be] gardens of perpetual abode, which the Most Gracious has promised to His slaves without their having seen them. Verily His promise must come to pass.

19:62. They will not hear therein any vain talk, but only greetings of peace. And they will have their provision therein in the morning and in the evening.

19:63. Such is the garden which We give as an inheritance to those of Our slaves who are God-fearing.

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

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

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

Then Allah (ﷻ) makes an exception to that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

– and similar verses.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿وَمَا نَتَنَزَّلُ إِلَّا بِأَمْرِ رَبِّكَ ۖ لَهُۥ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِينَا وَمَا خَلْفَنَا وَمَا بَيْنَ ذَٰلِكَ ۚ وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ نَسِيًّا ﴿٦٤﴾ رَّبُّ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فَٱعْبُدْهُ وَٱصْطَبِرْ لِعِبَٰدَتِهِۦ ۚ هَلْ تَعْلَمُ لَهُۥ سَمِيًّا ﴿٦٥﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٦٤-٦٥)

19:64. [Jibreel said:] We [angels] do not descend except by the command of your Lord. To Him belongs all that is ahead of us and all that is behind us, and all that is in between. Your Lord is never forgetful,

19:65. Lord of the heavens and the earth and of all that is between them. So worship Him, and remain steadfast in worshipping Him. Do you know of anyone equal to Him?

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

«Why do you not come to us more often?» (Bukhari)[12]

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

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

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

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

For they are slaves under orders.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿وَيَقُولُ ٱلْإِنسَٰنُ أَءِذَا مَا مِتُّ لَسَوْفَ أُخْرَجُ حَيًّا ﴿٦٦﴾ أَوَلَا يَذْكُرُ ٱلْإِنسَٰنُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَٰهُ مِن قَبْلُ وَلَمْ يَكُ شَيْـًٔا ﴿٦٧﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٦٦-٦٧)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿فَوَرَبِّكَ لَنَحْشُرَنَّهُمْ وَالشَّيَاطِينَ ثُمَّ لَنُحْضِرَنَّهُمْ حَوْلَ جَهَنَّمَ جِثِيًّا ﴿٦٨﴾ ثُمَّ لَنَنزِعَنَّ مِن كُلِّ شِيعَةٍ أَيُّهُمْ أَشَدُّ عَلَى الرَّحْمَٰنِ عِتِيًّا ﴿٦٩﴾ ثُمَّ لَنَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِالَّذِينَ هُمْ أَوْلَىٰ بِهَا صِلِيًّا ﴿٧٠﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٦٨-٧٠)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿...Our Lord, these people led us astray, so give them a double punishment of fire. He will say: [It will be] doubled for all, but you do not know. The first of them will say to the last: You were no better than us...﴾ *(al-A'râf 7: 38-39)*

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

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

﴿وَإِن مِّنكُمْ إِلَّا وَارِدُهَا ۚ كَانَ عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا مَّقْضِيًّا ﴿٧١﴾ ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوا وَّنَذَرُ الظَّالِمِينَ فِيهَا جِثِيًّا ﴿٧٢﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٧١-٧٢)

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَٰتُنَا بَيِّنَٰتٍ قَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ أَىُّ ٱلْفَرِيقَيْنِ خَيْرٌ مَّقَامًا وَأَحْسَنُ نَدِيًّا ﴿٧٣﴾ وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُم مِّن قَرْنٍ هُمْ أَحْسَنُ أَثَٰثًا وَرِءْيًا ﴿٧٤﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٧٣-٧٤)

19:73. When Our clear revelations are recited to them, those who disbelieve say to those who believe: Which of the two groups is better in terms of dwellings and social gatherings?

19:74. How many nations We destroyed before them who were better in terms of wealth and outward appearance!

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

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

﴿Which of the two groups﴾, us or the believers,

﴿is better in terms of dwellings﴾ that is, in this world, and in terms of large amounts of wealth, large numbers of children and fulfilment of desires

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Having mentioned the false argument which highlights the severity of their stubbornness and the extent of their misguidance, here Allah tells us that whoever is misguided, accepts that for himself and strives for it, Allah will give him respite and increase him in love for it, as a punishment to him for choosing it over guidance. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...So when they chose to deviate [from the truth], Allah caused their hearts to deviate [from right guidance]...﴾ *(as-Saff 61: 5)*

– and:

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

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

﴾or [the approach of] the Hour﴿ which signals the onset of requital for deeds

﴾then they will realise who is in a worse abode and has a smaller following﴿ that is, and at that time the falseness of their claim will become clear to them, and they will realise that it was a baseless claim; they will realise that they are in a worse situation

﴾and has a smaller following﴿. But this knowledge will not benefit them at all, because it will not enable them to go back to this world and do deeds other than those which they did the first time.

﴿ وَيَزِيدُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ٱهْتَدَوْا۟ هُدًى ۗ وَٱلْبَٰقِيَٰتُ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتُ خَيْرٌ عِندَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَخَيْرٌ مَّرَدًّا ﴿٧٦﴾ ﴾ (سورة مريم: ٧٦)

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

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

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

– and:

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

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

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

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

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

﴿أَفَرَءَيْتَ ٱلَّذِى كَفَرَ بِـَٔايَـٰتِنَا وَقَالَ لَأُوتَيَنَّ مَالًا وَوَلَدًا ﴿٧٧﴾ أَطَّلَعَ ٱلْغَيْبَ أَمِ ٱتَّخَذَ عِندَ ٱلرَّحْمَـٰنِ عَهْدًا ﴿٧٨﴾ كَلَّا ۚ سَنَكْتُبُ مَا يَقُولُ وَنَمُدُّ لَهُۥ مِنَ ٱلْعَذَابِ مَدًّا ﴿٧٩﴾ وَنَرِثُهُۥ مَا يَقُولُ وَيَأْتِينَا فَرْدًا ﴿٨٠﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٧٧-٨٠)

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

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

19:78. Has he gained knowledge of the unseen, or has he taken a promise from the Most Gracious?

19:79. No indeed! We will record what he says and We will add to his punishment.

19:80. We will take away from him all that he spoke of, and he will come to Us all alone.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿وَٱتَّخَذُوا۟ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ ءَالِهَةً لِّيَكُونُوا۟ لَهُمْ عِزًّا ﴿٨١﴾ كَلَّا ۚ سَيَكْفُرُونَ بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ وَيَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضِدًّا ﴿٨٢﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّآ أَرْسَلْنَا ٱلشَّيَٰطِينَ عَلَى ٱلْكَٰفِرِينَ تَؤُزُّهُمْ أَزًّا ﴿٨٣﴾ فَلَا تَعْجَلْ عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ إِنَّمَا نَعُدُّ لَهُمْ عَدًّا ﴿٨٤﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٨١-٨٤)

19:81. They have taken other gods besides Allah to help them and protect them [from punishment].

19:82. Nay, they will reject their worship of them, and will become their opponents.

19:83. Do you not see that We have sent the devils against the disbelievers, to incite them to sin?

19:84. So do not be hasty [in calling down Allah's punishment] upon them, for We are keeping full account of their deeds.

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ الْمُتَّقِينَ إِلَى الرَّحْمَٰنِ وَفْدًا ﴿٨٥﴾ وَنَسُوقُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ إِلَىٰ جَهَنَّمَ وِرْدًا ﴿٨٦﴾ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ الشَّفَاعَةَ إِلَّا مَنِ اتَّخَذَ عِندَ الرَّحْمَٰنِ عَهْدًا ﴿٨٧﴾﴾ (سورة مريم: ٨٥-٨٧)

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

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

19:87. No one will have the benefit of intercession, except one who entered into a covenant with the Most Gracious.[14]

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

[14] The covenant referred to is belief in the oneness of Allah (tawḥeed). (aṭ-Ṭabari; Ibn Katheer)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿ وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَٰنُ وَلَدًا ﴿٨٨﴾ لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا إِدًّا ﴿٨٩﴾ تَكَادُ السَّمَاوَاتُ
يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنشَقُّ الْأَرْضُ وَتَخِرُّ الْجِبَالُ هَدًّا ﴿٩٠﴾ أَن دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمَٰنِ وَلَدًا ﴿٩١﴾ وَمَا
يَنبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَٰنِ أَن يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا ﴿٩٢﴾ إِن كُلُّ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتِي الرَّحْمَٰنِ
عَبْدًا ﴿٩٣﴾ لَّقَدْ أَحْصَاهُمْ وَعَدَّهُمْ عَدًّا ﴿٩٤﴾ وَكُلُّهُمْ آتِيهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَرْدًا
﴿٩٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة مريم: ٨٨-٩٥)

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

19:89. Indeed you have uttered something atrocious,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

– the Jews said:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنُ وُدًّا ﴿٩٦﴾﴾

(سورة مريم: ٩٦)

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

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

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

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

﴿فَإِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنَٰهُ بِلِسَانِكَ لِتُبَشِّرَ بِهِ ٱلْمُتَّقِينَ وَتُنذِرَ بِهِۦ قَوْمًا لُّدًّا ﴿٩٧﴾ وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُم مِّن قَرْنٍ هَلْ تُحِسُّ مِنْهُم مِّنْ أَحَدٍ أَوْ تَسْمَعُ لَهُمْ رِكْزًا ﴿٩٨﴾﴾

(سورة مريم: ٩٧-٩٨)

19:97. We have made this [Qur'an] easy, in your own language, only so that you [O Muhammad] may give glad tidings to those who fear Allah, and warn thereby contentious people.

19:98. How many nations We destroyed before them! Do you see any one of them or hear even a whisper of them?

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

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

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

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

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

This is the end of the commentary on Soorat Maryam.
All praise and thanks are for Allah, and may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his family, and his Companions abundantly until the Day of Judgement.

# 20.
# Soorat Ṭâ Hâ

(Makki)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

﴿طه ﴿١﴾ مَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لِتَشْقَىٰ ﴿٢﴾ إِلَّا تَذْكِرَةً لِّمَن يَخْشَىٰ ﴿٣﴾ تَنزِيلًا
مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ الْأَرْضَ وَالسَّمَاوَاتِ الْعُلَىٰ ﴿٤﴾ الرَّحْمَٰنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَىٰ ﴿٥﴾ لَهُ مَا فِي
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَمَا تَحْتَ الثَّرَىٰ ﴿٦﴾ وَإِن تَجْهَرْ بِالْقَوْلِ فَإِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ
السِّرَّ وَأَخْفَى ﴿٧﴾ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ لَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ﴿٨﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ١-٨)

20:1. Ṭâ'-Hâ'.[15]

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

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

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

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

20:5. The Most Gracious rose over the Throne [in a manner that befits His Majesty].

20:6. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth, and all that is between them, and all that lies beneath the soil.

20:7. If you raise your voice [in supplication – there is no need for that], for He knows what is said privately and that which is yet more hidden [of unspoken thoughts].

20:8. Allah: there is no god but He; to Him belong the most beautiful names.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth, and all that is between them﴾ such as angels, humans, jinn, animals, inanimate objects and plants.
﴿and all that lies beneath the soil﴾ that is, beneath the ground. Everything belongs to Allah (ﷻ) and is under His control, subject to His decree. They have no share in dominion, and they do not possess the power to benefit themselves or ward off harm, and they have no power to give life, cause death or bring about resurrection.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿وَهَلْ أَتَىٰكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَىٰ ۝٩ إِذْ رَءَا نَارًا فَقَالَ لِأَهْلِهِ ٱمْكُثُوٓا۟ إِنِّىٓ ءَانَسْتُ نَارًا لَّعَلِّىٓ ءَاتِيكُم مِّنْهَا بِقَبَسٍ أَوْ أَجِدُ عَلَى ٱلنَّارِ هُدًى ۝١٠ فَلَمَّآ أَتَىٰهَا نُودِىَ يَٰمُوسَىٰٓ ۝١١ إِنِّىٓ أَنَا۠ رَبُّكَ فَٱخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ ۖ إِنَّكَ بِٱلْوَادِ ٱلْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى ۝١٢﴾ (سورة طه: ٩-١٢)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[16] This refers to help and directions, because they had lost their way.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿وَأَنَا ٱخْتَرْتُكَ فَٱسْتَمِعْ لِمَا يُوحَىٰٓ ﴿١٣﴾ إِنَّنِىٓ أَنَا ٱللَّهُ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّآ أَنَا۠ فَٱعْبُدْنِى وَأَقِمِ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ لِذِكْرِىٓ ﴿١٤﴾ إِنَّ ٱلسَّاعَةَ ءَاتِيَةٌ أَكَادُ أُخْفِيهَا لِتُجْزَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍۭ بِمَا تَسْعَىٰ ﴿١٥﴾ فَلَا يَصُدَّنَّكَ عَنْهَا مَن لَّا يُؤْمِنُ بِهَا وَٱتَّبَعَ هَوَىٰهُ فَتَرْدَىٰ ﴿١٦﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ١٣-١٦)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

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

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

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

﴿For verily the Hour is coming﴾ that is, it will inevitably come to pass

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

﴿The people ask you about the Hour. Say: The knowledge thereof is with Allah [alone]...﴾ *(al-Aḥzâb 33: 63)*

– and:

﴿...He alone has knowledge of the Hour...﴾ *(az-Zukhruf 43: 85)*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿وَمَا تِلْكَ بِيَمِينِكَ يَٰمُوسَىٰ ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَ هِيَ عَصَايَ أَتَوَكَّؤُا۟ عَلَيْهَا وَأَهُشُّ بِهَا
عَلَىٰ غَنَمِي وَلِيَ فِيهَا مَـَٔارِبُ أُخْرَىٰ ﴿١٨﴾ قَالَ أَلْقِهَا يَٰمُوسَىٰ ﴿١٩﴾ فَأَلْقَىٰهَا فَإِذَا هِيَ
حَيَّةٌ تَسْعَىٰ ﴿٢٠﴾ قَالَ خُذْهَا وَلَا تَخَفْ ۖ سَنُعِيدُهَا سِيرَتَهَا ٱلْأُولَىٰ ﴿٢١﴾ وَٱضْمُمْ
يَدَكَ إِلَىٰ جَنَاحِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضَآءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوٓءٍ ءَايَةً أُخْرَىٰ ﴿٢٢﴾ لِنُرِيَكَ مِنْ ءَايَٰتِنَا ٱلْكُبْرَى
﴿٢٣﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ١٧-٢٣)

20:17. And what is that in your right hand, O Moosâ?

20:18. He said: It is my staff; I lean on it, and with it I beat down leaves to feed my sheep, and I have other uses for it.

20:19. Allah said: Throw it down, O Moosâ.

20:20. So he threw it down, and thereupon it became a fast-moving snake.

20:21. Allah said: Pick it up, and do not be afraid. We will restore it to its former state.

20:22. Put your hand under your arm; it will come forth shining white, without harm, as another sign,

20:23. So that We may show you some of Our greatest signs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Then Allah said to Moosâ: ﴿Pick it up, and do not be afraid﴾ that is, no harm will come to you from it.
﴿We will restore it to its former state﴾ that is, as it was when it was a staff. Moosâ obeyed the command of Allah, out of faith and submission. So he picked it up and it turned back into his staff as he knew it. This was one sign, then Allah mentioned the other sign; He said:
﴿Put your hand under your arm﴾ that is, put your hand into your garment, then press your arm against it.
﴿it will come forth shining white, without harm﴾ that is, it will come out shining white, with no disease or leprosy, ﴿as another sign﴾. Allah says elsewhere:

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

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

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

﴿ٱذْهَبْ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُۥ طَغَىٰ ﴿٢٤﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ ٱشْرَحْ لِى صَدْرِى ﴿٢٥﴾ وَيَسِّرْ لِىٓ أَمْرِى ﴿٢٦﴾ وَٱحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّن لِّسَانِى ﴿٢٧﴾ يَفْقَهُوا۟ قَوْلِى ﴿٢٨﴾ وَٱجْعَل لِّى وَزِيرًا مِّنْ أَهْلِى ﴿٢٩﴾ هَٰرُونَ أَخِى ﴿٣٠﴾ ٱشْدُدْ بِهِۦٓ أَزْرِى ﴿٣١﴾ وَأَشْرِكْهُ فِىٓ أَمْرِى ﴿٣٢﴾ كَىْ نُسَبِّحَكَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَنَذْكُرَكَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٣٤﴾ إِنَّكَ كُنتَ بِنَا بَصِيرًا ﴿٣٥﴾ قَالَ قَدْ أُوتِيتَ سُؤْلَكَ يَٰمُوسَىٰ ﴿٣٦﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ٢٤-٣٦)

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

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

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

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

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

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

20:30. Hâroon, my brother.

20:31. Strengthen me through him,

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

20:33. So that we may glorify You much

20:34. And remember You much.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

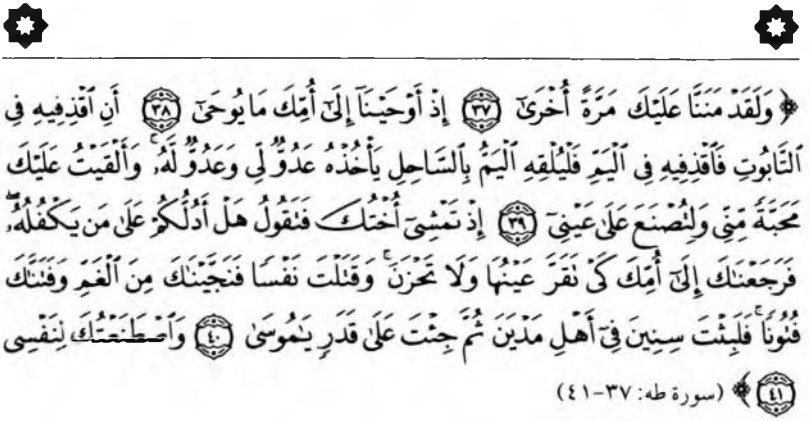
This request of Moosâ (ﷺ) is indicative of his perfect knowledge of Allah, his smartness and understanding of how things work, and his complete sincerity. That is because the one who seeks to guide people to Allah, especially if the one he is calling is a stubborn and arrogant transgressor, needs patience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

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

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

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

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



﴿وَلَقَدْ مَنَنَّا عَلَيْكَ مَرَّةً أُخْرَىٰ ﴿٣٧﴾ إِذْ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَىٰٓ أُمِّكَ مَا يُوحَىٰٓ ﴿٣٨﴾ أَنِ ٱقْذِفِيهِ فِي ٱلتَّابُوتِ فَٱقْذِفِيهِ فِي ٱلْيَمِّ فَلْيُلْقِهِ ٱلْيَمُّ بِٱلسَّاحِلِ يَأْخُذْهُ عَدُوٌّ لِّي وَعَدُوٌّ لَّهُۥ ۚ وَأَلْقَيْتُ عَلَيْكَ مَحَبَّةً مِّنِّي وَلِتُصْنَعَ عَلَىٰ عَيْنِيٓ ﴿٣٩﴾ إِذْ تَمْشِيٓ أُخْتُكَ فَتَقُولُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ مَن يَكْفُلُهُۥ ۖ فَرَجَعْنَٰكَ إِلَىٰٓ أُمِّكَ كَيْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنَ ۚ وَقَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا فَنَجَّيْنَٰكَ مِنَ ٱلْغَمِّ وَفَتَنَّٰكَ فُتُونًا ۚ فَلَبِثْتَ سِنِينَ فِيٓ أَهْلِ مَدْيَنَ ثُمَّ جِئْتَ عَلَىٰ قَدَرٍ يَٰمُوسَىٰ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَٱصْطَنَعْتُكَ لِنَفْسِي ﴿٤١﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ٣٧-٤١)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿ اذْهَبْ أَنتَ وَأَخُوكَ بِآيَاتِي وَلَا تَنِيَا فِي ذِكْرِي ﴿٤٢﴾ اذْهَبَا إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُ طَغَىٰ ﴿٤٣﴾ فَقُولَا لَهُ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا لَّعَلَّهُ يَتَذَكَّرُ أَوْ يَخْشَىٰ ﴿٤٤﴾ قَالَا رَبَّنَا إِنَّنَا نَخَافُ أَن يَفْرُطَ عَلَيْنَا أَوْ أَن يَطْغَىٰ ﴿٤٥﴾ قَالَ لَا تَخَافَا إِنَّنِي مَعَكُمَا أَسْمَعُ وَأَرَىٰ ﴿٤٦﴾ ﴾ (سورة طه: ٤٢-٤٦)

20:42. Go, you and your brother, with My signs, and do not be negligent in remembering Me.

20:43. Go, both of you, to Pharaoh, for he has indeed transgressed all bounds.

20:44. But speak to him gently, so that perhaps he may pay heed or fear Allah.

20:45. They [Moosâ and Hâroon] said: Our Lord, we fear that he may hasten to punish us or transgress all bounds.

20:46. Allah said: Fear not; verily I am with you both. I hear and see [everything].

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿ فَأْتِيَاهُ فَقُولَآ إِنَّا رَسُولَا رَبِّكَ فَأَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا بَنِيٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ وَلَا تُعَذِّبْهُمْ ۖ قَدْ جِئْنَٰكَ بِـَٔايَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكَ ۖ وَٱلسَّلَٰمُ عَلَىٰ مَنِ ٱتَّبَعَ ٱلْهُدَىٰٓ ﴿٤٧﴾ إِنَّا قَدْ أُوحِىَ إِلَيْنَآ أَنَّ ٱلْعَذَابَ عَلَىٰ مَن كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلَّىٰ ﴿٤٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة طه: ٤٧-٤٨)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿Verily it has been revealed to us﴾ that is, it is news from Allah, not from ourselves

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

﴿ قَالَ فَمَن رَّبُّكُمَا يَٰمُوسَىٰ ﴿٤٩﴾ قَالَ رَبُّنَا ٱلَّذِىٓ أَعۡطَىٰ كُلَّ شَىۡءٍ خَلۡقَهُۥ ثُمَّ هَدَىٰ ﴿٥٠﴾ قَالَ
فَمَا بَالُ ٱلۡقُرُونِ ٱلۡأُولَىٰ ﴿٥١﴾ قَالَ عِلۡمُهَا عِندَ رَبِّى فِى كِتَٰبٍ لَّا يَضِلُّ رَبِّى وَلَا يَنسَى ﴿٥٢﴾
ٱلَّذِى جَعَلَ لَكُمُ ٱلۡأَرۡضَ مَهۡدًا وَسَلَكَ لَكُمۡ فِيهَا سُبُلًا وَأَنزَلَ مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَأَخۡرَجۡنَا بِهِۦٓ
أَزۡوَٰجًا مِّن نَّبَاتٍ شَتَّىٰ ﴿٥٣﴾ كُلُوا۟ وَٱرۡعَوۡا۟ أَنۡعَٰمَكُمۡ إِنَّ فِى ذَٰلِكَ لَأٓيَٰتٍ لِّأُو۟لِى ٱلنُّهَىٰ ﴿٥٤﴾
مِنۡهَا خَلَقۡنَٰكُمۡ وَفِيهَا نُعِيدُكُمۡ وَمِنۡهَا نُخۡرِجُكُمۡ تَارَةً أُخۡرَىٰ ﴿٥٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة طه: ٤٩-٥٥)

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

20:50. Moosâ said: Our Lord is He Who gave all things their form and nature, then guided them [as to how to function and yield the benefits for which they were created].

20:51. Pharaoh said: Then what about the previous nations [who worshipped idols]?

20:52. Moosâ said: The knowledge thereof is with my Lord, in a Record; my Lord never errs, nor forgets.

20:53. It is He Who has spread out the earth for you, traced out paths for you therein, and sent down water from the sky. By means of it We bring forth various different types of vegetation.

20:54. So eat, and graze your livestock. Surely in that there are signs for people of sound intellect.

20:55. From it [the earth] We created you, to it We will return you, and from it We will bring you forth once again.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

How could he do that, especially as Allah has told us about him and how he rejected it even though he was convinced of it, as He said:

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

And Moosâ said:

﴿...You know full well that none but the Lord of the heavens and the earth has sent down these [signs] as clear evidence...﴾ *(al-Isrâ' 17: 102)*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿ وَلَقَدْ أَرَيْنَٰهُ ءَايَٰتِنَا كُلَّهَا فَكَذَّبَ وَأَبَىٰ ﴿٥٦﴾ قَالَ أَجِئْتَنَا لِتُخْرِجَنَا مِنْ أَرْضِنَا بِسِحْرِكَ
يَٰمُوسَىٰ ﴿٥٧﴾ فَلَنَأْتِيَنَّكَ بِسِحْرٍ مِّثْلِهِۦ فَٱجْعَلْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكَ مَوْعِدًا لَّا نُخْلِفُهُۥ نَحْنُ وَلَآ
أَنتَ مَكَانًا سُوًى ﴿٥٨﴾ قَالَ مَوْعِدُكُمْ يَوْمُ ٱلزِّينَةِ وَأَن يُحْشَرَ ٱلنَّاسُ ضُحًى ﴿٥٩﴾ فَتَوَلَّىٰ
فِرْعَوْنُ فَجَمَعَ كَيْدَهُۥ ثُمَّ أَتَىٰ ﴿٦٠﴾ قَالَ لَهُم مُّوسَىٰ وَيْلَكُمْ لَا تَفْتَرُوا۟ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ
كَذِبًا فَيُسْحِتَكُم بِعَذَابٍ ۖ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنِ ٱفْتَرَىٰ ﴿٦١﴾ ﴾ (سورة طه: ٥٦-٦١)

20:56. We showed Pharaoh all Our signs, but he rejected them and refused to believe in them.

20:57. He said: Have you come to drive us out of our land with your magic, O Moosâ?

20:58. Then we will surely produce for you magic to match it. So appoint a day when we and you may meet in a convenient place, an appointment which neither we nor you will fail to keep.

20:59. Moosâ said: Your appointment will be on the day of the festival; let the people assemble in the forenoon.

20:60. So Pharaoh withdrew and gathered his resources, then he came [for the appointment].

20:61. Moosâ said to them: Woe to you! Do not fabricate lies against Allah, lest He annihilate you with His punishment. Those who fabricate such lies are surely lost and doomed.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Allah describes the private conversation that they had:

﴿فَتَنَٰزَعُوٓاْ أَمۡرَهُم بَيۡنَهُمۡ وَأَسَرُّواْ ٱلنَّجۡوَىٰ ٦٢ قَالُوٓاْ إِنۡ هَٰذَٰنِ لَسَٰحِرَٰنِ يُرِيدَانِ أَن يُخۡرِجَاكُم مِّنۡ أَرۡضِكُم بِسِحۡرِهِمَا وَيَذۡهَبَا بِطَرِيقَتِكُمُ ٱلۡمُثۡلَىٰ ٦٣ فَأَجۡمِعُواْ كَيۡدَكُمۡ ثُمَّ ٱئۡتُواْ صَفّٗاۚ وَقَدۡ أَفۡلَحَ ٱلۡيَوۡمَ مَنِ ٱسۡتَعۡلَىٰ ٦٤﴾ (سورة طه: ٦٢-٦٤)

20:62. So they argued among themselves as to what they should do, and conferred in secret.

20:63. They said: Verily these two are magicians who want to drive you out of your land with their magic and put an end to your ideal way.

20:64. So consolidate your plan, then come forth in ranks. Whoever prevails today will indeed prosper.

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﴿They said: Verily these two are magicians who want to drive you out of your land with their magic﴾ – this is like what Pharaoh had said previously. Either it was a coincidence that Pharaoh and the magicians agreed on this view, without intending to, or he had dictated to them what he had made his mind up about and had announced to the people. Then they added to what Pharaoh had said by saying: ﴿and put an end to your ideal way﴾ that is, the path of magic for which he envies you, and he wants to prevail over you so that he may attain pride, renown and fame, and so that he may be the one whom people seek in order to learn from him this knowledge to which you have devoted all your time, and take away from you the livelihood that you have because of it and the leadership that you have attained by means of it. Thus they encouraged one another to strive hard in order to defeat him. Therefore they said:

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

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

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

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

﴿قَالُوا۟ يَٰمُوسَىٰٓ إِمَّآ أَن تُلْقِىَ وَإِمَّآ أَن نَّكُونَ أَوَّلَ مَنْ أَلْقَىٰ ﴿٦٥﴾ قَالَ بَلْ أَلْقُوا۟ ۖ فَإِذَا حِبَالُهُمْ وَعِصِيُّهُمْ يُخَيَّلُ إِلَيْهِ مِن سِحْرِهِمْ أَنَّهَا تَسْعَىٰ ﴿٦٦﴾ فَأَوْجَسَ فِى نَفْسِهِۦ خِيفَةً مُّوسَىٰ ﴿٦٧﴾ قُلْنَا لَا تَخَفْ إِنَّكَ أَنتَ ٱلْأَعْلَىٰ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَأَلْقِ مَا فِى يَمِينِكَ تَلْقَفْ مَا صَنَعُوٓا۟ ۖ إِنَّمَا صَنَعُوا۟ كَيْدُ سَٰحِرٍ ۖ وَلَا يُفْلِحُ ٱلسَّاحِرُ حَيْثُ أَتَىٰ ﴿٦٩﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ٦٥-٦٩)

20:65. They said: O Moosâ, either you throw or we will be the first to throw!

20:66. He said: No; you throw first. Thereupon their ropes and sticks appeared to him, by their magic, to be moving about.

20:67. Then Moosâ sensed fear in himself.

20:68. We said: Fear not, for verily it is you who will prevail.

20:69. Throw that which is in your right hand; it will swallow up what they have wrought. What they have wrought is no more than a magician's trick, and the magician will never prosper, no matter where he may be.

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

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

﴿by their magic﴾ which was very skilful

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

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

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

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

﴿فَأُلْقِيَ ٱلسَّحَرَةُ سُجَّدًا قَالُوٓاْ ءَامَنَّا بِرَبِّ هَٰرُونَ وَمُوسَىٰ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالَ ءَامَنتُمْ لَهُۥ قَبْلَ أَنْ ءَاذَنَ لَكُمْ ۖ
إِنَّهُۥ لَكَبِيرُكُمُ ٱلَّذِى عَلَّمَكُمُ ٱلسِّحْرَ ۖ فَلَأُقَطِّعَنَّ أَيْدِيَكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُم مِّنْ خِلَٰفٍ
وَلَأُصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ فِى جُذُوعِ ٱلنَّخْلِ وَلَتَعْلَمُنَّ أَيُّنَآ أَشَدُّ عَذَابًا وَأَبْقَىٰ ﴿٧١﴾ قَالُواْ لَن نُّؤْثِرَكَ عَلَىٰ
مَا جَآءَنَا مِنَ ٱلْبَيِّنَٰتِ وَٱلَّذِى فَطَرَنَا ۖ فَٱقْضِ مَآ أَنتَ قَاضٍ ۖ إِنَّمَا تَقْضِى هَٰذِهِ ٱلْحَيَوٰةَ ٱلدُّنْيَآ
﴿٧٢﴾ إِنَّآ ءَامَنَّا بِرَبِّنَا لِيَغْفِرَ لَنَا خَطَٰيَٰنَا وَمَآ أَكْرَهْتَنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنَ ٱلسِّحْرِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰٓ ﴿٧٣﴾﴾

(سورة طه: ٧٠-٧٣)

20:70. So the magicians fell down in prostration; they said: We believe in the Lord of Moosâ and Hâroon.

20:71. Pharaoh said: How dare you believe him before I give you permission! He must be your master, who taught you magic! I will surely cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides, and I will surely crucify you on the trunks of palm trees, and you will surely come to know which of us can give the more severe and longer-lasting punishment!

20:72. They said: We will never choose you over the clear signs that have come to us, or over the One Who created us. So decide whatever you will; you can only decide matters pertaining to the life of this world.

20:73. Verily we have believed in our Lord so that He may forgive us our sins and what you compelled us to do of magic, for Allah is better [in reward] and more lasting [in punishment].

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

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

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

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

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

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

Then Pharaoh threatened the magicians and said: ﴿I will surely cut off your hands and feet on opposite sides﴾ as is done to the bandit who spreads mischief; his right hand and left foot are cut off. ﴿and I will surely crucify you on the trunks of palm trees﴾ that is, so that you will become a lesson to others and will be humiliated. ﴿and you will surely come to know which of us can give the more severe and longer-lasting punishment﴾. What he meant, according to his claim, was himself or Allah, and that he was able to give a more severe and longer-lasting punishment than Allah, turning facts on their heads in order to scare the foolish.

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

﴿We will never choose you over the clear signs that have come to us﴾ that is, we will never choose you and what you promised us of reward and being close to you over what Allah has shown us of clear signs which prove that Allah is the only Lord Who is worthy of worship and veneration, and everything other than Him is false, and we will not give you precedence over the One Who originated us and created us; that can never happen.
﴿So decide whatever you will﴾ and choose whatever you will of that with which you threatened us, be it cutting off our limbs, crucifying us or punishing us.
﴿you can only decide matters pertaining to the life of this world﴾ that is, what you are threatening us with is only in this life, which will come to an end and vanish, and will not harm us, unlike the punishment of Allah for the one who persists in his disbelief, for it is eternal and severe.

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

﴿Verily we have believed in our Lord so that He may forgive us our sins﴾ that is, our disbelief and disobedience, for faith expiates evil deeds and repentance erases that which came before it.
﴿and what you compelled us to do of magic﴾ by means of which we opposed the truth. This indicates that they had no choice with regard to their previous deeds; rather Pharaoh had forced them to do that.

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

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

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

﴿for Allah is better [in reward]﴾ than what you have promised us of reward and high status

﴿and more lasting﴾ in punishment than what Pharaoh promised when he said ﴿and you will surely come to know which of us can give the more severe and longer-lasting punishment﴾ *(20: 71)*.

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

﴿إِنَّهُۥ مَن يَأْتِ رَبَّهُۥ مُجْرِمًا فَإِنَّ لَهُۥ جَهَنَّمَ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَىٰ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَمَن يَأْتِهِۦ مُؤْمِنًا قَدْ عَمِلَ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ لَهُمُ ٱلدَّرَجَٰتُ ٱلْعُلَىٰ ﴿٧٥﴾ جَنَّٰتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ خَٰلِدِينَ فِيهَا ۚ وَذَٰلِكَ جَزَٰٓؤُا۟ مَن تَزَكَّىٰ ﴿٧٦﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ٧٤-٧٦)

20:74. Verily whoever comes to his Lord as an evildoer, for him is hell, in which he will neither die nor live.

20:75. But whoever comes to Him as a believer, having done righteous deeds, for such will be high ranks,

20:76. gardens of perpetual abode, through which rivers flow, to abide therein forever. Such is the reward of those who purify themselves.

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

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

But whoever comes to his Lord believing in Him and in His Messengers, following His Books, ﴿having done righteous deeds﴾, both obligatory and recommended,

﴿for such will be high ranks﴾ that is, lofty dwellings, adorned rooms, never-ending delights, rivers flowing in all directions, eternal life and great joy such as no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and it has never crossed the mind of any man.

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

﴿وَلَقَدْ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰٓ أَنْ أَسْرِ بِعِبَادِى فَٱضْرِبْ لَهُمْ طَرِيقًا فِى ٱلْبَحْرِ يَبَسًا لَّا تَخَٰفُ دَرَكًا وَلَا تَخْشَىٰ ﴿٧٧﴾ فَأَتْبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ بِجُنُودِهِۦ فَغَشِيَهُم مِّنَ ٱلْيَمِّ مَا غَشِيَهُمْ ﴿٧٨﴾ وَأَضَلَّ فِرْعَوْنُ قَوْمَهُۥ وَمَا هَدَىٰ ﴿٧٩﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ٧٧-٧٩)

20:77. We inspired Moosâ: Travel by night with My slaves, and strike a dry path for them in the sea. Have no fear of being overtaken and do not be afraid [of drowning in the sea].

20:78. Then Pharaoh pursued them with his troops, but they were completely overwhelmed by the power of the sea.

20:79. Thus Pharaoh led his people astray, and he did not guide them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿يَٰبَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ قَدۡ أَنجَيۡنَٰكُم مِّنۡ عَدُوِّكُمۡ وَوَٰعَدۡنَٰكُمۡ جَانِبَ ٱلطُّورِ ٱلۡأَيۡمَنَ وَنَزَّلۡنَا عَلَيۡكُمُ ٱلۡمَنَّ وَٱلسَّلۡوَىٰ ﴿٨٠﴾ كُلُواْ مِن طَيِّبَٰتِ مَا رَزَقۡنَٰكُمۡ وَلَا تَطۡغَوۡاْ فِيهِ فَيَحِلَّ عَلَيۡكُمۡ غَضَبِي وَمَن يَحۡلِلۡ عَلَيۡهِ غَضَبِي فَقَدۡ هَوَىٰ ﴿٨١﴾ وَإِنِّي لَغَفَّارٞ لِّمَن تَابَ وَءَامَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَٰلِحٗا ثُمَّ ٱهۡتَدَىٰ ﴿٨٢﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ٨٠-٨٢)

20:80. O Children of Israel, verily We delivered you from your enemy, We made an appointment with you on the right-hand side of the mountain, and We sent down to you the manna and quails.

20:81. Eat of the good things We have provided for you, but do not exceed the bounds therein, lest you incur My wrath, for whoever incurs My wrath is indeed ruined.

20:82. Verily I am Oft-Forgiving to those who repent and believe, and do righteous deeds, then remain steadfast.

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

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

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

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

Nevertheless, repentance is always available, no matter what sins a person has committed. Hence Allah says:
﴿Verily I am Oft-Forgiving﴾ that is, I offer abundant forgiveness and mercy to anyone who repents from disbelief, innovation and evildoing, and believes in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers and the Last Day, and does righteous deeds in terms of beliefs, physical actions and words.
﴿then remains steadfast﴾ that is, he follows the straight path and follows the noble Messenger, and adheres to true religion. Allah will forgive such a person for his sins and pardon his previous errors in which he had persisted, because he has taken the best measures that may lead to forgiveness and mercy; indeed all measures are limited to these things, for repentance erases that which came before it, and faith and Islam cancel out that which came before them, and righteous deeds erase bad deeds. Being steadfast in following the path of guidance in all ways, such as acquiring knowledge and reflecting upon a verse or hadith, so that one may understand the meaning that will help him to be steadfast and call others to the true religion,

and refute innovation or disbelief or misguidance, as well as jihad, migration and other aspects of steadfastness in Islam, all expiate sins and fulfil the purpose.

﴿ وَمَآ أَعۡجَلَكَ عَن قَوۡمِكَ يَٰمُوسَىٰ ﴿٨٣﴾ قَالَ هُمۡ أُوْلَآءِ عَلَىٰٓ أَثَرِي وَعَجِلۡتُ إِلَيۡكَ رَبِّ لِتَرۡضَىٰ ﴿٨٤﴾ قَالَ فَإِنَّا قَدۡ فَتَنَّا قَوۡمَكَ مِنۢ بَعۡدِكَ وَأَضَلَّهُمُ ٱلسَّامِرِيُّ ﴿٨٥﴾ فَرَجَعَ مُوسَىٰٓ إِلَىٰ قَوۡمِهِۦ غَضۡبَٰنَ أَسِفٗاۚ قَالَ يَٰقَوۡمِ أَلَمۡ يَعِدۡكُمۡ رَبُّكُمۡ وَعۡدًا حَسَنًاۚ أَفَطَالَ عَلَيۡكُمُ ٱلۡعَهۡدُ أَمۡ أَرَدتُّمۡ أَن يَحِلَّ عَلَيۡكُمۡ غَضَبٞ مِّن رَّبِّكُمۡ فَأَخۡلَفۡتُم مَّوۡعِدِي ﴿٨٦﴾ ﴾ (سورة طه: ٨٣-٨٦)

20:83. What made you hasten and leave your people behind, O Moosâ?

20:84. Moosâ said: They are close behind me; I hastened to You, my Lord, so that You may be pleased.

20:85. Allah said: Verily We have put your people to the test in your absence and as-Sâmiri has led them astray.

20:86. So Moosâ returned to his people, angry and filled with sorrow. He said: O my people, did not your Lord give you a goodly promise? Did the time seem too long for you, or did you want the wrath of your Lord to fall upon you, when you broke your promise to me?

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Allah (ﷻ) had made an appointment with Moosâ, for him to come to Him so that He might send down the Torah to him, a period of thirty nights, then He completed it with ten more. When the appointed time came, Moosâ (عليه السلام) hastened to attend the appointment, longing and eager to keep the appointment. Allah said to him:

﴿What made you hasten and leave your people behind, O Moosâ?﴾ That is, what brought you here before them? Why could you not wait until you came with them? He said:

﴿They are close behind me﴾ that is, they are nearby and will come soon after me; what made me hasten to You, O Lord, was my desire to be near You and seek Your pleasure, and longing for You.

Allah said to him: ﴿Verily We have put your people to the test in your absence﴾ that is, with the worship of the calf; We tested and tried them, but they were not patient, and when that test came to them, they disbelieved
﴿and as-Sâmiri has led them astray﴾.

He ﴿produced for them a calf, an effigy﴾ *(20: 88)* which he fashioned, then it ﴿made a lowing sound, and they said: This is your god, and the god of Moosâ﴾ *(20: 88)*, but Moosâ has forgotten it. The Children of Israel were confused by it, so they worshipped it; Hâroon called them not to do that, but they paid no heed.

When Moosâ returned to his people, he was very angry and upset; in other words, he was filled with rage, anger and distress. He said to them, rebuking them for what they had done: ﴿O my people, did not your Lord give you a goodly promise?﴾ Which was His promise to send down the Torah.
﴿Did the time seem too long for you﴾ that is, did you think that I was away for too long, although it was only a short time?

This is the view of many commentators, but it may be that what is meant is: has it been so long since a Prophet or Messenger came to you, so that you did not have any knowledge of prophethood and the teachings of the Prophets had vanished, so that nothing of their teachings was left with you, and therefore you worshipped something other than Allah because of your ignorance and lack of knowledge of the teachings of prophethood? In other words, that is not so; rather there is prophethood among you, and knowledge is available, so your excuse is not acceptable. Or did you intend by your deed to bring upon yourselves the wrath of your Lord? For you have committed that which justifies His wrath and you have done that which makes His punishment inevitable. This is the reality.

(when you broke your promise to me), as I instructed you to adhere to the path of truth, and I left Hâroon in charge of you, but you did not pay any attention to what I said or show any respect to him.

﴿قَالُوا مَا أَخْلَفْنَا مَوْعِدَكَ بِمَلْكِنَا وَلَٰكِنَّا حُمِّلْنَا أَوْزَارًا مِّن زِينَةِ الْقَوْمِ فَقَذَفْنَاهَا فَكَذَٰلِكَ أَلْقَى السَّامِرِيُّ ﴿٨٧﴾ فَأَخْرَجَ لَهُمْ عِجْلًا جَسَدًا لَّهُ خُوَارٌ فَقَالُوا هَٰذَا إِلَٰهُكُمْ وَإِلَٰهُ مُوسَىٰ فَنَسِيَ ﴿٨٨﴾ أَفَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَلَّا يَرْجِعُ إِلَيْهِمْ قَوْلًا وَلَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا ﴿٨٩﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ٨٧-٨٩)

20:87. They said: We did not break our promise to you of our own accord. But we were loaded with the [sinful] burdens of the [Egyptian] people's jewellery, so we threw them into the fire, and as-Sâmiri also threw likewise.

20:88. Then as-Sâmiri produced for them a calf, an effigy that made a lowing sound, and they said: This is your god, and the god of Moosâ, but he has forgotten!

20:89. Could they not see that it could not give them any response and that it had no power either to cause harm or bring benefit to them?

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That is, they said to him: We did not do what we did deliberately or on our own initiative; rather the reason for that was that we felt the sin of keeping the people's jewellery that was in our possession. They had, according to what they said, borrowed a lot of jewellery from the Egyptians, and when they left Egypt they had it with them. They gathered it together when Moosâ went away, so that they could consult him about it when he returned.

On the day when Pharaoh was drowned, as-Sâmiri had spotted the hoof print of the messenger Jibreel's horse, and his soul prompted him

to take a handful of it. He thought that if he threw it onto something it would come to life, and that was a test and trial for them. He threw it onto that image that he had made in the shape of a calf, and it moved and made a lowing sound, and the people said: Moosâ has gone to seek his Lord but (his Lord) is here; Moosâ has forgotten. This was a sign of their foolishness and lack of intellect; when they saw this strange thing that began to make a lowing sound after having been inanimate, they thought that it was the God of the heavens and the earth!

﴿Could they not see﴾ that the calf ﴿could not give them any response﴾ that is, it could not speak or talk to them, or give them any response, and it could not ward off any harm from them or bring them any benefit. One who is lacking in perfection and unable to speak or do anything does not deserve to be worshipped. It is more lacking than its worshippers, for they are able to speak and do some things, and to bring some benefits and ward off some harm, by Allah's decree.

﴿ وَلَقَدْ قَالَ لَهُمْ هَٰرُونُ مِن قَبْلُ يَٰقَوْمِ إِنَّمَا فُتِنتُم بِهِۦ ۖ وَإِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنُ فَٱتَّبِعُونِى
وَأَطِيعُوٓا۟ أَمْرِى ﴿٩٠﴾ قَالُوا۟ لَن نَّبْرَحَ عَلَيْهِ عَٰكِفِينَ حَتَّىٰ يَرْجِعَ إِلَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ ﴿٩١﴾ قَالَ يَٰهَٰرُونُ
مَا مَنَعَكَ إِذْ رَأَيْتَهُمْ ضَلُّوٓا۟ ﴿٩٢﴾ أَلَّا تَتَّبِعَنِ ۖ أَفَعَصَيْتَ أَمْرِى ﴿٩٣﴾ قَالَ يَبْنَؤُمَّ لَا تَأْخُذْ
بِلِحْيَتِى وَلَا بِرَأْسِىٓ ۖ إِنِّى خَشِيتُ أَن تَقُولَ فَرَّقْتَ بَيْنَ بَنِىٓ إِسْرَٰٓءِيلَ وَلَمْ تَرْقُبْ قَوْلِى
﴿٩٤﴾ ﴾ (سورة طه: ٩٠-٩٤)

20:90. Hâroon had earlier said to them: O my people, you are being tested with it. Verily your Lord is the Most Gracious, so follow me and obey my command.

20:91. They said: We will not stop worshipping it until Moosâ comes back to us.

20:92. Moosâ said: O Hâroon, what prevented you, when you saw that they had gone astray,

20:93. from following me? Did you then disobey my command?

20:94. Hâroon said: O son of my mother, do not seize me by my beard, or by my head! Verily I was afraid that you would say: You have caused division among the Children of Israel, and you did not pay heed to my words.

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They had no excuse for taking the calf for worship. Even though they developed some confusion about worshipping it, Hâroon had forbidden them to do that and had told them that it was a test, and that the true Lord was the Most Gracious, from Whom come all blessings both visible and invisible, and Who wards off harm. He had commanded them to follow him and reject the calf, but they refused and said: ﴿We will not stop worshipping it until Moosâ comes back to us﴾.

Moosâ came to his brother and blamed him, saying: ﴿O Hâroon, what prevented you, when you saw that they had gone astray, from following me﴾ that is, coming after me and telling me so that I could hasten to come back to them?
﴿Did you then disobey my command?﴾ when I said:

﴿...Take my place amongst my people in my absence, do what is right, and do not follow the way of those who spread mischief.﴾ *(al-A râf 7: 142)*

Moosâ took hold of Hâroon by the head and beard, pulling him out of anger and rebuking him. But Hâroon said: ﴿O son of my mother﴾ to soften his heart; otherwise they were full brothers.
﴿do not seize me by my beard, or by my head! Verily I was afraid that you would say: You have caused division among the Children of Israel, and you did not pay heed to my words﴾ – you instructed me to take your place among them in your absence, and if I had followed you (and come after you to tell you what was happening), I would have been neglecting what you had instructed me to adhere to, and I was afraid that you would rebuke me and say: ﴿You have caused

division among the Children of Israel﴾ by leaving them. They had no one to look after them, and that would have divided them and caused them to split into groups. So do not count me among the people who are given to wrongdoing and do not give our enemies cause to rejoice in our misfortune *(cf. 7: 150)*.

Moosâ regretted what he had done to his brother when he did not deserve that, so he said:

﴿...O my Lord, forgive me and my brother and admit us to Your mercy, for You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.﴾ *(al-A'râf 7: 151)*

Then he turned his attention to as-Sâmiri.

﴿قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكَ يَٰسَٰمِرِيُّ ﴿٩٥﴾ قَالَ بَصُرْتُ بِمَا لَمْ يَبْصُرُوا۟ بِهِۦ فَقَبَضْتُ قَبْضَةً مِّنْ أَثَرِ ٱلرَّسُولِ فَنَبَذْتُهَا وَكَذَٰلِكَ سَوَّلَتْ لِى نَفْسِى ﴿٩٦﴾ قَالَ فَٱذْهَبْ فَإِنَّ لَكَ فِى ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ أَن تَقُولَ لَا مِسَاسَ ۖ وَإِنَّ لَكَ مَوْعِدًا لَّن تُخْلَفَهُۥ ۖ وَٱنظُرْ إِلَىٰٓ إِلَٰهِكَ ٱلَّذِى ظَلْتَ عَلَيْهِ عَاكِفًا ۖ لَّنُحَرِّقَنَّهُۥ ثُمَّ لَنَنسِفَنَّهُۥ فِى ٱلْيَمِّ نَسْفًا ﴿٩٧﴾﴾

(سورة طه: ٩٥-٩٧)

20:95. Moosâ said: And what is the matter with you, O Sâmiri?

20:96. He said: I saw what they did not see, so I took a handful [of dust] from the hoof print of the messenger Jibreel's horse, and threw it [into the calf]. Thus my soul prompted me.

20:97. Moosâ said: Begone then! Verily, your [punishment] in this life will be that you will say: Touch me not [and you will be an outcast]. And there awaits an appointed time for your reckoning that you cannot miss. Now look at your god, that you were worshipping. We will surely burn it then scatter its remains in the sea.

﴿Moosâ said: And what is the matter with you, O Sâmiri?﴾ that is, why did you do what you did?

As-Sâmiri said: ﴿I saw what they did not see﴾ that is, he saw Jibreel (ﷺ) on a horse when they came out of the sea, and Pharaoh and his troops drowned – this is according to what the commentators said. So I took a handful from the hoof print of his horse, and I threw it into the calf.

﴿Thus my soul prompted me﴾ to take that handful and then throw it, then what happened happened.

Moosâ said to him: ﴿Begone then!﴾ that is, go far away from me and keep your distance

﴿Begone then! Verily, your [punishment] in this life will be that you will say: Touch me not﴾ that is, the punishment in this life is that no one will come near you and no one will touch you; even if someone wants to come near you, you will say to him: Do not touch me and do not come near me – as a punishment for what you did, for you touched something that no one else touched, and you did something that no one else did.

﴿And there awaits an appointed time for your reckoning that you cannot miss﴾ and you will be requited for your deeds, both good and bad.

﴿Now look at your god, that you were worshipping﴾ namely the calf

﴿We will surely burn it then scatter its remains in the sea﴾. Moosâ did that, and if it had been a god it would have protected itself from the one who intended to harm it and wanted to destroy it. The hearts of the Israelites had been filled with love for the calf, so Moosâ (ﷺ) wanted to destroy it as they were looking on, in such a way that it could not be restored, by burning it, crushing it and scattering its remains in the sea, so as to remove love for it from their hearts, just as the thing itself was to be removed; moreover, leaving it alone would

﴾will surely bear a heavy burden [of sin] on the Day of Resurrection﴿ because of which he turned away from the Qur'an, and doing so led him to disbelief and negligence.

﴾abiding therein [in the punishment for that sin] forever﴿ that is, they will abide in that burden of sin forever; the sin itself will turn into punishment, according to how small or great it is.

﴾What a miserable burden it will be for them on the Day of Resurrection﴿ that is, what a wretched burden it is that they carry and what a wretched punishment they will be punished with on the Day of Resurrection.

Then Allah goes on to mention the state of affairs on the Day of Resurrection and the horrors thereof:

﴿يَوْمَ يُنفَخُ فِي الصُّورِ ۚ وَنَحْشُرُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ يَوْمَئِذٍ زُرْقًا ﴿١٠٢﴾ يَتَخَافَتُونَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِن لَّبِثْتُمْ إِلَّا عَشْرًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ نَّحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ إِذْ يَقُولُ أَمْثَلُهُمْ طَرِيقَةً إِن لَّبِثْتُمْ إِلَّا يَوْمًا ﴿١٠٤﴾﴾

(سورة طه: ١٠٢-١٠٤)

20:102. the day when the Trumpet will be blown; on that day the evildoers will be gathered together, their eyes blind.

20:103. They will whisper to one another: You stayed only for ten [days in the world].

20:104. We know best what they will say, but the most perceptive of them will say: You stayed only one day.

That is, when the Trumpet is blown and the people emerge from their graves, each according to his situation. So those who were pious and feared Allah will be gathered before the Most Gracious as an honoured delegation *(cf. 19: 85)*, and the evildoers will be gathered together, their eyes blind. They will converse with one another,

whispering to one another about how brief their stay in this world was and how swiftly the hereafter has come. Some will say that they stayed only for ten days in this world, and others will say something else. Allah knows of their whispering and hears what they say.

﴿but the most perceptive of them﴾ that is, the one who is closest in his estimate to the facts

﴿will say: You stayed only one day﴾. What this signifies is great regret at how they wasted that short time and spent it careless and negligent, turning away from that which would have benefitted them and turning towards that which harmed them, and now requital has come and the warning of punishment will inevitably be fulfilled. So there is nothing left but regret and calls for doom and destruction.

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

﴿Allah will say: How many years did you remain on earth? They will say: We remained there for a day, or part of a day. But ask those who keep count. Allah will say: You only remained there for a short while, if you had but known.﴾ *(al-Mu'minoon 23: 112-114)*

﴿وَيَسْـَٔلُونَكَ عَنِ ٱلْجِبَالِ فَقُلْ يَنسِفُهَا رَبِّى نَسْفًا ﴿١٠٥﴾ فَيَذَرُهَا قَاعًا صَفْصَفًا ﴿١٠٦﴾ لَّا
تَرَىٰ فِيهَا عِوَجًا وَلَآ أَمْتًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَّبِعُونَ ٱلدَّاعِىَ لَا عِوَجَ لَهُۥ ۖ وَخَشَعَتِ
ٱلْأَصْوَاتُ لِلرَّحْمَٰنِ فَلَا تَسْمَعُ إِلَّا هَمْسًا ﴿١٠٨﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّا تَنفَعُ ٱلشَّفَٰعَةُ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ
ٱلرَّحْمَٰنُ وَرَضِىَ لَهُۥ قَوْلًا ﴿١٠٩﴾ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِۦ عِلْمًا
﴿١١٠﴾ ۞ وَعَنَتِ ٱلْوُجُوهُ لِلْحَىِّ ٱلْقَيُّومِ ۖ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ حَمَلَ ظُلْمًا ﴿١١١﴾ وَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِنَ
ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا يَخَافُ ظُلْمًا وَلَا هَضْمًا ﴿١١٢﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ١٠٥-١١٢)

20:105. They ask you [O Muhammad] about the mountains. Say: My Lord will uproot them and scatter them as dust,

20:106. and He will leave the earth as a smooth, levelled plain,

20:107. In which you will see no depression or elevation.

20:108. On that day, they will follow the caller, without any deviation. All voices will be stilled before the Most Gracious, and you will not hear anything but a faint sound.

20:109. On that day, no intercession will be of any benefit except from one to whom the Most Gracious has given permission and with whose word He is pleased.

20:110. He knows what was before them and what will be after them, but they do not encompass it with their knowledge.

20:111. All faces will be humbled before the Ever-Living, the Self-Sustaining and All-Sustaining, and the one who carries a burden of wrongdoing will surely be lost and doomed.

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

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Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the horrors of the Day of Resurrection and what will occur then of earthquakes and upheaval.

﴿They ask you [O Muhammad] about the mountains﴾ that is, what will happen to them on the Day of Resurrection, and will they remain as they are or not?

﴿Say: My Lord will uproot them and scatter them as dust﴾ that is, He will remove them from their places and they will become like carded wool, or like sand. Then He will crush them and make them scattered dust, so they will diminish and vanish. He will make them level with the earth, and He will make the earth a smooth levelled plain, which will be so flat that the onlooker will see no depression or elevation, no valleys or high ground. The earth will be made smooth and flat, and will be expanded to accommodate all creatures. Allah will spread it out like a leather mat, so they will all be standing in one place, they will all be able to hear the caller and they will all be seen at one time. Hence Allah says:

﴿On that day, they will follow the caller﴾ that is when they are resurrected and rise from their graves. The caller will call them to attend and gather in the gathering place. So they will follow him, hastening towards him, not turning away from him and not deviating to the right or left.

﴿without any deviation﴾ that is, they will not deviate from his call; rather the caller will call all the people and make them all hear, so they will all come to the place of standing with their voices stilled before the Most Gracious.

﴿and you will not hear anything but a faint sound﴾ that is, the sound of their footsteps or the sound of whispering which is moving the lips only. They will be overwhelmed by fear, quiet and attentive, awaiting the judgement of the Most Gracious, utterly humbled. In that great place of standing, you will see rich and poor, men and women, free and slave, kings and commoners, silent and attentive, their gazes lowered, their necks bent in submission, kneeling in humility, not knowing what the fate of each will be or what will be done to him. Each person will be preoccupied with himself and his own situation, and he will be heedless of his father, brother, friends and loved ones. ﴿Every one of them, on that day, will have too many concerns of his own to care about anyone else.﴾ *('Abasa 80: 37)*

At that time the Just Judge will pass judgement on them and will requite the doer of good for his good deeds and the doer of evil by depriving him of reward.

The hope that we have in the generous Lord, the Most Gracious, Most Merciful, is that He will show people grace, kindness, pardon and forgiveness such as cannot be described or imagined.

At that time all people will hope for His mercy because of what they see, but those who believed in Him and His Messengers will be singled out for mercy. If it is asked: on what basis do you have this hope? Or if you wish, you may say: how do you know what is

mentioned above? Our response is: it is because of what we know about His mercy prevailing over His wrath, and what we know of His vast generosity which encompasses all of creation, and because of what we see in ourselves and others of abundant blessings in this realm, and especially what we know about His mercy on the Day of Resurrection, for Allah says: ﴿All voices will be stilled before the Most Gracious﴾ *(20: 108)* and ﴿except from one to whom the Most Gracious has given permission﴾, and He says elsewhere:

﴿On that day true dominion will belong to the Most Gracious...﴾ *(al-Furqân 25: 26)*

Moreover, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Allah has one hundred parts of mercy, and He sent down to His slaves one part thereof, by virtue of which they show mercy and compassion to one another, and even the animal lifts its foot for fear of stepping on its offspring, because of the mercy instilled in its heart. Then when the Day of Resurrection comes, this part of mercy will be put back together with the other ninety-nine parts of mercy, whereby mercy will be shown to all people.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

– and he said:

«Allah is more merciful towards His slaves than a mother towards her child.» (Muslim)

So say whatever you wish about His mercy; it is more than what you say. Imagine whatever you wish; it is far above that. So glory be to the One Who showed mercy in His justice and punishment, just as He showed mercy in His grace, kindness and reward.

Exalted be the One Whose mercy encompasses all things, Whose generosity encompasses all living beings. Glorified be the One Who has no need of His slaves and is merciful towards them, whilst they are in need of Him constantly, in all their affairs, so they cannot do without Him even for the blink of an eye.

﴿On that day, no intercession will be of any benefit except from one to whom the Most Gracious has given permission and with whose word He is pleased﴾ that is, no one among humankind can intercede with Him unless He has given permission for him to intercede, and He does not give permission to anyone except one with whose word – that is, his intercession – He is pleased, among the Prophets, Messengers and His slaves who are close to Him, for those with whose words and deeds He is pleased, namely the sincere believers. If any one of these conditions is not met, there is no way anyone can benefit from the intercession of anyone else.

In that place of standing, people will be divided into two groups, the first of which will be those who did wrong by disbelieving and committing evil deeds. These people will attain nothing but frustration, deprivation, the painful punishment in hell and the wrath of the Almighty Judge.

The second group is those who believed as enjoined and did righteous deeds, both obligatory and sunnah. They ﴿need have no fear of being wronged﴾ that is, of anything being added to their bad deeds ﴿or deprived﴾ that is, of anything being detracted from their good deeds. Rather their sins will be forgiven, they will be cleansed of their faults and the reward for their good deeds will be multiplied.

﴿...And if there is a good deed Allah will multiply it, and give an immense reward of His own.﴾ *(an-Nisā' 4: 40)*

﴿ وَكَذَٰلِكَ أَنزَلْنَٰهُ قُرْءَانًا عَرَبِيًّا وَصَرَّفْنَا فِيهِ مِنَ ٱلْوَعِيدِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ أَوْ يُحْدِثُ لَهُمْ ذِكْرًا ﴿١١٣﴾ ﴾ (سورة طه: ١١٣)

20:113. Thus We have sent it down, the Qur'an in Arabic, and given all kinds of warnings in it, so that they may fear Allah or pay heed.

That is, thus We have sent down this Book, in the noble Arabic language which you understand and comprehend, and none of its wordings or meanings are hidden from you.

﴿and given all kinds of warnings in it﴾ that is, We have given many various kinds of warnings, sometimes by mentioning divine names that are indicative of justice and vengeance, sometimes by giving examples of the punishments of previous nations and instructing later nations to learn from them, sometimes by mentioning the consequences of sin and how it makes a person look bad, sometimes by mentioning the horrors of the Day of Resurrection and what it involves of events that cause distress and anxiety, sometimes by mentioning hell and what it contains of all types of punishment and suffering. All of that is out of mercy towards people, so that they may fear Allah and give up evil and sin that bring them harm.

﴿or pay heed﴾ and thus start doing acts of obedience and good deeds that will benefit them. The fact that it is Arabic and that it gives all kinds of warnings is the greatest reason and greatest motive to follow the path of piety and righteous deeds, for if it was not Arabic or did not give all kinds of warnings, it would not have that impact.

﴿فَتَعَٰلَى ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمَلِكُ ٱلْحَقُّ ۗ وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِٱلْقُرْءَانِ مِن قَبْلِ أَن يُقْضَىٰٓ إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُۥ ۖ وَقُل رَّبِّ زِدْنِى عِلْمًا ﴿١١٤﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ١١٤)

20:114. So exalted be Allah, the True Sovereign. Do not hasten to repeat [the newly-revealed verses of] the Qur'an before its revelation to you is completed, and say: O my Lord, increase me in knowledge.

Having mentioned His decree concerning requital of His slaves and His decree concerning religious instructions that He revealed in His Book, which is a sign of His dominion, Allah (ﷻ) now says:

﴿So exalted be Allah﴾ that is, He is most high and sublime, above having any defects or shortcomings.

﴿the True Sovereign﴾ Whose attribute is dominion and all creatures are His subjects, for the decree of the Sovereign with regard to universal or religious decrees is inevitable and binding. His existence, dominion and perfection are true; attributes of perfection cannot rightfully be attributed to any but the Owner of Majesty, which includes the attribute of sovereignty. Even if created beings may possess some sort of sovereignty at some times, over some things, this is sovereignty that is limited, imperfect and temporary. As for the Lord, He never ceases to be the Sovereign, Ever-Living, Self-Sustaining and All-Sustaining, and Majestic.

﴿Do not hasten to repeat [the newly-revealed verses of] the Qur'an before its revelation to you is completed﴾ that is, do not hasten (O Muhammad [ﷺ]) to repeat the verses of the Qur'an whilst Jibreel is still reciting them to you; be patient until he has finished, and when he has finished, then recite it, for Allah has guaranteed that you will be able to memorise it and recite it, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿Do not move your tongue [O Prophet] in haste to repeat and memorize this revelation. Verily, it is incumbent upon Us to enable you to memorize it and enable you to recite it. So when We recite it [through Jibreel], follow its recitation attentively. Then it is incumbent upon Us to make its meanings clear.﴾ *(al-Qiyâmah 75: 16-19)*

Because the Prophet's hastening to repeat the Revelation was indicative of his perfect love for knowledge and his eagerness to acquire it, Allah (ﷻ) instructed him to ask Him for more knowledge, for knowledge is good and to have a great deal of goodness is something that is required. It is from Allah, and the way to attain it is by striving, longing for knowledge, asking Allah for it, seeking His help and acknowledging one's need for Him at all times.

From this verse we learn the etiquette of receiving knowledge, and that the one who listens to knowledge must be patient and wait

until the teacher has finished speaking, because what he wants to say is interconnected. Then when he has finished, the one who has questions may ask him. He should not hasten to ask questions and interrupt the teacher when he is speaking, because that is a cause of being deprived of knowledge. At the same time, the one who is asked a question should try to understand what the questioner is asking and find out what he really wants to know before answering, because that will help him to give the right answer.

﴿وَلَقَدْ عَهِدْنَآ إِلَىٰٓ ءَادَمَ مِن قَبْلُ فَنَسِىَ وَلَمْ نَجِدْ لَهُۥ عَزْمًا ﴿١١٥﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ١١٥)

20:115. Indeed We gave a command to Adam before, but he forgot, and We found him lacking in firm resolve.

That is, We instructed Adam and made a covenant with him so that he would adhere to it, and he did adhere to it, submit to it and comply with it, and he resolved to carry it out. Yet despite that, he forgot what he had been instructed to do and his strong resolve wavered. Therefore what happened to him happened. He became a lesson for his offspring, and their nature became like his. Adam forgot so his offspring forget; he did wrong so they do wrong. He could not adhere to what he firmly resolved to do, and they are the same. But he hastened to repent from his error, and he admitted and acknowledged it, so he was forgiven, and whoever does as his father (Adam) did will not go wrong.

Then Allah discusses in detail that which He spoke of in general terms:

﴿وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ ٱسْجُدُوا۟ لِءَادَمَ فَسَجَدُوٓا۟ إِلَّآ إِبْلِيسَ أَبَىٰ ﴿١١٦﴾ فَقُلْنَا يَٰٓـَٔادَمُ إِنَّ هَٰذَا عَدُوٌّ لَّكَ وَلِزَوْجِكَ فَلَا يُخْرِجَنَّكُمَا مِنَ ٱلْجَنَّةِ فَتَشْقَىٰٓ ﴿١١٧﴾ إِنَّ لَكَ أَلَّا

تَجُوعَ فِيهَا وَلَا تَعْرَىٰ ﴿١١٨﴾ وَأَنَّكَ لَا تَظْمَؤُا۟ فِيهَا وَلَا تَضْحَىٰ ﴿١١٩﴾ فَوَسْوَسَ إِلَيْهِ
ٱلشَّيْطَٰنُ قَالَ يَٰٓـَٔادَمُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكَ عَلَىٰ شَجَرَةِ ٱلْخُلْدِ وَمُلْكٍ لَّا يَبْلَىٰ ﴿١٢٠﴾ فَأَكَلَا
مِنْهَا فَبَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْءَٰتُهُمَا وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفَانِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِن وَرَقِ ٱلْجَنَّةِ ۚ وَعَصَىٰٓ ءَادَمُ رَبَّهُۥ
فَغَوَىٰ ﴿١٢١﴾ ثُمَّ ٱجْتَبَٰهُ رَبُّهُۥ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ وَهَدَىٰ ﴿١٢٢﴾ ﴾ (سورة طه: ١١٦-١٢٢)

20:116. And [remember] when We said to the angels: Prostrate before Adam, and they [all] prostrated except Iblees; he refused.

20:117. We said: O Adam, verily this is an enemy to you and your wife; do not let him drive you both out of paradise, for then you will be put to toil.

20:118. [But] here [in paradise] it is granted to you that you will not go hungry or be naked,

20:119. Nor will you be thirsty here [in paradise] or suffer from the sun's heat.

20:120. Then Shaytân whispered to him, saying: O Adam, shall I show you the tree of immortality and a dominion that will never decay?

20:121. So they both ate from the tree, then their private parts became visible to them, so they began to put together leaves from the garden to cover themselves. Thus Adam disobeyed his Lord, and fell into error.

20:122. Then his Lord brought him close, accepted his repentance, and guided him.

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That is, after He had finished creating Adam with His Hand, and after He had taught him the names of all things and favoured and honoured him, He commended the angels to prostrate to him by way of honour and respect, and they hastened to prostrate in obedience to the command. But among them was Iblees, who was too arrogant to obey the command of his Lord. He refused to prostrate to Adam and he said:

﴿...I am better than he; You created me from fire and You created him from clay.﴾ *(al-A'râf 7: 12)*

At that point his extreme animosity towards Adam and his wife became clear, because he was an enemy to Allah. He also showed his envy, which was the reason for his animosity. So Allah warned Adam and his wife against him, saying: ﴿do not let him drive you both out of paradise, for then you will be put to toil﴾ if you are driven out of it. For in it you have readily available provision and a life of ease.

﴿[But] here [in paradise] it is granted to you that you will not go hungry or be naked, nor will you be thirsty here [in paradise] or suffer from the sun's heat﴾. Thus he was guaranteed a perpetual supply of food, drink, clothing and water, with no toil or exhaustion, but He forbade him to eat from a particular tree, and said:

﴿...but do not approach this tree, or else you will both become transgressors.﴾ *(al-A'râf 7: 19)*

But Shaytân kept on inciting them and making the idea of eating from that tree fair-seeming to them, saying:
﴿O Adam, shall I show you the tree of immortality﴾ that is, a tree which whoever eats from it will live forever in paradise.
﴿and a dominion that will never decay﴾ that is, it will never end, if you eat from it. He approached him as a sincere adviser, using gentle words, and Adam was deceived by him. They both ate from the tree, then they fell into despair; their clothes fell from them and their sin became apparent to them. The private parts of each of them became visible to the other, after they had been covered, and they began to put together leaves from the garden to cover themselves. They felt very embarrassed before Allah, the extent of which only Allah knows.

﴿Thus Adam disobeyed his Lord, and fell into error﴾, but they both hastened to repent and turn back to Allah. They both said:

﴿...Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves. If You do not forgive us and have mercy on us, we will certainly be among the losers.﴾ *(al-A'râf 7: 23)*

So his Lord brought him close, chose him and enabled him to repent.

﴿accepted his repentance, and guided him﴾. After repenting, he was better than he had been before, so this scheme of his enemy backfired and his plot failed. The blessing was perfected for Adam and his offspring, and it became obligatory for them to show gratitude for the blessing and acknowledge it, and to beware of this enemy who was always with them, watching out by night and day.

﴿O children of Adam, do not let Shayṭân deceive you, as he caused your parents to be expelled from the garden, stripping them of their garments and making their private parts visible to them. For he and his offspring see you from where you cannot see them. We have made the devils friends and allies of those who do not believe.﴾ *(al-A'râf 7: 27)*

﴿ قَالَ ٱهۡبِطَا مِنۡهَا جَمِيعَۢاۖ بَعۡضُكُمۡ لِبَعۡضٍ عَدُوّٞۖ فَإِمَّا يَأۡتِيَنَّكُم مِّنِّي هُدٗى فَمَنِ ٱتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَلَا يَشۡقَىٰ ١٢٣ وَمَنۡ أَعۡرَضَ عَن ذِكۡرِي فَإِنَّ لَهُۥ مَعِيشَةٗ ضَنكٗا وَنَحۡشُرُهُۥ يَوۡمَ ٱلۡقِيَٰمَةِ أَعۡمَىٰ ١٢٤ قَالَ رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرۡتَنِيٓ أَعۡمَىٰ وَقَدۡ كُنتُ بَصِيرٗا ١٢٥ قَالَ كَذَٰلِكَ أَتَتۡكَ ءَايَٰتُنَا فَنَسِيتَهَاۖ وَكَذَٰلِكَ ٱلۡيَوۡمَ تُنسَىٰ ١٢٦ وَكَذَٰلِكَ نَجۡزِي مَنۡ أَسۡرَفَ وَلَمۡ يُؤۡمِنۢ بِـَٔايَٰتِ رَبِّهِۦۚ وَلَعَذَابُ ٱلۡأٓخِرَةِ أَشَدُّ وَأَبۡقَىٰٓ ١٢٧ ﴾ (سورة طه: ١٢٣-١٢٧)

20:123. Allah said: Go down from here, all of you, as enemies to one another. Then when guidance comes to you from Me, whoever follows My guidance will not go astray or suffer wretchedness.

20:124. But whoever turns away from My Reminder [the Qur'an] will have a miserable life, and on the Day of Resurrection We will raise him up blind.

20:125. He will say: O my Lord, why have You raised me up blind, when I was able to see before?

20:126. Allah will say: Just as Our revelations came to you and you disregarded them, so will you, on this day, be disregarded.

20:127. Thus do We requite him who transgresses beyond bounds and does not believe in the revelations of his Lord; and the punishment of the hereafter is more severe and more lasting.

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Here Allah tells us that He instructed Adam and Iblees to go down to the earth, and He decreed that Adam and his offspring should take the Shaytân as their enemy and beware of him, and they should take precautions and be prepared to fight him. Allah told Adam that He would send down Books to them and would send Messengers to them to explain to them the straight path that leads to Him and to His paradise, and to warn them against this avowed enemy. Whenever guidance came to them, in the form of the Books and Messengers, whoever followed that guidance, did what he was instructed to do and refrained from what was prohibited, would not go astray in this world or the hereafter, and would not suffer wretchedness in either realm; rather he would be guided to the straight path in this world and the hereafter, and he would attain happiness and safety in the hereafter.

Elsewhere, Allah tells us that such a one will not fear or grieve, as He says:

﴿...whosoever follows My guidance will have no fear, nor will they grieve.﴾ *(al-Baqarah 2: 38)*

Following true guidance means believing in the text and not rejecting it on the basis of doubts and specious arguments, and complying with the command and not going against it by following whims and desires.

﴿But whoever turns away from My Reminder﴾ that is, My Book by means of which he will be reminded of all sublime aims and goals; whoever turns away from it due to lack of interest in it or – what is worse – turns away from it because he rejects it and does not believe in it

﴿will have a miserable life﴾ that is, his requital will be that We will make his life difficult and hard; this cannot mean anything other than a life of pain and suffering.

The phrase ﴿miserable life﴾ has also been interpreted as referring to the punishment in the grave, for his grave will be narrow and he will be compressed in it and punished, as a requital for turning away from the reminder of his Lord. This is one of the verses that point to the punishment in the grave; the second such verse is:

﴿...If you [O Muhammad] could but see the evildoers when they are in the throes of death and the angels are stretching out their hands...﴾ *(al-An'âm 6: 93)*

The third verse is:

﴿We will surely cause them to taste a lesser punishment before the greater punishment...﴾ *(as-Sajdah 32: 21)*

– and the fourth verse is that in which Allah said concerning the people of Pharaoh:

﴿The fire, which will be shown to them morning and afternoon...﴾ *(Ghâfir 40: 46)*

What made some of the earlier scholars think that this refers to the punishment of the grave only and limit its interpretation to that only – and Allah knows best – is the end of the verse *(20: 124)* quoted above, at the end of which Allah mentions the punishment of the Day of Resurrection.

Some commentators thought that the phrase ﴿miserable life﴾ applies to this world, and what befalls the one who turns away from his Lord's reminder of distress, grief and pain, which is a kind of hastened portion of the punishment, as well as what will befall him in *al-barzakh* and in the hereafter, because the phrase ﴿miserable life﴾ is mentioned in general terms and is not specific, so it may refer to any stage.

﴿and on the Day of Resurrection We will raise him up blind﴾ in a real, physical sense, according to the correct view. This refers to the one who turns away from the reminder of his Lord. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...On the Day of Resurrection, We will gather them on their faces, blind, dumb and deaf...﴾ *(al-Isrâ' 17: 97)*

He (the one who is raised in such a manner) will say, by way of feeling humiliation, enquiring, expressing pain and complaining about his situation:

﴿O my Lord, why have You raised me up blind, when I was able to see before?﴾ – that is, in the previous world. What has brought me to this horrible situation?

﴿Allah will say: Just as Our revelations came to you and you disregarded them﴾ by turning away from them

﴿so will you, on this day, be disregarded﴾ that is, you will be left to suffer the punishment.

So the answer will be that this is exactly what you did, for the requital is of the same nature as the deed. Just as you were blind to the remembrance of your Lord, and you turned away and forgot Him, and you forgot your share of the reminder, Allah will make you blind in the hereafter, and you will be resurrected to the fire, blind, deaf and dumb, for He will have turned away from you and forgotten you, leaving you to suffer the punishment.

﴿Thus﴾ with this punishment

﴿do We requite him who transgresses beyond bounds﴾ by overstepping the mark and going beyond the bounds of what is permissible to commit what is prohibited

﴿and does not believe in the revelations of his Lord﴾ that clearly point to the requirements of faith; Allah will not have wronged him and will not have punished him when he did not deserve it; rather the reason for that is his transgression and lack of faith.

﴿and the punishment of the hereafter is more severe﴾ that is, many times more severe than punishment in this world
﴿and more lasting﴾ because it never ends, unlike worldly punishment, which does come to an end. So what is required is to fear Allah and beware of the punishment of the hereafter.

﴿أَفَلَمْ يَهْدِ لَهُمْ كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُم مِّنَ ٱلْقُرُونِ يَمْشُونَ فِى مَسَٰكِنِهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ فِى ذَٰلِكَ لَءَايَٰتٍ لِّأُو۟لِى ٱلنُّهَىٰ ﴿١٢٨﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ١٢٨)

20:128. Has it not become clear to them how many nations We destroyed before them, in whose dwelling places they now walk about? Surely in that there are signs for people of sound intellect.

That is, has it not become clear to these disbelievers who turn away? They should be prompted to follow the path of guidance and to avoid the path of misguidance and wickedness, by the punishment that Allah sent down upon the disbelievers who came before them, of past nations and successive nations whose stories they know, and they tell one another about their stories, and they see with their own eyes the dwellings left behind by those people, such as the people of Hood, Ṣâliḥ, Looṭ and others. When they rejected Our Messengers and turned away from our Books, we sent upon them the painful punishment.

What guarantee do these people have that the same fate will not befall them as befell those people?

﴿Are your disbelievers [O Quraysh] better than those, or have you been promised immunity in the [earlier] scriptures? Or do they say: We are a united group, bound to prevail?﴾ *(al-Qamar 54: 43-44)*

The answer is none of these; these disbelievers are no better than those of the past, such that the punishment could be warded off from

them because of their goodness. In fact they are worse than them, because they disbelieved in the noblest of the Messengers and the best of the Books. They have not been granted any immunity in the scriptures or any covenant with Allah, and they are not as they say, that their large number and unity will benefit them and protect them, for they are too insignificant for that.

The destruction of previous nations for their sins is one of the means of guidance, because it is one of the signs that point to the truthfulness of the message brought to them by the Messengers and the falseness of the path they were following. But not everyone benefits from the signs; rather it is people of sound intellect and upright nature who benefit, as these characteristics restrain them from doing that which is not appropriate.

﴿وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِن رَّبِّكَ لَكَانَ لِزَامًا وَأَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى ﴿١٢٩﴾ فَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا يَقُولُونَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوعِ الشَّمْسِ وَقَبْلَ غُرُوبِهَا ۖ وَمِنْ آنَاءِ اللَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْ وَأَطْرَافَ النَّهَارِ لَعَلَّكَ تَرْضَىٰ ﴿١٣٠﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ١٢٩-١٣٠)

20:129. Were it not for a prior decree from your Lord, and a term [of respite] already fixed, [their punishment in this world] would have been inevitable.

20:130. So bear patiently what they say, and glorify and praise your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its setting, and glorify Him during the night and during the day, so that you may be pleased [with the reward that Allah will give you].

These words offer consolation to the Messenger (ﷺ) and encourage him to be patient and not hasten to seek the destruction of the disbelievers who turn away, for their disbelief and rejection in

and of themselves form a good reason for punishment to inevitably befall them, because Allah has made the punishments to be the result and inevitable consequence of sin.

These people have done that which leads to the cause of punishment, but what delayed its coming was the decree of your Lord, which dictated that they should be given respite and the punishment should be delayed, and the duration of the respite had already been determined. It is the predetermined period of respite, in fulfilment of the divine decree, that caused the punishment to be delayed until the time for it came, so that they might pay heed to the command of Allah and repent, so that He might accept their repentance and lift the punishment, if it had not yet become inevitable.

Therefore Allah instructed His Messenger (ﷺ) to be patient in bearing their offensive words, and He instructed him to seek His help by glorifying and praising his Lord at these times of virtue, before sunrise and sunset, and during the day, and at some times of the night. (In other words,) perhaps if you do that, you will be content with what your Lord has given you of reward in this world and the hereafter, your heart will be reassured, you will find joy in worshipping your Lord, and you will be distracted thereby from thinking about their offensive words, and thus patience will become easy for you.

﴿وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ إِلَىٰ مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِۦٓ أَزْوَٰجًا مِّنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيهِ ۚ وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَىٰ ﴿١٣١﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ١٣١)

20:131. Do not look longingly at the good things We have given some among them to enjoy, the splendour of the life of this world, so that We may test them thereby. The provision of your Lord is better and more lasting.

That is, do not be unduly impressed and do not look repeatedly and admiringly at different aspects of this world and those who are enjoying them, such as delicious food and drink, fine clothing, beautiful houses, and adorned women, for all of that is merely the splendour of the life of this world. People who are deceived by this life are excited about these things and they dazzle the eyes of those who turn away from the truth, and the wrongdoers enjoy these things without paying any attention to the hereafter. But this world will soon come to an end, and everything in it will cease to be; it destroys those who love it and are infatuated by it, but they will regret it at a time when regret will be of no benefit, and they will realise, when the Resurrection comes, that what they were pursuing was no more than a trial and test from Allah, to find out who would make this world his sole concern and be deceived by it, and who would do good, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

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

﴿The provision of your Lord﴾ in this world of knowledge, faith, and righteous deeds, and in the hereafter of eternal bliss and a good life in closeness to the Most Gracious Lord,
﴿is better﴾ in essence and attributes than enjoyment in this life,
﴿and more lasting﴾ because it will never end; its food and shade will be perpetual, as Allah says elsewhere:

﴿But you [O humankind] prefer the life of this world, even though the hereafter is better and more lasting.﴾ *(al-A'lā 87: 16-17)*

This verse indicates that if an individual notices in himself any aspiration for the adornment of this world and finds himself interested in pursuing it, he should remind himself of what lies ahead of the provision of his Lord, and he should weigh up the two matters.

﴿وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَوٰةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا ۖ لَا نَسْـَٔلُكَ رِزْقًا ۖ نَّحْنُ نَرْزُقُكَ ۗ وَالْعَٰقِبَةُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ﴿١٣٢﴾﴾ (سورة طه: ١٣٢)

20:132. Enjoin your family [and your people] to establish prayer and remain steadfast therein. We do not ask you for provision; rather it is We who provide for you. And the best outcome is for those who fear Allah.

That is, encourage and urge your family to establish prayer, both obligatory and supererogatory. Enjoining prayer also implicitly enjoins everything without which it cannot be done. Hence this is a command to teach them how to pray, teach them what could invalidate the prayer, and teach them how to pray properly.

﴿and remain steadfast therein﴾ that is, remain steadfast in performing the prayer in the proper manner, paying attention to its essential parts, etiquette and focus of mind. If anyone finds that difficult, he should force himself to do it and strive to achieve that, and he should be patient in so doing. If he performs his prayer in the manner enjoined, he will be more careful and observant with regard to other matters of his religion, but if he neglects it, he will be more careless with regard to other matters. Then Allah (ﷻ) guarantees provision to His Messenger (ﷺ), so he should not be distracted by thinking of it from carrying out the commands of his religion.

﴿rather it is We who provide for you﴾ that is, your provision is due from Us and We guarantee it, just as We guarantee the provision of all creatures, so how about one who complies with Our commands and focuses on remembering Us? The provision of Allah is guaranteed to all, both those who fear Him and others, so we should focus our attention on that which will bring eternal happiness, which is piety or fear of Allah (*taqwâ*). Hence Allah says:

﴿And the best outcome﴾ in this world and the hereafter ﴿is for those who fear Allah﴾, which means doing what is enjoined and refraining from what is prohibited. Whoever does that will have the best outcome, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿...and the best outcome is for those who fear Allah.﴾ *(al-A'râf 7: 128)*

﴿ وَقَالُوا۟ لَوْلَا يَأْتِينَا بِـَٔايَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِۦٓ ۚ أَوَلَمْ تَأْتِهِم بَيِّنَةُ مَا فِى ٱلصُّحُفِ ٱلْأُولَىٰ ﴿١٣٣﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّآ أَهْلَكْنَٰهُم بِعَذَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِهِۦ لَقَالُوا۟ رَبَّنَا لَوْلَآ أَرْسَلْتَ إِلَيْنَا رَسُولًا فَنَتَّبِعَ ءَايَٰتِكَ مِن قَبْلِ أَن نَّذِلَّ وَنَخْزَىٰ ﴿١٣٤﴾ قُلْ كُلٌّ مُّتَرَبِّصٌ فَتَرَبَّصُوا۟ ۖ فَسَتَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلصِّرَٰطِ ٱلسَّوِىِّ وَمَنِ ٱهْتَدَىٰ ﴿١٣٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة طه: ١٣٣-١٣٥)

20:133. They say: Why does he not bring us a sign from his Lord? Has there not come to them that which explains and confirms what was in the earlier scriptures [namely the Qur'an]?

20:134. If We had destroyed them with a punishment before this, they would have said: Our Lord, why did You not send to us a Messenger so that we could have followed Your revelations before we were humiliated and disgraced?

20:135. Say: Each of us is waiting; so wait, and you will come to know who is following the straight path and who is rightly guided.

Those who disbelieved in the Messenger (ﷺ) said: Why does he not bring us a sign from his Lord? What they meant was the signs that they themselves demanded. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿They say: We will never believe in you until you cause a spring to gush forth from the earth for us; or you have a garden of date palms and vines, and you cause rivers to gush forth in their midst; or you cause the sky to fall upon us in pieces, as you claimed [will happen

on the Day of Resurrection]; or you bring Allah and the angels before us, face to face.﴾ *(al-Isrâ' 17: 90-92)*

This was obstinacy, stubbornness and wrongdoing on their part, for they and the Messenger (ﷺ) were all humans and slaves of Allah, so it was not appropriate for them to demand signs according to their own whims and desires; rather it is the One Who sends down the signs Who chooses them according to His wisdom, and that is Allah.

Because their words ﴿Why does he not bring us a sign from his Lord?﴾ implied that he had not brought them a sign to confirm his truthfulness, these words are to be regarded as a lie and fabrication, because he had indeed brought clear miracles and overwhelming signs, any one of which would be sufficient to achieve the purpose. Hence Allah says:

﴿Has there not come to them﴾, if they are sincere in what they say and are really seeking truth that is based on evidence,

﴿that which explains and confirms what was in the earlier scriptures?﴾ namely this Qur'an, which confirms that which was in the earlier scriptures, such as the Torah, Gospel and so on, with which it is in harmony, and it tells of what they told before, and they also offer testimony for the Qur'an and foretell of the Messenger (ﷺ). This is like the verse in which Allah says:

﴿Is it not enough for them that We have sent down to you the Book [Qur'an] which is recited to them? Verily, in that is mercy and a reminder for people who believe.﴾ *(al-'Ankaboot 29: 51)*

The signs benefit the believers, and increase them in faith and certainty; as for those who turn away from them and oppose them, they will not believe in them and will not benefit from them.

﴿Verily, those against whom the decree of your Lord is fulfilled will not believe, even if every sign were to come to them, until they see [for themselves] the painful punishment.﴾ *(Yoonus 10: 96-97)*

Rather the benefit in showing them Our signs is to establish the proof of Allah against them, lest they say when the punishment befalls them: ﴿Our Lord, why did You not send to us a Messenger so that we could have followed Your revelations before we were humiliated and disgraced﴾ by the punishment? For His Messenger did indeed come, bringing with him His signs and proof; so if you are as you claim, then believe in him.

Say, O Muhammad (ﷺ), to those who reject you and who say: wait for some misfortune to befall him

﴿Say: Each of us is waiting﴾, so wait for my death, and I will wait for the punishment to befall you.

﴿Say: Are you waiting for anything to happen to us except one of the two good things [victory or martyrdom]? But we are waiting for Allah to afflict you with a punishment, either from Himself or at our hands...﴾ *(at-Tawbah 9: 52)*

﴿so wait, and you will come to know who is following the straight path and who is rightly guided﴾ in his attitude, me or you, because the one who has the right attitude is the winner and is rightly guided, and he will be saved and will triumph. But the one who diverts from that path will be a loser and a failure, and he will be punished.

Thus it is known that it is the Messenger (ﷺ) who is like that, and his enemies are something other than that. And Allah knows best.

This is the end of the commentary on Soorat Ṭâ Hâ.
All praise and thanks are for Allah, and may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his family, and his Companions abundantly until the Day of Judgement.

# 21.
# Soorat al-Anbiyâ'

(Makki)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

﴿اقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ وَهُمْ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿١﴾ مَا يَأْتِيهِم مِّن ذِكْرٍ
مِّن رَّبِّهِم مُّحْدَثٍ إِلَّا اسْتَمَعُوهُ وَهُمْ يَلْعَبُونَ ﴿٢﴾ لَاهِيَةً قُلُوبُهُمْ ۗ وَأَسَرُّوا النَّجْوَى
الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا هَلْ هَٰذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ ۖ أَفَتَأْتُونَ السِّحْرَ وَأَنتُمْ تُبْصِرُونَ
﴿٣﴾ قَالَ رَبِّي يَعْلَمُ الْقَوْلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٤﴾﴾ (سورة
الأنبياء: ١-٤)

21:1. The Day of Reckoning for humankind has drawn near, and yet they turn away in heedlessness.

21:2. No fresh revelation comes to them from their Lord, but they listen to it in ridicule,

21:3. with hearts distracted. The wrongdoers whisper to one another in secret: Is this man not a human being like yourselves? Will you, then, follow his magic with your eyes wide open?

21:4. He said: My Lord knows every word spoken in the heavens and on earth, for He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

This is an expression of amazement at people's attitude, and at the fact that no reminder moves them, and they do not pay any attention to any warner, for their reckoning has drawn near and the requital for their deeds, both good and bad, is at hand, but they are turning away in heedlessness, paying no attention to the purpose for which they were created and ignoring that of which they have been warned, as if they were created for this world and were born merely to enjoy physical pleasures therein. Allah keeps renewing the reminder and exhortation to them, but they persist in their negligence and turning away. Hence He says:

﴿No fresh revelation comes to them from their Lord﴾, reminding them of that which will benefit them and urging them to do it, and reminding them of that which will harm them and warning them against it

﴿but they listen to it﴾ in a manner of listening that establishes proof against them

﴿in ridicule, with hearts distracted﴾ that is, their hearts are heedless and turn away, distracted by worldly concerns and idle pursuits. They are distracted by physical pleasure, striving for false purposes and ridiculing the message, even though what they should do is something other than that; their hearts should be focused on the commands and prohibitions of Allah, and they should listen to the message in such a way that they understand the intended meaning, and they should strive physically to worship their Lord, which is the purpose for which they were created, and they should be mindful of the Resurrection, reckoning and recompense. By doing that, they would attain what they aspire for, their affairs would be put in order and their deeds would become righteous.

There are two scholarly views concerning the meaning of the words: ﴿The Day of Reckoning for humankind has drawn near﴾ *(21: 1)*.

The first view is that the Ummah is the last of nations and its Messenger (ﷺ) is the final Messenger, and the Hour will come upon his Ummah. So the reckoning has drawn near to them in contrast to the nations that came before them, because the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«I and the Hour have been sent like these two.» (Muslim)

-- and he held up two of his fingers together, the forefinger and the one that is next to it.

The second view is that what is meant by the approach of the reckoning is death, because when a person dies, his reckoning has begun and he has entered the realm of requital for deeds. This is an expression of amazement at all those who are negligent and turn away, not knowing when death will strike, morning or evening. This is how all people are, except those on whom Allah has bestowed His grace, so they prepare for death and what comes after it.

Then Allah tells us what the disbelievers and wrongdoers spoke of when they whispered to one another by way of stubbornness, opposing the truth with falsehood. They conversed with one another and reached an agreement among themselves that they would say concerning the Messenger (ﷺ): He is a human being like you, so what makes him better than you and what makes him special? If any of you were to make a claim like his, his word would be equal to his, but he wants to make himself superior to you and establish himself as a leader among you, so do not obey him and do not believe him; he is a magician and what he has brought of the Qur'an is magic, so keep away from him and deter other people from speaking to him, and say: ﴿Will you, then, follow his magic with your eyes wide open?﴾ *(21: 3)*. They plotted this even though they knew that he was indeed the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), based on what they had seen of clear signs, the like of which no one else had ever seen. But what made them do that was the fact that they were doomed, wrongdoers and stubborn. Allah (ﷻ) encompassed with His knowledge all that they said in private, and He would requite them for it. Hence He said:

﴿He said: My Lord knows every word spoken﴾ in private and in public
﴿in the heavens and on earth﴾ that is, in all regions thereof
﴿for He is All-Hearing﴾ and hears all voices, in all different languages, calling out for all kinds of different needs
﴿All-Knowing﴾ and He knows what is in people's hearts and what is yet more hidden.

﴿ بَلْ قَالُوٓا۟ أَضْغَٰثُ أَحْلَٰمٍ بَلِ ٱفْتَرَىٰهُ بَلْ هُوَ شَاعِرٌ فَلْيَأْتِنَا بِـَٔايَةٍ كَمَآ أُرْسِلَ ٱلْأَوَّلُونَ ﴿٥﴾ مَآ ءَامَنَتْ قَبْلَهُم مِّن قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَٰهَآ ۖ أَفَهُمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٦﴾ ﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٥-٦)

21:5. They said: Nay, [these are] jumbled, confusing dreams; nay, he has fabricated it; nay, he is but a poet. So let him bring us a sign, such as the earlier Messengers were sent with.

21:6. Not one of the cities whom We destroyed believed [even though We showed them signs]; will these people then believe?

Here Allah (ﷻ) refers to the lies fabricated by those who disbelieved in Muhammad (ﷺ) and what he brought of the Holy Qur'an, telling us that they called him a fool and made other false accusations against him. Sometimes they said ﴿[these are] jumbled, confusing dreams﴾, like the words of one who murmurs in his sleep and does not realise what he is saying. Sometimes they said ﴿he has fabricated it﴾ and made it up by himself. And sometimes they said that he was a poet and what he brought was poetry.

Anyone who has the slightest knowledge of the reality of the Messenger (ﷺ), and examines this Book that he brought, will be certain, beyond any shadow of a doubt, that it is the best and most

sublime of speech and that it is from Allah, for no human could ever produce anything like even part of it, as Allah challenged His enemies to do and thereby prove that it was not from Him. Even though they had a motive to prove that it was not from Him, and they harboured enmity towards it, they were not able to produce something like it to prove that it was not from Him, and they were well aware of that. Otherwise, what made them strive so hard? What gave them sleepless nights and rendered them speechless, except the truth that nothing can resist? Rather they said these words about the Prophet (ﷺ) – as they did not believe in him – so as to turn people away from him who did not know him. The Qur'an is the greatest of eternal signs that points to the soundness of the message brought by the Messenger (ﷺ) and his truthfulness, and it is sufficient.

Whoever looks for proof other than it, or demands some other sign, is ignorant and is being unfair; he is more like those stubborn people who rejected the Qur'an and demanded other signs of their own, choosing which would be the most harmful thing for them and would bring them no benefits at all, because if their aim was to know the truth on the basis of proof, the proof was already established without what they were demanding of signs. But if their aim was to outwit the Prophet (ﷺ) and find excuses for themselves (for not believing) – if their demand for a particular sign was not met – then in that case, even if they were given what they demanded of signs, they definitely would not believe; even if every sign were to come to them, they would not believe until they saw (for themselves) the painful punishment *(cf. 10: 97)*.

Hence Allah tells us that they said: ﴿So let him bring us a sign, such as the earlier Messengers were sent with﴾ that is, like the she-camel of Ṣâliḥ and the staff of Moosâ, and so on.

﴿Not one of the cities whom We destroyed believed﴾ in these signs that they demanded. Allah's way of dealing with people is that if anyone demands a sign and it is granted to him, but he does not

believe, then the punishment will be hastened for him. The earlier generations did not believe in those signs, so will these people believe in them? What makes them better than those earlier generations? What good virtue do they possess that would make them believe when these signs appear?

This appears in the form of a question – ﴿will these people then believe?﴾ – but what is meant is denial or negation; in other words, they will never believe.

﴿وَمَآ أَرۡسَلۡنَا قَبۡلَكَ إِلَّا رِجَالٗا نُّوحِيٓ إِلَيۡهِمۡۖ فَسۡـَٔلُوٓاْ أَهۡلَ ٱلذِّكۡرِ إِن كُنتُمۡ لَا تَعۡلَمُونَ ٧ وَمَا جَعَلۡنَٰهُمۡ جَسَدٗا لَّا يَأۡكُلُونَ ٱلطَّعَامَ وَمَا كَانُواْ خَٰلِدِينَ ٨ ثُمَّ صَدَقۡنَٰهُمُ ٱلۡوَعۡدَ فَأَنجَيۡنَٰهُمۡ وَمَن نَّشَآءُ وَأَهۡلَكۡنَا ٱلۡمُسۡرِفِينَ ٩﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٧-٩)

21:7. We did not send before you [O Muhammad] any but men to whom We gave revelation. So [O people] ask those who have knowledge,[17] if you do not know.

21:8. We did not give them bodies that needed no food, nor were they immortal.

21:9. Then We fulfilled Our promise to them, and We saved them and those whom We willed, and We destroyed those who transgressed all bounds.

This is a response to the specious argument of those who disbelieved in the Messenger (ﷺ) and said: Why is he not an

[17] This may refer to: Jewish and Christian scholars who have knowledge of the previous scriptures; Muslim scholars who have knowledge of the Qur'an; or those who have knowledge of the history of earlier nations.

angel who does not need food or drink, and does not engage in business in the marketplace? Why is he not immortal? As he was not like that, they thought that this indicated that he was not a Messenger (ﷺ).

This specious argument is still used by those who disbelieve in the Messengers. They are all alike in their disbelief, and they are all alike in their thinking. Allah (ﷻ) responded to this argument from those who disbelieved in the Messenger (Muhammad [ﷺ]), although they accepted Messengers who came before him – even if they believed only in Ibrâheem (عليه السلام), whose prophethood was accepted by all groups, including the polytheists who claimed to be following his path and religion – by noting that the Messengers who came before Muhammad (ﷺ) were all human beings who ate food, walked about in the marketplaces and were subject to everything that human beings go through, such as death and the like; Allah sent them to their peoples and nations, and some believed in them whereas others disbelieved, and Allah fulfilled His promise to them of saving and blessing them and their followers, and destroying the transgressors who rejected them.

So why, in the case of Muhammad (ﷺ), do they reject his message on the basis of false arguments, when the same argument could be made with regard to his fellow Messengers in whom those who reject Muhammad believe? This argument is very clear and binding. If they accept a human Messenger, but they will not accept a non-human Messenger, then their argument is flawed, and they themselves have shown it to be flawed when they admitted that it was so, and when they contradicted themselves in their argument. If, based on this argument, they then denied the prophethood of any human being at all, and said that no one could be a Prophet unless he was immortal and did not eat food, then Allah (ﷻ) has answered this specious argument in the verses in which He says:

﴿They say: Why has an angel not been sent down to him? If We did send down an angel, that would be the end of the matter and they would be given no respite. And if We had appointed [as Messenger] an angel, We would have made him appear as a man, and thus We would only have confused them in the same way as they are now confusing themselves.﴾ *(al-An'ām 6: 8-9)*

Moreover, ordinary human beings are not able to receive revelation directly from the angels:

﴿Say: If there had been angels on earth, walking about and settled therein, We would surely have sent down to them from heaven an angel as a messenger.﴾ *(al-Isrā' 17: 95)*

If you still have any doubts and do not know about the condition of the earlier Messengers, then ﴿ask those who have knowledge﴾ of the earlier scriptures, such as the people of the Torah and the Gospel, and they will tell you what they know, that the Messengers were all human, like those to whom they were sent.

Although the particular reason for revelation of this verse had to do with asking the People of the Book about the earlier Messengers, as they were people of knowledge, it is general in meaning and applies to other matters of religion, both basic and minor. If a person does not have any knowledge of such an issue, he may ask one who does know it. So it is a command to learn and ask people of knowledge. We are only instructed to ask them because they are obliged to teach and answer questions about what they know.

Because we are specifically instructed to ask those who have knowledge, this implies that it is not allowed to ask questions of one who is known to be ignorant and to have no knowledge, and it is prohibited for one who has no knowledge to give answers. This verse also indicates that there are no Prophets among women, neither Maryam nor anyone else, because Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿any but men to whom We gave revelation﴾.

﴿لَقَدْ أَنزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكُمْ كِتَٰبًا فِيهِ ذِكْرُكُمْ ۖ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٠﴾﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ١٠)

21:10. We have sent down to you [O people] a Book in which there is honour for you [if you follow its teachings]; will you not then understand?

We have sent down to you – O people to whom Muhammad ibn 'Abdullâh ibn 'Abdul-Muṭṭalib (ﷺ) was sent – a noble Book and a clear Qur'an, ﴿in which there is honour for you﴾ that is, renown, pride and a lofty status, if you pay heed to what it contains of true stories, then believe in it, comply with what it enjoins and avoid what it forbids. Then you will rise in status and become significant.

﴿will you not then understand﴾ what will benefit you and what will harm you? How can you not accept it and not strive to adhere to that in which is your renown and honour in this world and in the hereafter? If you had any understanding, you would have followed this path.

But because you did not follow it, and you followed other paths instead that would lead to humiliation and to low status and misery in this world and the hereafter, it is known that you have no sound reasoning or understanding.

This verse is confirmed by what happened in reality: those who believed in the Messenger (ﷺ) and followed the teachings of the Qur'an, namely the *Ṣaḥâbah* and those who came after them, attained honour, high status and great renown, and were elevated to a higher position than kings, as is well known to everyone. It is also known what happened to those who did not adhere to this Qur'an and were not guided by it and did not purify themselves on the basis thereof: they were brought low, despised, tainted and wretched. There is no way to attain happiness in this world or the hereafter except by adhering to the teachings of this Book.

﴿وَكَمْ قَصَمْنَا مِن قَرْيَةٍ كَانَتْ ظَالِمَةً وَأَنشَأْنَا بَعْدَهَا قَوْمًا آخَرِينَ ﴿١١﴾ فَلَمَّا أَحَسُّوا بَأْسَنَا إِذَا هُم مِّنْهَا يَرْكُضُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ لَا تَرْكُضُوا وَارْجِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَا أُتْرِفْتُمْ فِيهِ وَمَسَاكِنِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُسْأَلُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ قَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿١٤﴾ فَمَا زَالَت تِّلْكَ دَعْوَاهُمْ حَتَّىٰ جَعَلْنَاهُمْ حَصِيدًا خَامِدِينَ ﴿١٥﴾﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ١١-١٥)

21:11. How many cities that were given to wrongdoing have We utterly destroyed, and raised up other people in their stead.

21:12. When they sensed Our punishment [approaching], they began to flee from it.

21:13. Do not flee. Go back to your comforts and your dwellings, so that you may be sought out [to give help and advice to others].

21:14. They said: Woe to us! We were indeed wrongdoers.

21:15. And that cry of theirs did not cease until We mowed them down and left them lifeless.

Here Allah warns these wrongdoers who disbelieved in the Messenger (ﷺ) of what happened to previous nations who disbelieved in other Messengers:

﴿How many cities that were given to wrongdoing have We utterly destroyed﴾ that is, eradicated completely ﴿and raised up other people in their stead﴾. When these people who were destroyed realised that the punishment of Allah was imminent and had started to befall them, and that it was not possible for them to go back and there was no way they could flee, they began to stamp their feet in an expression of regret and anguish, lamenting what they had done and trying to escape the punishment.

Therefore it was said to them, by way of mockery (as part of the punishment): ﴿Do not flee. Go back to your comforts and your dwellings, so that you may be sought out [to give help and advice

to others]﴾ that is, stamping your feet and expressing regret will not benefit you, but if you think you can, then go back to your pleasures and desirable things, to your fine dwellings and your world that deceived you and distracted you until the punishment of Allah came to you, so that you may establish yourselves again there and indulge in pleasures, and feel content and respected in your dwellings; perhaps you will be as you were before, and people will come to you seeking help with regard to worldly affairs, as happened before. But there is no way that can happen. How could they go back to that, when that time is now over and the punishment and divine wrath have started to befall them, their worldly honour and glory have vanished and all that is left is regret and lamentation?

Hence ﴿They said: Woe to us! We were indeed wrongdoers. And that cry of theirs did not cease﴾ that is, that cry of woe, doom and regret, admitting their wrongdoing and acknowledging that Allah was just in what He sent upon them, did not cease
﴿until We mowed them down and left them lifeless﴾ that is, like crops that are mown down and brought low. Thus they were felled, all their movements ceased and their voices were silenced. So beware – O you who are addressed here – of persisting in rejection of the noblest of the Messengers (ﷺ), lest there befall you what befell them.

﴿وَمَا خَلَقْنَا ٱلسَّمَآءَ وَٱلْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لَٰعِبِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ لَوْ أَرَدْنَآ أَن نَّتَّخِذَ لَهْوًا لَّٱتَّخَذْنَٰهُ مِن لَّدُنَّآ إِن كُنَّا فَٰعِلِينَ ﴿١٧﴾﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ١٦-١٧)

21:16. We have not created the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, in vain.

21:17. If We had wanted to take a pastime, We could have done so, if We were to do such a thing.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He did not create the heavens and the earth without purpose or for no reason; rather He created them in truth and for the truth, so that people may find proof in them that He is the Almighty Creator, wise controller, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful to Whom belong all attributes of perfection, to Whom be all praise and glory, Whose word is true and Whose Messengers are truthful in what they tell. The One Who is able to create the heavens and the earth, despite their immense vastness, is also able to recreate bodies after their death, so that He may requite the doer of good for his good deeds and the doer of evil for his evil deeds.

﴿If We had wanted to take a pastime﴾ – this is said only for argument's sake, because it is impossible
﴿We could have done so, if We were to do such a thing﴾ and We would not have disclosed to you what it would contain of vanity and frivolity, because that is a shortcoming and a negative reflection on Us, and We would not want to show it to you.

The real purpose behind the heavens and the earth, which are always visible to you, cannot be vain or frivolous. All of this is said by way of argument and addressed to small-minded people and is aimed at convincing them by all possible means. Glory be to the Most Forbearing, Most Merciful, Who is Most Wise and deals with all matters appropriately.

﴿ بَلْ نَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى الْبَاطِلِ فَيَدْمَغُهُ فَإِذَا هُوَ زَاهِقٌ ۚ وَلَكُمُ الْوَيْلُ مِمَّا تَصِفُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَلَهُ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ وَمَنْ عِندَهُ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهِ وَلَا يَسْتَحْسِرُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ يُسَبِّحُونَ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لَا يَفْتُرُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ ﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ١٨-٢٠)

21:18. Nay, rather We hurl the truth against falsehood, and it crushes it, whereupon it perishes. Woe to you for what you ascribe [falsely, to Allah].

21:19. To Him belong all those who are in the heavens and on earth, and those who are with Him are not too proud to worship Him, nor do they ever grow weary.

21:20. They glorify Him night and day, without flagging.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He guarantees to show the truth to be true and to show falsehood to be false; any falsehood that is presented or defended by anyone, Allah will send down truth, knowledge and explanations that will destroy it, so that it will diminish and it will become apparent to everyone that it is false.

﴿whereupon it perishes﴾ that is, it diminishes and disappears. This is general in meaning and applies to all religious matters. No supporter of falsehood presents a specious argument, basing it on reason or on a text, supporting falsehood or rejecting truth, but there is definitive evidence from Allah that is based on reason or on texts, that will defeat the false argument and suppress it. Thus the falseness thereof will become clear to everyone. That becomes clear by examining these issues one by one, and you will always find that this is the case.

﴿Woe to you﴾ who ascribed to Allah that which is not befitting to Him, such as saying that He has a child, a wife, rivals or partners. All that you will gain from that is ﴿woe﴾, regret and loss; there is no benefit for you in what you say and you will not get the return for which you hope and strive. All you will get is the opposite of what you are seeking, namely loss and deprivation.

Then Allah tells us that He is the Sovereign of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, therefore all creatures are His slaves and subject to Him, and not one of them has any control or share of dominion, not one of them helps Him in His control, and no one can intercede except by Allah's leave, so how can any of them be taken as gods? How could Allah have begotten any of them as a son?

Glorified and exalted be the Almighty Sovereign to Whom all submit, for Whom nothing is difficult, to Whom the angels who are near Him submit and they all constantly worship Him.

Hence Allah says: ﴿and those who are with Him﴾ namely the angels,

﴿are not too proud to worship Him, nor do they ever grow weary﴾ that is, they never tire of worship, because they are so eager, their love is complete and they are physically strong.

﴿They glorify Him night and day, without flagging﴾ that is, they are immersed in worship and glorification at all times, without ceasing. Despite their great number, all of them are like that, and this is indicative of Allah's greatness, complete sovereignty, and perfect knowledge and wisdom, which dictate that none should be worshipped except He, and no act of worship should be directed to anyone except Him.

﴿أَمِ اتَّخَذُوٓا۟ ءَالِهَةً مِّنَ ٱلْأَرْضِ هُمْ يُنشِرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَآ ءَالِهَةٌ إِلَّا ٱللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا ۚ فَسُبْحَٰنَ ٱللَّهِ رَبِّ ٱلْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ لَا يُسْـَٔلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْـَٔلُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ أَمِ ٱتَّخَذُوا۟ مِن دُونِهِۦٓ ءَالِهَةً ۖ قُلْ هَاتُوا۟ بُرْهَٰنَكُمْ ۖ هَٰذَا ذِكْرُ مَن مَّعِىَ وَذِكْرُ مَن قَبْلِى ۗ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ٱلْحَقَّ فَهُم مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا مِن قَبْلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا نُوحِىٓ إِلَيْهِ أَنَّهُۥ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّآ أَنَا۠ فَٱعْبُدُونِ ﴿٢٥﴾﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٢١-٢٥)

21:21. Or have they taken gods from the earth who can raise [the dead]?

21:22. If there had been therein [in the heavens and the earth] any gods besides Allah, both realms would surely have fallen into disorder. Glory be to Allah, Lord of the Throne, and [exalted be He] far above what they ascribe [to Him].

21:23. He cannot be questioned about what He does, but they will be questioned.

21:24. Or have they taken other gods besides Him? Say: Bring your proof. This is the Book of those who are with me, and the Book

of those who came before me. But most of them do not know the truth, so they turn away.

21:25. And We did not send before you [O Muhammad] any Messenger but We revealed to him: There is no god but I, so worship Me [alone].

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Having mentioned the perfect nature of His power and greatness, and the submission of all things to Him, here Allah (ﷻ) denounces the polytheists who have, besides Allah, taken others from the earth as gods who are utterly helpless and incapable.

﴿Or have they taken gods from the earth who can raise [the dead]?﴾ This appears in the form of a question, but what is meant is negation; in other words, those [false gods] are not able to raise the dead or resurrect them. This is explained elsewhere, where Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿They have taken other gods besides Him that can create nothing but are themselves created; they have no power either to harm or benefit themselves, and they have no power to cause death, give life or resurrect.﴾ *(al-Furqân 25: 3)*

– and:

﴿Yet they have taken other gods besides Allah, in the hope that they may be helped. They cannot help them; rather their worshippers stand like warriors ready to defend them.﴾ *(Yâ Seen 36: 74-75)*

So the polytheist worships something created that cannot benefit or harm, and he does not devote his worship solely to Allah, to Whom all perfect attributes belong and in Whose Hand is control and the power to benefit or harm. That is because the polytheist is not guided and is unfortunate, and because of his ignorance and wrongdoing. The universe cannot maintain well-being unless it is cared for by One God, as it was created and brought into being by only one Lord. Hence Allah says:

﴿If there had been therein﴾ that is in the heavens and the earth,

﴿any gods besides Allah, both realms would surely have fallen into disorder﴾ in and of themselves, and all creatures in them would also have fallen into disorder.

What this means is that the upper and lower realms are visibly in the most perfect shape, sound and in order, with no flaws or defects, no resistance to the divine will and no opposition to the divine decree. This indicates that their Controller is one, their Lord is one and their God is one. If there were two or more controllers or lords, then their system would falter and their pillars would collapse, because they (those two controllers or lords) would oppose one another and strive against one another. If one of them wanted one thing, the other would want the opposite. Therefore it is impossible for two wills to coexist, and if the will of one was done but not the other, this would indicate that the other was helpless and incapable, but it would be impossible for both to agree on one thing in all matters.

Therefore it must be the case that the Controller Whose will alone is done, without any resistance or opposition, is Allah, the One, the Subduer. Hence Allah refers to this argument when He says:

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

– and:

﴿Say [O Muhammad]: If there were [other] gods with Him, as they say, they would surely have sought a way to the Lord of the Throne.[18] Glory be to Him, and exalted be He far above what they say!﴾ *(al-Isrā' 17: 42-43)*

[18] What is meant is that they would have sought a way to challenge Him (al-Qurṭubi, from Ibn 'Abbās).

Hence Allah says here: ﴿Glory be to Allah﴾ that is, exalted be He above all shortcomings, for He alone is perfect
﴿Lord of the Throne﴾ which is above all creation, and is the vastest and greatest of all created things. If He is Lord of the Throne, it is even more appropriate for Him to be Lord of whatever is beneath it. ﴿and [exalted be He] far above what they ascribe [to Him]﴾ that is, what the disbelievers ascribe to Him, of having begotten offspring or taken a wife, or having a partner in any way whatsoever.

﴿He cannot be questioned about what He does﴾ because of His greatness, glory and perfect might. No one can resist Him or oppose Him in word or deed, because of His perfect wisdom, for He is precise and wise in all that He does. He has created everything perfectly that may be comprehended by reason, so there can be no question concerning it, because all that He creates is free of faults.

﴿but they﴾ that is, all created beings ﴿will be questioned﴾ about the deeds and words, because of their helplessness and weakness, and because they are His slaves; their actions and movements are controlled and they have not the slightest control over themselves or anyone else.

Then Allah again criticises and rebukes the polytheists for taking gods besides Him: ﴿Or have they taken other gods besides Him? Say: Bring your proof﴾ that is your evidence for the soundness of your view. But they will never be able to do that; rather definitive evidence has been established of its falseness. Hence Allah says:
﴿This is the Book of those who are with me, and the Book of those who came before me﴾ that is, all the previous scriptures and religious teachings are agreed on the soundness of what I have said to you regarding the wrongness of ascribing partners to Allah. This is the Book of Allah in which there is mention of all things on the basis of rational and textual evidence, and all of these previous scriptures are proof and evidence for what I said. As it is the case that proof and evidence have been established against them of the falseness

of what they believe, it is known that they have no proof, because definitive proof is that which, when there is certainty, no argument can withstand, otherwise it cannot be definitive. If there is proof and there are arguments that may be raised against it, then they are specious arguments that do not change anything.

﴿But most of them do not know the truth﴾ that is, they persist in their way, imitating their forefathers and arguing without any knowledge or guidance. The fact that they do not have any knowledge of the truth is not because it is hidden or unclear; rather it is because they turn away from it. Otherwise, if they paid the slightest attention to it, they would know truth from falsehood in a very clear way. Hence Allah says: ﴿so they turn away﴾.

When Allah referred to the scriptures of those who came before, and instructed people to refer to them in the context of discussing this issue, He explained it fully by saying: ﴿And We did not send before you [O Muhammad] any Messenger but We revealed to him: There is no god but I, so worship Me [alone]﴾. With regard to all the Messengers who came before you, and their Books, the basic essence of their message is the command to worship Allah alone, with no partner or associate, and the declaration that He alone is the true God Who is deserving of worship, and worship of anything other than Him is false.

﴿ وَقَالُوا۟ ٱتَّخَذَ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنُ وَلَدًا سُبْحَٰنَهُۥ ۚ بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُّكْرَمُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ لَا يَسْبِقُونَهُۥ بِٱلْقَوْلِ وَهُم بِأَمْرِهِۦ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يَشْفَعُونَ إِلَّا لِمَنِ ٱرْتَضَىٰ وَهُم مِّنْ خَشْيَتِهِۦ مُشْفِقُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ ۞ وَمَن يَقُلْ مِنْهُمْ إِنِّىٓ إِلَٰهٌ مِّن دُونِهِۦ فَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِيهِ جَهَنَّمَ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ نَجْزِى ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ ۞ (سورة الأنبياء: ٢٦-٢٩)

21:26. They say: The Most Gracious has begotten offspring. Glory be to Him! They [the ones they describe as His offspring] are but honoured slaves.

21:27. They do not speak until He has spoken, and they only do as He commands.

21:28. He knows what was before them and what will be after them, and they cannot intercede except for those with whom He is pleased, and they are filled with reverent awe of Him.

21:29. If any of them were to say: I am a god besides Him, We would requite him with hell. Thus do We requite the wrongdoers.

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Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the foolishness of the polytheists who disbelieved in the Messenger (ﷺ) and claimed that Allah had begotten offspring by saying that the angels were the daughters of Allah. Exalted be Allah far above what they say.

Then He goes on to describe the angels as slaves who are subject to His Lordship and under His control. They have no control over anything at all; rather they are honoured by Allah, Who made them His slaves and bestowed His mercy upon them, and He singled them out for virtues and purified them of all bad attributes. They observe the utmost etiquette with Allah and comply with His commands.

﴿They do not speak until He has spoken﴾ that is, they do not say anything that has to do with the affairs of His dominion until Allah speaks, because of their perfect etiquette and their awareness of the perfect nature of His wisdom and knowledge.

﴿and they only do as He commands﴾ that is, no matter what He commands them to do, they comply with His command; no matter what task He gives them, they do it. They do not disobey Him for even an instant, and they do not do anything on the basis of what they themselves desire; rather they do only what Allah commands. Moreover, Allah has encompassed them with His knowledge.

For He knows ﴿what was before them and what will be after them﴾ that is, their past and future affairs, so they cannot escape His knowledge, just as they cannot escape His command and control.

Because they do not speak until He has spoken, they do not intercede for anyone without His permission and consent. If He gives them permission and is pleased with the one for whom they seek to intercede, then they will intercede for him. However, Allah (ﷻ) does not accept any words or deeds except those that were done sincerely for His sake, in accordance with the teachings of His Messenger (ﷺ). This verse is one of the proofs for the concept of intercession, and proves that the angels will intercede.

﴿and they are filled with reverent awe of Him﴾ that is, they fear Him and are in awe of Him. They have submitted to His Majesty and their faces are humbled before His glory and beauty.

Having explained that they have no right to divinity and do not deserve any worship at all, as the description that He gives of them implies that, Allah also states that they have no share in divinity even if they make such a claim, and that if, for argument's sake, any of them were to say, ﴿I am a god besides Him, We would requite him with hell. Thus do We requite the wrongdoers﴾. What wrongdoing could be greater than that of an imperfect creature, who is in need of Allah in all ways, claiming to share with Allah the attributes of divinity and Lordship?

﴿ أَوَلَمْ يَرَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوٓاْ أَنَّ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا فَفَتَقْنَٰهُمَا ۖ وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ ٱلْمَآءِ كُلَّ شَىْءٍ حَىٍّ ۖ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ ﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٣٠)

21:30. Do the disbelievers not realise that the heavens and the earth were a single mass, then We split them apart? And We have made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?

That is, can these people who disbelieve in their Lord and do not show devotion in worship to Him alone not see that which clearly indicates that He is the Lord Who is Most Praiseworthy, Most Generous, and is deserving of worship? They look at the heavens and the earth, and see them as a solid mass; they see the sky without a single cloud to bring rain, and they see the earth lifeless and dead, with no vegetation in it. Then We split them apart, so that the sky produces rain and the earth produces vegetation. It is He Who creates clouds in the sky, after it had been completely clear, and instils in the clouds abundant water, then sends it down to a dead land, that was covered in dust and utterly parched, and He causes it to rain so that the earth stirs to life and swells, and brings forth beautiful plants of every kind, that are used for many different purposes. Does that not indicate that He is true and all others besides Him are false, and that it is He Who will give life to the dead, and that He is the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful? ﴿Will they not then believe?﴾ This refers to sound faith, with no element of doubt or ascription of partners to Allah.

Then Allah refers to evidence in the universe:

﴿وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ رَوَٰسِيَ أَن تَمِيدَ بِهِمْ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا فِجَاجًا سُبُلًا لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا ٱلسَّمَآءَ سَقْفًا مَّحْفُوظًا ۖ وَهُمْ عَنْ ءَايَٰتِهَا مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِي خَلَقَ ٱلَّيْلَ وَٱلنَّهَارَ وَٱلشَّمْسَ وَٱلْقَمَرَ ۖ كُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٣١-٣٣)

21:31. And We have set on the earth mountains standing firm, lest it shake with them, and We have made therein broad paths so that they may find their way.

21:32. And We have made the heaven a canopy, safe and well-guarded, yet they turn away from its signs.

21:33. It is He Who created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon, each moving swiftly in its orbit.

That is, among the evidence of His might, His perfection, His oneness and His mercy is the fact that, as the earth could not be stable without the mountains, He has made it stable thereby, and has made the mountains like pegs for it, so that it will not shake with the people. People would not be able to remain steady on it or cultivate it or settle on it otherwise.

So Allah has made the earth stable by means of the mountains, which resulted in an abundance of benefits. Because the mountains are connected to one another, and those chains of high peaks run on for a long distance, if they were to remain like that, travelling between countries would be very difficult. But by His wisdom and mercy, Allah has created broad paths between the mountains; this refers to easy routes and gentle terrain through which people can find their way to reach the lands they seek. And perhaps they will be guided to evidence of the oneness of the Bestower.

﴿And We have made the heaven a canopy﴾ for the earth on which you are;
﴿safe and well-guarded﴾ against falling.
﴿Verily, Allah sustains the heavens and the earth, lest they decline...﴾ *(Fâțir 35: 41)*

The heavens are also guarded against the eavesdropping of the devils.

﴿yet they turn away from its signs﴾ that is, they are heedless and distracted. This is general in meaning and refers to all the signs in the heaven: its great height, vastness, greatness, beautiful colour, amazing precision and other things that are visible in it, such as the stars and planets, sun and moon, from which result night and day, and the fact that they are always running in their own courses, and the stars do

likewise. Many benefits for people result from that, such as heat and cold, and the passage of the seasons; they know how to work out the times for their acts of worship and their dealings and transactions; they rest at night, settling down calmly, and they go about their business during the day, earning their livelihood. If the wise person reflects on all these things and thinks deeply about them, he will reach the certain conclusion, with no element of doubt, that Allah has made them for a certain length of time, during which people will gain great benefits from them, then after that they will diminish and cease to be; the One Who created them will extinguish them, and the One Who set them in motion will bring them to a halt.

Then those who are accountable will move to another realm, in which they will find the requital of their deeds in full, and it will be known that the purpose of this realm was to invest for the eternal realm, and that it was a place to pass through, not a place to settle.

﴿ وَمَا جَعَلْنَا لِبَشَرٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ ٱلْخُلْدَ ۖ أَفَإِين مِّتَّ فَهُمُ ٱلْخَٰلِدُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَآئِقَةُ ٱلْمَوْتِ ۗ وَنَبْلُوكُم بِٱلشَّرِّ وَٱلْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً ۖ وَإِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٣٤-٣٥)

21:34. We did not grant everlasting life to any human being before you [O Muhammad]. So if you die, will they [the disbelievers] live forever?

21:35. Every soul is bound to taste death; We test you with evil and good by way of trial, and to Us you will be returned.

Because the enemies of the Messenger (ﷺ) were saying: Let us wait for some misfortune to befall him *(cf. 52: 30)*, Allah (ﷻ) said: This path (of misfortune) is well-trodden. ﴿We did not grant everlasting

life﴾ in this world ﴿to any human being before you﴾, O Muhammad (ﷺ), so if you die, it is the same as happened to others like you among the Messengers, Prophets, close friends of Allah, and others.

﴿So if you die, will they [the disbelievers] live forever?﴾ That is, will they be given eternal life after you are gone? Then let them enjoy that eternal life, if there is such a thing, but that is not the case; rather all who are on earth will perish, hence Allah says here: ﴿Every soul is bound to taste death﴾. This includes all creatures; this is a cup from which all must inevitably drink, even those who live for a long time.

But Allah (ﷻ) has created His slaves in this world, and has issued commands and prohibitions. He tests them with good and bad, wealth and poverty, power and humiliation, life and death; this is a trial from Him and a test to see who among them will be best in deeds, who will fail when tested, and who will be saved.

﴿and to Us you will be returned﴾ and We will requite you for your deeds; if they were good then you will be rewarded, and if they were evil then you will be punished.

﴿...And your Lord is never unjust to His slaves.﴾ *(Fuṣṣilat 41: 46)*

This verse highlights the falseness of the view of those who say that al-Khiḍr is still alive and that he is immortal in this world. This is a view for which there is no proof and it is contrary to the shar'i evidence.

﴿وَإِذَا رَءَاكَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوٓا۟ إِن يَتَّخِذُونَكَ إِلَّا هُزُوًا أَهَٰذَا ٱلَّذِى يَذْكُرُ
ءَالِهَتَكُمْ وَهُم بِذِكْرِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ هُمْ كَٰفِرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ خُلِقَ ٱلْإِنسَٰنُ مِنْ عَجَلٍ
سَأُو۟رِيكُمْ ءَايَٰتِى فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُونِ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هَٰذَا ٱلْوَعْدُ إِن كُنتُمْ
صَٰدِقِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ لَوْ يَعْلَمُ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ حِينَ لَا يَكُفُّونَ عَن وُجُوهِهِمُ ٱلنَّارَ

وَلَا عَن ظُهُورِهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنصَرُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ بَلْ تَأْتِيهِم بَغْتَةً فَتَبْهَتُهُمْ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ رَدَّهَا وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَلَقَدِ اسْتُهْزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِينَ سَخِرُوا مِنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ ﴿سورة الأنبياء: ٣٦-٤١﴾

21:36. When the disbelievers see you, they treat you only with ridicule, [saying]: Is this the one who speaks ill of your gods? and they reject all mention of the Most Gracious.

21:37. Man is a creature of haste. I will show you My signs, so do not ask Me to hasten.

21:38. They say: When will this promise come to pass, if you speak the truth?

21:39. If only the disbelievers knew of the time when they will not be able to ward off the fire from their faces or their backs, nor will they be helped, [they would not seek to hasten it].

21:40. Rather it will come upon them suddenly and confound them, and they will not be able to avert it, nor will they be given any respite.

21:41. Indeed Messengers before you were ridiculed, but then those who mocked them were overwhelmed by the very thing [punishment] they used to ridicule.

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This is because of the severity of their disbelief. When the polytheists saw the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), they ridiculed him and said: ﴿Is this the one who speaks ill of your gods?﴾ That is, is this insignificant man – as they claimed – the one who reviles your gods, criticises them and attacks them? In other words: pay no attention to him and do not worry about him.

The fact that they ridiculed him and looked down on him is indicative of his perfection, for he was the more perfect and virtuous one; one of his virtues was his devotion to worshipping Allah alone and his criticism of everything that is worshipped besides Him,

pointing out its real status and situation. Rather those who deserved to be despised and ridiculed were these disbelievers, who combined all blameworthy characteristics. Even if there was nothing except their disbelief in the Lord and their rejection of His Messengers, they would still be the most vile and worst of people.

The mention of His name ﴿Most Gracious﴾ here highlights how bad they were. How could they respond to the Most Gracious – Who bestows all blessings and protects against harm, and no one has any blessing but it comes from Him, and no harm is warded off except by Him – by disbelieving in Him and ascribing partners to Him?

﴿Man is a creature of haste﴾ that is, he was created hasty and prone to rushing into things, impatient for them to happen. The believers seek to hasten the punishment of Allah for the disbelievers, and think it slow in coming, whilst the disbelievers turn away and seek to hasten the punishment because they do not believe in it, and out of stubbornness, and they say:

﴿When will this promise come to pass, if you speak the truth?﴾ Allah (ﷻ) gives respite but does not overlook; He shows forbearance and grants them a temporary reprieve, but:

﴿...when their appointed time comes, they will not be able to delay it for a single moment or bring it forward.﴾ *(Yoonus 10: 49)*

Hence Allah says here *(21: 37)*: ﴿I will show you My signs﴾ that is, in My vengeance upon those who disbelieved in Me and disobeyed Me, ﴿so do not ask Me to hasten﴾ that. Similarly, those who disbelieve say: ﴿When will this promise come to pass, if you speak the truth?﴾. They said this out of arrogance, when the punishment had not yet become due and had not yet befallen them.

﴿If only the disbelievers knew of﴾ the terrible situation they will be in at ﴿the time when they will not be able to ward off the fire from their faces or their backs﴾, when it surrounds them on all sides and overwhelms them from all directions

﴿nor will they be helped﴾ that is, no one will help them; they will not help others and they will not be helped.

﴿Rather it﴾ that is, the fire ﴿will come upon them suddenly and confound them﴾ because of its suddenness and the alarm and great fear it will bring.

﴿and they will not be able to avert it﴾ because they will be too humiliated and weak to do that

﴿nor will they be given any respite﴾ that is, any reprieve, such that the punishment might be delayed for them. If they truly understood this, they would not seek to hasten the punishment, and they would be very afraid. But because they did not have this knowledge, they said what they said.

Having mentioned their ridicule of His Messenger (ﷺ) when they said: ﴿Is this the one who speaks ill of your gods?﴾ *(21: 36)*, Allah consoles him by reminding him that this was the way in which previous nations dealt with their Messengers, as He says:

﴿Indeed Messengers before you were ridiculed, but then those who mocked them were overwhelmed by the very thing [punishment] they used to ridicule﴾ that is, the punishment befell them and they could find no means of escape. So let these people beware, lest there befall them what befell those disbelievers.

﴿ قُلْ مَن يَكْلَؤُكُم بِٱلَّيْلِ وَٱلنَّهَارِ مِنَ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ۗ بَلْ هُمْ عَن ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِم مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ أَمْ لَهُمْ ءَالِهَةٌ تَمْنَعُهُم مِّن دُونِنَا ۚ لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَلَا هُم مِّنَّا يُصْحَبُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ بَلْ مَتَّعْنَا هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ وَءَابَآءَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ طَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ ٱلْعُمُرُ ۗ أَفَلَا يَرَوْنَ أَنَّا نَأْتِى ٱلْأَرْضَ نَنقُصُهَا مِنْ أَطْرَافِهَآ ۚ أَفَهُمُ ٱلْغَٰلِبُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ ﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٤٢-٤٤)

21:42. Say: Who can protect you by night and by day other than the Most Gracious? Yet they turn away from the admonition of their Lord.

21:43. Or do they have gods who can protect them from Our [punishment]? They have no power to help themselves, nor do they enjoy Our support.

21:44. But We have allowed these people and their forefathers to enjoy the good things of life for a long time. Do they not see that We gradually reduce the land [under their control] from its outlying borders? Is it they who will prevail?

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Here Allah (ﷻ) mentions the helplessness of these people who take others besides Him as gods, and notes that they are in desperate need of their Lord, the Most Gracious, Whose mercy encompasses both righteous and evildoers alike, by night and by day:

﴿Say: Who can protect you﴾ that is, guard you
﴿by night﴾ when you are sleeping in your beds and your faculties are not functioning
﴿and by day﴾ as you go about your business and are distracted
﴿other than the Most Gracious?﴾ Can anyone protect you other than Him? No one can protect except Him.
﴿Yet they turn away from the admonition of their Lord﴾. Hence they ascribed partners to Him. Otherwise, if they had paid heed to the admonition of their Lord and accepted His instructions, they would have been guided and granted divine help.

﴿Or do they have gods who can protect them from Our [punishment]?﴾ that is, if We decree ill for them, can any of their gods protect them from that ill and the evil that befalls them?

﴿They have no power to help themselves, nor do they enjoy Our support﴾ that is, they will receive no help from Us with regard to their affairs, and if they receive no help from Allah, they will fail in all their affairs and will not be able to achieve any benefit or ward off any harm.

The reason why they persisted in their disbelief and ascription of partners to Allah is indicated in the following verse:

﴿But We have allowed these people and their forefathers to enjoy the good things of life for a long time﴾ that is, We have granted them wealth and sons, and We have given them a long life, so they focused on enjoying it and were distracted from that for which they were created. That went on for a long time, so their hearts grew hardened, and they persisted in their transgression and in their ingratitude. If they had paid attention and looked at the people around them, they would not have seen anything but people dying all around them, and they would not have heard anything but voices of lament, and they would not have been aware of anything but a constant succession of people dying, day after day. Death sets traps on every route to snatch people's souls.

Hence Allah says: ﴿Do they not see that We gradually reduce the land [under their control] from its outlying borders?﴾ That is, by means of the death of its people and their gradual demise, until Allah inherits the earth and all who are on it, and He is the best of inheritors. If they realised this situation, they would not be deceived and would not persist as they are.

﴿Is it they who will prevail?﴾ That is, is it really possible that they will be able to escape Allah's decree or that they can ward off death? How could they be so deceived and think that they will live forever? Or is it the case that when the Angel of Death comes to take their souls, they will submit and surrender, and will not show any resistance?

﴿قُلْ إِنَّمَآ أُنذِرُكُم بِٱلْوَحْىِ ۚ وَلَا يَسْمَعُ ٱلصُّمُّ ٱلدُّعَآءَ إِذَا مَا يُنذَرُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَلَئِن مَّسَّتْهُمْ نَفْحَةٌ مِّنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّكَ لَيَقُولُنَّ يَٰوَيْلَنَآ إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَٰلِمِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٤٥-٤٦)

21:45. Say: I only warn you on the strength of divine revelation. But the deaf cannot hear the call when they are warned.

21:46. If the slightest touch of your Lord's punishment were to reach them, they would surely say: Woe to us! We were indeed wrongdoers.

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﴿Say﴾, O Muhammad (ﷺ), to all the people: ﴿I only warn you on the strength of divine revelation﴾ that is, I am just a Messenger; I do not bring anything of my own accord, I do not possess the treasuries of Allah, I have no knowledge of the unseen and I am not an angel; rather I warn you on the basis of what Allah reveals to me. So if you respond, you have responded to Allah and He will reward you for that, but if you turn away and resist, then I have no control over the matter at all; rather the matter rests with Allah and the decree is all His.

﴿But the deaf cannot hear the call when they are warned﴾ that is, one who is deaf cannot hear any voice, for the faculty of hearing is absent in his case. Hearing is stipulated in addition to the voice, for the means of receiving the sound should be present. Likewise, the revelation causes the heart to spring to life (spiritual life), and makes one understand what Allah wants from us. But if the heart is not receptive to guidance, then with regard to guidance and faith, it will be like the deaf person with regard to sounds and voices. These polytheists are deaf to guidance, so it is no wonder that they are not guided, especially in this situation where the punishment has not yet reached them and they have not yet felt its pain.

﴿If the slightest touch﴾ that is, even a small part ﴿of your Lord's punishment were to reach them﴾, and nothing of His punishment is easy,

﴿they would surely say: Woe to us! We were indeed wrongdoers﴾ that is, crying out words of woe, doom and regret, acknowledging their wrongdoing and disbelief, and admitting that they deserve the punishment.

﴿وَنَضَعُ ٱلْمَوَٰزِينَ ٱلْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ فَلَا تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْـًٔا ۖ وَإِن كَانَ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِّنْ خَرْدَلٍ أَتَيْنَا بِهَا ۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِنَا حَٰسِبِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٤٧)

21:47. We will set up scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection, so that no soul will be dealt with unjustly in the least. Even if a deed is the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it forth, and sufficient are We as Reckoners.

Here Allah tells us that He will judge justly and fairly between His slaves when He gathers them on the Day of Resurrection; He will set up the scales of justice which will show even the weight of a tiny particle, to weigh people's good deeds and bad deeds.

﴿so that no soul﴾, Muslim or disbeliever, ﴿will be dealt with unjustly in the least﴾ by anything being detracted from its good deeds or added to its bad deeds.

﴿Even if a deed is the weight of a mustard seed﴾, which is the smallest and most insignificant of things, whether that deed is good or bad ﴿We will bring it forth﴾ so that the doer may be requited for it. This is like the verses in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.﴾ *(az-Zalzalah 99: 7-8)*

And they will say:

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

﴿and sufficient are We as Reckoners﴾. Here Allah (ﷻ) refers to Himself; sufficient is He as a Reckoner; that is, He knows people's deeds and has a record of that; He knows their quantity and what reward or punishment they deserve in requital, and He will ensure that the requital reaches the doer.

﴿وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ وَهَٰرُونَ ٱلْفُرْقَانَ وَضِيَآءً وَذِكْرًا لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُم بِٱلْغَيْبِ وَهُم مِّنَ ٱلسَّاعَةِ مُشْفِقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَهَٰذَا ذِكْرٌ مُّبَارَكٌ أَنزَلْنَٰهُ أَفَأَنتُمْ لَهُۥ مُنكِرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٤٨-٥٠)

21:48. Verily We gave to Moosâ and Hâroon the criterion [between right and wrong – the Torah], and a light, and admonition for the pious,

21:49. who fear their Lord unseen, and are apprehensive about the Hour.

21:50. And this [the Qur'an] is a blessed reminder that We have sent down. Will you then deny it?

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Allah (ﷻ) often mentions these two noble Books together; no Book has ever come to the world that is better than them, of greater renown and blessing, or greater in guidance and clarification. They are the Torah and the Qur'an. Allah tells us that the Torah came principally to Moosâ, but also to Hâroon, as he joined him in his mission.

﴿the criterion﴾, namely the Torah which differentiates between truth and falsehood, guidance and misguidance. It is ﴿light﴾ by which people are guided; those who want to follow the straight path follow its teachings, and from it they learn religious rulings, distinguish what is lawful from what is prohibited, and find light in the darkness of ignorance, innovation and misguidance.

﴿and admonition for the pious﴾, by which they are reminded of what will benefit them and what will harm them, and they are reminded thereby of good and evil. The pious are singled out for mention because they are the ones who benefit from that in terms of both knowledge and deeds.

Then Allah explains who the pious are, namely those ﴿who fear their Lord unseen﴾ that is, they fear Him when they are hiding away

and no one sees them, so it is more apt when they are in the view of others that they refrain from that which is prohibited and they do that which is obligatory.

﴿and are apprehensive about the Hour﴾ that is, they fear it and are in awe of it, because of their perfect knowledge of their Lord. Thus they combine piety with fear of Allah.

﴿And this [the Qur'an] is a blessed reminder that We have sent down﴾. Allah describes two characteristics that it possesses: it is a reminder of all that one needs to be reminded of, such as knowing Allah by His names, attributes and deeds; and the characteristics and stories of the Messengers and close friends of Allah; Islamic rulings having to do with acts of worship, business dealings and other matters; rulings on requital, and paradise and hell. Through the Qur'an people are reminded of issues and proofs both rational and textual. Allah calls it a reminder, because it reminds the individual of what Allah has instilled in his mind and nature of believing in true stories, enjoining what is regarded as good on a rational basis, and forbidding what is regarded as evil on a rational basis. The second characteristic that it possesses, namely that it is blessed, implies that it contains abundant and ever-increasing goodness. There is nothing more blessed than this Qur'an. Every good thing, blessing and increase, whether that is in terms of religious or worldly affairs, or in the hereafter, is because of it and is a result of adhering to it. As it is a blessed reminder, one should accept it with willing submission and give thanks to Allah for this great gift, adhering to its teachings and seeking its blessings by learning its words and meanings. As for responding to it in the opposite manner, by turning away from it, ignoring it, rejecting it and not believing in it, this is one of the worst kinds of disbelief, ignorance and wrongdoing. Hence Allah (ﷻ) denounced the one who rejects it by saying: ﴿Will you then deny it?﴾.

﴿ وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَآ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ رُشْدَهُۥ مِن قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا بِهِۦ عَٰلِمِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِۦ مَا هَٰذِهِ ٱلتَّمَاثِيلُ ٱلَّتِىٓ أَنتُمْ لَهَا عَٰكِفُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ قَالُوا۟ وَجَدْنَآ ءَابَآءَنَا لَهَا عَٰبِدِينَ ﴿٥٣﴾ قَالَ لَقَدْ كُنتُمْ أَنتُمْ وَءَابَآؤُكُمْ فِى ضَلَٰلٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ قَالُوٓا۟ أَجِئْتَنَا بِٱلْحَقِّ أَمْ أَنتَ مِنَ ٱللَّٰعِبِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾ قَالَ بَل رَّبُّكُمْ رَبُّ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ٱلَّذِى فَطَرَهُنَّ وَأَنَا۠ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكُم مِّنَ ٱلشَّٰهِدِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَتَٱللَّهِ لَأَكِيدَنَّ أَصْنَٰمَكُم بَعْدَ أَن تُوَلُّوا۟ مُدْبِرِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٥١-٥٧)

21:51. Indeed We bestowed upon Ibrâheem maturity of mind [from an early age] before that, for We knew him well.

21:52. [Remember] when he said to his father and his people: What are these images to which you are so devoted?

21:53. They said: We found our fathers worshipping them.

21:54. He said: Indeed you and your fathers have been clearly misguided.

21:55. They said: Are you telling us the truth, or are you joking?

21:56. He said: Nay, your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, Who created them, and I am one of those who bear witness to that.

21:57. And, by Allah, I have a plan for your idols, after you leave.

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Having mentioned Moosâ (ﷺ) and Muhammad (ﷺ) and their Books, Allah (ﷻ) now says:

﴿Indeed We bestowed upon Ibrâheem maturity of mind [from an early age] before that﴾ that is, before the sending of Moosâ and Muhammad (ﷺ), and the sending down of their Books. Allah gave him an insight into (His) mighty dominion over the heavens and the earth *(cf. 6: 75)*, and gave him maturity of mind, by means of which he perfected himself and called people to that, such as was given to no

one else in the world apart from Muhammad (ﷺ). Maturity of mind is attributed to him, because his level of maturity was commensurate with his situation and high level. Otherwise every believer was given maturity of mind commensurate with the level of his faith.

﴿for We knew him well﴾ that is: We gave him maturity of mind and singled him out to be Our Messenger and close friend, and We chose him in this world and the hereafter, because We knew that he was deserving of that and was qualified for it, due to his purity and intelligence. Hence Allah tells us of how he debated with his people and told them not to ascribe partners to Him, and how he broke their idols and established binding proof against them.

﴿[Remember] when he said to his father and his people: What are these images﴾ that you make and carve with your own hands in the form of some created beings
﴿to which you are so devoted﴾ and you constantly worship them. What are they? What virtue is proven to be in them? Where has your reasoning gone, so that you ended up devoting your lives to worship of these things, at the time when you are the ones who shaped them and carved them with your own hands? This is something very strange indeed, that you worship something that you yourselves carved.

They responded without giving any proof, in the manner of one who is helpless and does not have even the flimsiest argument to support what he does. They said:
﴿We found our fathers worshipping them﴾, so we followed the same path and imitated our fathers in worshipping them.

It is well known that the actions of any person, other than the Messengers, do not constitute proof and it is not permissible to follow a person's example blindly, especially with regard to fundamentals of religion and the oneness of the Lord of the worlds. Hence Ibrâheem said to them, describing them all as being misguided:
﴿Indeed you and your fathers have been clearly misguided﴾ that is, you are obviously misguided, for what misguidance can be greater

than their misguidance that led them to ascribe partners to Allah and ignore His oneness? In other words, what you have said is not fit to be adhered to, and you and they are all clearly misguided, as is quite obvious to everyone.

﴿They said﴾ by way of finding his words strange, and expressing their shock at what he said, for how could he describe them and their fathers as being foolish?

﴿Are you telling us the truth, or are you joking?﴾ That is, what you have said, and the message you have brought to us, is it really true and serious? Or is what you say to us by way of a joke and ridicule on the part of one who does not know what he is saying? They asked whether it was one or the other, because what they meant was that they were certain that his words were the words of someone foolish, who did not understand what he was saying. Therefore Ibrâheem gave them a clear response, highlighting why he thought that they were foolish and lacking in reason:

﴿He said: Nay, your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, Who created them, and I am one of those who bear witness to that﴾. Thus he combined rational evidence with textual evidence.

As for the rational evidence, everyone – even those with whom Ibrâheem argued – knows that Allah alone is the Creator of all created things, including the sons of Adam, the angels, the jinn, the animals, the heavens and the earth; He controls them all, in all ways. Therefore every created being is under His control and domination, including everything that is worshipped besides Allah. So is it befitting, for anyone who possesses the slightest reason and discernment, to worship a created thing that is itself under control, and does not possess any power to bring benefit, cause harm, cause death, give life or resurrect, and fail to worship the Creator and Provider, Who is in control of all things?

As for the textual evidence, such evidence has been transmitted from the Messengers (blessings and peace of Allah be upon them).

Whatever they brought is infallible and cannot be wrong, and it cannot say anything but the truth. Part of this textual evidence is the testimony of any one of the Messengers to that effect. Hence Ibrâheem said: ﴿and I am one of those who bear witness to that﴾ that is, to the fact that Allah alone is deserving of worship, and worship of anything other than Him is false and invalid. What testimony, after the testimony of Allah, can be better than the testimony of the Messengers, especially the Messengers of strong will, and especially the close friend of the Most Gracious?

Having stated that their idols had no control over anything, he wanted to show them in practical terms just how helpless they were and how unable they were to help themselves, by taking action that would force them to admit that. Hence he said:

﴿And, by Allah, I have a plan for your idols﴾ that is, I will break them ﴿after you leave﴾ and head out to attend your festival. When they left, he went to the idols secretly.

﴿فَجَعَلَهُمْ جُذَٰذًا إِلَّا كَبِيرًا لَّهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ قَالُوا مَن فَعَلَ هَٰذَا
بِـَٔالِهَتِنَآ إِنَّهُۥ لَمِنَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾ قَالُوا سَمِعْنَا فَتًى يَذْكُرُهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهُۥٓ إِبْرَٰهِيمُ ﴿٦٠﴾ قَالُوا
فَأْتُوا بِهِۦ عَلَىٰٓ أَعْيُنِ ٱلنَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْهَدُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ قَالُوٓا ءَأَنتَ فَعَلْتَ هَٰذَا بِـَٔالِهَتِنَا
يَٰٓإِبْرَٰهِيمُ ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالَ بَلْ فَعَلَهُۥ كَبِيرُهُمْ هَٰذَا فَسْـَٔلُوهُمْ إِن كَانُوا يَنطِقُونَ
﴿٦٣﴾ فَرَجَعُوٓا إِلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِهِمْ فَقَالُوٓا إِنَّكُمْ أَنتُمُ ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ ثُمَّ نُكِسُوا عَلَىٰ
رُءُوسِهِمْ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ يَنطِقُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ قَالَ أَفَتَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ
ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا يَنفَعُكُمْ شَيْـًٔا وَلَا يَضُرُّكُمْ ﴿٦٦﴾ أُفٍّ لَّكُمْ وَلِمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ
أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٥٨-٦٧)

21:58. So he broke them to pieces, [all] but the biggest of them, so that they might come back to it [and ask it what happened].

21:59. They said: Who has done this to our gods? He must surely be one of the wrongdoers!

21:60. They said: We heard a young man speaking ill of them; he is called Ibrâheem.

21:61. They said: So bring him out before the people, so that they may be witnesses.

21:62. They said: Is it you who has done this to our gods, O Ibrâheem?

21:63. He said: Nay, it was this one, the biggest of them, who did it. So ask them, if they can speak!

21:64. So they started thinking and said to one another: Surely it is you who are doing wrong.

21:65. But then they relapsed into their former obstinacy [and said]: You know full well that these [idols] cannot speak.

21:66. Ibrâheem said: Do you then worship, besides Allah, that which cannot benefit or harm you in any way?

21:67. Fie on you and on all that you worship besides Allah! Have you then no sense?

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﴿So he broke them to pieces﴾ that is, he smashed them. The idols were all gathered together in one place, so he broke all of them, ﴿[all] but the biggest of them﴾ that is, except the biggest idol, which he left alone for a purpose that would become clear.

When they saw what had happened to their idols of disrespect and humiliation,

﴿They said: Who has done this to our gods? He must surely be one of the wrongdoers!﴾ They accused Ibrâheem of wrongdoing when they were the ones who were more deserving of being described as such, because they did not realise that his breaking of the idols was one of the best of his virtues, and was an action that was based on his sense of justice and affirmation of the oneness of Allah. Rather

the wrongdoer is the one who took such idols as gods, even though he saw what had happened to them.

﴿They said: We heard a young man speaking ill of them﴾ that is, criticising and condemning them, and one who is like that must surely be the one who broke them. Or it may mean that some of them had heard him saying that he had a plan for them.
﴿he is called Ibrâheem﴾. When they realised that it was Ibrâheem who had broken them,
﴿They said: So bring him﴾ namely Ibrâheem
﴿out before the people﴾ that is, where they can see and hear
﴿so that they may be witnesses﴾ that is, so that they may be present in order to see what is to be done with the one who broke their gods. This is what Ibrâheem wanted; he wanted the truth to be manifest before the people so that they could witness the truth, and truth could be established against them, as Moosâ said when he made his appointment to confront Pharaoh:

﴿...Your appointment will be on the day of the festival; let the people assemble in the forenoon.﴾ *(Tâ Hâ 20: 59)*

When the people had gathered and Ibrâheem was brought out, they said to him:
﴿Is it you who has done this﴾ that is, breaking them ﴿to our gods, O Ibrâheem?﴾ This was a question that was aimed at affirming that he was the one who did it. In other words: what gave you the audacity and what made you do this thing?

Ibrâheem said, as the people were looking on: ﴿Nay, it was this one, the biggest of them, who did it﴾ that is, it broke them out of resentment towards them, because they were being worshipped alongside it, and it wanted you to worship your biggest idol only.

The aim behind these words was to establish binding proof against his opponents. Hence he said: ﴿So ask them, if they can speak!﴾ He

was referring to the broken idols; ask them why they were broken, and ask the idol that was not broken why it broke them. If they are able to speak they will answer, otherwise you and I, and everyone, will know that they cannot speak and talk, and that they cannot bring benefit or cause harm, indeed they cannot even help themselves against anyone who intends harm towards them.

﴿So they started thinking﴾ that is, it was as if their reason suddenly came back to them and they came back to their senses, and realised that they had gone astray by worshipping those idols; they admitted to themselves that they had done wrong and ascribed partners to Allah. ﴿and said to one another: Surely it is you who are doing wrong﴾. Thus the point was made and proof was established by their admission that what they were doing was false and wrong.

But they did not persist in that; rather they ﴿relapsed into their former obstinacy﴾ that is, suddenly they changed and their thinking took a wrong turn, and they said to Ibrâheem:
﴿You know full well that these [idols] cannot speak﴾ so how could you make fun of us and ridicule us, telling us to ask them questions when you know that they cannot speak?

Ibrâheem said, rebuking them openly in front of the people for ascribing partners to Allah and pointing out that their gods were not deserving of worship:
﴿Do you then worship, besides Allah, that which cannot benefit or harm you in any way?﴾

﴿Fie on you and on all that you worship besides Allah!﴾ That is, how astray you are, what losers you are, and how evil you are, you and all that you worship besides Allah! If you had any sense, you would realise the situation you are in. But because you lack common sense and you are ignorant, going astray with your eyes wide open, animals are better off than you.

Once he had defeated them in argument and proved them wrong, they could not produce any evidence to support their ascription of partners to Allah, so they resorted to physical strength to punish him.

﴿ قَالُوا۟ حَرِّقُوهُ وَٱنصُرُوٓا۟ ءَالِهَتَكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ فَٰعِلِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾ قُلْنَا يَٰنَارُ كُونِى بَرْدًا وَسَلَٰمًا عَلَىٰٓ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ ﴿٦٩﴾ وَأَرَادُوا۟ بِهِۦ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنَٰهُمُ ٱلْأَخْسَرِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَنَجَّيْنَٰهُ وَلُوطًا إِلَى ٱلْأَرْضِ ٱلَّتِى بَٰرَكْنَا فِيهَا لِلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿٧١﴾ ﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٦٨-٧١)

21:68. They said: Burn him and avenge your gods, if you are going to take action!

21:69. We said: O fire, be cool and safe for Ibrâheem.

21:70. They planned to harm him, but We made them the greatest losers.

21:71. And We saved him and Loot [and brought them] to the land which We have blessed for all people.

﴿They said: Burn him and avenge your gods, if you are going to take action!﴾ That is, kill him in the worst manner, by burning him, in anger for the sake of your gods and in support of them. How doomed they were, as they worshipped that which they admitted needed their support, and they took it as a god.

But Allah helped His close friend when they threw him in the fire, as He said to it: ﴿be cool and safe for Ibrâheem﴾. So it became cool and safe for him, no harm reached him and he did not feel any pain.

﴿They planned to harm him﴾ when they decided to burn him ﴿but We made them the greatest losers﴾ in this world and the hereafter, just as Allah made His close friend and his followers the triumphant winners.

﴿And We saved him and Loot﴾ – that was when no one among his people believed except Loot. It was said that he was the son of

his brother. Allah saved him and he migrated ﴿to the land which We have blessed for all people﴾ that is, Greater Syria. So Ibrâheem left his people in Babylon, in Iraq, and said:

﴿...I shall migrate [where I have been commanded to] by my Lord. Verily, He is the Almighty, Most Wise.﴾ *(al-'Ankaboot 29: 26)*

One of the blessings of Greater Syria is that many of the Prophets went there. Allah chose it as the place of migration for His close friend, and in that land there is one of His three sacred houses, namely Bayt al-Maqdis.

﴿وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُۥٓ إِسْحَٰقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ نَافِلَةً ۖ وَكُلًّا جَعَلْنَا صَٰلِحِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَجَعَلْنَٰهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ ٱلْخَيْرَٰتِ وَإِقَامَ ٱلصَّلَوٰةِ وَإِيتَآءَ ٱلزَّكَوٰةِ ۖ وَكَانُوا۟ لَنَا عَٰبِدِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٧٢-٧٣)

21:72. And We bestowed upon him Is-ḥâq and [then] Ya'qoob, a grandson, and We made all of them righteous.

21:73. We made them leaders, guiding people by Our command; and We inspired them to do good deeds, establish prayer and give zakâh; and they worshipped only Us.

﴿And We bestowed upon him﴾ when he withdrew from his people ﴿Is-ḥâq and [then] Ya'qoob﴾, the son of Is-ḥâq ﴿a grandson﴾ after he had grown old and his wife was barren, the angels gave him the glad tidings of Is-ḥâq:

﴿...and, after Is-ḥâq, of Ya'qoob.﴾ *(Hood 11: 71)*

Ya'qoob is Isrâ'eel (Israel), from whom stemmed a great nation. Ibrâheem was also the father of Ismâ'eel, from whom stemmed the noble Arab nation, and among his descendants was the leader of the first and the last (namely the Prophet Muhammad [ﷺ]).

﴿and We made all of them﴾ namely, Ibrâheem, Is-ḥâq and Ya'qoob ﴿righteous﴾ that is, fulfilling their duties towards Him and towards His slaves. Because of their righteousness, He made them leaders who guided people by His command. This is one of the greatest blessings that Allah may bestow upon His slave, by making him a leader by means of whom people are guided and whom many people follow. That is because they were patient and steadfast, and they had certain faith in the revelations of Allah.

﴿guiding people by Our command﴾ that is, on the basis of the teachings of Our religion. They did not instruct people to do things on the basis of their own whims and desires; rather it was by the command of Allah and in accordance with His religion, and for the purpose of seeking His pleasure. A person cannot be a leader unless he calls people to that which Allah has commanded.

﴿and We inspired them to do good deeds﴾ which they did, calling people to them. This includes all good deeds with regard to duties towards Allah and towards other people.

﴿establish prayer and give zakâh﴾ – this comes under the heading of mentioning specific deeds after speaking in general terms, because of the noble status and virtue of these two acts of worship. Whoever does them properly, his religious commitment will be sound, but whoever neglects them will be more neglectful with regard to other matters. Moreover, prayer is the best of deeds that are due to Allah, and zakâh is the best of deeds that involve kindness towards His creation.

﴿and they worshipped only Us﴾ and no others. In other words, they persisted in acts of worship, both in their hearts (in terms of belief) and in their words and physical actions, most of the time. So they deserved to be described as worshippers, as they adhered to that which Allah enjoined upon humankind and the purpose for which He created them.

﴿وَلُوطًا ءَاتَيْنَٰهُ حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا وَنَجَّيْنَٰهُ مِنَ ٱلْقَرْيَةِ ٱلَّتِى كَانَت تَّعْمَلُ ٱلْخَبَٰٓئِثَ ۗ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا۟ قَوْمَ سَوْءٍ فَٰسِقِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَأَدْخَلْنَٰهُ فِى رَحْمَتِنَآ ۖ إِنَّهُۥ مِنَ ٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٧٤-٧٥)

21:74. To Loot also We gave wisdom and knowledge, and We saved him from the city that practised abominations. Verily, they were a people given to wickedness, and rebellious.

21:75. And We admitted him to Our mercy, for he was one of the righteous.

Here Allah praises His Messenger Loot (ﷺ) for having religious knowledge and having the knowledge to judge between people soundly and correctly. Allah sent him to his people, to call them to worship Allah alone and to forbid them to do the shameful deeds they were involved in. He spent some time calling them, but they did not respond to him, so Allah turned their city upside down upon them and punished them all, because they were ﴿a people given to wickedness, and rebellious﴾. They rejected the caller and threatened to punish him, but Allah saved Loot and his family. He commanded him to take them and leave by night, so that they could get far away from the city. So they left at night and thus were saved, by the grace and blessing of Allah towards them.

﴿And We admitted him to Our mercy﴾ and whoever enters it will be safe from all fears, and will attain all goodness, happiness, joy and praise. That is because he was one of the righteous, whose deeds were righteous, who became of sound character and Allah put right the (formerly) wicked ones among them. Righteousness is the means of being admitted to the mercy of Allah, just as wickedness is the means of being deprived of mercy and goodness. The most righteous of the

people are the Prophets (peace be upon them), hence Allah describes them as righteous. Sulaymān (ﷺ) said:

﴿...and include me, by Your mercy, among Your righteous slaves.﴾ *(an-Naml 27: 19)*

﴿وَنُوحًا إِذْ نَادَىٰ مِن قَبْلُ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُۥ فَنَجَّيْنَٰهُ وَأَهْلَهُۥ مِنَ ٱلْكَرْبِ ٱلْعَظِيمِ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَنَصَرْنَٰهُ مِنَ ٱلْقَوْمِ ٱلَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا۟ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَآ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا۟ قَوْمَ سَوْءٍ فَأَغْرَقْنَٰهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٧٦-٧٧)

21:76. And [remember] Nooḥ, when he called upon [Us] before that. We answered him and saved him and his family from great distress.

21:77. And We delivered him from the people who rejected Our signs. They were a people given to wickedness, so We drowned them all.

That is, and remember Our slave and Messenger Nooḥ (ﷺ), by way of praising and commending him. When Allah sent him to his people, he stayed among them for one thousand years less fifty, calling them to worship Allah alone and forbidding them to ascribe partners to Him, trying repeatedly and never wavering, calling them in private and in public, by night and day.

But when he saw that exhorting them was to no avail, and that rebuking them was of no benefit, he called upon his Lord and said:

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

Allah answered his prayer and drowned them, and not one of them survived, but Allah saved Nooḥ and his family, along with the

believers who were with him, in the laden ark, and He caused his offspring to be the survivors, and Allah granted him victory over his people who had ridiculed him.

﴿ وَدَاوُۥدَ وَسُلَيْمَٰنَ إِذْ يَحْكُمَانِ فِى ٱلْحَرْثِ إِذْ نَفَشَتْ فِيهِ غَنَمُ ٱلْقَوْمِ وَكُنَّا لِحُكْمِهِمْ شَٰهِدِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَفَهَّمْنَٰهَا سُلَيْمَٰنَ ۚ وَكُلًّا ءَاتَيْنَا حُكْمًا وَعِلْمًا ۚ وَسَخَّرْنَا مَعَ دَاوُۥدَ ٱلْجِبَالَ يُسَبِّحْنَ وَٱلطَّيْرَ ۚ وَكُنَّا فَٰعِلِينَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَعَلَّمْنَٰهُ صَنْعَةَ لَبُوسٍ لَّكُمْ لِتُحْصِنَكُم مِّنۢ بَأْسِكُمْ ۖ فَهَلْ أَنتُمْ شَٰكِرُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَلِسُلَيْمَٰنَ ٱلرِّيحَ عَاصِفَةً تَجْرِى بِأَمْرِهِۦٓ إِلَى ٱلْأَرْضِ ٱلَّتِى بَٰرَكْنَا فِيهَا ۚ وَكُنَّا بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَٰلِمِينَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَمِنَ ٱلشَّيَٰطِينِ مَن يَغُوصُونَ لَهُۥ وَيَعْمَلُونَ عَمَلًا دُونَ ذَٰلِكَ ۖ وَكُنَّا لَهُمْ حَٰفِظِينَ ﴿٨٢﴾ ﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٧٨-٨٢)

21:78. And [remember] Dâwood and Sulaymân, when they gave judgement in the case of the field into which some people's sheep had strayed at night and eaten the crops. We were witness to their judgement.

21:79. We guided Sulaymân to the right verdict, and to each of them We gave wisdom and knowledge. And We compelled the mountains and the birds to glorify Allah with Dâwood, for We are able to do [all things].

21:80. And We taught him the art of making coats of mail for your benefit, to protect you in battle. Will you then be grateful?

21:81. And for Sulaymân [We subjugated] the raging wind, which blew at his command to the land which We had blessed. And We have full knowledge of all things.

21:82. And [We also subjugated for him] some of the devils who dived for him in the sea and performed other tasks. And We were watching over them.

That is, and remember these two noble Prophets, namely Dâwood and Sulaymân, by way of praise and commendation. Allah gave them abundant knowledge and the ability to judge between people, based on the words: ﴿when they gave judgement in the case of the field into which some people's sheep had strayed at night and eaten the crops﴾ that is, when the owner of the field referred to them for judgement, as some people's sheep had strayed into the field at night and grazed there, eating everything that was growing, and had eaten his crops. Dâwood (ﷺ) issued a verdict that the sheep should go to the owner of the field, based on the negligence of their owners, so he punished them in this manner.

But Sulaymân gave the right verdict in this case, as he ruled that the owners of the sheep should let the owners of the field keep the sheep and benefit from their milk and wool, and they should tend the garden of the owner of the field until they had restored it to its original state. Then when it was restored to its original state, each party should return the property of the other. This was due to his perfect understanding and smartness. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says:
﴿We guided Sulaymân to the right verdict﴾ that is, We helped him to understand this case and reach the right verdict. This does not mean that Allah did not enable Dâwood to reach the right verdict in other cases. Hence He pointed this out, as He says: ﴿and to each of them﴾ namely Dâwood and Sulaymân ﴿We gave wisdom and knowledge﴾. This indicates that a judge may reach the right conclusion or he may get it wrong; he is not to be blamed if he makes a mistake so long as he tried his hardest.

Then Allah tells us of what was given uniquely to each of them:

﴿And We compelled the mountains and the birds to glorify Allah with Dâwood﴾ that is because he was one of the most devoted of worshippers and one of those who remembered Allah the most, glorifying Him and praising Him. Allah had given him a beautiful, soft and melodious voice, such as He had never given to anyone else.

So when he glorified and praised Allah, the mountains and birds would repeat his words of praise. This was by the grace and great kindness of Allah to him. Hence Allah says: ﴿for We are able to do [all things]﴾.

﴿And We taught him the art of making coats of mail for your benefit﴾ that is, Allah taught Dâwood (ﷺ) how to make coats of mail. He was the first one to make them and learn this craft, and this skill was passed down to those who came after him. Allah made iron soft in his hands and taught him how to make it into rings of chainmail, which was of immense benefit.
﴿to protect you in battle﴾ that is, it is protection for you, to protect you in battle when the fighting grows intense.

﴿Will you then be grateful?﴾ For the blessing that Allah has bestowed upon you, when He caused it to reach you through His slave Dâwood. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...and He has given you garments to protect you from heat, and garments to protect you in battle. Thus does He perfect His favours to you, so that you may submit to Him.﴾ *(an-Nahl 16: 81)*

It may be that when Allah taught Dâwood how to make chainmail and made iron soft for him, this was a miracle by which – as the commentators said – Allah made iron soft for him until he was able to use it like dough or clay, without having to melt it in fire.

Or it may be that Allah taught him how to do it in the ordinary manner, and that iron was made soft for him by way of Allah teaching him the means that is known now, namely melting it. This is what appears to be the case, because Allah is reminding people of His favour and instructing them to give thanks for it. Were it not for the fact that making it is something that Allah has put within the capability of people, He would not have reminded them of this favour and mentioned its benefit, because it is not possible that only the chainmail that was actually made by Dâwood (ﷺ) is what is meant here. Rather the reminder has to do with the knowledge of how to

make it. There is no evidence for the first possibility mentioned by the commentators except the words:

﴿...And We made iron malleable for him.﴾ *(Saba' 34: 10)*

There is nothing to indicate that He made it soft for him without any cause. And Allah knows best about that.

﴿And for Sulaymân [We subjugated] the raging wind﴾ that is, the fast-moving wind

﴿which blew at his command﴾; wherever it was directed, it would obey his command, travelling a month's journey in the morning and again in the afternoon, coming back ﴿to the land which We had blessed﴾, namely Greater Syria, where he resided. He would travel on the wind, east and west, but he would always come back to the blessed land.

﴿And We have full knowledge of all things﴾ that is, Our knowledge encompasses all things; We knew about Dâwood and Sulaymân, and that which made them deserve to be blessed as described.

﴿And [We also subjugated for him] some of the devils who dived for him in the sea and performed other tasks﴾. This was another of the unique characteristics of Sulaymân (ﷺ): Allah subjugated for him devils and ifrits, and gave him the power to subjugate them to do tasks that many others were not able to do. Some of them dived in the sea for him and brought out pearls and other things, and some of them worked for him as he desired, (making) arches, images, basins as large as reservoirs, and (cooking) cauldrons fixed (in their places) *(cf. 34: 13)*. He subjugated some of them to build Bayt al-Maqdis (the Temple) for him, and he died whilst they were building it, but they continued for a year after that, until they found out that he had died, as we shall see below, in shâ' Allâh.

﴿And We were watching over them﴾ that is, they could not refuse to do anything he told them to, or disobey him; rather Allah kept watch over them, by His might, power and authority.

﴿ وَأَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُۥٓ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ ٱلضُّرُّ وَأَنتَ أَرْحَمُ ٱلرَّٰحِمِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ فَٱسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُۥ فَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِۦ مِن ضُرٍّ ۖ وَءَاتَيْنَٰهُ أَهْلَهُۥ وَمِثْلَهُم مَّعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِندِنَا وَذِكْرَىٰ لِلْعَٰبِدِينَ ﴿٨٤﴾ ﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٨٣-٨٤)

21:83. And [remember] Ayyoob, when He called upon his Lord: Affliction has indeed befallen me, and You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.

21:84. So We answered his prayer and relieved his affliction, and We restored his family to him and doubled their number, as a mercy from Us and as a reminder for all who worship Us.

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That is, remember Our slave and Messenger Ayyoob, in a context of praise and respect, showing his high status, when Allah tested him with a great trial and found him patient and content with his Lord. The Shaytân was given power over his body as a test from Allah, so he breathed into his body and he was afflicted with great sores that stayed for a long time. He faced a severe calamity, his family died and he lost his wealth, so he called out to his Lord: O Lord, ﴿Affliction has indeed befallen me, and You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy﴾.

He beseeched Allah by telling of his situation – and that his affliction had become so severe – and by referring to His abundant mercy. So Allah responded to him and said to him:

﴿...Strike [the ground] with your foot. Here is cool water for you to wash in and drink.﴾ *(Ṣâd 38: 42)*

So he struck the ground with his foot, and as a result of his doing so, a spring of cold water gushed forth. He bathed in it and drank from it, and Allah relieved him of his affliction.

﴿and We restored his family to him﴾ that is, we returned his family and his wealth to him

﴿and doubled their number﴾ because, in addition to healing him, Allah granted him family and wealth in abundance.

﴿as a mercy from Us﴾ to him, because he was patient and was content with his Lord. Therefore Allah rewarded him in this world, before bestowing the reward of the hereafter.

﴿and as a reminder for all who worship Us﴾ that is, We made him a lesson for all who worship Us, those who will benefit from the lesson. When they see what befell him of calamity, then what Allah rewarded him with after it was over, and they look for the reason behind that, they will realise that it is patience and steadfastness. Hence Allah praised him for that when He said:

﴿...Truly We found him to be patient and steadfast, a good and faithful slave who constantly turned [to Us].﴾ *(Sâd 38: 44)*

So they will take him as an example to follow when calamity strikes.

﴿وَإِسْمَٰعِيلَ وَإِدْرِيسَ وَذَا ٱلْكِفْلِ ۖ كُلٌّ مِّنَ ٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَأَدْخَلْنَٰهُمْ فِى رَحْمَتِنَآ ۖ إِنَّهُم مِّنَ ٱلصَّٰلِحِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٨٥-٨٦)

21:85. And remember Ismâ'eel and Idrees and Dhul-Kifl. All of them were men of constancy and patience,

21:86. And We admitted them to Our mercy, for they were among the righteous.

And remember Our chosen slaves and Prophets, mention them in the best manner, and praise them in the most eloquent terms: Ismâ'eel ibn Ibrâheem, and Idrees and Dhul-Kifl, who were two of the Prophets of the Israelites.

﴿All﴾ of those who are mentioned here ﴿were men of constancy and patience﴾. Constancy and patience refers to restraining oneself from

doing that to which one is naturally inclined. This includes all three types of patience: patience in obeying Allah, patience in refraining from disobeying Allah, and patience in accepting the decree of Allah when it is painful. No one deserves to be described as perfectly patient unless he fulfils all three types of patience.

Allah (ﷻ) described these Prophets (peace be upon them) as being patient, which indicates that they attained all three types of patience, and they exercised patience. He also described them as righteous, which includes righteousness of the heart, by knowing and loving Allah, and turning to Him at all times; righteousness of the tongue, by keeping it moist with the remembrance of Allah; and physical righteousness, by keeping the physical faculties busy with acts of obedience to Allah and restraining them from sin. By virtue of their patience and righteousness, Allah admitted them to His mercy and included them alongside their fellow Messengers, and He rewarded them in this world and in the hereafter. If their reward was no more than making their names renowned among humankind and granting them an honourable mention among the later nations, that would be sufficient honour and virtue.

﴿ وَذَا ٱلنُّونِ إِذ ذَّهَبَ مُغَٰضِبًا فَظَنَّ أَن لَّن نَّقۡدِرَ عَلَيۡهِ فَنَادَىٰ فِي ٱلظُّلُمَٰتِ أَن لَّآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّآ أَنتَ سُبۡحَٰنَكَ إِنِّي كُنتُ مِنَ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ فَٱسۡتَجَبۡنَا لَهُۥ وَنَجَّيۡنَٰهُ مِنَ ٱلۡغَمِّۚ وَكَذَٰلِكَ نُنجِي ٱلۡمُؤۡمِنِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٨٧-٨٨)

21:87. And [remember] Dhun-Noon [Yoonus], when he departed in anger, thinking that We would not punish him. Then he called out in the depths of darkness: There is no god but You. Glory be to You; I have indeed done wrong.

21:88. So We answered his prayer and delivered him from his distress; thus do We deliver the believers.

That is, and remember Our slave and Messenger Dhun-Noon, namely Yoonus, the one who was swallowed by the fish; remember him in the best terms and praise him, for Allah (ﷻ) sent him to his people, and he called them, but they did not believe, so he warned them of the punishment which would befall at a set time of which he informed them.

The punishment came to them, and they saw it with their own eyes, so they turned to Allah, beseeching and repenting, and Allah spared them the punishment, as He says elsewhere:

﴿There was no city that believed [after seeing the punishment] and benefitted from its faith except the people of Yoonus. When they believed, We removed from them the punishment of disgrace in this world, and allowed them to enjoy life for a while.﴾ *(Yoonus 10: 98)*

And He said:

﴿We sent him as a Messenger to a hundred thousand people or more, and they believed, so We allowed them to enjoy life for a while.﴾ *(aṣ-Ṣâffât 37: 147-148)*

This great nation that believed in the call of Yoonus was one of his greatest virtues, but he departed in anger and ran away to the fully laden ship, because of some sin of which Allah has not told us in His Book, and we have no need to know what it was, as Allah tells us:

﴿He ran away to the fully-laden ship, then he drew lots with them and he was one of those who lost. Then the fish swallowed him. He had done an act worthy of blame.﴾ *(aṣ-Ṣâffât 37: 140-142)*

What appears to be the case is that this refers to his hastening to leave his people, getting angry with them, and leaving them before Allah (ﷻ) instructed him to do so, and thinking that Allah would not punish him for that and would not put him in a constrained space in the belly of the fish, or he thought that he could escape the punishment of Allah. There is nothing wrong with such a thought crossing the mind of people of perfect character, in a way that does not take root and does

not persist. So he embarked on the ship with some other people, then they cast lots to determine which of them should be thrown into the sea, because they feared that they would drown if they all remained on board. The lot fell to Yoonus, so he was thrown overboard and the fish swallowed him and took him down to the darkest depths of the sea. In the depths of darkness he called out: ﴿There is no god but You. Glory be to You; I have indeed done wrong﴾. Thus he affirmed the perfect divinity of Allah (ﷻ), declaring Him to be above any shortcomings, defects or faults, and he acknowledged his own wrongdoing and transgression. Allah (ﷻ) said:

﴿Were it not for the fact that he was one of those who glorified Allah a great deal, he would have remained in its belly until the Day of Resurrection.﴾ *(as-Sâffât 37: 143-144)*

Hence Allah says here: ﴿So We answered his prayer and delivered him from his distress﴾ that is, from the hardship he had fallen into. ﴿thus do We deliver the believers﴾. This is a promise and glad tidings to every believer who falls into hardship and distress, that Allah (ﷻ) will save him from it, and will grant him relief and alleviate his distress, because of his faith, as He did in the case of Yoonus (عليه السلام).

﴿وَزَكَرِيَّآ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُۥ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْنِى فَرْدًا وَأَنتَ خَيْرُ ٱلْوَٰرِثِينَ ﴿٨٩﴾ فَٱسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُۥ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُۥ يَحْيَىٰ وَأَصْلَحْنَا لَهُۥ زَوْجَهُۥٓ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا۟ يُسَٰرِعُونَ فِى ٱلْخَيْرَٰتِ وَيَدْعُونَنَا رَغَبًا وَرَهَبًا ۖ وَكَانُوا۟ لَنَا خَٰشِعِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٨٩-٩٠)

21:89. And [remember] Zakariyâ, when he called upon his Lord: My Lord, do not leave me childless, although You are the best of inheritors.

21:90. So We answered his prayer and We bestowed upon him Yaḥyâ, and cured his wife [of barrenness]. Verily, they used to hasten to do good deeds, and they used to call on Us in hope and fear, and they were always humble before Us.

That is, and remember Our slave Zakariyâ, by way of praise and holding him in high esteem, mentioning his virtues and good characteristics, among which was this great virtue which is indicative of his sincerity towards people and the mercy of Allah towards him. He ﴿called upon his Lord: My Lord, do not leave me childless﴾. In other words: he said:

﴿...My Lord, my bones have grown weak and my head glows silver with age, but never, my Lord, has my prayer to You remained unanswered. Verily, I fear [what] my kinsmen [will do] after I am gone, for my wife is barren.[19] Grant unto me by Your grace an heir, who will inherit from me and from the family of Ya'qoob, and make him, my Lord, one with whom You are pleased.﴾ *(Maryam 19: 4-6)*

From these verses, in which we see that he said ﴿My Lord, do not leave me childless﴾, we learn that as death approached, he feared that there would be no one to take his place in calling people to Allah and advising the slaves of Allah, for there was no one at his time who was like him in knowledge, and there would be no one to succeed him and carry on the work that he had been doing.

﴿although You are the best of inheritors﴾ that is, the best of those who remain, and the best to do good to people after I am gone, for You are more merciful towards Your slaves than I am, but I want to put my mind at rest and be reassured, and to have ongoing reward for that.

[19] His kinsmen did not care about religion, and he was afraid that after he died, religion would be neglected. So he asked for an heir who would uphold religion after he was gone. Therefore he asked for someone who would inherit knowledge and prophethood, not wealth, from him. (al-Qurṭubi)

﴿So We answered his prayer and We bestowed upon him Yaḥyâ﴾ the noble Prophet, whose name Allah had never given to anyone before him.

﴿and cured his wife [of barrenness]﴾ after her womb had been unable to bear children. Allah healed her and made her womb able to bear a child, for the sake of His Prophet Zakariyâ. This is one of the benefits of having good and righteous companions, for those who keep company with them will be blessed. Thus Yaḥyâ was born to his parents.

Having mentioned these Prophets and Messengers, each of them on his own, Allah praises all of them in general terms by saying:

﴿Verily, they used to hasten to do good deeds﴾ that is, they would hasten to do them at the best time and complete them in the appropriate manner, not omitting any virtue that they were able to attain without making the most of any opportunity to do good.

﴿and they used to call on Us in hope and fear﴾ that is, they would ask Us for whatever they needed and hoped for, in this world and the hereafter, and they would seek refuge with Us from that which they feared of harm in both realms, hoping and fearing, never becoming heedless or distracted, or taking things for granted.

﴿and they were always humble before Us﴾ that is, they submitted with humility, beseeching Us, because of their perfect knowledge of their Lord.

﴿وَٱلَّتِيٓ أَحۡصَنَتۡ فَرۡجَهَا فَنَفَخۡنَا فِيهَا مِن رُّوحِنَا وَجَعَلۡنَٰهَا وَٱبۡنَهَآ ءَايَةٗ لِّلۡعَٰلَمِينَ ٩١ إِنَّ هَٰذِهِۦٓ أُمَّتُكُمۡ أُمَّةٗ وَٰحِدَةٗ وَأَنَا۠ رَبُّكُمۡ فَٱعۡبُدُونِ ٩٢ وَتَقَطَّعُوٓاْ أَمۡرَهُم بَيۡنَهُمۡۖ كُلٌّ إِلَيۡنَا رَٰجِعُونَ ٩٣ فَمَن يَعۡمَلۡ مِنَ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ وَهُوَ مُؤۡمِنٞ فَلَا كُفۡرَانَ لِسَعۡيِهِۦ وَإِنَّا لَهُۥ كَٰتِبُونَ ٩٤﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٩١-٩٤)

21:91. And [remember] the one who guarded her chastity: We blew into her [garment] through Our angel [Jibreel], and We made her and her son a sign for all people.

21:92. Verily this religion of yours is one religion, and I am your Lord, so worship Me alone.

21:93. But people have divided themselves into sects; yet to Us they will all return.

21:94. Then whoever does righteous deeds and is a believer, his efforts will not go unappreciated, for We are recording it.

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That is, and remember Maryam (peace be upon her), praising her, pointing out her high status and making her chastity known to all.

﴿the one who guarded her chastity﴾ that is, she protected it from that which is prohibited and from approaching such deeds; she also protected it from that which is lawful. She did not marry, because she was focused on worship, and spent all her time serving her Lord.

When Jibreel came to her in the form of a perfect, handsome man:

﴿She said: I seek refuge in the Most Merciful from you; [do not come near me] if you fear Him!﴾ *(Maryam 19: 18)*

Allah granted her a reward that fit the nature of her deed, as He blessed her with a son without a father; rather Jibreel blew into her (garment) and she conceived by Allah's leave.

﴿and We made her and her son a sign for all people﴾, as she conceived him and gave birth to him without anyone touching her; and he spoke in the cradle, declaring her innocent of that of which people accused her, and he spoke of himself in that situation. Allah caused extraordinary events and miracles to occur at his hands, as is well known. Thus she and her son were a sign for all people, as generation after generation of those who pay heed have spoken of her and learned lessons from her.

Having mentioned the Prophets, Allah (ﷻ) now addresses the humankind and says: ﴿Verily this religion of yours is one religion﴾ that is, this religion is the religion of all the Messengers mentioned. They are your leaders whose example you follow. They all follow one religion and one path, and they all worship one Lord.
Hence Allah says: ﴿and I am your Lord﴾ Who created you and bestowed My blessings upon you, by guiding you to faith and granting other worldly blessings. As the Lord is one, and the Prophet is one, and the religion is one – and it is to worship Allah alone, with no partner or associate, devoting all kinds of worship to Him – your role and duty is to follow that. Hence Allah says: ﴿so worship Me alone﴾.

What should have happened is that people should have agreed on the matter of religion and not been divided on this matter, but transgression and enmity insisted on causing divisions and dissent. Hence Allah says: ﴿But people have divided themselves into sects﴾ that is, they split into factions and parties who claim to follow the Prophets, each claiming to possess the truth and regarding all others as following falsehood.

﴿But people divided into sects, each group rejoicing in what it has.﴾ *(al-Mu'minoon 23: 53)*

It is known that the one who gets it right is the one who follows the true religion and straight path, following in the footsteps of the Prophets. This will become clear when the covers are removed and hidden things are exposed, when Allah gathers all people to pass judgement. At that time it will become clear who is telling the truth and who is lying. Hence Allah says: ﴿yet to Us they will all return﴾ that is, all these various groups, and others, will return to Us and We will requite them in full.

Then Allah explains how He will requite them:
﴿Then whoever does righteous deeds﴾ that is, the deeds that were prescribed by the Messengers and encouraged in the Books

﴿and is a believer﴾ in Allah and His Messengers, and the message they brought

﴿his efforts will not go unappreciated﴾ that is, We will not cause his efforts to be wasted or rendered invalid; rather We will greatly multiply the reward for them.

﴿for We are recording it﴾ that is, We are recording it in al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfoodh, and in pages that are with the recording angels. This implies that whoever does not do righteous deeds, or who does righteous deeds but is not a believer, will be deprived of reward and will be a loser in both religious and worldly terms.

﴿ وَحَرَامٌ عَلَىٰ قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَاهَا أَنَّهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٩٥)

21:95. It is not possible for any city whom We have destroyed to return [to this world],

That is, it is impossible for any city that was destroyed with the punishment to return to this world in order to make up for what they neglected. There is no way for those who were destroyed and punished to return. So let those who are addressed here beware of continuing to do that which leads to doom, lest it befall them, for then it cannot be lifted; let them give up (their sin) whilst it is still possible for them to do so.

﴿ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فُتِحَتْ يَأْجُوجُ وَمَأْجُوجُ وَهُم مِّن كُلِّ حَدَبٍ يَنسِلُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾ وَاقْتَرَبَ الْوَعْدُ الْحَقُّ فَإِذَا هِيَ شَاخِصَةٌ أَبْصَارُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا قَدْ كُنَّا فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَٰذَا بَلْ كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٩٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٩٦-٩٧)

21:96. until, when Ya'jooj and Ma'jooj have been let loose and come rushing from all directions,

21:97. and the true promise[20] nears its fulfilment; then the eyes of the disbelievers will stare in horror [and they will say]: Woe to us! We were indeed heedless of this; nay, we were wrongdoers.

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This is a warning from Allah to the people, lest they persist in disbelief and sin, for the time has drawn near for the emergence of Ya'jooj and Ma'jooj. These are two great tribes of the sons of Adam. Dhul-Qarnayn built the barrier to contain them, when a complaint was made to him about their spreading mischief in the land.

At the end of time, the barrier will be breached and they will emerge against people in the manner described by Allah, rushing from all directions. This is indicative of their huge numbers and the speed with which they will travel throughout the earth, either because of their own strength or because of what Allah will create for them of means of crossing large distances and making that which is difficult easy. They will subdue the people and behave arrogantly towards them in this world, and no one will be able to fight them.

﴿and the true promise nears its fulfilment﴾ namely the Day of Resurrection, which Allah has promised will come, and His promise is true. On that day, you will see the eyes of the disbelievers staring in horror because of the intensity of fear, great terror and immense turmoil, and because of what they know of their offences and sins. They will pray against themselves and call for doom, in regret and sorrow for what has passed, and they will say:
﴿Woe to us! We were indeed heedless of this﴾ great day, for we were constantly distracted from it, indulging in worldly pleasures, until that which is certain (death) came to us, and the resurrection came to us. If anyone could die of regret and sorrow, they would die.

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[20] This refers to the Day of Resurrection.

﴿nay, we were wrongdoers﴾ – they will admit their wrongdoing and will acknowledge that Allah has been just towards them.

At that point, orders will be issued to take them to the fire, they and that which they used to worship. Hence Allah says:

﴿إِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ حَصَبُ جَهَنَّمَ أَنتُمْ لَهَا وَٰرِدُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾ لَوْ كَانَ هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ ءَالِهَةً مَّا وَرَدُوهَا ۖ وَكُلٌّ فِيهَا خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾ لَهُمْ فِيهَا زَفِيرٌ وَهُمْ فِيهَا لَا يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ سَبَقَتْ لَهُم مِّنَّا ٱلْحُسْنَىٰٓ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ حَسِيسَهَا ۖ وَهُمْ فِى مَا ٱشْتَهَتْ أَنفُسُهُمْ خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ لَا يَحْزُنُهُمُ ٱلْفَزَعُ ٱلْأَكْبَرُ وَتَتَلَقَّىٰهُمُ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةُ هَٰذَا يَوْمُكُمُ ٱلَّذِى كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٩٨-١٠٣)

21:98. Verily you [O disbelievers] and that which you worship besides Allah are fuel for hell; to it you will [surely] come.

21:99. If these [idols] had really been gods, they would not have come to it. But they will all abide therein forever.

21:100. Therein they will be wailing, and they will not be able to hear.

21:101. But those for whom We have decreed good will surely be kept far away from it.

21:102. They will not hear even the slightest sound of it, and they will abide forever in that which their hearts desire.

21:103. The greatest terror will not grieve them; and the angels will welcome them [saying]: This is your day, that you were promised.

That is, O you who used to worship other gods alongside Allah, you ﴿are fuel for hell; to it you will [surely] come﴾, you and your idols.

The wisdom behind the admission of the idols to hell, even though they are inanimate and cannot think, and there is no sin on their part, is to highlight the lies of those who took them as gods, and so as to increase their punishment. Hence Allah says:

﴿If these [idols] had really been gods, they would not have come to it﴾. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿[They will be raised up] so that He may make clear to them that concerning which they differ, and so that those who disbelieved may realise that they were lying.﴾ *(an-Nahl 16: 39)*

Both the worshippers and their objects of worship will abide therein forever, and will never emerge from it or depart from it.

﴿Therein they will be wailing﴾ because of the severity of the punishment

﴿and they will not be able to hear﴾. They will be deaf, dumb and blind, unable to hear any sound other than that made by the fire, because of the intensity of its boiling, wailing and raging.

The admission of the gods of the polytheists to hell only refers to the idols or those who were worshipped and approved of that.

However in the case of the Messiah, 'Uzayr, the angels and other close friends of Allah who were worshipped, they will not be punished for that. They are included among ﴿those for whom We have decreed good﴾ that is, according to the prior knowledge of Allah and as is written in al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfoodh, they are blessed, and in this world they are guided to the path of ease and righteous deeds. They ﴿will surely be kept far away from it﴾ namely hell. They will not enter it or even come near it; rather they will be kept very far away from it, so that they will not hear the slightest sound from it or see it.

﴿and they will abide forever in that which their hearts desire﴾ of food, drink, spouses and scenery, such as no eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has it ever entered the mind of man. That will be perpetual and will increase in beauty with the passage of time.

﴿The greatest terror will not grieve them﴾ that is, it will not worry them when the people panic at the greatest terror. That will be on the Day of Resurrection, when the fire is brought near, raging with anger towards the disbelievers and sinners, and there will be great panic and terror at that point, but these righteous people will not be grieved by that, because they are certain of what lies ahead of them, for Allah has granted them safety against what they fear.

﴿and the angels will welcome them﴾ when they are resurrected from their graves and come on camels as a delegation. The angels will congratulate them, saying: ﴿This is your day, that you were promised﴾; we congratulate you for what Allah has promised you. So be of great good cheer, for what lies ahead of you of honour, and rejoice greatly, for Allah has saved you from fear and harm.

﴿يَوْمَ نَطْوِي السَّمَاءَ كَطَيِّ السِّجِلِّ لِلْكُتُبِ كَمَا بَدَأْنَا أَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُّعِيدُهُ وَعْدًا عَلَيْنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا فَاعِلِينَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُورِ مِن بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ أَنَّ الْأَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصَّالِحُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ١٠٤-١٠٥)

21:104. On that day We will roll up the heavens like a written scroll. As We originated creation, so We will repeat it, a promise binding upon Us. We will indeed fulfil it.

21:105. We wrote in the scripture, after We had done so in the Reminder: My righteous slaves will inherit the land.

Here Allah tells us that on the Day of Resurrection, He will roll up the heavens, despite their vastness, as a written scroll is rolled up. The stars will be scattered, and the sun and moon will be rolled up and moved from their places. ﴿As We originated creation, so We will repeat it﴾ that is, We will create them anew, as We created them the first time. As we created them initially, when they were nothing, so too We will recreate them after they have died.

﴿a promise binding upon Us. We will indeed fulfil it﴾ and do what We have promised. That is because of His perfect might, for nothing is impossible for Him.

﴿We wrote in the scripture﴾ this refers to the divinely revealed Books, such as the Torah and the like
﴿after We had done so in the Reminder﴾ that is, We wrote it in the divinely revealed Books, after We had written it in the previous record, namely al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfoodh. What was written in it is:
﴿My righteous slaves﴾ that is, those who did what was enjoined and avoided what was prohibited ﴿will inherit the land﴾ namely, the land of paradise. It is His righteous slaves whom Allah will cause to inherit paradise, as the people of paradise will say:

﴿...Praise be to Allah Who has fulfilled His promise to us and given us this land as our own, so that we may dwell in paradise wherever we wish...﴾ *(az-Zumar 39: 74)*

It may be that what is meant is becoming in charge of the land on earth, and that Allah will give the righteous power and authority on earth, and will cause them to be in charge of it, as He says elsewhere:

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

﴿إِنَّ فِي هَٰذَا لَبَلَاغًا لِّقَوْمٍ عَابِدِينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ
﴿١٠٧﴾ قُلْ إِنَّمَا يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ أَنَّمَا إِلَٰهُكُمْ إِلَٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ ۖ فَهَلْ أَنتُم مُّسْلِمُونَ

﴿ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ ءَاذَنتُكُمْ عَلَىٰ سَوَآءٍ ۖ وَإِنْ أَدْرِىٓ أَقَرِيبٌ أَم بَعِيدٌ مَّا تُوعَدُونَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ إِنَّهُۥ يَعْلَمُ ٱلْجَهْرَ مِنَ ٱلْقَوْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾ وَإِنْ أَدْرِى لَعَلَّهُۥ فِتْنَةٌ لَّكُمْ وَمَتَٰعٌ إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿١١١﴾ قَٰلَ رَبِّ ٱحْكُم بِٱلْحَقِّ ۗ وَرَبُّنَا ٱلرَّحْمَٰنُ ٱلْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَىٰ مَا تَصِفُونَ ﴿١١٢﴾ ﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ١٠٦-١١٢)

21:106. Verily this [Qur'an] is sufficient for people who are devoted to worshipping Allah.

21:107. And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds.

21:108. Say: It has been revealed to me that your God is One God. Will you then submit to Him [in Islam]?

21:109. But if they turn away, say: I have proclaimed the message to all of you alike; but I do not know whether what you are warned of is imminent or far off.

21:110. Verily He knows what is said openly and He knows what you conceal.

21:111. For all I know, this may be a test for you and a short reprieve.

21:112. He said: O my Lord, judge in truth. Our Lord, the Most Gracious, is the One Whose help is to be sought against what you utter [of falsehood].

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Here Allah (ﷻ) praises His noble Book, the Qur'an, and explains that it is completely sufficient and they have no need of anything else; no one can do without it.

﴿Verily this [Qur'an] is sufficient for people who are devoted to worshipping Allah﴾ that is, it is sufficient to help them reach their Lord and His paradise. It shows them the way to attain the sublime goal and best aim. Those who are devoted to worshipping Allah – who are the noblest of humankind – have no other aim, because this Book will guarantee that they will learn about their Lord and His names, attributes and deeds; and about the true stories of the unseen. It calls them to the fundamentals of faith, highlighting proof and evidence for

that, explaining all the commands and prohibitions, highlighting the faults and weaknesses of the soul, what could undermine deeds, and the ways they should follow in minor and major issues of religion. It warns them against the paths of the Shaytân and explains how he interferes with man and tries to gain control over him. Whoever does not think that the Qur'an is sufficient, may Allah never make him content.

Then Allah praises His Messenger (ﷺ) who brought the Qur'an: ﴿And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds﴾ for he is Allah's mercy, given to His slaves. So those who believe in him accept this mercy, give thanks for it and adhere to it, but others reject it, respond with ingratitude for the blessing of Allah, and refuse the mercy and grace of Allah.

﴿Say﴾, O Muhammad (ﷺ): ﴿It has been revealed to me that your God is One God﴾ and none is deserving of worship except Him. Hence He says: ﴿Will you then submit to Him [in Islam]?﴾ That is, submit in servitude to Him and surrender to His divinity. If they do that, then let them praise their Lord for this blessing that He has bestowed upon them that surpasses all other blessings.

﴿But if they turn away﴾ and do not submit in servitude to their Lord, then warn them of the punishment, and ﴿say: I have proclaimed the message﴾ that is, I have given notice of the punishment ﴿to all of you alike﴾ that is, all of us, you and I, are now equally aware of it, so do not say, when the punishment befalls you:

﴿...No bearer of glad tidings and no warner ever came to us...﴾ *(al-Mā'idah 5: 19)*

Rather now everyone knows about it, because I have warned you and have told you the consequences of disbelief, and I have not withheld or concealed anything from you.

﴿but I do not know whether what you are warned of﴾ namely the punishment ﴿is imminent or far off﴾, because knowledge of that is

with Allah, and it is under His control; I have no say in the matter at all.

﴿For all I know, this may be a test for you and a short reprieve﴾ that is, perhaps the delay of the punishment that you seek to hasten is bad for you, so that you may enjoy life in this world for a little while, then your punishment will be greater.

﴿He said: O my Lord, judge in truth﴾ that is, between me and the disbelieving people. Allah answered this supplication and judged between them in this world, before the hereafter, as He punished the disbelievers at the Battle of Badr and otherwise.

﴿Our Lord, the Most Gracious, is the One Whose help is to be sought against what you utter [of falsehood]﴾ that is, we ask our Lord, the Most Gracious, and we seek His help against what you say; we will prevail over you and your religion will diminish. This is not self-admiration on our part, and we are not putting our trust in our power or strength; rather we are seeking the help of the Most Gracious, in Whose Hand is the forelock of every creature, and we hope that He will continue to bestow His mercy upon us. And He did indeed do that. Praise be to Allah.

This is the end of the commentary on Soorat al-Anbiyâ'.
All praise and thanks are for Allah, and may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his family, and his Companions abundantly until the Day of Judgement.

# 22.
# Soorat al-Ḥajj

(It was said that it is Makki or Madani)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ ٱتَّقُوا۟ رَبَّكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ زَلْزَلَةَ ٱلسَّاعَةِ شَىْءٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١﴾ يَوْمَ تَرَوْنَهَا تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّآ أَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَتَرَى ٱلنَّاسَ سُكَٰرَىٰ وَمَا هُم بِسُكَٰرَىٰ وَلَٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ ٱللَّهِ شَدِيدٌ ﴿٢﴾﴾ (سورة الحج: ١-٢)

22:1. O humankind, fear your Lord, for verily the convulsion of the Hour will be a terrible thing.

22:2. On the day you see it, every nursing mother will be distracted from the infant she is nursing and every pregnant woman will miscarry. You will see people as though they are drunk, although they are not drunk, but the punishment of Allah will be severe indeed.

Here Allah addresses all people, telling them to fear their Lord Who has bestowed upon them all sorts of blessings, both visible and

hidden. Therefore they should fear Him and refrain from ascription of partners to Him, evildoing and sin; and they should comply with His commands as much as possible.

Then He tells them that He will help them to fear Him, and He warns them against not doing that, by telling them of the horrors of the Day of Resurrection.

﴿for verily the convulsion of the Hour will be a terrible thing﴾ and no one can estimate how terrible it will be and what its nature will be. When the Hour begins, the earth will shake and convulse, and there will be earthquakes. The mountains will begin to collapse and crumble, and will become like heaps of shifting sand, then like scattered dust. Then humankind will be divided into three groups.

The heaven will be rent asunder, the sun and the moon will be rolled up, and the stars will be scattered. There will be such turmoil and upheaval that hearts will crack, children will turn grey and the solid mountains will melt. Hence Allah says:

﴿On the day you see it, every nursing mother will be distracted from the infant she is nursing﴾, even though the nursing mother naturally has a deep love for her child, especially at this stage, at which the infant cannot survive without her.
﴿and every pregnant woman will miscarry﴾ because of the intensity of terror and horror.

﴿You will see people as though they are drunk, although they are not drunk﴾ that is, you would think – if you saw them – that they were drunk from imbibing alcohol, but they will not be drunk.
﴿but the punishment of Allah will be severe indeed﴾ and as a result they will lose their minds, and their hearts will be filled with fear and panic; their hearts will reach their throats and they will stare fixedly in horror. On that day, no father will avail his child and no child will avail his father anything. On that day:

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

On that day:

﴿...the wrongdoer will bite on his hands and say: Would that I had taken a path with the Messenger. Alas for me! Would that I had not taken So-and-so as a friend!﴾ *(al-Furqān 25: 27-28)*

On that day, some faces will turn dark and others will turn bright. The Balance will be set up which will weigh the smallest particle of good or evil. The records of deeds will be spread out, with all that they contain of deeds, words and intentions, small or great. The ṣirāṭ (the path leading to paradise that passes over hellfire) will be set up over hell, paradise will be brought near to the pious, and hell will be placed in full view of those who went astray.

﴿When it sees them from afar, they will hear its raging and roaring. When they are cast into a narrow place therein, bound together in shackles, they will call out [wishing] for death.﴾ *(al-Furqān 25: 12-13)*

But it will be said to them:

﴿...Do not call out once [wishing] for death today; rather call out many times.﴾ *(al-Furqān 25: 14)*

But when they call upon their Lord, asking Him to bring them out of it, He will say:

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

The Most Merciful Lord will be angry with them; the painful punishment will befall them, and they will despair of all good. They will find all their deeds recorded, with nothing omitted, not even the tiniest detail.

On the other hand, the pious will be in a garden, rejoicing *(30: 15)*, enjoying all kinds of pleasures, abiding forever in that which their hearts desire *(21: 102)*.

The wise person who knows that all of this lies ahead of him is expected to prepare the means that will enable him to reach it, and he should not hope to live long (in this world) and give up striving. He should fear Allah, and love and remembrance of Allah should be the essence of all his deeds.

﴿ وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يُجَٰدِلُ فِى ٱللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَيَتَّبِعُ كُلَّ شَيْطَٰنٍ مَّرِيدٍ ۝٣ كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِ أَنَّهُۥ مَن تَوَلَّاهُ فَأَنَّهُۥ يُضِلُّهُۥ وَيَهْدِيهِ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ ٱلسَّعِيرِ ۝٤ ﴾ (سورة الحج: ٣-٤)

22:3. Among people there are some who dispute about Allah without knowledge, and they follow every rebellious devil,

22:4. about whom it is decreed that whoever takes him as an ally, he will lead him astray and guide him to the punishment of the raging fire.

That is, among people there are some who followed the path of misguidance, and began to argue on the basis of falsehood against the truth, wanting to prove and support falsehood and invalidate the truth. But in fact they are extremely ignorant and do not have any knowledge. All they have is blind imitation of the leaders of misguidance, and of every rebellious devil who stubbornly rebelled against Allah and His Messengers, opposing them and going against what they said, thus becoming leaders of those who called people to hell.

﴿about whom it is decreed﴾ that is, it is decreed against this rebellious devil

﴿that whoever takes him as an ally﴾ that is, follows him

﴿he will lead him astray﴾ from the truth, and will keep him away from the straight path
﴿and guide him to the punishment of the raging fire﴾.

The person who disputes about Allah has combined his own misguidance with attempts to misguide other people. He is a follower and imitator of every rebellious devil. This is darkness upon darkness, and it includes the majority of the disbelievers and innovators, for most of them are mere imitators who argue without knowledge.

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ إِن كُنتُمْ فِى رَيْبٍ مِّنَ ٱلْبَعْثِ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَٰكُم مِّن تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِن مُّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِّنُبَيِّنَ لَكُمْ ۚ وَنُقِرُّ فِى ٱلْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَآءُ إِلَىٰٓ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوٓا۟ أَشُدَّكُمْ ۖ وَمِنكُم مَّن يُتَوَفَّىٰ وَمِنكُم مَّن يُرَدُّ إِلَىٰٓ أَرْذَلِ ٱلْعُمُرِ لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ مِنۢ بَعْدِ عِلْمٍ شَيْـًٔا ۚ وَتَرَى ٱلْأَرْضَ هَامِدَةً فَإِذَآ أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا ٱلْمَآءَ ٱهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ وَأَنۢبَتَتْ مِن كُلِّ زَوْجٍۭ بَهِيجٍ ﴿٥﴾ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ هُوَ ٱلْحَقُّ وَأَنَّهُۥ يُحْىِ ٱلْمَوْتَىٰ وَأَنَّهُۥ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٦﴾ وَأَنَّ ٱلسَّاعَةَ ءَاتِيَةٌ لَّا رَيْبَ فِيهَا وَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَبْعَثُ مَن فِى ٱلْقُبُورِ ﴿٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة الحج: ٥-٧)

22:5. O humankind, if you are in doubt about the resurrection, then consider that We created you from dust, then from a drop of semen, then from a clinging clot, then from a lump of flesh, shaped and unshaped,[21] so that We may make clear to you [Our power]. And We cause to remain in the wombs whomever We

[21] ﴿shaped and unshaped﴾: the developing embryo is initially unshaped, then its features start to appear until it is fully shaped. This is what is seen in the event of miscarriage; the embryo is either undeveloped (unshaped) or has distinct features (shaped).

will for an appointed term. Then We bring you forth as infants, then [We cause you to grow] so that you may reach your age of full strength. Then some of you die and some are sent back to a feeble age, so that, after having had knowledge, they then know nothing at all. You see the earth dry and barren, but when We send down rain upon it, it stirs and swells, and brings forth beautiful plants of every kind.

22:6. That is because Allah alone is the Truth; He alone brings the dead to life, and He has power over all things.

22:7. For verily the Hour is coming; there can be no doubt about it. And verily Allah will raise up those who are in the graves.

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﴿O humankind, if you are in doubt about the resurrection﴾ and you do not know when it will happen, even though all that is required of you is to believe your Lord and believe His Messengers with regard to this matter. But if you must doubt it, then here are two rational proofs that you can see, either one of which definitively points to that which you doubt, and will dispel the doubts from your heart.

Firstly, Allah gives as evidence the beginning of man's creation, for the One Who initiated his creation will repeat it.

﴿then consider that We created you from dust﴾ – this refers to the creation of the father of humankind, Adam (ﷺ)

﴿then from a drop of semen﴾ – this is the beginning of the creation process

﴿then from a clinging clot﴾ that is, the drop of semen turns into red blood, by Allah's leave

﴿then from a lump of flesh﴾ that is, the blood turns into a lump of flesh the size of a morsel of food. That lump of flesh is sometimes ﴿shaped﴾ that is, it has human features; or sometimes it is ﴿unshaped﴾, when the womb miscarries it before it is shaped.

﴿so that We may make clear to you﴾ how you are created and the stages of your development. Even though He is able to complete

creation in a single moment, He highlights to us the perfect nature of His wisdom, the greatness of His might and the vastness of His mercy.

﴿And We cause to remain in the wombs whomever We will for an appointed term﴾ that is, We cause to become established in the womb and not expelled thereby whatever We will, for an appointed term, which is the duration of pregnancy.

﴿Then We bring you forth﴾ from your mothers' wombs ﴿as infants﴾, not knowing anything and having no power. We cause your mothers to look after you and We grant you provision at their breast, then you move through one stage after another until you reach your age of full strength, which is the peak of your physical and mental faculties.

﴿Then some of you die﴾ before reaching the age of full strength, and some pass that stage and are sent back to a feeble age, which is the worst stage. That is senile old age and dementia, in which the individual's mental capacity diminishes and is lost, as are all his other strengths, and he becomes weak.

﴿so that, after having had knowledge, they then know nothing at all﴾ that is, so that this elderly person will know nothing that he knew before, because his mind has grown weak. Human strength begins and ends with weakness: the weakness of childhood and the weakness of old age, as Allah says:

﴿It is Allah Who created you in a state of weakness, then after weakness He gave you strength, then after strength, weakness and grey hair. He creates as He wills, and He is the All-Knowing, Omnipotent.﴾ *(ar-Room 30: 54)*

Secondly, Allah gives as evidence the revival of the earth after it was dead, concerning which He says:

﴿You see the earth dry and barren﴾ that is, lifeless and dusty, with no vegetation or greenery.

﴿but when We send down rain upon it, it stirs﴾ with the movement of plants beginning to grow

﴿and swells﴾ that is, it rises up after it was subdued, due to increased growth

﴿and brings forth beautiful plants of every kind﴾ that is, all kinds of plants, the beauty of which brings delight to the beholder and brings joy to those who reflect. These two definitive proofs highlight the following points:

﴿That is because Allah﴾ is the One Who created man from that which He described to you, and gave life to an earth that was dead, and He ﴿alone is the Truth﴾ that is, He alone is the Lord Who is deserving of worship, and none should be worshipped except Him. Worship of Him is the truth and worship of anything other than Him is false. ﴿He alone brings the dead to life﴾ – as He initiated creation and as He gave life to an earth that was dead

﴿and He has power over all things﴾ – as He has made you see the brilliance of His power and creation.

﴿For verily the Hour is coming﴾ so there is no reason to think that it is not possible

﴿And verily Allah will raise up those who are in the graves﴾, then He will requite them for their deeds, both good and bad.

﴿وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يُجَٰدِلُ فِى ٱللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلَا هُدًى وَلَا كِتَٰبٍ مُّنِيرٍ ﴿٨﴾ ثَانِىَ عِطْفِهِۦ لِيُضِلَّ عَن سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ لَهُۥ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا خِزْىٌ ۖ وَنُذِيقُهُۥ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ عَذَابَ ٱلْحَرِيقِ ﴿٩﴾ ذَٰلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدَاكَ وَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّٰمٍ لِّلْعَبِيدِ ﴿١٠﴾﴾ (سورة الحج: ٨-١٠)

22:8. Among people there are some who dispute about Allah without knowledge, without guidance and without any clear revealed text.

22:9. They turn their faces away in scorn, so as to lead people astray from the path of Allah. For them there is disgrace in this world, and on the Day of Resurrection We will cause them to taste the punishment of the scorching fire.

22:10. [It will be said to them:] This is because of what your hands sent on ahead. For Allah is never unjust to [His] slaves.

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The ﴿dispute﴾ mentioned above [vv. 3-4] refers to the argument of one who argues on the basis of imitation (and has no knowledge of his own). Here the ﴿dispute﴾ refers to the argument of the rebellious devil who calls people to innovation. Allah tells us that he ﴿dispute[s] about Allah﴾ that is, he disputes with the Messengers of Allah and their followers on the basis of falsehood in an attempt to refute the truth ﴿without knowledge﴾ that is, without sound knowledge ﴿without guidance﴾ that is, without following in his argument anyone who could guide him, and without being guided by rational thinking, or following someone who is guided ﴿and without any clear revealed text﴾ that is, without any rational or textual proof. It is nothing but specious arguments with which the Shaytân inspires him.

﴿...But the devils whisper to their friends [among humankind] to argue with you...﴾ *(al-An'âm 6: 121)*

Despite that, ﴿They turn their faces away in scorn﴾. This refers to their being too arrogant to follow the truth and their scorn for people. They rejoice in what they have of knowledge that is not beneficial and they look down upon the people of truth and the truth that they follow. ﴿so as to lead people astray from the path of Allah﴾ that is, so that they may be promoters of misguidance. This includes all the leaders of disbelief and misguidance.

Then Allah mentions their punishment in this world and the hereafter:

﴿For them there is disgrace in this world﴾ that is, they will be exposed to shame in this world, before the hereafter. This is one of the wondrous signs of Allah, for you will not find anyone who calls to disbelief and misguidance but he will be resented, cursed, hated and blamed by people and he will have what he deserves, each according to his situation.

﴿and on the Day of Resurrection We will cause them to taste the punishment of the scorching fire﴾ that is, We will cause him to taste its intense scorching heat. That is because of what their hands sent on ahead. ﴿For Allah is never unjust to [His] slaves﴾.

﴿وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يَعۡبُدُ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ حَرۡفٖۖ فَإِنۡ أَصَابَهُۥ خَيۡرٌ ٱطۡمَأَنَّ بِهِۦۖ وَإِنۡ أَصَابَتۡهُ فِتۡنَةٌ ٱنقَلَبَ عَلَىٰ وَجۡهِهِۦ خَسِرَ ٱلدُّنۡيَا وَٱلۡأٓخِرَةَۚ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ ٱلۡخُسۡرَانُ ٱلۡمُبِينُ ﴿١١﴾ يَدۡعُواْ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهُۥ وَمَا لَا يَنفَعُهُۥۚ ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ ٱلضَّلَٰلُ ٱلۡبَعِيدُ ﴿١٢﴾ يَدۡعُواْ لَمَن ضَرُّهُۥٓ أَقۡرَبُ مِن نَّفۡعِهِۦۚ لَبِئۡسَ ٱلۡمَوۡلَىٰ وَلَبِئۡسَ ٱلۡعَشِيرُ ﴿١٣﴾﴾ (سورة الحج: ١١-١٣)

22:11. Among people there are some who worship Allah on the edge [of faith]. If something good comes to them, they are content with it, but if a trial befalls them, they make an about-face, thus forfeiting both this world and the hereafter. That is indeed manifest loss.

22:12. They call, besides Allah, upon that which can neither harm them nor benefit them. That is straying far into error.

22:13. They call upon that which is more likely to harm them than benefit them. What a wretched protector and what a wretched associate!

That is, among people there are some who are weak in faith; faith has not truly entered their hearts and they have never felt the joy of

faith. Rather they entered the religion either out of fear or by way of following a custom, and they cannot be steadfast when faced with trials and tribulations.

﴿If something good comes to them, they are content with it﴾ if provision continues to come easily, and they are not faced with any hardship, they are content with that life of ease, not with their faith. Allah may give them well-being and not put them through trials which could cause them to give up their religion.
﴿but if a trial befalls them﴾ such as being faced with hardship or the loss of someone or something dear to them
﴿they make an about-face﴾ that is, they apostatise and give up their religion.
﴿thus forfeiting both this world and the hereafter﴾. With regard to this world, this means that they do not get what they hope for by apostatising. The one who made his apostasy his capital, giving up his faith in return for something that he thought he would achieve, will find that his efforts were to no avail and he will not get anything but what is decreed for him. With regard to the hereafter, it is obvious. They will be deprived of paradise which is as vast as the heavens and the earth, and they will deserve hell.
﴿That is indeed manifest loss﴾ that is, clear and obvious loss.

﴿They﴾ that is, those who do an about-face
﴿call, besides Allah, upon that which can neither harm them nor benefit them﴾. This description is applicable to everything that is called upon and worshipped instead of Allah: it has no power to bring benefit or cause harm to itself or to anyone else.
﴿That is straying far into error﴾ which has reached the ultimate level, when people turn away from worshipping the One Who can bring benefit and cause harm, the One Who is Self-Sufficient and can suffice others, and they focus instead on worshipping a created being that is like them or lower in status, that has no power or control at all; rather they are more likely to find the opposite of what they seek to attain. Hence Allah says:

﴿They call upon that which is more likely to harm them than benefit them﴾ because the harm it causes, that will affect them in both mind and body, in this world and the hereafter, is well known. ﴿What a wretched protector﴾ – this refers to that object of worship ﴿and what a wretched associate﴾ that is, the companion who was always there. The purpose of a protector and associate is to attain benefit and ward off harm, but in this case none of that was achieved, so this protector and associate is indeed deserving of blame.

﴿إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُدۡخِلُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ جَنَّٰتٖ تَجۡرِي مِن تَحۡتِهَا ٱلۡأَنۡهَٰرُۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَفۡعَلُ مَا يُرِيدُ ١٤﴾ (سورة الحج: ١٤)

22:14. Verily Allah will admit those who believe and do righteous deeds to gardens through which rivers flow; verily Allah does whatever He wills.

Having mentioned those who argue on the basis of falsehood, and explained that they are of two types: those who imitate others and those who are leaders of the call to falsehood, Allah (ﷻ) now tells us that those who claim to have faith are also of two types: those for whom faith has not truly entered their hearts, as mentioned above, and a second category, namely those who are truly believers and who confirm their faith by doing righteous deeds. Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He will admit them to gardens through which rivers flow.

Paradise is described as *jannah* because it contains dwellings, palaces, trees and plants that cover (*tujinnu*) those who are in them, and they are concealed by them because they are so abundant and plentiful.

﴿verily Allah does whatever He wills﴾. Whatever He wills, He does without any resistance or opposition. That includes causing the

people of paradise to reach it; may Allah make us among them by His grace and generosity.

﴿مَن كَانَ يَظُنُّ أَن لَّن يَنصُرَهُ ٱللَّهُ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْءَاخِرَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ بِسَبَبٍ إِلَى ٱلسَّمَآءِ ثُمَّ لْيَقْطَعْ فَلْيَنظُرْ هَلْ يُذْهِبَنَّ كَيْدُهُۥ مَا يَغِيظُ ﴿١٥﴾﴾ (سورة الحج: ١٥)

22:15. Whoever thinks [and hopes] that Allah will not grant victory to him [His Messenger] in this world and in the hereafter, let him tie a rope to heaven [and climb up], so as to stop the victory [from coming down from Allah to the Prophet], then let him see whether his action will do away with that which has enraged him.[22]

That is, whoever thinks that Allah will not grant victory to His Messenger (ﷺ), and that the religion of Islam will diminish, then he should understand that victory is from Allah and He sends it down from heaven.

﴿let him tie a rope to heaven [and climb up], so as to stop the victory﴾ that is coming down from heaven.

﴿then let him see whether his action will do away with that which has enraged him﴾ that is, let him see whether the plot he is hatching against the Prophet (ﷺ), the effort he is putting into fighting him and his eagerness to destroy his religion will do away with that which has enraged him of the religion of Islam prevailing.

This verse confirms that this can never happen, and that he will never be able to do away with that which has enraged him, no matter what measures he takes.

[22] What is meant is that the hopes and wishes of those enemies will not change anything, and the Prophet's victory is inevitable, so they may as well give up and kill themselves.

What this verse means is: O you who oppose the Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) and are striving to extinguish his religion, thinking on the basis of ignorance that your efforts will benefit you, you should understand that no matter what measures you take and no matter what efforts you make to oppose and harm the Messenger (ﷺ), that will not take away your rage and will not give you any satisfaction. You have no power to do that, but We will point out something that could take away your rage and help you to stop the victory from reaching the Messenger (ﷺ), if that was possible: take a rope and tie it to heaven, then climb up until you reach the gates of heaven from which victory comes; then block those gates and put an end to them. Thus you will do away with that which has enraged you. This is the right plan; you should never think that any other plan could help you to do away with that which has enraged you, no matter how many people help you.

This verse contains a promise and glad tidings that Allah will grant victory to His religion, His Messenger (ﷺ), and His believing slaves, as is quite clear, and He will cause the disbelievers who seek to extinguish the light of Allah with their mouths to lose hope, for Allah will perfect His light even though the disbelievers hate that and no matter how hard they strive.

﴿وَكَذَٰلِكَ أَنزَلْنَٰهُ ءَايَٰتٍۭ بَيِّنَٰتٍ وَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَهْدِى مَن يُرِيدُ ﴿١٦﴾﴾ (سورة الحج: ١٦)

22:16. Thus We have sent down to you clear revelations; verily Allah guides whomever He wills.

That is, as We have explained issues clearly in this Qur'an, We have made it of clear verses that explain all that is needed of beneficial issues. But guidance is in the Hand of Allah; whomever Allah wishes to guide, he will be guided by this Qur'an, and he will adhere to it and

follow its teachings, and he will benefit from its light. But whomever Allah does not wish to guide, even if all signs come to him he will not believe, and the Qur'an will not benefit him in the slightest; rather it will be proof against him.

﴿ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَٱلَّذِينَ هَادُوا۟ وَٱلصَّٰبِـُٔونَ وَٱلنَّصَٰرَىٰ وَٱلْمَجُوسَ وَٱلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوٓا۟
إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ شَهِيدٌ ﴿١٧﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ
يَسْجُدُ لَهُۥ مَن فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَن فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَٱلشَّمْسُ وَٱلْقَمَرُ وَٱلنُّجُومُ وَٱلْجِبَالُ وَٱلشَّجَرُ
وَٱلدَّوَآبُّ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنَ ٱلنَّاسِ ۖ وَكَثِيرٌ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِ ٱلْعَذَابُ ۗ وَمَن يُهِنِ ٱللَّهُ فَمَا لَهُۥ مِن
مُّكْرِمٍ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَآءُ ﴿١٨﴾ ۞ هَٰذَانِ خَصْمَانِ ٱخْتَصَمُوا۟ فِى رَبِّهِمْ ۖ فَٱلَّذِينَ
كَفَرُوا۟ قُطِّعَتْ لَهُمْ ثِيَابٌ مِّن نَّارٍ يُصَبُّ مِن فَوْقِ رُءُوسِهِمُ ٱلْحَمِيمُ ﴿١٩﴾ يُصْهَرُ
بِهِۦ مَا فِى بُطُونِهِمْ وَٱلْجُلُودُ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَهُم مَّقَٰمِعُ مِنْ حَدِيدٍ ﴿٢١﴾ كُلَّمَآ أَرَادُوٓا۟ أَن
يَخْرُجُوا۟ مِنْهَا مِنْ غَمٍّ أُعِيدُوا۟ فِيهَا وَذُوقُوا۟ عَذَابَ ٱلْحَرِيقِ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُدْخِلُ ٱلَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ جَنَّٰتٍ تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيهَا مِنْ
أَسَاوِرَ مِن ذَهَبٍ وَلُؤْلُؤًا ۖ وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيهَا حَرِيرٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَهُدُوٓا۟ إِلَى ٱلطَّيِّبِ مِنَ
ٱلْقَوْلِ وَهُدُوٓا۟ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطِ ٱلْحَمِيدِ ﴿٢٤﴾ ﴾ (سورة الحج: ١٧-٢٤)

22:17. Verily those who believe, those who are Jews, the Sabians, the Christians, the Magians and those who ascribe partners to Allah – Allah will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection. Verily Allah is Witness over all things.

22:18. Do you not see that to Allah prostrate all those who are in the heavens and on earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the trees, the animals, and many people? But there are also many for whom punishment is inevitable. Whomever Allah disgraces, none can honour him. Verily Allah does whatever He wills.

22:19. These are two opposing groups who are disputing about their Lord. As for those who disbelieve, garments of fire will be cut out for them, and scalding water will be poured over their heads,

22:20. which will cause their insides and their skins to melt.

22:21. They will be lashed with rods of iron.

22:22. Every time they want to escape from it, in their anguish, they will be driven back into it and [it will be said to them]: Taste the punishment of the scorching fire!

22:23. Verily Allah will admit those who believe and do righteous deeds to gardens through which rivers flow. They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and of pearls, and their garments therein will be of silk.

22:24. For they were guided to the best of words and they were guided to the path of Him Who is Worthy of all praise.

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Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us about the groups among the people of earth, those who were given the scriptures, the believers, the Jews, the Christians, the Sabians, the Magians and the polytheists. He will gather them all together on the Day of Resurrection, will pass judgement between them on the basis of His just rule, and requite them for their deeds that He recorded, wrote down and witnessed. Hence He says: ﴿Verily Allah is Witness over all things﴾.

Then He explains this judgement between them: ﴿These are two opposing groups who are disputing about their Lord﴾, each group claiming that it is following the right path.

﴿As for those who disbelieve﴾ – this includes all disbelievers, such as the Jews, Christians, Magians, Sabians and polytheists.
﴿garments of fire will be cut out for them﴾ that is, garments of pitch will be made for them, then they will be set on fire, so that the punishment will envelop them from all directions.

﴿and scalding water﴾ that is, extremely hot water ﴿will be poured over their heads﴾; it will cause whatever is inside them of flesh, fat and intestines to melt, due to the severity of its heat.

﴿They will be lashed with rods of iron﴾ in the hands of stern angels who will strike them with those rods and subdue them.

﴿Every time they want to escape from it, in their anguish, they will be driven back into it﴾. The punishment will never be reduced for them and they will never be given any respite. It will be said to them, by way of rebuke: ﴿Taste the punishment of the scorching fire!﴾ That is, the fire that burns hearts and bodies.

﴿Verily Allah will admit those who believe and do righteous deeds to gardens through which rivers flow﴾. It is well known that this description does not apply to anyone other than the Muslims, who believe in all the Books and all the Messengers.

﴿They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and of pearls﴾ which will adorn their arms; both their men and their women will wear bracelets of gold

﴿and their garments therein will be of silk﴾. Allah completes the description of their joy by referring to different kinds of delicious food, which may be implied by the word gardens; by referring to rivers going in all directions, which are rivers of water, milk, honey and wine; by referring to different kinds of clothing and splendid jewellery. That is because ﴿they were guided to the best of words﴾, the best and most virtuous of which is the word of sincere faith *(lâ ilâha illâ Allâh*), then all good words, including remembrance of Allah and kind words to the slaves of Allah.

﴿and they were guided to the path of Him Who is Worthy of all praise﴾ that is, they were guided to the path of Allah, the Most Praiseworthy, for Allah often ascribes the path to Himself, because it leads the one who follows it to Allah. Moreover, the path itself may be described as praiseworthy, because all its teachings are based on wisdom and praise, for everything that is enjoined in Islam is good and everything

that is forbidden is bad. This is the religion of the middle path between two extremes, a religion that encourages the pursuit of beneficial knowledge and doing righteous deeds.

The fact that Allah is mentioned here as He ﴿Who is Worthy of all praise﴾ indicates that they attained guidance by virtue of their praising their Lord and by virtue of His blessings upon them. Hence they will say in paradise:

﴿...Praise be to Allah Who has guided us to this, for we would never have been guided if Allah had not guided us...﴾ *(al-A'râf 7: 43)*

In the midst of this passage (in *22: 18*), Allah mentions the prostration of all creatures to Him, all those who are in the heavens and on earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the mountains, the trees, the animals and many people, namely the believers.

﴿But there are also many for whom punishment is inevitable﴾ that is, it has been decreed, because of their disbelief and failure to believe. Allah did not guide them to faith, because He has disgraced them, and ﴿Whomever Allah disgraces, none can honour him﴾ and none can resist His will or object to His will.

As all creatures prostrate to their Lord and submit to His greatness and power, this indicates that He alone is the Lord Who is deserving of worship, the Sovereign Who is deserving of all praise. Whoever turns away from Him to worship something other than Him has gone far astray and is clearly a loser.

﴿إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ وَٱلْمَسْجِدِ ٱلْحَرَامِ ٱلَّذِى جَعَلْنَٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ سَوَآءً ٱلْعَٰكِفُ فِيهِ وَٱلْبَادِ ۚ وَمَن يُرِدْ فِيهِ بِإِلْحَادٍۭ بِظُلْمٍ نُّذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٢٥﴾﴾ (سورة الحج: ٢٥)

22:25. As for those who disbelieve and bar [people] from the path of Allah and from the Sacred Mosque – which We have made for all people, residents and visitors alike – and any who intend to profane it by deliberate evildoing, We will cause them to taste a painful penalty.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us about the abhorrent ways of the polytheists who disbelieved in their Lord: they combined disbelief in Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) with barring people from the path of Allah and preventing them from believing, and also barring them from the Sacred Mosque, which did not belong to them or their forefathers; rather all people have equal rights to it, both residents and visitors. Indeed, they barred from it the best of humankind, namely Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions. In fact, because the Sacred Mosque is a holy and venerated place, whoever intends to profane it by deliberate evildoing, We will cause them to taste a painful penalty.

Merely intending to do wrong or commit profane acts in the sanctuary makes punishment inevitable, although in other cases a person will not be punished unless he actually does the wrong deed. So how about those who actually committed the worst of wrongdoing, such as disbelieving, ascribing partners to Allah, barring people from His path and preventing those who wanted to visit the Sacred Mosque? What do you think Allah will do to them?

This verse highlights the obligation to respect and venerate the sanctuary, and warns against wanting to commit sin therein and actually doing that.

﴿وَإِذْ بَوَّأْنَا لِإِبْرَٰهِيمَ مَكَانَ ٱلْبَيْتِ أَن لَّا تُشْرِكْ بِى شَيْـًٔا وَطَهِّرْ بَيْتِىَ لِلطَّآئِفِينَ وَٱلْقَآئِمِينَ وَٱلرُّكَّعِ ٱلسُّجُودِ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَأَذِّن فِى ٱلنَّاسِ بِٱلْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ

رِجَالًا وَعَلَىٰ كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ مِن كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ ﴿٢٧﴾ لِّيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ
وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيَّامٍ مَّعْلُومَاتٍ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُم مِّن بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ
فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطْعِمُوا الْبَائِسَ الْفَقِيرَ ﴿٢٨﴾ ثُمَّ لْيَقْضُوا تَفَثَهُمْ وَلْيُوفُوا
نُذُورَهُمْ وَلْيَطَّوَّفُوا بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ ﴿٢٩﴾ (سورة الحج: ٢٦-٢٩)

22:26. And [remember] when We showed to Ibrâheem the site of the [Sacred] House, [saying]: Do not associate anything in worship with Me, and purify My House for those who circumambulate it, those who stand to pray, and those who bow and prostrate.

22:27. And proclaim to all people the duty of pilgrimage. They will come to you on foot and on every lean camel, coming from every distant land,

22:28. so that they may avail themselves of benefits and mention the name of Allah [at the time of sacrifice], during the appointed days, over the livestock that He has provided for them; then eat thereof and feed the wretched poor.

22:29. Then let them complete their rites, fulfil their vows, and [again] circumambulate the Ancient House.

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Here Allah mentions the greatness and majestic nature of the Sacred House, and the greatness of the one who built it, namely the close friend of the Most Gracious:

﴿And [remember] when We showed to Ibrâheem the site of the [Sacred] House﴾ and We caused him to stay there, and We caused some of his progeny to reside permanently in that place. Allah instructed him to build it, so he built it on the basis of piety and obedience to Allah. He built it along with his son Ismâ'eel, instructing him not to associate anything with Allah, to make his deed sincerely for the sake of Allah alone, and to build it in the name of Allah.

﴿and purify My House﴾ that is, purify it from polytheism and sin, and cleanse it of impurity and dirt. The Most Gracious called it His

House in order to highlight its great status and virtue, and so that people would have great love for it, their hearts would long to come to it from all directions, and people would be motivated to purify it and venerate it, because it is the House of the Lord, purifying it for those who circumambulate it and those who worship at that place, and those who stay there to perform some acts of worship such as remembering Allah, reading Qur'an, acquiring knowledge and teaching it, and other acts by means of which one may draw closer to Allah.

﴿and those who bow and prostrate﴾ that is, people who come and pray there. In other words, purify it for those good people whose main aim is to worship and serve their Lord, and to draw near to Him at His House. These people have the right and deserve to be honoured and welcomed. Part of honouring them is to purify the House for their sake. Purifying it includes purifying it of loud voices talking of idle things that disturb those worshippers who come to pray and circumambulate the Kaaba. Circumambulation is mentioned before standing to pray, because it is unique to this House; then prayer is mentioned, because it is something that is common to every mosque.

﴿And proclaim to all people the duty of pilgrimage﴾ that is, tell them about it, summon them to it, and convey to near and far how obligatory and virtuous it is. If you call them, they will come to you to perform Hajj and 'umrah. They will come on foot, walking with longing (to visit the sacred places) ﴿and on every lean camel﴾, crossing wildernesses and deserts, travelling great distances, until they reach the holiest of places, ﴿coming from every distant land﴾ that is, from every faraway land.

Ibrâheem (عليه السلام) did that, as did his descendant Muhammad (ﷺ); he called people to come on pilgrimage to this House, and they both did that repeatedly. And what Allah promised came to pass: people came to it on foot and riding, from east and west. Then Allah mentions the benefits of visiting the sacred House of Allah, so as to encourage people to do that:

﴿so that they may avail themselves of benefits﴾ that is, so that they may avail themselves at the House of Allah of spiritual benefits such as acts of worship, including acts of worship that can only be done at that place, and worldly benefits such as earning income and making some worldly gains. All of this happens, as everyone knows. ﴿and mention the name of Allah [at the time of sacrifice], during the appointed days, over the livestock that He has provided for them﴾ – this refers to another of the spiritual and worldly benefits. In other words: mention the name of Allah at the time of slaughtering the sacrificial animals, in gratitude to Allah for what He has bestowed thereof and made easy for the pilgrims. When you have slaughtered them, ﴿then eat thereof and feed the wretched poor﴾ that is, those who are very poor.

﴿Then let them complete their rites﴾ that is, let them complete their pilgrimage rituals, which includes removing dirt that has got onto them during the state of *iḥrâm*.
﴿fulfil their vows﴾ that they took upon themselves, to perform Hajj and 'umrah, and offer the sacrifice.
﴿and [again] circumambulate the Ancient House﴾, the best of all mosques. This command to circumambulate the Kaaba is a specific instruction that comes after the command to perform the rituals in general, to highlight its special virtue, and because it is the ultimate act; everything that comes before it is a means to get to this point.

Perhaps – and Allah knows best – it is also for another reason, which is that circumambulation is prescribed at all times, whether it is connected to a pilgrimage or is done separately.

﴿ذَٰلِكَ وَمَن يُعَظِّمْ حُرُمَٰتِ ٱللَّهِ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُۥ عِندَ رَبِّهِۦ ۗ وَأُحِلَّتْ لَكُمُ ٱلْأَنْعَٰمُ إِلَّا مَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ ۖ فَٱجْتَنِبُوا۟ ٱلرِّجْسَ مِنَ ٱلْأَوْثَٰنِ وَٱجْتَنِبُوا۟

قَوْلَ ٱلزُّورِ ﴿٣٠﴾ حُنَفَآءَ لِلَّهِ غَيْرَ مُشْرِكِينَ بِهِۦ ۚ وَمَن يُشْرِكْ بِٱللَّهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا خَرَّ مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ فَتَخْطَفُهُ ٱلطَّيْرُ أَوْ تَهْوِى بِهِ ٱلرِّيحُ فِى مَكَانٍ سَحِيقٍ ﴿٣١﴾ ﴾ (سورة الحج: ٣٠-٣١)

22:30. Such [is the pilgrimage]; whoever honours the sacred rites of Allah, that is better for him with his Lord. All livestock has been made lawful for you except that mentioned to you [as unlawful]. So shun the abomination of idols and shun all words of falsehood,

22:31. being true in faith to Allah alone, not ascribing any partner to Him. Whoever ascribes partners to Him, it is as if he has fallen from heaven and been snatched up by birds or carried away by the wind to a far-off place.

﴿Such [is the pilgrimage]﴾ That is, what We have mentioned to you of those rulings that have to do with the pilgrimage and what they involve of venerating, showing respect to and honouring the sacred rites of Allah; venerating the sacred rites of Allah is something that is beloved to Him and is a means of drawing closer to Him for the one who venerates and honours those rites. Allah will reward him greatly for that, and it will be good for him in his spiritual and worldly affairs, and in the hereafter with his Lord.

The sacred rites of Allah include everything that is sacred and that we are instructed to respect, such as acts of worship and other matters, including all the rituals, the Ḥaram zone, iḥrām, the sacrificial animals, and all the acts of worship that Allah has instructed His slaves to adhere to and perform.

Venerating them means respecting them in one's heart, loving them and showing complete servitude when doing them, without taking the matter lightly, feeling lazy or showing reluctance.

Then Allah mentions His blessing and kindness, as He has made permissible to His slaves the livestock animals such as camels, cattle

and sheep, and has made them part of the rituals through which one draws closer to Him. Thus His blessing is shown to be great on two counts (namely making their meat permissible and making them part of the rituals).

﴿All livestock has been made lawful for you except that mentioned to you [as unlawful]﴾ in the Qur'an, in the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Forbidden to you [for food] are: the meat of animals found dead, blood, the flesh of swine...﴾ *(al-Mā'idah 5: 3)*

But what He forbade to them was because of His mercy towards His slaves; He forbade it to them for the purpose of purifying them and cleansing them from the sin of polytheism and speaking falsehood. Hence He says:

﴿So shun the abomination﴾ that is, the filth and evil ﴿of idols﴾ that they regarded as gods besides Allah, for they are the worst kind of innovation.

﴿and shun all words of falsehood﴾ that is, all forbidden kinds of speech, for they come under the heading of words of falsehood. This includes lying and bearing false witness.

Having forbidden them to ascribe partners to Him, worship idols and speak words of falsehood, Allah now enjoins them to be ﴿true in faith to Allah alone﴾ that is, turning to Him and focusing on His worship, turning away from all besides Him, ﴿not ascribing any partner to Him﴾.

﴿Whoever ascribes partners to Him, it is as if he has fallen from heaven and been snatched up﴾ quickly ﴿by birds or carried away by the wind to a far-off place﴾ that is, a distant place. Such is the polytheist, for faith is like the heavens: it is protected and elevated. But whoever shuns faith is like the one who has fallen from heaven and is exposed to troubles and problems. He may be snatched up by the birds, who will tear him limb from limb. This is like the polytheist:

when he shuns the protection of faith, the devils snatch him from all directions and tear him apart, spoiling his spiritual and worldly well-being.

﴿ذَٰلِكَ وَمَن يُعَظِّمْ شَعَٰٓئِرَ ٱللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِن تَقْوَى ٱلْقُلُوبِ ﴿٣٢﴾ لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَٰفِعُ إِلَىٰٓ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ مَحِلُّهَآ إِلَى ٱلْبَيْتِ ٱلْعَتِيقِ ﴿٣٣﴾﴾ (سورة الحج: ٣٢-٣٣)

22:32. That [is the command]. And whoever honours the rites of Allah, verily that stems from piety of the hearts.

22:33. You may derive benefit [from the sacrificial animals] for an appointed term, then their place of sacrifice is near the Sacred House.

That is, what we have mentioned to you about venerating the sacred rites and symbols of Allah. What is meant by symbols is the visible symbols of Islam, including all the rituals, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿Verily, Ṣafā and Marwah are among the symbols of Allah...﴾ *(al-Baqarah 2: 158)*

It also includes offering the sacrifice in Makkah.

We stated above that what is meant by honouring them is venerating them and doing them in the most perfect manner possible. That includes the sacrificial animals: they are to be respected and the animals chosen for the sacrifice should be of high quality and healthy, perfect in all ways. Honouring the sacred rites of Allah stems from piety of the hearts. The one who honours them is proving his piety and the soundness of his faith, because honouring them results from honouring and venerating Allah.

﴿You may derive benefit [from the sacrificial animals] for an appointed term﴾ this refers to the sacrificial animals that are brought

to Makkah, camels and others. The owner may derive benefits from them by riding them, milking them, and so on, so long as that does not cause any harm to them

﴿for an appointed term﴾ that is, for a limited time, which is until they are slaughtered. When the animals reach their place of sacrifice, which is the Ancient House – this refers to the entire Ḥaram zone, Mina and elsewhere – then when they are slaughtered, eat from their meat, give some as a gift, and feed the desperate poor.

﴿ وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنسَكًا لِّيَذْكُرُوا۟ ٱسْمَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُم مِّنۢ بَهِيمَةِ ٱلْأَنْعَٰمِ ۗ فَإِلَٰهُكُمْ إِلَٰهٌ وَٰحِدٌ فَلَهُۥٓ أَسْلِمُوا۟ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ ٱلْمُخْبِتِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ ٱللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَٱلصَّٰبِرِينَ عَلَىٰ مَآ أَصَابَهُمْ وَٱلْمُقِيمِى ٱلصَّلَوٰةِ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَٰهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة الحج: ٣٤-٣٥)

22:34. For every nation We ordained rites of sacrifice, so that they might mention the name of Allah [at the time of sacrifice] over the livestock that He provided for them. But your God is One God, so submit to Him alone. And give glad tidings [O Muhammad] to the humble,

22:35. those whose hearts are filled with awe when Allah is mentioned, who endure with patience whatever befalls them, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them.

That is, for each of the previous nations, We ordained rites of sacrifice. Therefore hasten to do good deeds so that We may see which of you is best in deeds. The wisdom behind Allah's ordaining rites of sacrifice for each nation was so as to establish remembrance of Him and focus on giving thanks to Him. Hence He says:

﴿so that they might mention the name of Allah [at the time of sacrifice] over the livestock that He provided for them. But your God

is One God﴾. Even though the types of rituals differed, they were all agreed on this principle, namely the divinity of Allah and the fact that He alone is to be worshipped, and no partners are to be ascribed to Him. Hence He says:

﴿so submit to Him alone﴾ that is, submit and surrender to Him and no other, for submission to Him is the path that leads to paradise.

﴿And give glad tidings﴾ in this world and the hereafter ﴿to the humble﴾ that is, those who humble themselves before their Lord and submit to His command, and are humble towards His slaves.

Then Allah describes the characteristics of the humble:

﴿those whose hearts are filled with awe when Allah is mentioned﴾ that is, their hearts are filled with fear and veneration, and for that reason they refrain from that which is forbidden, because of their fear and awe of Allah alone.

﴿who endure with patience whatever befalls them﴾ of hardship, sickness or other kinds of harm. They do not become discontent with any of that; rather they bear it with patience for the sake of their Lord, seeking His reward and hoping for it.

﴿establish prayer﴾ that is, those who establish it properly and perfectly, by doing that which is obligatory and that which is recommended, with complete submission and servitude, both outward and inward.

﴿and spend out of what We have provided for them﴾ this includes all kinds of obligatory expenditure, such as zakâh, expiation, spending on wives, dependents and relatives, as well as recommended kinds of spending such as charity of all kinds.

It says ﴿out of what﴾ so as to highlight that it is only some of it, so as to indicate how easy the commands of Allah are, and to encourage people to do that, because it is only a small part of that which Allah has provided. The individual could not have obtained it, were it not that Allah made it easy for him and provided it to him. This command is addressed to one who has received provision from the bounty of Allah: spend out of what Allah has provided for you, and Allah will spend on you and give you more.

﴿ وَٱلْبُدْنَ جَعَلْنَٰهَا لَكُم مِّن شَعَٰٓئِرِ ٱللَّهِ لَكُمْ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ ۖ فَٱذْكُرُوا۟ ٱسْمَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا صَوَآفَّ ۖ فَإِذَا وَجَبَتْ جُنُوبُهَا فَكُلُوا۟ مِنْهَا وَأَطْعِمُوا۟ ٱلْقَانِعَ وَٱلْمُعْتَرَّ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ سَخَّرْنَٰهَا لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ لَن يَنَالَ ٱللَّهَ لُحُومُهَا وَلَا دِمَآؤُهَا وَلَٰكِن يَنَالُهُ ٱلتَّقْوَىٰ مِنكُمْ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ سَخَّرَهَا لَكُمْ لِتُكَبِّرُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ مَا هَدَىٰكُمْ ۗ وَبَشِّرِ ٱلْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة الحج: ٣٦-٣٧)

22:36. We have ordained the sacrificial camels for you as one of the rites of Allah. There is much good for you in them. So mention the name of Allah over them [at the time of sacrifice] as they are standing, then after they have fallen lifeless to the ground, eat thereof and feed [the poor] who do not ask as well as those who do. Thus We have made these animals subservient to your needs, so that you may give thanks.

22:37. It is not their flesh or their blood that reaches Allah; rather it is your piety that reaches Him. Thus He has subjected them to you, so that you may glorify Allah for having guided you. And give glad tidings to those who do good.

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This indicates that the rites of Allah include all visible symbols of Islam. We noted above that Allah tells us that if a person respects His rites, that stems from the piety of the hearts. Here He tells us that one of His rites is the sacrificial camels – and cows according to one of the two scholarly views. They are to be respected, and healthy and good specimens are to be chosen for the sacrifice.

﴿There is much good for you in them﴾ that is, for the one who offers the sacrifice and others, as their meat may be eaten and given in charity, bringing benefit and reward.

﴿So mention the name of Allah over them﴾ that is, at the time of slaughter, say: "*bismillāh* (in the name of Allah)" and slaughter them.

﴿as they are standing﴾. The camel is to be made to stand on all four legs, then the left foreleg is to be tied up, then it is to be slaughtered.

﴿then after they have fallen lifeless to the ground﴾ on their sides, then the carcass is skinned and cut into pieces by the butcher, and the pieces fall to the ground, at that point it is ready to be eaten from. ﴿eat thereof﴾. This is addressed to the one who offers the sacrifice; it is permissible for him to eat from his sacrifice.
﴿and feed [the poor] who do not ask as well as those who do﴾ that is, the poor person who does not ask out of dignity, and the poor person who does ask. Both of them have a right to a share of it.

﴿Thus We have made these animals﴾ namely the sacrificial camels ﴿subservient to your needs, so that you may give thanks﴾ to Allah for making them subservient to your needs, for if He had not made them subservient to your needs, you would not be able to control them (and benefit from them). But He has subjugated them to you out of mercy and kindness towards you, so praise Him.

﴿It is not their flesh or their blood that reaches Allah﴾ that is, the aim of the sacrifice is not merely to slaughter the animals, for nothing of their flesh or blood reaches Allah, because He is the Self-Sufficient, Most Praiseworthy. Rather what reaches Him is sincerity in the deed, seeking of His reward, and good intention. Hence He says: ﴿rather it is your piety that reaches Him﴾.

This encourages and urges the believer to be sincere to Him when offering the sacrifice. The aim should be to seek the pleasure of Allah alone, not pride, showing off, seeking to enhance one's reputation or merely following custom. The same applies to all acts of worship: if they are not accompanied by sincerity and fear of Allah, then they are merely empty shells, like a body without a soul.

﴿Thus He has subjected them to you, so that you may glorify Allah﴾ that is, venerate and honour Him
﴿for having guided you﴾ that is, in return for His having guided you, for He is deserving of the most perfect praise and highest veneration.

﴿And give glad tidings to those who do good﴾ by worshipping Allah, in that they worship Allah as if they see Him. If they have not reached that level, then let them worship Him believing at the time of their worship that He is watching them and sees them. This also refers to those who do good to other people in all ways, whether by offering financial help, teaching knowledge, using their position to help, offering sincere advice, enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong, saying a kind word, and so on.

Those who do good have glad tidings from Allah of happiness in this world and the hereafter; Allah will show them kindness as they did good by worshipping Him and they did good to His slaves.

﴿Is the reward of goodness anything but goodness?﴾ *(ar-Raḥmân 55: 60)*

﴿For those who do good there will be the best reward and more besides...﴾ *(Yoonus 10: 26)*

﴿ ۞ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُدَٰفِعُ عَنِ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا۟ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ خَوَّانٍ كَفُورٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ ﴾

(سورة الحج: ٣٨)

22:38. Verily, Allah will defend those who believe; verily Allah does not love the treacherous and the ungrateful.

This is a promise and glad tidings from Allah to those who believe, that Allah will ward off from them all hardships and will ward off from them all evil – because of their faith – and He will protect them from the evil of the disbelievers, the evil of the whispers of the Shaytân, the evil of their own selves and their bad deeds. He will help them when hardship comes and they are faced with something beyond that which they can bear, and He will reduce it greatly. Every believer has a share of this defence and the virtue of being defended, commensurate with his faith; some will have a little and some will have a great deal.

﴿verily Allah does not love the treacherous﴾ that is, the one who betrays his trust that Allah made obligatory upon him, so he does not carry out his duties towards Allah and he betrays that trust, and he betrays people too.

﴿and the ungrateful﴾ that is, those who are ungrateful for the blessings of Allah that He persistently bestows, and in return he persists in disbelief and disobedience. Allah does not love such a person; rather He hates him and despises him, and He will requite him for his disbelief and treachery. What this verse means is that Allah loves every trustworthy person who fulfils his trust and gives thanks to his Lord.

﴿أُذِنَ لِلَّذِينَ يُقَٰتَلُونَ بِأَنَّهُمْ ظُلِمُوا۟ ۚ وَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ أُخْرِجُوا۟ مِن دِيَٰرِهِم بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ إِلَّآ أَن يَقُولُوا۟ رَبُّنَا ٱللَّهُ ۗ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ ٱللَّهِ ٱلنَّاسَ بَعْضَهُم بِبَعْضٍ لَّهُدِّمَتْ صَوَٰمِعُ وَبِيَعٌ وَصَلَوَٰتٌ وَمَسَٰجِدُ يُذْكَرُ فِيهَا ٱسْمُ ٱللَّهِ كَثِيرًا ۗ وَلَيَنصُرَنَّ ٱللَّهُ مَن يَنصُرُهُۥٓ ۗ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَقَوِىٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ ٱلَّذِينَ إِن مَّكَّنَّٰهُمْ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا۟ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتَوُا۟ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَأَمَرُوا۟ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا۟ عَنِ ٱلْمُنكَرِ ۗ وَلِلَّهِ عَٰقِبَةُ ٱلْأُمُورِ ﴿٤١﴾﴾ (سورة الحج: ٣٩-٤١)

22:39. Permission [to fight] is given to those who are attacked, because they have been wronged. Verily Allah is able to grant them victory,

22:40. those who have been driven from their homes unjustly, only because they say: Our Lord is Allah. Were it not for Allah restraining the people, some by means of others, monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, in which the name of Allah is mentioned much, would surely have been destroyed. Allah will surely help those who help His cause. Verily Allah is Strong, Almighty.

22:41. [They are] those who, if We establish them in the land, will establish regular prayer and give zakâh, and will enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. Allah decides the outcome of all matters.

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In the beginning, the Muslims were forbidden to fight the disbelievers and were enjoined to show patience with them, as dictated by divine wisdom. But when they migrated to Madinah and gained some strength and power, permission was given to them to fight. Allah (ﷻ) said:

﴿Permission [to fight] is given to those who are attacked﴾. From this it is understood that prior to that they had been forbidden to fight, then Allah gave them permission to fight those who attacked them. Such permission was given to them only because they had been wronged by being prevented from following their religion; they had been persecuted for that and had been expelled from their homes.

﴿Verily Allah is able to grant them victory﴾ so let them seek His help and support. Then Allah mentions the nature of the wrong that was done to them:

﴿those who have been driven from their homes﴾ they were forced to leave, because of the harm and persecution that were done to them ﴿unjustly﴾ that is, their "fault" for which their enemies resented them was ﴿only because they say: Our Lord is Allah﴾. In other words, it was only because they affirmed the oneness of Allah and devoted their worship solely to Him. If this is a fault, then that was their fault. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Their only grievance against them was that they believed in Allah, the Almighty, the Praiseworthy.﴾ *(al-Burooj 85: 8)*

This is indicative of the wisdom behind jihad, the purpose of which is to establish the religion of Allah and stand up to those disbelievers who are persecuting the believers and who are the ones who started

the aggression, so as to ward off their wrongdoing and persecution in order that the believers will be able to worship Allah and establish the visible symbols and rituals of Islam. Hence Allah says:

﴿Were it not for Allah restraining the people, some by means of others﴾ for Allah wards off the harm of the disbelievers by means of those who strive in jihad in His cause

﴿monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques, in which the name of Allah is mentioned much, would surely have been destroyed﴾ that is, these main places of worship for various groups of the People of the Book – the places of worship of the Jews and Christians, and the mosques of the Muslims – would have been destroyed.

﴿in which the name of Allah is mentioned much﴾ that is, in these places of worship prayers are held, the Books of Allah are recited and the name of Allah is mentioned in different ways. Were it not for Allah restraining the people, some by means of others, the disbelievers would gain control over the Muslims, and they would destroy their places of worship and force them to give up their religion. This indicates that jihad is prescribed for the purpose of warding off the aggressor and the one who causes harm. And there are also other aims of jihad.

This indicates that the countries in which people feel safe to worship Allah, the mosques are maintained and all the rituals of Islam are established, are part of the virtue resulting from the efforts of those who strive in jihad, for by virtue of their blessed efforts Allah warded off the disbelievers from that country. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...Were it not for Allah restraining the people, some by means of others, the earth would indeed be filled with mischief. But Allah is most gracious to all the worlds.﴾ *(al-Baqarah 2: 251)*

If you were to say: nowadays we see the mosques of the Muslims being maintained and frequented, and they are not destroyed, even though many are in small Muslim countries with governments that are not powerful, and they have no power to fight in neighbouring

non-Muslim countries; in fact we even see mosques in countries under the control of non-Muslims that are maintained and frequented, and their people are safe and secure, even though the non-Muslim rulers are able to destroy them, but Allah has told us that were it not for Allah restraining the people, some by means of others, these places of worship would be destroyed. But we do not see the application of this concept of some people being restrained by others.

The response to that is that this question is included in the general meaning of this verse. The one who knows about how countries are run nowadays is aware that according to their system every community under its authority and subject to its rule is regarded as part of the society that plays a role in its government, even if that community has power because of its numbers or what it possesses of equipment or wealth, or the work it does and the services it offers. Governments pay attention to both the religious and worldly interests of that community, because they fear that if they do not do that it will lead to trouble or loss of some of their support. For that reason, they pay attention to some aspects of the religion, especially mosques which, praise be to Allah, are well established even in the capitals of the superpowers.

Those independent states and governments pay attention to the feelings of their Muslim subjects. Moreover there is mutual envy and enmity among some Christian nations, which Allah has told us will continue until the Day of Resurrection. So you will find that the Muslim government, even though it may not be able to defend itself, is safe from much of their harm because of that enmity that exists among them. So not one of them can cause harm to the Muslim state, lest the Muslim state seek the protection of another Christian state. Moreover, Allah (ﷻ) will show His slaves support for Islam and the Muslims, as He has promised in His Book.

The signs of divine support began to appear – praise be to Allah – when the Muslims realised the necessity of turning back to their

religion and of striving hard. We praise Him and we ask Him to complete His blessing.

Hence Allah says in a true promise, the fulfilment of which can be seen in real life: ﴿Allah will surely help those who help His cause﴾ that is, those who support His religion with sincerity to Him alone, fighting for His sake so that the word of Allah will be supreme.

﴿Verily Allah is Strong, Almighty﴾ that is, He is perfect in His might and strength, and none can resist Him. He has subjected all creatures and has control over them. So be of good cheer, O Muslims, for even though you are weak in numbers and in weapons and equipment, and the numbers and weapons of your enemy are greater, your support is Allah, the Strong, the Almighty, and you are relying on the One Who created you and created all that you do. So take the measures that are enjoined upon you, then seek His support, and He will inevitably grant you victory.

﴿O you who believe, if you help Allah's cause, He will help you and steady your footsteps.﴾ *(Muhammad 47: 7)*

So fulfil your duties, O Muslims, as dictated by your faith, and do righteous deeds, for:

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

Then Allah mentions the sign of the one who supports and helps His cause and the means by which it is known who supports Allah's cause and His religion, and whoever does not fit this description is lying. Allah says: ﴿[They are] those who, if We establish them in the land﴾ that is, if We give them control in it and give them power

over it, without anyone disputing their authority or opposing them, they ﴿will establish regular prayer﴾, offering their prayers on time, performing them properly, doing all the obligatory parts of the prayer and fulfilling the necessary conditions, in *Jumu'ah* (Friday) prayer and prayers in congregation.
﴿and give zakâh﴾ which is obligatory upon them in particular and upon their subjects in general; they give it to those who are entitled to it.

﴿and will enjoin what is right﴾ that includes everything that is right and good according to Islamic teaching and common sense, with regard to the rights of Allah and the rights of other people.
﴿and forbid what is wrong﴾ everything that is wrong according to Islamic teaching and common sense is known to be reprehensible. The command to do a thing or the prohibition on doing it includes that without which it cannot be done. If the commands and prohibitions are dependent upon learning and teaching, then it is to be made mandatory for people to learn and teach; if they are dependent upon discipline and punishment, whether that is specified by Islamic laws or otherwise, such as certain kinds of disciplinary punishments, then that must be done. If it depends on appointing people to carry out this task, then that must be done, and so on; this applies to everything without which enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong cannot be done.

﴿Allah decides the outcome of all matters﴾ that is, all matters are decided by Allah, and He has told us that the best outcome results from piety or fear of Him. Whoever is given authority and power over people by Allah, and he complies with the commands of Allah, he will have a good end and his well-being will be sound. But whoever behaves as a tyrant, ruling over them according to his whims and desires, even if he has power for a while, his outcome will not be good; his reign will bode ill for people and his end will be bad.

﴿ وَإِن يُكَذِّبُوكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوحٍ وَعَادٌ وَثَمُودُ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَقَوْمُ إِبْرَٰهِيمَ وَقَوْمُ لُوطٍ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَأَصْحَٰبُ مَدْيَنَ ۖ وَكُذِّبَ مُوسَىٰ فَأَمْلَيْتُ لِلْكَٰفِرِينَ ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُهُمْ ۖ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيرِ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَكَأَيِّن مِّن قَرْيَةٍ أَهْلَكْنَٰهَا وَهِىَ ظَالِمَةٌ فَهِىَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلَىٰ عُرُوشِهَا وَبِئْرٍ مُّعَطَّلَةٍ وَقَصْرٍ مَّشِيدٍ ﴿٤٥﴾ أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا۟ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَآ أَوْ ءَاذَانٌ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا ۖ فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى ٱلْأَبْصَٰرُ وَلَٰكِن تَعْمَى ٱلْقُلُوبُ ٱلَّتِى فِى ٱلصُّدُورِ ﴿٤٦﴾ ﴾ (سورة الحج: ٤٢-٤٦)

22:42. If they reject you [O Muhammad], the people of Nooḥ, 'Âd and Thamood before them also rejected [their Prophets],

22:43. as did the people of Ibrâheem and the people of Loot,

22:44. and the people of Madyan. And Moosâ was also rejected. But I granted respite to the disbelievers, then I punished them, and how [severe] was My punishment of them![23]

22:45. How many cities that were given to wrongdoing have We destroyed! They lie in ruins, their wells abandoned and their lofty palaces [deserted].

22:46. Have they not travelled in the land so that their hearts might understand and their ears might hear?[24] Verily it is not the eyes that are blind, but the hearts in their chests.

Here Allah tells His Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ): If these polytheists reject you, you are not the first Messenger to be rejected, and they

[23] As Allah changed the way He had been dealing with them, changing abundance to scarcity and well-being to destruction. (aṭ-Ṭabari)

[24] This verse urges the disbelievers to travel to the lands of past nations like them who disbelieved and rejected their Messengers, and see how Allah punished them, so that they may take heed and begin to understand the signs of Allah and listen to the truth. (aṭ-Ṭabari)

are not the first nation to reject its Messenger. ﴿the people of Nooḥ, ʻÂd and Thamood before them also rejected [their Prophets], as did the people of Ibrâheem and the people of Loot, and the people of Madyan﴾ that is, the people of Shu'ayb.

﴿And Moosâ was also rejected. But I granted respite to the disbelievers﴾ who rejected their Messengers. I did not hasten the punishment for them; rather I gave them respite until they persisted in wandering blindly in their transgression, increasing in their disbelief and evil.

﴿then I punished them﴾ with the punishment of One Who is Almighty, Omnipotent

﴿and how [severe] was My punishment of them﴾ that is, My punishment of them because of their disbelief and their rejection of the Messengers was the most severe and terrible of punishments. Some of them were drowned, some of them were overcome by the blast, some of them were destroyed by the devastating wind, some of them were swallowed up by the earth, some of them were overtaken by the punishment of the day of the overshadowing cloud *(26: 189)*. So let these disbelievers learn from them, lest there befall them what befell those earlier peoples, for they are no better than them, and they have not been given any exemption in the scriptures that were revealed by Allah. How many disbelievers were punished and destroyed who were just like these people. Hence Allah says:

﴿How many cities that were given to wrongdoing have We destroyed﴾ with severe punishment and disgrace in this world because of their disbelief in Allah and their rejection of His Messengers. Our punishment of them was not wrongdoing on Our part.

﴿They lie in ruins﴾ that is, their houses, palaces and walls are destroyed; they have fallen down and have been abandoned after having been populated, desolate after having been filled with life and people.

﴿their wells abandoned and their lofty palaces [deserted]﴾ that is, how many wells there are, around which people used to crowd to get water for themselves and for their flocks, but now they are deserted; no one comes and goes around them. And how many palaces that are, which people worked hard to build, fortify and adorn, but when the decree of Allah came to pass, nothing availed those people; those palaces are also now deserted and have become a lesson for those who will learn and an example for those who reflect and ponder.

Hence Allah calls upon His slaves to travel in the land, in order to see and learn. He says: ﴿Have they not travelled in the land so that their hearts might understand﴾ the signs of Allah, and reflect upon them and learn lessons
﴿and their ears might hear﴾ the stories of past nations who were subject to punishment. However, merely looking, listening and travelling without reflecting and learning lessons is of no benefit and does not serve the purpose.

Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Verily it is not the eyes that are blind, but the hearts in their chests﴾ that is, the kind of blindness that is detrimental to one's religious commitment is blindness of the heart to the truth, so that it does not see it, just as the blind man does not see things that are visible to others. As for physical blindness, it is limited only to worldly issues.

﴿وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِٱلْعَذَابِ وَلَن يُخْلِفَ ٱللَّهُ وَعْدَهُۥ ۚ وَإِنَّ يَوْمًا عِندَ رَبِّكَ كَأَلْفِ سَنَةٍ مِّمَّا تَعُدُّونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَكَأَيِّن مِّن قَرْيَةٍ أَمْلَيْتُ لَهَا وَهِىَ ظَالِمَةٌ ثُمَّ أَخَذْتُهَا وَإِلَىَّ ٱلْمَصِيرُ ﴿٤٨﴾﴾ (سورة الحج: ٤٧-٤٨)

22:47. They ask you to hasten on the punishment, but Allah will not fail in His promise, for verily a day with your Lord is like a thousand years by your reckoning.

22:48. To how many cities that were given to wrongdoing have I granted respite, then I punished them. And unto Me is the return [of all].

That is, these disbelievers ask you to hasten the punishment due to their ignorance, wrongfully and stubbornly, thinking that they can outwit Allah, to express their rejection of His Messengers. But Allah will never break His promise: what He has promised them of punishment will inevitably come to them, and nothing can prevent it reaching them. As for seeking to hasten it and bring it upon them quickly, that is not up to you, O Muhammad (ﷺ), and you cannot respond to their demands for haste. Ahead of them lies the Day of Resurrection, on which the first of them and the last of them will be gathered together and they will be requited for their deeds, and the eternal, everlasting punishment will befall them. Hence Allah says:

﴿for verily a day with your Lord is like a thousand years by your reckoning﴾, because it will be so long and difficult, and filled with terrors. It is all the same whether punishment befalls them in this world or is delayed, for this day will inevitably come.

It may be that what is meant is that Allah is forbearing; even if they seek to hasten the punishment, one day with Him is like a thousand years by your reckoning, so even if you think that the period of waiting is long and is passing slowly, and that the punishment will not come, you should know that Allah may give respite for a long time but He never forgets, and when He seizes the wrongdoers with His punishment, He will not let them escape.

﴿To how many cities that were given to wrongdoing have I granted respite﴾ that is, a lengthy period of respite, even though they were doing wrong. The fact that they hastened to do wrong does not mean that We should hasten to punish them.

﴿then I punished them. And unto Me is the return [of all]﴾ that is, in addition to their punishment in this world, they will be brought

back to Allah, and He will punish them for their sins. So let these evildoers beware of the punishment of Allah, and let them not be deceived by the respite.

﴿ قُلْ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ إِنَّمَآ أَنَا۠ لَكُمْ نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ سَعَوْ فِىٓ ءَايَٰتِنَا مُعَٰجِزِينَ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلْجَحِيمِ ﴿٥١﴾ ﴾ (سورة الحج: ٤٩-٥١)

22:49. Say [O Muhammad]: O people, verily I am to you but a clear warner.

22:50. Those who believe and do righteous deeds will have forgiveness and a generous provision.

22:51. But those who strive against Our revelations, seeking to discredit them, will be inhabitants of the blazing fire.

Here Allah (ﷻ) instructs His slave and Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) to call people, telling them that he is indeed the Messenger of Allah, who brings glad tidings to the believers of the reward of Allah, and warns the disbelievers and wrongdoers of His punishment.
﴿a clear warner﴾ that is, bringing a warning that is clear, which is a warning that explains that of which they are warned, because he has established clear proof of the truth of what he has warned them of.

Then Allah mentions details of the warning and glad tidings:
﴿Those who believe﴾ in their hearts, with sincere and sound faith ﴿and do righteous deeds﴾ in terms of physical actions ﴿will be in gardens of delight﴾ *(22: 56)* that is, gardens in which they will enjoy all manner of delightful food, drink, spouses, images and sounds, and they will have the joy of beholding the Most Generous Lord and hearing His words.

﴿And for those who disbelieve﴾ *(22: 57)* that is, those who deny the blessings of their Lord and reject His Messengers and His signs, will be the inhabitants of hell: they will abide therein and remain there at all times; its torment will never be reduced or its punishment halted even for a moment.

﴿وَمَآ أَرۡسَلۡنَا مِن قَبۡلِكَ مِن رَّسُولٖ وَلَا نَبِيٍّ إِلَّآ إِذَا تَمَنَّىٰٓ أَلۡقَى ٱلشَّيۡطَٰنُ فِيٓ أُمۡنِيَّتِهِۦ فَيَنسَخُ ٱللَّهُ مَا يُلۡقِي ٱلشَّيۡطَٰنُ ثُمَّ يُحۡكِمُ ٱللَّهُ ءَايَٰتِهِۦۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٞ ۝٥٢ لِّيَجۡعَلَ مَا يُلۡقِي ٱلشَّيۡطَٰنُ فِتۡنَةٗ لِّلَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٞ وَٱلۡقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمۡۗ وَإِنَّ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ لَفِي شِقَاقِۭ بَعِيدٖ ۝٥٣ وَلِيَعۡلَمَ ٱلَّذِينَ أُوتُواْ ٱلۡعِلۡمَ أَنَّهُ ٱلۡحَقُّ مِن رَّبِّكَ فَيُؤۡمِنُواْ بِهِۦ فَتُخۡبِتَ لَهُۥ قُلُوبُهُمۡۗ وَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَهَادِ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٖ مُّسۡتَقِيمٖ ۝٥٤ وَلَا يَزَالُ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ فِي مِرۡيَةٖ مِّنۡهُ حَتَّىٰ تَأۡتِيَهُمُ ٱلسَّاعَةُ بَغۡتَةً أَوۡ يَأۡتِيَهُمۡ عَذَابُ يَوۡمٍ عَقِيمٍ ۝٥٥ ٱلۡمُلۡكُ يَوۡمَئِذٖ لِّلَّهِ يَحۡكُمُ بَيۡنَهُمۡۚ فَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ فِي جَنَّٰتِ ٱلنَّعِيمِ ۝٥٦ وَٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ وَكَذَّبُواْ بِـَٔايَٰتِنَا فَأُوْلَٰٓئِكَ لَهُمۡ عَذَابٞ مُّهِينٞ ۝٥٧﴾ (سورة الحج: ٥٢-٥٧)

22:52. We did not send any Messenger or Prophet before you but, when he recited [the revelations], the Shaytân threw [some falsehood] into his recitation. But Allah cancels out anything [false] that the Shaytân throws in, then Allah confirms His revelations, for Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.

22:53. [That is] so that He may make what the Shaytân throws in [of falsehood] a trial for those in whose hearts is a disease and those whose hearts are hardened, for verily the wrongdoers go much too far in opposition;

22:54. And so that those who were given knowledge may know that it [the Qur'an] is the truth from your Lord, so they may believe

therein and their hearts may be certain of it. Verily Allah guides those who believe to a straight path.

22:55. Those who disbelieve will not cease to be in doubt concerning it [the Qur'an] until the Hour comes upon them suddenly or there comes upon them the punishment of a day devoid of all hope.

22:56. On that day all dominion will belong to Allah. He will judge between them, then those who believed and did righteous deeds will be in gardens of delight.

22:57. And for those who disbelieve and reject Our revelations, there will be a humiliating punishment.

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Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of His great wisdom in testing His slaves, for before Muhammad (ﷺ) He never sent ﴿any Messenger or Prophet... but, when he recited [the revelations]﴾ by means of which he reminded people, enjoining that which is right and forbidding that which is wrong,

﴿the Shaytân threw [some falsehood] into his recitation﴾, as part of his plots and schemes, that was contrary to that recitation. Although Allah protected the Messengers from error with regard to what they conveyed from Him, and He protected His revelation from being tampered with or mixed with something else, this introduction or throwing in of falsehood by the Shaytân did not remain in the text; rather it was something temporary that might happen then be removed. Hence Allah says:

﴿But Allah cancels out anything [false] that the Shaytân throws in﴾ that is, He removes it and takes it away, and clearly shows that it is not part of His revelation

﴿then Allah confirms His revelations﴾ that is, He keeps them precise, frees them from error and preserves them as they originally were; thus they remain free of that material that was thrown in by the Shaytân.

﴿for Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise﴾ and does what is appropriate. By His perfect wisdom, He allowed the devils to throw

in falsehood as mentioned, so that the purpose referred to in the following verse would be achieved:

﴿[That is] so that He may make what the Shaytân throws in [of falsehood] a trial﴾ for two groups of people about whom Allah does not care. They are:

﴿those in whose hearts is a disease﴾ that is, weakness or lack of perfect faith and firm belief, hence the slightest doubt that occurs to them may shake their faith. When they hear that which the Shaytân throws in, they begin to doubt and it becomes a test for them;

﴿and those whose hearts are hardened﴾ and they are not influenced by rebukes or reminders, and they do not understand what Allah and His Messengers say, because of their hardheartedness. When they hear that which the Shaytân throws in, they use it to support their arguments and opposition to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ). Hence Allah says:

﴿for verily the wrongdoers go much too far in opposition﴾ that is, in opposition to Allah and in stubborn rejection of the truth, going against it and straying far from the right path. So what the Shaytân throws in becomes a trial to these two groups, thus exposing what is in their hearts of concealed evil. As for the third group, it is a mercy in their case. They are the ones who are mentioned in the following verse:

﴿And so that those who were given knowledge may know that it [the Qur'an] is the truth from your Lord﴾ because Allah has blessed them with knowledge through which they recognise the truth as distinct from falsehood, and guidance as distinct from misguidance. So they distinguish between the two matters – established truth that Allah confirms and makes precise, and falsehood of a temporary nature that Allah cancels out – on the basis of indications that are available for both, so that they may know that Allah is Most Wise; He decrees some types of tests so as to show what is hidden in people's hearts of good and evil.

﴿so they may believe therein﴾ because of that, and increase in faith, when they ward off passing doubts and confusion

﴿and their hearts may be certain of it﴾ that is, so that their hearts may be humbled and submit to His wisdom. This is part of His guidance to them; ﴿Verily Allah guides those who believe﴾, because of their faith, ﴿to a straight path﴾ that is, knowledge of the truth and acting accordingly. Allah will make steadfast those who believe, with the word that stands firm, in this world and in the hereafter *(cf. 14: 27)*.

These verses highlight the fact that the Messenger (ﷺ) had the example of his fellow Messengers with regard to what happened to him when he recited Soorat an-Najm. When he reached the words:

﴿Have you thought about al-Lât and al-'Uzzâ, and Manât, the third and last?﴾ *(an-Najm 53: 19-20)*

– the Shaytân threw into his recitation the words "These are the exalted *gharâneeq* (cranes), whose intercession is hoped for", which caused great sorrow and distress for the Messenger (ﷺ) and confusion for the people, as Allah stated. So Allah revealed these verses: ﴿Those who disbelieve will not cease to be in doubt concerning it [the Qur'an] until the Hour comes upon them suddenly or there comes upon them the punishment of a day devoid of all hope. On that day all dominion will belong to Allah. He will judge between them, then those who believed and did righteous deeds will be in gardens of delight. And for those who disbelieve and reject Our revelations, there will be a humiliating punishment.﴾ *(22: 55-57)*

Here Allah tells us of the state of the disbelievers, and that they will continue to doubt that which you have brought to them, O Muhammad (ﷺ), because of their stubbornness and aversion, and that they will persist in this attitude, ﴿until the Hour comes upon them suddenly﴾ and catches them unawares, ﴿or there comes upon them the punishment of a day devoid of all hope﴾ that is, in which there is nothing good, namely the Day of Resurrection.

When the Hour comes upon them, or that day comes, those who disbelieve will realise that they were lying, and they will be filled

with regret at a time when regret will not avail them anything. They will give up all hope and despair of all good, and they will wish that they had believed in the Messenger (ﷺ) and followed his path. In this there is a warning against persisting in suspicion and fabrication.

﴿On that day﴾ namely the Day of Resurrection,
﴿all dominion will belong to Allah﴾ may He be exalted, and to no other.
﴿He will judge between them﴾ with justice, and His judgement will be decisive.
﴿then those who believed﴾ in Allah and His Messengers, and what they brought
﴿and did righteous deeds﴾ that confirmed their faith
﴿will be in gardens of delight﴾ that will bring to their hearts, souls and bodies delights that can barely be described or comprehended.

﴿And for those who disbelieve﴾ in Allah and His Messengers, and reject His revelations that guide to the truth and what is right, so they stubbornly turn away from them,
﴿there will be a humiliating punishment﴾ that will be severe and painful for them, and will reach their hearts. As they tried to humiliate His Messengers and ridicule His revelations, Allah will humiliate them with the punishment.

﴿وَٱلَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا۟ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ثُمَّ قُتِلُوٓا۟ أَوْ مَاتُوا۟ لَيَرْزُقَنَّهُمُ ٱللَّهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا ۚ وَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَهُوَ خَيْرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾ لَيُدْخِلَنَّهُم مُّدْخَلًا يَرْضَوْنَهُۥ ۗ وَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَعَلِيمٌ حَلِيمٌ ﴿٥٩﴾﴾ (سورة الحج: ٥٨-٥٩)

22:58. As for those who migrate in the cause of Allah and are slain or die, Allah will surely bestow upon them a goodly provision. Verily Allah is the best of providers.

22:59. He will surely admit them to a place with which they will be well pleased, for verily Allah is All-Knowing, Most Forbearing.

This is great glad tidings for those who migrated in Allah's cause, leaving behind their homes, native lands, children and wealth, seeking the pleasure of Allah and in support of His religion. The reward of such a person has become incumbent upon Allah, whether he dies in his bed or is killed fighting in jihad in Allah's cause.

﴿Allah will surely bestow upon them a goodly provision﴾ in al-barzakh, and on the Day of Resurrection, by admitting them to paradise, where they will find peace and tranquillity, beauty and delight, and spiritual and physical bliss.

It may be that what is meant is that for the one who migrates for the sake of Allah, his provision is guaranteed in this world, goodly and abundant provision, whether Allah knows that he will die in his bed or he will be killed as a martyr. All of them are guaranteed provision, so no one should ever think that if he migrates and leaves behind his property and wealth, that he will become poor and needy, for his Provider is the best of providers. And it happened as He said: the earlier migrants left behind their property, children and wealth in support of the religion of Allah, but it was not long before Allah enabled them to conquer various lands and gave them power over people. Thus they accumulated wealth by means of which they became the richest of people. Based on this view, what is meant by the words ﴿He will surely admit them to a place with which they will be well pleased﴾ is that either Allah would enable them to conquer various lands, especially the conquest of Makkah, for they entered it in a state of joy and happiness, or it refers to provision in the hereafter, and this refers to admission to paradise. Thus this verse combines two types of provision: provision in this world and provision in the hereafter. The wording is appropriate for both interpretations and both meanings are sound; therefore there is no reason why it should not refer to both.

﴿for verily Allah is All-Knowing﴾ of all affairs, both apparent and hidden, what comes earlier and what comes later

﴿Most Forbearing﴾ – people disobey Him and defiantly commit grievous sins, yet He does not hasten the punishment for them, although He is perfectly able to do so; rather He continues to grant them His provision and bestow His bounty upon them.

﴿ ذَٰلِكَ وَمَنْ عَاقَبَ بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوقِبَ بِهِۦ ثُمَّ بُغِىَ عَلَيْهِ لَيَنصُرَنَّهُ ٱللَّهُ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَعَفُوٌّ غَفُورٌ ﴿٦٠﴾ ﴾ (سورة الحج: ٦٠)

22:60. That is so. Whoever retaliates only to the extent of the wrong that was done to him, and then is wronged again, Allah will surely help him. Verily Allah is Pardoning, Oft-Forgiving.

If a person is wronged and injustice is committed against him, it is permissible for him to retaliate and do a similar wrong to the one who wronged him. If he does that, there is no blame on him and he is not to be criticised, and if he is wronged after that, Allah will help him, because he has been wronged. So it is not permissible for anyone to wrong him again because he settled the score. If the one who settled the score in return for a wrong done to him is wronged again, Allah will help him. In the case of the one who did not settle the score and is wronged again, divine help is even closer to him.

﴿Verily Allah is Pardoning, Oft-Forgiving﴾ that is, He pardons sinners and does not hasten to punish them; He forgives their sins and removes them, and removes the effects and consequences thereof.

This is how Allah always is, and this is how He deals with His slaves at all times, offering pardon and forgiveness. So you who have been wronged and mistreated should pardon, overlook and forgive, so that Allah may treat you as you treated His slaves.

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

﴿ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُولِجُ ٱلَّيْلَ فِى ٱلنَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُ ٱلنَّهَارَ فِى ٱلَّيْلِ وَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَمِيعٌۢ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٦١﴾ ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ هُوَ ٱلْحَقُّ وَأَنَّ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِهِۦ هُوَ ٱلْبَٰطِلُ وَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ هُوَ ٱلْعَلِىُّ ٱلْكَبِيرُ ﴿٦٢﴾ ﴾ (سورة الحج: ٦١-٦٢)

22:61. That is because Allah causes the night to encroach upon the day, and the day to encroach upon the night. And verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

22:62. That is because Allah is the Truth, and those they call upon besides Him are sheer falsehood. Verily Allah is the Most High, the Most Great.

Such is the One Who has prescribed for you these good and just rulings. He is good in His control and planning, the One Who ﴿causes the night to encroach upon the day﴾, so He brings the night after the day, and the day after the night, and He causes the one to increase by as much as the other decreases, then vice versa, which results in the passage of the seasons and causes the alternation of night and day, sun and moon, which is one of His greatest blessings and is something that is essential for people.

﴿And verily Allah is All-Hearing﴾; He hears the sound of all voices, in all languages, expressing various needs

﴿All-Seeing﴾; He sees a black ant walking on a solid rock in the darkness of night.

﴿It is the same [to Him] whether any of you conceals his speech or declares it openly, and whether he hides under the cover of the night or walks openly in the light of day.﴾ *(ar-Ra'd 13: 10)*

﴿That is because Allah is the Truth﴾ and is eternal; He always was and always will be. He is the First, before Whom there was nothing, and the Last, after Whom there will be nothing, and He is the most perfect in His names and attributes. He fulfils His promise, and His promise is true, the meeting with Him is true, His religion is true, worship of Him is true and brings benefits that will last forever.

﴿and those they call upon besides Him﴾ of idols and rivals, both animate and inanimate,
﴿are sheer falsehood﴾; they are false in and of themselves and worship of them is false because it is connected to something transient that will inevitably perish and therefore is false and invalid.

﴿Verily Allah is the Most High, the Most Great﴾ in and of Himself, for He is high above all created things. He is also Most High and Most Great in His decree, for He is perfect in all His attributes and in His subduing of all creatures. And He is Most Great in and of Himself, and in His names and attributes. One sign of His greatness and pride is that on the Day of Resurrection He will hold the entire earth in His grasp and fold up the heavens in His Right Hand *(cf. 39: 67)*. As a sign of His pride, His Footstool encompasses the heavens and the earth. As a sign of His greatness and pride, the forelocks of all people are in His Hand, so they do not do anything at all except by His will.

No one knows the true nature of His pride except He, not any angel who is close to Him or any Prophet who was sent. The real nature thereof is that every attribute of perfection, majesty, pride and greatness is confirmed and affirmed for Him, and of each of these attributes He is possessed of the most sublime and perfect degree thereof. As a sign of His pride, the purpose of all acts of worship done by the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth is to magnify Him, glorify Him, venerate Him and honour Him. Hence the *takbeer* (saying *Allāhu akbar* – Allah is most great) is the slogan of major acts of worship such as the prayer and others.

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ أَنزَلَ مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَتُصْبِحُ ٱلْأَرْضُ مُخْضَرَّةً ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٦٣﴾ لَّهُۥ مَا فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَمَا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ وَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَهُوَ ٱلْغَنِىُّ ٱلْحَمِيدُ ﴿٦٤﴾﴾ (سورة الحج: ٦٣-٦٤)

22:63. Do you not see that Allah sends down water from the sky, whereupon the earth becomes green? Verily Allah is the Knower of subtleties, the All-Aware.

22:64. To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth. And verily Allah is Self-Sufficient, Worthy of all praise.

Here Allah (ﷻ) encourages us to look at the signs which point to His oneness and perfect nature.

﴿Do you not see﴾ that is, have you not seen with your eyes and reflected with your intellect

﴿that Allah sends down water from the sky﴾, which is the rain; it comes down to an earth that is barren, desolate and dusty, its trees and plants dry, then it becomes green, covered with all kinds of vegetation, a delight to behold. The One Who brought it back to life after it was dead and lifeless will revive the dead after they have turned to dust.

﴿Verily Allah is the Knower of subtleties, the All-Aware﴾. He is the Knower of subtleties, Who knows the hidden part of things and their secrets. He brings good things to His slave and wards off evil from him in very subtle ways that are hidden from people. By His knowledge of subtleties, He shows His slaves His might and perfect power when He wreaks vengeance, then He shows His kindness after a person was about to die. By His knowledge of subtleties, He knows where the raindrops fall on earth, and where the seeds are in the earth, so He sends that rain to those seeds that are hidden and unknown to people, and brings forth all kinds of plants from them.

﴿the All-Aware﴾ of all secrets, what is hidden in people's hearts, and all hidden things.

﴿To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth﴾ because He created them and they are all His slaves; He controls them as He is the Sovereign, Most Wise, Almighty; no one else has any control at all.

﴿And verily Allah is Self-Sufficient﴾ in and of Himself; He is completely independent of means in all aspects. One aspect thereof is that He does not need any of His creation and does not take them as friends because of any need for help and support. Because He is Self-Sufficient, He has never taken a spouse or begotten a child. He is entirely Self-Sufficient; He does not eat or drink, and He does not need what people need in any way. He feeds but is not fed. Because He is Self-Sufficient, all people need Him to bring them into existence, to make them adaptable to their environment and to provide for them, and to guide them with regard to their religious and worldly affairs. Because He is Self-Sufficient, if all those who are in the heavens and on earth were to come together, both the living and the dead, in a single plain, and each of them were to ask Him for what he wishes for, and He were to give them more than they wished for, that would not detract from His sovereignty in the slightest. Because He is Self-Sufficient, His Hand is outstretched to bestow goodness and blessings by night and by day; His bounty keeps coming down at every moment. Because He is Self-Sufficient and Most Generous, what He has stored up in paradise is such that no eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has it ever crossed the mind of man.

﴿Worthy of all praise﴾ that is, He is praiseworthy in and of Himself; in His names, for they are beautiful; in His attributes, because they are all attributes of perfection; in His deeds, because they are all based on justice, kindness, mercy and wisdom; in His laws, for He does not enjoin anything but that which is completely of benefit or its benefits outweigh its harms, and He does not forbid

anything but that which is completely bad or its harms outweigh any benefits. To Him be praise that fills everything in the heavens and on earth and in between, and whatever He wills after that, for people cannot praise Him enough; rather He is as He has praised Himself, far above the praise that His slaves give. He is worthy of praise for helping whomever He helps and forsaking whomever He forsakes. He is Self-Sufficient in His praise, and Most Praiseworthy in His self-sufficiency.

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَٱلْفُلْكَ تَجْرِى فِى ٱلْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِۦ وَيُمْسِكُ ٱلسَّمَآءَ أَن تَقَعَ عَلَى ٱلْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِۦٓ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ بِٱلنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ لَكَفُورٌ ﴿٦٦﴾﴾ (سورة الحج: ٦٥-٦٦)

22:65. Do you not see that Allah has made all that is on earth to be of service to you, and the ships that sail on the sea by His command? And He holds back the sky so that it cannot fall on the earth except by His leave. Verily Allah is Most Compassionate, Most Merciful to humankind.

22:66. It is He Who gave you life, then will cause you to die, then He will bring you back to life. Verily man is indeed ungrateful.

That is, have you not seen with your own eyes and intellect the comprehensive blessings and favours of your Lord?

﴿Allah has made all that is on earth to be of service to you﴾ including animals, plants and inanimate objects. Everything that is on earth has been made to be of service to the sons of Adam: animals which they use for riding, carrying loads and other purposes, as well as food and other kinds of benefits; trees and fruits that they eat, for man has been

given the ability to plant them and make use of them; and minerals that man extracts from the earth and makes use of them.

﴿and the ships﴾ have also been made to be of service to you, as they ﴿sail on the sea by His command﴾, carrying you and your trade goods, and they take you from one place to another. And you extract from the sea ornaments that you wear. By His mercy towards you, Allah ﴿holds back the sky so that it cannot fall on the earth﴾. Were it not for His mercy and might, the sky would have fallen onto the earth, destroying all that is on it and killing everyone on it.

﴿Verily, Allah sustains the heavens and the earth, lest they decline, and if they were to decline, there is no one who could sustain them other than Him. Verily, He is Forbearing, Oft-Forgiving.﴾ *(Fāṭir 35: 41)*

﴿Verily Allah is Most Compassionate, Most Merciful to humankind﴾ – He is more merciful to them than their parents and than their own selves. Hence He wants what is good for them, whereas they want that which is evil and harmful for themselves. By His mercy, He has caused all these things to be of service to them.

﴿It is He Who gave you life﴾ when He created you from nothing ﴿then will cause you to die﴾ after giving you life
﴿then He will bring you back to life﴾ after your death, in order to requite the doer of good for his good deeds and the doer of evil for his evil deeds. ﴿Verily man﴾ in general, except those whom Allah blesses ﴿is indeed ungrateful﴾ for the blessings of Allah; he is ungrateful to Allah and does not acknowledge His kindness; rather he may disbelieve in the resurrection and the might of his Lord.

﴿لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنسَكًا هُمْ نَاسِكُوهُ فَلَا يُنَازِعُنَّكَ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَادْعُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ
إِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ هُدًى مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَإِن جَادَلُوكَ فَقُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ اللَّهُ

يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كُنتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ
يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ ۚ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٧٠﴾

(سورة الحج: ٦٧-٧٠)

22:67. For every nation We decreed ways of worship which they follow, so do not let them dispute with you concerning this matter. But call them to your Lord, for you are indeed rightly guided.

22:68. And if they do dispute with you, then say: Allah knows best what you are doing.

22:69. Allah will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection concerning that wherein you differ.

22:70. Do you not know that Allah knows all that is in the heavens and on earth? Verily that is [inscribed] in a record; verily that is easy for Allah.

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Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that He decreed for every nation its ﴿ways of worship﴾, which may differ in some aspects, but they are all based on justice and wisdom, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿...To each [community] among you, We have prescribed a law and a clear way. If Allah had so willed, He would have made you a single community, but [He willed it otherwise] in order to test you in what He has given you. So hasten to do good deeds. To Allah you will all return, then He will inform you about the matters concerning which you differed.﴾ *(al-Mā'idah 5: 48)*

﴿which they follow﴾ that is, they act in accordance with that, according to their situations. So there should not be any objection to any set of divine laws, especially from the illiterate polytheists who are clearly ignorant. Once the message of the Messenger (ﷺ) is proven with evidence, it becomes obligatory to respond to everything he brought by accepting it and submitting, and not raising objections. Hence Allah says:

﴿so do not let them dispute with you concerning this matter﴾ that is, do not let those who reject you dispute with you and object to some of what you have brought to them, on the basis of their corrupt thinking, such as when they disputed the issue of meat found dead, on the basis of their false analogy, saying: "You eat what you kill, but you do not eat what Allah kills", and when they said "Selling is like usury", and similar objections, concerning which there is no need to answer these particular objections when they are denying the message, and there is no point in arguing about these issues in isolation from the main issue (which is the message itself), because issues should be discussed within the right framework and context.

If the one who raises these objections whilst denying the message of the Messenger (ﷺ) claims that he is arguing in order to learn and find the right answer, it should be said to him: What we discuss with you is whether the message is sound or not, otherwise his limiting the discussion to this issue is indicative of his stubbornness and attempts to frustrate you. Hence Allah instructed His Messenger (ﷺ) to call people to his Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching, and to focus on that, regardless of whether anyone objects or not. Nothing should deter you from calling people to Allah, because you are ﴿indeed rightly guided﴾, for the path you are following is moderate and will bring you to your goal, as it includes knowledge of the truth and acting upon it. So you are sure of the matter that you are following, and you are certain of your religion, which requires you to adhere strongly to what your Lord has enjoined upon you. You are not following a matter that is doubtful or something that is fabricated, such that you would go along with people and follow their whims and desires, and be hindered by their objections. This is similar to the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿So put your trust in Allah, for you are on the path of clear truth.﴾ *(an-Naml 27: 79)*

Moreover, the words ﴿for you are indeed rightly guided﴾ are a response, based on sound rational thought, to the objections of those who object to minor issues of Islamic teaching, because the Messenger (ﷺ) is following guidance, and all that the Messenger (ﷺ) brought, whether minor or major issues, is part of that guidance. The beauty, justice, fairness and wisdom of these issues may be known by means of reasoning and sound thinking, and may be reached by reflecting on the details of what is enjoined and what is prohibited.

Hence Allah instructed him to refrain from disputing with them in this situation, as He said: ﴿And if they do dispute with you, then say: Allah knows best what you are doing﴾ that is, He knows your aims and intentions, and He will requite you for that on the Day of Resurrection, on which Allah will judge between you concerning that wherein you differed. So whoever follows the straight path will be among the people of paradise, and whoever deviates from it will be one of the people of hell.

One aspect of the perfect nature of His judgement is that it is based on knowledge; therefore Allah tells us that His knowledge and His record are all-encompassing.

﴿Do you not know that Allah knows all that is in the heavens and on earth?﴾ Nothing is hidden from Him of either visible or hidden matters, what has already happened and what is yet to come. Allah has inscribed in a record that knowledge which encompasses all that is in heaven and on earth; that record is al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfoodh, and that knowledge was inscribed when Allah created the Pen and:

«He said to it: Write. It said: What should I write? He said: Write what will happen until the Day of Resurrection.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

﴿verily that is easy for Allah﴾; it is easy for Him even if your imagination cannot grasp it, for it is easy for Allah (ﷻ) to encompass all things with His knowledge and to inscribe that in a record in such a way that events will unfold exactly as written in that record.

﴿وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزِّلْ بِهِۦ سُلْطَٰنًا وَمَا لَيْسَ لَهُم بِهِۦ عِلْمٌ ۖ وَمَا لِلظَّٰلِمِينَ مِن نَّصِيرٍ ﴿٧١﴾ وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَٰتُنَا بَيِّنَٰتٍ تَعْرِفُ فِى وُجُوهِ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ ٱلْمُنكَرَ ۖ يَكَادُونَ يَسْطُونَ بِٱلَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايَٰتِنَا ۗ قُلْ أَفَأُنَبِّئُكُم بِشَرٍّ مِّن ذَٰلِكُمُ ۗ ٱلنَّارُ وَعَدَهَا ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ ۖ وَبِئْسَ ٱلْمَصِيرُ ﴿٧٢﴾﴾ (سورة الحج: ٧١-٧٢)

22:71. Yet they worship, besides Allah, that for which no authority has been sent down to them and that of which they have no knowledge. For the wrongdoers there will be no helpers.

22:72. When Our clear revelations are recited to them, you will notice repugnance in the faces of those who disbelieve. They can barely restrain themselves from assaulting those who recite Our revelations to them. Say [O Muhammad]: Shall I tell you of something worse than what you feel at present? It is the fire, which Allah has promised to those who disbelieve – a hapless journey's end.

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Here Allah describes the true nature of the polytheists who regard others as equal to Him, and tells us that they are in the worst condition, for they have no basis for what they do (of equating others to Him). They have no knowledge to support that; rather it is blind imitation of what they learned from their misguided forefathers.

A person may have no knowledge of what he does although, at the same time, there is proof for what he does, of which he has no knowledge. But in this case, Allah tells us that He has not sent down any authority for that. In other words, there is no proof to support it or permit it; rather what has been sent down is definitive proof that it is invalid and false.

Then Allah warns the wrongdoers among them who stubbornly reject the truth:

﴿For the wrongdoers there will be no helpers﴾ to protect them from the punishment of Allah when it befalls them. Do these people – who have no knowledge of what they are following – have any intention of following the signs and guidance that have come to them? Or are they content with what they are following of falsehood?

Allah refers to that when He says:

﴿When Our clear revelations﴾ that are the great revelations of Allah that make truth distinct from falsehood ﴿are recited to them﴾, they pay no attention to them and make no effort to understand them. Rather ﴿you will notice repugnance in the faces of those who disbelieve﴾. Because of their hatred and resentment, you see their faces frowning and displeased.

﴿They can barely restrain themselves from assaulting those who recite Our revelations to them﴾ that is, they can barely restrain themselves from attacking them in order to kill them or beat them severely, because of the severity of their resentment and animosity towards them and towards the truth. This attitude of the disbelievers is the worst of attitudes, and its evil is the greatest of evils, but there is something that is even worse than that, namely the state which they will ultimately reach. Hence Allah says:

﴿Say [O Muhammad]: Shall I tell you of something worse than what you feel at present? It is the fire, which Allah has promised to those who disbelieve – a hapless journey's end﴾. Its evil is immense and its hardship and pain will constantly increase.

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ ضُرِبَ مَثَلٌ فَٱسْتَمِعُوا۟ لَهُۥٓ ۚ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ
لَن يَخْلُقُوا۟ ذُبَابًا وَلَوِ ٱجْتَمَعُوا۟ لَهُۥ ۖ وَإِن يَسْلُبْهُمُ ٱلذُّبَابُ شَيْـًٔا لَّا يَسْتَنقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ

ضَعُفَ ٱلطَّالِبُ وَٱلْمَطْلُوبُ ﴿٧٣﴾ مَا قَدَرُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِۦٓ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَقَوِىٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٧٤﴾ ﴾ (سورة الحج: ٧٣-٧٤)

22:73. O people, an example is being presented, so listen to it: those on whom you call besides Allah can never create even a fly, even if they all came together to do that. And if the fly snatches something away from them, they cannot recover it from it. How weak are both the pursuer and the pursued!

22:74. They have not given due recognition to Allah. Verily Allah is indeed Strong, Almighty.

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This is an example that Allah gives of the abhorrent nature of idol worship, highlighting the fact that those who worship them have no sense, for all the idols are weak. He says:

﴿O people﴾ – this is addressed to both believers and disbelievers; the believers increase in knowledge and insight, whilst proof is established against the disbelievers.

﴿an example is being presented﴾ that is, listen attentively and understand what it implies. You should not receive it heedlessly or listen inattentively; rather you should listen properly and pay attention. This is the example given:

﴿those on whom you call besides Allah﴾ that is, everything that is called upon besides Allah

﴿can never create even a fly﴾ which is the most insignificant and ignoble of created beings. They are not able to create even this feeble creature, so it is more unlikely that they could create anything greater than that.

﴿even if they all came together to do that﴾ and, what is more, ﴿if the fly snatches something away from them, they cannot recover it from it﴾ – this is the utmost helplessness.

﴿How weak are both the pursuer﴾ namely the one that is worshipped besides Allah

﴿and the pursued﴾ namely the fly. Both of them are weak, and even weaker than both of them is the one who gets attached to this weak entity and gives it the same status as the Lord of the worlds.

Such a one has not given ﴿due recognition to Allah﴾, as he has regarded that which is lacking and incapable in all aspects as equal to the One Who is self-sufficient and most strong in all aspects. He has regarded that which has no power to bring benefit or ward off harm from itself or from anyone else, and has no power to cause death, give life or resurrect, as equal to the One Who brings benefits and wards off harm, Who gives and withholds, the ultimate Sovereign Who controls him in all ways.

﴿Verily Allah is indeed Strong, Almighty﴾ that is, He is perfect in strength and perfect in might, and because of the perfect nature of His strength and might, the forelocks of all creatures are in His Hand and nothing moves or halts except by His will. Whatever Allah wills happens, and whatever He does not will does not happen. By His perfect strength, He keeps a firm hold on the heavens and the earth, lest they fall apart. By His perfect strength, He will resurrect all people, the first and the last of them, with a single trumpet blast. By His perfect strength, He destroyed the tyrants and stubborn nations with something that is very easy for Him, and some of His punishment.

﴿ ٱللَّهُ يَصْطَفِى مِنَ ٱلْمَلَٰٓئِكَةِ رُسُلًا وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ سَمِيعٌۢ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٧٥﴾ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ ۗ وَإِلَى ٱللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ ٱلْأُمُورُ ﴿٧٦﴾ ﴾ (سورة الحج: ٧٥-٧٦)

22:75. Allah chooses messengers from among the angels and from among humankind. Verily Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

22:76. He knows what was before them and what will be after them, and it is to Allah that all things will return.

Having explained His perfect nature and the weakness of the idols, and that He alone is deserving of worship, Allah (ﷻ) now speaks of the Messengers, and how they differ from other people, because of their distinct virtues.

﴿Allah chooses messengers from among the angels and from among humankind﴾ that is, He selects messengers from among the angels and messengers from among humankind, to be the best of their type, as they combine all noble characteristics and are the most deserving of being chosen. The Messengers can only be from among the very best of humankind, for the One Who chose and selected them is not unaware of the reality of things, and it is not the case that He knows some things and not others. Rather the One Who chooses them is the All-Hearing, All-Seeing, Whose knowledge, hearing and vision encompass all things. His choice of them is based on His knowledge that they are qualified for that and that they are fit to receive revelation, as He says elsewhere:

﴿...Allah knows best where to place His message...﴾ *(al-An'âm 6: 124)*

﴿and it is to Allah that all things will return﴾ that is, He sends the Messengers, who call people to Allah, then some of the people respond and some reject the call. This is the role of the Messengers. As for the requital for those deeds, it is up to Allah, and He will judge on the basis of His grace and justice.

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ ٱرۡكَعُواْ وَٱسۡجُدُواْ وَٱعۡبُدُواْ رَبَّكُمۡ وَٱفۡعَلُواْ ٱلۡخَيۡرَ
لَعَلَّكُمۡ تُفۡلِحُونَ ۩ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَجَٰهِدُواْ فِي ٱللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِۦۖ هُوَ ٱجۡتَبَىٰكُمۡ وَمَا

جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ ۚ مِّلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۚ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مِن قَبْلُ وَفِي هَٰذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ ۚ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللَّهِ هُوَ مَوْلَاكُمْ ۖ فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلَىٰ وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ ﴿٧٨﴾ (سورة الحج: ٧٧-٧٨)

22:77. O you who believe, bow and prostrate, and worship your Lord, and do good, so that you may prosper.

22:78. Strive in the cause of Allah as you ought to strive. He has chosen you and has not imposed any hardship on you in religion, the religion of your father Ibrâheem. It is He [Allah] Who named you Muslims, both before and in this [Qur'an], so that the Messenger might be a witness over you and you might be witnesses over humankind. So establish prayer, give zakâh, and hold fast to Allah, for He is your Protector, an excellent Protector and an excellent Helper!

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Here Allah (ﷻ) enjoins His believing slaves to pray, and mentions in particular bowing and prostration, because of the virtue of these deeds and because they are an essential part of the prayer and of worshipping Him which brings comfort and consolation to one who is grieved. His Lordship and generosity towards His slaves require them to devote their worship to Him alone and make it incumbent upon them to do good deeds in general.

Allah (ﷻ) has made prosperity and success dependent upon these things, as He says: ﴿so that you may prosper﴾ that is, so that you may attain what you seek and be saved from what you fear. There is no way to prosper and succeed except by being sincere in worship of the Creator alone and striving to be of benefit to His slaves. Whoever is enabled to do that will attain a high level of happiness, success and prosperity.

﴿Strive in the cause of Allah as you ought to strive﴾ – striving means doing one's utmost to attain the desired goal. Striving in the cause of Allah as one ought to strive means complying in full with the commands of Allah, and calling people to His path by all possible means, such as offering sincere advice, teaching, fighting, disciplining, rebuking, exhorting, and so on.

﴿He has chosen you﴾ that is, He has selected you, O Muslims, from among humankind, and has chosen and approved of Islam for you, and He has chosen for you the best of Books and the best of Messengers. So respond to this immense blessing by striving as you should.

Because some people may imagine that the phrase ﴿Strive in the cause of Allah as you ought to strive﴾ may imply imposition of a duty that is beyond their ability to fulfil, or is too difficult to carry out, Allah dispels this notion by saying:
﴿and has not imposed any hardship on you in religion﴾ that is, He has not imposed any difficulty; rather He has made it very easy and straightforward. Firstly, He never enjoins or makes binding anything but that which is easy to carry out and is not burdensome or too hard. If there is some reason to reduce the burden, He reduces some of what He has enjoined, waiving it in full or in part.

An important principle is based on this verse, which is that if a command becomes too difficult, it becomes a cause for the scholars to review the matter and issue a fatwa to make it easier, and necessity makes prohibited things permissible. Based on that, there are many minor rulings that are well known in the books of the scholars.

﴿the religion of your father Ibrâheem﴾ that is, the religion and commands mentioned are the religion of your father Ibrâheem, in which he persisted, so adhere to it and cling to it.

﴿It is He [Allah] Who named you Muslims, both before﴾ that is, in the previous Books, which are well known.

﴿and in this [Qur'an]﴾ so this name of yours is well known, past and present.

﴿so that the Messenger might be a witness over you﴾, to your deeds, both good and bad

﴿and you might be witnesses over humankind﴾, because you are the best community ever brought forth for (the benefit of) humankind *(3: 110)*, a moderate, fair and exemplary community; you testify that the Messengers indeed conveyed the message to their nations, and you testify that the nations did indeed receive the message conveyed by their Messengers, as Allah has told you in His Book.

﴿So establish prayer﴾, with all its essential parts, fulfilling its conditions and performing it properly.

﴿give zakâh﴾ as you are obliged to, giving it to those who are entitled to it, out of gratitude to Allah for what He has bestowed upon you.

﴿and hold fast to Allah﴾ that is, seek His help and put your trust in Him, and do not trust in your own power and strength

﴿for He is your Protector﴾ Who is taking care of your affairs and managing them well, disposing of your affairs in your best interests.

﴿an excellent Protector﴾ that is, the best protector for the one who takes Him as an ally, so He helps him to attain what he is seeking

﴿and an excellent Helper﴾ to the one who seeks His help, so He wards off from him what he fears.

This is the end of the commentary on Soorat al-Ḥajj.
All praise and thanks are for Allah, and may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his family, and his Companions abundantly until the Day of Judgement.

# 23.
# Soorat al-Mu'minoon

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

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

23:1. The believers have indeed attained true success,

23:2. Those who humble themselves in their prayers,

23:3. who turn away from all that is vain,

23:4. who are active in giving zakâh,

23:5. and who restrain their carnal desires,

23:6. except with their wives or any slave women they may own, for then they are free of blame.

23:7. But whoever seeks anything beyond that, such are the transgressors.
23:8. Those who are faithful to their trusts and pledges,
23:9. and who are diligent in their prayers,
23:10. such will be the heirs
23:11. who will inherit paradise; they will abide therein forever.

Here Allah praises and commends His believing slaves, highlighting their success and bliss, and the means by which they attain that. This implicitly urges us to acquire the same characteristics and encourages us to do so. So the individual should take stock of himself and others, measuring against these standards; thus he will know what he and others have of faith, and the level and extent of that faith.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿But whoever seeks anything beyond that﴾ that is, beyond the wife or the female slave

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

The general meaning of this verse indicates that *mut'ah* marriage (temporary marriage) is prohibited, and the woman in such a marriage is not a wife in a true sense, with the intention of permanent marriage, nor is she a slave. *Tahleel* marriage[25] is prohibited for the same reason.

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

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

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

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[25] Tahleel marriage: after a third *talāq*, a woman cannot go back to her husband unless she has married another man, in a genuine marriage, then been divorced by him:
﴿And if he divorces her [the third time], she will not be lawful for him again until she has married another husband...﴾ *(al-Baqarah 2: 230)*
Tahleel marriage is a marriage for the purpose of making her permissible for her first husband by marrying her, consummating the marriage, and then divorcing her; it is haram, and it does not make the woman permissible for her first husband.

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا ٱلْإِنسَٰنَ مِن سُلَٰلَةٍ مِّن طِينٍ ﴿١٢﴾ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَٰهُ نُطْفَةً فِى قَرَارٍ مَّكِينٍ ﴿١٣﴾ ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا ٱلنُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا ٱلْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا ٱلْمُضْغَةَ عِظَٰمًا فَكَسَوْنَا ٱلْعِظَٰمَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَٰهُ خَلْقًا ءَاخَرَ ۚ فَتَبَارَكَ ٱللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ ٱلْخَٰلِقِينَ ﴿١٤﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّكُم بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ لَمَيِّتُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيَٰمَةِ تُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ١٢-١٦)

23:12. Indeed We created man from the finest extract of clay,

23:13. Then We placed him as a drop of semen in a safe repository.[26]

23:14. Then We made the drop of semen into a clinging clot, then We made the clinging clot into a lump of flesh, then We made the lump of flesh into bones, and clothed the bones with flesh, and then We brought it forth as another creation.[27] So blessed be Allah, the best of creators.

23:15. Then after that you will surely die,

23:16. then on the Day of Resurrection you will surely be raised up.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿then We made the lump of flesh﴾ which was soft ﴿into bones﴾ which were hard.

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

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

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

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

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

﴿Verily We have created man in the best of conditions.﴾ *(at-Teen 95: 4)*

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

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

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

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

﴿ وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعَ طَرَآئِقَ وَمَا كُنَّا عَنِ الْخَلْقِ غَٰفِلِينَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَأَنزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءًۢ بِقَدَرٍ فَأَسْكَنَّٰهُ فِى الْأَرْضِ ۖ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ ذَهَابٍۭ بِهِۦ لَقَٰدِرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ فَأَنشَأْنَا لَكُم بِهِۦ جَنَّٰتٍ مِّن نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَٰبٍ لَّكُمْ فِيهَا فَوَٰكِهُ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَشَجَرَةً تَخْرُجُ مِن طُورِ سَيْنَآءَ تَنۢبُتُ بِالدُّهْنِ وَصِبْغٍ لِّلْءَاكِلِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ١٧-٢٠)

23:17. We have created above you seven heavens [one over the other], and We have never been negligent towards Our creation.

23:18. We send down water from the sky in due measure and We cause it to remain on the earth; and verily, We are able to take it away.

23:19. And by means of this water We bring forth for you gardens of date palms and vines, in which you have many fruits and from them you eat.

23:20. And We bring forth a tree [the olive] which grows on Mount Sinai, producing oil and a condiment for all to eat.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً نُّسْقِيكُم مِّمَّا فِي بُطُونِهَا وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٢١-٢٢)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِۦ فَقَالَ يَٰقَوْمِ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُۥٓ ۖ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَقَالَ ٱلْمَلَؤُا۟ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ مِن قَوْمِهِۦ مَا هَٰذَآ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُرِيدُ أَن يَتَفَضَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ شَآءَ ٱللَّهُ لَأَنزَلَ مَلَٰٓئِكَةً مَّا سَمِعْنَا بِهَٰذَا فِىٓ ءَابَآئِنَا ٱلْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا رَجُلٌۢ بِهِۦ جِنَّةٌ فَتَرَبَّصُوا۟ بِهِۦ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ ٱنصُرْنِى بِمَا كَذَّبُونِ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَأَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَيْهِ أَنِ ٱصْنَعِ ٱلْفُلْكَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَوَحْيِنَا فَإِذَا جَآءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ ٱلتَّنُّورُ ۙ فَٱسْلُكْ فِيهَا مِن كُلٍّ زَوْجَيْنِ ٱثْنَيْنِ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلَّا مَن سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ ٱلْقَوْلُ مِنْهُمْ ۖ وَلَا تُخَٰطِبْنِى فِى ٱلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوٓا۟ ۖ إِنَّهُم مُّغْرَقُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَإِذَا ٱسْتَوَيْتَ أَنتَ وَمَن مَّعَكَ عَلَى ٱلْفُلْكِ فَقُلِ ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ٱلَّذِى نَجَّىٰنَا مِنَ ٱلْقَوْمِ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَقُل رَّبِّ أَنزِلْنِى مُنزَلًا مُّبَارَكًا وَأَنتَ خَيْرُ ٱلْمُنزِلِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ إِنَّ فِى ذَٰلِكَ لَءَايَٰتٍ وَإِن كُنَّا لَمُبْتَلِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٢٣-٣٠)

23:23. Indeed We sent Nooḥ to his people. He said: O my people, worship Allah; you have no god but He. Will you not then fear Him?

23:24. But the chieftains of his people who disbelieved said: This one is no more than a man like yourselves who wants to make himself superior to you. If Allah had so willed, He could have sent down angels [as messengers]. We have never heard of such a thing from our forefathers.

23:25. He is no more than a man in whom there is madness. So bear with him for a while.

23:26. Nooḥ said: My Lord, help me, for they have rejected me.

23:27. So We inspired him: Build the ark under Our supervision and in accordance with Our inspiration. Then, when Our command comes and water gushes up out of the earth, let on board a pair

from every species, and your family, except those against whom the sentence has already been passed. And do not plead with Me concerning those who did wrong, for they will surely be drowned.

23:28. Once you and those who are with you are settled on board the ark, say: Praise be to Allah, Who has saved us from the people who are given to wrongdoing.

23:29. And say: My Lord, cause me to land at a blessed landing-place, for You are the Best of those who bring to land.

23:30. Surely in that there are signs; for, verily, We always put [man] to the test.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

And Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Indeed, Nooḥ called upon Us, and how excellent was Our response!﴾ *(aṣ-Ṣâffât 37: 75)*

﴿So We inspired him﴾ when We answered him, telling him of a means to save himself before the punishment came.
﴿Build the ark﴾ that is, the ship ﴿under Our supervision and in accordance with Our inspiration﴾ that is, in accordance with Our instructions to you and with Our help, for you are under Our care and supervision, as We see you and hear you.

﴿Then, when Our command comes﴾ to send the flood with which they were to be punished,
﴿and water gushes up out of the earth﴾ that is, when springs burst forth from the earth
﴿let on board a pair from every species﴾ that is, take on board the ark a male and female of every animal, so as to maintain the offspring of all animals that were created on earth by divine wisdom.
﴿and your family﴾ that is, take them on board too,
﴿except those against whom the sentence has already been passed﴾, such as his son.
﴿And do not plead with Me concerning those who did wrong﴾ that is, do not pray to Me to save them, for it has already been willed and decreed that they will be drowned.

﴿Once you and those who are with you are settled on board the ark﴾ that is, when you have embarked and it has sailed with you on the waves, then praise Allah for saving you and keeping you safe.
﴿say: Praise be to Allah, Who has saved us from the people who are given to wrongdoing﴾. Allah taught Nooḥ and those who were with

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَا مِنۢ بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنًا ءَاخَرِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ فَأَرْسَلْنَا فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْهُمْ أَنِ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ
غَيْرُهُۥٓ ۖ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَقَالَ ٱلْمَلَأُ مِن قَوْمِهِ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ وَكَذَّبُوا۟ بِلِقَآءِ ٱلْءَاخِرَةِ وَأَتْرَفْنَٰهُمْ

فِي ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا مَا هَٰذَآ إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يَأْكُلُ مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ مِنْهُ وَيَشْرَبُ مِمَّا تَشْرَبُونَ
﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَئِنْ أَطَعْتُم بَشَرًا مِّثْلَكُمْ إِنَّكُمْ إِذًا لَّخَٰسِرُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ أَيَعِدُكُمْ أَنَّكُمْ إِذَا مِتُّمْ وَكُنتُمْ
تُرَابًا وَعِظَٰمًا أَنَّكُم مُّخْرَجُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ هَيْهَاتَ هَيْهَاتَ لِمَا تُوعَدُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ إِنْ هِىَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا
ٱلدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا رَجُلٌ ٱفْتَرَىٰ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ كَذِبًا وَمَا
نَحْنُ لَهُۥ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ ٱنصُرْنِى بِمَا كَذَّبُونِ ﴿٣٩﴾ قَالَ عَمَّا قَلِيلٍ لَّيُصْبِحُنَّ نَٰدِمِينَ
﴿٤٠﴾ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ ٱلصَّيْحَةُ بِٱلْحَقِّ فَجَعَلْنَٰهُمْ غُثَآءً فَبُعْدًا لِّلْقَوْمِ ٱلظَّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

(سورة المؤمنون: ٣١-٤١)

23:31. Then We raised up after them another nation.

23:32. We sent to them a Messenger from among themselves, [who said]: O my people, worship Allah; you have no god but He. Will you not then fear Him?

23:33. But the chieftains of his people who disbelieved and denied the meeting in the hereafter, and upon whom We had conferred ease and comfort in the life of this world, said: This one is no more than a man like yourselves who eats what you eat, and drinks what you drink.

23:34. If you obey a man like yourselves, then indeed you will be losers.

23:35. Does he promise you that when you have died and become dust and bones, you will be brought forth [alive, from your graves]?

23:36. Far-fetched, utterly far-fetched is what you are promised.

23:37. There is nothing beyond our life in this world; we die and we live,[28] and we will not be resurrected.

23:38. He is no more than a man who fabricated lies against Allah; we will never believe in him.

23:39. [Their Prophet] said: My Lord, help me, for they have rejected me.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Allah said in response to them:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿ثُمَّ أَنشَأْنَا مِنۢ بَعْدِهِمْ قُرُونًا ءَاخَرِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾ مَا تَسْبِقُ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلَهَا وَمَا يَسْتَـْٔخِرُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا تَتْرَا ۖ كُلَّ مَا جَآءَ أُمَّةً رَّسُولُهَا كَذَّبُوهُ ۚ فَأَتْبَعْنَا بَعْضَهُم بَعْضًا وَجَعَلْنَٰهُمْ أَحَادِيثَ ۚ فَبُعْدًا لِّقَوْمٍ لَّا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٤٢-٤٤)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ وَأَخَاهُ هَٰرُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٤٥﴾ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَإِيْهِ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا عَالِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَقَالُوا أَنُؤْمِنُ لِبَشَرَيْنِ مِثْلِنَا وَقَوْمُهُمَا لَنَا عَابِدُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَكَانُوا مِنَ الْمُهْلَكِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٤٥-٤٩)

23:45. Then We sent Moosâ and his brother Hâroon with Our clear signs and compelling proofs

23:46. To Pharaoh and his chiefs. But they showed arrogance and were haughty people.

23:47. They said: Should we believe in two men like ourselves, when their people are subject to us?

23:48. So they rejected them both, and were among those who were destroyed.

23:49. We gave Moosâ the Book so that they might be guided.

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

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

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

The same point is made in Soorah Yoonus, where Allah tells us:

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

And Allah knows best.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿And We inscribed for him in the Tablets all manner of admonition and an explanation of all things...﴾ *(al-A'râf 7: 145)*

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

﴿وَجَعَلْنَا ٱبْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمَّهُۥٓ ءَايَةً وَءَاوَيْنَٰهُمَآ إِلَىٰ رَبْوَةٍ ذَاتِ قَرَارٍ وَمَعِينٍ ﴿٥٠﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٥٠)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلرُّسُلُ كُلُوا۟ مِنَ ٱلطَّيِّبَٰتِ وَٱعْمَلُوا۟ صَٰلِحًا ۖ إِنِّى بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥١﴾ وَإِنَّ هَٰذِهِۦٓ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَٰحِدَةً وَأَنَا۠ رَبُّكُمْ فَٱتَّقُونِ ﴿٥٢﴾ فَتَقَطَّعُوٓا۟ أَمْرَهُم بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُرًا ۖ كُلُّ حِزْبٍۭ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ فَذَرْهُمْ فِى غَمْرَتِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ أَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّمَا نُمِدُّهُم بِهِۦ مِن مَّالٍ وَبَنِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾ نُسَارِعُ لَهُمْ فِى ٱلْخَيْرَٰتِ ۚ بَل لَّا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٥١-٥٦)

23:51. O Messengers, eat of that which is wholesome and do righteous deeds, for I am well aware of all that you do.

23:52. Verily this religion of yours is one religion, and I am your Lord, so fear Me alone.

23:53. But people divided into sects, each group rejoicing in what it has.

23:54. So leave them in their confusion for a while.

23:55. Do they think, because We grant them wealth and sons,

23:56. that We hasten to them all that is good? Nay, they do not understand.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ هُم مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ رَبِّهِم مُّشْفِقُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ هُم بِـَٔايَـٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ هُم بِرَبِّهِمْ لَا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَا ءَاتَوا۟ وَّقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ رَٰجِعُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ أُو۟لَـٰٓئِكَ يُسَـٰرِعُونَ فِى ٱلْخَيْرَٰتِ وَهُمْ لَهَا سَـٰبِقُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَلَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۖ وَلَدَيْنَا كِتَـٰبٌ يَنطِقُ بِٱلْحَقِّ ۚ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٥٧-٦٢)

23:57. Verily those who are filled with reverent awe of their Lord,

23:58. And who believe in the revelations of their Lord,

23:59. And who do not ascribe partners to their Lord,

23:60. And who give what they give [of charity], their hearts filled with apprehension, knowing that they will return to their Lord,

23:61. Those are the ones who hasten to do good deeds, and they are foremost in attaining them.

23:62. We do not place on any soul a burden greater than it can bear. We have a record [of their deeds] that speaks the truth, and they will not be wronged.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

﴿Those are the ones who hasten to do good deeds﴾ that is, in the arena of competing to do good deeds, their main concern is that which will bring them closer to Allah, and they are focused on that which could save them from His punishment. Whatever good deed they hear

of or have the opportunity to do, they hasten to make the most of it and do that good deed. They look at the close friends and chosen ones of Allah who are ahead of them and on their right and left, hastening to do all that is good and striving to draw close to their Lord, and they try to compete with them. As the one who is racing and competing with others may go ahead because of his efforts and striving, or he may not do so because of his shortcomings, Allah (ﷻ) tells us that these people are among the category who will be foremost, as He says: ﴿and they are foremost in attaining them﴾ that is, good deeds. They will attain the pinnacle, for they competed with the first rank. Moreover, it was already decreed by Allah that they would be among those who are blessed and those who are foremost.

Because Allah mentioned their hastening to do good and their being foremost in that regard, some people may imagine that what is required of them and others is something that is too difficult and hard, He tells us that He does not place ﴿on any soul a burden greater than it can bear﴾ that is, the burden is only as much as a person can bear, and there will still be some strength left over; it is not something that will exhaust all his strength. This is by His mercy and wisdom, so as to make the path to Him easy and so that there will always be people who are racing on that path to Him.

﴿We have a record [of their deeds] that speaks the truth﴾ which is the first Book in which all things are written, and it reflects exactly all that takes place. Hence it is true.

﴿and they will not be wronged﴾ that is, nothing will be detracted from their good deeds and nothing will be added to their punishment or sins.

﴿بَلْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فِي غَمْرَةٍ مِّنْ هَٰذَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْمَالٌ مِّن دُونِ ذَٰلِكَ هُمْ لَهَا عَامِلُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَخَذْنَا مُتْرَفِيهِم بِالْعَذَابِ إِذَا هُمْ يَجْأَرُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ لَا تَجْأَرُوا الْيَوْمَ إِنَّكُم مِّنَّا لَا تُنصَرُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ قَدْ

كَانَتْ ءَايَٰتِى تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فَكُنتُمْ عَلَىٰٓ أَعْقَٰبِكُمْ تَنكِصُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ مُسْتَكْبِرِينَ بِهِۦ سَٰمِرًا تَهْجُرُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ ﴿سورة المؤمنون: ٦٣-٦٧﴾

23:63. But their hearts are utterly heedless of this [the Qur'an]; and they have, besides that, other [evil] deeds which they will continue to do

23:64. Until, when We seize the affluent amongst them with punishment, they will cry for help.

23:65. [It will be said to them:] Do not cry for help today, for you will receive no help from Us.

23:66. My revelations were recited to you, but you used to turn on your heels

23:67. Out of pride [in being the custodians of the Sacred Mosque], talking nonsense far into the night [about the Qur'an].

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Here Allah tells us that the hearts of the disbelievers are utterly heedless, because they are steeped in ignorance, wrongdoing, negligence and aversion that prevent them from reaching out to this Qur'an. Therefore they are not guided by it and nothing of it reaches their hearts.

﴿When you recite the Qur'an, We place between you and those who do not believe in the hereafter a hidden barrier,[29] and We have placed covers on their hearts so that they will not understand it, and deafness in their ears...﴾ *(al-Isrâ' 17: 45-46)*

Because their hearts are utterly heedless of it, their actions are commensurate with their state of stubbornness and disbelief, which will result in their punishment.

﴿and﴾ but ﴿they have, besides that﴾ that is, besides these deeds

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[29] That is so that they will not understand it, as a punishment for their (stubborn) disbelief. (at-Tabari)

﴿other [evil] deeds which they will continue to do﴾ that is, they should not find it strange that the punishment has not yet befallen them, because Allah is giving them respite so that they may finish doing all the deeds that they are meant to do according to the divine decree. When they have done that and completed them all, they will move on in the worst state to face the wrath and punishment of Allah.

﴿Until, when We seize the affluent amongst them﴾ that is, those who live a life of ease and are only used to a life of affluence, luxury and enjoyment, and have not experienced hardship; when We seize them ﴿with punishment﴾, and they feel its touch,
﴿they will cry for help﴾ that is, they will scream in pain, because something has befallen them other than what they are used to. They will cry for help, but it will be said to them:
﴿Do not cry for help today, for you will receive no help from Us﴾ – because no help or support will come to them from Allah, they will not be able to help themselves and no one else will be able to help them.

It is as if it will be said to them: What is it that has brought you to this state? ﴿My revelations were recited to you﴾ so that you might believe in them and accept them, but you did not do that; rather ﴿you used to turn on your heels﴾ that is, you went backwards. By following the Qur'an they could have advanced, but by turning away from it they went backwards and became the lowest of the low.

﴿Out of pride [in being the custodians of the Sacred Mosque], talking nonsense far into the night [about the Qur'an]﴾. The commentators said that what is meant is that they were proud of it, and the pronoun (rendered here as ﴿[in being the custodians of the Sacred Mosque]﴾) refers to the Kaaba or the Ḥaram. In other words, they felt proud before people because of that, and they said: We are the people of the sanctuary, therefore we are better than others and of higher status than them.
﴿talking nonsense far into the night﴾ that is, gathering and talking by night around the Kaaba. Talking nonsense refers to saying bad things

about this Qur'an. The way in which the disbelievers responded to the Qur'an was by turning away from it and telling one another to do that.

﴿Those who disbelieved said: Do not listen to this Qur'an; make noise when it is recited, so that you may drown it out.﴾ *(Fussilat 41: 26)*

And Allah said concerning them:

﴿Do you then wonder at this discourse [the Qur'an] and laugh [at it], and not weep, while you remain heedless?﴾ *(an-Najm 53: 59-61)*

﴿Or do they say: He has made it [the Qur'an] up himself?...﴾ *(at-Toor 52: 33)*

As they had all these bad manners and attitudes, it is no wonder that they deserved the punishment, and when they fell into that they had no one to support them or save them, and they were rebuked at that point because of these bad deeds.

﴿ أَفَلَمْ يَدَّبَّرُوا۟ ٱلْقَوْلَ أَمْ جَآءَهُم مَّا لَمْ يَأْتِ ءَابَآءَهُمُ ٱلْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٦٨)

23:68. Have they not pondered the words [of Allah], or is it that there has come to them that which did not come to their forefathers?

﴿Have they not pondered the words [of Allah]﴾ that is, have they not reflected on the Qur'an and pondered its meanings? In other words, if they had pondered it, that would have led them to faith and would have prevented them from disbelieving. But the calamity that befell them was due to their turning away. This indicates that reflecting upon the Qur'an leads to all that is good and protects against all that is evil, and what prevented them from reflecting upon it was the fact that there were locks upon their hearts.

﴿or is it that there has come to them that which did not come to their forefathers?﴾ that is, or is what prevented them from believing

the fact that there came to them a Messenger and Book that had not come to their forefathers, so they were content to follow the path of their misguided forefathers, and they objected to anything that differed from that? Therefore they and others like them among the disbelievers said, as Allah tells us:

﴿Likewise, We never sent any warner before you to a city but its affluent ones said: We found our forefathers following a certain path, and we are following in their footsteps.﴾ *(az-Zukhruf 43: 23)*

The warner responded to them by saying:

﴿...Even if I bring you better guidance than that which you found your forefathers following?...﴾ *(az-Zukhruf 43: 24)*

Will you follow it even if your aim is to follow the truth? And the answer exposed their real thinking, as they said:

﴿...Verily, We disbelieve in that with which you have been sent﴾ *(az-Zukhruf 43: 24)*

﴿أَمْ لَمْ يَعْرِفُوا رَسُولَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَهُ مُنكِرُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٦٩)

23:69. Or is it that they do not know their Messenger well enough,[30] so they reject him?

That is, is what prevented them from following the truth the fact that their Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) was not known to them, therefore they denied him and said: We do not know him, we do not know how sincere he is, so let us wait and see how he is, and ask

[30] On the contrary, the disbelievers of Quraysh knew him very well, as he had grown up in their midst, and his good character, honesty and sincerity were so well known to them that they called him *al-Ameen* (the trustworthy one).

those who know him about him? But that was not the case, for they knew the Messenger (ﷺ) very well indeed; young and old alike knew that he had all good characteristics, and they knew him to be sincere and honest, to the extent that before his mission began they used to call him *al-Ameen* (the trustworthy one). So why did they not believe him when he brought them the truth with all honesty and sincerity?

﴿أَمْ يَقُولُونَ بِهِۦ جِنَّةٌۢ ۚ بَلْ جَآءَهُم بِٱلْحَقِّ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كَٰرِهُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٧٠)

23:70. Or do they say that there is madness in him? Rather he has brought them the truth, but most of them are averse to the truth.

﴿Or do they say that there is madness in him?﴾ that is, do they say that he is insane, and this is why he said what he said? For if a person is insane, no one listens to him and his words do not count, because he murmurs nonsense and foolish words.

Allah said, refuting this suggestion on their part:
﴿Rather he has brought them the truth﴾ that is, he has brought them that which is confirmed and based on truthfulness and justice, in which there is no difference or contradiction. So how could there be madness in the one who brought it?! Could he be anything but a person who is at the highest level of perfection in terms of knowledge, rational thinking, and good manners and attitude? Rather the reality is that what prevented them from believing was that ﴿he has brought them the truth, but most of them are averse to the truth﴾. The greatest truth that he brought them was the command to devote worship solely to Allah and to abandon everything else that is worshipped besides Allah. It is well known that they were averse to that and found it strange, so the fact that the Messenger (ﷺ) brought the

truth when they were averse to the truth in the first place is what made them deny the truth. It was not because they doubted or rejected the Messenger (ﷺ) himself. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...It is not you they disbelieve; rather it is the revelations of Allah that the wrongdoers deny.﴾ *(al-An'âm 6: 33)*

If it is asked: why was not the truth in accordance with their whims and desires, so that they might believe and hasten to submit? The answer is given in the following verse:

﴿وَلَوِ ٱتَّبَعَ ٱلْحَقُّ أَهْوَآءَهُمْ لَفَسَدَتِ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتُ وَٱلْأَرْضُ وَمَن فِيهِنَّ ۚ بَلْ أَتَيْنَٰهُم بِذِكْرِهِمْ فَهُمْ عَن ذِكْرِهِم مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٧١﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٧١)

23:71. If the truth had been in accordance with their desires, the heavens and the earth, and all those who are therein, would have been brought to ruin. In fact We have given them that which would bring them honour [that is, the Qur'an], but they turn away from that which would bring them honour.

﴿If the truth had been in accordance with their desires, the heavens and the earth, and all those who are therein, would have been brought to ruin﴾ the reason being that their whims and desires are based on wrongdoing, disbelief, mischief, and bad manners and deeds. Therefore if the truth had followed their whims and desires, the heavens and the earth would have been brought to ruin because of the corruption of conduct and control that would be based on oppression and injustice. Therefore the heavens and the earth can only be kept in good order on the basis of truth and justice.

﴿In fact We have given them that which would bring them honour﴾ namely this Qur'an, which motivates them to do all that is good, and

in which is their pride and honour if they adhere to it, and through it they could become leaders of humankind.

﴿but they turn away from that which would bring them honour﴾ because they are doomed and are not guided;

﴿...They have forgotten Allah, so He has forgotten them...﴾ *(at-Tawbah 9: 67)*

– and they:

﴿...forgot Allah, so He caused them to forget themselves...﴾ *(al-Hashr 59: 19)*

The Qur'an and the one who brought it are the greatest blessing that Allah bestowed upon them, but their only response was to reject it and turn away. Can there be any deprivation worse than this? Can there be anything beyond that but the utmost loss?

﴿أَمْ تَسْـَٔلُهُمْ خَرْجًا فَخَرَاجُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ ٱلرَّٰزِقِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٧٢)

23:72. Or is it that you ask them for some recompense? But the recompense of your Lord is better, and He is the best of providers.

That is, are they being prevented from following you, O Muhammad (ﷺ), by your asking them for payment if they respond:

﴿...recompense which they find too burdensome?﴾ *(al-Qalam 68: 46)*

– and they find it burdensome to follow you, because of what you would take from them of recompense and payment? That is not the case; ﴿But the recompense of your Lord is better, and He is the best of providers﴾. This is like what the Prophets said to their nations:

﴿O my people, no recompense do I ask of you for this...﴾ *(Hood 11: 51)*

– and:

﴿...my reward is with Allah alone...﴾ *(Hood 11: 29)*

In other words, they were not calling people to Allah in hopes of what they could get of their wealth; rather it was out of sincerity towards them and a desire to guide them to that which was in their best interests. In fact the Messengers were more sincere to people than their own selves. May Allah grant them the best of rewards on behalf of their nations and enable us to follow their example in all our affairs.

﴿وَإِنَّكَ لَتَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ عَنِ الصِّرَاطِ لَنَاكِبُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٧٣-٧٤)

23:73. Surely you [O Muhammad] are calling them to a straight path.

23:74. But indeed those who do not believe in the hereafter are deviating from that path.

In these verses Allah mentions every means that may lead to faith and He mentions obstacles to faith; He highlights how corrupt the obstacles are, one after another. Among the obstacles, He mentions the fact that their hearts are utterly heedless of this (the Qur'an) *(23: 63)*; they did not ponder the words of Allah *(23: 68)*; they followed in the footsteps of their forefathers; and they said that there was madness in their Messenger (ﷺ), as we have discussed above.

Among the things that would lead them to faith, Allah mentioned: reflecting upon the Qur'an; accepting the blessings of Allah with appreciation; acknowledging the sublime attributes, sincerity and honesty of the Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ), and that he was not asking for any reward, rather his efforts were for their benefit and in their interests, and that what he called them to is the straight path which is easy to follow because it is straight and leads to the goal in the shortest way, and he called them to a religion of ease that is based on pure monotheism. What is meant is: you, O Muhammad

(ﷺ), are calling them to the straight path, which requires the one who seeks the truth to follow you, because what you are calling them to is something that is in harmony with rational thinking and common sense, and through that path they may attain all their interests. What other path will they follow if they do not follow you? They do not have any other alternative that could suffice them so that they would not need to follow you, because they ﴿are deviating from that path﴾, drifting away from the path that leads to Allah and to His paradise; what they are following is nothing but misguidance and ignorance.

The same applies to everyone who goes against the truth; he will inevitably deviate in all his affairs. Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿But if they do not respond to you, then know that they only follow their own desires, and who is more astray than one who follows his own desires, without any guidance from Allah?...﴾ *(al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 50)*

﴿وَلَوْ رَحِمْنَٰهُمْ وَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِم مِّن ضُرٍّ لَّلَجُّوا۟ فِى طُغْيَٰنِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَٰهُم بِٱلْعَذَابِ فَمَا ٱسْتَكَانُوا۟ لِرَبِّهِمْ وَمَا يَتَضَرَّعُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَابًا ذَا عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ إِذَا هُمْ فِيهِ مُبْلِسُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٧٥-٧٧)

23:75. If We showed them mercy and relieved their misfortunes, they would persist in their transgression, wandering blindly in their misguidance.

23:76. We have already seized them with punishment, but they did not humble themselves before their Lord, nor did they beseech Him.

23:77. Until, when We open upon them a gate of severe punishment, they will be plunged into utter despair.

This highlights the extent of their foolishness and stubbornness: if harm befalls them, they call upon Allah, asking Him to grant them

relief so that they may believe, or He may test them so that they may come back to Him, then if He grants them relief, they persist in their transgression, wandering blindly in their misguidance; that is, they wander blindly in their disbelief.

Similarly, Allah mentioned their state when they board ships: they call upon Him, professing sincere devotion to Him alone, and they forget those whom they ascribed as partners to Him. But when He delivers them, they spread mischief throughout the land by ascribing partners to Allah and otherwise *(10: 22-23)*.

﴿We have already seized them with punishment﴾. The commentators said that what is meant here is the hunger and famine that they experienced for seven years. Allah tested them thereby so that they might turn back to Him in humble submission. But it was to no avail; not one of them benefited from it.

﴿but they did not humble themselves before their Lord﴾ that is, they did not submit to Him

﴿nor did they beseech Him﴾ or acknowledge their need of Him; rather they went through that then they recovered, as if nothing had happened to them, and they continued in their misguidance and disbelief. But ahead of them is a punishment that cannot be warded off, as Allah says:

﴿Until, when We open upon them a gate of severe punishment﴾ such as their being killed on the day of Badr

﴿they will be plunged into utter despair﴾ that is, they will give up hope of all good and will find themselves surrounded by all ills and all causes that lead to that. So let them pay heed, before there befalls them the severe punishment of Allah that cannot be warded off, unlike worldly punishments that may cease, such as those with which Allah disciplines His slaves.

Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿Corruption and disorder have appeared on land and sea[31] because of what people's hands have earned. Thus Allah causes them to taste the consequences of some of what they have done, so that they may turn in repentance.﴾ *(ar-Room 30: 41)*

﴿وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَنشَأَ لَكُمُ ٱلسَّمْعَ وَٱلْأَبْصَٰرَ وَٱلْأَفْـِٔدَةَ ۚ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِى ذَرَأَكُمْ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَهُوَ ٱلَّذِى يُحْىِۦ وَيُمِيتُ وَلَهُ ٱخْتِلَٰفُ ٱلَّيْلِ وَٱلنَّهَارِ ۚ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٧٨-٨٠)

23:78. It is He Who has given you hearing, sight and intellect; little it is that you give thanks.

23:79. And it is He Who has created you on the earth, and unto Him you will be gathered.

23:80. It is He Who gives life and causes death, and He controls the alternation of night and day. Will you not then understand?

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the blessings that He has bestowed upon His slaves, which should prompt them to give thanks to Him and fulfil their duties towards Him.

﴿It is He Who has given you hearing﴾ so that you may understand what you hear, and benefit with regard to your religious and worldly affairs.

﴿sight﴾ so that you may understand what you see, and benefit from it when you go about your business.

﴿and intellect﴾ that is, reason by means of which you understand things, and by means of which you are distinguished from the animals.

[31] This refers to the widespread occurrence of troubles such as drought, fires and floods, poor yield of crops, decline of fish stocks, market stagnation and difficulty in earning a living. That is because of people's sins, including neglect and abuse of the natural environment.

If you did not have hearing, sight and intellect, and you were deaf, blind and dumb, what would your condition be? What would you miss out on of essentials and luxuries?

Will you not then give thanks to the One Who has bestowed these blessings upon you, and affirm His oneness and obey Him? Little is it that you give thanks, even though the blessings come to you continuously.

﴿And it is He﴾, may He be exalted, ﴿Who has created you on the earth﴾ and He has caused you to spread throughout the earth, in all directions, and has given you the power to bring forth benefits from the earth; He has made it sufficient for your livelihood and dwelling.

﴿and unto Him you will be gathered﴾ after your death, and He will requite you for what you did on earth of good and evil, and the earth on which you dwelt will speak of what happened.

﴿And it is He﴾ alone, may He be exalted, ﴿Who gives life and causes death﴾ that is, the One Who has control over life and death is Allah alone.

﴿and He controls the alternation of night and day﴾ so if He willed, He could make the day everlasting, then what god other than Allah could bring the night so that you could rest therein? And if He willed, He could make the night everlasting, then what god other than Allah could bring you light? Will you not then see?

﴿By His mercy He has made for you night and day, so that you may rest therein and seek His bounty, and so that you may give thanks.﴾ *(al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 73)*

Hence Allah says here: ﴿Will you not then understand?﴾ And realise that the fact that He alone bestowed upon you all these blessings, hearing, sight and intellect, He alone caused you to spread out on earth, He alone gives life and causes death, and He alone controls night and day, dictates that you should devote your worship to Him alone, with no partner or associate, and you should refrain

from worshipping those that cannot bring benefit or ward off harm, and have no control over anything at all; in fact they are incapable in all ways, so if you had any common sense, you would not do that.

﴿ بَلْ قَالُوا مِثْلَ مَا قَالَ الْأَوَّلُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ قَالُوا أَإِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظَامًا أَإِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ لَقَدْ وُعِدْنَا نَحْنُ وَآبَاؤُنَا هَٰذَا مِن قَبْلُ إِنْ هَٰذَا إِلَّا أَسَاطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٨١-٨٣)

23:81. On the contrary, they say the like of what the earlier peoples said.

23:82. They said: What! When we have died and have turned into dust and bones, will we really be raised up?

23:83. We and our forefathers have been promised this before; it is nothing but tales of the ancients.

That is, rather these disbelievers all follow the same path as their predecessors who disbelieved in the resurrection and thought it highly unlikely, and said: ﴿What! When we have died and have turned into dust and bones, will we really be raised up?﴾ That is, this is something that cannot be imagined and is incomprehensible – according to their claim.

﴿We and our forefathers have been promised this before﴾ that is, we are still being promised that the resurrection will happen, we and our fathers before us, but we have not seen it and it has not happened yet.

﴿it is nothing but tales of the ancients﴾ that is, it is nothing more than their stories and nightly entertainment that they used to talk about to pass the time, otherwise it has no reality. Thus they disbelieved when Allah had shown them signs greater than the resurrection, for example:

﴿Indeed, the creation of the heavens and the earth is a greater matter than the creation [or recreation] of humankind...﴾ *(Ghâfir 40: 57)*

﴿Producing arguments against Us and forgetting his own creation. He says: Who can give life to bones that have crumbled to dust?﴾ *(Yâ Seen 36: 78)*

﴿...You see the earth dry and barren, but when We send down rain upon it, it stirs and swells, and brings forth beautiful plants of every kind.﴾ *(al-Ḥajj 22: 5)*

﴿ قُل لِّمَنِ ٱلْأَرْضُ وَمَن فِيهَآ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ ۚ قُلْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ قُلْ مَن رَّبُّ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ ٱلسَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ ٱلْعَرْشِ ٱلْعَظِيمِ ﴿٨٦﴾ سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ ۚ قُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٨٧﴾ قُلْ مَنۢ بِيَدِهِۦ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ ۚ قُلْ فَأَنَّىٰ تُسْحَرُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٨٤-٨٩)

23:84. Say [O Muhammad]: To whom does the earth and all that is on it belong, if you know [the answer]?

23:85. They will say: To Allah. Say: Will you not then pay heed?

23:86. Say: Who is the Lord of the seven heavens and the Lord of the Mighty Throne?

23:87. They will say: [They belong] to Allah. Say: Will you not then fear Him?

23:88. Say: In Whose Hand is the dominion over all things, and He protects, while against Him there is no protection,[32] if you know [the answer]?

[32] Allah may offer protection to whomever He wills against harm intended by others, but no one can offer protection against any harm or punishment that Allah may decree against a person. (aṭ-Ṭabari)

23:89. They will say: In Allah's [Hand]. Say: Then how can you be so deluded?

That is, say to these people who disbelieve in the resurrection and regard others as equal to Allah, using as evidence against them that which they themselves affirm and acknowledge – of the oneness of Allah's Lordship and that Allah alone is the Lord – to prove what they denied of the oneness of Allah's divinity and that He alone is deserving of worship. Thus He uses as evidence that which they affirm and accept about the creation of these mighty created entities, in order to prove that which they deny of His ability to raise the dead, which is easier than the creation of these mighty entities.

﴿To whom does the earth and all that is on it belong﴾ that is, who is the Creator of the earth and everything on it of animals, plants, inanimate objects, seas, rivers and mountains? Who is the Sovereign thereof, who is in control of it? If you ask them about that, they will inevitably say that it belongs to Allah. So if they affirm that, then say to them:

﴿Will you not then pay heed?﴾ That is, will you not think of that of which Allah reminded you, which is known to you and is firmly based on your common sense, but may be absent from your mind when you are heedless on occasion?

In fact, if you think and ponder, you will realise that the Sovereign of all that is the only One Who deserves to be worshipped, and attributing divinity to one who is controlled (by Allah) is one of the most obvious of falsehoods.

Then He moves on to something that is greater than that, as He says:

﴿Say: Who is the Lord of the seven heavens﴾ and all that they contain of stars and planets

﴿and the Lord of the Mighty Throne﴾ which is the highest, vastest and greatest of all created things. Who is it that created it, controls it and manages it in various ways?

﴿They will say: [They belong] to Allah﴾ that is, they will affirm that Allah is the Lord of all that.

So say to them, when they affirm that: ﴿Will you not then fear Him?﴾ and avoid worshipping incapable created things, and fear the Almighty Lord Who is perfect in might and great in authority?

Here we see gentle words, as Allah says ﴿Will you not then pay heed?﴾ *(23: 85)* and ﴿Will you not then fear Him?﴾ *(23: 87)*. This is exhortation by using gentle words in order to appeal to the heart, as is quite clear.

Then He moves on to their affirmation of that which is more general than all of the above, as He says:

﴿Say: In Whose Hand is the dominion over all things﴾ that is, the sovereignty of all things, in both the upper and lower realms, all that we can see and all that we cannot see?

﴿and He protects﴾ His slaves from evil, warding off hardship from them and guarding them against that which would harm them

﴿while against Him there is no protection﴾ that is, no one can protect anyone against Allah or ward off harm that Allah wills. Indeed, no one can intercede with Him except by His leave.

﴿They will say: In Allah's [Hand]﴾ that is, they will affirm that Allah is the Sovereign of all things, the Protector against Whom there is no protection.

﴿Say﴾ to them, when they affirm that, so as to establish binding proof against them:

﴿Then how can you be so deluded?﴾ That is, have you lost your minds, as you worship that which you know has no sovereignty over you and has no share of dominion, and is incapable in all aspects, and you failed to devote your worship solely to the Almighty, omnipotent Sovereign Who controls all things? The minds that led you to this

conclusion can only be deluded, and they have undoubtedly been deceived by the Shaytân, who made that fair-seeming to them by turning the facts upside down; thus their minds became deluded.

﴿بَلْ أَتَيْنَٰهُم بِٱلْحَقِّ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَٰذِبُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾ مَا ٱتَّخَذَ ٱللَّهُ مِن وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُۥ مِنْ إِلَٰهٍ ۚ إِذًا لَّذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَٰهٍۭ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلَا بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ ۚ سُبْحَٰنَ ٱللَّهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿٩١﴾ عَٰلِمِ ٱلْغَيْبِ وَٱلشَّهَٰدَةِ فَتَعَٰلَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٩٠-٩٢)

23:90. In fact We have brought them the truth, but they are indeed liars.

23:91. Allah has never begotten a son, nor is there any god besides Him. [In that case,] each god would have taken full control of what he had created, and each would have rushed to gain supremacy over the others. Glory be to Allah and [exalted be He] far above what they ascribe [to Him].

23:92. Knower of the unseen and the seen; exalted be He far above the partners they ascribe to Him!

Here Allah says: Rather We have brought the truth to these deniers of truth, truth that is based on truthful news and fairness in commands and prohibitions. So what is the matter with them, that they do not acknowledge it, when it is most deserving of being followed? They have no other alternative to that except lies and wrongdoing, hence Allah says: ﴿but they are indeed liars. Allah has never begotten a son, nor is there any god besides Him﴾. We know that this is a lie on the basis of what Allah and His Messengers have told us, and on the basis of sound reasoning. Therefore Allah (ﷻ) pointed out, on the basis of rational evidence, that it is impossible for there to be two gods, as He says: ﴿[In that case]﴾, if there were other gods besides Him, ﴿each

god would have taken full control of what he had created﴾ that is, each of the two gods would have taken control of his own creation, independently of the other, and he would have tried to resist and stand up to the other gods.

﴿and each would have rushed to gain supremacy over the others﴾, then the one who gained the upper hand would have become the supreme god, otherwise if they continued to resist one another without any gaining the upper hand, then the universe could not have come into existence and it cannot be imagined that it would have existed with such precise order that astounds the mind. Think for example of the sun, moon, planets and stars; you will realise that since they were created they are moving according to one system and one order, and all of that is subjugated to the power of Allah and controlled and directed on the basis of wisdom to serve all people's interests; that is not limited to the interests of some and not others. You will never find any problems or contradictions or resistance in the least of their movements. So could it be imagined that all of that is the work of two gods or two lords? ﴿Glory be to Allah and [exalted be He] far above what they ascribe [to Him]﴾. The way it is run implies and indicates that its controller is One God, perfect in His names and attributes. All created things are in need of His care as their Lord and His divine help. As they cannot exist or continue to exist without His care as their Lord, and their well-being cannot be sound and cannot be maintained except by worshipping and obeying Him alone, Allah points out the greatness of His attributes by referring to one of them, namely His all-encompassing knowledge, as He says:

﴿Knower of the unseen﴾ that is, that which is hidden from our eyes and our knowledge of what must exist, what cannot exist and what may exist.

﴿and the seen﴾ which is what we can see of that.

﴿of the unseen and the seen; exalted be He far above the partners they﴾ namely those who have no knowledge except what Allah has told them ﴿ascribe to Him﴾.

﴿ قُل رَّبِّ إِمَّا تُرِيَنِّي مَا يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾ رَبِّ فَلَا تَجْعَلْنِي فِي الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ أَن نُّرِيَكَ مَا نَعِدُهُمْ لَقَادِرُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٩٣-٩٥)

23:93. Say: O my Lord, if You show me that which they are warned of,

23:94. My Lord, then do not include me among the people who are given to wrongdoing.

23:95. We are surely able to show you that of which We have warned them.

Allah established strong proof against the disbelievers, but they did not pay any attention to it and did not submit to it; therefore the punishment became inevitable and they were warned of its coming, and Allah instructed His Messenger (ﷺ) to say: ﴿O my Lord, if You show me that which they are warned of﴾ that is, whenever You show me their punishment and You cause me to be present at that time, ﴿My Lord, then do not include me among the people who are given to wrongdoing﴾ that is, protect me from these sins that they have been committing that incur Your punishment, and protect me also from the punishment that befalls them, because when the general punishment comes, it includes both the sinner and others.

Allah says, regarding the closeness of their punishment: ﴿We are surely able to show you that of which We have warned them﴾ but if We delay it, that is for some reason, otherwise We have the power to inflict it upon them at any time.

﴿ ادْفَعْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةَ ۚ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾ وَقُل رَّبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيَاطِينِ ﴿٩٧﴾ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَن يَحْضُرُونِ ﴿٩٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٩٦-٩٨)

23:96. Repel evil with that which is better; We know best what they allege.

23:97. And say: My Lord, I seek refuge with You from the goading of the devils.

23:98. And I seek refuge with You, my Lord, lest they come near me.

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This is part of the good manners and attitude that Allah enjoined upon His Messenger (ﷺ), as He said:

﴿Repel evil with that which is better﴾ that is, when your enemies mistreat you, in word or deed, do not respond with bad treatment, even though it is permissible to react to an offender with an equal offence; rather ward off mistreatment by being kind to them, for that is generosity on your part to the wrongdoer.

The good that is achieved thereby is that his mistreatment towards you will be reduced immediately and in the future, and it is more effective in bringing the wrongdoer back to his senses and is more likely to make him regret it and cause him to repent from what he has done.

It will also cause the one who forgives to attain the description of being a doer of good, by means of which he will suppress his enemy the Shaytân. Thus he will be entitled to reward from his Lord, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...but whoever forgives and reconciles, his reward is with Allah...﴾ *(ash-Shoorâ 42: 40)*

– and:

﴿...Repel evil with that which is good, whereupon he between whom and you there was ill feeling will become like a close friend. But none can attain that except those who are patient, and none can attain it except one who is blessed with a great share of good and righteousness.﴾ *(Fuṣṣilat 41: 34-35)*

﴿We know best what they allege﴾ that is, what they say of words that imply disbelief and rejection of the truth. Our knowledge encompasses all of that, but We have been forbearing and have given them respite, and We have shown patience towards them, but they are committing wrong against Us and are denying Us, so you – O Muhammad (ﷺ) – should bear with patience what they say, and respond to them with kindness. This is what is expected of the pious slave in response to humans who mistreat them.

As for devils who mistreat people, kindness is of no benefit in this case, for the Shaytân only calls his party to be the inhabitants of the blazing fire. So what is expected (of humans) in response to him is to follow the instructions given by Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ).

﴿And say: My Lord, I seek refuge with You﴾ that is, I seek protection in Your strength and power, and I acknowledge that I have no power or strength of my own,
﴿from the goading of the devils. And I seek refuge with You, my Lord, lest they come near me﴾ that is, I seek refuge with You from the evil that may befall me because of their attempts to harm me, and their goading and their touch; and I seek refuge with You from the evil that results from their coming near and from their whispers. This is seeking refuge with Allah from all evil and its origin, which includes seeking refuge from all the temptations of the Shaytân, and from his touch and whispers. If Allah grants His slave refuge from this evil and answers his prayer, he will be safe from all evil and will be enabled to do all good.

﴿ حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا جَآءَ أَحَدَهُمُ ٱلْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ٱرْجِعُونِ ﴿٩٩﴾ لَعَلِّيٓ أَعْمَلُ صَٰلِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلَّآ ۚ إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَآئِلُهَا ۖ وَمِن وَرَآئِهِم بَرْزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٩٩-١٠٠)

23:99. Until, when death comes to one of them, he says: My Lord, send me back,

23:100. so that I may do the righteous deeds that I have failed to do. Nay, it is but a word he says. And behind them is a barrier, until the day they are resurrected.

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Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us about what happens to one of the negligent wrongdoers when he is dying: in that situation, when he sees his fate and realises the abhorrent nature of his deeds, he is filled with regret, so he asks to go back to this world, not to enjoy its physical joys and indulge in its pleasures, rather he says: ﴿so that I may do the righteous deeds that I have failed to do﴾, for I neglected my duty to Allah.

﴿Nay﴾ there is no going back and no respite, for Allah has decreed that they will not go back

﴿it﴾ that is, his statement that he wishes to go back to this world

﴿is but a word he says﴾ that is, it is mere words that will not benefit the one who says them or bring him anything but regret and sorrow. Moreover, he is not sincere in that, for even if he were sent back, he would surely go back to that which was forbidden to him *(cf. 6: 28)*.

﴿And behind them is a barrier, until the day they are resurrected﴾. It is a barrier between two things, between this world and the hereafter. During that period between death and the resurrection, those who obeyed Allah will enjoy bliss and those who disobeyed Him will be punished, so make preparations for that and be ready for it.

﴿ فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي ٱلصُّورِ فَلَآ أَنسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلَا يَتَسَآءَلُونَ ﴿١٠١﴾ فَمَن ثَقُلَتْ
مَوَٰزِينُهُۥ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَٰزِينُهُۥ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ
خَسِرُوٓا۟ أَنفُسَهُمْ فِى جَهَنَّمَ خَٰلِدُونَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ تَلْفَحُ وُجُوهَهُمُ ٱلنَّارُ وَهُمْ فِيهَا كَٰلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾

أَلَمْ تَكُنْ ءَايَٰتِي تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فَكُنتُم بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا غَلَبَتْ عَلَيْنَا شِقْوَتُنَا
وَكُنَّا قَوْمًا ضَالِّينَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْهَا فَإِنْ عُدْنَا فَإِنَّا ظَٰلِمُونَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ قَالَ
اخْسَـُٔوا فِيهَا وَلَا تُكَلِّمُونِ ﴿١٠٨﴾ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِي يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا ءَامَنَّا فَاغْفِرْ
لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنتَ خَيْرُ الرَّٰحِمِينَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ فَاتَّخَذْتُمُوهُمْ سِخْرِيًّا حَتَّىٰٓ أَنسَوْكُمْ ذِكْرِي وَكُنتُم
مِّنْهُمْ تَضْحَكُونَ ﴿١١٠﴾ إِنِّي جَزَيْتُهُمُ الْيَوْمَ بِمَا صَبَرُوٓا أَنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْفَآئِزُونَ ﴿١١١﴾ قَٰلَ
كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ عَدَدَ سِنِينَ ﴿١١٢﴾ قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ فَسْـَٔلِ الْعَآدِّينَ
﴿١١٣﴾ قَٰلَ إِن لَّبِثْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا لَّوْ أَنَّكُمْ كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١١٤﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ١٠١-١١٤)

23:101. Then when the Trumpet is blown, there will be no ties of kinship between them on that day, nor will they ask after one another.

23:102. Then those whose good deeds weigh heavily in the balance will be the successful ones.

23:103. And those whose good deeds weigh lightly in the balance are the ones who will lose their own souls; in hell they will abide forever.

23:104. The fire will burn their faces, and they will grin therein, with shrivelled lips.

23:105. [It will be said to them:] Were not My revelations recited to you, but you used to reject them?

23:106. They will say: Our Lord, our misfortune[33] overwhelmed us, and we were people who went astray.

23:107. Our Lord, deliver us from this. Then if we return [to evil], we will indeed be wrongdoers.

23:108. Allah will say: Away with you! Be humiliated therein and do not speak to Me.

[33] What is meant is that they were controlled by their whims and desires, which led to them being overwhelmed by that misfortune. (al-Qurtubi)

23:109. Among My slaves there were some who said: Our Lord, we believe, so forgive us and have mercy upon us, for You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.

23:110. But you treated them with ridicule, so much so that [ridicule of them] made you forget all remembrance of Me, and you used to laugh at them.

23:111. I have rewarded them this day for their patience and steadfastness; verily it is they who have triumphed.

23:112. Allah will say: How many years did you remain on earth?

23:113. They will say: We remained there for a day, or part of a day. But ask those who keep count.

23:114. Allah will say: You only remained there for a short while, if you had but known.

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Here Allah tells us of the horrors of the Day of Resurrection, and what will happen on that day of disturbing and alarming events. When the Trumpet is blown for the resurrection, all people will be gathered for an appointed day, and there will befall them such terror that it will cause them to forget the ties of kinship which are the strongest ties between people, so it is more likely that other ties will be utterly forgotten. No one will ask anyone else about his situation, because each one will be preoccupied only with his own self, for he will not know whether he will be granted salvation after which there will be no misery, or he will be doomed after which there will be no happiness. Allah (ﷻ) tells us that on that day:

﴿...a man will flee from his own brother, and from his mother and his father, and from his wife and his children. Every one of them, on that day, will have too many concerns of his own to care about anyone else.﴾ *('Abasa 80: 34-37)*

On the Day of Resurrection, there will be some stages during which the hardship will become very intense and will have a great impact, such as when the Balance is set up to differentiate between people's

deeds, and their deeds will be examined on the basis of justice, to measure what is in a person's favour and what is against him. Even the smallest particles of good and evil will show up in that reckoning.

﴿Then those whose good deeds weigh heavily in the balance﴾ so that their good deeds outweigh their bad deeds, ﴿will be the successful ones﴾, for they will be saved from the fire and will deserve paradise, and they will be praised and commended.

﴿And those whose good deeds weigh lightly in the balance﴾ so that their bad deeds outweigh their good deeds, and they are overwhelmed by their sins,
﴿are the ones who will lose their own souls﴾; in comparison to this loss, any other loss is easy to bear. But this loss will be difficult to bear, for nothing can help them to withstand and recover from this loss, for it is eternal loss and everlasting doom. They will lose their own souls, that could have attained eternal happiness, but they missed out on this everlasting bliss in nearness to the Most Generous Lord. ﴿in hell they will abide forever﴾ and will never emerge from it. This warning is addressed, as we have mentioned above, to those whose bad deeds overwhelm their good deeds. This can only be applicable to the disbeliever. Based on that, he will not be taken to task in the sense of weighing between his good deeds and bad deeds, because the disbelievers have no good deeds to their credit. Rather their deeds will be counted and listed, then they will be shown to them and they will be made to admit them and will be disgraced thereby. As for the one who is basically a believer, but has done so many bad deeds that they outweigh his good deeds, even if he enters hell, he will not abide therein forever, as is indicated by the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Then Allah (ﷻ) mentions the bad fate of the disbelievers:
﴿The fire will burn their faces﴾ and overwhelm them on all sides, until it touches all parts of their bodies and the flames will burn their faces. ﴿and they will grin therein﴾ that is, they will grimace, and their lips will shrink from the intensity and gravity of the situation with which they are faced.

It will be said to them, by way of rebuke and blame: ﴿Were not My revelations recited to you﴾ and were you not called to believe in them, and were they not presented to you so that you might reflect? ﴿but you used to reject them﴾ wrongfully and stubbornly, even though they were clear revelations that pointed out truth and falsehood, and explained who was in the right and who was in the wrong.

At that point they will admit their wrongdoing, at the time when admitting it will be of no benefit.

﴿They will say: Our Lord, our misfortune[34] overwhelmed us﴾ that is, the misfortune that resulted from wrongdoing, turning away from the truth and turning to that which is harmful, forsaking that which is beneficial, overwhelmed us.
﴿and we were people who went astray﴾ in their deeds, even though they knew that they were doing wrong. In other words: we acted in this world like one who is lost, misguided and foolish. This is like another verse which tells us that they will say:

﴿...If only we had listened or understood, we would not be among the inhabitants of the raging fire.﴾ *(al-Mulk 67: 10)*

﴿Our Lord, deliver us from this. Then if we return [to evil], we will indeed be wrongdoers﴾ but they will be lying when they make this promise, for they are as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...And even if they were sent back, they would surely go back to that which was forbidden to them...﴾ *(al-An'ām 6: 28)*

Allah (ﷻ) has left them no argument, and has left no excuse for them; He causes them to live in this world long enough to be reminded and understand the reminder, and for the evildoer to be deterred. So Allah will say, in response to their request:

﴿Be humiliated therein and do not speak to Me﴾. These words – we ask Him to keep us safe and sound – are the worst rebuke that the

[34] What is meant is that they were controlled by their whims and desires, which led to them being overwhelmed by that misfortune. (al-Qurtubi)

evildoers may hear in terms of shame, censure, humiliation and loss, for it will cause them to despair of all good and will bring tidings of all ills. These words and wrath from the Most Merciful Lord will be harder for them to bear and more effective in causing them pain than the torments of hell.

Then Allah mentions that which brought the punishment upon them and deprived them of mercy:
﴿Among My slaves there were some who said: Our Lord, we believe, so forgive us and have mercy upon us, for You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy﴾, so they combined faith which leads to righteous deeds, calling upon their Lord to forgive them and bestow mercy upon them, seeking to draw close to Him by calling upon Him as their Lord, expressing gratitude to Him for blessing them with faith, and speaking of the vastness of His mercy and kindness. This is indicative of their submission, humility and humbleness before their Lord, and their fear of His punishment and their hope for His mercy.

These are the leaders of humankind and the best of them, ﴿But you﴾, O base disbelievers who were lacking in reason and wisdom, ﴿treated them with ridicule﴾ and mocked them and looked down on them to such an extent that you were distracted by that foolish behaviour.

﴿so much so that [ridicule of them] made you forget all remembrance of Me, and you used to laugh at them﴾. This is what made them forget the reminder; they were distracted by the ridicule of them. Their forgetting of the reminder encouraged them to ridicule them, so that the one exacerbated the other. Can there be anything worse than this audacity?

﴿I have rewarded them this day for their patience and steadfastness﴾ in obeying Me and in putting up with your annoyances, until they came to Me.
﴿verily it is they who have triumphed﴾ by attaining eternal bliss and salvation from hell. This is like the verse in which Allah says:

﴿But on that day those who believed will laugh at the disbelievers.﴾ *(al-Mutaffifeen 83: 34)*

﴿Allah will say﴾ to the disbelievers, by way of blame, for they were foolish because, within this short time, they committed every evil that led to them incurring His wrath and punishment, and they did not do what the believers did of good deeds that led to them attaining eternal happiness and the pleasure of their Lord: ﴿How many years did you remain on earth? They will say: We remained there for a day, or part of a day﴾. Their saying this is based on the fact that they will regard their stay on earth as having been very short. This is what it implies, but their words will not tell the exact length of their stay, or specify it. Hence they will say: ﴿But ask those who keep count﴾.

In their case, they will be very distracted with something else, namely the tremendous punishment, from knowing the exact number of years. So Allah will say to them: ﴿You only remained there for a short while﴾ whether you know the number or not, ﴿if you had but known﴾.

﴿أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَٰكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١١٥﴾ فَتَعَٰلَى ٱللَّهُ ٱلْمَلِكُ ٱلْحَقُّ ۖ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ ٱلْعَرْشِ ٱلْكَرِيمِ ﴿١١٦﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ١١٥-١١٦)

23:115. Did you think that We created you without purpose, and that you would not be brought back to Us?

23:116. So exalted be Allah, the True Sovereign; there is no god but He, Lord of the magnificent Throne.

﴿Did you think﴾, O people, ﴿that We created you without purpose﴾ that is, in vain, so that you might eat, drink, have fun, and enjoy the pleasures of this world, and We would leave you alone without any commands or prohibitions, reward or punishment? Hence He says:

﴿and that you would not be brought back to Us﴾ – and did this never cross your minds?

﴿So exalted be Allah, the True Sovereign; there is no god but He, Lord of the magnificent Throne﴾ for He is truly the Sovereign of all creation and He is truthful in His promise and warning, and He is the One Who is worthy of worship, because of the perfect attributes He possesses

﴿Lord of the magnificent Throne﴾ so it is more appropriate that He should be the Lord of everything beneath it, and that He would not create you in vain.

﴿ وَمَن يَدْعُ مَعَ ٱللَّهِ إِلَٰهًا ءَاخَرَ لَا بُرْهَٰنَ لَهُۥ بِهِۦ فَإِنَّمَا حِسَابُهُۥ عِندَ رَبِّهِۦٓ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ لَا يُفْلِحُ ٱلْكَٰفِرُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَقُل رَّبِّ ٱغْفِرْ وَٱرْحَمْ وَأَنتَ خَيْرُ ٱلرَّٰحِمِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ١١٧-١١٨)

23:117. Whoever calls upon any other god besides Allah, for which he has no proof, his reckoning will only be with his Lord. Verily the disbelievers will never prosper.

23:118. So say: My Lord, forgive and have mercy, for You are the best of those who show mercy.

That is, whoever calls upon other gods besides Allah, without having any proof or evidence to support what he believes – for everyone who calls upon anything other than Allah has no proof for that; in fact the evidence all points to the falseness of his way, but he turns away from that proof wrongfully and stubbornly – will come to his Lord, and He will requite him for his deeds, and he will not attain anything of success, because he is a disbeliever, and ﴿Verily

the disbelievers will never prosper﴾, because their disbelief is an obstacle to success.

﴿So say﴾, calling upon your Lord, with sincere devotion to Him alone,
﴿My Lord, forgive﴾ us so that we may be safe from harm, and have mercy on us, so that by Your mercy we may attain all that is good.
﴿for You are the best of those who show mercy﴾. Whoever shows mercy to people, Allah is better for them than him, for He is more merciful towards His slave than a mother towards her child, and He is more merciful towards him than he is to himself.

This is the end of the commentary on Soorat al-Mu'minoon. All praise and thanks are for Allah, and may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his family, and his Companions abundantly until the Day of Judgement.

# 24.
# Soorat an-Noor

(Madani)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of Allah,*
*the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*

﴿سُورَةٌ أَنزَلْنَاهَا وَفَرَضْنَاهَا وَأَنزَلْنَا فِيهَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١﴾﴾ (سورة النور: ١)

24:1. [This is] a soorah that We have sent down and ordained; in it We have sent down clear signs so that you may pay heed.

That is, this is ﴿a soorah﴾ of great importance
﴿that We have sent down﴾ as a mercy from Us to Our slaves, and We have protected it from every devil
﴿and ordained﴾ that is, We have ordained in it what We ordained of limits, testimony and so on.
﴿in it We have sent down clear signs﴾ that is, important rulings, commands, rebukes and great wisdom
﴿so that you may pay heed﴾ when We explain to you and teach you that which you did not know.

Then Allah begins to explain the rulings referred to:

﴿ ٱلزَّانِيَةُ وَٱلزَّانِي فَٱجْلِدُوا۟ كُلَّ وَٰحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِاْئَةَ جَلْدَةٍ ۖ وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُم بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِى دِينِ ٱللَّهِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلْيَوْمِ ٱلْءَاخِرِ ۖ وَلْيَشْهَدْ عَذَابَهُمَا طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢﴾ ﴾ (سورة النور: ٢)

24:2. As for the woman and the man who commit fornication, flog each of them with a hundred lashes. Do not let pity for them deter you from obedience to Allah [in carrying out the punishment He has prescribed], if you believe in Allah and the Last Day; and let a group of the believers witness their punishment.

This ruling applies to men and women who are virgins and commit fornication; they are each to be flogged with a hundred lashes. As for the fornicators who were previously married,[35] the well-known, ṣaḥeeḥ Sunnah indicates that the *ḥadd* punishment in this case is stoning. Allah (ﷻ) has forbidden us to let pity for them deter us from obedience to Him and prevent us from carrying out the ḥadd punishment on them, whether that is natural pity or is because the person is a relative or friend and so on. Faith should lead one not to have that pity which could prevent one from carrying out the command of Allah. True mercy and compassion is in carrying out the ḥadd punishment on him that has been prescribed by Allah. Even though one may feel sorry for him because of what is decreed for him, in another way one should not feel sorry for him.

Allah (ﷻ) also commands us that the punishment of the fornicators should be witnessed by a group of the believers, so that it will become widely known and thus disgrace the fornicators and deter others from doing this deed. They should watch the ḥadd punishment as it is carried out, because witnessing the rulings actually being carried

[35] It refers to anyone who has ever been married and consummated the marriage, whether the marriage still stands or has ended through divorce or death of the spouse. (Translator)

out deepens one's knowledge of them and helps one to understand them better; that is also more likely to lead to accuracy in counting the number of lashes, to make sure that the number is not more or less than it should be. And Allah knows best.

﴿ٱلزَّانِي لَا يَنكِحُ إِلَّا زَانِيَةً أَوْ مُشْرِكَةً وَٱلزَّانِيَةُ لَا يَنكِحُهَآ إِلَّا زَانٍ أَوْ مُشْرِكٌ ۚ وَحُرِّمَ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣﴾﴾ (سورة النور: ٣)

24:3. A man who fornicates may only marry a woman who fornicates or who is a polytheist, and a woman who fornicates may only marry a man who fornicates or who is a polytheist. Such marriages are forbidden to the believers.

This highlights the abhorrent nature of fornication, for it tarnishes the honour of the one who does it and that of the one with whom he does it, in a manner that is not shared by other sins. So Allah tells us that no woman would marry a fornicator except one who commits the same deed, so that they will be a match for one another, or a female polytheist who does not believe in the resurrection or requital, and does not adhere to the commands of Allah.

By the same token, no man would marry a woman who commits fornication except a fornicator or a polytheist.

﴿Such marriages are forbidden to the believers﴾ that is, Allah has prohibited them to marry fornicators. What this verse means is that if a person – man or woman – characteristically commits fornication, and does not repent from it, the one who wants to marry such a person, despite the fact that Allah has forbidden that, must either not be adhering to the rulings of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), and such a person can only be a polytheist; or he or she is adhering to the rulings of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), but goes ahead with this

marriage despite being aware of the other person's fornication. In that case, the marriage is fornication and the individual is a fornicator and is immoral, for if he truly believed in Allah, he would not do that. This clearly indicates that it is prohibited to marry a woman who fornicates unless she repents, and it is prohibited to marry a man who fornicates unless he repents. That is because the connection between a husband and wife is the strongest form of companionship and bonds between people.

Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿[Allah will command:] Gather together those who did wrong, and others of their ilk …﴾ *(as-Sâffât 37: 22)*

– that is, their spouses. Allah has forbidden that because of what it leads to of great evil, for it reflects a lack of protective jealousy and leads to the attribution to the husband of children who are not his; moreover, the fornicator or adulterer will be unable to keep his wife chaste because he is distracted by other women. Any one of these reasons on its own is sufficient to make it prohibited. This indicates that the fornicator or adulterer is not a believer, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The fornicator is not a believer at the time when he is committing fornication.» (Bukhari)

Even if he is not a polytheist, he cannot be given the praiseworthy description of being a believer in general terms.

﴿ وَٱلَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ ٱلْمُحْصَنَٰتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا۟ بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَآءَ فَٱجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَٰنِينَ جَلْدَةً وَلَا تَقْبَلُوا۟ لَهُمْ شَهَٰدَةً أَبَدًا ۚ وَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْفَٰسِقُونَ ﴿٤﴾ إِلَّا ٱلَّذِينَ تَابُوا۟ مِنۢ بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا۟ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة النور: ٤-٥)

24:4. As for those who make accusations against chaste women but do not produce four witnesses, flog them with eighty lashes and never afterwards accept their testimony, for it is they who are the wicked transgressors,

24:5. Except those who repent after that and mend their ways, for verily Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

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Having highlighted the seriousness of the crime of fornication and adultery, by decreeing that the one who commits this crime should be flogged, or stoned if he or she was previously married, and stated that it is not permissible to marry such a person or mix with him or her in such a way that one cannot be safe from his or her evil, Allah (ﷻ) here highlights the seriousness of violating a person's honour by accusing him or her of fornication or adultery, as He says:

﴿As for those who make accusations against chaste women﴾ that is, women who are free (not slaves) and chaste. This also applies to men, for there is no differentiation between the genders in this regard. What is meant by making accusations is accusations of fornication or adultery, based on the context.

﴿but do not produce four witnesses﴾ that is, men of good character who will testify to that in clear terms.

﴿flog them with eighty lashes﴾ with a whip of moderate thickness, so as to cause pain but not to the point of causing harm, because the aim is discipline, not injury. This verse affirms the ḥadd punishment for slander, but that is on condition that the person who is accused is, as Allah (ﷻ) says, a chaste believer. As for slandering or accusing one who is not chaste, that deserves a disciplinary punishment (*ta'zeer*).

﴿and never afterwards accept their testimony﴾ that is, there is a further punishment in this case, which is that the testimony of the one who made that accusation is not to be accepted, even if he has been punished, unless he repents, as we shall see below.

﴿for it is they who are the wicked transgressors﴾ that is, they have gone beyond the bounds of obedience to Allah, and their evil

has increased, because of this violation of that which Allah has made sacred and this violation of the honour of his brother, because he gave people the opportunity to repeat what he said, thus undermining the bond of brotherhood that Allah has created among the believers, and he loved to see indecency spread among the believers. This indicates that slander or making false accusations is a major sin.

﴿Except those who repent after that and mend their ways, for verily Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾. Repentance, in this situation, means that the one who made that accusation admits that he was lying. It is obligatory for him to state that he was lying, even if he was certain that it had happened, because he failed to produce four witnesses. If the slanderer repents and mends his ways, then his bad deeds are turned into good deeds, and he is no longer to be described as a wicked transgressor. Similarly, his testimony may be accepted in the future, according to the correct scholarly view, for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful; He forgives all sins for the one who repents and turns back to Him.

The slanderer is only to be flogged for not producing four witnesses if he is not the husband of the woman he accused. If he is the husband, then what is to be done (a procedure called *li'ân*) is described in the following passage:

﴿ وَٱلَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ أَزْوَٰجَهُمْ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُمْ شُهَدَآءُ إِلَّآ أَنفُسُهُمْ فَشَهَٰدَةُ أَحَدِهِمْ أَرْبَعُ شَهَٰدَٰتٍۭ بِٱللَّهِ ۙ
إِنَّهُۥ لَمِنَ ٱلصَّٰدِقِينَ ۝٦ وَٱلْخَٰمِسَةُ أَنَّ لَعْنَتَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ إِن كَانَ مِنَ ٱلْكَٰذِبِينَ ۝٧
وَيَدْرَؤُا۟ عَنْهَا ٱلْعَذَابَ أَن تَشْهَدَ أَرْبَعَ شَهَٰدَٰتٍۭ بِٱللَّهِ ۙ إِنَّهُۥ لَمِنَ ٱلْكَٰذِبِينَ ۝٨ وَٱلْخَٰمِسَةَ أَنَّ
غَضَبَ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْهَآ إِن كَانَ مِنَ ٱلصَّٰدِقِينَ ۝٩ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُۥ وَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ
حَكِيمٌ ۝١٠ ﴾ (سورة النور: ٦-١٠)

24:6. As for those who make accusations against their wives but have no witnesses except themselves, such a person should testify four times by Allah that he is telling the truth,

24:7. And the fifth [oath] should be invoking the curse of Allah upon himself if he is telling a lie.

24:8. But it will avert the punishment from her if she testifies four times by Allah that he is telling a lie,

24:9. And the fifth [oath] should be invoking the wrath of Allah upon herself if he is telling the truth.

24:10. Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you, and that He is Accepting of repentance, Most Wise, [He would have hastened to punish you].

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The reason why the husband's testimony against his wife does not incur the hadd punishment is because usually the husband does not accuse his wife, when tarnishing her reputation would also tarnish his, unless he is telling the truth, and because he has the right to do that, for fear of a child being attributed to him who is not his child, as well as other reasons that are absent in regular cases of a person making accusations against a stranger. Hence Allah says:

﴿As for those who make accusations against their wives﴾ that is, wives who are free women and not slaves
﴿but have no witnesses﴾ to support the accusation ﴿except themselves﴾, as they do not have any witnesses to testify to what they are accusing their wives of,
﴿such a person should testify four times by Allah that he is telling the truth﴾. It is called testimony, because it takes the place of witnesses, when the husband says: I call upon Allah to bear witness that I am telling the truth with regard to what I have accused her of.

﴿And the fifth [oath] should be invoking the curse of Allah upon himself if he is telling a lie﴾ that is, the fifth time he should add to his testimony something to confirm his previous words, by invoking upon

himself the divine curse if he is lying. When he has completed this procedure of li'ân, the ḥadd punishment for making a false accusation is waived from him.

The apparent meaning of these verses suggests that if he mentions the alleged adulterer by name, he is not to be subjected to flogging because it is connected to the case of his wife. But is the ḥadd punishment to be carried out against her on the basis of the husband's li'ân if she refuses to swear an similar oath, or is she to be imprisoned? There are two scholarly views; the view that is supported by the evidence is that she is to be subjected to the ḥadd punishment, based on the fact that Allah says: ﴿But it will avert the punishment from her if she testifies four times by Allah that he is telling a lie...﴾. Were it not that the ḥadd punishment becomes due because of his li'ân, then her li'ân would not ward it off. This also indicates that the punishment may be averted from her if she responds to her husband's testimony with similar testimony of her own.

﴿if she testifies four times by Allah that he is telling a lie﴾ and the fifth time, to confirm that, she adds an oath invoking divine wrath upon herself if she is lying. Once the li'ân procedure between them has been completed, they become permanently separated, and the child concerning whom the dispute arose is not to be attributed to the man. The apparent meaning of this passage indicates that this wording is required, from both the man and the woman, in the event of li'ân, and it must be done in this order, and nothing of that should be omitted or altered. Li'ân is only for the husband, if he is accusing his wife; the converse does not apply. Once li'ân has been done, it does not matter if the child resembles the husband or not, just as, if a child resembles the alleged adulterer, he is still to be attributed to the husband (if no li'ân has taken place). Rather resemblance is to be taken into account when there is no other factor to indicate either way.

﴿Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you, and that He is Accepting of repentance, Most Wise﴾ – the completion

of this sentence is omitted, but is indicated by the context: He would have caused to befall the partner who was lying that which he or she had invoked upon himself or herself. But by His grace and mercy, this ruling was decreed especially for spouses, because there was a need for it, but He has highlighted to you the abhorrent nature of fornication and adultery, and the abhorrent nature of false accusations and He has prescribed repentance from these major sins and others.

﴿إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ جَآءُو بِٱلْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنكُمْ ۚ لَا تَحْسَبُوهُ شَرًّا لَّكُم ۖ بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۚ لِكُلِّ ٱمْرِئٍ
مِّنْهُم مَّا ٱكْتَسَبَ مِنَ ٱلْإِثْمِ ۚ وَٱلَّذِى تَوَلَّىٰ كِبْرَهُۥ مِنْهُمْ لَهُۥ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾ لَّوْلَآ إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ
ظَنَّ ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتُ بِأَنفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا وَقَالُوا۟ هَٰذَآ إِفْكٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٢﴾ لَّوْلَا جَآءُو عَلَيْهِ
بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَآءَ ۚ فَإِذْ لَمْ يَأْتُوا۟ بِٱلشُّهَدَآءِ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ عِندَ ٱللَّهِ هُمُ ٱلْكَٰذِبُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَلَوْلَا
فَضْلُ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُۥ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْءَاخِرَةِ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِى مَآ أَفَضْتُمْ فِيهِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٤﴾
إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُۥ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَتَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَٰهِكُم مَّا لَيْسَ لَكُم بِهِۦ عِلْمٌ وَتَحْسَبُونَهُۥ هَيِّنًا وَهُوَ عِندَ
ٱللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٥﴾ وَلَوْلَآ إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُم مَّا يَكُونُ لَنَآ أَن نَّتَكَلَّمَ بِهَٰذَا سُبْحَٰنَكَ هَٰذَا
بُهْتَٰنٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾ يَعِظُكُمُ ٱللَّهُ أَن تَعُودُوا۟ لِمِثْلِهِۦٓ أَبَدًا إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَيُبَيِّنُ
ٱللَّهُ لَكُمُ ٱلْءَايَٰتِ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَن تَشِيعَ ٱلْفَٰحِشَةُ
فِى ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِى ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْءَاخِرَةِ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ
﴿١٩﴾ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُۥ وَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ رَءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢٠﴾ ۞ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا
ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لَا تَتَّبِعُوا۟ خُطُوَٰتِ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ ۚ وَمَن يَتَّبِعْ خُطُوَٰتِ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنِ فَإِنَّهُۥ يَأْمُرُ بِٱلْفَحْشَآءِ
وَٱلْمُنكَرِ ۚ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ ٱللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُۥ مَا زَكَىٰ مِنكُم مِّنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا وَلَٰكِنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُزَكِّى مَن
يَشَآءُ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢١﴾ وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُو۟لُوا۟ ٱلْفَضْلِ مِنكُمْ وَٱلسَّعَةِ أَن يُؤْتُوٓا۟ أُو۟لِى ٱلْقُرْبَىٰ

وَٱلْمَسَٰكِينَ وَٱلْمُهَٰجِرِينَ فِى سَبِيلِ ٱللَّهِ ۖ وَلْيَعْفُوا۟ وَلْيَصْفَحُوٓا۟ ۗ أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَن يَغْفِرَ ٱللَّهُ
لَكُمْ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ ٱلْمُحْصَنَٰتِ ٱلْغَٰفِلَٰتِ ٱلْمُؤْمِنَٰتِ لُعِنُوا۟ فِى
ٱلدُّنْيَا وَٱلْـَٔاخِرَةِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُم
بِمَا كَانُوا۟ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ يُوَفِّيهِمُ ٱللَّهُ دِينَهُمُ ٱلْحَقَّ وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ هُوَ ٱلْحَقُّ ٱلْمُبِينُ
﴿٢٥﴾ ٱلْخَبِيثَٰتُ لِلْخَبِيثِينَ وَٱلْخَبِيثُونَ لِلْخَبِيثَٰتِ ۖ وَٱلطَّيِّبَٰتُ لِلطَّيِّبِينَ وَٱلطَّيِّبُونَ
لِلطَّيِّبَٰتِ ۚ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ مُبَرَّءُونَ مِمَّا يَقُولُونَ ۖ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ (سورة النور: ١١-٢٦)

24:11. Verily those who propagated the slander were a group among you. Do not think that it was bad for you; rather it is good for you. Each man among them bears [responsibility for] his share in the sin, and as for the one among them who played the major role, for him there will be a grievous punishment.

24:12. Why, when you heard it, did the believing men and women not think the best of one another and say: This is obviously a lie?

24:13. Why did they not bring four witnesses to prove it? As they did not bring the witnesses, they are the liars before Allah.

24:14. Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you in this world and the hereafter, a grievous penalty would have overtaken you, because of the talk you indulged in,

24:15. When you were propagating it with your tongues and saying with your mouths that of which you had no knowledge. You regarded [your talking about it] as a trivial matter, whereas with Allah it was a grievous offence.

24:16. Why, when you heard it, did you not say: It is not right for us to speak of this. Glory be to You [O Allah]![36] This is a monstrous slander!?

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[36] This is an expression of amazement, shock or surprise, as one would usually say, when seeing or hearing something that is amazing, strange or shocking, "*subḥān Allāh* (glory be to Allah)!"

24:17. Allah admonishes you never to repeat such conduct, if you are [truly] believers.

24:18. And Allah explains the revelations to you, for Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.

24:19. Verily those who like to see indecency spread among the believers will have a painful punishment in this world and the hereafter; Allah knows, and you do not know.

24:20. Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you, and that He is Most Compassionate, Most Merciful, [He would have hastened to punish you].

24:21. O you who believe, do not follow the footsteps of the Shaytân; whoever follows the footsteps of the Shaytân, he only enjoins indecency and wickedness. Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you, not one of you would ever have been purified. But Allah purifies whomever He wills, and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

24:22. Let not those among you who are people of virtue and wealth swear to cease giving [aid] to their kinsfolk, the needy and those who have migrated in Allah's cause. Rather let them pardon and overlook. Do you not like for Allah to forgive you? For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

24:23. Verily those who make accusations against chaste women who are innocent at heart and believers are cursed in this world and the hereafter, and theirs will be a grievous punishment

24:24. On the day when their own tongues, hands and feet will testify against them regarding what they used to do.

24:25. On that day, Allah will give them in full their due recompense and they will know that Allah is indeed the Truth Who makes manifest [the true nature of all things].

24:26. Evil men are for evil women and evil women are for evil men; good words describe good people, and good people are described

by good words.[37] Those [good people] are innocent of all that [the slanderers] say; they will have forgiveness and a generous provision.

In the previous verses Allah mentioned the seriousness of false accusations of adultery in general terms; it is as if that was an introduction to this story, which happened to the noblest of women, the Mother of the Believers 'Â'ishah (*raḍiya Allâhu 'anhâ* – may Allah be pleased with her). These verses were revealed concerning the well-known story of the slander (*al-ifk*) which is proven in the books of *Ṣaḥeeḥ*, the *Sunans* and the *Musnads* (books of Hadith).

In brief, the Prophet (ﷺ) went out on one of his military campaigns, and took his wife, 'Â'ishah aṣ-Ṣiddeeqah bint (Abi Bakr) aṣ-Ṣiddeeq (*raḍiya Allâhu 'anhuma* – may Allah be pleased with both of them) with him. Her necklace broke, so she stayed behind to look for it, and they moved on with her camel and howdah, not realising that she was not there. The army moved on, and she came back to the place where they had been camping; she knew that once they realised that she was missing, they would come back for her, but they continued on their way. In the meantime, Ṣafwân ibn al-Mu'aṭṭal as-Sulami (رضي الله عنه), who was one of the best of the Ṣaḥâbah, had lagged behind the army, and had stopped at the end of the night to sleep. He now came along and he saw 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) and recognised her, so he made his camel kneel down and she mounted it, without him speaking to her or her speaking to him. Then he came, leading the camel, after the army had halted at noon time. When some of the hypocrites who were accompanying

[37] This translation of the meanings is in accordance with the view of the majority of commentators. However, this verse may also mean: "Evil men are for evil women and evil women are for evil men; good women are for good men and good men are for good women", which indicates that 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها), as she was married to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), could not have been anything but good.

the Prophet (ﷺ) on that journey saw Ṣafwân arriving with her in that state, they began to spread rumours, and the rumours spread far and wide, and people's tongues wagged until even some believers were deceived and began to narrate what they had heard, and the revelations stopped coming to the Messenger (ﷺ) for a long time.

News of what was happening reached 'Â'ishah sometime after that, and she was very upset by it. Then Allah (ﷻ) sent down revelation confirming her innocence in these verses, in which He admonished the believers, highlighted how serious the matter was, and gave some important instructions.

﴿Verily those who propagated the slander﴾ that is, the abhorrent lie, which was an accusation against the Mother of the Believers ﴿were a group among you﴾ that is, they were a group who belonged to you, O believers, some of whom were sincere believers, but they were deceived by the rumours of the hypocrites, and some of them were themselves hypocrites.

﴿Do not think that it was bad for you; rather it is good for you﴾ because of the outcome of the matter, namely the declaration of the innocence and chastity of the Mother of the Believers, and the mention of her in the highest terms; that praise went even further, to include all of the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ); and because of what this incident led to of the revelation of some verses that people needed, which will remain applicable until the Day of Resurrection. All of this was great goodness that, were it not for the rumours spread by those who initiated the slander, would not have been achieved. If Allah wills something, He creates a cause for it. Therefore these words are addressed in general terms to all the believers, as Allah told them that impugning one another is like impugning their own selves. Hence the verse implies that the believers, in their mutual love, compassion, mercy and unity are like a single body, and the believers as a whole are like a structure, parts of which support other parts. Just as any individual would hate his honour to be impugned, he should hate

for anyone to impugn the honour of his fellow believer, who is like himself. Unless a person reaches this level, he is lacking in faith and in sincerity towards his brother.

﴿Each man among them bears [responsibility for] his share in the sin﴾ this is a warning to those who produced this slander that they will be punished for what they said of such things. And in fact the Prophet (ﷺ) carried out the ḥadd punishment on some of them.
﴿and as for the one among them who played the major role﴾ namely the evil hypocrite 'Abdullâh ibn Ubayy ibn Salool (may Allah curse him)
﴿for him there will be a grievous punishment﴾ namely eternity in the lowest level of hell.

Then Allah advises His slaves as to what they should do if they hear such talk:
﴿Why, when you heard it, did the believing men and women not think the best of one another﴾ that is, the believers should think well of one another, which means assuming that they are innocent of what they are accused of, because what they have of certain faith should ward off any false accusations made against them.
﴿and say﴾ because of that positive thinking of one another
﴿This is obviously a lie﴾ that is, a fabrication, one of the most abhorrent and most obviously mendacious of things. This is the way of thinking that is required when the believer hears such things about his fellow believer; he should state his innocence verbally and tell the one who says that: You are lying.

﴿Why did they not bring four witnesses to prove it?﴾ That is, why did those who made this accusation not bring four witnesses of good character to testify to it?
﴿As they did not bring the witnesses, they are the liars before Allah﴾. Even if they are certain of that, according to the rulings of Allah they are liars, because Allah has forbidden them to speak of that unless they can produce four witnesses. Hence Allah says: ﴿As they did

not bring the witnesses, they are the liars before Allah﴾. All of this serves to emphasise the sanctity of the Muslim's honour, as it is not permissible to make an accusation against him without having the required number of witnesses to confirm it.

﴿Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you in this world and the hereafter﴾, as His kindness encompasses you in both realms, in both your religious and worldly affairs,
﴿a grievous penalty would have overtaken you, because of the talk you indulged in﴾ with regard to the slander, because you deserve that as a result of what you said. But by Allah's grace and mercy towards you, He prescribed repentance for you and made the punishment a means of purification.

﴿When you were propagating it with your tongues﴾ that is, spreading it and passing it to one another, whispering the gossip when it was a false story,
﴿and saying with your mouths that of which you had no knowledge﴾. There are two forbidden matters here: speaking on the basis of falsehood and speaking without knowledge
﴿You regarded [your talking about it] as a trivial matter﴾, therefore some of the believers did that, who later repented and purified themselves
﴿whereas with Allah it was a grievous offence﴾. This is an emphatic rebuke against indulging in some sins because one thinks that they are trivial. But what a person thinks will not avail him anything and will not reduce the punishment for that sin; rather it makes him get carried away in sin and makes it easy for him to do it again.

﴿Why, when you heard it﴾ that is, why – O believers – when you heard what the people of the slander said
﴿did you not say﴾, denouncing it and regarding it as a serious matter,
﴿It is not right for us to speak of this﴾ that is, we should not speak of this, and it is not appropriate for us to speak of this obvious lie, because the believer's faith prevents him from committing abhorrent deeds

﴿This is a monstrous slander﴾ that is, a monstrous lie.

﴿Allah admonishes you never to repeat such conduct﴾ that is, accusing the believers of immorality; Allah admonishes you and advises you not to repeat that, and what a beautiful admonition and advice from our Lord. Therefore we should accept it and submit to it, and give thanks to Him for what He has explained to us.

﴿...How excellent is the exhortation Allah gives you!...﴾ *(an-Nisâ' 4: 58)*

﴿if you are [truly] believers﴾. This indicates that sincere faith prevents a person from committing prohibited actions.

﴿And Allah explains the revelations to you﴾ that contain the explanation of rulings, admonition, rebukes, encouragement and warnings. He explains them to you clearly,
﴿for Allah is All-Knowing﴾ that is, His knowledge is perfect and His wisdom is all-encompassing, and by His knowledge and wisdom He has taught you what He taught you, and that is in your best interests at all times.

﴿Verily those who like to see indecency﴾ that is, abhorrent and grievous things ﴿spread among the believers will have a painful punishment in this world and the hereafter﴾ that is, a punishment that will hurt them emotionally and physically, because of their insincerity towards their Muslim brothers and their loving bad things for them, and their audacity in impugning their honour. If this warning is for merely liking indecency to be spread, and finding it exciting, then how about that which is worse than that, of showing that and transmitting it? It is the same whether the immoral act is actually committed or not.

All of this is by the mercy of Allah towards His believing slaves, and in order to protect their honour, as He protected their lives and wealth. Allah enjoined them to have a sincere relationship with one another, and instructed them that one of them should love for his brother what he loves for himself, and hate for his brother what he hates for himself.

﴿Allah knows, and you do not know﴾ therefore He has taught you and explained to you that of which you are not aware.

﴿Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you﴾ that encompass you on all sides,
﴿and that He is Most Compassionate, Most Merciful﴾, He would not have explained these rulings to you and would not have exhorted you, and He would not have given respite to those who go against His commands. But by His grace and mercy, which are His constant attributes, this matter resulted in some goodness for you in this world and in the hereafter, that is more than you can count or enumerate.

Having forbidden this sin in particular, Allah then forbids sins in general terms, as He says:
﴿O you who believe, do not follow the footsteps of the Shaytân﴾ that is, his ways and whispers. The footsteps of the Shaytân include all the sins having to do with the heart (beliefs and intentions), tongue (words) and body (physical actions).

By His wisdom, Allah (ﷻ) has explained the ruling, which is the prohibition on following the footsteps of the Shaytân, and the wisdom behind the ruling, by highlighting the evil of the prohibited deed, which dictates that one should stay away from it:
﴿whoever follows the footsteps of the Shaytân, he﴾ namely the Shaytân ﴿only enjoins indecency﴾ that is, major sins that are regarded by common sense and religious teachings as indecent, even though there may be some inclination towards them
﴿and wickedness﴾ – this refers to something that is denounced on the basis of reason and no one would approve of it. The sins that are described as being the footsteps of the Shaytân do not go beyond that. Allah has forbidden them to His slaves as a favour from Him, so they should give thanks to Him and remember Him, because this is protection for them against being contaminated with abhorrent and evil deeds.

By His kindness towards them, He has forbidden these sins to them, as He has forbidden them to consume lethal poison and the like.

﴿Were it not for the grace and mercy of Allah towards you, not one of you would ever have been purified﴾ that is, they would never have been purified from following the footsteps of the Shaytân, because the Shaytân and his troops strive hard to call people to sins and make them appear fair-seeming, and the *nafs* is inclined towards evil and prompts one to do it. Man by nature is prone to shortcomings in all aspects, and faith is not strong, so if man were to be left (without help) under the influence of these factors, no one would be purified by cleansing himself of sins and bad deeds, and by starting to do good deeds. Purification requires cleansing oneself and doing good deeds. But Allah's grace and mercy dictate that some of you should be cleansed and purified. One of the supplications of the Prophet (ﷺ) was:

«O Allah, grant my soul piety and purify it, for You are the best to purify it, You are its Guardian and its Lord.» (Muslim)

Hence Allah says:

﴿But Allah purifies whomever He wills﴾, who He knows is fit for that; hence He says: ﴿and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing﴾.

﴿Let not those among you who are people of virtue and wealth swear to cease giving [aid] to their kinsfolk, the needy and those who have migrated in Allah's cause. Rather let them pardon and overlook﴾.

One of those who were involved in spreading the slander was Mistah ibn Athâthah, who was a relative of Abu Bakr as-Siddeeq. Mistah was a poor man, one of those who had migrated in Allah's cause. Abu Bakr swore that he would no longer spend on him, because of what he had said. But then this verse was revealed, forbidding them to swear that they would no longer spend on them, and urging him to pardon and overlook, promising the forgiveness of Allah, if he forgave his relative:

﴿Do you not like for Allah to forgive you? For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾; if you are forgiving towards His slaves, by pardoning and overlooking, then Allah will treat you likewise. When Abu Bakr heard this verse, he said: Nay, by Allah I like that Allah should forgive me. And he resumed spending on Mistah.

This verse indicates that it is prescribed to spend on relatives, and one should not stop doing so, or stop showing kindness towards them, because of a sin that a person may commit. It is encouraged to pardon and overlook, no matter what sins a person may commit.

Then comes a stern warning against making accusations against chaste women:
﴿Verily those who make accusations against chaste women﴾ that is, women who refrain from immoral acts
﴿who are innocent at heart﴾ and such things never cross their minds
﴿and believers are cursed in this world and the hereafter﴾ the curse can only be because of a major sin. It is highlighted that the curse is ongoing and will impact them in both realms
﴿and theirs will be a grievous punishment﴾. This is in addition to the curse; Allah will cast them far away from His mercy and will send against them His mighty vengeance.

That punishment will come on the Day of Resurrection, ﴿On the day when their own tongues, hands and feet will testify against them regarding what they used to do﴾. Each of their physical faculties will testify against them, regarding what they did. They will be caused to speak by the One Who will cause everything to speak, so it will not be possible to deny anything. He is just towards His slaves, for He will cause the witnesses to be from their own selves.

﴿On that day, Allah will give them in full their due recompense﴾ that is, He will requite them for their deeds, giving the due recompense that is based on justice and fairness, and they will find their recompense in full, with nothing missing.

﴿...They will say: Woe to us! What sort of record is this, that leaves no deed, small or great, unaccounted for? They will find all they did recorded there, and your Lord will not wrong anyone.﴾ *(al-Kahf 18: 49)*

They will realise, in that great place of standing, that Allah is the Truth Who makes manifest all things.

His sublime attributes are true, His deeds are true, worship of Him is true, the meeting with Him is true, His promise, His warning, His religious decree and His judgement are all true, and His Messengers are true, so there is nothing true except that which is with Allah and from Allah.

﴿Evil men are for evil women and evil women are for evil men﴾ that is, everything that is evil of men, women, words and deeds is befitting for the one who is evil, for it is in harmony with him and is similar to him. And everything that is good of men, women, words and deeds is befitting for the one who is good, for it is in harmony with him and is similar to him.

This is general in meaning, and nothing is excluded from that. One of the most important implications of that is the fact that nothing is suitable for the Prophets – especially the Messengers of strong will among them, and especially our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), who is the best of all good people in absolute terms – except the best of women.

Casting aspersions upon 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) with regard to this matter is casting aspersions upon the Prophet (ﷺ); he was the intended target of the slander fabricated by the hypocrites. From the mere fact that she was the wife of the Messenger (ﷺ), it is known that she could not be anything but good and pure, innocent of this reprehensible action.

So how about when she is more than that? For she was the *ṣiddeeqah* of women (that is, one who was strong and true in faith), the best, most knowledgeable and most pure of women, the beloved of the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds; revelation never came

down to him when he was under the cover of any of his other wives, apart from her.

Then Allah states that clearly, in such a way that no evildoer would have any justification for saying anything bad about her, and that there is no room left for doubt, as He says: ﴿Those [good people] are innocent of all that [the slanderers] say﴾. This refers primarily to 'Â'ishah (ﷺ), but also to other chaste believing women who are innocent at heart.

﴿they will have forgiveness﴾ that will cleanse all their sins

﴿and a generous provision﴾ in paradise, coming from the Most Generous Lord.

﴿ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُواْ لَا تَدۡخُلُواْ بُيُوتًا غَيۡرَ بُيُوتِكُمۡ حَتَّىٰ تَسۡتَأۡنِسُواْ وَتُسَلِّمُواْ عَلَىٰٓ أَهۡلِهَاۚ ذَٰلِكُمۡ خَيۡرٞ لَّكُمۡ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَذَكَّرُونَ ٢٧ فَإِن لَّمۡ تَجِدُواْ فِيهَآ أَحَدٗا فَلَا تَدۡخُلُوهَا حَتَّىٰ يُؤۡذَنَ لَكُمۡۖ وَإِن قِيلَ لَكُمُ ٱرۡجِعُواْ فَٱرۡجِعُواْۖ هُوَ أَزۡكَىٰ لَكُمۡۚ وَٱللَّهُ بِمَا تَعۡمَلُونَ عَلِيمٞ ٢٨ لَّيۡسَ عَلَيۡكُمۡ جُنَاحٌ أَن تَدۡخُلُواْ بُيُوتًا غَيۡرَ مَسۡكُونَةٖ فِيهَا مَتَٰعٞ لَّكُمۡۚ وَٱللَّهُ يَعۡلَمُ مَا تُبۡدُونَ وَمَا تَكۡتُمُونَ ٢٩ ﴾ (سورة النور: ٢٧-٢٩)

24:27. O you who believe, do not enter houses other than your own until you have asked permission and greeted their occupants; that is better for you, so that you may pay heed.

24:28. If you do not find anyone therein, do not enter them until you are given permission. If you are told to go back, then go back; that is more proper for you. And Allah is well aware of all that you do.

24:29. There is no sin on you if you enter uninhabited houses, if that serves a useful purpose. And Allah knows what you disclose and what you conceal.

Here Allah instructs His believing slaves not to enter houses other than their own without permission, because that leads to a number of bad consequences, such as the following:

- That to which the Messenger (ﷺ) referred when he said:

  «Seeking permission has only been prescribed so that one will not see that which is not appropriate for him to see.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

  Not following this ruling properly may lead to one's gaze falling upon private things that he is not meant to see inside other people's houses. A person's house, by covering what is private, inside its walls, is like a garment that covers what is private of his body.
- Entering other people's houses without permission may create suspicion about the one who enters them, and he may be accused of evil deeds such as stealing and so on, because entering houses surreptitiously is suggestive of evil intent. Allah forbids the believers to enter houses other than their own until they seek permission; the word used in the original Arabic suggests that seeking permission creates a sense of assurance, whereas entering without permission may cause alarm.

﴿and greeted their occupants﴾ – the manner in which this is to be done is mentioned in the hadith:

«As-salâmu 'alaykum (peace be upon you); may I come in?» (Recorded by Abu Dâwood; al-Albâni graded it as sound)

﴿that﴾ namely seeking permission to enter

﴿is better for you, so that you may pay heed﴾, because it will serve many interests, and because it is part of the noble characteristics that are required of the Muslim.

If he is given permission, then he may enter, but ﴿If you do not find anyone therein, do not enter them until you are given permission. If you are told to go back, then go back﴾ that is, do not refuse to go

back, and do not get angry about it, because the owner of the house is not depriving you of a right that you must have. Rather he has the choice: if he wishes he may give you permission to enter, or he may refuse. So no one should feel offended or annoyed in that case.
﴿that is more proper for you﴾ that is, it is more effective in protecting you from falling into sin, and it helps you to do more good.
﴿And Allah is well aware of all that you do﴾; He will requite each person for his deeds, whether they were many or few, good or otherwise.

This ruling applies to inhabited houses, whether one is going there for a purpose or not, and to uninhabited houses for which one has no need to enter them.

In the case of houses that are not inhabited, but they contain the belongings of the person who needs to enter the house, but there is no one present whose permission he may seek to enter – which applies to rented accommodation and so on – Allah has mentioned them in the following verse:

﴿There is no sin on you﴾ that is, there is no blame on you. In contrast, entering the houses mentioned above without permission is deemed to be prohibited because it is described as blameworthy.
﴿if you enter uninhabited houses, if that serves a useful purpose﴾. This is an example of the amazing wisdom and prudence of the Qur'an: the words ﴿do not enter houses other than your own﴾ are general in meaning and apply to all houses that do not belong to the individual, but Allah (ﷻ) excluded from that houses that do not belong to him, but he has some interest there, and no one lives there. In that case, blame is waived for the one who enters them.

﴿And Allah knows what you disclose and what you conceal﴾ – He knows your inward and outward condition, and He knows what is in your best interests; therefore He has prescribed for you what you need and cannot do without of laws and teachings.

﴿قُل لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾﴾ (سورة النور: ٣٠)

24:30. Tell the believing men to avert their gaze [from that which is forbidden] and restrain their carnal desires; that will be more conducive to their purity. Verily Allah is well aware of all that they do.

That is, instruct the believers and tell those who have faith that prevents them from doing that which undermines faith:

﴿to avert their gaze﴾ from looking at nudity, or at *non-maḥram* women or beardless youths, where there is the fear that looking at them may lead to temptation; and tell them to avert their gaze from looking at worldly adornments that may be tempting and cause them to fall into that which is prohibited.

﴿and restrain their carnal desires﴾ from prohibited sexual acts, in the vagina, anus or otherwise, and from allowing others to touch or look at their private parts

﴿that﴾ caution with regard to the gaze and carnal desires

﴿will be more conducive to their purity﴾ that is, it will be purer and better, and more effective in helping them to do righteous deeds. The one who restrains his carnal desires and his gaze will be pure and free of the evil that contaminates those who commit immoral deeds, and it will make his deeds pure, because of giving up the prohibited actions to which the soul may be inclined and may prompt one to do. Whoever gives up something for the sake of Allah, Allah will compensate him with something better than it; whoever averts his gaze (from that which is forbidden), Allah will give him enlightenment. If a person restrains his carnal desires and averts his gaze from that which is forbidden, and that which leads to it, despite the pressure of desire,

then he is more likely to refrain from other things. Therefore Allah describes this as *ḥifdh* (*lit.* guarding, translated here as "restraining") because if a person does not try hard to keep watch over the thing that he is guarding, and take proper measures to guard it, it will not be guarded. The same applies to the gaze and carnal desires: if he does not try hard to guard them and restrain them, they will cause him to fall into troubles and problems.

Think about how Allah gives instructions to restrain their carnal desires completely, because allowing them free reign is not permissible under any circumstances. But with regard to the gaze, He says ﴿to avert their gaze﴾; the wording of the original Arabic suggests that this is only to be done in part, because it is permissible to look in some cases, if there is a need for that, as in the case of one who is giving testimony, or one who wants to propose marriage, and so on. Then Allah reminds them that He is aware of all that they do, so that they will strive hard to protect themselves against that which is prohibited.

﴿وَقُل لِّلْمُؤْمِنَٰتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَٰرِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا ۖ وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ ۖ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ ءَابَآئِهِنَّ أَوْ ءَابَآءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَآئِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَآءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَٰنِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِىٓ إِخْوَٰنِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِىٓ أَخَوَٰتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَآئِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَٰنُهُنَّ أَوِ ٱلتَّٰبِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُو۟لِى ٱلْإِرْبَةِ مِنَ ٱلرِّجَالِ أَوِ ٱلطِّفْلِ ٱلَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا۟ عَلَىٰ عَوْرَٰتِ ٱلنِّسَآءِ ۖ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِن زِينَتِهِنَّ ۚ وَتُوبُوٓا۟ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣١﴾﴾ (سورة النور: ٣١)

24:31. Tell the believing women to avert their gaze [from that which is forbidden] and restrain their carnal desires, and not to show

their adornments except what ordinarily appears thereof.[38] And let them draw [part of] their headcovers over their chests and not show their adornments except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers, their sons, their husbands' sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, their [fellow Muslim] women, slaves whom they own, male retainers[39] who are free of physical desire, or small children who still have no awareness of the private aspects of women. Nor let them stamp their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments. And, O believers, turn all together towards Allah in repentance, so that you may prosper.

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Having instructed the believing men to avert their gaze and restrain their carnal desires, Allah now instructs the believing women to do likewise:

﴿Tell the believing women to avert their gaze﴾ and avoid looking at that which they are not supposed to look at, such as looking at men with desire and other kinds of prohibited looking.
﴿and restrain their carnal desires﴾ by not allowing anyone to have intercourse with them, touch them or look at them in prohibited ways.

﴿and not to show their adornments﴾ such as beautiful clothes and jewellery; the entire body comes under the heading of adornment.

Because the outer garment is something that cannot be concealed, Allah says: ﴿except what ordinarily appears thereof﴾ that is, the outer garment that is usually worn, so long as there is nothing in it that could cause temptation.

﴿And let them draw [part of] their headcovers over their chests﴾. This is in order to perfect their covering up. This indicates that the adornment that is prohibited to show includes the entire body, as

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[38] ﴿what ordinarily appears thereof﴾: this refers to the outer garments.

[39] This refers to dependants or followers who are attached to a tribe or family.

we have mentioned. Then Allah repeats the prohibition on showing adornment, then makes an exception from that:
﴿except to their husbands, their fathers, their husbands' fathers﴾ – this includes the father himself, and grandfathers, no matter how far the line of ascent reaches
﴿their sons, their husbands' sons﴾ this includes sons and grandsons, no matter how far the line of descent reaches.
﴿their brothers, their brothers' sons﴾ this includes both full brothers and half-brothers through the father or mother
﴿their sisters' sons, their [fellow Muslim] women﴾ that is, it is permissible for women to look at one another in all cases. It may be that what is meant by "their women" is women of the same religion as them, namely other Muslim women. This is quoted as proof by those who say that it is not permissible for a *dhimmi* (non-Muslim) woman to see a Muslim woman (without hijab).

﴿slaves whom they own﴾ it is permissible for a slave, if the woman owns him completely, to see his mistress, so long as he belongs to her. If that ownership comes to an end, in full or partially, then it is not permissible for him to see her.

﴿male retainers who are free of physical desire﴾ that is, those who are dependent on you and are connected to you of men who have no desire, such as one who has an intellectual disability and is not aware of what is going around him, or one who is impotent and has no desire, physical or otherwise. In this case it is not prohibited for these individuals to look at the woman.

﴿or small children who still have no awareness of the private aspects of women﴾ that is, children below the age of discernment. It is permissible for them to look at non-mahram women. Allah (ﷻ) gives the reason for that, which is that they have no awareness of the private aspects of women. In other words they have no knowledge and no desire yet. This indicates that once the child has reached the age of discernment, women should cover in front of him, because he is now aware of the private aspects of women.

﴿Nor let them stamp their feet in order to draw attention to their hidden ornaments﴾ that is, they should not stamp the ground with their feet so that the jewellery they are wearing, such as anklets and the like, makes a noise by which their adornments may be known, and thus become a means of temptation. From this verse and others is derived the principle of barring the means. If something is permissible in and of itself, but it may lead to something that is prohibited, or there is the fear that that may happen, then it is disallowed. Stamping the feet on the ground is permissible in principle, but if it is a means of making hidden adornment known, then it is disallowed.

Having issued these goodly instructions and this excellent advice, because it is inevitable that there will be some shortcomings on the part of the believers, Allah (ﷻ) enjoins us to repent, as He says: ﴿And, O believers, turn all together towards Allah in repentance﴾, because the believer's faith calls him to repent. Then that is made a condition of attaining prosperity, as Allah says: ﴿so that you may prosper﴾, for there is no way to prosper except by repenting, which means giving up that which Allah hates, both inwardly and outwardly, and focusing on that which He loves, both inwardly and outwardly. This indicates that every believer needs to repent, because here Allah is addressing all the believers together. And He urges them to be sincere in repentance, as He says: ﴿turn all together towards Allah in repentance﴾ that is, not for any other purpose except seeking His pleasure; it should not be for any other purpose such as seeking protection from troubles in this world, or showing off and seeking to enhance one's reputation, or other corrupt purposes.

﴿وَأَنكِحُوا۟ ٱلْأَيَـٰمَىٰ مِنكُمْ وَٱلصَّـٰلِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَآئِكُمْ ۚ إِن يَكُونُوا۟ فُقَرَآءَ يُغْنِهِمُ ٱللَّهُ
مِن فَضْلِهِۦ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ وَٰسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَلْيَسْتَعْفِفِ ٱلَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ نِكَاحًا حَتَّىٰ يُغْنِيَهُمُ ٱللَّهُ

مِن فَضْلِهِۦ ۗ وَٱلَّذِينَ يَبْتَغُونَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَٰنُكُمْ فَكَاتِبُوهُمْ إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ
خَيْرًا ۖ وَءَاتُوهُم مِّن مَّالِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلَّذِىٓ ءَاتَىٰكُمْ ۚ وَلَا تُكْرِهُوا۟ فَتَيَٰتِكُمْ عَلَى ٱلْبِغَآءِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَ
تَحَصُّنًا لِّتَبْتَغُوا۟ عَرَضَ ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا ۚ وَمَن يُكْرِههُّنَّ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ مِنۢ بَعْدِ إِكْرَٰهِهِنَّ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

﴿٣٣﴾ (سورة النور: ٣٢-٣٣)

24:32. Arrange marriages for those among you who are single, and those who are righteous and fit for marriage among your male and female slaves. If they are poor, Allah will suffice them from His bounty, for Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.

24:33. Let those who do not have the means to marry keep themselves chaste until Allah suffices them from His bounty. If any of your slaves ask for a deed in writing [to enable them to earn their freedom in return for a certain sum], then write it for them, if you see any good in them,[40] and give them some of the wealth that Allah has given you. Do not force your slave girls into prostitution, if they want to remain chaste, seeking thereby some worldly gain. But if anyone does compel them, verily Allah, after such compulsion, is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

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Here Allah (ﷻ) instructs guardians and masters to arrange marriages for the single people under their care. This refers to those who have no spouses, whether they are men, previously married women or virgins. So relatives and guardians of orphans should arrange marriages for those who wish to get married among those on whom they are obliged to spend. If they are enjoined to arrange marriages for those who are under their guardianship, then it is more appropriate that they should be instructed to get married themselves.

﴿and those who are righteous and fit for marriage among your male and female slaves﴾ it may be that what is meant by the word

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[40] That is, if you deem them able to earn their own livelihood and not become dependent on others.

*ṣâliḥeen* (translated here as ﴿righteous and fit for marriage﴾) is being righteous in religious terms, and in the case of male or female slaves who are righteous – which refers to those who are not immoral and do not commit fornication – their master is instructed to arrange marriages for them, as a reward to the slave for being righteous and by way of encouraging him to remain righteous. The fact that it is not permissible for anyone to marry one who is immoral and fornicates confirms what is mentioned at the beginning of the soorah, that it is prohibited to marry a man or woman who fornicates until he or she repents. Righteousness is singled out for mention with regard to slaves – as opposed to those who are free – because fornication is usually more common among slaves. Or it may be that what is meant by ṣâliḥeen is those slaves, male and female, who are fit and capable for marriage and ready to bear the responsibilities thereof.

The latter view is supported by the fact that the master is not obliged to arrange a marriage for his slave before he needs to get married. And it is not unlikely that both meanings are intended. And Allah knows best.

﴿If they﴾ that is, married people or those who want to get married ﴿are poor, Allah will suffice them from His bounty﴾. So you should not let what you imagine – that if he gets married, he will become poor because of having too many dependents – prevent you from getting married. This offers encouragement to get married, and is a divine promise to the one who gets married that he will become independent of means after having been poor.

﴿for Allah is All-Encompassing﴾ and His generosity encompasses all

﴿All-Knowing﴾ – He knows who deserves His grace and bounty in both religious and worldly terms, or in one of them, and who does not deserve that. So He gives to all in accordance with His knowledge and wisdom.

﴿Let those who do not have the means to marry keep themselves chaste until Allah suffices them from His bounty﴾. This ruling applies to the one who is unable to get married. Allah instructs him to keep himself chaste, refrain from that which is prohibited and to take measures to restrain himself and prevent thoughts crossing his mind that may prompt him to fall into sin. He should also do what the Prophet (ﷺ) instructed, as he said:

«O young men, whoever among you can afford it, let him get married, and whoever cannot, let him fast, for it will be a shield for him.» (Muslim)

﴿Let those who do not have the means to marry﴾ that is, they are not able to get married, either because they themselves are poor or because their guardians and masters are poor, or because the latter refused to arrange marriages for them, and they do not have the means to force them to do that. This interpretation is better than the interpretation of those who understood it to refer to those who cannot afford the *mahr* (dowry) for marriage. There are two reservations about the latter interpretation:

1- The word mahr is not mentioned in this verse, so we should not assume that this is what is meant.
2- Introducing the idea of the mahr would restrict the meaning to free people who can or cannot afford it, and would exclude male and female slaves and those whose marriage is the responsibility of their guardians, as we have mentioned above.

﴿keep themselves chaste until Allah suffices them from His bounty﴾ – this is a promise to the one who keeps himself chaste that Allah will suffice him and make things easy for him; he is instructed to await relief so that his situation will not become unbearable.

﴿If any of your slaves ask for a deed in writing [to enable them to earn their freedom in return for a certain sum], then write it for them, if you see any good in them﴾ that is, whoever among your slaves, male or female, seeks a contract of manumission from you in order

to purchase his or her freedom, you should respond to this request and write that contract for him or her.

﴿if you see any good in them﴾ that is, in those who are requesting that contract. What is meant by good here is the ability to earn a living, as well as righteousness and religious commitment, because writing such a contract serves two interests: the interest of manumission and freedom (for the slave), and the interest (or benefit) of the money he pays to his master in order to ransom himself (for the master). Perhaps he will work hard and strive, and be able to earn money for his master during the period covered by the contract of manumission that he could not do as a slave, so there will be no harm done to the master's interests by writing this contract; this is in addition to the great benefits that will be attained by the slave. Therefore Allah enjoined masters to draw up contracts in this way, and that is either obligatory, as appears to be the case, or it is recommended, according to the other opinion. Allah enjoined that slaves should be helped in their manumission, because they need that, as they have no wealth of their own. Therefore He said: ﴿and give them some of the wealth that Allah has given you﴾. This includes a command to the master who writes the contract of manumission to give him some of the costs of his manumission or to waive some of the costs, and He also instructed people in general to help them.

Therefore Allah has allocated a share of zakâh to slaves who seek to buy their freedom, and He encourages people to give it, as He says: ﴿and give them some of the wealth that Allah has given you﴾. That is, as the wealth belongs to Allah, what He has given to you is a gift from Allah to you and is a pure blessing, so show kindness to the slaves of Allah as Allah has shown kindness to you.

What this verse means is that if a slave does not seek manumission, then his master is not obliged to initiate that process. If he does not know of any good in him, in the sense that what he knows of him is the opposite of that, either because he knows that he is not able to earn a living and would therefore become dependent upon people and

destitute, or he fears that if he is manumitted and becomes free, he would spread mischief, then in such cases the master is not instructed to manumit him; rather he is forbidden to do that because of the reservations mentioned above.

Then Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Do not force your slave girls into prostitution, if they want to remain chaste﴾ because it is not possible to imagine them being forced into that unless they want to be chaste. If a slave woman does not want to be chaste, then she is immoral and her master must prevent her from doing that. This prohibition is mentioned because they used to do that during the *jāhiliyah* (pre-Islamic period of ignorance), when a master would force his slave woman into prostitution in order to take her earnings. Hence Allah says: ﴿seeking thereby some worldly gain﴾. It is not befitting for your slave women to be better and more chaste than you, when you are doing that to them for the sake of worldly gain and some small fleeting gain that is soon gone.

Attaining dignity, purity and decency – regardless of reward or punishment in the hereafter – is better than acquiring some small gain that causes you to become immoral and vile.

Then Allah calls upon those who forced their slave women into prostitution to repent, as He says: ﴿But if anyone does compel them, verily Allah, after such compulsion, is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾, so let him repent to Allah and give up what he did that incurred divine wrath. If he does that, Allah will forgive him his sins and will have mercy on him, as he had mercy on himself and tried to protect himself from punishment, and as he showed mercy towards his slave woman by not forcing her to do that which would harm her.

﴿وَلَقَدْ أَنزَلْنَآ إِلَيْكُمْ ءَايَٰتٍ مُّبَيِّنَٰتٍ وَمَثَلًا مِّنَ ٱلَّذِينَ خَلَوْا۟ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾﴾ (سورة النور: ٣٤)

24:34. Verily We have sent down to you revelations making things clear, and an account of those [nations] who passed away before you, and an admonition for those who fear Allah.

This highlights the greatness and high status of these verses that are recited to His slaves, so that they may realise their importance and comply with them in the proper manner.

﴿Verily We have sent down to you revelations making things clear﴾ that is, they are clear in meaning and clarify everything that you need to know of the fundamentals and minor issues of Islam, so that there will be no confusion or ambiguity.

﴿and﴾ We have also sent down to you ﴿an account of those [nations] who passed away before you﴾ that is, stories of the earlier nations, both righteous and otherwise, and a description of their deeds and what happened to them of ease and hardship, so that you may take it as an example and lesson that whoever does what they did will be requited as they were requited.

﴿and an admonition for those who fear Allah﴾ that is, and We have sent down to you an admonition for those who fear Allah, containing the promises and warnings, encouragement and deterrent, by which those who fear Allah may be admonished, so that they will refrain from that which Allah hates and do that which Allah loves.

﴿ ۞ ٱللَّهُ نُورُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ مَثَلُ نُورِهِۦ كَمِشْكَوٰةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ ۖ ٱلْمِصْبَاحُ فِى زُجَاجَةٍ ۖ ٱلزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّىٌّ يُوقَدُ مِن شَجَرَةٍ مُّبَٰرَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَّا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِىٓءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ ۚ نُّورٌ عَلَىٰ نُورٍ ۗ يَهْدِى ٱللَّهُ لِنُورِهِۦ مَن يَشَآءُ ۚ وَيَضْرِبُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْأَمْثَٰلَ لِلنَّاسِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة النور: ٣٥)

24:35. Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth. The likeness of His light is that of a niche in which is a lamp; the lamp is in a glass; the glass is like a brightly-shining star. [The lamp is] lit from a blessed tree: an olive, neither of the east nor of the west,[41] whose oil would almost glow [by itself] though no fire touched it. Light upon light; Allah guides to His light whomever He will. Allah sets forth comparisons for people; and Allah has knowledge of all things.

﴿Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth﴾. This is true in both a literal and metaphorical sense, for Allah (ﷻ) is Himself light and His veil – which, were it not for His kindness, the splendour of His Countenance would have burned everything of His creation as far as He can see – is also light. By that light the Throne, the Footstool, the sun, the moon and all light is illuminated, and by it paradise is illuminated. This is also true in a metaphorical sense. So His Book is light, His law is light, faith and knowledge in the hearts of His Messengers and His believing slaves is light. Were it not for His light, darkness would have accumulated. Therefore every place in which His light is lacking is a place of darkness and constraint.

﴿The likeness of His light﴾ to which He guides people, which is the light of faith and the Qur'an in the hearts of the believers ﴿is that of a niche in which is a lamp﴾, because the niche concentrates the light of the lamp so that it is not scattered ﴿the lamp is in a glass; the glass﴾ because of its purity and splendour ﴿is like a brightly-shining star﴾ that is, it shines like a star.

That lamp which is in that shining glass is ﴿lit from a blessed tree: an olive﴾ that is, it is lit with olive oil, which shines the brightest when it is lit

[41] This refers to an olive tree in a place that receives sunlight throughout the day, not only when the sun is rising or setting. Olive trees that grow in such locations produce purer and higher-quality oil. (aṭ-Ṭabari; Ibn Katheer; ar-Râzi)

﴿neither of the east﴾ only, so that it does not get any sun at the end of the day

﴿nor of the west﴾ so that it does not get any sun at the beginning of the day. As it is neither of these two, it is in the middle of the earth, like the olive trees of Greater Syria, which get sun at both the beginning and the end of the day, so their oil is of good quality and good taste, and is the purest oil. Hence Allah says:

﴿whose oil﴾, because it is so pure, ﴿would almost glow [by itself] though no fire touched it﴾. So if the fire does touch it, it shines very brightly.

﴿Light upon light﴾ that is, the light of the fire and the light of the oil.

This likeness that Allah gives and applies to the believer, in whose heart is the light of Allah, refers to the natural disposition with which Allah created him. That disposition is likened to the pure oil; it is pure and is receptive to divine teaching and prescribed actions. When knowledge and faith reach his heart, that light will begin to shine in his heart, like the fire in the wick of the lamp. This refers to the heart that is pure and free of bad intentions and misunderstandings of the divine text. If faith reaches that heart, it will be illuminated greatly, because it is pure and free of contamination, like the purity of the shining glass. Thus in that heart are combined the light of sound natural inclinations, the light of faith, the light of knowledge and the purity of proper understanding of faith: light upon light.

Because this comes from the light of Allah (ﷻ), and not everyone is fit to receive it, Allah says:

﴿Allah guides to His light whomever He will﴾ who He knows is pure of heart, so faith will grow in his heart and it will benefit him and have an impact on him.

﴿Allah sets forth comparisons for people﴾ so that they may understand them, out of kindness towards them, and so that the truth may become clear and distinct from falsehood. Comparisons make the intended meanings clear when compared to something physical, so that people may learn those meanings and understand them clearly.

﴿and Allah has knowledge of all things﴾ – His knowledge encompasses all things, so you should realise that when He sets forth comparisons, that is done by One Who knows the reality and details of all things, and that is in the interests of people, so they should strive to ponder and understand them, not turn away and oppose them, for He knows and you do not know.

Because the places where the means of finding the light of faith and the Qur'an are most available are the mosques, Allah mentions them in the context of praise and speaking highly of them, as He says:

﴿فِي بُيُوتٍ أَذِنَ اللَّهُ أَن تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ ﴿٣٦﴾ رِجَالٌ لَّا تُلْهِيهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ يَخَافُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ ﴿٣٧﴾ لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا وَيَزِيدَهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَن يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٣٨﴾﴾ (سورة النور: ٣٦-٣٨)

24:36. [Such lamps are lit] in houses [mosques] which Allah has ordained to be built so that His name may be remembered therein. In them His name is glorified morning and afternoon,

24:37. By men who are not distracted by buying or selling from the remembrance of Allah, or from establishing prayer or giving zakâh. They fear a day when hearts will quiver and eyes will stare fixedly.

24:38. [Their hope is] that Allah may reward them according to the best of their deeds and give them yet more out of His bounty, for Allah bestows His abundance without measure on whomever He will.

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As Allah is worshipped ﴿in houses﴾ of great virtue, which are the dearest of places to him, namely the mosques, He ﴿has ordained﴾

that they ﴿be built so that His name may be remembered therein﴾. These two things summarise the rulings on mosques, which includes building them, constructing them, sweeping them, cleansing them of impurities and dirt, protecting them from insane people and small children who do not know how to clean themselves from impurity, and from disbelievers; mosques are also to be protected from idle talk and the raising of voices in anything other than remembrance of Allah.

﴿so that His name may be remembered therein﴾ this includes all prayers, obligatory and supererogatory, reading Qur'an, *tasbeeḥ* (glorifying Allah), *tahleel* (reciting the phrase *lâ ilâha illâ Allâh* [there is no god but Allah]), and other kinds of dhikr, acquiring knowledge and teaching, discussing issues of religion, *i'tikâf*, and other kinds of worship that are done in the mosques. Hence maintenance of the mosques is divided into two categories: maintaining and protecting the structure, and maintaining remembrance of Allah in them by praying and doing other acts of worship. The latter is the nobler of the two categories.

Hence it is prescribed to offer the five daily prayers and Jumu'ah prayer in the mosques, and this is obligatory according to most of the scholars, or recommended according to others.

Then Allah (ﷻ) praises those who stay in the mosques to worship, as He says: ﴿In them His name is glorified﴾ sincerely ﴿morning﴾ at the beginning of the day ﴿and afternoon﴾ at the end of the day. These two times are singled out because of their high status and because it is easier at these times to turn to Allah in worship.

That includes tasbeeḥ (glorifying Allah) in prayer and otherwise. Therefore it is prescribed to recite the *adhkâr* and *awrâd*[42] of the morning and the afternoon at those times.

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[42] Awrâd (*sing.* wird): Remembrance of Allah and glorifying Him in various phrases that are prescribed at different times as a voluntary act, which a Muslim commits to reciting on a daily basis, such as morning and evening.

﴿By men﴾ that is, at those times they glorify Allah, and what good men they are, for they are not those who give precedence to worldly pleasures or trade, and the distractions of business.
﴿who are not distracted by buying or selling﴾ – this includes any type of earnings through exchange. These men, even if they do engage in trade, buying and selling – and there is nothing wrong with that – they are not distracted by that and they do not give it precedence over ﴿the remembrance of Allah, or from establishing prayer or giving zakâh﴾. Rather they make obedience and worship of Allah their ultimate desire and goal, and whatever gets in the way of that, they reject it.

Because forsaking worldly matters is very hard for most people, and love of earning by means of various kinds of trade is dear to them, and giving it up is very hard for most of them, and it may not come naturally to them to give precedence to the rights of Allah over that, He mentions that which will motivate them to do it by means of encouragement and warnings:
﴿They fear a day when hearts will quiver and eyes will stare fixedly﴾ due to severe terror and emotional and physical turmoil. Hence they fear that day, so it becomes easy for them to do righteous deeds and give up that which distracts them from such deeds.

﴿[Their hope is] that Allah may reward them according to the best of their deeds﴾ what is meant by the best of their deeds is their righteous good deeds, because they are the best of all that they do, as they do both permissible deeds and others. The reward will only be for the good deeds. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:
﴿And Allah will absolve them of the worst of their deeds, and He will surely grant them their reward according to the best of their deeds.﴾ *(az-Zumar 39: 35)*

﴿and give them yet more out of His bounty﴾ – He will give them much more than the reward that is due for their deeds
﴿for Allah bestows His abundance without measure on whomever He will﴾; indeed He will give him a reward much greater than his

deeds deserve, and indeed much more than he ever hoped for. He will give him without counting or measuring. This is indicative of His great abundance.

﴿ وَٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوٓا۟ أَعْمَٰلُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍۭ بِقِيعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ ٱلظَّمْـَٔانُ مَآءً حَتَّىٰٓ إِذَا جَآءَهُۥ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْـًٔا وَوَجَدَ ٱللَّهَ عِندَهُۥ فَوَفَّىٰهُ حِسَابَهُۥ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ سَرِيعُ ٱلْحِسَابِ ﴿٣٩﴾ أَوْ كَظُلُمَٰتٍ فِى بَحْرٍ لُّجِّىٍّ يَغْشَىٰهُ مَوْجٌ مِّن فَوْقِهِۦ مَوْجٌ مِّن فَوْقِهِۦ سَحَابٌ ۚ ظُلُمَٰتٌۢ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ إِذَآ أَخْرَجَ يَدَهُۥ لَمْ يَكَدْ يَرَىٰهَا ۗ وَمَن لَّمْ يَجْعَلِ ٱللَّهُ لَهُۥ نُورًا فَمَا لَهُۥ مِن نُّورٍ ﴿٤٠﴾ ﴾ (سورة النور: ٣٩-٤٠)

24:39. As for the disbelievers, their deeds are like a mirage in a desert plain. The thirsty man thinks it is water until, when he reaches it, he finds it to be nothing. But he finds [the punishment of] Allah waiting, thus Allah will requite him in full, for Allah is swift in reckoning.

24:40. Or [their deeds are] like the depths of darkness in a vast deep ocean, overwhelmed by waves, above which are other waves, above which are clouds; layers of darkness, one above another. If a man stretches out his hand [in this darkness], he can hardly see it. The one to whom Allah gives no light will have no light at all.

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These are two likenesses that Allah gives of the deeds of the disbelievers in terms of their falseness and how they will be of no avail to them, and how the doers will feel regret.

﴿As for the disbelievers﴾, who disbelieved in their Lord and rejected His Messengers

﴿their deeds are like a mirage in a desert plain﴾ that is, barren flat land in which there are no trees or plants.

﴿The thirsty man﴾ whose thirst is so intense that he imagines what others do not imagine
﴿thinks it is water﴾ because of his thirst, but this is a false perception; so he heads towards it to relieve his thirst.
﴿until, when he reaches it, he finds it to be nothing﴾ then he regrets it greatly and that only exacerbates his thirst, because his hopes have been dashed.

Thus the deeds of the disbelievers are like a mirage; they are seen, and the ignorant person who has no knowledge of things thinks that they are beneficial deeds, but he is deceived by their outward appearance, and he thinks that they also serve his own whims and desires. He also needs them and is in fact desperate for them, just as the thirsty man needs water, but when he comes to his deeds on the day of requital, he will find them lost and he will not find anything. But in fact they are not lost; rather he will find ﴿[the punishment of] Allah waiting, thus Allah will requite him in full﴾. For nothing is hidden from Him, not even the smallest of deeds; nothing small or great will be missing.
﴿for Allah is swift in reckoning﴾, so the ignorant should not think that this promise is slow in coming, for it will inevitably come. Allah likens it to a mirage in the desert plain, a place in which there are no trees or plants. This is the likeness of the hearts, in which there is no goodness and no righteousness by means of which they may be purified or blessed. That is because of the impediment, which is disbelief.

The second likeness of the invalidity of the disbelievers' good deeds is ﴿the depths of darkness in a vast deep ocean, overwhelmed by waves, above which are other waves, above which are clouds﴾. This refers to the darkness of the vast deep ocean, above which is the darkness of other layers of waves, and above that is the darkness of huge clouds, then above that is the darkness of the dark night. So this darkness is very intense, such that anyone in that situation, if

he ﴿stretches out his hand [in this darkness], he can hardly see it﴾, even though it is so close to him, so how about anything else? This is how the disbelievers are: layers of darkness have accumulated in their hearts: inherent darkness in which there is nothing good, above which is the darkness of disbelief; above that is the darkness of ignorance, and above that is darkness of the deeds which result from that which is mentioned above. Thus they remain confused in the darkness, wandering blindly in their confusion, turning away from the straight path and stumbling along the paths of misguidance. That is because Allah (ﷻ) has forsaken them and has not given them any of His light.

﴿The one to whom Allah gives no light will have no light at all﴾, because he is a wrongdoer and ignorant, and there is nothing in his heart of goodness and light except what its Lord bestows upon it.

It may be that these two likenesses refer to the deeds of all of the disbelievers, and each is applicable to all of them, so two likenesses are given in order to describe the situation from different angles. Or it may be that each likeness refers to a particular group: the first refers to the leaders and the second refers to the followers. And Allah knows best.

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُۥ مَن فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَٱلطَّيْرُ صَٰٓفَّٰتٍ ۖ كُلٌّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهُۥ وَتَسْبِيحَهُۥ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمٌۢ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۖ وَإِلَى ٱللَّهِ ٱلْمَصِيرُ ﴿٤٢﴾﴾ (سورة النور: ٤١-٤٢)

24:41. Do you not see that all who are in the heavens and on earth glorify Allah, as do the birds with wings outspread? Each knows its [own way] of praying and glorifying Him. And Allah has full knowledge of all that they do.

24:42. To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and unto Him is the return [of all].

Here Allah points out to His slaves His greatness, His perfect power and authority, and the need of all created things for Him to take care of them and their need to worship Him:

﴿Do you not see that all who are in the heavens and on earth﴾ both animate beings and inanimate objects
﴿glorify Allah, as do the birds with wings outspread﴾ that is, with their wings outspread in the air.
﴿Each﴾ of these created things ﴿knows its [own way] of praying and glorifying Him﴾ that is, each has its own way of prayer and worship, according to each situation, as is appropriate for it. Allah has inspired it to pray and glorify Him, either through the Messengers, as in the case of the jinn, humans and angels, or by inspiring it directly, as in the case of all other created things. This interpretation is more likely to be correct, based on the fact that Allah says: ﴿And Allah has full knowledge of all that they do﴾ that is, He knows all their deeds, and nothing of that is hidden from Him, and He will requite them for that. Based on that, this verse combines mention of His knowledge of the deeds of creatures for whom there is no requital, which they do on the basis of inspiration from Him, with mention of His knowledge of the deeds of those for whom there is requital, on the basis of those deeds. This verse is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿The seven heavens and the earth, and all those who are therein, glorify Him. There is not a thing that does not glorify Him with praise, but you do not understand their glorification. Verily, He is Forbearing, Oft-Forgiving.﴾ *(al-Isrā' 17: 44)*

Having highlighted their servitude and need for Him – in the sense of worship and affirming His oneness, Allah now mentions their need for His sovereignty, care and control of their affairs, as He says:
﴿To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth﴾, for He is the Creator and provider, and He controls them through His

religious and universal decree in this realm, and what He will decree of requital in the hereafter. This is based on the fact that He says: ﴿and unto Him is the return [of all]﴾ that is, the ultimate return of all creatures is to Him, and He will requite them for their deeds.

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ ٱللَّهَ يُزْجِى سَحَابًا ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُۥ ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُۥ رُكَامًا فَتَرَى ٱلْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَٰلِهِۦ وَيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ ٱلسَّمَآءِ مِن جِبَالٍ فِيهَا مِنۢ بَرَدٍ فَيُصِيبُ بِهِۦ مَن يَشَآءُ وَيَصْرِفُهُۥ عَن مَّن يَشَآءُ ۖ يَكَادُ سَنَا بَرْقِهِۦ يَذْهَبُ بِٱلْأَبْصَٰرِ ﴿٤٣﴾ يُقَلِّبُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّيْلَ وَٱلنَّهَارَ ۚ إِنَّ فِى ذَٰلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّأُو۟لِى ٱلْأَبْصَٰرِ ﴿٤٤﴾﴾ (سورة النور: ٤٣-٤٤)

24:43. Do you not see that Allah drives along the clouds, then gathers them together, then piles them into heaps? Then you see the rain coming forth from their midst. He sends down hail from mountains [of clouds] in the sky; He strikes with it whomever He will and He averts it from whomever He will. The brightness of their lightning almost takes away the sight.

24:44. Allah alternates the night and the day. Verily in this there is a lesson for those who have insight.

That is, have you not seen with your own eyes the greatness of Allah's might, and how He ﴿drives along the clouds﴾ in scattered pieces, ﴿then piles them into heaps﴾, gathering the pieces together and piling them up like mountains.

﴿Then you see the rain﴾ coming out of the clouds in scattered crops, to bring about benefit without harm. Then the streams and rivers are filled, and water flows through the wadis, bringing forth every type of beautiful plants.

Sometimes Allah sends down from those clouds hail that destroys whatever it strikes, ﴿He strikes with it whomever He will and He

averts it from whomever He will﴾ according to His decree and wisdom, for which He is to be praised.

﴿The brightness of their lightning﴾ that is, the lightning that emanates from the cloud, because it is so bright, ﴿almost takes away the sight﴾. Is not the One Who creates the clouds and drives them towards His needy slaves, and sends down rain from them in such a way that it brings benefits and does not cause harm, perfect in might, His will is always done, and He is abundant in mercy?

﴿Allah alternates the night and the day﴾ from hot to cold and from cold to hot, from night to day and from day to night; He causes the days to alternate among His slaves.

﴿Verily in this there is a lesson for those who have insight﴾ that is, those who have reason with which to understand what they need to understand. Just as one sees physical things with one's eyes, the one who has insight looks at creation, reflects upon it and learns from it the divine wisdom behind its creation, whereas the one who is ignorant looks at it in a heedless manner, just as animals look at it.

﴿وَٱللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَآبَّةٍ مِّن مَّآءٍ ۖ فَمِنْهُم مَّن يَمْشِى عَلَىٰ بَطْنِهِۦ ۖ وَمِنْهُم مَّن يَمْشِى عَلَىٰ رِجْلَيْنِ ۖ وَمِنْهُم مَّن يَمْشِى عَلَىٰٓ أَرْبَعٍ ۚ يَخْلُقُ ٱللَّهُ مَا يَشَآءُ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤٥﴾﴾ (سورة النور: ٤٥)

24:45. Allah has created every living creature from water. Some of them move on their bellies, some walk on two legs and some walk on four. Allah creates whatever He wills; verily Allah has power over all things.

Here Allah draws the attention of His slaves to what they see, for He has created all creatures that are on the face of the earth

﴿from water﴾ that is, the substance of all of that is water, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿...And We have made from water every living thing...﴾ *(al-Anbiyā' 21: 30)*

The substance of animals that procreate is the water of the *nutfah* (drop of semen), when the male fecundates the female. With regard to animals that lay eggs in the ground, they only procreate by means of dampness, such as insects; there are none that procreate without water.

The substance is the same, but the nature of each creature is different in many ways:
﴿Some of them move on their bellies﴾ like snakes and the like
﴿some walk on two legs﴾ like humans and many birds
﴿and some walk on four﴾ like livestock animals, and so on.

These differences in shape – despite having the same origin – indicates that Allah is able to do all that He wills. Hence He says:
﴿Allah creates whatever He wills﴾ of creatures, with the characteristics that He wants
﴿verily Allah has power over all things﴾. As He sent down rain upon the earth, it is one fecundation and the mother – namely the earth – is one, but the offspring (plants and trees) vary greatly in types and characteristics.

﴿And on earth there are adjoining [yet different] tracts of land, and gardens of grapevines, grains and date palms, growing in clusters from one root or standing alone. They are irrigated with the same water, yet We cause some of them to excel others in taste. Surely in that there are signs for people of understanding.﴾ *(ar-Ra'd 13: 4)*

﴿لَقَدْ أَنزَلْنَآ ءَايَٰتٍ مُّبَيِّنَٰتٍ ۚ وَٱللَّهُ يَهْدِى مَن يَشَآءُ إِلَىٰ صِرَٰطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٤٦﴾﴾ (سورة النور: ٤٦)

24:46. Verily We have sent down to you revelations making things clear, and Allah guides whom He will to a path that is straight.

That is, We had mercy on Our slaves, and We sent down to them clear signs that point to the teachings of Islam, praiseworthy manners and attitude, endowed with all that leads to guidance. Thus the issues become clear and guidance becomes distinct from misguidance. So there is no longer any specious argument to cling to and no reason for the slightest confusion for the one who sincerely seeks the truth, because it has been sent down from One Whose knowledge is perfect, Whose mercy is perfect and Whose explanation is perfect, so no one can explain things any more clearly than He.

﴿...and so that [after that] those who chose to perish [by choosing disbelief] might do so after seeing clear evidence, and those who chose to live [by choosing faith] might do so after seeing clear evidence...﴾ *(al-Anfâl 8: 42)*

﴿and Allah guides whom He will﴾ of those who are destined for paradise

﴿to a path that is straight﴾ that is, a path that is clear and straightforward, and that leads to Him and to His paradise; it can be reached through knowledge of the truth, giving it precedence and acting upon it.

Allah makes His revelations clear to everyone, but He singles out for His guidance whomever He will. This is His grace and bounty, and by His generosity. That is because He is just and He did not want to leave any excuse for anyone. Allah knows best who is deserving of His generosity.

﴿ وَيَقُولُونَ ءَامَنَّا بِٱللَّهِ وَبِٱلرَّسُولِ وَأَطَعْنَا ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّىٰ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ ذَٰلِكَ ۚ وَمَآ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ بِٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَإِذَا دُعُوٓا۟ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُم مُّعْرِضُونَ

﴿ وَإِن يَكُن لَّهُمُ ٱلْحَقُّ يَأْتُوٓا۟ إِلَيْهِ مُذْعِنِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾ أَفِى قُلُوبِهِم مَّرَضٌ أَمِ ٱرْتَابُوٓا۟ أَمْ يَخَافُونَ أَن يَحِيفَ ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَرَسُولُهُۥ ۚ بَلْ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ ﴾ (سورة النور: ٤٧-٥٠)

24:47. They [the hypocrites] say: We believe in Allah and in the Messenger, and we obey. But after that, some of them turn away. Such are not [truly] believers.

24:48. When they are called to Allah and His Messenger so that he may judge between them, some of them turn away in aversion.

24:49. But if the right is on their side, they come to him willingly.

24:50. Is it that there is a disease in their hearts? Or are they full of doubt? Or do they fear that Allah and His Messenger might deal unjustly with them? Nay, it is they who are the wrongdoers.

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Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us about the situation of the wrongdoers, those in whose hearts is a disease, weakness of faith, hypocrisy, doubt or lack of knowledge. They speak words and make a show of commitment to faith and obedience to Allah, but then they do not act in accordance with what they say. Some of them turn away significantly from obedience, based on the fact that Allah says here: ﴿some of them turn away﴾. The one who turns away may have the intention of coming back to that from which he turned away, but in this case what is referred to is the one who turns away and does not turn back at all, and does not look at that from which he is turning away. You will find that this is applicable to many of those who claim to believe in Allah and be obedient to Him, but they are weak in faith; you will find that they do not do many acts of worship, especially those that are hard for many people, such as giving zakâh, spending in ways that are obligatory or recommended, jihad in Allah's cause, and so on.

﴿When they are called to Allah and His Messenger so that he may judge between them﴾ that is, if an issue arises between them and someone else where a judgement is required, and they are called to the judgement of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ),

﴿some of them turn away in aversion﴾ seeking the rulings of the time of ignorance, and preferring the rulings of man-made laws over the rulings of Sharia, because they know that they are in the wrong and that Sharia only judges on the basis of what really is the case.

﴿But if the right is on their side, they come to him﴾ that is, they come to the ruling of Sharia
﴿willingly﴾ but that is not because it is the ruling of Sharia; rather that is because it coincides with their whims and desires. So they are not doing anything praiseworthy in this case, even if they come willingly, because the one who is a slave of Allah in a true sense is the one who follows the truth whether he likes it or not, whether it suits him or not. As for the one who follows Sharia when it coincides with his whims and desires and rejects it when it does not, and gives precedence to his whims and desires over Sharia, he is not a slave of Allah in a true sense.

Allah says, criticising them for turning away from the ruling of Sharia:
﴿Is it that there is a disease in their hearts﴾ that undermines the healthy state of the heart and removes common sense, so that he becomes like a sick person who turns away from that which will benefit him and turns towards that which will harm him?

﴿Or are they full of doubt﴾ that has made them anxious about the ruling of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), so that they accused him of not judging in accordance with the truth?

﴿Or do they fear that Allah and His Messenger might deal unjustly with them?﴾ That is, are they afraid that an unfair and unjust ruling will be passed against them? Rather that is how they are, ﴿Nay, it is they who are the wrongdoers﴾. As for the ruling of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), it is based on the utmost justice and is in accordance with wisdom.

﴿...But who could be better in judgement than Allah, for a people who are certain in faith?﴾ *(al-Mā'idah 5: 50)*

These verses indicate that faith is not just words, unless those words are accompanied by action. Therefore the one who turns away from obedience has no faith.

It is obligatory to submit to the ruling of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) in all cases, and if a person does not submit to that ruling, this is indicative of a disease in his heart and weakness in his faith. It is forbidden to think negatively of the rulings of Sharia or to think that they are contrary to justice and wisdom.

Having described the condition of those who turn away from the rulings of Sharia, Allah now describes the condition of the praiseworthy believers:

﴿إِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ ٱلْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذَا دُعُوٓا۟ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ أَن يَقُولُوا۟ سَمِعْنَا وَأَطَعْنَا ۚ وَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَمَن يُطِعِ ٱللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُۥ وَيَخْشَ ٱللَّهَ وَيَتَّقْهِ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْفَآئِزُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾﴾ (سورة النور: ٥١-٥٢)

24:51. The only response of the believers, when they are called to Allah and His Messenger so that he may judge between them, is to say: We hear and we obey. It is they who will be the successful ones.

24:52. Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, and fears Allah, and remains mindful of Him – it is they who will be the triumphant ones.

﴿The only response of the believers﴾ that is, the true believers whose deeds confirm their faith, when they are called to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) so that he may judge between them, whether that is in accordance with their whims and desires or otherwise,

﴿is to say: We hear and we obey﴾ that is, we hear the ruling of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), we respond to that to which he called us, and we obey him completely, without any reservation.

﴿It is they who will be the successful ones﴾ it is only they who will be successful, because success means attaining what is sought and being saved from what one fears, and no one will succeed except the one who refers to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) for judgement, and obeys Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ).

Having mentioned the virtue of obedience with regard to the rulings in particular, Allah now mentions the virtue of obedience in general terms, in all situations:

﴿Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger﴾ by believing in what they say and complying with their commands,

﴿and fears Allah﴾ that is, fear accompanied by knowledge, so he refrains from what is forbidden to him and restrains himself from following whims and desires. Hence Allah says, ﴿and remains mindful of Him﴾ by refraining from that which is prohibited, because being mindful of Allah (taqwâ) – when it is mentioned in general terms – includes doing what is enjoined and refraining from what is forbidden. When this is mentioned alongside righteousness or obedience – as in this case – it is interpreted as referring to warding off the punishment of Allah by refraining from disobeying Him.

﴿it is they﴾ namely those who combine obedience to Allah, obedience to His Messenger (ﷺ), fear of Allah and mindfulness of Him

﴿who will be the triumphant ones﴾ as they will be saved from the punishment, because they avoided the causes that lead to that, and they will attain reward, because they did that which leads to it. So triumph is theirs alone. As for those who were not like that, they will miss out on triumph, according to what they failed to attain of these praiseworthy characteristics.

This verse also refers to the duty that is owed to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), namely obedience that stems from faith. It also mentions a duty that is owed exclusively to Allah, which is fear of Him and mindfulness of Him. There remains a third duty, that is owed exclusively to the Messenger (ﷺ), which is respect and veneration. These three duties are also mentioned together in Soorat al-Fath, where Allah says:

﴿So that you [O people] may believe in Allah and His Messenger, and support and honour him, and glorify Allah morning and afternoon.﴾ *(al-Fath 48: 9)*

﴿وَأَقْسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ أَمَرْتَهُمْ لَيَخْرُجُنَّ قُلْ لَا تُقْسِمُوا طَاعَةٌ مَعْرُوفَةٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا عَلَيْهِ مَا حُمِّلَ وَعَلَيْكُمْ مَا حُمِّلْتُمْ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوهُ تَهْتَدُوا وَمَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٥٤﴾﴾ (سورة النور: ٥٣-٥٤)

24:53. They [the hypocrites] swear their most solemn oaths by Allah that, if you give the command, they will surely march forth. Say [O Muhammad]: Do not swear; [the real nature of your so-called] obedience is known. Verily Allah is well aware of all that you do.

24:54. Say [O Muhammad]: Obey Allah and obey the Messenger. But if you turn away, he is only responsible for the duty entrusted to him and you are responsible for the duty entrusted to you. If you obey him, you will be rightly guided. The duty of the Messenger is only to convey the message in the clearest way.

Here Allah tells us about the condition of those who stayed behind and did not go out for jihad with the Messenger (ﷺ); these were the

hypocrites and those in whose hearts was a disease and weakness of faith. They swore by Allah that ﴿if you give the command﴾ in the future, ﴿they will surely march forth﴾. But Allah said, refuting what they said:

﴿Say [O Muhammad]: Do not swear﴾ that is, we do not need your oaths or excuses, for Allah has told us about you and the real nature of your obedience is known and is not hidden from us. We are aware of your reluctance and slowness with no excuse, so your apology and oath are pointless. Rather the one who may need to give an excuse and swear an oath is the one whose case is unclear. That is the one whose excuse may benefit him and prove his innocence, but in your case that is not acceptable at all. Rather what is expected and feared in your case is the punishment and vengeance of Allah. Therefore He warned them by saying: ﴿Verily Allah is well aware of all that you do﴾. And He will requite them for that in full.

As for the Messenger (ﷺ), his role is to enjoin them to do what is right and to forbid them to do what is wrong. Hence Allah says:

﴿Say [O Muhammad]: Obey Allah and obey the Messenger﴾ then if they comply, that is because they are fortunate and blessed,

﴿But if you turn away, he is only responsible for the duty entrusted to him﴾ of conveying the message, and he has fulfilled that duty.

﴿you are responsible for the duty entrusted to you﴾ of obedience. But now the situation has become quite clear, and it is obvious that you are misguided and are deserving of punishment.

﴿If you obey him, you will be rightly guided﴾ to the straight path in word and deed, but there is no way for you to be guided except through obedience; without that it is not possible for you to be guided, and in fact it is impossible.

﴿The duty of the Messenger is only to convey the message in the clearest way﴾ that is, to convey it in the clearest manner so that there will be no doubt or confusion left for anyone. And he did indeed do that; he conveyed the message clearly. But the one who will bring

you to account and requite you for your deeds is Allah (ﷻ); the Messenger (ﷺ) has no control over that and he has done what was required of him.

﴿ وَعَدَ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ مِنكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا۟ ٱلصَّٰلِحَٰتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ كَمَا ٱسْتَخْلَفَ ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِينَهُمُ ٱلَّذِى ٱرْتَضَىٰ لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُم مِّنۢ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ أَمْنًا ۚ يَعْبُدُونَنِى لَا يُشْرِكُونَ بِى شَيْـًٔا ۚ وَمَن كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ فَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ هُمُ ٱلْفَٰسِقُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة النور: ٥٥)

24:55. Allah has promised those among you who believe and do righteous deeds that He will surely make them successors [to power] in the land, as He made those before them successors; that He will surely establish for them their religion that He has chosen for them; and that He will surely cause their [present] state of fear to be replaced by peace and security. [That is because] they worship Me alone and do not associate anything with Me. If any are ungrateful after this, it is they who are the evildoers.

This is one of the true promises of Allah, the interpretation and fulfilment of which was witnessed. He promised to those of this Ummah who believed and did righteous deeds that He would make them successors to power in the land, and they would become people of authority, in charge of its affairs, and that He would establish for them their religion that He had chosen for them, namely the religion of Islam which is superior to all other religions, which He chose for this Ummah because of its virtue and high status, and because He blessed it by enabling them to establish the religion and to implement its teachings and laws, both visible and hidden, with regard to

themselves and others, because the followers of all other religions, and all the disbelievers, are to be defeated and humiliated; and He promised to replace their fear – because of which a Muslim could not practise his religion openly without suffering persecution from many of the disbelievers, as the number of Muslims was very few in comparison to others, and all the people of earth at that time had ganged up on them and were scheming against them – with peace and security.

So Allah promised these things to them at the time when this verse was revealed, when they had not yet witnessed being made successors in the land and being given authority, or being able to establish the Islamic religion in complete security, so that they could worship Allah, not ascribing any partner to Him, without fearing anybody but Allah. The early generations of this Ummah had such strong faith and did such righteous deeds that they surpassed others, so Allah gave them power in the land and control over people, and they conquered the east and the west of the earth, and they achieved complete security and power. This is one of the dazzling and wondrous signs of Allah, that will continue until the onset of the Hour. Every time they establish faith and do righteous deeds, they will inevitably find what Allah promised them. The disbelievers and hypocrites only gain power over them and sometimes get the upper hand because of the shortcomings of the Muslims in terms of faith and righteous deeds.

﴿If any are ungrateful after this﴾ that is, after you have been given full power and authority, O Muslims
﴿it is they who are the evildoers﴾ who have drifted away from obedience to Allah and have become corrupt, so they are no longer righteous people and are no longer qualified for anything good, because if a person gives up faith when the religion is prevailing and its enemies have been defeated, and there are no impediments to faith, this is indicative of his corrupt intentions and evil nature, because he has no reason to abandon faith except that.

This verse indicates that Allah gave power to those who came before us and made them successors to power in the land, as Moosâ said to his people:

﴿...It may well be that your Lord will destroy your enemy and make you successors in the land, so that He may see how you will do.﴾ *(al-A'râf 7: 129)*

And Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿But it was Our will to bestow favour upon those who were oppressed in the land, to make them leaders and cause them to inherit [the land], and to establish them in the land...﴾ *(al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 5-6)*

﴿وَأَقِيمُوا۟ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ وَءَاتُوا۟ ٱلزَّكَوٰةَ وَأَطِيعُوا۟ ٱلرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ مُعْجِزِينَ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ وَمَأْوَىٰهُمُ ٱلنَّارُ ۖ وَلَبِئْسَ ٱلْمَصِيرُ ﴿٥٧﴾﴾ (سورة النور: ٥٦-٥٧)

24:56. Establish prayer, give zakâh and obey the Messenger, so that you may be shown mercy.

24:57. Do not think that those who disbelieve can escape [Allah's punishment] on earth. Their abode will be the fire, a hapless journey's end.

Here Allah enjoins establishing prayer with all of its essential parts, conditions and etiquette, both outwardly and inwardly, and the giving of zakâh from the wealth that Allah has entrusted to His slaves and given to them, by giving it to the poor and others whom Allah has designated as recipients of zakâh. These two are the greatest and most virtuous acts of worship, in which are combined the fulfilment of duties towards Allah and towards His creation, in which the individual shows devotion to Allah and shows kindness to people. That is followed by a general command:

﴿and obey the Messenger﴾, by complying with what he enjoins and refraining from what he forbids.

﴿Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah...﴾ *(an-Nisâ' 4: 80)*

﴿so that﴾, if you do this, ﴿you may be shown mercy﴾. Whoever seeks mercy, this is the way to attain it. Whoever hopes to find mercy without establishing prayer, giving zakâh and obeying the Messenger (ﷺ) is indulging in wishful thinking and is lying; his nafs has made him feel content with wishful thinking.

﴿Do not think that those who disbelieve can escape [Allah's punishment] on earth﴾ that is, do not be deceived by what they are given in the life of this world of ease and pleasure. Although Allah gives them respite, He does not forget about them.

﴿We will allow them to enjoy life for a little while, then We will drive them to a harsh punishment.﴾ *(Luqmân 31: 24)*

Hence Allah says here: ﴿Their abode will be the fire, a hapless journey's end﴾ that is, what a wretched destination is the destination of the disbelievers, for it is a destination of evil, loss and eternal punishment.

﴿يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ لِيَسْتَـْٔذِنكُمُ ٱلَّذِينَ مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَٰنُكُمْ وَٱلَّذِينَ لَمْ يَبْلُغُوا۟ ٱلْحُلُمَ مِنكُمْ ثَلَٰثَ مَرَّٰتٍ ۚ مِّن قَبْلِ صَلَوٰةِ ٱلْفَجْرِ وَحِينَ تَضَعُونَ ثِيَابَكُم مِّنَ ٱلظَّهِيرَةِ وَمِنۢ بَعْدِ صَلَوٰةِ ٱلْعِشَآءِ ۚ ثَلَٰثُ عَوْرَٰتٍ لَّكُمْ ۚ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا عَلَيْهِمْ جُنَاحٌۢ بَعْدَهُنَّ ۚ طَوَّٰفُونَ عَلَيْكُم بَعْضُكُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمُ ٱلْـَٔايَٰتِ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَإِذَا بَلَغَ ٱلْأَطْفَٰلُ مِنكُمُ ٱلْحُلُمَ فَلْيَسْتَـْٔذِنُوا۟ كَمَا ٱسْتَـْٔذَنَ ٱلَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمْ ءَايَٰتِهِۦ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٥٩﴾﴾ (سورة النور: ٥٨-٥٩)

24:58. O you who believe, let any slaves you may own, and those among you who have not yet reached puberty, ask permission [to enter] at three times: before *fajr* prayer, when you have undressed [in order to rest] at midday and after *'ishâ'* prayer; these are three times of privacy for you. Beyond that there is no blame on either you or them in moving about freely, attending to one another. Thus does Allah make clear to you His revelations, for Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.

24:59. And when the children among you reach puberty, let them also ask permission [to enter, at all times], as their elders do. Thus does Allah make clear to you His revelations, for Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise.

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Here Allah instructs the believers that their slaves and those among them who have not yet reached puberty should ask permission to enter. He mentions the wisdom behind that, and states that there are three times of privacy when permission to enter must be sought: the time when they go to sleep at night after 'ishâ' prayer; when they wake up before fajr prayer; and during the mid-day siesta. No mention is made of the state of dress in the case of the time after 'ishâ' and the time before fajr, because usually the sleeper at night wears something other than his usual day-time garments. However, with regard to sleeping during the day, because it is usually brief, the individual may sleep in his ordinary, day-time clothes, or he may change his clothes or remove some of his clothes, as mentioned here: ﴿when you have undressed [in order to rest] at midday﴾, which refers to the siesta in the middle of the day; if that is the case, then permission to enter must be sought.

At these three times, slaves and small children, like all others, should not be allowed to enter except with permission. Concerning all other times apart from these three, Allah says:
﴿Beyond that there is no blame on either you or them﴾ that is, they are not like others, because they are always needed, so it would be too

difficult for them to have to ask permission every single time. Hence Allah says: ﴿there is no blame on either you or them in moving about freely, attending to one another﴾ that is, coming and going among you, doing their work and attending to your needs.

﴿Thus does Allah make clear to you His revelations﴾, accompanied by an explanation of His wisdom, so as to increase you in conviction and compliance, and so that you may appreciate the mercy and wisdom of the Lawgiver. Hence He says
﴿for Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise﴾. His knowledge encompasses all that must exist, or that cannot possibly exist, or that may possibly exist, and the wisdom on the basis of which everything is put in the right place. Hence He has given every creature the shape and structure that suits its nature, and He issues each ruling in a manner that suits the wisdom behind it, including these rulings which He explains and highlights their beauty.

﴿And when the children among you reach puberty﴾ by the emission of *maniy* (semen) either when awake or asleep,
﴿let them also ask permission [to enter, at all times], as their elders do﴾. Their elders are those whom Allah mentions in a previous verse: ﴿O you who believe, do not enter houses other than your own until you have asked permission and greeted their occupants; that is better for you, so that you may pay heed﴾ *(24: 27)*.

﴿Thus does Allah make clear to you His revelations﴾ and He clarifies them, explaining their rulings in detail
﴿for Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise﴾.

In these two verses we learn many things, including the following:

- Masters of slaves and guardians of small children are instructed to teach their slaves and the children under their guardianship Islamic knowledge and etiquette, because Allah addresses them here by saying: ﴿O you who believe, let any slaves you may own, and those among you who have not yet reached puberty...﴾.

That can only be done by teaching them and disciplining them, hence He says: ﴿Beyond that there is no blame on either you or them﴾.

- It is enjoined to respect that which is private and take precautionary measures to attain that in all ways. With regard to any place or location in which a person's *'awrah* may be seen, it is prohibited to bathe, wash one's private parts and so on in that place.
- It is permissible to uncover the 'awrah when needed, such as when going to sleep, when urinating and defecating, and so on.
- The Muslims used to take a nap or siesta during the day, as they used to sleep at night, because Allah addressed them with reference to the habits and customs that existed at the time of revelation.
- In the case of a small child who has not yet reached the age of puberty, it is not permissible to let him see the 'awrah of any other person, just as it is not permissible to let his 'awrah be seen, because Allah only enjoined that they should seek permission to enter because of something that is not permissible.
- It is also not permissible for a slave to see the 'awrah of his master, or for the master to see the 'awrah of his slave, as we mentioned in the case of the small child.
- Preachers, teachers and so on who speak about issues of knowledge should accompany that with mention of the reason and wisdom behind it, and the basis for it. They should not just tell people about rulings with evidence, without explaining why. That is because when Allah stated the ruling under discussion here, He gave reasons for it by saying: ﴿these are three times of privacy for you﴾.
- Small children and slaves are included in these verses as their guardians and masters are also included, because Allah says: ﴿Beyond that there is no blame on either you or them﴾.

- The saliva of a minor is *ṭāhir* (pure), even after the occurrence of impurities such as vomiting, because Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿moving about freely﴾. Furthermore, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, when he was asked about cats:

  «They are not *najis* (impure); rather they are among those who move about freely among you.» (A sound hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)
- It is permissible for a person to tell the children under his care to do tasks for him, within reason, so long as it is not too difficult for the child, because Allah says: ﴿moving about freely﴾.
- The rulings discussed in the verse all have to do with children below the age of puberty. After they reach the age of puberty, they can only enter after asking permission.
- The sign of reaching puberty is ejaculation; all the Islamic rulings that are connected to reaching puberty come into effect once ejaculation has occurred. This is a matter concerning which there is scholarly consensus; the differences of opinion have to do with whether age or the appearance of pubic hair count as signs of puberty. And Allah knows best.

﴿ وَٱلْقَوَٰعِدُ مِنَ ٱلنِّسَآءِ ٱلَّٰتِى لَا يَرْجُونَ نِكَاحًا فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْهِنَّ جُنَاحٌ أَن يَضَعْنَ ثِيَابَهُنَّ غَيْرَ مُتَبَرِّجَٰتٍۭ بِزِينَةٍ ۖ وَأَن يَسْتَعْفِفْنَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُنَّ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٠﴾ ﴾ (سورة النور: ٦٠)

24:60. With regard to elderly women who have no interest in marriage, there is no blame on them if they put aside their outer garments, without aiming to flaunt their adornments. But if they refrain from doing so, that is better for them. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

Elderly women are those who no longer hope for marriage and no longer feel desire.

﴿who have no interest in marriage﴾ that is, they do not want to get married, and they are not sought for marriage, because they have grown old and are no longer desirable, or they have lost their looks. They no longer feel desire and they are no longer desirable.

﴿there is no blame﴾ or sin ﴿on them if they put aside their outer garments﴾ such as the face veil and the like, concerning which Allah says to women: ﴿And let them draw [part of] their headcovers over their chests﴾ *(24: 31)*.

In the case of these women, it is permissible for them to uncover their faces, because there is no fear of such a woman causing temptation to others or being tempted herself. As it is stated that there is no blame on them if they put aside their outer garments, one may think that it is permissible for them to adorn themselves; therefore in order to avoid this misunderstanding, Allah says: ﴿without aiming to flaunt their adornments﴾ that is, without showing their adornments to people, such as beautifying themselves by wearing a fancy outer garment whilst covering the face, or stamping the feet in order to make known what is hidden of adornments, because the mere presence of adornment – even if it is hidden, and even if she is not desirable and there is no possibility of being tempted by her – could cause the one who looks at her to fall into sin.

﴿But if they refrain from doing so, that is better for them﴾ refraining means seeking chastity by taking measures to achieve that, such as getting married and refraining from that which it is feared may lead to temptation.

﴿And Allah is All-Hearing﴾ and hears all voices

﴿All-Knowing﴾: He knows people's intentions and aims, so women should beware of all bad words and bad intentions, and understand that Allah will requite them for that.

﴿لَّيْسَ عَلَى ٱلْأَعْمَىٰ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى ٱلْأَعْرَجِ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَى ٱلْمَرِيضِ حَرَجٌ وَلَا عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِكُمْ أَن تَأْكُلُوا۟ مِنۢ بُيُوتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ ءَابَآئِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أُمَّهَٰتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ إِخْوَٰنِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَخَوَٰتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَعْمَٰمِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ عَمَّٰتِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ أَخْوَٰلِكُمْ أَوْ بُيُوتِ خَٰلَٰتِكُمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكْتُم مَّفَاتِحَهُۥٓ أَوْ صَدِيقِكُمْ ۚ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَن تَأْكُلُوا۟ جَمِيعًا أَوْ أَشْتَاتًا ۚ فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُم بُيُوتًا فَسَلِّمُوا۟ عَلَىٰٓ أَنفُسِكُمْ تَحِيَّةً مِّنْ عِندِ ٱللَّهِ مُبَٰرَكَةً طَيِّبَةً ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ ٱللَّهُ لَكُمُ ٱلْءَايَٰتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦١﴾﴾

(سورة النور: ٦١)

24:61. There is no blame on the blind nor any blame on the lame nor any blame on the sick nor on yourselves if you eat from your own houses, or from the houses of your fathers, or from the houses of your mothers, or from the houses of your brothers, or from the houses of your sisters, or from the houses of your paternal uncles, or from the houses of your paternal aunts, or from the houses of your maternal uncles, or from the houses of your maternal aunts, or from houses of which the keys are in your possession, or the houses of your friends. There is no blame on you if you eat together or separately. But when you enter houses, greet one another with *salâm*, a greeting from Allah, blessed and good. Thus does Allah make clear to you His revelations, so that you may understand.

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Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the blessings that He bestows upon His slaves, and that He has not imposed any hardship on them in religion; rather He has made it very easy:

﴿There is no blame on the blind nor any blame on the lame nor any blame on the sick﴾ that is, there is no blame on these people for not

doing duties for one of the reasons mentioned. This refers to jihad and other things that the one who is blind cannot do because he cannot see, and the one who is lame cannot do because his limbs are not sound, and the one who is sick cannot do because he is not in good health. Because of this general meaning, the words are mentioned in general terms and are not restricted, as is the case with the following phrase: ﴿nor on yourselves﴾ that is, there is no blame on yourselves ﴿if you eat from your own houses﴾ that is, the houses of your children. This is in accordance with the hadith that is proven to be sound:

«You and your wealth belong to your father.» (Recorded by Ibn Mâjah; al-Albâni graded it as sound)

– another hadith says:

«The best of what you eat is what you earn yourselves, and your children are included in what you earn.» (An authentic hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

The phrase ﴿from your own houses﴾ does not refer to a person's own house, because that would be stating the obvious, and Allah would not state something that is so obvious; moreover, saying that there is nothing wrong with that may give the impression that there is something sinful in the case of those mentioned here, whereas in the case of a person's own house, no one would think such a thing.

﴿or from the houses of your fathers, or from the houses of your mothers, or from the houses of your brothers, or from the houses of your sisters, or from the houses of your paternal uncles, or from the houses of your paternal aunts, or from the houses of your maternal uncles, or from the houses of your maternal aunts﴾ these cases are quite clear.

﴿or from houses of which the keys are in your possession﴾ that is, houses which have been entrusted to you and are under your care, or houses that belong to someone who is under your guardianship, and the like. With regard to the interpretation of this phrase as referring to slaves, that is not valid, for two reasons:

Firstly: it is not said concerning a slave that one "owns his keys"; rather one would say "those whom you own" and the like, because the master owns the entire slave, not just his keys.

Secondly: the houses of slaves are no different from a man's own house, because the slave and all that he owns belong to his master, so there is no reason to say that there is no blame in eating from your slave's house.

﴿or the houses of your friends﴾. The statement that there is no blame on eating from these houses applies to cases where that is done without express permission. The wisdom behind it is known from the context: the custom with regard to the people mentioned here is usually to tolerate a person's eating from them, because of close blood ties, complete authority, or close friendship. But if it is known that a person does not allow that or is stingy with regard to food, then it is not permissible to eat from his house, and blame is not lifted in that case, because of the reason mentioned above.

﴿There is no blame on you if you eat together or separately﴾ – all of that is permissible. If the members of a household eat together, or each one of them eats on his own, this verse says that there is no blame, but that does not mean that eating separately is better, because it is preferable to eat together.

﴿But when you enter houses﴾ – this includes both a person's own house and the houses of others, whether there is anyone in the house or not. When a person enters a house, ﴿greet one another with salâm﴾.

It is prescribed to say salâm when entering houses, with no differentiation between one type of house and another, whereas with regard to asking permission, there are some differences in the rulings as stated above.

Then Allah praises this salâm, saying: ﴿a greeting from Allah, blessed and good﴾ that is, when you say salâm, by saying *as-salâmu 'alaykum wa raḥmatullâhi wa barakâtuhu* (peace be upon you and

the mercy of Allah and His blessings) or *as-salâmu 'alaynâ wa 'alâ 'ibâdillâh iṣ-ṣâliheen* (peace be upon us and upon the righteous slaves of Allah) when you enter houses, this is ﴿a greeting from Allah﴾. That is, He has prescribed it for you and has made it your greeting ﴿blessed﴾ because it implies attaining mercy, blessing, growth and increase
﴿and good﴾ because it is one of the good words that are beloved by Allah, for it shows kindness, love and affection to the one who is greeted.

Having explained to us these sublime rulings, Allah now says: ﴿Thus does Allah make clear to you His revelations﴾ that point to His rulings and the wisdom behind them
﴿so that you may understand﴾ what He reveals to you regarding the rulings, so that you may understand them and comprehend them, and so that you may be people of reason and mature understanding, for knowing the rulings and understanding them properly increases one in wisdom and causes understanding to grow, because the meaning of these verses and the etiquette they describe are most sublime, and the reward matches the deed. Just as the individual used his reason in order to understand the revelation of his Lord and to reflect upon His revelations to which He called him, He will increase him in understanding.

This passage points to the general holistic principle that "custom and tradition make exceptions to what is stated in general, just as one statement may make specific what is stated in general." Although in principle it is not allowed to eat the food of another person, Allah made an exception allowing one to eat from the houses of the people mentioned here, because custom and tradition allow that. With regard to issues that depend on permission from the owner of the thing, if it is known that he gave permission, either verbally or according to custom, it is permissible to go ahead and make use of it.

This indicates that the one who is taking care of a person's house and has authority concerning it, such as his wife, sister and the like, may eat from it according to what is customary, and give to the poor on a reasonable basis.

It also indicates that it is permissible to share food, whether people eat together or separately, even if that leads to some of them eating more than others.

﴿إِنَّمَا ٱلْمُؤْمِنُونَ ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا۟ بِٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ وَإِذَا كَانُوا۟ مَعَهُۥ عَلَىٰٓ أَمْرٍ جَامِعٍ لَّمْ يَذْهَبُوا۟ حَتَّىٰ يَسْتَـْٔذِنُوهُ ۚ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ يَسْتَـْٔذِنُونَكَ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ ٱلَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِۦ ۚ فَإِذَا ٱسْتَـْٔذَنُوكَ لِبَعْضِ شَأْنِهِمْ فَأْذَن لِّمَن شِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ وَٱسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمُ ٱللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٦٢﴾ لَّا تَجْعَلُوا۟ دُعَآءَ ٱلرَّسُولِ بَيْنَكُمْ كَدُعَآءِ بَعْضِكُم بَعْضًا ۚ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلَّذِينَ يَتَسَلَّلُونَ مِنكُمْ لِوَاذًا ۚ فَلْيَحْذَرِ ٱلَّذِينَ يُخَالِفُونَ عَنْ أَمْرِهِۦٓ أَن تُصِيبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ أَوْ يُصِيبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٣﴾ أَلَآ إِنَّ لِلَّهِ مَا فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۖ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ مَآ أَنتُمْ عَلَيْهِ ۖ وَيَوْمَ يُرْجَعُونَ إِلَيْهِ فَيُنَبِّئُهُم بِمَا عَمِلُوا۟ ۗ وَٱللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَلِيمٌۢ ﴿٦٤﴾﴾ (سورة النور: ٦٢-٦٤)

24:62. The true believers are those who believe in Allah and His Messenger. When they are with him for a matter of communal concern, they do not depart until they have asked his permission. Those who ask your permission [O Muhammad] are those who believe in Allah and His Messenger, so when they ask your permission to attend to some of their own affairs, then give permission to whomever you wish among them and ask Allah's forgiveness for them, for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

24:63. Do not regard the summons of the Messenger to you as being like your summoning of one another. Allah surely knows those

of you who try to slip away surreptitiously. So let those who go against His command beware lest some calamity strikes them or a painful punishment befalls them.

24:64. Verily to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth. He surely knows your condition [of sincere faith or hypocrisy]. On the day they return to Him, He will inform them about what they used to do. And Allah has knowledge of all things.

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Here Allah instructs His believing slaves that when they are with the Messenger (ﷺ) dealing with a matter of communal concern – that is, something that requires all to be present – such as jihad, consultation and similar matters that concern all the believers, what is required is for them all to meet together and not be scattered. So the one who truly believes in Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) should not leave for some reason, or go back to his family, or go to attend to some of his own affairs that would keep him away from them, except with the permission of the Messenger (ﷺ) or his representative after he is gone. Allah has made it a condition of faith that no one should leave without permission, and He praised them for doing that and for their good manners with His Messenger (ﷺ) and those in authority over them. Hence He says: ﴿Those who ask your permission [O Muhammad] are those who believe in Allah and His Messenger﴾. But should he give them permission or not? Two conditions are mentioned for giving permission to them:

1- That there should be some personal matter or errand that they want to attend to. As for the one who asks for permission to leave with no excuse, he should not give him permission;
2- He should agree to give his consent because there is a good reason to do so, and no harm should result to the one who gives permission.

Allah says: ﴿so when they ask your permission to attend to some of their own affairs, then give permission to whomever you wish

among them﴾. If he has good reason to leave and asks for permission to do so, then if there is an interest to be served by his staying and not leaving, such as if he could help by giving his opinion, or because of his courage and the like, then he should not give him permission to leave.

However, even if he asks permission to leave, and is given permission, subject to these two conditions, Allah instructs His Messenger (ﷺ) to pray for forgiveness for him, because perhaps he is falling short by seeking permission to leave. Hence Allah says: ﴿and ask Allah's forgiveness for them, for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾ – He will forgive their sins and have mercy on them, by allowing them to seek permission to leave even when they have an excuse for doing so.

﴿Do not regard the summons of the Messenger to you as being like your summoning of one another﴾ that is, do not make the Messenger's summoning of you and your summoning of him like your summoning of one another, because if he summons you, it is obligatory for you to respond. It is even obligatory to respond to the Messenger (ﷺ) when one is praying. There is no one whose opinion the Ummah must accept and comply with except the Messenger (ﷺ), because he is infallible and we are commanded to follow him. Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿O you who believe, respond to Allah and His Messenger when he calls you to that which will give you life...﴾ *(al-Anfâl 8: 24)*

The word translated above as ﴿summons﴾ may also mean 'call', therefore another meaning of this verse is: do not make your calling of the Messenger (ﷺ) like your calling of one another. So do not say, "O Muhammad" or "O Muhammad ibn 'Abdullâh", when you call him, as you do when calling one another. Rather, because of his honour and virtue, and because of his being distinct from others, one should say, "O Messenger of Allah" or "O Prophet of Allah".

﴿Allah surely knows those of you who try to slip away surreptitiously﴾. Having praised those who believe in Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), who – when they are with him for a matter of communal concern – do not leave until they have asked his permission, Allah now warns those who do not do that and who leave without asking permission, even though you (O Muslims) were unaware of their sneaking away, which is what is meant by the phrase ﴿those of you who try to slip away surreptitiously﴾ – that is, they hide behind something at the time when they slip away, so as to be hidden from view. Allah is aware of them and He will requite them for that in full. Therefore He warns them by saying:

﴿So let those who go against His command beware﴾ that is, those who leave to attend to some of their own affairs and go against the command of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ); so how about those who do not leave to attend to some of their own affairs; rather they leave because they are simply going against Allah's command, without any affairs to attend to?

﴿lest some calamity﴾ that is, something bad ﴿strikes them or a painful punishment befalls them﴾.

﴿Verily to Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth﴾ in the sense that He owns them and they are His slaves, and He controls them by His decree and His religious rulings.

﴿He surely knows your condition [of sincere faith or hypocrisy]﴾ that is, His knowledge encompasses all that you do of good and evil, and He knows all your deeds, for He encompasses them with His knowledge, His pen has written it all down, and the noble scribes (the angels) are recording it.

﴿On the day they return to Him﴾ that is, the Day of Resurrection ﴿He will inform them about what they used to do﴾ that is, He will tell them about all their deeds, small and great, exactly what they did, and He will summon their physical faculties to testify against them, and they will be treated on the basis of grace or justice.

Having mentioned that His knowledge specifically encompasses their deeds, Allah now states that His knowledge goes beyond that, as He says: ﴿And Allah has knowledge of all things﴾.

This is the end of the commentary on Soorat an-Noor.
All praise and thanks are for Allah, and may the blessings and peace of Allah be upon Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), his family, and his Companions abundantly until the Day of Judgement.

# 25.
# Soorat al-Furqân

(Makki, according to
the majority of scholars)

بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ

*In the name of Allah,*
*the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*

﴿تَبَارَكَ ٱلَّذِى نَزَّلَ ٱلْفُرْقَانَ عَلَىٰ عَبْدِهِۦ لِيَكُونَ لِلْعَٰلَمِينَ نَذِيرًا ۝١ ٱلَّذِى لَهُۥ مُلْكُ ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُۥ شَرِيكٌ فِى ٱلْمُلْكِ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَىْءٍ فَقَدَّرَهُۥ تَقْدِيرًا ۝٢﴾ (سورة الفرقان: ١-٢)

25:1. Blessed be He Who sent down the criterion [between right and wrong, namely the Qur'an] to His slave, so that it may be a warning to the worlds,

25:2. He to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth. He has never begotten a son, and has no partner in His dominion. He has created all things and determined their design and nature in accordance with a precisely accurate plan.

This is a statement of the perfect might and majesty of Allah, that He is One and unique in all aspects, and that His generosity and kindness are abundant.

﴿Blessed be He﴾ that is, glorified be He, for His attributes are most perfect and His goodness is abundant. One of His greatest favours and blessings is that He has sent down this Qur'an to differentiate between lawful and prohibited, guidance and misguidance, those who are destined for paradise and those who are destined for hell.
﴿to His slave﴾ namely Muhammad (ﷺ), who reached the highest level of servitude and surpassed all the Messengers
﴿so that it may be﴾ – this refers to the sending down of the criterion to His slave.
﴿a warning to the worlds﴾, warning them of the might and vengeance of Allah and explaining to them how to attain His pleasure and avoid His wrath, so that whoever accepts His warning and acts accordingly will be among those who are saved in this world and the hereafter, those who will attain eternal happiness and everlasting glory. Can there be anything greater than this blessing and this grace and kindness? Blessed be the One Whose kindness and blessings include this.

﴿He to Whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth﴾ that is, He alone controls them and all who are in them of His slaves submit to His greatness, humble themselves before His Lordship and are in need of His mercy; ﴿He has never begotten a son, and has no partner in His dominion﴾.

How could He have a son or a partner when He is the Sovereign and all others are slaves, He is the Subduer and all others are subdued, He is Self-Sufficient in all aspects, and all created beings are inherently in need of Him in all aspects?

How could He have a partner in dominion, when the forelocks of all people are in His Hand, so they cannot move or halt, or do anything except by His leave? Exalted be Allah far above that; the one who says such a thing has not given due recognition to Him. Hence He says:

﴿He has created all things﴾ that is, everything that the upper and lower realms contain, including animate beings, plants and inanimate things.

﴿and determined their design and nature in accordance with a precisely accurate plan﴾ that is, He has given each created thing that which befits it and suits it of attributes, in accordance with what His wisdom dictates, so that no sound reason could imagine any created thing to be any different in its shape and image from what we see now. In fact, there is no location for any part or faculty of any created thing that is better suited to it than where it is now. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Glorify the name of your Lord, the Most High, Who created and fashioned in due proportion.﴾ *(al-A'lâ 87: 1-2)*

– and:

﴿...Our Lord is He Who gave all things their form and nature, then guided them [as to how to function and yield the benefits for which they were created].﴾ *(Ṭâ Hâ 20: 50)*

Having highlighted His perfection in greatness, and His abundant kindness, this dictates that it is He alone Who should be loved, worshipped and venerated, the only One to Whom we should be devoted, with no partner or associate. Therefore it is appropriate to describe as false the worship of anything other than Him.

﴿وَٱتَّخَذُوا۟ مِن دُونِهِۦٓ ءَالِهَةً لَّا يَخْلُقُونَ شَيْـًٔا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ لِأَنفُسِهِمْ ضَرًّا وَلَا نَفْعًا وَلَا يَمْلِكُونَ مَوْتًا وَلَا حَيَوٰةً وَلَا نُشُورًا ﴿٣﴾﴾ (سورة الفرقان: ٣)

25:3. They have taken other gods besides Him that can create nothing but are themselves created; they have no power either to harm or benefit themselves, and they have no power to cause death, give life or resurrect.

That is, one of the strangest things, which is most indicative of their foolishness and lack of reason, and indeed is most indicative

of their wrongdoing and audacity towards their Lord, is the fact that they have taken as gods these things that are completely helpless, that are unable to create anything and are themselves created; in fact they made some of them with their own hands.

﴿they have no power either to harm or benefit themselves﴾ that is, either to a small extent or a great extent.
﴿and they have no power to cause death, give life or resurrect﴾ that is, to raise up after death. One of the greatest conclusions of rational thinking is that these cannot be gods; this idea is corrupt and the minds of those who worship them – taking them as gods and partners to the Creator of all things, Who created them without having any partner in that, the One in Whose Hand is the power to bring benefit and cause harm, the One Who gives life and causes death – are corrupt. He will resurrect those who are in the graves and will bring them together on the Day of Resurrection, and in the hereafter He has created two abodes for them: an abode of doom, humiliation and punishment, for those who took other gods alongside Him, and an abode of triumph, happiness and eternal bliss, for those who took Him alone as their God.

Having affirmed, with clear and definitive evidence, the soundness of His oneness and the falseness of its opposite, Allah then affirms the soundness of the message and the falseness of the views of those who opposed that message and objected to it:

﴿ وَقَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوٓا۟ إِنْ هَٰذَآ إِلَّآ إِفْكٌ ٱفْتَرَىٰهُ وَأَعَانَهُۥ عَلَيْهِ قَوْمٌ ءَاخَرُونَ ۖ فَقَدْ جَآءُو ظُلْمًا وَزُورًا ﴿٤﴾ وَقَالُوٓا۟ أَسَٰطِيرُ ٱلْأَوَّلِينَ ٱكْتَتَبَهَا فَهِىَ تُمْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِ بُكْرَةً وَأَصِيلًا ﴿٥﴾ قُلْ أَنزَلَهُ ٱلَّذِى يَعْلَمُ ٱلسِّرَّ فِى ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ ۚ إِنَّهُۥ كَانَ غَفُورًا رَّحِيمًا ﴿٦﴾ ﴾ (سورة الفرقان: ٤-٦)

25:4. The disbelievers say: This [the Qur'an] is nothing but a lie that he has fabricated, with the help of other people. What they say is unjust and false.

25:5. And they say: Tales of the ancients that he has written down; they are dictated to him morning and afternoon.

25:6. Say: It [the Qur'an] has been sent down by Him Who knows all that is hidden in the heavens and the earth. Verily He is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

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That is, as for those who disbelieved in Allah, their disbelief led them to say concerning the Qur'an and the Messenger (ﷺ): This Qur'an is a lie; it was fabricated by Muhammad (ﷺ) and falsely attributed to Allah, and some other people helped him with that.

But Allah refuted their words by stating that this was arrogance on their part, and that they were uttering words of injustice and falsehood, that cannot be accepted by anyone. They were the people who knew the most about the Messenger (ﷺ) and his perfect sincerity, honesty and righteousness; they knew that neither he nor anyone else was able to bring something like the Qur'an, which is the most sublime of words, and they knew that he did not meet anyone who could help him with that. Rather what they suggested was unjust and false.

Among other things, they said concerning him: This that Muhammad (ﷺ) has brought is ﴿Tales of the ancients that he has written down﴾ that is, these are stories and fables of the earlier nations that they transmitted from one to another, then Muhammad (ﷺ) wrote them down as they were dictated to him.
﴿they are dictated to him morning and afternoon﴾. These words of theirs contained a number of grievous accusations, including the following:

- They accused the Messenger (ﷺ), who was one of the most righteous and sincere of people, of lying and committing a gravely audacious deed.

- They said concerning this Qur'an – which is the truest, greatest and most sublime of speech – that it was a lie and a fabrication.
- This implies that they were able to produce something like it, and suggests that man, who is created and is imperfect in all aspects, could compete with the Creator Who is perfect in all aspects, with regard to one of His attributes, namely His words.
- The character of the Messenger (ﷺ) was well known, and they had the most knowledge of his character and were aware that he could not write or meet someone who would write for him, but they made claims to that effect.

Therefore Allah refuted them by saying: ﴿Say: It [the Qur'an] has been sent down by Him Who knows all that is hidden in the heavens and the earth﴾ that is, it has been sent down by One Whose knowledge encompasses all that is in the heavens and all that is on earth, both unseen and seen, what is known and what is secret. This is like the verse in which Allah says:

﴿Verily, this [Qur'an] is a revelation from the Lord of the worlds; the faithful Spirit [Jibreel] has brought it down to your heart so that you may be one of the warners.﴾ *(ash-Shu'arā' 26: 192-194)*

The argument against them here is that the One Who sent it down is the One Whose knowledge encompasses all things, so it is impossible for a created being to make up this Qur'an and say: This is from Allah, if it was not from Him, and to regard it as permissible to fight those who oppose him, and to take their wealth, and to claim that Allah told him to do that, when Allah knows all things, yet He is supporting him against his enemies and giving him control over people and their lands. No one can deny this Qur'an unless he denies the knowledge of Allah, and no group ever said such a thing, apart from the Dahri[43] philosophers who do not believe in the hereafter.

[43] Dahri: The Dahris were a type of heretical philosophers who did not believe in the hereafter; some Dahris even denied the existence of the Creator Himself.

Moreover, referring to the all-encompassing knowledge of Allah will alert them to the importance of pondering the Qur'an and encourage them to do so, for if they ponder it, they will see in it knowledge and rulings of Allah which will definitively prove that it can only be from the Knower of the unseen and the seen. Despite their denial of Allah's oneness and the message of His Prophet (ﷺ), by His grace towards them, Allah does not leave them in the depths of their disbelief and wrongdoing; rather He calls them to repent and turn to Him, and He promises them forgiveness and mercy, if they repent and turn back to Him.

﴿Verily He is Oft-Forgiving﴾ that is, His characteristic is forgiveness, to those who commit sins and bad deeds, if they take the measures that lead to forgiveness, which means giving up sin and repenting therefrom.

﴿Most Merciful﴾ towards them, for He does not hasten to punish them even when they do that which incurs the punishment, and He accepts their repentance after they have committed sin, and He erases what they did before of bad deeds, and He accepts their good deeds, and He accepts the one who returns to Him after having drifted away from Him and begins to follow the path of obedience towards Him.

﴿وَقَالُوا۟ مَالِ هَٰذَا ٱلرَّسُولِ يَأْكُلُ ٱلطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِى فِى ٱلْأَسْوَاقِ ۙ لَوْلَآ أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ
مَلَكٌ فَيَكُونَ مَعَهُۥ نَذِيرًا ﴿٧﴾ أَوْ يُلْقَىٰٓ إِلَيْهِ كَنزٌ أَوْ تَكُونُ لَهُۥ جَنَّةٌ
يَأْكُلُ مِنْهَا ۚ وَقَالَ ٱلظَّٰلِمُونَ إِن تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا مَّسْحُورًا ﴿٨﴾ ٱنظُرْ
كَيْفَ ضَرَبُوا۟ لَكَ ٱلْأَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوا۟ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ سَبِيلًا ﴿٩﴾ تَبَارَكَ ٱلَّذِىٓ
إِن شَآءَ جَعَلَ لَكَ خَيْرًا مِّن ذَٰلِكَ جَنَّٰتٍ تَجْرِى مِن تَحْتِهَا ٱلْأَنْهَٰرُ وَيَجْعَل لَّكَ قُصُورًۢا
﴿١٠﴾ بَلْ كَذَّبُوا۟ بِٱلسَّاعَةِ ۖ وَأَعْتَدْنَا لِمَن كَذَّبَ بِٱلسَّاعَةِ سَعِيرًا ﴿١١﴾ إِذَا رَأَتْهُم مِّن
مَّكَانٍۭ بَعِيدٍ سَمِعُوا۟ لَهَا تَغَيُّظًا وَزَفِيرًا ﴿١٢﴾ وَإِذَآ أُلْقُوا۟ مِنْهَا مَكَانًا ضَيِّقًا مُّقَرَّنِينَ دَعَوْا

هُنَالِكَ ثُبُورًا ﴿١٣﴾ لَّا تَدْعُوا الْيَوْمَ ثُبُورًا وَاحِدًا وَادْعُوا ثُبُورًا كَثِيرًا ﴿١٤﴾ (سورة الفرقان: ٧-١٤)

25:7. And they say: What sort of Messenger is this, who eats food and walks about in the marketplaces? Why has an angel not been sent down to him, to be a warner with him?

25:8. Or why is not some treasure thrown down to him, or why does he not have a garden from which to eat? The wrongdoers say: [If you were to follow Muhammad] you would be following none but a man who is bewitched.

25:9. See what they liken you to! Thus they have gone astray and cannot find a way [to undermine you].

25:10. Blessed be He Who, if it were His will, could give you better than that: gardens through which rivers flow, and He could give you palaces.

25:11. Rather they deny the Hour,[44] and for those who deny the Hour, We have prepared a raging fire.

25:12. When it sees them from afar, they will hear its raging and roaring.

25:13. When they are cast into a narrow place therein, bound together in shackles, they will call out [wishing] for death.

25:14. [It will be said to them:] Do not call out once [wishing] for death today; rather call out many times.

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This is the argument of those who rejected the Messenger (ﷺ), which they used to cast doubts on his message. They objected by asking: why has an angel not been sent, or why does an angel not

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[44] The reason for their disbelief was not that Muhammad (ﷺ) was a human who ate food like them and walked about in the marketplaces; rather it was because they denied the concept of the resurrection, the hereafter and the judgement. (at-Ṭabari)

help him? So they said: ﴿What sort of Messenger is this﴾ that is, what sort of person is this who claims to be a Messenger? They said that by way of ridicule and mockery.

﴿who eats food﴾ – for this is a characteristic of human beings; why was an angel not sent, who does not eat food and does not need what humans need?

﴿and walks about in the marketplaces﴾ to buy and sell. This – according to their claim – was not befitting for one who was a Messenger, even though Allah says: ﴿We did not send any Messengers before you [O Muhammad] but they ate food and walked about in the marketplaces﴾ *(25: 20)*.

﴿Why has an angel not been sent down to him﴾ that is, why does an angel not come down with him, to help him and support him?

﴿to be a warner with him﴾ because, according to their claim, he was not strong enough to deliver the message and did not have the ability to fulfil that mission.

﴿Or why is not some treasure﴾ that is, wealth that is accumulated without effort ﴿thrown down to him, or why does he not have a garden from which to eat?﴾ For then he would have no need to walk about in the marketplaces in order to seek provision.

﴿The wrongdoers say﴾ – the reason why they said that was their wrongdoing; it did not stem from doubts or confusion on their part. ﴿[If you were to follow Muhammad] you would be following none but a man who is bewitched﴾. They said this even though they knew that he was wise and mature in his thinking, eloquent in his speech, and free of anything for which he could be criticised.

Because what they said was so strange, Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿See what they liken you to!﴾ That was because they asked why he was not an angel, free of human characteristics; or why he did not have an angel with him, because they thought that he was not able to do what he said; or why was a treasure not sent down to him, or why was he not

given a garden, so that he would have no need to walk about in the marketplaces; or they said that he was bewitched.

﴿Thus they have gone astray and cannot find a way [to undermine you]﴾. They said things that were contradictory, all of which were based on ignorance, misguidance and foolishness, and none of which were sound. In fact there was not the slightest reason in any of it to cause any doubt about the message. Once anyone looks at these arguments and tries to examine them, it will become quite clear to the intelligent person that they are flawed, and there is no need to refute them. Hence Allah (ﷻ) instructed us to look at them, reflect on them, and see whether this argument would give sufficient reason to undermine one's certainty of his being the Messenger (ﷺ).

Hence Allah states that He is able to give you much good in this world, as He says: ﴿Blessed be He Who, if it were His will, could give you better than that﴾ that is, better than what they say. Then He explains that:
﴿gardens through which rivers flow, and He could give you palaces﴾ that is, lofty and ornate palaces. His power and will do not fall short of that, but – because for Him the life of this world is something insignificant – He gives to His close friends and Messengers whatever of its conveniences His wisdom dictates, and this questioning on the part of their enemies as to why they were not given a great deal of provision is wrongdoing and audacity.

Because these arguments of theirs are known to be flawed, Allah (ﷻ) tells us that they did not say it by way of seeking the truth or looking for proofs; rather they said it by way of stubbornness and wrongdoing, rejecting the truth. They said what was in their hearts, hence Allah says:

﴿Rather they deny the Hour﴾. If a person is stubborn in his disbelief and has no intention of following the truth, there is no way he can be guided and there is no benefit in arguing with him. Only

one thing will work with him, which is for the punishment to befall him. Hence Allah says:

﴿and for those who deny the Hour, We have prepared a raging fire﴾ that is, a great fire that burns intensely and roars and rages against those who are doomed to enter it.

﴿When it sees them from afar﴾ that is, before they reach it and it reaches them

﴿they will hear its raging﴾ against them ﴿and roaring﴾ which will fill them with dread and shatter their hearts. One of them will almost die in fear of it and panic, for its wrath against them stems from the wrath of its Creator, and its flames will increase because of the increase in their disbelief and evil.

﴿When they are cast into a narrow place therein, bound together in shackles﴾ that is, their punishment, when they are in the midst of it, will be a combination of the tight and narrow space and the overcrowding of inhabitants, who will be bound together in chains and shackles. When they reach that dreadful place and think that they have been detained in the worst of places,

﴿they will call out [wishing] for death﴾ that is, they will pray against themselves, calling for death, disgrace and humiliation, and they will realise that they were wrongdoers and transgressors, and that the Creator has been entirely just towards them, as He has caused them to dwell in this abode because of their deeds. But that prayer and call for help will be of no avail, and it will not save them from the punishment of Allah. Rather it will be said to them:

﴿Do not call out once [wishing] for death today; rather call out many times﴾ that is, even if you repeat what you said many, many times, it will not bring you anything but distress, grief and sorrow.

Having highlighted the requital of the wrongdoers, it is appropriate to mention the reward of the pious, those who fear Allah:

﴿قُلْ أَذَٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ أَمْ جَنَّةُ الْخُلْدِ الَّتِي وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَزَاءً وَمَصِيرًا ﴿١٥﴾ لَّهُمْ فِيهَا مَا يَشَاءُونَ خَالِدِينَ كَانَ عَلَىٰ رَبِّكَ وَعْدًا مَّسْئُولًا ﴿١٦﴾﴾ (سورة الفرقان: ١٥-١٦)

25:15. Say: Is that better, or the garden of eternity which has been promised to those who fear Allah? It will be theirs as a reward and final destination.

25:16. There they will have all that they wish for; they will abide therein forever. It is a binding promise given by your Lord, always to be prayed for.

That is, say to them – highlighting the folly of their opinion and their choice of what is harmful over what is beneficial:

﴿Say: Is that﴾ – namely what has been described to you of the punishment

﴿better, or the garden of eternity which has been promised to those who fear Allah?﴾ The provision that helps you to reach it is piety and fear of Allah; whoever fears Allah, Allah has promised this to him.

﴿It will be theirs as a reward﴾ for fearing Him

﴿and final destination﴾ that is, a place of final return, where they will settle and abide forever.

﴿There they will have all that they wish for﴾ that is, whatever they request, wish for and want, of delicious food and drink, fine clothing, beautiful women, lofty palaces, verdant gardens, fruit that is a delight to the eye and a joy to eat because of its beauty and variety, rivers that flow through the gardens of paradise – wherever they want to direct them, they will flow, rivers of water that is not stagnant, rivers of milk in the taste of which there is no change, rivers of wine, delicious to those who drink it, rivers of pure honey – delightful fragrances,

ornate dwellings, lovely voices of astounding beauty; brothers will visit one another and they will enjoy meeting with their loved ones.

Even more sublime than all of that is the joy of gazing upon the Countenance of the Most Merciful Lord, hearing His words, being close to Him, earning His pleasure, being safe from His wrath, abiding in this ever-increasing bliss for all eternity.

﴿It﴾ namely reaching and entering paradise
﴿is a binding promise given by your Lord, always to be prayed for﴾ – His slaves who fear Him ask Him for it, implicitly and explicitly. Which of the two abodes mentioned is better and to be given precedence? Which of the two types of workers – those who are striving for the abode of doom or those who are striving for the abode of bliss – are more virtuous and mature in thinking, and more deserving of pride, if you understand?

As the truth has become clear and the path has been illuminated, there is no longer any excuse for the negligent to ignore the evidence. We implore You, Who has decreed that there should be people who are doomed to hell and people who are destined for paradise, to make us among those for whom You have decreed paradise, and we seek Your help, O Allah, lest we be among the doomed; we ask You to protect us from that.

﴿ وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ فَيَقُولُ ءَأَنتُمْ أَضْلَلْتُمْ عِبَادِى
هَٰٓؤُلَآءِ أَمْ هُمْ ضَلُّوا۟ ٱلسَّبِيلَ ﴿١٧﴾ قَالُوا۟ سُبْحَٰنَكَ مَا كَانَ يَنۢبَغِى لَنَآ أَن نَّتَّخِذَ مِن
دُونِكَ مِنْ أَوْلِيَآءَ وَلَٰكِن مَّتَّعْتَهُمْ وَءَابَآءَهُمْ حَتَّىٰ نَسُوا۟ ٱلذِّكْرَ وَكَانُوا۟ قَوْمًۢا بُورًا
﴿١٨﴾ فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوكُم بِمَا تَقُولُونَ فَمَا تَسْتَطِيعُونَ صَرْفًا وَلَا نَصْرًا ۚ وَمَن
يَظْلِم مِّنكُمْ نُذِقْهُ عَذَابًا كَبِيرًا ﴿١٩﴾ وَمَآ أَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ مِنَ ٱلْمُرْسَلِينَ

إِلَّآ إِنَّهُمْ لَيَأْكُلُونَ ٱلطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشُونَ فِى ٱلْأَسْوَاقِ ۗ وَجَعَلْنَا بَعْضَكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ فِتْنَةً أَتَصْبِرُونَ ۗ وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ بَصِيرًا ﴿٢٠﴾ (سورة الفرقان: ١٧-٢٠)

25:17. On the day when He gathers them together with those whom they worshipped besides Allah, He will ask:[45] Did you lead these slaves of Mine astray, or did they stray from the [right] path by themselves?

25:18. They will say: Glory be to You! It was not proper for us to take anyone as an ally besides You [and worship him].[46] But You granted them and their fathers a life of ease until they forgot the message, for they were people devoid of good and doomed.

25:19. [Allah will say to the disbelievers:] They [those whom you wrongfully worshipped] have denied what you said, so you cannot avert the punishment nor defend yourselves. Whoever among you does wrong, We will cause him to taste a great punishment.

25:20. We did not send any Messengers before you [O Muhammad] but they ate food and walked about in the marketplaces. We have made some of you as a trial for others; will you have patience? For your Lord sees all things.

---

Here Allah tells us about the state of the polytheists and their so-called partners on the Day of Resurrection, when the so-called partners will disavow them and their deeds will be rendered invalid.

﴿On the day when He gathers them﴾ namely the polytheist disbelievers

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[45] This question will be put to those who were wrongfully worshipped, such as the angels, 'Eesâ (عليه السلام), Prophets, righteous people, 'saints', idols and so on.

[46] A question is implied here: so how could we have asked anyone else to take us as allies and worship us besides You? (ash-Shawkâni)

﴿together with those whom they worshipped besides Allah, He will ask﴾ that is, Allah will address those who were worshipped, by way of rebuke to those who worshipped them:

﴿Did you lead these slaves of Mine astray, or did they stray from the [right] path by themselves?﴾ That is, did you instruct them to worship you, and did you make that fair-seeming to them, or is this something that they did on their own initiative?

﴿They will say: Glory be to You!﴾ That is, they will declare Him to be far above the partners that the polytheists ascribed to Him, and they will declare themselves innocent of that.

﴿It was not proper for us﴾ that is, it was not appropriate and was not right for us to take anyone besides You as allies, worshipping them and calling upon them. As we need You and we need to worship You, we disavow the worship of anyone other than You, so how could we instruct anyone to worship us? This is something that cannot happen. Or, in other words: Glory be to You, it was not appropriate for us ﴿to take anyone as an ally besides You [and worship him]﴾. This is like what the Messiah 'Eesâ ibn Maryam (ﷺ) will say:

﴿When Allah says: O 'Eesâ son of Maryam, did you say to people: Take me and my mother as two gods besides Allah? He ['Eesâ] will say: Glory be to You! It would not have been proper for me to say that which I had no right [to say]. If I had said it, You would surely have known it. You know all that I know, whereas I do not know what You know. Verily, You alone are the Knower of the unseen. I said nothing to them except that which You commanded me [to say]: Worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord...﴾ *(al-Mâ'idah 5: 116-117)*

And Allah says:

﴿On the day when He gathers them all together He will say to the angels: Was it you that these people used to worship? They will say: Glory be to You! You are our Close Friend, not they. Rather they used to worship the jinn; most of them believed in them.﴾ *(Saba' 34: 40-41)*

﴿When humankind are gathered [on the Day of Resurrection], they will become their enemies and will reject their worship of them.﴾ *(al-Aḥqâf 46: 6)*

Having declared their innocence and stated that there is no way they could have called for the worship of anyone other than Allah or misguided them, they will mention the reason why the polytheists went astray. They will say:

﴿But You granted them and their fathers a life of ease﴾ and they indulged in the pleasures of this world and followed their desires ﴿until they forgot the message﴾ and were distracted by worldly pleasures and focusing on their desires, so they cared only for their worldly interests and neglected their religion.

﴿for they were people devoid of good and doomed﴾ that is, they were worthless, with nothing good in them; they were not fit for anything good and they were only fit to be doomed and lost. Thus they will mention the reason that prevented them from following true guidance, which is enjoyment of worldly pleasures which diverted them from guidance. The reason why they were not guided is the fact that there was no good in them. If the reason for guidance is not present but the impediment is present, then whatever evil and corruption you can think of, you will find in them.

When they (those who were worshipped on the basis of falsehood) disavow the polytheists, Allah will say, rebuking those who worshipped others:

﴿They [those whom you wrongfully worshipped] have denied what you said﴾, about them having instructed you to worship them, having been pleased with your deeds and having said that they would intercede for you with your Lord. They have declared those claims to be false and they have become among your greatest enemies, so you deserve the punishment.

﴿so you cannot avert the punishment﴾ for your deeds, or ransom yourselves, or take any other measures

﴿nor defend yourselves﴾ because you are helpless and have no one to support you. This is the ruling on those who were misguided and ignorant, and blindly followed others. As you can see, it is the worst ruling and the worst fate.

As for those among them who were stubborn, who knew the truth but turned away from it, Allah says concerning them:
﴿Whoever among you does wrong﴾ by rejecting the truth, wrongfully and stubbornly,
﴿We will cause him to taste a great punishment﴾ that cannot be estimated.

Then Allah says, responding to the objection of the disbelievers who said: ﴿What sort of Messenger is this, who eats food and walks about in the marketplaces?﴾ *(25: 7)*:
﴿We did not send any Messengers before you [O Muhammad] but they ate food and walked about in the marketplaces﴾. We did not give them bodies that needed no food *(21: 8)*, and We did not make them angels, so you have an example to follow in them.

As for wealth and poverty, these are trials that Allah decrees for a reason, as He says: ﴿We have made some of you as a trial for others﴾. The Messenger (ﷺ) is a trial for those to whom he is sent, a test to see who will obey and who will disobey, and We test the Messengers by giving them the mission of calling people. The rich man is a trial for the poor man, and the poor man is a trial for the rich man – and so on, with all types of people in this world, which is the realm of trials and tests.

The purpose of that test is to see: ﴿will you have patience?﴾ And do what you are supposed to do, in which case your Lord will reward you, or will you fail to be patient and thus deserve the punishment?

﴿For your Lord sees all things﴾ and He knows your circumstances. He selects whoever He knows is fit to convey His message and singles him out for His blessings. He knows your deeds and will requite you

for them: if they are good then the consequences will be good, and if they are bad then the consequences will be bad.

# Glossary of Islamic Terms*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *abu* (or *abi*) | أبو، أبي | father (of) |
| *adhkâr* | | *see dhikr* |
| *ahl as-Sunnah wal-jamâ'ah* | أهل السُّنَّة والجماعة | 'people of the Sunnah and the community' |
| *Allâhu akbar* | الله أكبر | Allah is the Greatest |
| angel | ملاك | A being made of light who is totally obedient to Allah and has no free will. Allah has assigned some angels specific tasks, like those who record our good and bad deeds, the Angel of Death, the guardians of hell, etc. |
| *'awrah* | عَوْرَة | the part of a person's body that must be screened from public view; for males it is the area between the navel and the knees, and for females it is everything except the hands and the face |

* The Arabic words are transliterated according to the conventions of the Transliteration Chart found in this book. If a word has become part of the English language (that is, is found in a dictionary of Standard English), that spelling is used in this book and appears first in this Glossary, with the transliterated form in brackets after it.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *barzakh* | بَرْزَخ | An intermediate state between death and the Day of Resurrection; it is also said to be a 'place' where the souls of the deceased will remain until the blowing of the trumpet |
| Dahri | دَهْري | the Dahris were a type of heretical philosophers who did not believe in the hereafter; some Dahris even denied the existence of the Creator Himself. |
| *bismillâh* | بِسْمِ الله | in the name of Allah |
| *dhikr Allâh* | ذِكْرُ الله | remembrance of Allah; specifically, remembering Allah through praising and supplicating to Him |
| *dhimmi* | ذِمِّي | protected or covenanted people; non-Muslims who pay *jizyah* in lieu of *zakât* |
| *fajr* | الْفَجْر | dawn; the obligatory prayer at that time |
| fatwa *(fatwah)* | فَتْوَى | religious decision or decree |
| *fiqh* | فِقْه | Islamic jurisprudence; understanding or interpreting Islamic law |
| *ḥadd* | حدّ | specific punishments prescribed in Sharia for specific offences such as theft and fornication |
| Hadith *(Ḥadeeth)* | حديث | the collected statements and actions of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that with the Qur'an form the basis of Islamic law |
| hadith *(ḥadeeth)* | حديث | a statement or action of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that was remembered and recorded by his Companions and followers |

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| Hajj *(Ḥajj)* | حجّ | the major pilgrimage to the Sacred Mosque, site of the Kaaba in Makkah, to be undertaken by every able Muslim once in his or her lifetime |
| Ḥaram | حَرَم | the sacred area surrounding and including the Kaaba in Makkah; any inviolable or holy area |
| haram *(ḥarâm)* | حرام | forbidden according to Islamic law |
| *ḥoor al-'een* | الحُورُ الْعِين | houris, fair women with big, beautiful eyes who are created to be spouses of the believers in paradise |
| Iblees | إبليس | another name for Satan in Arabic |
| *ifk* | إفْك | forged statement; a lie or slander |
| *iḥrâm* | إحْرام | the state of consecration for Hajj or 'umrah; the special clothing worn by the pilgrim in such a state |
| *in shâ'Allâh* | إنْ شاء الله | God willing |
| *'ishâ'* | عِشاء | late evening; the obligatory prayer at that time |
| *i'tikâf* | اعْتِكاف | a spiritual retreat; seclusion in the mosque solely for the purpose of worship |
| *jâhiliyah* | جَاهِلِيَّة | *lit.* 'ignorance'; the age of spiritual darkness before Islam |
| Jibreel | جِبْرِيل | the Arabic name for Gabriel (عليه السلام), the archangel who transmitted the verses of the Qur'an and other communications from Allah (ﷻ) to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) |

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|---|---|---|
| *jinn* (plural of *jinni*) | جِنّ | non-human, rational beings created by Allah from fire, often referred to as 'demons' or 'devils'. They have free will like humans: some are Muslims, others disbelievers; some are obedient to Allah, others disobedient. Satan is a jinni. Some disobedient jinn mislead people into thinking that they can foretell the future, near or distant, or provide people with riches or some sort of power. |
| *jizyah* | جِزْيَة | a tax levied on the People of the Scriptures when they are under the protection of a Muslim government; it is in lieu of the alms tax paid by Muslims |
| *Jumu'ah* | جُمُعة | Friday; *also*, the midday congregational prayer on that day |
| *juz'* (pl. *ajzâ'*) | جُزْء | a section of the Qur'an equal to one-thirtieth of the text |
| Kaaba (*Ka'bah*) | الكعبة | the House of Allah in Makkah, originally built by Prophets Ibrâheem and Ismâ'eel, which Muslims face when they pray |
| *lâ ilâha illâ Allâh* | لا إله إلّا الله | the Islamic testimony of faith: 'there is none worthy of worship other than Allah' |
| *al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfoodh* | اللَّوْح المحفوظ | the Preserved Tablet in Heaven on which Allah's words and decrees are written |

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| *mahr* | مَهْر | obligatory marriage gift presented by the groom to the bride as a necessary stipulation of the marriage contract |
| *maḥram* | مَحْرَم | a degree of consanguinity precluding marriage; a man whom a woman may not marry due to the close blood or marriage relationship, e.g., her father, brother, son, uncle, or father-in-law |
| Marwah | الْمَرْوَة | one of the two hills between which pilgrims must hurry back and forth during the rites of the Hajj and the *'umrah* |
| *musnad* | مُسْنَد | a compilation (made by his student) of the hadiths related by a scholar of Hadith |
| *nafs* | نَفْس | inner soul or self |
| Quraysh | قُرَيْش | the dominant tribe in Makkah at the time of the Prophet's mission; their society was based on polytheism |
| *Ṣaḥâbah* | صحابة | Companions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) |
| *ṣaḥeeḥ* | صحيح | a grade of hadith: sound or authentic |
| Ṣafâ | الصَّفا | one of the two hills between which pilgrims must hurry back and forth during the rites of the Hajj and the *'umrah* |
| *salâm* | السلام | *lit.* 'peace'; the Islamic greeting of peace |
| *shar'i* | شَرْعي | of or pertaining to Sharia; Islamic |
| Sharia *(sharee'ah)* | شَرِيعة | Islamic law derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah |

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|---|---|---|
| Shayṭân | شيطان | Satan |
| *ṣirâṭ* | صِراط | the path leading to paradise that passes over hellfire; it is found by disbelievers and sinners to be extremely sharp and narrow |
| *soorah* or *soorat* | سُورة | chapter of the Qur'an |
| Sunnah | سُنَّة | the practice and collected sayings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that together with the Qur'an forms the basis of Islamic law |
| sunnah | سُنَّة | acts that are recommended but not mandatory; one who performs them is rewarded, but one who neglects tem is not punished |
| *tafseer* | تَفْسير | exegesis: commentary, or explanation of the meanings (*usu.* of Qur'anic verses) |
| *tahleel* | تَهْلِيل | the act of saying *lâ ilâha illâ Allâh* (there is none worthy of worship other than Allah) |
| *ṭalâq* | طَلَاق | divorce |
| *taqwâ* | التَّقْوَى | fearful awareness of Allah; being mindful of Allah; pious dedication; being careful not to transgress the bounds set by Allah |
| *tasbeeḥ* | تَسْبيح | the recitation of phrases glorifying Allah; saying *subḥân Allâh* (glory be to Allah) |

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| *tawḥeed* | التوحيد | the oneness of Allah: the knowledge that He alone deserves to be worshipped and that He has no partners |
| Ummah | أُمَّة | community or nation: *usu.* used to refer to the entire global community of Muslims |
| *'umrah* | عُمْرة | a minor, non-obligatory pilgrimage to Makkah |
| unseen | خفي | a term used to denote phenomena or aspects that cannot be known using ordinary human faculties |
| *zakât* (or *zakâh)* | زكاة | obligatory charity: an 'alms tax' on wealth that is paid by Muslims and be distributed to others who qualify as recipients |
| *zinâ* | زِنا | fornication or adultery; unlawful sexual intercourse |

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