

divided into two groups according to their attitude towards these things. One group made pursuit of these things their main aim, thus it became the focal point of their thoughts, ideas and actions both visible and hidden, and it distracted them from the purpose for which they were created; they became like grazing animals, enjoying these pleasures and indulging their desires, not caring in what manner they acquired these things or disposed of them. For these people, these things became a cause of their ending up in the realm of suffering and torment. The second group understood the purpose of these things and realised that Allah has made them as a test and a trial for His slaves, so that it may be known who will give precedence to obeying and pleasing Him over his own pleasures and desires. In this case, they have made it a means of attaining success in the hereafter, and they enjoy what they enjoy in a manner that helps them to obey Him. Physically they are dealing with these things but their focus of mind is on something else. They understand that these things are as Allah says: «the enjoyments of the life of this world», so they take them as a means of reaching the hereafter and their *ḥasanât* (righteous deeds) increase thereby, thus giving them provision to help them in their journey towards their Lord.

This verse offers consolation to the poor who cannot afford these pleasures that the rich can afford. It is also a warning to those who are deceived by them and get carried away, and it discourages people of intelligence from pursuing them. This is followed by mention of the permanent abode and ultimate destination of the pious and righteous; Allah tells us that it is better than what is mentioned here, because in it there are lofty gardens with elegant dwellings and high chambers, various kinds of trees bearing all kinds of fruit, flowing rivers that will go wherever they want, and pure spouses who are free of any dirt, impurity or faults, visible or hidden; they will abide therein forever, thus their joy will be complete. Moreover, they will attain the pleasure