

of Allah which is the greatest blessing. Compare this sublime abode with the ignoble realm, then choose for yourself which is better.

﴿Allah is fully aware of His slaves﴾ that is, He knows what they have of good qualities and bad qualities, and what is best suited to their condition, so He helps whomever He wills among them and He leaves whomever He wills to his own devices.

Allah describes paradise perfectly, and He describes those who deserve it, namely those who fear Him by doing what He has enjoined and refraining from what He has forbidden. Part of their supplication is: ﴿Our Lord! We have indeed believed; forgive us, then, our sins, and protect us from the punishment of the fire﴾. They seek to draw closer to Allah by virtue of His favour upon them, as He guided them to believe, and they beseech Him to forgive them for their sins and to protect them from the evil consequences thereof, which is the punishment of the fire. Then He discusses further the nature of their piety or fear of Him:

﴿Those who are patient﴾ that is, they are steadfast in doing that which Allah loves of acts of obedience, and in refraining from disobedience towards Him; they bear with patience the divine decrees that cause them pain

﴿those who are truthful﴾ that is, sincere in faith and truthful in all they do and say

﴿those who are charitable﴾ and spend from that which Allah has provided to them on various causes to help the needy among their relatives and others

﴿those who pray for forgiveness before dawn﴾. Among their praiseworthy characteristics is their thinking little of themselves; they do not regard themselves as good enough or as being of any status; rather they regard themselves as sinners who fall short, so they seek forgiveness from their Lord and look for the times when supplications are more likely to be answered, such as the time before dawn. Al-Ḥaṣan said, “They extended their (night) prayers until dawn,