

﴿so pray to your Lord for us to bring forth for us of what the earth produces, its herbs﴾ – the word translated here as ﴿herbs﴾ refers to plants other than trees – ﴿cucumbers, garlic, lentils and onions﴾. Moosâ said to them: ﴿Would you exchange that which is better﴾ namely the manna and quails ﴿for that which is inferior﴾ namely the foods mentioned; this is not befitting for you, because the foods you are asking for can be found in any town that you go down to. As for the food with which Allah has blessed you, it is the best and finest of food, so how can you ask for something else in its stead?

Since their behaviour was the greatest evidence of their lack of patience and their scorning the commands and blessings of Allah, He gave them an appropriate punishment, as He said: ﴿They were struck with humiliation﴾ that could be seen in their physical appearance, and ﴿wretchedness﴾ in their hearts, so that they had no self-respect or high ambitions; rather their souls were low and vile, and their aspirations were the worst of aspirations. ﴿they incurred the wrath of Allah﴾ that is, they did not gain anything but the wrath of Allah; what a bad return, and what a bad situation they found themselves in.

﴿That﴾ – the reason why they deserved His wrath – ﴿was because they rejected the signs of Allah﴾ that pointed to the truth. When they rejected His signs, He punished them by becoming angry with them. That was also because they ﴿killed the Prophets unjustly﴾.

Allah says ﴿unjustly﴾ to emphasise the abhorrent nature of the crime; otherwise it is well known that killing a Prophet can never be just or lawful. It also indicates that no one should think that they were ignorant or lacking in knowledge.

﴿That was because of their disobedience﴾ in committing sin ﴿and transgression﴾ against the slaves of Allah. One sin leads to another: negligence leads to minor sin, from which stems major sin, which in turn leads to various kinds of innovation, disbelief and so on. We ask Allah to keep us safe and sound from all trials.