
03. Soorat Âl 'Imrân

(Madani)



The first eighty-odd verses of this soorah have to do with debating with the Christians, highlighting the flaws in their arguments and calling them to enter the true religion, which is Islam, as the first part of Soorat al-Baqarah spoke of debating with the Jews, as discussed previously.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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



﴿١﴾ اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ ﴿٢﴾ نَزَّلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ بِالْحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَأَنزَلَ التَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنْجِيلَ ﴿٣﴾ مِنْ قَبْلِ هُدًى لِّلنَّاسِ وَأَنزَلَ الْفُرْقَانَ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَاللَّهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انْتِقَامٍ ﴿٤﴾ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَخْفَى عَلَيْهِ شَيْءٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ ﴿٥﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي يُصَوِّرُكُمْ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٦﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١-٦)

3:1. Alif. Lãm. Meem.²²

²² Groups of letters (*al-huroof al-muqatta'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 =

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- 3:2. Allah: there is no god but He, the Ever-Living, the Self-Sustaining and All-Sustaining.
 - 3:3. He has sent down to you the Book in truth, confirming what came before it; and He sent down the Torah and the Gospel
 - 3:4. before this, as a guide to humankind, and He sent down the criterion [between right and wrong]. Then those who disbelieve in the revelations of Allah will suffer a severe punishment, and Allah is Almighty, an Avenger.
 - 3:5. From Allah, verily nothing is hidden on earth or in the heavens.
 - 3:6. He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He wills. There is no god but He, the Almighty, the Most Wise.
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Allah (ﷻ) begins this soorah by telling us of His divinity and that He is God and there is no god but He; no devotion or worship should be directed to anyone but Him. Everything other than Him that is worshipped is false; Allah is the true God Who has the divine attributes that are inherently implied in these two names. The Ever-Living is the One Who has life in the most perfect sense, which implies all attributes without which life cannot be complete or perfect, such as hearing, seeing, power, strength, greatness, eternal life, and unsurpassable might. The Self-Sustaining and All-Sustaining is the One Who sustains Himself and has no need of any of His creation, and the One Who sustains all others. All created beings need Him to be brought into existence, to be formed and shaped, and to be sustained. He is the One Who controls the affairs of all creatures, body, mind and soul. One aspect of His sustaining and caring for His slaves and showing mercy towards them is that He sent down to His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) the Book, which is the greatest and holiest of the Books, containing truth in its stories, commands and prohibitions. What He says is truth and what He ordains is justice. He sent it down in truth so that people would worship their Lord and learn His Book.

= they were not revealed in vain, and that there is wisdom behind them of which we are not aware.

﴿confirming what came before it﴾ of the previous books. So it is a judge over them; what it confirms is to be accepted and what it refutes is to be rejected. What you find in the Qur'an of rulings that all previous Messengers agreed upon you will find in other books too, and these (previous books) testify that the Qur'an is truly from Allah. But the People of the Book cannot truly believe in their books if they do not believe in the Qur'an; their disbelief in it undermines their belief in their own books.

Then Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿and He sent down the Torah﴾ to Moosâ ﴿and the Gospel﴾ to 'Eesâ

﴿before this﴾ that is, before the sending down of the Qur'an ﴿as a guide to humankind﴾. The apparent meaning of this phrase is that it refers to everything mentioned previously, that is, Allah sent down the Qur'an, the Torah and the Gospel as a guide to humankind to steer them away from misguidance, so whoever accepts the guidance of Allah is guided, and whoever does not accept it will remain misguided. ﴿and He sent down the criterion [between right and wrong]﴾ that is, definitive arguments, proof and evidence that point to the right path. Thus Allah explains what people need to know, so that the rulings will remain clear and no one will have any excuse or argument for not believing in Allah and His revelations. Hence He says: ﴿Then those who disbelieve in the revelations of Allah﴾ that is, after He has explained them, and made them clear and removed any ambiguity ﴿will suffer a severe punishment﴾ that no one can imagine how severe it is or comprehend its nature.

﴿and Allah is Almighty﴾ that is, powerful, and nothing is beyond Him ﴿an Avenger﴾ against those who disobey Him.

﴿From Allah, verily nothing is hidden on earth or in the heavens﴾. This is an affirmation that His knowledge encompasses all things, manifest and hidden, visible and invisible, including the foetus in the womb that cannot be seen by other created beings, and of which they have no knowledge at the time when He is caring for it in the

best manner and it is developing according to His decree. Hence He says: «He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He wills», complete or incomplete, beautiful or ugly, male or female.

«the Almighty, the Most Wise».

These verses affirm the divinity of Allah and that it is His alone, and they declare false the divinity of anything other than Him. This is a refutation of the Christians who claimed that 'Eesâ ibn Maryam (ﷺ) was divine. The verses also affirm the perfect life of Allah, Who is self-sustaining and sustains others completely. These two attributes (divinity and perfect life) imply all the other divine attributes, as discussed above. These verses also affirm the great scriptures and tell us that they were a mercy and guidance for people; hence people are divided into those who are guided and those who are not, and those who do not follow the guidance (of these scriptures) will be punished. There is also affirmation of the vastness of Allah's knowledge, and that His will and wisdom always come to pass.



﴿هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ مِنْهُ آيَاتٌ مُحْكَمَاتٌ هُنَّ أُمُّ الْكِتَابِ وَأُخْرُ مُتَشَابِهَاتٌ
فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ زَيْغٌ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ مَا تَشَابَهَ مِنْهُ ابْتِغَاءَ الْفِتْنَةِ وَابْتِغَاءَ تَأْوِيلِهِ. وَمَا يَعْلَمُ
تَأْوِيلَهُ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالرَّاسِخُونَ فِي الْعِلْمِ يَقُولُونَ ءَأَمْتًا بِهِ. كُلٌّ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّنَا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو
الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٧﴾ رَبَّنَا لَا تَجْعَلْ قُلُوبَنَا بَعْدَ إِذْ هَدَيْتَنَا وَهَبْ لَنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ
﴿٨﴾ رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ جَامِعُ النَّاسِ لِيَوْمٍ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ إِنَّكَ اللَّهُ لَا يُخْلِفُ الْوَعْدَ ﴿٩﴾﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ٧-٩)

- 3:7. It is He Who has sent down to you the Book. In it are definitive verses, which are the foundation of the Book; others are ambiguous, but those in whose hearts is deviation follow the part thereof that is ambiguous, seeking [to cause] confusion,

and seeking an interpretation [that suits them]. But no one knows its [true] interpretation except Allah. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: We believe in [the Book]; all of it is from our Lord. None will pay heed except people of understanding.

3:8. Our Lord, do not let our hearts deviate now after You have guided us, and bestow upon us mercy from Yourself; for You are the Bestower.

3:9. Our Lord, You will gather all people on the day of which there is no doubt; for Allah does not break His promise.

The entire Qur'an is definitive, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...This is a Book, the verses of which are perfected, then explained in detail, from One Who is Most Wise, All-Aware.﴾ (Hood 11: 1)

It is precise, based on clarity, justice and perfection.

﴿...But who could be better in judgement than Allah, for a people who are certain in faith?﴾ (al-Mā'idah 5: 50)

All of it is similar in beauty and eloquence, with some parts confirming others and with similarities in terms of wording and meaning. With regard to the definitive clarity and ambiguity mentioned in this verse, Allah says, in reference to the Qur'an: ﴿In it are definitive verses﴾ that is, their meaning is clear and there is no ambiguity or confusion.

﴿which are the foundation of the Book﴾ that is, they form the basic reference point in the light of which any ambiguous verse is to be understood, and they form the greater part of the Book.

﴿others are ambiguous﴾ that is, the meaning may not be clear to many people, because the wording is very general, or they may be misunderstood by some. To sum up, some of the verses are clear to everyone, and they are the majority that form the reference point for others; and there are other verses which may be unclear to some people. In that case what they must do is refer that which is ambiguous

to that which is definitive, and that which is unclear to that which is clear. In that way, one will find that some parts of the Book confirm others and there will be no contradiction or conflict in meaning. But people are divided into two groups:

﴿but those in whose hearts is deviation﴾ that is, an inclination away from righteousness because of corrupt motives; their aim is to follow misguidance. Their hearts have deviated from the path of guidance. ﴿follow the part thereof that is ambiguous﴾ that is, they forsake what is definitive and clear, and go to that which is ambiguous. Thus they approach the matter backwards, trying to interpret that which is definitive in the light of what they want to understand from the ambiguous verses, which results in confusion.

﴿seeking [to cause] confusion﴾ to those whom they call to follow them, because that which is ambiguous may be interpreted in such a way as to cause confusion due to its ambiguous nature. However, that which is clear and definitive cannot be a cause of confusion, because the true meaning is clear to anyone who seeks to follow the truth.

﴿and seeking an interpretation [that suits them]. But no one knows its [true] interpretation except Allah﴾. There are two opinions among the commentators as to whether the sentence ends with the word ﴿Allah﴾. The majority are of the view that it does end there; others are of the view that it continues, so that what is meant is, “But no one knows its [true] interpretation except Allah and those who are firmly grounded in knowledge.” Both meanings are possible. If interpretation is aimed at finding out the truth about the matter and its real nature, then the correct opinion is to stop at the phrase ﴿except Allah﴾, because Allah has kept knowledge of the true meaning of the ambiguous verses to Himself, as in the case of the exact nature of the attributes of Allah and how they are, and the exact nature of the events that will occur on the Last Day, and so on. These are matters the true nature of which is known only to Allah. It is not permissible to try to understand the nature of these things, because that is something that cannot be

known. Imam Mālik (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about the verse:

﴿The Most Gracious rose over the Throne [in a manner that befits His Majesty].﴾ (*Tā Hā 20: 5*)

The questioner said: How did He rise over it? Imam Mālik said: The rising over is known (in linguistic terms), how (with regard to Allah) is not known, belief in it is obligatory, and asking about its nature is an innovation (bid'ah).

Something similar may be said concerning all the divine attributes to one who asks how they are; he should be told something similar to what Imam Mālik said: that the attribute is known, but how it is, is not known; believing in it is obligatory and asking about its nature is an innovation. Allah has told us of it but He has not told us how it is. So we must be content with the limit that He has set for us. But those who have devious inclinations seek out these ambiguous and unclear matters and seek to discuss that which does not concern them; they put effort into trying to understand that which we cannot comprehend, because no one knows it except Allah. Those who are firmly grounded in knowledge believe in it, but they leave the meaning to Allah; they leave it to Him and thus are safe. However, if what is meant by interpretation is explanation and clarification, then the correct view is to connect ﴿those who are firmly grounded in knowledge﴾ to ﴿Allah﴾. Thus we may understand that interpreting that which is ambiguous in the light of that which is definitive, and removing the ambiguity, is a process that no one knows except Allah and those who are well grounded in knowledge. Hence they believe in it and refer it to the definitive texts and say: ﴿all of it﴾, both the definitive and ambiguous texts ﴿is from our Lord﴾, and there can be no contradiction in that which is from Him; rather it is harmonious, and some parts of it confirm and support one another. This points to an important major principle, which is that if they know that all of it is from Allah, and they are not sure about the exact meaning of

an ambiguous verse, they know for certain that it is to be referred to the definitive verses, even if they do not know how to go about doing that. As Allah encourages people to submit to Him and believe in His rulings, and He has warned against following that which is ambiguous, He says:

«None will pay heed» that is, no one will understand the admonition of Allah and accept His advice and teachings except «people of understanding» that is, people of sound reasoning, who are the best of people and the elite among the sons of Adam. The admonition reaches their minds, so they pay attention to what will benefit them and they do it, and they take note of what will harm them and they avoid it. But in the case of others, they are like dross in which there is no benefit and which produces nothing. No rebuke or reminder will benefit them because they are devoid of reason.

Then Allah (ﷻ) tells us about those who are firmly grounded in knowledge: they call upon Him and say: «Our Lord, do not let our hearts deviate now after You have guided us» that is, do not cause our hearts to incline away from the truth out of ignorance or stubbornness on our part; rather cause us to follow the straight path, to be guided and to guide others; make us steadfast in adhering to Your guidance and keep us safe from that which those who deviate suffer «and bestow upon us mercy from Yourself» that is, grant mercy by means of which You guide us to that which will help us to do good and will protect us from evil «for You are the Bestower» that is, You give in abundance and are very kind; Your generosity reaches all created beings.

«Our Lord, You will gather all people on the day of which there is no doubt; for Allah does not break His promise». He will requite them for their deeds, both good and bad. Allah (ﷻ) praises those who are firmly grounded in knowledge for having seven attributes, which are the key to happiness. They are:

- 1- Knowledge which is the way to reach Allah, for it explains His rulings and laws.
- 2- Deep knowledge, which does not refer to merely having some knowledge. Rather the one who has deep knowledge is the scholarly person who has certain knowledge and practises precise scholarship. Allah has taught him the apparent and hidden meanings (with regard to the rulings and so on). He is deeply immersed in the wisdom of Sharia in terms of knowing, shaping his character and acting upon it.
- 3- Allah describes such people as believers in His Book in its entirety, for they refer that which is ambiguous to that which is definitive. ﴿We believe in [the Book]; all of it is from our Lord﴾.
- 4- They ask Allah for well-being and protection from that which those who deviate suffer.
- 5- They acknowledge the blessings of Allah for having bestowed guidance upon them, as they say: ﴿Our Lord, do not let our hearts deviate now after You have guided us﴾.
- 6- Nevertheless, they ask Him for His mercy which leads to all that is good and wards off all that is evil. They seek His mercy by virtue of His name the Bestower (al-Wahhâb).
- 7- Allah tells us of their faith and certainty in the Day of Resurrection, and their fear of Him. This is what should motivate them to strive to protect themselves from falling into error.

Then Allah (ﷻ) says:



﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ تُغْنِيَ عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَأُولَئِكَ هُمْ وَقُودُ النَّارِ ﴿٦﴾ كَذَّابِ ۖ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا فَآخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿١١﴾ قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا سَتْغَلِبُونَ وَتُحْشَرُونَ إِلَىٰ﴾

جَهَنَّمَ وَيَنَسُّ الْمِهَادُ ﴿١٣﴾ قَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ آيَةٌ فِي فِئَتَيْنِ الْتَقَتَا فِئَةٌ تُقَاتِلُ فِي
 سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَأُخْرَى كَافِرَةٌ يَرَوْنَهُمْ مِثْلَيْهِمْ رَأَى الْعَيْنُ وَاللَّهُ يُؤَيِّدُ بِنَصْرِهِ
 مَنْ يَشَاءُ إِنَّكَ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةٌ لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ ﴿١٣﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٠-١٣)

- 3:10. As for those who disbelieve, neither their wealth nor their children will avail them at all against Allah; it is they who will be fuel for the fire,
- 3:11. as was the case with the people of Pharaoh and those who came before them. They rejected Our signs, and Allah seized them because of their sins. For Allah is severe in punishment.
- 3:12. Say to the disbelievers: You will be defeated and driven together to hell – what a wretched resting-place.
- 3:13. There has already been for you a sign in the two groups that met [in combat]: one was fighting in the cause of Allah, the other disbelieving [in Allah]; they saw them with their own eyes twice their number. But Allah supports with His help whomever He wills. In this is a lesson for those who have insight.

Here Allah tells us that those who disbelieve in Him and His Messengers, and reject His religion and His Book, are deserving of punishment, and indeed the most severe punishment, for their disbelief and their sins; their wealth and their children will not avail them at all, even though in this world they may be useful in warding off some of these calamities that may befall them. They say:

﴿...We are more abundant in wealth and children, and we are not going to be punished.﴾ (Saba' 34: 35)

– but on the Day of Resurrection there will appear to them from Allah that which they had not reckoned on.

﴿The evil consequences of what they have earned will become apparent to them, and the very thing [punishment] they used to ridicule will overwhelm them.﴾ (az-Zumar 39: 48)

Children and wealth will have no value before Allah; rather what will benefit a person will be his faith in Allah and his righteous deeds, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

«It is not your wealth or your children that bring you nearer to Us; but those who believe and do righteous deeds – it is they who will have a multiple reward for their deeds, and they will dwell secure in the high places in paradise.» (Saba' 34: 37)

Here Allah tells us that the disbelievers are the fuel of hellfire, and they are the ones who will remain therein forever. That is the situation in which Allah says that no wealth or children will avail the disbelievers at all. This is the way in which Allah dealt with previous nations, as happened to Pharaoh, those who came before him and those who came after him of transgressors and tyrants, who had much wealth and many troops under their control, when they disbelieved in the signs of Allah and stubbornly denied the message that the Messengers brought. Allah seized them because of their sins, on the basis of justice on His part, not injustice. Allah punishes severely those who do that which incurs the punishment, namely disbelief and sins of various types and degrees of severity.

«Say» O Muhammad (ﷺ) «to the disbelievers: You will be defeated and driven together to hell – what a wretched resting-place». This indicates that the believers will prevail; it is also a warning to the disbelievers. And it came to pass as Allah foretold; He granted victory to the believers over their enemies, the disbelievers among the polytheists, Jews and Christians, and He will continue to do this for His believing slaves and troops until the Day of Resurrection. In this there is a lesson; it is one of the visible miracles of the Qur'an. Allah tells us that in addition to being defeated in this world, the disbelievers will also be gathered on the Day of Resurrection in the abode of perdition. This is what they have brought upon themselves, and what a wretched resting-place and bad recompense will be theirs.

«There has already been for you a sign» that is, a great lesson «in the two groups that met [in combat]» on the day of Badr «one was fighting in the cause of Allah» namely the Messenger (ﷺ) and his Companions «the other disbelieving [in Allah]» namely the disbelievers of Quraysh who came out of their homes in insolence and arrogance, aiming to show off and to bar people from the path of Allah. Allah brought the two groups together at Badr, and the polytheists were many times greater in number than the believers. Hence Allah says: «they saw them with their own eyes twice their number» that is, the believers saw that the disbelievers were much more numerous than them, double their number or more; this is confirmed by the words «with their own eyes». But Allah helped and supported the believers, so they defeated (the enemy), killed their leaders and captured many of them. That only came about because Allah supports those who support His cause and humiliates those who disbelieve in Him. In this there is a lesson for those who have insight and sound reasoning, that the group that prevails is in the right and the other group is in the wrong; otherwise if one only examines and compares the number and arms of the two sides as they appear to be, he will be certain that it is impossible for this small group to prevail over this large group. But in addition to these visible means, there are greater means that lie beyond them and cannot be comprehended except by people of insight, who believe in Allah, put their trust in Him and have the confidence that He will suffice. Those greater means are His help and support that He gives to His believing slaves against His disbelieving enemies.



﴿رُزِقَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ وَالْبَنِينَ وَالْقَنَاطِيرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْأَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ ذَلِكَ مَتَاعُ الْحَيَاةِ

الدُّنْيَا وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الْمَبَاقِ ﴿١٤﴾ قُلْ أَوْفَيْتُكُمْ بِخَيْرٍ مِّنْ ذَٰلِكُمْ لِلَّذِينَ
 اتَّقَوْا عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَأَزْوَاجٌ مُّطَهَّرَةٌ
 وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿١٥﴾ الَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا
 إِنَّا ءَامَنَّا فَأَغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٦﴾ الصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّادِقِينَ
 وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْمُنْفِقِينَ وَالْمُسْتَغْفِرِينَ بِالْأَسْحَارِ ﴿١٧﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٤-١٧)

(١٧)

- 3:14. Fair-seeming to men is the love of pleasures, such as women and sons, heaped-up hoards of gold and silver, fine horses, and livestock and well-tilled land. These are the enjoyments of the life of this world; but with Allah is the best place to return to.
- 3:15. Say: Shall I tell you of something better than that? For those who are pious, there are gardens with their Lord, through which rivers flow, where they will abide forever, with pure spouses and the good pleasure of Allah. Allah is fully aware of His slaves,
- 3:16. those who say: Our Lord! We have indeed believed; forgive us, then, our sins, and protect us from the punishment of the fire:
- 3:17. Those who are patient, those who are truthful, those who are truly devout, those who are charitable, those who pray for forgiveness before dawn.

Here Allah tells us that love of worldly pleasures has been made fair-seeming to people. The things mentioned are singled out because they are the greatest pleasures in this world, and others are secondary to them. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, We have made all that is on earth as an adornment for it...﴾
 (al-Kahf 18: 7)

As the things mentioned have been made fair-seeming to them, because of the excitement they generate, people become attached to them and their hearts become inclined to them, therefore they were

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

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,

then they sat asking their Lord for forgiveness.” This passage speaks of how people are inclined towards the life of this world, then points out that it is nothing more than conveniences that will soon come to an end; this is followed by a description of paradise which is filled with delights. Thus the contrast between this world and the hereafter, and the superiority of the hereafter over this world, is highlighted, in order to point out that people should give precedence to the hereafter and strive for it. The people of paradise are described as pious, then the characteristics of piety are outlined so that one may measure oneself against that and see whether he is one of the people of paradise or not.



﴿ شَهِدَ اللَّهُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ وَأُولُو الْعِلْمِ قَائِمًا بِالْقِسْطِ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ
 الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الْأَسْلَمُ وَمَا اخْتَلَفَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا
 الْكِتَابَ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَيْنَهُمْ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ
 اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٩﴾ فَإِنْ حَاجُّوكَ فَقُلْ أَسْلَمْتُ وَجْهِيَ لِلَّهِ وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَنِ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَقُلْ لِلَّذِينَ
 أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ وَالْأُمِّيَّةِينَ أَسْلَمْتُمْ فَإِنْ أَسْلَمُوا فَقَدِ اهْتَدَوْا وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا
 عَلَيْكَ الْبَلَاغُ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٢١﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٨-٢٠)

- 3:18. Allah bears witness that there is no god but He, as do His angels and people of knowledge; He is the upholder of justice. There is no god but He, the Almighty, the Most Wise.
- 3:19. Verily the true religion in the sight of Allah is Islam. Those who were given the scripture did not differ except after knowledge had come to them, out of mutual envy and rivalry. But if any disbelieve in the revelations of Allah, then Allah is swift in reckoning.
- 3:20. So if they dispute with you, say: I have submitted my whole self to Allah and so have those who follow me. And say to those who were given the scripture and to the unlettered: Do

you [also] submit yourselves? If they do, then they are rightly guided, but if they turn away, your duty is only to convey the message. Allah is fully aware of His slaves.

This is an affirmation from Allah (ﷻ) of His oneness (tawḥeed) in the strongest terms, because it is the testimony of Allah Himself and of the best of His creation, namely the angels and the people of knowledge. The testimony of Allah is based on definitive proof and evidence that point to His being one and that there is no God but He; the type of evidence that is found in the universe and in people's own creation points to this great principle (that there is only one God). If there was no evidence other than the fact that no one affirms His oneness but Allah supports him against the polytheists who deny His oneness, His great grace in that there is no blessing that people enjoy but it is from Him, the fact that no one could ward off harm except Him, and that all people are unable to bring benefits or cause harm to themselves or others – then this would be definitive proof of the oneness of Allah and the invalidity of associating others with Him. As for the testimony of the angels to that effect, we learn it from what Allah has told us about it and what His Messengers have told us. As for the testimony of the people of knowledge, that is because they are the reference point to be consulted in all religious matters, especially the most important, greatest and noblest matter, namely affirming the oneness of Allah (tawḥeed). All of them, from the first one to the last, agreed on that, called people to it and showed them the way that leads to it. So people are obliged to adhere to this matter (tawḥeed), concerning which testimony was given, and to act upon it. This indicates that the noblest of matters is knowledge of tawḥeed, because Allah has testified to it Himself and the best of His creation have also testified to it; testimony can only be based on knowledge and certainty. This indicates that whoever has not reached that level in knowledge of tawḥeed is not one of the people of knowledge.

This verse highlights the importance of knowledge from many angles, such as the following:

- Allah singled them (the people of knowledge) out for the honour of testifying to the most important matter to which anyone may testify (namely tawḥeed).
- Allah mentioned their testimony alongside His own and that of the angels, which is sufficient honour.
- He describes them as people of knowledge, as they are the ones who are carrying this knowledge.
- He describes them as witnesses and proof against people, and made it binding upon people to adhere to the matter that was witnessed; thus Allah made them the cause of people adhering to belief in His oneness, so whoever follows that, the scholars will get part of the reward for it. This is the bounty of Allah that He bestows upon whomever He will.
- The fact that He includes the people of knowledge among the witnesses implies that they are praiseworthy and of good character, and that they are trustworthy and able to take care of that which He entrusted to them (namely affirmation of His oneness). As He affirmed His oneness, He also affirmed His justice and said: ﴿He is the upholder of justice﴾ that is, He is always just and fair in all His actions and in the disposal of His slaves' affairs. He is indeed on a straight path in what He enjoins and forbids, and what He creates and decrees. Then He reiterates the affirmation of His oneness: ﴿There is no god but He, the Almighty, the Most Wise﴾.

It should be noted that this principle, which is affirmation of the oneness of Allah and worshipping Him alone, is supported by textual evidence and by rational evidence, thus it becomes clearer than daylight to those who have deep insight.

With regard to textual evidence, everything in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Messenger (ﷺ) that enjoins and affirms belief

in His oneness, and speaks of loving those who believe in it and hating those who do not believe in it, punishing them (the disbelievers), and condemns polytheism and those who believe in it, comes under the heading of textual evidence; almost the entire Qur'an affirms that. With regard to rational evidence, that may be understood just by thinking, contemplating and pondering, the Qur'an refers to that and points out much of this evidence.

One of the most important principles is acknowledging the Lordship (ruboobiyah) of Allah. The one who realises that He is the Creator, Provider and Controller of all things will reach the conclusion that He is the only One Who is to be worshipped, and worship should be directed only to Him. As this is the clearest and most important of matters, Allah (ﷻ) reiterates this evidence frequently in His Book. Another example of rational evidence that Allah is the only One to be worshipped, to the exclusion of all others, is that He alone bestows blessings and wards off harm. The one who realises that blessings, both apparent and hidden, great and small, come from Allah and that there is no harm, hardship or distress but He is the only One Who can ward it off, and that no one in creation has the power to bring benefit to or ward off harm from himself, let alone anyone else, will reach the certain conclusion that worshipping anything other than Allah is the falsest of falsehood and that worship should only be for the only One Who can bring benefits and ward off harm. Hence Allah often highlights this point in His Book. A further example of rational evidence to that effect is what Allah has told us about other deities that were worshipped instead of Him: they have no power to bring benefit or cause harm; they cannot help anyone else or even help themselves; they have no power of hearing and seeing; even if it is assumed that they can hear, it would avail them nothing; and they have other attributes which are indicative of their utter imperfection. What Allah has told us about Himself, of His majestic attributes, sublime actions, might, power and other attributes may be known

from textual and rational evidence. The one who truly knows that knows that it is not befitting or appropriate to worship any but the Almighty Lord to Whom belong all perfection, all glory, all praise, all might and all pride; it is not befitting to worship created beings that are subject to control, imperfect, deaf and dumb, and have no understanding. Further rational evidence to that effect is found in what people see with their own eyes in the past and at present of how Allah honours those who affirm His oneness, and humiliates and punishes those who associate others with Him. That is because Allah has made affirming His oneness a means of attaining all that is good and warding off all that is harmful in both spiritual and worldly terms. He has made associating others with Him and disbelief a means of incurring punishment in both spiritual and worldly terms. Hence when He mentions the stories of the Messengers and their interactions with nations who were obedient or disobedient, and He tells us about the punishment of the disobedient and the salvation of the Messengers and those who followed them, after each story He says:

﴿...Surely, in that there is a sign...﴾ (*al-Baqarah 2: 248*)

– that is, a lesson that may be understood by those who reflect, for they will understand that belief in His oneness is the only way to attain salvation, and failure to do that leads to doom. This is the main rational and textual evidence that points to this important principle. Allah mentions it a great deal in His Book in various ways, so that the one who chooses faith will do so on the basis of clear evidence, and the one who chooses disbelief would do so despite the evidence that had been made clear to him. To Allah be all praise and thanks.

Then He affirms that He is the True God Who deserves to be worshipped, and He explains the religion through which people should worship Him and submit to Him; that is Islam, which is submission to Allah by declaring His oneness and obeying Him. This is the religion to which His Messengers called people and which is prescribed in His Books. No other religion is accepted from anyone. It is the religion

that is based on sincerity towards Him in terms of love, fear, hope, turning to Him, beseeching Him and following His Messenger in all of that. This is the religion of all the Messengers; anyone who follows them is on their path. The People of the Book only differed after their Books had come to them, urging them to unite in following the religion of Allah, but they only differed out of enmity, envy and rivalry amongst themselves. Otherwise there had come to them the greatest reason that should have motivated them to follow the truth and give up dissent. This was the result of their disbelief, hence Allah (ﷻ) said: ﴿Those who were given the scripture did not differ except after knowledge had come to them, out of mutual envy and rivalry. But if any disbelieve in the revelations of Allah, then Allah is swift in reckoning﴾. Allah will requite each person for his deeds, especially those who abandon the truth after having come to know it. Such a one deserves the stern warning and the painful punishment.

Then Allah (ﷻ) commanded His Messenger (ﷺ), when debating with the Christians and others who preferred a religion other than Islam, to say to them: ﴿I have submitted my whole self to Allah and so have those who follow me﴾ that is, I and those who followed me have affirmed and testified and submitted our own selves to our Lord; we have forsaken any religion other than the religion of Islam and we are certain that they (other religions) are false. This is aimed at making them lose hope of winning you over to their religion and reinforcing your beliefs when you come across specious arguments. It also offers proof to the one who is confused, because, as stated above, Allah referred to the testimony of the people of knowledge among His slaves to His oneness, so that they may provide evidence against others. The leader of the people of knowledge, the best of them and the most knowledgeable is our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), then after him come his followers of different levels. They are possessed of sound knowledge and mature thinking that is unmatched by anyone else; no one else even comes close to it. Once the oneness of Allah and

His religion, to which the best and most knowledgeable of creation (the Prophet ﷺ) devoted himself, are proven on the basis of clear evidence, certainty will be attained and all doubts and uncertainty will be dispelled, and one will realise that all other religions are false. Hence Allah says: ﴿And say to those who were given the scripture﴾, namely the Christians and the Jews ﴿and to the unlettered﴾ namely the polytheists among the Arabs and others: ﴿Do you [also] submit yourselves? If they do﴾ that is, if they believe the same as you believe, ﴿then they are rightly guided﴾ as you are rightly guided, and they become your brothers with the same rights and duties as you have. ﴿but if they turn away﴾ from Islam, and are content with other religions, ﴿your duty is only to convey the message﴾ and your reward is due from your Lord. Proof has been established against them and there is nothing left after that but the requital of punishment for their sins. Hence Allah says: ﴿Allah is fully aware of His slaves﴾.



﴿ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ النَّبِيَّاتِ بَعْدَ حَقِّهِمْ وَيَقْتُلُونَ
الَّذِينَ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْقِسْطِ مِنَ النَّاسِ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ
﴿١١﴾ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ حِطَّتْ أَعْمَالُهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ
نَاصِرِينَ ﴿١٢﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٢١-٢٢)

- 3:21. As to those who reject the revelations of Allah and unjustifiably slay the Prophets, and slay those of humankind who enjoin justice among the people, give them the tidings of a painful punishment.
- 3:22. They are those whose deeds will come to nothing in this world or in the hereafter and they will have no helpers.

These are the ones of whom Allah tells us, in this verse, that they are the worst of people in terms of sin, and what sin can be worse than rejecting the revelations of Allah which are definitive proof of the truth? Those who reject them are the worst in terms of disbelief and stubbornness; they killed the Prophets of Allah who have the greatest rights over people after Allah, for Allah enjoined that they should be obeyed, believed, respected, honoured and supported. But these people did the opposite of that; they also killed those who enjoined justice upon people, which is enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, which in fact is kindness and sincerity to the ones to whom this advice is addressed. But they responded in the worst manner, and thus they deserve the worst punishment for this evil offence; that is the most indescribably painful and severe punishment, one that hurts bodies, hearts and souls. Moreover, their deeds are rendered invalid because of what their hands have earned and they will have no one to help them against the punishment of Allah or to ward off His wrath and punishment in the slightest. Rather, they will lose hope of all good, and everything that is evil or harmful will befall them. This applies to the Jews and others like them, whom Allah has cursed for their audacity against Allah, His Prophets and His righteous slaves.



﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا نَصِيبًا مِّنَ الْكِتَابِ يُدْعَوْنَ إِلَى كِتَابِ اللَّهِ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّى فَرِيقٌ مِّنْهُمْ وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَن نَّمَسْنَا النَّارَ إِلَّا آيَاتِنَا مَعْدُودَاتٍ وَعَزَّوَجَدَ فِي دِينِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَكَيْفَ إِذَا جُمِعْتَهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَوُفِّيَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾﴾ (سورة آل

عمران: ٢٣-٢٥)

- 3:23. Have you not seen those who have been given a portion of the Book? They are invited to the Book of Allah, so it may judge between them, but a group of them turn away in aversion.
- 3:24. That is because they say: The fire will only touch us for a few days. Thus the lies they fabricated have deceived them with regard to their own religion.
- 3:25. But how [will they fare] when We gather them together on a day about which there is no doubt, and each soul will be paid in full for what it has earned, and none will be wronged?

Here Allah tells us about the People of the Book whom Allah blessed with His Book. It was incumbent upon them to be those who most closely adhered to it and were quickest to submit to its rulings. But, Allah tells us, when they are called to comply with the ruling of the Book, some of them turn away in aversion; they turn away physically and mentally. That is the utmost criticism which contains an implicit warning to us, lest we do what they did, in which case we would be subject to the same criticism and punishment. Rather what is required of everyone, if he is called to the Book of Allah, is to hear and obey, and submit, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿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...﴾ (an-Noor 24: 51)

The reason why the People of the Book were deceived into such audacity in disobeying Allah is that they said: ﴿The fire will only touch us for a few days. Thus the lies they fabricated have deceived them with regard to their own religion﴾. They fabricated these words and thought that they were true, so they based their actions on that and did not refrain from falling into sin, because they had developed wishful thinking; they were deceived by thinking that their ultimate destiny was paradise, but they were lying for that was no more than lies and fabrications. Rather their ultimate destiny is the worst of

destinies, and the consequences of their actions will be extremely severe. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says:

«But how [will they fare] when We gather them together on a day about which there is no doubt» that is, how will they be when they are faced with the evil consequences of their deeds on that day? Their situation will be indescribably and unimaginably awful, because that day is the day when all people will be paid in full for what they earned; the requital will be on the basis of justice, not injustice. It is already established that the requital will be in accordance with the deeds. We have seen above that some of their deeds indicate that they will be among those who are most severely punished.



﴿قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَلِكُ الْمَلِكِ تُؤْتِي الْمَلِكَ مِنْ تَشَاءَ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمَلِكَ مِنْ تَشَاءَ وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُهْزِلُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُؤَدِّلُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِإِذْنِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ تُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَتُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَتُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَتَرْزُقُ مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٢٧﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٢٦-٢٧)

- 3:26. Say: O Allah, Lord of all dominion, You grant dominion to whomever You will, and You take away dominion from whomever You will; You grant honour to whomever You will, and You humiliate whomever You will. In Your Hand is all good. Verily, You have power over all things.
- 3:27. You cause the night to encroach upon the day, and the day to encroach upon the night; You bring forth the living from the dead, and You bring forth the dead from the living; and You grant provision to whomever You will without measure.

Here Allah says to His Prophet (ﷺ): «Say: O Allah, Lord of all dominion» that is, You are the Sovereign, the Lord of all realms; absolute possession and control is only for You; all realms, in heaven

and on earth, are Yours and all control is Yours. Then Allah highlights some of the ways in which He alone controls all affairs, as He says: ﴿You grant dominion to whomever You will, and You take away dominion from whomever You will﴾. This indicated that Allah (ﷻ) would take away dominion from Caesar and Chosroes and those who followed them, and would give it to the Ummah of Muhammad (ﷺ). And Allah did indeed do that, to Him be praise. Dominion may be granted or taken away in accordance with the will of Allah (ﷻ). This does not contradict the laws of cause and effect, whether in universal or religious terms, that what Allah has decreed should be the means of attaining, keeping or losing dominion. All of that is connected to the will of Allah, and there is no cause or measure that can lead independently to the effect; rather all causes are connected to the divine will and decree. Among the causes that Allah has decreed should be means of attaining dominion are faith and righteous deeds, unity among the Muslims, preparing whatever weapons can be acquired, being patient and avoiding division. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿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...﴾ (an-Noor 24: 55)

Thus Allah tells us that faith and righteous deeds are the means of attaining power, as mentioned in this verse. Allah says:

﴿...He it is Who strengthened you with His help and with [the support of] the believers. He brought their hearts together...﴾ (an-Anfāl 8: 62-63)

﴿O you who believe, when you meet an [enemy] troop, stand firm and remember Allah much, so that you may triumph. And obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not dispute, lest you lose heart and your strength desert you. And be steadfast, for Allah is with those who are steadfast.﴾ (al-Anfāl 8: 45-46)

Here Allah tells us that the unity and steadfastness of the believers, and their avoidance of division, are the means of attaining victory over their enemies. If you study the history of Muslim nations, you will find that the main cause of their decline is drifting away from Islam and division amongst themselves, which encouraged their enemies to attack them and made them turn against one another.

Then Allah says: ﴿You grant honour to whomever You will﴾ by virtue of his obedience to You ﴿and You humiliate whomever You will﴾ because of his disobedience towards You.

﴿Verily, You have power over all things﴾ and nothing is beyond You; rather all things are under Your control and power.

﴿You cause the night to encroach upon the day, and the day to encroach upon the night﴾ that is, You cause the one to encroach upon the other, and vice versa, which results in the change of seasons, light, sunshine, shade, stagnation and spreading out. This is one of the greatest signs of Allah's might, greatness, wisdom and mercy.

﴿You bring forth the living from the dead﴾, such as the chicken from the egg, trees and crops from the seeds, the believer from the disbeliever

﴿and You bring forth the dead from the living﴾ such as the egg from the bird, the seed from the tree, the grain from the crop, the disbeliever from the believer. This is the greatest sign of Allah's might, which demonstrates that all things are subjugated and are controlled, and nothing has any control over anything. The fact that Allah (ﷻ) created opposites, and created some things from their opposites, indicates that all things are subjugated to His control.

﴿and You grant provision to whomever You will without measure﴾ that is, You grant abundant provision to whomever You will, from sources he never thought of and never earned anything from them before.



﴿لَا يَتَّخِذِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الْكَافِرِينَ أَوْلِيَاءَ مِنْ دُونِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ فَلَيْسَ مِنَ اللَّهِ فِي شَيْءٍ إِلَّا أَنْ تَخَفُوا مِنْهُمْ تَقَةً وَيَحْذَرُكُمْ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٢٨﴾ قُلْ إِنْ تَخَفُوا مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ أَوْ بُشُواهُ يَعْلَمُهُ اللَّهُ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ يَوْمَ تَجِدُ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مُحْضَرًا وَمَا عَمِلَتْ مِنْ سُوءٍ تَوَدُّ لَوْ أَنَّ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَهُ أَمَدًا بَعِيدًا وَيَحْذَرُكُمْ اللَّهُ نَفْسَهُ وَاللَّهُ رَءُوفٌ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿٣٠﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٢٨-٣٠)

- 3:28. Let not the believers take for allies disbelievers instead of believers, for anyone who does that has no connection with Allah at all, except when you need to protect yourselves from them. Allah admonishes you to fear Him, for to Allah is the return [of all].
- 3:29. Say: Whether you conceal what is in your hearts or disclose it, Allah knows it all: He knows what is in the heavens and what is on earth. And Allah has power over all things.
- 3:30. On the day when every soul will find itself faced with all the good it has done, and all the evil it has done, it will wish there were a great distance between it and its evil. But Allah admonishes you to fear Him. And Allah is Most Compassionate towards His slaves.

Here Allah forbids the believers to take the disbelievers as allies, close friends or supporters, seeking their help in any matter pertaining to the Muslims, and He issues a stern warning against doing that: «anyone who does that has no connection with Allah at all» that is, he is cut off from Allah and has no share in the religion of Allah, because taking disbelievers as allies and close friends is contradictory to faith. That is because faith enjoins taking Allah and His close friends, the

believers, as allies, helping one another to establish the religion of Allah and fighting in jihad against His enemies. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿The believers, men and women, are allies of one another...﴾
(*at-Tawbah 9: 71*)

So whoever takes the disbelievers as allies instead of the believers, aligning himself with those who want to extinguish the light of Allah and persecute His close friends, has left the party of the believers and joined the party of the disbelievers. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...Whoever among you takes them as allies is indeed one of them...﴾
(*al-Mâ'idah 5: 51*)

This verse indicates that we should keep our distance from the disbelievers, not mix with them, befriend them, incline towards them or trust them; the disbeliever should not be appointed to a position of authority over the Muslims and his help should not be sought in matters pertaining to the public interests of the Muslims.

﴿except when you need to protect yourselves from them﴾ that is, when you fear for your lives, then it is permissible to do that which will protect you by saying or making a show of that which will bring about protection.

﴿Allah admonishes you to fear Him﴾ that is, do not expose yourselves to His wrath by committing sins for which He will punish you.

﴿for to Allah is the return [of all]﴾ that is, all people will return to Him on the Day of Resurrection, when He will examine their deeds, bring them to account for them, and requite them accordingly. So beware of doing abhorrent deeds that will incur punishment; rather do that which will bring reward. Then Allah tells us of the vastness of His knowledge, which encompasses what is in their hearts in particular, and what is in heaven and on earth in general; and of the perfect nature of His power, which indicates that people should strive to purify their hearts and bear in mind the knowledge of Allah at all times, so that

the individual will feel too shy before his Lord to let Him see his heart filled with bad thoughts; rather he will focus his thoughts on that which will bring him closer to Allah, such as pondering a verse of the Qur'an or a hadith of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), or thinking of and seeking knowledge that may benefit him, or contemplating the creation and blessings of Allah, or offering sincere advice to the slaves of Allah. It is appropriate, in the context of Allah informing us of His knowledge and power, to speak of what implies the requital for deeds, which will take place on the Day of Resurrection, when people will be requited in full for their deeds. Hence Allah says:

﴿On the day when every soul will find itself faced with all the good it has done﴾ that is, in full and complete, not lacking in the slightest, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it.﴾ (az-Zalzalah 99: 7)

The word good (*khayr*) refers to everything that brings one closer to Allah of righteous deeds both great and small; similarly, the word evil (*saw'*) refers to everything that incurs the wrath of Allah of bad deeds both great and small.

﴿and all the evil it has done, it will wish there were a great distance between it and its evil﴾, because of its great sorrow and regret. So people should beware of doing evil deeds that will inevitably lead to great regret, and give them up in this world whilst they are still able to do so, before one says:

﴿...Alas! I neglected my duty towards Allah...﴾ (az-Zumar 39: 56)

﴿On that day, those who disbelieved and disobeyed the Messenger will wish that the earth could be levelled over them...﴾ (an-Nisâ' 4: 42)

﴿On that day, the wrongdoer will bite on his hands and say: Would that I had taken a path with the Messenger.﴾ (al-Furqân 25: 27)

﴿Then when [such a one] comes to Us, he will say [to his devil companion]: Would that there was between me and you the distance

between east and west. What a wretched companion!﴾ (az-Zukhruf 43: 38)

By Allah, giving up every desire and pleasure, even if it is difficult to do so in this world, is easier than suffering all these pains and exposure before people (on the Day of Judgement). But because of wrongdoing and ignorance, a person may focus only on the present moment and not have the rational thinking to see the consequences and thus do that which would benefit him in this world and in the hereafter, and refrain from that which will harm him in both realms. Then Allah reiterates the admonition to fear Him, out of kindness and mercy towards us, lest our hearts become hard with the passage of time. This is a combination between encouragement that leads to hope and righteous deeds and warnings that lead to fear of Allah and giving up sin, as He says:

﴿But Allah admonishes you to fear Him. And Allah is Most Compassionate towards His slaves﴾.

We ask Him to bless us with consciousness of Him at all times, so that we will not do that which incurs His wrath and punishment.



﴿قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ٣١) ﴿n﴾

3:31. Say: If you love Allah then follow me; Allah will love you and forgive you your sins: For Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

This verse speaks of the obligation to love Allah and explains the signs, consequences and fruits thereof.

﴿Say: If you love Allah﴾ that is, you claim this lofty status, above which there is no other, but it is not sufficient to make mere claims;

rather it is essential to be sincere in that claim. The sign of such sincerity is following His Messenger (ﷺ) in all matters, in word and deed, in both major and minor issues of religion, inwardly and outwardly; if an individual follows the Messenger, this indicates that he is sincere in his claim to love Allah (ﷻ), and Allah will love him, forgive his sins, have mercy on him and guide him in all that he does and does not do. But the one who does not follow the Messenger does not truly love Allah, because loving Allah requires him to follow His Messenger; so long as that is not the case, this indicates that that love is not present and that he is lying in his claim. Even if that love did exist, it would not benefit him without fulfilling the necessary conditions. This verse sets the standard against which all people may be measured; the extent to which they follow the Messenger is indicative of their faith and love for Allah, and any shortcoming in that reflects a shortcoming in loving Allah.



﴿ قُلْ أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ ۗ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴾ (سورة آل

عمران: ٣٢)

3:32. Say: Obey Allah and the Messenger: But if they turn away, Allah does not love the disbelievers.

This is a command from Allah to His slaves in very general terms. The command is to obey Him and His Messenger, by means of which one enters faith and embraces belief in the oneness of Allah; all minor issues regarding actions and words, both visible and hidden, are based on that. Indeed, obedience to Him and to His Messenger includes avoiding that which He has prohibited, because avoiding it in obedience to the command of Allah is part of obeying Him. Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, it is they who are the successful.

﴿But if they turn away﴾ that is, if they turn away from obeying Allah and His Messenger, there is no recourse for them except disbelief and obedience to every rebellious devil:

﴿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.﴾ (al-Hajj 22: 4)

Hence Allah says: ﴿But if they turn away, Allah does not love the disbelievers﴾; rather He hates them and despises them, and punishes them in the severest manner. It is as if this verse is explaining what it means to follow His Messenger, which is by obeying Allah and obeying His Messenger. This is following in the true sense.



﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَىٰ آدَمَ وَنُوحًا وَآلَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَآلَ عِمْرَانَ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾ ذُرِّيَّةً
بَعْضُهَا مِنْ بَعْضٍ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ إِذْ قَالَتِ امْرَأَتُ عِمْرَانَ رَبِّ إِنِّي نَذَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِي
بَطْنِي مُحَرَّرًا فَتَقَبَّلْ مِنِّي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَلَمَّا وَضَعَتْهَا قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي وَضَعْتُهَا
أُنْثَىٰ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا وَضَعْتَ وَلَيْسَ الذَّكَرُ كَالْأُنْثَىٰ وَإِنِّي سَعَيْتُهَا مَرْيَمَ وَإِنِّي أُعِيذُهَا
بِكَ وَذُرِّيَّتَهَا مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ ﴿٣٦﴾ فَتَقَبَّلَهَا رَبُّهَا بِقَبُولٍ حَسَنٍ وَأَنْبَتَهَا نَبَاتًا
حَسَنًا وَكَفَّلَهَا زَكَرِيَّا كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ عَلَيْهَا زَكَرِيَّا الْمِحْرَابَ وَجَدَ عِنْدَهَا رِزْقًا قَالَ يَنْعَزِمُ أَنَّي
لَكَ هَذَا قَالَتْ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٣٧﴾﴾ (سورة آل

عمران: ٣٣-٣٧)

- 3:33. Allah chose Adam and Nooh, the family of Ibrâheem, and the family of 'Imrân above all of creation.²³
- 3:34. They were descendants one of another. And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

²³ Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is the best of Allah's creation, and he is included in the family of Ibrâheem mentioned here.

- 3:35. [Remember] when the wife of 'Imrân said: O my Lord, I dedicate entirely unto You what is in my womb, so accept this from me, for You are the All-Hearing, All-Knowing.
- 3:36. When she gave birth, she said: O my Lord, I have given birth to a female! – and Allah knew best what she had given birth to – and the male is not like the female. I have named her Maryam, and I seek refuge with You for her and her offspring from the accursed Shaytân.
- 3:37. Her Lord graciously accepted her and caused her to grow in a good manner, and entrusted her to the care of Zakariyâ. Every time Zakariyâ entered the chamber to see her, he found some provisions with her. He said: O Maryam, where has this come from? She said: From Allah; for Allah grants provision without measure to whomever He will.

Here Allah tells us about those whom He selected among His close friends, beloved and chosen ones. He tells us that he chose Adam above all other created beings; He created him with His own Hand and breathed into him a spirit created by Him; he instructed the angels to prostrate to him and caused him to dwell in His paradise; He gave him knowledge, forbearance and virtue by means of which he superseded all other created beings. Hence Allah favoured his descendants and said:

﴿We have indeed honoured the sons of Adam, given them means of transportation on land and sea, provided them with good things, and have favoured them above many of those whom We have created.﴾

(*al-Isrâ' 17: 70*)

He chose Nooh and made him the first Messenger to the people of earth, when they began to worship idols, and He gave him patience, perseverance and gratitude that enabled him to call the people to Allah at all times. Hence Allah chose him and brought him close to Him, and He caused the people of earth to drown in response to his

prayer, but He saved him and those who were with him in the laden ark, and made his progeny the survivors. Thus He caused him to be remembered and praised in all eras.

He chose the family of Ibrâheem, who was the close friend of the Most Merciful whom Allah favoured by choosing him to be His close friend. He offered himself to be thrown into the fire, he offered his son to be sacrificed and he offered his wealth to honour his guests. He called people to his Lord, night and day, in private and in public. Allah made him an example to be followed by those who came after him, and He ordained that prophethood and the Book should be among his descendants. All the Prophets who came after him are regarded as being of the family of Ibrâheem, because they were his descendants. Allah singled them out for all kinds of noble traits by virtue of which they were the best of creation. Among them was the leader of the children of Adam, our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Allah (ﷻ) combined in him all the perfect qualities that were scattered among others, and he superseded the first and the last; he is the leader of the Messengers, the chosen one from among the children of Ibrâheem.

Allah chose the family of 'Imrân, who was either the father of Maryam bint 'Imrân, or the father of Moosâ ibn 'Imrân (ﷺ). These families who were mentioned by Allah are the best of creation, and righteousness and guidance were handed down from one generation to another of their descendants. Hence Allah says: ﴿They were descendants one of another﴾ that is, they were connected by bonds of blood ties and sharing similar sublime characteristics, as Allah said, after mentioning a number of Prophets who were members of those great families:

﴿And [We guided] some of their forefathers, progeny and brothers; We chose them and guided them to a straight path.﴾ (al-An'âm 6: 87)

﴿And Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing﴾ – He knows who deserves to be chosen, so He chooses him, and who does not deserve to be chosen, so He forsakes him and lets him get carried away (in

misguidance), and causes his doom. This indicates that He chose these people on the basis of what He knew about their characters that made them entitled to receive His generosity and bounty.

The wisdom that we learn from this story about these chosen ones is that we should love them and follow their example, and we should ask Allah to help and guide us as He did for them. We should always strive hard to emulate them and try to acquire their noble characteristics and traits. This is also by virtue of Allah's kindness towards them, that they are praised among the earlier and later generations, which highlights their high status. How great is His generosity and kindness; how many benefits one may attain from staying close to Him. If they had no honour except the fact that the memory of them and their noble attributes is eternal, that would be sufficient honour.

When Allah mentions the virtues of these noble families, He also tells us what happened to Maryam, the mother of 'Eesâ, and how Allah took care of her as she was growing up. He said:

«[Remember] when the wife of 'Imrân» that is the mother of Maryam, «said» when she became pregnant: «O my Lord, I dedicate entirely unto You what is in my womb» that is, I dedicate what is in my womb sincerely for Your sake, to serve You and Your House. «so accept this» that is, this blessed deed «from me, for You are the All-Hearing, All-Knowing»; You hear my prayer and You know my intention. This was when she was still in the uterus and had not yet been born.

«When she gave birth, she said: O my Lord, I have given birth to a female!» It was as if she was hoping that the infant would be male, because he would be more able to offer greater service. In her words there is a kind of apology to her Lord. But Allah said: «– and Allah knew best what she had given birth to» that is, there was no need for her to tell Him; rather He knew about her before her mother knew what she was

﴿and the male is not like the female. I have named her Maryam﴾. This indicates that the male is preferred to the female, and that the child may be named at the time of birth, and that the mother may give the child his or her name, if the father does not object.

﴿and I seek refuge with You for her and her offspring from the accursed Shayṭān﴾. She prayed for her and her offspring, asking Allah to protect them from the accursed Shayṭān.

﴿Her Lord graciously accepted her﴾ that is, He accepted the vow and protected her and her offspring from Shayṭān

﴿and caused her to grow in a good manner﴾ that is, she grew in a good manner physically and in terms of physical well-being and attitude, because Allah made Zakariyâ (ﷺ) available to look after her:

﴿and entrusted her to the care of Zakariyâ﴾. This was by Allah's kindness towards her, so that she would grow up in the best circumstances. So she grew up worshipping her Lord, and she superseded all women and devoted all her time to the worship of her Lord, remaining in her chamber or prayer place.

﴿Every time Zakariyâ entered the chamber to see her, he found some provisions with her﴾ that is, without any effort on her part; rather it was provision that Allah granted to her and with which Allah honoured her. Zakariyâ said to her: ﴿...where has this come from? She said: From Allah﴾ that is, by His grace and kindness

﴿for Allah grants provision without measure to whom He will﴾ that is, without any thought or effort on the individual's part. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿... Whoever fears Allah, He will grant him a way out [from difficulty], and will provide for him from where he does not expect...﴾ (at-Talâq 65: 2-3)

This verse indicates that miracles and extraordinary events may happen to the close friends of Allah, as has been mentioned in many reports, contrary to denials. When Zakariyâ saw what Allah had bestowed upon Maryam and what He had honoured her with of

delicious provision that came to her without any effort on her part, he began to hope for a child himself. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says:



﴿هَذَاكَ دَعَا زَكَرِيَّا رَبَّهُ، قَالَ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنْ لَدُنْكَ ذُرِّيَّةً طَيِّبَةً إِنَّكَ سَمِيعُ الدُّعَاءِ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَنَادَتْهُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُصَلِّي فِي الْمِحْرَابِ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكَ بِيَحْيٰى مُصَدِّقًا بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَسَيِّدًا وَحَصُورًا وَنَبِيًّا مِنَ الصَّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ أَنَّىٰ يَكُونُ لِي غُلَامٌ وَقَدْ بَلَغَنِي الْكِبَرُ وَامْرَأَتِي عَاقِرٌ قَالَ كَذٰلِكَ أَلتَّكَلَّمَ النَّاسُ لِنَاسٍ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا رَمَزًا وَآذَكَر رَبِّكَ رَبِّ أَجْعَلْ لِي ءَايَةً قَالَ ءَايَتُكَ أَلَّا تُكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلَاثَةَ أَيَّامٍ إِلَّا رَمَزًا وَآذَكَر رَبِّكَ كَثِيرًا وَسَمِيعٌ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَرِ ﴿٤١﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٣٨-٤١)

- 3:38. Thereupon Zakariyâ prayed to his Lord, saying: O my Lord! Grant unto me by Your grace righteous offspring, for You are the One Who hears every prayer.
- 3:39. While he was standing in prayer in the chamber, the angels called unto him: Allah gives you glad tidings of Yaḥyâ, who will believe in a word from Allah. He will be a leader and abstinent [from women], a Prophet from among the righteous.
- 3:40. He said: O my Lord, how can I have a son, when old age has overtaken me, and my wife is barren? He said: Thus Allah does whatever He wills.
- 3:41. He said: O my Lord! Give me a sign. He said: Your sign will be that you will not speak to people for three days except through gestures. So remember your Lord often, and glorify Him in the evening and in the morning.

Zakariyâ (ﷺ) called upon his Lord, asking Him to bless him with righteous offspring, that is offspring who would be good in behaviour and attitude and well mannered, so that the blessings, both

worldly and spiritual, would be completed by them. Allah answered his prayer; whilst he was standing in his chamber worshipping and beseeching his Lord, the angels called out to him: ﴿Allah gives you glad tidings of Yaḥyā, who will believe in a word from Allah﴾ that is, in 'Eesā (ﷺ), because he was created by means of a word from Allah ('Be!' and he was).

﴿He will be a leader﴾ that is, he will have such a beautiful and perfect character that he would be elevated to the position of a noble leader, and matters would be referred to him for advice and decisions.

﴿and abstinent [from women]﴾ that is, he is prevented from intimacy with women because he has no desire for them, as he is preoccupied with serving and obeying his Lord.

﴿a Prophet from among the righteous﴾. What tidings could be greater than tidings of this son with his perfect qualities, who would be a Prophet from among the righteous?

In his great joy, Zakariyā said:

﴿O my Lord, how can I have a son, when old age has overtaken me, and my wife is barren?﴾ and either of these two matters could be a cause of not being able to have a child, so how about when both are present? But Allah told him that this would be a miracle, as He said: ﴿Thus Allah does whatever He wills﴾. Just as He has decreed that children come into being by various means, including procreation, if He wills to bring them into existence without the usual means, He will do so, because nothing is too difficult for Him. In haste and seeking certainty, Zakariyā (ﷺ) said: ﴿O my Lord! Give me a sign﴾ that is, a sign that this child will come.

﴿He said: Your sign will be that you will not speak to people for three days except through gestures﴾ that is, your tongue will be prevented from speaking, without there being any physical problem, so you will only be able to communicate by means of gestures; this is a great sign, that you will not be able to speak. This is an amazing contrast: just as He may prevent causes from leading to effects even when

they are present, He may also make things happen without the causes that would lead to them. This serves to demonstrate that all causes and means are subject to His will and decree. So Zakariyâ stopped speaking for three days, and Allah enjoined him to give thanks to Him and remember Him a great deal in the evening and in the morning. Then when he came out from his chamber to the people, he gestured to them that they should glorify Allah in the evening and in the morning, that is, at the beginning and end of the day.



﴿ وَإِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ اصْطَفَاكِ وَطَهَّرَكِ وَأَمْطَلَكِ عَلَى نِسَاءِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾ يَا مَرْيَمُ اقْنُتِي لِرَبِّكِ وَأَسْجُدِي وَأَرْكَعِي مَعَ الرَّاكِعِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ ذَلِكَ مِنْ أَنْبَاءِ الْغَيْبِ نُوحِيهِ إِلَيْكَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يُلْقُونَ أَقْلَامَهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ يَكْفُلُ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا كُنْتَ لَدَيْهِمْ إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٤٢-٤٤)

- 3:42. 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].
- 3:43. O Maryam, worship your Lord devoutly; prostrate and bow [in prayer] with those who bow.
- 3:44. This is an account of the unseen [the distant past], which We reveal to you [O Muhammad]; you were not with them when they cast lots with their pens, [to decide] who, from among them, should be the guardian of Maryam. Nor were you with them when they disputed about it.

Here Allah speaks of the virtue and high status of Maryam, and tells us that the angels addressed her and told her their message, saying:

﴿O Maryam! Allah has chosen you and purified you﴾ from imperfections that could undermine your good character ﴿chosen you above the women of all nations﴾. The first choosing is because of her praiseworthy characteristics and righteous deeds; the second choosing is because she was favoured above the women of all nations, meaning that she was favoured either above the women of all nations of her own time, or in general terms, even though in the latter case some other women shared that status with her, such as Khadeejah, 'Â'ishah and Fâṭimah (*raḍiya Allāhu 'anhunna* – may Allah be pleased with all of them). Thus the fact that other women were also chosen later on does not contradict what is mentioned in this verse about Maryam. When the angels told her that Allah had chosen her and purified her, that was a great blessing and gift that required her to give thanks. Hence the angels said to her:

﴿O Maryam, worship your Lord devoutly﴾. What is meant by the word translated here as “devout” is persisting in obedience, with submission and humility.

﴿prostrate and bow [in prayer] with those who bow﴾. Prostration and bowing are singled out for mention because of their virtue and because they are indicative of the utmost submission to Allah. So Maryam did what she was instructed to do, in gratitude and obedience to Allah (ﷻ). As Allah told His Prophet (ﷺ) what He told him about Maryam, and how she followed the course that Allah had set for her, and this was one of the matters of the unseen that could only be known through revelation, He said:

﴿This is an account of the unseen [the distant past], which We reveal to you [O Muhammad]; you were not with them when they cast lots with their pens, [to decide] who, from among them, should be the guardian of Maryam﴾. That was when her mother took her to those who were in charge of Bayt al-Maqdis, and they disputed amongst themselves as to which of them would take charge of Maryam. They cast lots concerning her by throwing their pens into the river; the one

whose pen was not carried away by the water would be her guardian. That fell to Zakariyâ, their Prophet and the best of them. As you, O Muhammad (ﷺ), told them of this story which neither you nor your people knew, this indicates that you are telling the truth and that you are indeed the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), so they are obliged to submit to you and follow your instructions, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿You were not there on the western side [of the mountain] when We decreed for Moosâ the commission...﴾ (al-Qasas 28: 44)



﴿ إِذْ قَالَتِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ يَا مَرْيَمُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُبَشِّرُكِ بِكَلِمَةٍ مِنْهُ اسْمُهُ الْمَسِيحُ عِيسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَجِيهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِينَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَيُكَلِّمُ النَّاسَ فِي الْمَهْدِ وَكَهْلًا وَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ قَالَتْ رَبِّ أَنَّى يَكُونُ لِي وَلَدٌ وَلَمْ يَمَسِّنِي بَشَرٌ قَالَ كَذَلِكَ اللَّهُ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ إِذَا قَضَىٰ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿١٧﴾ وَيُعَلِّمُهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَالتَّوْرَةَ وَالْإِنجِيلَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَرَسُولًا إِلَىٰ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنِّي قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ أَنِّي أَخْلُقُ لَكُمْ مِنَ الطَّيْرِ كَهَيْئَةِ الطَّيْرِ فَأَنْفُخُ فِيهِ فَيَكُونُ طَيْرًا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُبْرِئُ الْأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ وَأُخِي الْمَوْتَىٰ بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ وَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَمَا تَدْخُرُونَ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَمُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ مِنَ التَّوْرَةِ وَلِأَجَلٍ لِّكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ ۗ وَجِئْتُكُمْ بِآيَةٍ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا عِيسَى ابْنَ اللَّهِ رَبَّكُمْ وَرَبِّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٢١﴾ ۖ فَلَمَّا أَحَسَّ عِيسَى مِنْهُمُ الْكُفْرَ قَالَ مَنْ أَنْصَارِي إِلَى اللَّهِ قَالَ الْحَوَارِيُّونَ نَحْنُ أَنْصَارُ اللَّهِ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَأَشْهَدُ بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ رَبَّنَا ءَامَنَّا بِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ وَاتَّبَعْنَا الرَّسُولَ فَاكْتَسَبْنَا مَعَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَمَكْرُوهًا وَمَكْرًا أَلَّهُ اللَّهُ خَيْرَ الْمَكْرَيْنِ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِذْ قَالَ اللَّهُ

يَعِيسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَرَافِعَكَ إِلَىٰ وَمُطَهَّرَكَ مِنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَجَاعِلِ الَّذِينَ
 اتَّبَعُواكَ فَوْقَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ مَرْجِعِكُمْ فَأَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ
 فِيمَا كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَأَعَذِبْنَاهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا فِي الدُّنْيَا
 وَالْآخِرَةِ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
 فَيُوَفِّيهِمْ أُجُورَهُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٥٧﴾ ذَلِكَ نَتْلُوهُ عَلَيْكَ مِنَ الْآيَاتِ وَالذِّكْرِ
 الْحَكِيمِ ﴿٥٨﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٤٥-٥٨)

- 3:45. Remember [when] the angels said: O Maryam! Allah gives you glad tidings of a word from Him: his name will be the Messiah 'Eesâ, the son of Maryam, held in honour in this world and the hereafter and one of those granted nearness [to Allah].
- 3:46. He will speak to the people in the cradle and in maturity. And he will be one of the righteous.
- 3:47. She said: O my Lord! How will I have a son when no man has touched me? He said: Thus Allah creates what He wills. When He has decreed something, He merely says to it, 'Be!' and it is.
- 3:48. And Allah will teach him the Book and wisdom, the Torah and the Gospel.
- 3:49. And [will appoint him] a Messenger to the Children of Israel, [with this message]: I have come to you, with a sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay, as it were, the figure of a bird, and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allah's leave. And I heal those born blind, and the lepers, and I bring the dead back to life, by Allah's leave; and I tell you what you eat, and what you store in your houses. Surely in that is a sign for you if you are believers;
- 3:50. [I have come] to confirm that which came before me of the Torah, and to make lawful to you some of the things which had been forbidden to you; I have come to you with a sign from your Lord, so fear Allah, and obey me.

- 3:51. Verily Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him. This is a straight path.
- 3:52. When 'Eesâ came to know of their disbelief, he said: Who will be my helpers in the cause of Allah? The disciples said: We will be helpers [in the cause] of Allah. We believe in Allah; bear witness that we are Muslims.
- 3:53. Our Lord! We believe in what You have revealed, and we follow the Messenger, so record us among those who bear witness [to the truth].
- 3:54. And [the disbelievers] plotted and planned, and Allah also planned, and Allah is the best of planners.
- 3:55. And [remember] when Allah said: O 'Eesâ, I will take you back and raise you up to Me and deliver you from those who disbelieve; I will make those who follow you superior to those who disbelieve, until the Day of Resurrection. Then you will all return unto Me, and I will judge between you concerning the matters about which you differed.
- 3:56. As for those who disbelieve, I will punish them with a severe punishment in this world and in the hereafter, and they will have no helpers.
- 3:57. As for those who believe and do righteous deeds, He [Allah] will give them their reward in full; but Allah does not love the wrongdoers.
- 3:58. This is what We convey to you of the signs and the wise admonition.

Here Allah tells us that the angels gave the greatest glad tidings to Maryam (peace be upon her), which was the 'Word of Allah', His slave and Messenger, 'Eesâ ibn Maryam. He was called the 'Word of Allah', because he came into being by virtue of a word from Allah, not by the usual means. Allah made him one of His signs and one of the wonders of His creation. Allah sent Jibreel (جبرئيل) to Maryam, and he blew into the collar of her garment; thus the blessed breath

from the pure angel entered into her, and Allah caused that pure soul to grow from it; thus he was a spiritual being, created from spiritual matter. Hence he was called a spirit created by Allah, «held in honour in this world and the hereafter» that is, he was of high status in this world, for Allah made him one of the Messengers of strong will, those who brought major laws and had many followers. Allah caused his fame to spread, filling the earth from east to west. And in the hereafter he is of high status before Allah; he will intercede like his fellow Prophets and Messengers, and it will become clear that he is superior to most of Allah's creation. Thus he will be one of those granted nearness to Allah, one of the closest of all creatures to their Lord; indeed he will be one of the prominent ones among those who are brought close to Allah.

«He will speak to the people in the cradle and in maturity». This is something other than regular speech; what is meant is that he will speak to the people with regard to that which is in their best interests and will lead to their well-being. This is the speech of the Messengers. This confirms that he was a Messenger who was sent to call people to their Lord. His speaking to them in the cradle is one of the great signs of Allah from which the believers benefit, and which constitutes proof against the stubborn that he was the Messenger of the Lord of the worlds and that he was a slave of Allah; it was also a help to his mother, as it demonstrated that she was innocent of what she was accused of.

«And he will be one of the righteous» that is, Allah blessed him by causing him to be righteous, one of those whom He blessed. These words brought many glad tidings to Maryam, in addition to what they say about the Messiah (ﷺ).

«She said: O my Lord! How will I have a son when no man has touched me?» Usually a child can only be born as a result of intimacy, and this astonished her; however, she did not doubt the power of Allah (ﷻ).

﴿He said: Thus Allah creates what He wills. When He has decreed something, He merely says to it, 'Be!' and it is﴾. So the angel told her that this was something extraordinary, created by the One Who says to everything that He wills, 'Be!' and it is. The one who is certain of that will no longer be astonished or amazed. In His wisdom, Allah (ﷻ) takes a gradual approach by telling His slaves of that which is strange as an introduction to that which is stranger. So He first of all mentioned the creation of Yaḥyâ ibn Zakariyâ, who was born to parents, one of whom was elderly and the other was barren. Then He mentioned something stranger and more amazing than that, which was the creation of 'Eesâ (ﷺ) through a mother, without a father, in order to show to His slaves that He does what He wills, and that whatever He wills happens, and whatever He does not will does not happen.

Then Allah (ﷻ) speaks of the great blessing that He bestowed upon His slave and Messenger 'Eesâ (ﷺ), as He said:

﴿And Allah will teach him the Book﴾. It may be that what is meant is books in general, thus the Torah and the Gospel are mentioned in specific terms because of their sublime status and virtue, and because they contain rulings and laws by which the Israelite Prophets ruled and in which there is a great deal of knowledge; hence they include knowledge of words and meanings. Or it may be that what is meant by the words ﴿And Allah will teach him the Book﴾ is literacy, because literacy is one of the greatest blessings that Allah bestows upon His slaves. Thus He reminds His slaves of His favour in teaching them the use of the pen, as mentioned in the first soorah that He revealed, as He said:

﴿Recite [commencing] with the name of your Lord Who created, created man from a clinging clot. Recite, for your Lord is the Most Generous, Who taught the use of the pen.﴾ (*al-'Alaq 96: 1-4*)

What is meant by wisdom is knowledge of the reasons behind the rulings and knowing how to do or say the right thing at the right time. Hence this is a reminder of Allah's blessings to 'Eesâ (ﷺ), as He

taught him literacy, knowledge and wisdom. This is what helps man to attain perfection. Then Allah refers to another quality of perfection, in addition to what Allah granted him of virtues, as He says:

﴿a Messenger to the Children of Israel﴾. Allah sent him to this virtuous people who were the best of the worlds at their time, to call them to Allah and show them signs to prove that he was indeed a Messenger of Allah and a true Prophet. Hence he said:

﴿I have come to you, with a sign from your Lord, in that I make for you out of clay﴾ a bird; that is, he made it into the shape of a bird.

﴿and breathe into it, and it becomes a bird by Allah's leave﴾ that is, a bird that has a soul and flies, by Allah's leave.

﴿And I heal those born blind, and the lepers﴾ by Allah's leave

﴿and I bring the dead back to life, by Allah's leave; and I tell you what you eat, and what you store in your houses. Surely in that is a sign for you if you are believers﴾. What sign could be greater than making an inanimate object come to life, healing people of ailments that doctors cannot treat, bringing the dead back to life and speaking of unseen matters? Each one of these on its own is a great sign, so how about when they are combined and confirm one another? That should be a cause of belief and faith.

﴿[I have come] to confirm that which came before me of the Torah﴾ that is, I have brought something similar to the Torah and what Moosā brought. The sign of the truthful person is that what he tells people is similar to that which truthful people tell; he tells the truth and enjoins justice, without any contradiction in his words, unlike those who make false claims, especially with regard to the greatest claim, which is the claim of prophethood. The liar who makes a false claim thereof will inevitably demonstrate to everyone that he is lying, as he will contradict himself, and will say something that is different to what the truthful say and is in accordance with what liars say. This is what is dictated by the nature of things and as a result of divine wisdom and mercy, because the one who speaks the truth can

never resemble a liar who makes false claims of prophethood. This is unlike some minor issues, where the words of one who speaks the truth may be confused with the words of the liar. But with regard to prophethood, the matter has to do with guidance or misguidance of people, and their ultimate fate (in paradise or hell). It is well known that the one who is truthful in his claim of prophethood is one of the most perfect of people, and the one who makes a false claim to that effect is one of the most ignoble, mendacious and evil of people. By virtue of the wisdom of Allah and His mercy towards His slaves, Allah has decreed that there should be a difference between them, so that the matter will be clear to anyone who can think rationally.

Then 'Eesā (ﷺ) told them that the law of the Gospel is a law that is easy, as he said:

«and to make lawful to you some of the things which had been forbidden to you». This indicates that most of the rulings of the Torah were not abrogated by the Gospel; rather it completed them and confirmed them.

«I have come to you with a sign from your Lord» that proves my truthfulness and that you are obliged to follow me. This refers to the signs mentioned above. What all of this means is summed up in the words: «so fear Allah» by doing what He has enjoined and refraining from what He has forbidden. «and obey me», because obedience to the Messenger is obedience to Allah.

«Verily Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him». 'Eesā (ﷺ) referred to the concept of the oneness of divine Lordship (tawḥeed ar-ruboobiyah) which is acknowledged by everyone, in order to affirm the oneness of divinity (tawḥeed al-uloohiyah), which is denied by the polytheists. Just as Allah is the One Who created us, granted us provision and bestowed upon us blessings both apparent and hidden, He should be our (only) object of worship, to Whom we turn in love, fear and hope, calling upon Him and seeking His help, and to Whom we devote all kinds of acts of worship. This is a

refutation of the Christians who say that 'Eesâ is God or the son of God; it is an affirmation on his part that he is a slave under orders and a created being, as he said:

﴿... Verily, I am a slave of Allah; He has given me the Book and made me a Prophet.﴾ (Maryam 19: 30)

﴿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 is not proper for me to say that which I have no right [to say]. If I had said it, You would surely have known it... 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)

﴿This﴾ that is, worshipping and fearing Allah and obeying His Messenger ﴿is a straight path﴾ that leads to Allah and to His paradise; anything other than that is a way that leads to hell.

﴿When 'Eesâ came to know of their disbelief﴾ that is, when he saw that they were not accepting what he said, and they said that it was obvious sorcery, and they thought of killing him and tried to do that, ﴿he said: Who will be my helpers in the cause of Allah?﴾ That is, who will help me and stand with me in support of Allah's religion? ﴿The disciples﴾, who were the helpers, ﴿said: We will be helpers [in the cause] of Allah﴾ that is, they offered their support and did that, and they said: ﴿We believe in Allah; bear witness that we are Muslims﴾.

﴿Our Lord! We believe in what You have revealed, and we follow the Messenger, so record us among those who bear witness [to the truth]﴾ that is, beneficial testimony, bearing witness to the oneness of Allah (tawḥeed) and believing in His Messenger, and adhering to that. When they stood with 'Eesâ in support of Allah's religion and established His laws, some of the Children of Israel believed whilst others disbelieved. Then the two groups fought, and Allah supported those who had believed against their enemies, and thus they were victorious. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says here:

﴿And [the disbelievers] plotted and planned﴾ that is, the disbelievers plotted to kill the Prophet of Allah and extinguish His light ﴿and Allah also planned﴾ against them, as a requital to them for their plot.

﴿and Allah is the best of planners﴾. Thus Allah thwarted their plot and they became losers.

﴿And [remember] when Allah said: O 'Eesâ, I will take you back and raise you up to Me and deliver you from those who disbelieve﴾. So Allah took His slave and Messenger 'Eesâ up to Himself, and He made someone else look like him, so they [the disbelievers] took the one who had been made to look like him, and they killed him and crucified him and thus incurred great sin because of their intention to kill the Messenger of Allah. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...But they did not slay him or crucify him; rather [another man] was made to resemble him to them...﴾ (*an-Nisâ' 4: 157*)

This verse indicates that Allah is exalted above His creation and that He rose above His Throne in a real sense, as is indicated by the Qur'anic texts and hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ) which are accepted and believed in by ahl as-Sunnah. Allah is Almighty, Most Powerful, the Subduer, and by His might He prevented the Children of Israel, after they had decided to kill 'Eesâ (ﷺ) and there was nothing to prevent them from doing so, from harming him, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...I restrained the Children of Israel from [harming] you when you brought them the clear signs and the disbelievers among them said: This is obviously nothing but magic!﴾ (*al-Mâ'idah 5: 110*)

Allah is most wise and does what is most appropriate; there is great wisdom behind His confusing the Children of Israel, and thus they crucified the one who was caused to look like 'Eesâ, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...Those who differ concerning this matter are in doubt concerning it, with no [certain] knowledge, but only conjecture to follow. But they certainly did not slay him.﴾ (*an-Nisâ' 4: 157*)

Then Allah (ﷻ) said:

«I will make those who follow you superior to those who disbelieve, until the Day of Resurrection». We have seen above that Allah supported the believers among them against the disbelievers, and the Christians who claimed to follow 'Eesâ (ﷺ) continued to subdue the Jews, because the Christians were closer to following 'Eesâ than the Jews were. That continued until Allah sent our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ); then the Muslims became the ones who were truly following 'Eesâ, so Allah supported them and caused them to prevail over the Jews, Christians and all of the disbelievers, although at some times it may so happen that the disbelievers, Christians or others, gain the upper hand over the Muslims, in accordance with Allah's wisdom and as a punishment for failing to follow the Messenger (ﷺ).

«Then you will all return unto Me» that is, the ultimate destiny of all creatures is to Him

«and I will judge between you concerning the matters about which you differed». Everyone claims that the truth is with him, and that he is right and everyone else is wrong, but these are mere claims that require proof. Then Allah tells us that He will judge between them on the basis of fairness and justice.

«As for those who disbelieve» that is, those who disbelieve in Allah, His revelations and His Messengers

«I will punish them with a severe punishment in this world and in the hereafter». The punishment in this world is what Allah sent upon them of calamities, visible punishments, killing, humiliation and so on, as a foretaste of the punishment of the hereafter, and the punishment of the hereafter is the greatest calamity. Indeed, it is the punishment of the fire, the wrath of Allah and deprivation of reward.

«and they will have no helpers» to protect them from the punishment of Allah, neither among those who they claim will intercede for them with Allah nor those that they take as protectors instead of Him. Neither their friends and relatives nor their own selves will help them.

﴿As for those who believe﴾ in Allah, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, the resurrection after death, and other things that Allah has enjoined us to believe in

﴿and do righteous deeds﴾ in their hearts, and in word and deed, as taught by the Messengers, seeking thereby the pleasure of the Lord of the worlds

﴿He [Allah] will give them their reward in full﴾. This indicates that they will be rewarded in this world for their good deeds, by way of honour, dignity, support and a good life, but the reward will be given in full on the Day of Resurrection, when they will find what they sent forth of good deeds rewarded abundantly. So He will give each one who did good deeds the reward of his deeds, and give them more by His grace and generosity.

﴿but Allah does not love the wrongdoers﴾; rather He hates them and subjects them to His wrath and punishment.

﴿This is what We convey to you of the signs and the wise admonition﴾. This is a great blessing to His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) and to his Ummah, as He sent down to them this wise admonition which is precise and clear, and explains in detail rulings, what is permissible and what is forbidden, and stories of the earlier Prophets and what Allah caused to happen at their hands of clear signs and astounding miracles. This Qur'an tells us everything that will benefit us of stories and rulings, from which we may increase in knowledge, learn lessons and find reassurance; this is the greatest mercy from the Lord of humanity.

Then Allah (ﷻ) says:



﴿إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ﴿٥٩﴾﴾

﴿الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُن مِّنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٥٩-٦٠)

- 3:59. The likeness of 'Eesâ before Allah is as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him, 'Be!' and he was.
- 3:60. This is the truth from your Lord, so do not be among those who doubt.

Here Allah establishes proof against the Christians who attribute to 'Eesâ (ﷺ) that which is not his, with no proof and no reason for confusion, and claim that as he did not have a father, he deserves to be the son of God or a partner in God's divinity. But this (the fact that he did not have a father) should not lead to any confusion, let alone form the basis of their argument, because his being created in this manner is one of the signs of Allah that indicate that Allah alone is the Creator Who is in control of all things, and that all causes that lead to effects are subject to His will and power. The fact that 'Eesâ was created with a mother only is more indicative of the opposite of their argument, and demonstrates that no one can be a partner or associate of Allah in any way whatsoever. Moreover, Allah created Adam (ﷺ) from dust, not from a father or a mother, and if that does not lead to the same conclusion as the Christians claimed about the Messiah, then it is more appropriate that the fact that the Messiah was created from a mother without a father should not lead to that conclusion. If the claim of prophethood and divinity can be made with regard to the Messiah, then the argument may be stronger with regard to Adam. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿The likeness of 'Eesâ before Allah is as the likeness of Adam; He created him from dust, then said to him, 'Be!' and he was. This is the truth from your Lord﴾ that is, what We have told you about the Messiah (ﷺ) is the truth that is at the highest level of authenticity, because it comes from your Lord; because He has bestowed special care upon you and your Ummah, He has told you stories of the Prophets (peace be upon them).

«so do not be among those who doubt» that is, those who are uncertain of something that your Lord has told you. This verse and those that follow it offer proof for an important principle, which is that where there is evidence that something is true and one is certain about it, whether it is an issue of belief ('*aqeedah*) or otherwise, he must be certain that everything that is contrary to it must be false and any argument in support of that opposing view is flawed, whether one is able to see the flaw or not. His inability to refute that argument should not make him doubt what he knows, because whatever is contrary to the truth is false. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«...And what is there apart from truth but error?...» (*Yoonus 10: 32*)

Following this principle will help one deal with many specious arguments that may be presented by philosophers and sophisticates; if a person tries to highlight the flaws, that is good but is not necessary; otherwise he should focus on his task, which is to explain the truth on the basis of evidence and call people to it.



﴿فَمَنْ حَاجَّكَ فِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ فَقُلْ تَعَالَوْا نَدْعُ أَبْنَاءَنَا وَأَبْنَاءَكُمْ
وَنِسَاءَنَا وَنِسَاءَكُمْ وَأَنْفُسَنَا وَأَنْفُسَكُمْ ثُمَّ نَبْتَهِلْ فَنَجْعَلْ لَعْنَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَى
الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٦١﴾ إِنَّ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْقَصَصُ الْحَقُّ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُوَ
الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٦٢﴾ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٦٣﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٦١-٦٣)

3:61. If anyone disputes with you concerning him [*'Eesâ*], after the knowledge that has come to you, say: Come, let us gather together – our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves – then let us earnestly pray and invoke the curse of Allah on the liars.

3:62. This is the truth of the matter. There is no god but Allah. Verily Allah is the Almighty, the Most Wise.

3:63. But if they turn away, Allah is fully aware of those who spread mischief.

«If anyone disputes» that is, argues «with you» about 'Eesā (ﷺ), and claims that he is above being a slave of Allah, and raises him above his real status, «after the knowledge that has come to you», that he is indeed a slave of Allah and His Messenger, and you have explained to those who argue with you what you have of evidence that indicates that he is no more than a slave whom Allah has blessed, then this indicates that he is stubborn and has not accepted what you say about this issue that is based on certain knowledge. Hence there is no longer any benefit, either for you or for him, in arguing with him because the truth has become clear, so his arguing about it is the argument of a stubborn person who is opposing Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ); his aim is to follow his whims and desires, not to follow that which Allah has revealed, so this is a hopeless case. Hence Allah instructed His Prophet (ﷺ) to move onto challenging and invoking mutual curses: they were to call upon Allah and pray earnestly, asking Him to send His curse and punishment upon whichever of the two groups was lying, on (the leader) and on the most beloved of people to him, namely his children and womenfolk. So the Prophet (ﷺ) called upon them to do that, but they turned away and refused, because they realised that if they engaged in invoking mutual curses, they would go back to their families and children, and they would not find any families and any wealth, and the punishment would be brought forward for them. They were content with their false religion, even though they were certain that it was false. This is the utmost mischief and stubbornness. Hence Allah (ﷻ) said:

«But if they turn away, Allah is fully aware of those who spread mischief» and He will punish them severely for that. Allah tells us that «This» that Allah has related to His slaves «is the truth of the

matter», and any other story or statement that is told to the believer that contradicts this is false.

«There is no god but Allah», hence He is the only object of worship Who is to be worshipped sincerely, and it is not appropriate to direct worship to anyone but Him; no one else deserves even an atom's weight of worship.

«Verily Allah is the Almighty»; He has subdued all things and everything submits to Him

«the Most Wise»; He is wise in all that he does or says, and His is the utmost wisdom in testing the believers with the disbelievers, by means of their fighting them, arguing with them and striving against them in word and deed.



﴿قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ تَعَالَوْا إِلَى كَلِمَةٍ سَوَامٍ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ أَلَّا نَعْبُدَ إِلَّا اللَّهَ وَلَا نُشْرِكَ بِهِ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعْضُنَا بَعْضًا أَرْبَابًا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَقُولُوا اشْهَدُوا بِأَنَّا مُسْلِمُونَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٦٤)

3:64. Say: O People of the Book! Come to common terms between us and you, that we worship none but Allah, that we associate no partners with Him, and that we not take one another as lords besides Allah. If then they turn away, say: Bear witness that we are Muslims [those who submit to Allah].

That is, say to the People of the Book, the Jews and Christians: «Come to common terms between us and you» that is, let us agree on a word on which all the Prophets and Messengers are agreed, and no one differs from that except those who are stubborn and misguided, and it does not belong only to one party and not the other; rather it is something that we and you have in common. This is by way of fairness in discussion and argument. Then Allah explains that by saying:

﴿that we worship none but Allah, that we associate no partners with Him﴾ that is, we worship Allah only, focusing all love, fear and hope on Him alone, and we do not associate any Prophet, angel, “saint”, idol, graven image, animate being or inanimate object with Him ﴿and that we not take one another as lords besides Allah﴾; rather, all obedience is to Allah and His Messenger, so we do not obey created beings by disobeying the Creator, because that would be ascribing the status of lordship to those created beings.

When calling the People of the Book or others to that, if they respond then they are like you, with the same rights and duties; but if they turn away, then they are stubborn and are following their whims and desires, so let them bear witness that you are Muslims (those who submit to Allah). Perhaps the benefit of that is that if you say that to them, when you are the people of true knowledge, this will establish further proof against them, as Allah referred to the testimony of the people of knowledge in order to establish proof against those who are stubborn. Moreover, if you become Muslim and believe, Allah would not care that others do not submit, because they are wicked and have evil in their hearts. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say: Believe in it, or do not believe. Verily, those who were given knowledge before it, when it is recited to them, fall down on their faces in prostration.﴾ (al-Isrâ' 17: 107)

Moreover, when the specious arguments are presented in order to undermine belief and faith, that motivates the believer to renew his faith, affirm his Islam, announce his certainty and express gratitude for the blessing of his Lord.



﴿يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تُحَاجُّونَ فِي إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمَا أُنزِلَتِ التَّوْرَةُ وَالْإِنْجِيلُ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ هَكَانُمْ هُنُوْلَاءُ حَاجِبَةٌ فِيمَا لَكُمْ بِدِيءٍ عِلْمٌ فَلِمَ

تَحَاجُونَ فِيهَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ مَا كَانَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ يَهُودِيًّا
وَلَا نَصْرَانِيًّا وَلَكِنْ كَانَ حَنِيفًا مُسْلِمًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٦٧﴾ إِنَّ أَوْلَى النَّاسِ
بِإِبْرَاهِيمَ لِلَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ وَهَذَا النَّبِيُّ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾ (سورة آل

عمران: ٦٥-٦٨)

- 3:65. O People of the Book! Why do you dispute about Ibrâheem, when the Torah and the Gospel were not revealed until after him? Do you not understand?
- 3:66. Look at yourselves! You are the ones who disputed about that of which you have [a little] knowledge, but why do you dispute about matters of which you have no knowledge? Allah knows, but you do not know.
- 3:67. Ibrâheem was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a monotheist, a Muslim, and he was not one of those who ascribe partners to Allah.
- 3:68. Verily the closest of people to Ibrâheem are those who followed him, and this Prophet and those who believe. And Allah is the Guardian of the believers.

When the Jews claimed that Ibrâheem was a Jew, and the Christians claimed that he was a Christian, and they argued about that, Allah refuted their arguments on three counts:

- 1- Their argument about Ibrâheem was an argument about a matter of which they had no knowledge, hence it was not possible or allowable for them to argue about something that had nothing to do with them. They used to argue about the rulings mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel, whether they were right or wrong, but in this case they had no right to argue about Ibrâheem.
- 2- The Jews claimed to be following the Torah and the Christians claimed to be following the Gospel, but the Torah and the Gospel only came down after the time of Ibrâheem. So how

could they claim that Ibrâheem belonged to them, when he had come before them? Does this make any sense? Hence Allah says: ﴿Do you not understand?﴾ that is, if you did understand what you are saying, you would not say that.

- 3- Allah (ﷻ) declared that His close friend (Ibrâheem) had nothing to do with the Jews, the Christians or the polytheists; rather He described him as ﴿a monotheist, a Muslim﴾, and stated that the people who were closest to him were those who believed in him of his own nation, and this Prophet – namely Muhammad (ﷺ) – and those who believed with him, because they are the ones who truly followed him, and they are closer to him than any others, and Allah (ﷻ) is their Guardian, Helper and Supporter. As for those who cast his religion behind their backs, such as the Jews and Christians and polytheists, they do not belong to Ibrâheem and he is not one of them; merely attributing themselves falsely to him is of no benefit to them. These verses include the prohibition on arguing and debating without knowledge; the one who speaks in that case is speaking of something that he cannot prove and it is not permissible for him to argue about it. These verses also offer encouragement to learn history, for it is a way to refute many false arguments and claims that are contrary to history.



﴿وَدَّتْ طَّائِفَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَوْ يُضِلُّوكُمْ وَمَا يُضِلُّوكُمْ إِلَّا أَنفُسُهُمْ وَمَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ يَتَّأَهَّلُ الْكِنَانِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِتَايَاتِ اللَّهِ وَأَنْتُمْ تَشْهَدُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ يَتَّأَهَّلُ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَلْسُوتُ الْحَقَّ بِالْبَطْلِ وَتَكْنُمُونَ الْحَقَّ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَقَالَتْ طَّائِفَةٌ مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ ءَامِنُوا بِالَّذِي أُنزِلَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَجِهَ النَّهَارِ وَكُفِّرُوا ءَاخِرَهُ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ وَلَا تَتُومِنُوا إِلَّا لِمَنْ تَبِعَ دِينَكُمْ قُلْ إِنْ أَلْهَدَىٰ هَدَىٰ اللَّهُ أَن

يُؤَفِّقُ أَحَدًا مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيتُمْ أَوْ يُجَاجِرُكُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ قُلْ إِنْ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٣﴾ يَخْلُصُ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٧٤﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ٦٩-٧٤)

- 3:69. Some of the People of the Book wish to lead you astray, but they only lead themselves astray, although they do not realise it.
- 3:70. O People of the Book, why do you reject the revelations of Allah, while you [yourselves] bear witness [to their truth]?
- 3:71. O People of the Book, why do you confuse truth with falsehood and knowingly conceal the truth?
- 3:72. A group among the People of the Book say: [Claim to] believe in the morning in what is revealed to the believers, but reject it at the end of the day; perhaps they may turn back [from Islam].
- 3:73. And believe no one except one who follows your religion.²⁴ Say [O Muhammad]: True guidance is the guidance of Allah. [They say:] Lest anyone be given the same as you were given, or argue with you before your Lord. Say: All bounties are in the Hand of Allah; He grants them to whomever He will. And Allah is All-Encompassing, All-Knowing.
- 3:74. He singles out for His mercy whomever He will; for Allah is the Possessor of abundant grace.

Here Allah (ﷻ) warns His believing slaves about the plot of that evil group among the People of the Book, and tells them that they wish to lead you astray, as He says elsewhere:

﴿Many among the People of the Book wish they could turn you back to disbelief after you have believed...﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 109)

²⁴ These are the words of that group among the People of the Book to their co-religionists.

It is well known that the one who wishes for something will try his hardest to attain his goal, and this group is indeed striving and putting effort into leading the believers astray and making them doubt their faith by all possible means. But by His grace and kindness, the plotting of evil only rebounds on those who make the plot. Allah says: ﴿but they only lead themselves astray﴾. Their efforts to lead the believers astray only make them go further astray and will result in more severe punishment for them. Allah says:

﴿For those who disbelieve and bar others from the path of Allah, We will add punishment to their punishment because they used to spread mischief.﴾ (*an-Nahl 16: 88*)

﴿although they do not realise it﴾ that is, they do not realise that they are in fact striving to harm themselves, and that they will not harm you at all.

﴿O People of the Book, why do you reject the revelations of Allah, while you [yourselves] bear witness [to their truth]?﴾ That is, what makes you disbelieve in the revelations of Allah despite your knowing that what you follow is false, and that what Muhammad (ﷺ) has brought is the truth about which you have no doubt; rather you bear witness to it and sometimes whisper this testimony to one another? This is instructing them to give up their misguidance, then Allah rebukes them for misleading the people, as He says:

﴿O People of the Book, why do you confuse truth with falsehood and knowingly conceal the truth?﴾. Here Allah rebukes them for confusing truth with falsehood and for concealing the truth, because by doing these two things they misled their own people. If the scholars confuse truth with falsehood and do not distinguish between them, and instead leave matters vague and conceal the truth which they are enjoined to make manifest, that results in concealment of the truth and the prevalence of falsehood, and hence the common folk who are seeking the truth and want to know it so that they can follow it will not be guided. What is required from the people of knowledge

is to make the truth clear to the people and proclaim it openly, and distinguish truth from falsehood, and explain clearly the difference between evil and good, what is permissible and what is forbidden, sound belief and corrupt belief, so that the people will be guided, those who have gone astray will be brought back and proof will be established against those who are stubborn. Allah says:

﴿And [remember] when Allah took a covenant from those who were given the scripture, that they should make it known and clear to humankind, and not conceal it; but they cast it behind their backs...﴾
(*Al 'Imrān* 3: 187)

Then Allah tells us about what this evil group thought of and what they wanted to plot against the believers:

﴿A group among the People of the Book say: [Claim to] believe in the morning in what is revealed to the believers, but reject it at the end of the day﴾ that is, enter their religion with ulterior motives, and as a trick, at the beginning of the day, then at the end of the day, exit from it; ﴿perhaps they may turn back [from Islam]﴾ that is, from their religion, and perhaps they may say: If it were true, the people of knowledge and the Book would not have left it. This is what they were aiming at, because they thought highly of themselves and thought that the people thought well of them and would follow them in what they said and did. But Allah insists that His light should be perfected even if the disbelievers hate that.

They said to one another: ﴿And believe no one except one who follows your religion.﴾ That is, do not trust or accept the word of anyone but your co-religionists, and conceal your affairs, because if you tell others who are not followers of your religion, they will acquire knowledge that you have and will become like you or they will argue with you before your Lord, and will testify against you that proof was established against you and true guidance was explained to you, but you did not follow it. To sum up, they thought that by not telling the believers about what they had of knowledge, they

would be depriving them of knowledge, because in their view no one could have knowledge except them, and the knowledge they had could establish proof against them. But Allah refuted them by saying: ﴿True guidance is the guidance of Allah﴾, because guidance is only from Allah to everyone who is guided. Guidance means knowing the truth or following it; there is no knowledge except that which was brought by the Messengers of Allah and no one is guided except the one whom Allah guides. The People of the Book were only given a little knowledge, and as for guidance, their share of it has come to an end because of their evil intentions and ulterior motives.

But in the case of this Ummah, Allah granted them knowledge and the ability to act upon it in a way that surpassed all others, and in that regard they superseded all others. So they became the leaders of guidance who guided others as commanded by Allah. This is by the favour and grace of Allah and His great kindness to this Ummah. Hence He said: ﴿Say: All bounties are in the Hand of Allah﴾ that is, Allah is the One Who bestows all kinds of bounties upon His slaves ﴿He grants them to whomever He will﴾ among those who take measures to attain that.

﴿And Allah is All-Encompassing﴾ in His bounty, and very kind ﴿All-Knowing﴾ – He knows who deserves this kindness, so He grants it to him, and He knows who does not deserve it so He withholds it from him.

﴿He singles out for His mercy whomever He will﴾ that is, by His mercy in a general sense, which He grants in this world and makes it continue into the hereafter; this is the blessing of Islam and other blessings.

﴿for Allah is the Possessor of abundant grace﴾ that is indescribable and does not even enter the mind of man; rather His grace and kindness reach as far as His knowledge reaches; our Lord, You have encompassed all things with Your mercy and knowledge.



﴿ وَمِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَهُ بِقِنطَارٍ يُؤَدِّهِ إِلَيْكَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ إِنْ تَأْمَنَهُ بِدِينَارٍ لَا يُؤَدِّهِ إِلَيْكَ إِلَّا مَا دُمْتَ عَلَيْهِ قَائِمًا ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ قَالُوا لَيْسَ عَلَيْنَا فِي الْأُمْنِ سَبِيلٌ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكُذِبَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ بَلَى مَنْ أَوْفَى بِعَهْدِهِ وَاتَّقَى فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾ إِنْ الَّذِينَ يَشْتَرُونَ بِعَهْدِ اللَّهِ وَأَيْمَانِهِمْ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا أُولَئِكَ لَا خَلَاقَ لَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَا يُكَلِّمُهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَا يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلَا يُزَكِّيهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٧٥-٧٧)

- 3:75. Among the People of the Book are some who, if entrusted with a heap of gold, will [readily] pay it back; there are others, who, if entrusted with a single gold coin, will not repay it unless you keep standing over him, because, they say: We are under no obligation towards the unlettered. And they tell lies about Allah knowingly.
- 3:76. But those who fulfil their covenant and fear Allah – Allah loves those who fear Him.
- 3:77. As for those who sell Allah's covenant and their own oaths for a small price, they shall have no share in the hereafter. Allah will not speak to them or look at them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them, and theirs will be a painful punishment.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us about the People of the Book with regard to honesty or dishonesty concerning wealth, as He already mentioned their treachery with regard to religion and their plots and concealment of the truth. He tells us that among them are those who are dishonest and those who are honest, and among them are ﴿some who, if entrusted with a heap of gold﴾ that is, a large amount of wealth ﴿will [readily] pay it back﴾ that is, they are more likely to be honest and return what is less than that. And there are others ﴿who, if entrusted with a single gold coin, will not repay it unless you keep standing

over him), so it is more likely that they will not return any amount greater than that. What makes them dishonest towards you is that they claim that they are «under no obligation towards the unlettered» that is, there is no sin on them if they do not give their wealth back to them, because on the basis of their false claim and flawed opinions, they look down on them and feel greatly superior to them, when in fact they are the lowest and most despised. They give no sanctity to the unlettered, and they regard that as permissible, and thus they combined the consumption of haram wealth with the belief that it was permissible. This amounted to telling lies about Allah, because when a scholar says that forbidden things are permissible at the time when the people are under the impression that he is speaking of the ruling from Allah and not his own ruling, this is a lie. Hence Allah says: «And they tell lies about Allah knowingly». This is a more serious sin than speaking about Allah without knowledge.

Then He refutes their false claim and says:

«But» that is, it is not as you claim, that there is no sin on you for what you do to the unlettered; rather there is the gravest of sin and the greatest blame on you for that.

«those who fulfil their covenant and fear Allah». The word covenant here includes everything that Allah has enjoined upon a person with regard to His dues, as well as covenants between one person and another. This is the context in which fear of Allah is required, which leads to fear of falling into sin with regard to matters between a person and his Lord, and between him and other people. The one who does that will be one of the pious who fear Allah, whom Allah (ﷻ) loves, whether they are unlettered or otherwise. Whoever says that we are under no obligation towards the unlettered has not fulfilled his covenant and has not feared Allah, so he is not one of those whom Allah loves; rather he is one of those whom Allah hates. If the unlettered were known to fulfil the covenants, fear Allah and not transgress the limits with regard to the wealth of others, then

they would be the ones who are beloved to Allah, the pious for whom paradise is prepared, and they would be the best and the most honoured of Allah's creation, unlike those who say, we are under no obligation towards the unlettered. The latter are included in the verse in which Allah says: ﴿As for those who sell Allah's covenant and their own oaths for a small price...﴾. That includes anyone who makes any worldly gains in return for overlooking the rights of Allah or the rights of His slaves. It also includes the one who swears an oath in order to acquire the property of another to which he has no right; such a one is also included in this verse. These are the ones who ﴿shall have no share in the hereafter﴾ that is, they will have no share of good.

﴿Allah will not speak to them﴾ on the Day of Resurrection, because He will be angry with them, as they gave precedence to their own whims and desires over pleasing their Lord

﴿nor will He purify them﴾ that is, He will not purify them of their sins nor free them from their faults

﴿and theirs will be a painful punishment﴾ that is, it will be painful both psychologically and physically; this is the punishment of the divine wrath and being kept away from Him, and the punishment of hell. We ask Allah to keep us safe and sound.



﴿وَإِنَّ مِنْهُمْ لَفَرِيقًا يَلُؤْنَ أَلْسِنَتَهُم بِالْكِتَابِ لِتَحْسَبُوهُ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَيَقُولُونَ عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكِبْرَ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٧٨)

- 3:78. There are some among them who distort the Book with their tongues, so that you would think it is part of the Book, but it is not part of the Book; and they say: This is from Allah, but it is not from Allah. And they tell lies about Allah knowingly.

Here Allah tells us that some of the People of the Book distort the Book with their tongues, that is, they twist the meanings. That includes distorting both the pronunciation and the meanings, when what should be done is to keep the wording of the Book as it is and not change it, and to understand it properly and help others to do likewise. But these people did the opposite of that and they gave an impression of incorrect meanings of the Book, either implicitly or explicitly. They do so implicitly in such a manner that «you would think it is part of the Book» that is, they distort it with their tongues and give you the impression that this is what is intended in the Book of Allah, when it is not what was intended. And they do so explicitly when they say «This is from Allah, but it is not from Allah. And they tell lies about Allah knowingly». This is a more serious sin than speaking about Allah without knowledge. These people tell lies about Allah, and thus they combine denial of the true meaning and affirmation of the false meaning, in order to knowingly interpret in a corrupt manner the verses that speak of the truth.



﴿ مَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ أَنْ يُؤْتِيَهُ اللَّهُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ ثُمَّ يَقُولَ لِلنَّاسِ كُونُوا عِبَادًا لِي مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنْ كُونُوا رَبَّيْنَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُونَ الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَلَا يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تَتَّخِذُوا الْمَالِيكَةَ وَالنَّيِّعِينَ أَرْبَابًا أَيَاْمُرُكُمْ بِالْكُفْرِ بَعْدَ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٧٩-٨٠)

- 3:79. No human being to whom Allah has given the scripture, wisdom and prophethood would ever say to the people: Be my worshippers rather than Allah's. On the contrary [he would say]: Be perfect in knowledge and in deeds, by virtue of your constant teaching of the scripture and of your constant study thereof.

3:80. Nor would he instruct you to take angels and Prophets for lords. Would he command you to disbelieve after you have submitted to Allah [as Muslims]?

This verse was revealed in response to those of the People of the Book who said to the Prophet (ﷺ), when he instructed them to believe in him and called them to obey him: O Muhammad, do you want us to worship you alongside Allah? He said: «No human being» that is, it is utterly impossible for any human being whom Allah has blessed by sending down the Book to him, and teaching him what he did not know and sending him to humankind, to «ever say to the people: Be my worshippers rather than Allah's». This is the most impossible thing for any of the Prophets ever to do, because this is the most abhorrent of all things and the Prophets are the most perfect of all people. Hence their instructions are befitting to their status, so they would never enjoin anything but the most sublime of actions, and they would be the most outspoken of people in forbidding abhorrent things. Hence Allah (ﷻ) said: «On the contrary [he would say]: Be perfect in knowledge and in deeds, by virtue of your constant teaching of the scripture and of your constant study thereof» that is, rather he would enjoin them to be perfect in knowledge, that is, wise and forbearing scholars who teach the people and educate them in a gradual manner and act upon what they know and teach. Thus they enjoin the pursuit of knowledge, acting upon it and teaching it, which is the basis of success; falling short in any of these matters leads to shortcomings and problems.

«by virtue of your constant teaching» that is, because of what you teach others of that which you know and have studied of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet (ﷺ), by studying which you have attained deep and entrenched knowledge, as you have become perfect in knowledge and in deeds.

«Nor would he instruct you to take angels and Prophets for lords». This is a general statement after a specific statement. In other words, he would not instruct you to worship him or to worship any of creation, such as the angels, Prophets or others.

«Would he command you to disbelieve after you have submitted to Allah [as Muslims]?» This is something that could not happen and it cannot be imagined that such a thing would be done by one whom Allah has blessed with prophethood. Whoever accuses any of the Prophets of any such thing has committed a grievous sin and an abhorrent act of disbelief.



﴿وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ النَّبِيِّينَ لَمَا آتَيْتُكُمْ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَحِكْمَةٍ ثُمَّ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولٌ مُصَدِّقٌ لِمَا مَعَكُمْ لَتُؤْمِنُنَّ بِهِءَ وَلَتَنْصُرُنَّهُ، قَالَ أَأَقْرَرْتُمْ وَأَخَذْتُمْ عَلَىٰ ذَٰلِكُمْ إِصْرِي قَالُوا أَقْرَرْنَا قَالَ فَاشْهَدُوا وَأَنَا مَعَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّاهِدِينَ ﴿٨١﴾ فَمَنْ تَوَلَّىٰ بَعْدَ ذَٰلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٨١-٨٢)

3:81. And [remember] when Allah took the covenant of the Prophets, saying: If I give you scripture and wisdom, and there comes to you a Messenger confirming what is with you, then you must believe in him and you must support him. [Allah] said: Do you agree, and take this covenant of Mine as binding upon you? They said: We agree. He said: Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses.

3:82. If any turn away after this, it is they who are the evildoers.

Here Allah tells us that He took from the Prophets a covenant and a solemn pledge because of what He bestowed upon them of the revealed Book of Allah and the wisdom to distinguish between truth and falsehood, guidance and misguidance. The covenant was that if

Allah sent a Messenger confirming what was with them, they would believe in him and follow him, and they took this pledge from their nations. So Allah (ﷻ) enjoined them to believe in one another and confirm one another, because everything they had was from Allah, and everything that is from Allah must be believed and followed. Thus they were all the same, and on this basis it is known that Muhammad (ﷺ) is the last of them; all the Prophets, if they had lived to see him, were obliged to believe in him, follow him and support him, and he would be their leader and commander. This verse is one of the greatest proofs of his high status and that he is the best of the Prophets and their leader. When Allah (ﷻ) asked them if they agreed, ﴿They said: We agree﴾ that is, we accept what You have commanded, willingly. Allah (ﷻ) said to them: ﴿Then bear witness﴾ to yourselves and your nations to that effect; ﴿and I am with you among the witnesses﴾.

﴿If any turn away after this﴾ that is, after this covenant and pledge that has been confirmed by testimony from Allah and from His Messengers

﴿it is they who are the evildoers﴾. Based on this, those who claim to be followers of the Prophets, like the Jews and Christians and those who followed them, have turned away from this solemn covenant and deserve to be among the evildoers who will abide forever in hell, if they do not believe in Muhammad (ﷺ).



﴿أَفَغَيْرَ دِينِ اللَّهِ يَبْغُونَ وَلَهُ أَسْلَمَ مَنْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ طَوْعًا

وَكَرْهًا وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُونَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٨٣)

- 3:83. Is it other than the religion of Allah that they seek, when to Him has submitted everything in the heavens and on earth, willingly or unwillingly, and to Him they will return?

That is, are the seekers seeking a religion other than the religion of Allah? That is not appropriate and it is not befitting, because there is no better religion than the religion of Allah ﴿when to Him has submitted everything in the heavens and on earth, willingly or unwillingly﴾ that is, all of creation are subjugated to Him and in a state of submission to Him, willingly and by choice, namely the Muslim believers who are submitting to the worship of their Lord, or unwillingly, namely the rest of creation, even the disbelievers who must submit to His will and decree, and they have no way of evading it or resisting it, and to Him all creatures will return, and He will judge between them and requite them on the basis of either grace or justice.



﴿قُلْ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْنَا وَمَا أُنزِلَ عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَإِسْمَاعِيلَ وَإِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَالْأَسْبَاطِ وَمَا أُوتِيَ مُوسَىٰ وَعِيسَىٰ وَالنَّبِيُّونَ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ لَا نُفَرِّقُ بَيْنَ أَحَدٍ مِنْهُمْ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ مُسْلِمُونَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٨٤)

3:84. Say: We believe in Allah, and that which has been sent down to us, and that which was sent down to Ibrâheem, Ismâ'eel, Is-hâq, Ya 'qoob, and the tribes, and that which was given to Moosâ and 'Eesâ, and to the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between one and another of them, and to Him we have submitted [in Islam].

There is a similar verse in Soorat al-Baqarah (2: 136).



﴿وَمَنْ يَبْتَغِ غَيْرَ الْإِسْلَامِ دِينًا فَلَنْ يُقْبَلَ مِنْهُ وَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَاسِرِينَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٨٥)

(سورة آل عمران: ٨٥)

- 3:85. If anyone seeks a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted from him; and in the hereafter he will be among the losers.

That is, whoever follows a religion other than the religion of Islam, which Allah wants His slaves to follow, his deeds will be rejected and not accepted, because the religion of Islam is what is meant by (willing) submission to the will of Allah and sincerely following His Messengers. So if a person does not adhere to it, then he is not taking the measures of salvation from the punishment of Allah and attaining His reward. All religions other than Islam are false.



﴿كَيْفَ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ قَوْمًا كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ وَشَهِدُوا أَنَّ الرَّسُولَ حَقٌّ وَجَاءَهُمُ
الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ أُولَئِكَ جَزَاءُهُمْ أَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ لَعْنَةَ
اللَّهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا لَا يُخَفَّفُ عَنْهُمْ الْعَذَابُ وَلَا هُمْ
يُنظَرُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٨٩﴾﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ٨٦-٨٩)

- 3:86. How would Allah guide people who disbelieve after having believed and borne witness that the Messenger was true and that clear signs had come unto them? But Allah does not guide people who are wrongdoers.
- 3:87. The requital of such people is that upon them is the curse of Allah, the angels and all humankind.
- 3:88. They will remain under it forever. Their punishment will not be alleviated, nor will they be given respite.
- 3:89. Except for those who repent after that, and mend their ways; for verily Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

This is an expression of something being very unlikely; that is, it is very unlikely that Allah would guide people who chose disbelief and misguidance after having believed and testified that the Messenger (ﷺ) was true on the basis of what he brought to them of clear signs and definitive proof.

﴿But Allah does not guide people who are wrongdoers﴾. These people did wrong and abandoned the truth after having come to know it, and they followed falsehood even though they knew it was false, wrongfully and stubbornly, and on the basis of their own whims and desires. Hence these people will not be shown the path of guidance, because the one who it is hoped will be guided is the one who did not know the truth but is keen to seek it. Such a one is deserving of being shown the path of guidance and being protected from misguidance by Allah.

Then Allah tells us of the punishment of these stubborn wrongdoers in this world and in the hereafter, as He says:

﴿The requital of such people is that upon them is the curse of Allah, the angels and all humankind. They will remain under it forever. Their punishment will not be alleviated, nor will they be given respite﴾. That is, the punishment is not reduced for them, not even for a moment, either by being stopped altogether or by being reduced in intensity. ﴿nor will they be given respite﴾ that is, they will not be given any reprieve, because the time for respite has passed and Allah has left them no excuse, as He caused them to live for a long time but they did not heed the admonition. If there had been any good in them, it would have shown, and if they were to return to this world they would go back to their evil ways.



﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بَعْدَ إِيمَانِهِمْ ثُمَّ أَزْدَادُوا كُفْرًا لَنْ نُقَبِّلَ تَوْبَتَهُمْ وَأَوْلِيكَ هُمْ
الضَّالُّونَ ﴿٩٠﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَمَانُوا هُمْ كَفَّارٌ فَلَنْ يُفْعَلَ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمْ مِثْلُ

﴿سورة آل عمران: ٩٠-٩١﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ٩٠-٩١)

- 3:90. But those who disbelieve after having believed – and then continue increasing in their disbelief, their repentance will never be accepted; they are the ones who have gone astray.
- 3:91. Verily those who disbelieved and died as disbelievers, not an earthful of gold will be accepted from any such, even if they were to offer it as a ransom. For such there will be a painful punishment, and they will find no helpers.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that whoever disbelieves after having believed, then increases in disbelief by persisting in wrongdoing and misguidance, and persisting in turning away from the path of guidance, his repentance will not be accepted. In other words, they will not be helped to repent in any acceptable manner; rather Allah will let them get carried away in their misguidance. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿We will turn their hearts and eyes away [from the truth], since they refused to believe in it the first time...﴾ (*al-An'ām 6: 110*)

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

Hence evil deeds lead to more evil deeds, especially in the case of one who has fallen into major disbelief and has abandoned the straight path, after proof was established against him and Allah had shown him clear signs and evidence. Such a person has barred himself from taking measures of attaining his Lord's mercy, and he is the one who has barred the way to repentance for himself. Hence misguidance is solely applicable to this type of people.

﴿they are the ones who have gone astray﴾ that is, what misguidance can be greater than that of the one who has abandoned the straight path, knowing that it is the straight path. If these disbelievers persist

in disbelief until death, then eternal doom and wretchedness become inevitable, and nothing will benefit them; if one of them were to spend an earthful of gold to ransom himself from the punishment of Allah, that would not benefit him at all; rather they will inevitably remain subjected to the painful punishment, with no intercessor, support or help, and no one to turn to, to save them from the punishment of Allah. Thus they will despair of all good and will be certain that they will abide forever subject to punishment and wrath; may Allah save us from their fate.



03. Soorat Âl 'Imrân

(continued)



﴿لَنْ نَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتَّىٰ نُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا نَحِبُّونَ ۚ وَمَا نُنْفِقُوا مِن شَيْءٍ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِهِ عَلِيمٌ﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ٩٢)

3:92. You will never attain righteousness until you spend [in charity] of that which you love; and whatever you give [in charity], verily Allah knows it well.¹

Here Allah (*Subhânahu wa Ta'âlâ* – Glorified and Exalted is He) encourages His slaves to spend on good causes, and says: «You will never attain righteousness» that is, you will never reach the level of righteousness which leads to paradise, «until you spend [in charity] of that which you love» that is, your precious wealth that you love. If you give precedence to the love of Allah over the love of wealth, and you spend it in ways that please Him, this will prove your sincere faith, the righteousness of your hearts and the genuineness of your piety. That includes spending what is precious of your wealth, spending when the giver is in need of what he gives, and spending when one is healthy. The verse indicates that

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)

the individual will attain righteousness according to his spending of that which he loves, and that he will be lacking according to what is lacking in his spending. Because spending in any way brings reward, whether the amount is small or great, and whether it is something he loves or not, and the words: «You will never attain righteousness until you spend [in charity] of that which you love» may give the impression that spending anything other than what is mentioned will be of no benefit, Allah dispelled this notion by saying: «and whatever you give [in charity], verily Allah knows it well», so do not be hard on yourselves, for He will reward you according to your intentions and the extent to which (your charity) benefits others.



﴿ كُلُّ الطَّعَامِ كَانَ حَلَالًا لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ إِلَّا مَا حَرَّمَ إِسْرَائِيلُ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تُنَزَّلَ التَّوْرَةُ ۗ قُلْ فَأْتُوا بِالتَّوْرَةِ فَاتْلُوهَا إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٩٣﴾ فَمَنْ أَفْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ الْكُذْبَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٩٤﴾ قُلْ صَدَقَ اللَّهُ فَاتَّبِعُوا مِلَّةَ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَنِيفًا وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٩٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٩٣-٩٥)

- 3:93. All food was lawful to the Children of Israel, except what Israel [Ya'qoob] made unlawful for himself, before the Torah was revealed. Say: Bring the Torah and read it, if you are telling the truth.
- 3:94. Those who persist in fabricating lies and attributing them to Allah after this are indeed the wrongdoers.
- 3:95. Say: Allah has spoken the Truth. Follow the religion of Ibrâheem, the monotheist, and he was not one of those who ascribe partners to Allah.

This is a refutation of the Jews' false claim that abrogation was not permissible, as a result of which they disbelieved in 'Eesâ ('alayhi

as-salām – peace be upon him) and Muhammad (*ṣalla Allāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* – blessings and peace be upon him) because they brought some rulings that differed from the rulings of the Torah concerning what is permissible and what is forbidden. By way of being completely fair in argument, and to make them quote from their own Book, the Torah, in order to prove that all types of food were permissible to the Children of Israel, Allah said: «All food was lawful to the Children of Israel, except what Israel» meaning Ya‘qoob (ﷺ) «made unlawful for himself» that is, without any prohibition from Allah (ﷻ); rather he forbade it to himself because he suffered from sciatica, so he vowed that if Allah (ﷻ) healed him, he would forbid to himself the most beloved of food to him. According to their sources, he forbade to himself the meat and milk of camels, and they followed him in that; this happened before the Torah was revealed. Then it was revealed in the Torah things that were forbidden other than what Israel (Ya‘qoob) had forbidden, of foods that had previously been permissible to them, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Because of the wrongdoing of the Jews, We forbade to them certain good things that had [previously] been permitted to them...» (*an-Nisā’ 4: 160*)

Allah instructed His Messenger (ﷺ) that if they denied that, he was to tell them to bring the Torah, yet they persisted in wrongdoing and stubbornness after that. Hence Allah (ﷻ) said:

«Those who persist in fabricating lies and attributing them to Allah after this are indeed the wrongdoers». What wrongdoing can be greater than the wrongdoing of one who is called to let his scripture judge, but he refuses to do that out of stubbornness and arrogance? This is among the greatest evidence of the soundness of the prophethood of our Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and that there are many clear signs of his truthfulness and the truthfulness of the One Who told him of various matters that he could not have known unless his Lord had told him of them. Hence Allah says:

«Say: Allah has spoken the Truth» that is, in what He has told you and in what He has ruled. This is a command from Allah to His Messenger (ﷺ) and those who follow him that they should say out loud: “Allah has spoken the truth”, believing that in their hearts on the basis of certain evidence, and so as to establish this testimony against those who deny it. Thus we know that the people who have the most faith and belief in Allah are those who have the most knowledge and understanding of the proof and evidence in detail, based on reports or reason. Then He instructed them to follow the religion of their father Ibrâheem (ﷺ), that was based on affirmation of the oneness of Allah and abandoning polytheism; this is the basis of happiness, and abandoning it will result in doom and misery. This indicates that the Jews and others, who are not following the religion of Ibrâheem (ﷺ), are polytheists, not monotheists.

When Allah commanded them to follow the religion of Ibrâheem in affirming the oneness of Allah and giving up polytheism, He commanded them to follow him in venerating His Sacred House by performing pilgrimage to it and otherwise, as He said:



﴿إِنَّ أَوَّلَ بَيْتٍ وُضِعَ لِلنَّاسِ لَلَّذِي بِبَكَّةَ مُبَارَكًا وَهُدًى لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١١﴾ فِيهِ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ مَّقَامُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمَنْ دَخَلَهُ كَانَ آمِنًا وَلِلَّهِ عَلَى النَّاسِ حِجُّ الْبَيْتِ مَنِ اسْتَطَاعَ إِلَيْهِ سَبِيلًا وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٢﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ٩٦-٩٧)

- 3:96. The first House [of worship] to be established for humanity was that at Bakkah [Makkah], full of blessings and guidance for the worlds.
- 3:97. In it are clear signs, [such as] the Station of Ibrâheem; whoever enters it will be safe. Pilgrimage to the House is a duty owed to Allah by all who can afford the journey; and whoever disbelieves, then Allah has no need of the worlds.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us about the high status of this sacred House and that it was the first House (of worship) that Allah established for people, where they could focus on worshipping their Lord, and thus their sins would be forgiven, they would draw close to Allah, and by virtue of (this House) they would do many acts of worship and good deeds to attain the pleasure of their Lord, earn His reward and be saved from His punishment. Hence Allah says:

﴿full of blessings﴾ that is, in it there is a great deal of blessing and spiritual and worldly benefits, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿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...﴾ (*al-Hajj* 22: 28)

﴿and guidance for the worlds﴾. Guidance is of two types: guidance in knowledge and guidance in deeds. Guidance in deeds is visible; it includes what Allah has ordained in it (the Ḥaram) of various acts of worship that are unique to this place. Guidance in knowledge refers to what a person acquires, by means of this place, of knowledge of the truth, as there are clear signs therein that Allah (ﷻ) has mentioned in the following verse:

﴿In it are clear signs﴾ that is, clear evidence and definitive proof for various kinds of divinely revealed knowledge and sublime aims, such as evidence of His oneness, mercy, wisdom, greatness, majesty, the perfect nature of His knowledge, and the vastness of His bounty and what He has bestowed upon His close friends and Prophets. One of these signs is ﴿the Station of Ibrâheem﴾. It may be that what is meant here is the well-known *Maqâm*² (Station), which is the rock on which Ibrâheem (ﷺ) stood in order to build the Kaaba when the structure

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)

had grown tall. It was formerly attached to the wall of the Kaaba, then when 'Umar (*raḍiya Allāhu 'anhu* – may Allah be pleased with him) was caliph, he put it in the place where it is now. It was also said that the sign in it is the traces of Ibrâheem's feet, which left a mark on the rock; that mark remained until the early period of this Ummah, and this is something extraordinary. It was also said that the sign in it is the high esteem for it that Allah has instilled in people's hearts, so they venerate, honour and respect it. It may be that what is meant by the Station of Ibrâheem is the various locations in which he stood for the rituals of Hajj. Thus it may mean that all the parts of Hajj are clear signs, such as *tawâf* (circumambulation of the Kaaba), *sa'iy* (going back and forth between Şafâ and Marwah), as well as its locations, standing in 'Arafah and Muzdalifah, and the stoning of the *jamarât*, and all the rituals of Hajj. The sign in this case is what Allah has instilled in people's hearts of veneration and respect for these places and rituals, and their readiness to make the effort and spend the best of their wealth in order to reach these places, and putting up with all kinds of difficulty for that purpose, as well as what there is in those rituals and places of great wisdom and sublime meanings, and what there may be in those actions of wisdom and benefits, some of which are beyond people's comprehension. Another of the great signs in this place is that whoever enters it will be safe, protected by Sharia, as is Allah's will. With regard to *shar'î* protection, Allah and His Messenger Ibrâheem (ﷺ), then His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ), ordained that the place should be respected and that whoever enters it should be granted safety and not be disturbed. This protection even includes the game animals, trees and plants (in the Ḥaram). This verse is quoted as evidence by those scholars who said that any person who commits an offence outside the Ḥaram then seeks sanctuary in the Ḥaram is to be granted safety and no *ḥadd* punishment is to be carried out on him unless he goes out of the Ḥaram. As for being granted safety according to Allah's will, that is because Allah (ﷻ),

by His will and decree, has instilled in people's hearts – even in the hearts of the polytheists who associate others with Him and those who disbelieve in their Lord – veneration and respect for this place, to the extent that one of them, despite all their strong tribal feelings and lack of patience in putting up with any wrongdoing done to him, may find his father's killer in the Haram and not disturb him. Part of it being made a sanctuary is that if anyone intends to do harm to it, Allah will inevitably punish him in this world, as happened to the army of the elephant and others.



﴿ قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ شَهِيدٌ عَلَىٰ مَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٨﴾ قُلْ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ لِمَ تَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ مِن ءَامَنَ تَبِعُونَهَا ءَوْجًا وَانْتُمْ شُهَدَاءُ ۗ وَمَا اللَّهُ بِغَفِيلٍ ۗ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٩﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تَطِيعُوا قَرِيبًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ يَرُدُّوكُم بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ كَافِرِينَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَكَيْفَ تَكْفُرُونَ وَأَنْتُمْ تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ ءَايَاتُ اللَّهِ وَفِيكُمْ رَسُولُهُ ۗ وَمَن يَعْتَصِم بِاللَّهِ فَقَدْ هُدِيَ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل

عمران: ٩٨-١٠١)

- 3:98. Say: O People of the Book, why do you reject the revelations of Allah, when Allah is witness to all that you do?
- 3:99. Say: O People of the Book, why do you bar from Allah's way those who believe, seeking to make it [seem] crooked when you yourselves are witnesses [to its truth]? But Allah is not unaware of all that you do.
- 3:100. O you who believe, if you obey some of those who were given the scripture, they will turn you into disbelievers after your having believed.

3:101. How can you disbelieve, when Allah's revelations are being recited to you and His Messenger is in your midst? Whoever holds fast to Allah is indeed guided to a straight path.

Here Allah rebukes the People of the Book, the Jews and Christians, for their rejection of the revelations of Allah that He sent down to His Messengers and made as a mercy to His slaves, by means of which they are guided to Him and by means of which they will be guided to all sublime aims and beneficial knowledge. These disbelievers combine disbelief in the revelations with barring those who believe in Allah from following them, and distorting and twisting the intended meaning, when they bear witness to its truth, knowing that what they have done is the greatest act of disbelief that would incur punishment. ﴿For those who disbelieve and bar others from the path of Allah, We will add punishment to their punishment because they used to spread mischief.﴾ (*an-Nahl* 16: 88)

Hence Allah warns them here: ﴿But Allah is not unaware of all that you do﴾; rather He is aware of your deeds, your intentions and your evil plot, and He will requite you for it with the worst of punishments. As He warned and rebuked them, He followed that with mention of His mercy, generosity and kindness, and warned His believing slaves lest a plot be hatched against them without them realising, as He said:

﴿O you who believe, if you obey some of those who were given the scripture, they will turn you into disbelievers after your having believed﴾ – that is because of their envy and resentment towards you, and their eagerness to turn you away from your religion, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿Many among the People of the Book wish they could turn you back to disbelief after you have believed, out of the envy they have in their hearts, after the truth has become clear to them...﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 109)

Then Allah (ﷻ) mentions the main reason and most significant factor that should make the believers steadfast, so that their certainty will not be shaken, and He states that this is something that is very unlikely:

«How can you disbelieve, when Allah's revelations are being recited to you and His Messenger is in your midst?» That is, the Messenger (ﷺ) is among you, reciting to you the verses of your Lord all the time; these are clear revelations which make one certain of the meaning and what they refer to, and not have any doubt about that content in any way, especially when the one who is explaining them is the best of humankind, the most knowledgeable, the most eloquent, the most sincere and the most compassionate towards the believers, and he is eager for people to be guided by all possible means; blessings and peace of Allah be upon him. He conveyed the message sincerely and clearly, and he did not leave any room for anyone to need to ask further questions or to seek further. Then Allah tells us that the one who holds fast to Him, puts his trust in Him, seeks protection by virtue of His strength and mercy from all evils and seeks His help in attaining all that is good, «is indeed guided to a straight path» that will bring him to his ultimate goal, because he is combining following the Messenger (ﷺ) in word and deed with holding fast to Allah.



﴿يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ ءَامَنُوْا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ حَقَّ تُقَاتِهٖۤ وَلا تَمُوْنُوْا اِلَّا وَاَنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ
 (۱۰۳) وَاعْتَصِمُوْا بِحَبْلِ اللّٰهِ جَمِيْعًا وَّلا تَفْرُقُوْا وَاذْكُرُوْا اللّٰهَ عَلَيْكُمْ اِذْ كُنْتُمْ
 اَعْدَاءَۙ فَاَلْفَ بَيْنَ قُلُوْبِكُمْ فَاصْبِرْۢمُۙ بِنِعْمَةِ اللّٰهِ اِنَّكُمْ عَلٰى شَفَا حُفْرٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ
 فَاَنْقَذَكُمْ مِّنْهَاۙ كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ ءَايٰتِهٖۤ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿ (سورة آل عمران:

(۱۰۳-۱۰۲)

- 3:102. O you who believe, fear Allah as He should be feared, and do not die except as Muslims.
- 3:103. And hold fast, all together, to the rope of Allah, and do not be divided among yourselves. Remember the blessing that Allah bestowed upon you, for you were enemies then He brought your hearts together, so that by His grace, you became brethren, and you were on the brink of the pit of fire, and He saved you from it. Thus Allah makes His revelations clear to you, so that you may be guided.

This is a command from Allah to His believing slaves, that they should fear Him as He should be feared and persist in that, remaining steadfast and adhering to it until death. The one who persists in something will die adhering to it. If a person persists in fearing his Lord, obeying Him and turning to Him all the time when he is healthy, energetic and able, Allah will make him steadfast at the time of death and bless him with a good end. Fearing Allah as He should be feared – as Ibn Mas'ood said – means that He is to be obeyed and not disobeyed, remembered and not forgotten, shown gratitude and not ingratitude. This verse explains what Allah (ﷻ) deserves of fear of Him. As for what is required of people in that regard, it is as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿So fear Allah as best you can...﴾ (at-Taghābun 64: 16)

The details of fearing Allah in terms of what is in the heart and actions that one should take are very many; fearing Allah means doing what Allah has enjoined and refraining from everything that Allah has forbidden.

Then Allah (ﷻ) instructed them to do that which will help them to attain fear of Him, which is to be united and adhere to the religion of Allah. The fact that the believers' call is one should unite them in harmony, because if the Muslims are united in their religion and their hearts are in harmony with one another, that will help to make

their religious affairs sound and worldly affairs in good shape. By uniting, they will be able to tackle any matter and achieve innumerable interests that depend on unity, such as cooperating in righteousness and piety, and other matters; by the same token, division and enmity undermine their well-being, sever the bonds between them and lead to everyone striving for his own self-interests, even if that leads to harm on a community level.

Then Allah (ﷻ) reminds them of His blessings and instructs them to remember them:

﴿Remember the blessing that Allah bestowed upon you, for you were enemies﴾ killing one another and taking one another's wealth, to such an extent that the members of one tribe would fight and oppose one another, and there would be enmity and fighting among the people of one city. Their situation was one of grievous trouble; this was the situation of the Arabs before the Prophet (ﷺ) was sent. When Allah sent him and they believed in him, united in Islam and joined together in faith, they became like one person because of the harmony and bonds of friendship between them. Hence Allah (ﷻ) said: ﴿then He brought your hearts together, so that by His grace, you became brethren, and you were on the brink of the pit of fire﴾ that is, you deserved to enter the fire, and there was nothing standing between you and it except death, after which you would enter it

﴿and He saved you from it﴾ by means of what He blessed you with of belief in Muhammad (ﷺ).

﴿Thus Allah makes His revelations clear to you﴾ that is, He explains and clarifies them, and distinguishes for you truth from falsehood, guidance from misguidance

﴿so that you may be guided﴾ by knowing the truth and acting upon it. This verse indicates that Allah loves His slaves to remember His blessing in their hearts and verbally, so that they may increase in gratitude towards Him and love for Him, and so that He will give them more of His bounty and blessings. The greatest of what one

may remember of His blessings is the blessing of guidance to Islam, following the Messenger (ﷺ) and unity among the Muslims.



﴿وَلَتَكُنَّ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٤﴾ وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ وَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٠٥﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٠٤-١٠٥)

- 3:104. Let there arise from among you a group of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong. They are the ones who will be successful.
- 3:105. Do not be like those who became divided and fell into disputes after the clear proofs had come unto them; for them there will be a grievous punishment.

That is, let there be among you, O believers whom Allah has blessed with faith and holding fast to His rope, ﴿a group of people inviting to all that is good﴾. Good (*khayr*) is a comprehensive word that includes everything that brings one closer to Allah and further away from His wrath ﴿enjoining what is right﴾ that is, everything that is known to be good by means of rational or shar'i proof ﴿and forbidding what is wrong﴾ that is, everything that is known to be evil by means of rational or shar'i proof. This is an instruction from Allah to the believers, that among them there should be a group that takes on the task of calling people to His way and explaining His religion to people. That includes the scholars who teach religion; the preachers who call the people of other religions to enter Islam and call those who have gone astray to mend their ways; the *mujāhideen* who strive in jihad for the sake of Allah; those who have the task of checking on people and making them adhere to the rulings of Islam

such as the five daily prayers, *zakâh*, fasting, Hajj and so on; and those who check on weights and measures, and check on the traders in the marketplace, preventing them from cheating or engaging in invalid transactions. All of these matters come under the heading of communal obligations, as is indicated in this verse, in which it says, «Let there arise from among you a group of people». In other words, let there be among you a group of people who achieve the purpose behind the things mentioned. It is well established that when something is enjoined, it refers to that thing and whatever means are necessary to achieve it. Whatever these matters depend on is also enjoined, such as preparing for jihad by making ready all kinds of equipment by means of which the goal of defeating enemies and making the word of Islam supreme may be attained; acquiring knowledge with which to call people to what is good and developing means of achieving that; building schools to teach knowledge; helping the authorities in implementing the laws of Sharia among the people in word and deed, and with financial support; and other matters on which these aims depend. This group that is prepared to call people to what is good, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, is the elite of the believers. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says concerning them: «They are the ones who will be successful»; they will attain what they are seeking (paradise) and be saved from what they fear (hell).

Then Allah forbids being like the People of the Book in terms of division and disputes:

«Do not be like those who became divided and fell into disputes». What is astounding is that their disputes came «after the clear proofs had come unto them», that should have led to them not being divided. It was more expected of them than others that they would adhere to the religion, but what happened was the opposite, even though they were aware that they were going against the command of Allah. Thus they deserved the severe punishment; hence Allah (ﷻ) said: «for them there will be a grievous punishment».



﴿يَوْمَ تَبْيَضُّ وُجُوهُهُ وَسَوْدُو وُجُوهُهُ فَمَا الَّذِينَ اسْوَدَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ أَكَفَرْتُمْ بَعْدَ إِيمَانِكُمْ فَذُوقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ أَبْيَضتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فَبِئْسَ رَحْمَةً مِنَ اللَّهِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١٠٧﴾ تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٠٨﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٠٦-١٠٨)

- 3:106. On the day when some faces will become bright, and some faces will become dark, to those whose faces will become dark, [it will be said]: Did you disbelieve after having believed? Taste then the punishment for having disbelieved.
- 3:107. But those whose faces become bright, they will be in Allah's mercy [paradise], to abide therein forever.
- 3:108. These are the revelations of Allah; We recite them to you in Truth: And Allah does not intend any injustice to [any of] His creation.

Here Allah tells us about the Day of Resurrection and the outcome of recompense on the basis of justice and grace on that day. This includes both promises and warnings that instil hope and fear.

﴿On the day when some faces will become bright﴾ – these are the faces of the good people who are blessed, the people who were united in holding fast to the rope of Allah.

﴿and some faces will become dark﴾ – these are the faces of the evil people who are doomed, those who were divided and who differed among themselves. Their faces will become dark because of the disgrace, humiliation and shame in their hearts; the faces of the blessed will become bright because of the joy, happiness, blessing and contentment in their hearts, the effects of which will appear on their faces, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...and will bestow upon them radiance and joy.﴾ (al-Insân 76: 11)

The radiance will be on their faces and the joy will be in their hearts. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿As for those who earn evil, the recompense of an evil deed will be the like thereof, and shame will cover them. They will have no protector from [the wrath of] Allah. Their faces will be covered, as it were, with patches of darkest night. They will be inhabitants of the fire; they will abide therein forever.﴾ (Yoonus 10: 27)

﴿to those whose faces will become dark﴾ it will be said to them by way of rebuke and reprimanding: ﴿Did you disbelieve after having believed?﴾ that is, how could you prefer disbelief and misguidance over faith and guidance? How could you forsake the path of guidance and follow the path of misguidance?

﴿Taste then the punishment for having disbelieved﴾ for nothing is befitting for you except the fire and you deserve nothing but disgrace and shame.

﴿But those whose faces become bright﴾ will have the most perfect joy and they will be given the greatest glad tidings. They will be given the glad tidings of admittance to paradise and the pleasure and mercy of their Lord.

﴿they will be in Allah's mercy [paradise], to abide therein forever﴾. Because they will abide in His mercy forever, paradise is part of His mercy; they will abide therein forever, enjoying all that it contains of eternal delights and a life of ease in the vicinity of the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.

When Allah explained to His Messenger (ﷺ) the rulings and requitals, He said: ﴿These are the revelations of Allah; We recite them to you﴾ that is, We tell them to you ﴿in Truth﴾ because His commands and prohibitions are based on wisdom and mercy, and the reward and punishment are likewise based on wisdom, mercy and justice that is free of any injustice. Hence He said ﴿And Allah does not intend any injustice to [any of] His creation﴾. He told us that He does not intend to be unjust towards them, let alone act on the basis

of injustice, so He will not detract from the reward for good deeds of anyone or increase the wrongdoing of the wrongdoers; rather He will requite them for their deeds only.



﴿وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ﴾ (سورة آل عمران:

(١٠٩)

3:109. To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth; it is to Allah that all things will return.

That is, He is the Sovereign of everything in the heavens and on earth; He created them and granted them provision, and He controls them in accordance with His will and decree and in what He prescribes and enjoins upon them. They will return to Him on the Day of Resurrection, and He will requite them for their deeds, both good and bad.



﴿كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَلَوْ آمَنَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ ۚ مِنْهُمْ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَأَكْثَرُهُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ﴾ (١١٠) لَنْ يَضُرُّكُمْ إِلَّا أَذًى ۗ وَإِنْ يُفْتَلِكُمْ يُؤْلِكُمْ الْآذِبَارِثُمْ لَا يَبْصُرُونَ﴾ (١١١) ضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الذَّلِيلَةُ أَنْ مَا تُفْقَهُوا إِلَّا بِحَبْلِ مِنْ اللَّهِ وَحَبْلِ مِنَ النَّاسِ وَبَاءُ وَبِغَضِبِ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَضُرِبَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَسْكَنَةُ ۚ ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يَكْفُرُونَ بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَيَقْتُلُونَ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقِّ ۚ ذَلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوْا وَكَانُوا يَعْتَدُونَ

﴿﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١١٠-١١٢)

- 3:110. You are the best community ever brought forth for [the benefit of] humankind; you enjoin what is good, and forbid what is evil, and you believe in Allah. If only the People of the Book had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are some who do believe, but most of them are evildoers.
- 3:111. They will do you no harm, except with abusive words. If they come out to fight you, they will turn and flee, then they will not be helped.
- 3:112. They are struck with humiliation wherever they may be, except when under a covenant [of protection] from Allah or a covenant [of protection] from the people. They have incurred Allah's wrath, and wretchedness is decreed for them. This is because they disbelieved in the revelations of Allah, and killed the Prophets unjustly. That was because of their disobedience and transgression.

Here Allah (ﷻ) praises this Ummah and states that it is the best of communities that Allah has ever brought forth for (the benefit of) humanity, because they perfected themselves by having faith, which requires them to do everything that He enjoined and to strive in perfecting others by enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil. That includes calling the people to Allah, striving for that purpose and doing their utmost to turn people away from their misguidance, transgression and sin. By doing that, they (the Muslims) become the best community ever brought forth for (the benefit of) humanity. In a previous verse (3: 104), Allah (ﷻ) said: «Let there arise from among you a group of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong». This is a command from Allah to this Ummah, and when there is a command, the one who is commanded may or may not do it. But in this verse (3: 110) Allah states that the Ummah has carried out what Allah instructed it to do and obeyed the command of its Lord; thus it deserves to be favoured above all other nations or communities.

﴿If only the People of the Book had believed, it would have been better for them﴾. This is a kind of calling them in a gentle manner that should cause them to respond to the call, but only a few of them believed; most of them are evildoers who disobeyed Allah and showed all kinds of enmity towards the close friends of Allah. But by the grace of Allah towards His believing slaves, He caused their plots to backfire, so they will not harm the believers in terms of their religious commitment or physical well-being. Rather the worst of their harm is no more than verbal annoyance which is inevitable on the part of every opponent. But if they fight the believers, they will turn and flee, then their defeat will be ongoing; they will continue to be humiliated and they will not be helped at any time. Hence Allah says that He has punished them with inward humiliation and outward wretchedness, and they will never feel settled or at peace.

﴿except when under a covenant [of protection] from Allah or a covenant [of protection] from the people﴾. The Jews will only either be under Muslim rule, paying *jizyah* according to the covenant, or they will be under Christian rule.

﴿They have incurred Allah's wrath﴾ in addition to that, and this is the worst punishment. Allah tells us why they have ended up in this situation, as He says:

﴿This is because they disbelieved in the revelations of Allah﴾ that Allah sent down to His Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ), that should have led to certainty and faith, but they disbelieved in them out of resentment and stubbornness

﴿and killed the Prophets unjustly﴾ that is, they responded to the Prophets of Allah, who showed them the greatest kindness, in the most evil of ways, by killing them. After such an audacious crime, could there be anything worse than that? All of this came about because of their disobedience and enmity, which is what gave them the audacity to disbelieve in Allah and kill the Prophets of Allah.



﴿ لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً مِّنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ ءَاتَاءَ اللَّيْلِ وَهُمْ
 يَسْجُدُونَ ﴿١١٣﴾ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ
 عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَأُولَئِكَ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١١٤﴾ وَمَا يَفْعَلُوا مِنْ
 خَيْرٍ فَلَن يُكْفَرُوهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِالْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١١٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١١٣-١١٥)

- 3:113. Not all of them are alike. Among the People of the Book are some who are upright; they recite the revelations of Allah [in prayer] during the night, and they prostrate.
- 3:114. They believe in Allah and the Last Day; they enjoin what is good, and forbid what is evil; and they hasten to do good deeds. They are among the righteous.
- 3:115. Whatever good they do, it will not go unappreciated; for Allah knows well those who are conscious of Him.

After having told us about the evildoers among the People of the Book, and their deeds and punishments, Allah then tells us about the upright group, and their deeds and rewards. He tells us that they are not alike in His sight, rather there is an indescribable difference between them. The evildoers are as described above, whereas these people are believers. Allah tells us that some of them «are upright» that is, they adhere to the religion of Allah and do that which Allah has commanded, which includes establishing prayer «they recite the revelations of Allah [in prayer] during the night, and they prostrate». This is a description of their prayer during the night, their lengthy *tahajjud*, their recitation of the Book of their Lord, their showing humility towards Him and their bowing and prostrating to Him.

«They believe in Allah and the Last Day» that is, their faith is like that of the believers, which includes believing in every Prophet who was sent and every Book revealed by Allah. Belief in the Last Day

is singled out for mention because belief in the Last Day motivates the believer to do that which brings him closer to Allah and that will bring reward on that day, and to avoid anything for which he will be punished on that day.

﴿they enjoin what is good, and forbid what is evil﴾ thus they strive to perfect themselves by means of faith and all that it entails, and they strive to perfect others by enjoining them to do all that is good and forbidding them to do anything that is evil. That includes encouraging their co-religionists and others to believe in Muhammad (ﷺ). Then Allah describes their lofty aspirations:

﴿and they hasten to do good deeds﴾ that is, they rush to do them and seek every opportunity to do them at the earliest possible time. That is because of their great eagerness to do what is good, and their knowledge of the benefits and reward that goodness brings. These are the people to whom Allah ascribes these beautiful characteristics and good deeds.

﴿They are among the righteous﴾ whom Allah encompasses in His mercy and forgiveness, bestowing upon them His grace and bounty.

﴿Whatever good they do﴾, whether it is great or small
 ﴿it will not go unappreciated﴾ that is, they will never be deprived of its reward; rather Allah will reward them for it completely, but the reward for deeds depends on what is in the individual's heart of faith and piety. Hence Allah says: ﴿for Allah knows well those who are conscious of Him﴾, as He says elsewhere:

﴿... Verily, Allah only accepts from those who fear Him.﴾ (al-Mā'idah 5: 27)



﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَنْ تُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَأُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١١٦﴾ مَثَلُ مَا يُنْفِقُونَ فِي هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَثَلِ

رِيحٌ فِيهَا صِرٌّ أَصَابَتْ حَرْثَ قَوْمٍ ظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ فَأَهْلَكْتَهُ وَمَا ظَلَمَهُمُ اللَّهُ وَلَٰكِن
 أَنفُسُهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١١٦-١١٧)

- 3:116. As for those who disbelieve, neither their wealth nor their children will avail them at all against Allah; it is they who will be inhabitants of the fire, abiding therein forever.
- 3:117. The likeness of what they spend in this worldly life is that of a freezing wind that strikes the crops of people who have wronged themselves, destroying them. It is not Allah Who has wronged them, but they wronged themselves.

Here Allah tells us that in the case of those who disbelieve, their wealth and children will never avail them at all before Allah; they will not ward off from them anything of the punishment of Allah or bring them anything of the reward of Allah, as He says:

﴿It is not your wealth or your children that bring you nearer to Us; but those who believe and do righteous deeds...﴾ (Saba' 34: 37)

Rather their wealth and their children are a means that will take them to hell and serve as proof against them that Allah bestowed blessings upon them for which they should have been grateful, and they will be punished for not giving thanks and for disbelieving. Hence Allah says: ﴿it is they who will be inhabitants of the fire, abiding therein forever﴾.

Then Allah gives a likeness of what the disbelievers spend of their wealth in order to bar people from the path of Allah, seeking thereby to extinguish the light of Allah; their wealth will not achieve anything and it will diminish, like one who sows crops, hoping that they will be productive and hoping to harvest the yield, but whilst he is like that a freezing wind comes, one that is biting cold, and destroys his crops, leaving him with nothing but exhaustion and sorrow. Similarly, these disbelievers, of whom Allah (ﷻ) says:

«The disbelievers spend their wealth to bar [people] from the path of Allah, and they will continue to spend it, then it will become a source of regret for them, then they will be defeated...» (al-Anfāl 8: 36)

«It is not Allah Who has wronged them» by cancelling out their deeds

«but they wronged themselves» when they disbelieved in the revelations of Allah, rejected His Messenger (ﷺ) and were eager to extinguish the light of Allah. These factors are what made their deeds come to nothing and took away their wealth.



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا بَطَانَةَ مِن دُونِكُمْ لَا يَأُولُونَكُمْ خَبَالًا وَدُوا مَا عَنِتُّمْ قَدْ بَدَتِ الْبَغْضَاءُ مِن أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَمَا تُخْفِي صُدُورُهُمْ أَكْبَرُ قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١١٨﴾ هَآئِنَّمْ أَوْلَآءُ تُحِبُّونَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِبُّونَكُمُ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ كُلِّهِ وَإِذَا لَقُوكُمْ قَالُوا ءَامَنَّا وَإِذَا خَلَوْا عَضُوا عَلَيْكُمُ الْآنَامِلَ مِنَ الْفَيْظِ قُلْ مُوتُوا بِغَيْظِكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿١١٩﴾ إِن تَمَسَّكُمُ حَسَنَةٌ سَوَّهْتُمْ وَإِن تُصِيبَكُمُ سَيِّئَةٌ يَفْرَحُوا بِهَا وَإِن تَصِيرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ كَيْدُهُمْ شَيْئًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ مُحِيطٌ ﴿١٢٠﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١١٨-١٢٠)

3:118. O you who believe, do not take as your close friends those outside your ranks; they will spare no effort to cause you mischief; they wish to see you in distress. Hatred has already appeared from their mouths, and what their hearts conceal is far worse. We have made clear to you the revelations, if you understand.

3:119. O you who [take them as close friends], you love them but they do not love you, even though you believe in all the scriptures. When they meet you, they say: We believe, but when they are

alone, they bite their fingertips in their rage against you. Say: Perish in your rage; Allah knows well what is in [your] hearts.

- 3:120. If anything good happens to you, it grieves them; but if some misfortune overtakes you, they rejoice at it. But if you remain steadfast and fear Allah, not the least harm will their scheming do to you; for Allah has full knowledge of all that they do.

Here Allah (ﷻ) forbids His believing slaves to take close friends from among the hypocrites of the People of the Book and others, telling them of their secrets and what is in their hearts, or appointing them to do some work for the Muslim community. That is because they are enemies whose hearts are filled with hostility and hatred, thus it has appeared from their mouths.

﴿and what their hearts conceal is far worse﴾ than what you hear from them. Hence ﴿they will spare no effort to cause you mischief﴾ that is, they will do their utmost to cause you harm and distress, and they will do things to cause you trouble and help your enemies against you. Allah says to the believers:

﴿We have made clear to you the revelations﴾ that is, in which you will find that which is in your best interests in both religious and worldly terms

﴿if you understand﴾ and thus recognise these things and distinguish between friends and enemies. For not everyone should be taken as a close friend; rather the wise person is someone who, if he has no choice but to mix with the enemy, only mixes with him outwardly, and does not let him know anything about his inner thoughts, even if that person tries to be a friend and swears that he is his friend.

Allah says, urging the believers to be cautious of these hypocrites among the People of the Book, and explaining the extent of their enmity:

﴿O you who [take them as close friends], you love them but they do not love you, even though you believe in all the scriptures﴾ that is,

all the Books that Allah has revealed to His Prophets, whereas they do not believe in your Book; rather when they meet you they pretend to be believers:

«When they meet you, they say: We believe, but when they are alone, they bite their fingertips in their rage against you».

«Say: Perish in your rage; Allah knows well what is in [your] hearts» this is glad tidings for the believers: those who aim to harm you are only harming themselves and they cannot act upon their rage; they will continue to be troubled by it until they die and move from the punishment of this world to the punishment of the hereafter.

«If anything good happens to you», such as victory over the enemy, conquests and booty

«it grieves them» that is, it upsets them and causes them distress

«but if some misfortune overtakes you, they rejoice at it. But if you remain steadfast and fear Allah, not the least harm will their scheming do to you; for Allah has full knowledge of all that they do». If you take the measures by means of which Allah has promised victory – namely steadfastness and fear of Him – their scheming will not harm you; rather Allah will cause their schemes to backfire, because He has complete knowledge and power over them. Hence they cannot escape from that and nothing is hidden from Him.



﴿وَإِذْ عَدَّوْتُمْ مِنْ أَهْلِ كُتَيْبٍ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ مَقْعِدِ الْقِتَالِ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿١٢١﴾ إِذْ هَمَّتْ طَّائِفَتَانِ مِنْكُمْ أَنْ تَفْشَلَا وَاللَّهُ وَلِيَهُمَا وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١٢٢﴾﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ١٢١-١٢٢)

- 3:121. And [remember] when you set out from your home to post the believers at their stations for battle; and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

3:122. And [remember] when two groups from among you were about to lose heart; but Allah was their protector, and in Allah let the believers put their trust.

These verses were revealed concerning the battle of Uḥud, the story of which is well known from books of *seerah* (Prophet's biography) and history. Perhaps the reason why the story of Uḥud is mentioned in this context, as is the story of Badr later on, is that Allah (ﷻ) had promised the believers that if they were steadfast and feared Him, He would grant them victory and foil the schemes of their enemies against them. This is a general principle and true promise that is never broken if the conditions are met. Examples of that are mentioned in these two stories. Allah supported the believers at Badr, when they were patient and feared Him, and He caused the enemy to gain the upper hand (at Uḥud) when they acted in a manner that showed that their fear of Allah had been undermined. One of the reasons why these two stories are mentioned together is that Allah loves His slaves, if something they dislike happens to them, to remember other things that happened to them that they do like; this will reduce the impact of the calamity and they will give thanks to Allah for the great blessing that, when compared to the calamity that has befallen them but is ultimately good for them, will make the calamity seem insignificant in comparison with those blessings. And Allah also refers to this wisdom in the verse: ﴿How is it that, when a calamity befell you whilst you had inflicted twice as much [on your enemy], you said: Where has this come from? Say [to them]: It has come from your own selves. Verily, Allah has power over all things.﴾ (3: 165).

To sum up the story of Uḥud: when the remnants of the polytheists went back from Badr to Makkah, which happened in 2 AH, they prepared all that they could of wealth, men and equipment, until they had collected enough to give some certainty that they would achieve their goal and exact vengeance. Then they headed from Makkah to

Madinah with three thousand fighters, and they halted near Madinah. The Prophet (ﷺ) came out to meet them, after consulting with his Companions (*radiya Allāhu 'anhum* – may Allah be pleased with all of them). He came out with one thousand men. After they had gone a short distance, the hypocrite 'Abdullāh ibn Ubayy went back with one-third of the army whose thinking was akin to his. Two groups among the believers, Banu Salamah and Banu Ḥārithah, thought of turning back, but Allah made them steadfast. When they reached Uḥud, the Prophet (ﷺ) stationed the Muslims with their back to Uḥud, then he placed fifty men in a gap in Mount Uḥud, and instructed them to stay put and not to move from that spot; their job was to make sure that no one could attack the Muslims from the rear. When the Muslims and the polytheists met in battle, the polytheists were initially defeated and they fled, leaving behind their camps, and the Muslims pursued them, killing some and taking others captive. When the archers whom the Prophet (ﷺ) had stationed in the gap in the mountain saw them, they said to one another: The booty, the booty! Why should we stay here when the polytheists have been defeated? Their commander, 'Abdullāh ibn Jubayr, warned them not to disobey orders, but they did not pay any attention to him. When they deserted their posts and only a few were left, including their commander 'Abdullāh ibn Jubayr, the cavalry of the polytheists came through that gap and attacked the Muslim rearguard from behind. The Muslims were thrown into panic, which was a very hard test for them and in which they were made to taste the punishment for their disobedience, and some of them were killed. Then they climbed up to the top of Mount Uḥud and Allah restrained the hands of the polytheists, who returned to their land, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and his Companions (رضي الله عنهم) returned to Madinah.

﴿And [remember] when you set out from your home﴾ the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions set out after *Jumu'ah* prayer

﴿to post the believers at their stations for battle﴾ that is, you organised them and placed them in suitable positions. This is great praise for the Prophet (ﷺ), because he is the one who organised them and posted them in their battle stations; that was because of his perfect knowledge and skill, and his high aspirations and perfect courage, because he took care of these matters himself; blessings and peace of Allah be upon him.

﴿and Allah is All-Hearing﴾; He hears all sounds, including what the believers and hypocrites say, each of them speaking in accordance with what is in his heart

﴿All-Knowing﴾; He knows people's intentions, and requites them in full. Moreover, Allah hears you, knows all about you, and takes care of you; He controls your affairs and supports you. He said to Moosâ and Hâroon:

﴿Allah said: Fear not; verily I am with you both. I hear and see [everything].﴾ (Tâ Hâ 20: 46)

By His grace and kindness to them, when ﴿two groups from among﴾ the believers thought of giving up – namely Banu Salamah and Banu Hârithah, as stated above – Allah (ﷻ) made them steadfast as a favour to them and to the rest of the believers. Hence He said: ﴿but Allah was their protector﴾. That was by His grace towards His close friends; He guided them to that which was in their best interests and protected them from that which could have caused them harm. One aspect of His protection of them was that when they thought of committing this great sin, namely giving up and deserting the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), He protected them from doing so because of the faith they had. This is like the verse:

﴿Allah is the Protector of those who have faith; from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light...﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 257)

Then He said: ﴿and in Allah let the believers put their trust﴾. This is a command to put their trust in Allah, which means relying on Him to bring benefits and ward off harm, whilst trusting and having faith

in Allah. A person's trust in Allah will be commensurate with his faith, and the believers are more entitled to put their trust in Allah than anyone else, especially at times of hardship and fighting, because they have no choice but to put their trust in their Lord, to seek His help and support, to declare that they have no power or strength of their own and to depend on the power and strength of Allah. Thus He will support them and ward off calamities and trials from them.



﴿ وَلَقَدْ نَصَرَكُمُ اللَّهُ بِبَدْرٍ وَأَنْتُمْ أَذِلَّةٌ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ إِذْ تَقُولُ
لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْ يَكْفِيكُمْ أَنْ يُمِدَّكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِثَلَاثَةِ آفَافٍ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُنَزَّلِينَ ﴿١٢٤﴾
بَلَىٰ إِنْ تَصْبِرُوا وَتَتَّقُوا وَيَأْتُوكُم مِّن فَوْرِهِمْ هَذَا يُمْدِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ بِخَمْسَةِ آفَافٍ مِّن
الْمَلَائِكَةِ مُسَوِّمِينَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ وَمَا جَعَلَهُ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بُشْرَىٰ لَكُمْ وَلِنُظْمِينَ قُلُوبِكُمْ بِهِ وَمَا لَتَأْتَرُ
إِلَّا مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ ﴿١٢٦﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٢٣-١٢٦)

- 3:123. Allah had helped you at Badr, when you were weak and few in number. So fear Allah, that you may be grateful.
- 3:124. [Remember] when you said to the believers: Does it not suffice you that Allah will help you with three thousand angels sent down?
- 3:125. Indeed, if you remain steadfast and are mindful of Allah, even if the enemy should attack you suddenly, your Lord will [immediately] help you with five thousand angels clearly marked.
- 3:126. Allah ordained this only as glad tidings for you, and to reassure your hearts thereby; there is no victory except from Allah, the Almighty, the Most Wise.

This is a reminder to His believing slaves of how He helped them achieve victory on the day of Badr, when they were weak, few in

number and poorly equipped, in contrast to the great numbers and superior equipment of their enemy. The battle of Badr occurred in 2 AH. The Prophet (ﷺ) left Madinah with a little over three hundred of his Companions (رضي الله عنهم), and they had only seventy camels and two horses with them. They set out in pursuit of the caravan of Quraysh that had come from Syria. The polytheists heard of that, so they prepared the army to go from Makkah to protect their caravan; they set out with approximately one thousand well-equipped and fully armed fighters and plenty of horses. They and the Muslims met at a well called Badr, between Makkah and Madinah, where they fought. Allah granted a great victory to the Muslims, who killed seventy of the most prominent and courageous of the polytheists, as well as capturing seventy more and seizing control of their camp. We will discuss the story further in the commentary on Soorat al-Anfāl, in *shā' Allāh*, as that is the appropriate place to do so. However, Allah mentioned it here to remind the Muslims that they should fear their Lord and give thanks to Him. Hence He said: ﴿So fear Allah, that you may be grateful﴾, because the one who fears his Lord has given thanks to Him, and the one who does not fear his Lord has not given thanks to him.

﴿[Remember] when you said to the believers﴾ that is, remember, O Muhammad (ﷺ), when you said to the believers on the day of Badr, giving them the glad tidings of victory:

﴿Does it not suffice you that Allah will help you with three thousand angels sent down? Indeed, if you remain steadfast and are mindful of Allah, even if the enemy should attack you suddenly, your Lord will [immediately] help you with five thousand angels clearly marked﴾ that is, they bear marks of courage. Allah stipulated three conditions for their support: steadfastness, fear of Allah and a sudden attack from the enemy. This was a promise to send down the angels mentioned and to support them by means of those angels. As for the promise of victory and foiling the enemy's schemes, Allah stipulated the first

two conditions for that, as we have seen previously in the verse: ﴿But if you remain steadfast and fear Allah, not the least harm will their scheming do to you﴾ (3: 120).

﴿Allah ordained this﴾ that is, His support of you with the angels ﴿only as glad tidings for you﴾ so that you might rejoice and your spirits be raised

﴿and to reassure your hearts thereby; there is no victory except from Allah﴾, so do not rely on what you have of the means of victory; rather the means of victory may give you some reassurance, but the true victory that cannot be overturned comes by the will of Allah; He grants victory to whomever He will of His slaves. If He wills, He grants victory to those who have the means of attaining victory and are better prepared, as is usually the case; but if He wills, He will grant victory to the weaker side, in order to highlight to His slaves that all matters are in His Hands and all matters go back to Him. Hence He said:

﴿from Allah, the Almighty﴾, so no created being can frustrate Him; rather all people are weak and under His control

﴿the Most Wise﴾ Who says and does what is appropriate at the right time and in the right place. By His wisdom He sometimes causes the disbelievers to prevail over the Muslims, but this is not ongoing. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...If Allah had so willed, He could have exacted retribution upon them [without you fighting], but He [commands you to fight] in order to test some of you by means of others...﴾ (Muhammad 47: 4)



﴿لَيَقْطَعَنَّ طَرْفًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْ يَكْتُمُهُمْ فَتَنقَلِبُوا ظَٰئِرِينَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران)

(١٢٧)

3:127. [Allah helped you] so that He might cut down a section of the disbelievers or disgrace them, so that they might retreat in utter disappointment.

Here Allah tells us that He gives His help to His believing slaves for either of two reasons, the first of which is to cut down a section or group of the disbelievers and their prominent figures, by causing them to be killed or captured, or a city to be taken over, or booty to be seized, thus strengthening the believers and humiliating the disbelievers. That is because the disbelievers' resistance to Islam and their fighting the Muslims are based on their individuals, weapons, wealth and land, by means of which they are able to resist and fight. Therefore cutting down any part of that reduces their strength. The second reason is that by means of their strength and numbers, the disbelievers have great hope of defeating the Muslims and are very keen to achieve that, so they do their utmost and spend their wealth to achieve it. Hence Allah helps the believers against them and sends them back disappointed, not having achieved their goal; rather they go back with loss, grief and sorrow. If you think about what happens in reality, you will see that Allah's help to His believing slaves is only ever one of these two things: either victory against the enemy or disgrace and retreat for them.



﴿ لَيْسَ لَكَ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ أَوْ يَتُوبَ عَلَيْهِمْ أَوْ يُعَذِّبَهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴾ وَاللَّهُ مَا فِي
السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ يَعْفُرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

(سورة آل عمران: ١٢٨-١٢٩) ﴿١٢٩﴾

3:128. It is not for you [O Prophet] to decide whether He turn in mercy to them, or punish them, for they are indeed wrongdoers.

3:129. To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth. He forgives whomever He wills and punishes whomever He wills, and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

When the events of the day of Uḥud unfolded, and the Prophet (ﷺ) went through hardship, by means of which Allah raised him in status, and his head was injured and his front tooth broken, he said: «How can any people prosper who injured the head of their Prophet?» (Muslim)³

He started to pray against the leaders of the polytheists, such as Abu Sufyān ibn Ḥarb, Ṣafwān ibn Umayyah, Suhayl ibn 'Amr and al-Ḥārith ibn Hishām, but Allah sent down revelation to him, forbidding him to pray against them, invoke curses upon them and seek their expulsion from the mercy of Allah:

«It is not for you [O Prophet] to decide»; all you have to do is convey the message, teach the people and strive to do what is in their best interests. The matter is in the Hand of Allah (ﷻ), Who controls all things; He guides whomever He wills and He causes to go astray whomever He wills. So do not pray against them; rather their case is for your Lord to decide. If His wisdom and mercy dictate that He should show mercy to them and bless them with Islam, He will do that, and if His wisdom dictates that they should remain disbelievers and not be guided, in which case they are the ones who wronged and harmed themselves and brought it upon themselves, He will do that.

³ 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)

Allah turned in mercy to these specific individuals and others, and guided them to Islam, may Allah be pleased with them. This verse indicates that the will of Allah supersedes the will of people; that an individual, no matter how high his status, may choose one thing but what is best and serves a purpose is something other than that; it was not for the Messenger (ﷺ) to decide, so it is more appropriate to say this in the case of others. This is the greatest refutation of those who pin their hopes on Prophets, righteous people and others, and it highlights the fact that doing so is associating others with Allah in worship and is indicative of a lack of rational thinking, because they turn away from the One Who is in control of all things and turn to those who have no control at all, which is clearly misguidance. Think about how, when Allah mentions His turning to them in mercy, He attributes this action to Himself and does not refer to any measure on their part that could make them qualified for that. This indicates that this blessing is pure grace from Him to His slave, without any prior measure on the part of that person. But when He mentions the punishment, He also mentions their wrongdoing and connects the punishment to the fact that they were wrongdoers: ﴿or punish them, for they are indeed wrongdoers﴾. This is indicative of the perfect justice and wisdom of Allah, as He dictates punishment when appropriate, and He does not wrong His slaves; rather it is the slave who wrongs himself. When He stated that His Messenger (ﷺ) had nothing to do with the decision, He affirmed that the decision was His to make:

﴿To Allah belongs all that is in the heavens and on earth﴾ including the angels, human beings, *jinn*, animals, heavenly bodies and all inanimate things. Everything in the heavens and on earth belongs to Allah, and is created by Him and under His control. He directs them like slaves, and they have no control at all. As that is the case, they are recipients of either His forgiveness or His punishment; He forgives whomever He wills, by guiding him to Islam, forgiving his association of others with Him and blessing him by enabling him to give up sin, so that He will forgive him his sin.

﴿and punishes whomever He wills﴾ by leaving him to his own devices and his ignorant self that is inclined towards evil; thus he will do evil deeds and be punished for that. Then the verse ends with two names of Allah that are indicative of the vastness of His mercy and the comprehensive nature of His forgiveness, as He says: ﴿and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful﴾. This offers the great glad tidings that His mercy prevails over His wrath, and His forgiveness prevails over His punishment. This verse tells us about the categories of people and that Allah forgives some of them and punishes others, but it does not end with one name that refers to mercy and another that refers to vengeance; rather it ends with two names, both of which refer to His mercy. He is possessed of mercy and kindness by virtue of which He will show mercy to His slaves such as has never entered the mind of any human being and cannot be described. We ask Him to bestow His mercy upon us and admit us to His paradise among His righteous slaves.



﴿يَتَابِعُهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَأْكُلُوا الرِّبَا اَضْعَافًا مُضَاعَفَةً ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ وَاتَّقُوا النَّارَ الَّتِي أُعِدَّتْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَالرَّسُولَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ ۞ وَسَارِعُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا السَّمَاوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ أُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ الَّذِينَ يُنْفِقُونَ فِي السَّرَّاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَالْكَنُظِيِّنَ الْفَظِيطَ وَالْعَافِينَ عَنِ النَّاسِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا فَعَلُوا فَجَسَةً أَرٰظَلَمُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللَّهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوا لِذُنُوبِهِمْ وَمَن يَغْفِرِ الذُّنُوبَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَلَمْ يُصِرُّوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَعَلُوا وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ جَزَاؤُهُم مَّغْفِرَةٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَجَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِن تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا وَيَنصَبُ لَهُمُ الْعِلْمَ لِيَنصَبُوا فِيهَا وَيَنصَبُ لَهُمُ الْعِلْمَ لِيَنصَبُوا فِيهَا وَيَنصَبُ لَهُمُ الْعِلْمَ لِيَنصَبُوا فِيهَا﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٣٠-١٣٦)

- 3:130. O you who believe! Do not devour usury, doubled and multiplied. Fear Allah, that you may prosper.
- 3:131. Guard yourselves against the fire, which is prepared for the disbelievers,
- 3:132. And obey Allah and the Messenger; that you may attain mercy.
- 3:133. Hasten towards forgiveness from your Lord and a garden as vast as the heavens and the earth, which is prepared for the pious,
- 3:134. Those who spend in times of both ease and hardship, who control their anger, and pardon people, for Allah loves those who do good;
- 3:135. And those who, if they do something shameful or wrong themselves, remember Allah and ask for forgiveness for their sins – for who can forgive sins except Allah? – and do not knowingly persist in what they have done.
- 3:136. For such their reward is forgiveness from their Lord, and gardens through which rivers flow, to abide therein forever; how excellent a reward for those who work [and strive]!

We have seen above, in the introduction to this *tafseer*, that each person should pay attention to enjoining what is good and forbidding what is bad to himself and to others, and that when Allah (ﷻ) issues a command, it becomes incumbent upon him – first of all – to understand when and how it is to be done, and what is enjoined upon him, so that he can fulfil the command. Once he understands that, he must strive and seek Allah’s help to put it into practice himself and enjoin others to do so, as much as he is able. Similarly, if he is told not to do something, he must understand when and how this applies, and what it does and does not include, then he should strive hard, seeking the help of his Lord, to refrain from it. This is what he must do with regard to all the divine commands and prohibitions.

In these verses, Allah issues some commands and describes some good characteristics that He enjoins and urges us to attain, and tells us

of the reward of those who do these things. He also mentions some prohibitions and urges us to keep away from those things.

It may be – and Allah knows best – that the reason why these verses come in the context of the story of Uḥud is that Allah (ﷻ) had previously promised His believing slaves that, if they remained steadfast and feared Him, He would grant them victory over their enemies and He would weaken their enemies' resolve against them, as He said: ﴿But if you remain steadfast and fear Allah, not the least harm will their scheming do to you﴾ (3: 120) and ﴿Indeed, if you remain steadfast and are mindful of Allah, even if the enemy should attack you suddenly, your Lord will [immediately] help you...﴾ (3: 125).

It is as if the listener would be keen to know what these qualities are that bring fear of Allah, by means of which victory, success and happiness may be attained. Hence in these verses Allah mentions the most important characteristics of fear of Him which, if a person attains them, he will be more likely to attain others.

This is proven by the fact that Allah mentions the word *taqwa* (meaning piety or fear of Him) three times in this passage, once in absolute terms (without mentioning Who or what is to be feared or to Whom piety is to be directed): ﴿which is prepared for the pious﴾ (3: 133); and twice in conjunction with mention of Who is to be feared or what is to be guarded against: ﴿Fear Allah﴾ (3: 130) and ﴿Guard yourselves against the fire﴾ (3: 131).

﴿O you who believe﴾ every time this phrase appears in the Qur'an, saying ﴿O you who believe﴾, do such and such or do not do such and such, it indicates that faith is the reason that makes one abide by these commands and avoid what is prohibited, because faith means believing in everything that one is required to believe in, which has an impact on one's deeds. Here Allah forbids them to devour usury, doubled and multiplied. This is what the people of the *jāhiliyah*, and those who did not care about the commands of Sharia, were used to,

namely that when debt became due from one who was in financial difficulty, they would say to him: Either pay what you owe us, or we will extend the deadline and increase what you owe. The poor man would be forced to accept this condition in order to get the lender off his back, trying to find temporary relief from this trouble, but it increased what he owed, doubled and multiplied, without any benefit to him.

The words ﴿doubled and multiplied﴾ highlight the harshness and abhorrent nature of this condition, and point to the wisdom behind the prohibition thereof. Allah forbade usury because of the injustice it involves; Allah instructs the lender to give respite to the one who is in difficulty and leave the amount owed as it is, without increasing it. Forcing the borrower to pay more than he owes is multiple wrongdoing, which the pious believer must refrain from and not go near it, because forsaking it is one of the requirements of piety or fear of Allah.

Success depends on piety or fear of Allah, therefore He said: ﴿Fear Allah, that you may prosper. Guard yourselves against the fire, which is prepared for the disbelievers﴾ by giving up that which leads to entering it, namely disbelief and sins of varying degrees. All sins – especially major sins – lead to disbelief; in fact they are among the characteristics of disbelief. Allah has prepared the fire for those who do these things, therefore giving up sin will save one from the fire and protect one from the wrath of Allah. Doing good deeds and acts of obedience lead to attaining the pleasure of the Most Merciful, entering paradise and attaining mercy. Therefore Allah says:

﴿And obey Allah and the Messenger﴾ by doing what He commands and avoiding what He forbids ﴿that you may attain mercy﴾; obeying Allah and obeying His Messenger (ﷺ) are means of attaining mercy, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿...My mercy encompasses all things; I shall ordain it for those who fear Me, and give zakâh...﴾ (al-A'raf 7: 156)

Then Allah commanded them to hasten towards His forgiveness and His paradise, as vast as the heavens and the earth, which Allah has prepared for the pious who fear Him, for they are its people and acts of piety are what bring one to it.

Then He describes the pious and their deeds:

﴿Those who spend in times of both ease and hardship﴾ that is, at times of difficulty or ease. When things are easy, they spend a great deal and when things are hard they do not think of any deed of kindness as being too little.

﴿who control their anger﴾ that is, if someone else harms them in a way that makes them angry – which refers to the heart being filled with rage and the desire to take revenge in word and deed – they do not act in accordance with human nature; rather they suppress the anger in their hearts and show patience in refraining from treating the offender in the same manner.

﴿and pardon people﴾ – pardoning people includes pardoning everyone who mistreats you in word or deed. Pardon is superior to suppressing anger because pardon means not holding it against the one who mistreated you and forgiving the offender. This can only come from one who has attained praiseworthy characteristics and has given up bad characteristics, and who is thinking of the reward of Allah, so he forgives the slaves of Allah out of compassion and kindness towards them, because he does not want to hurt them, and so that Allah will forgive him and his reward will be with his generous Lord, not with His helpless slave, as Allah says:

﴿...but whoever forgives and reconciles, his reward is with Allah...﴾ (ash-Shoorâ 42: 40)

Then Allah tells us about a quality that is more comprehensive, better and more sublime, which is doing good (*ihsân*):

﴿for Allah loves those who do good﴾. Doing good refers to two things: doing well in worshipping the Creator and doing good to other people. The Prophet (ﷺ) described doing well in worshipping the Creator as: «...worshipping Allah as if you can see Him, for if you do not see Him, He sees you.» (Muslim)

Doing good to other people means trying to help or benefit them in both spiritual and worldly terms, and warding off harm from them in both spiritual and worldly terms. That includes enjoining them to do good and forbidding them to do bad, teaching those who are ignorant, admonishing those who are heedless, offering sincere advice to the common folk and prominent figures, striving to bring them together, giving them charity, and spending on them in ways that are obligatory or encouraged, according to their situation and needs.

That includes being generous and helpful, refraining from annoying them, and putting up with their annoyance, as Allah described the pious in these verses. Whoever does these things has done his duty towards Allah and towards His slaves.

Then Allah tells us how they apologise to their Lord for their sins: ﴿And those who, if they do something shameful or wrong themselves﴾ that is, if they do bad deeds, whether they are major sins or of a lesser degree, they hasten to repent and seek forgiveness, and they remember their Lord and His warning to those who are disobedient and His promise to those who fear Him. So they ask for forgiveness for their sins and concealment for their faults; at the same time, they give up their sins and regret them. Hence Allah says: ﴿and [they] do not knowingly persist in what they have done﴾.

﴿For such﴾ that is, for those who are described in these terms ﴿their reward is forgiveness from their Lord﴾ that removes the burden of sin that forms an impediment to reaching paradise ﴿and gardens through which rivers flow﴾ in which there is eternal blessing, delight, happiness, well-being, goodness, happiness, palaces,

lofty and elegant dwellings, beautiful and fruitful trees, and rivers flowing through that splendid abode.

﴿to abide therein forever﴾ – they will never leave it; they will never want anything else and its delights will never change.

﴿how excellent a reward for those who work [and strive]﴾. They strove a little for the sake of Allah and were rewarded with much. Those who push themselves to travel by night will, in the morning, be glad that they made that effort, and at the time of reward, the one who strove hard will find his reward paid in full.

These verses are among the texts quoted by *ahl as-Sunnah wal-jamâ'ah* as evidence that deeds are part of faith, which is unlike the view of the Murjites.

To prove this, we quote the following verse from Soorat al-Hadeed, which is akin to this passage in Âl 'Imrân:

﴿Race towards forgiveness from your Lord and paradise which is as wide as the heavens and the earth, prepared for those who believe in Allah and His Messengers...﴾ (*al-Hadeed* 57: 21)

The verse in Soorat al-Hadeed only refers to believing in Allah and His Messengers, and the verse here in Soorat Âl 'Imrân (3: 133) says that paradise is prepared for the pious.

Then Allah describes the pious in terms of financial and physical actions, which indicates that these pious people who are described in these terms are the same as those who are mentioned in Soorat al-Hadeed as believers (in Allah and His Messenger ﷺ).

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﴿قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ سُنَنٌ فَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكْذِبِينَ﴾
 ﴿هَذَا بَيَانٌ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَمَوْعِظَةٌ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٣٧ - ١٣٨)

- 3:137. There were many nations before you; travel through the earth, and see what was the fate of those who disbelieved.
- 3:138. This is a clarification for all humankind, a guidance and admonition to those who fear Allah.

In these verses and those that follow them, discussing the story of Uḥud, Allah (ﷻ) offered consolation to His believing slaves and told them that there had been many nations before them who were tested, and Allah tried the believers among them by causing them to fight the disbelievers, and the struggle continued with no decisive outcome until Allah decreed that the ultimate victory should be for His pious, believing slaves, and in the end the disbelievers were defeated; Allah humiliated them by granting victory to His Messengers and their followers.

«travel through the earth» that is, travel physically and contemplate «and see what was the fate of those who disbelieved» for you will not find that there was any other outcome for them but all kinds of worldly punishments. Their habitations are empty, and the loss of their power and sovereignty, and the disappearance of their extravagance and pride, are clear to everyone. Is this not the greatest proof for the truth of what the Messengers brought?

The divine wisdom behind the trials that Allah sends to His slaves is to distinguish those who are sincere from those who are lying. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says:

«This is a clarification for all humankind» that is, a clear explanation that shows people truth from falsehood, those who are blessed from those who are doomed. This refers to those whom Allah punishes.

«a guidance and admonition to those who fear Allah» because they are the ones who benefit from the revelation, which guides them to the straight path, and admonishes them and deters them from following the path of misguidance. As for other people, it is a clarification for

them by means of which Allah establishes proof against them, that those who died might die after proof had been established against them.

It may be that what is referred to in the words ﴿This is a clarification for all humankind﴾ is the Holy Qur'an and that it is a clarification for people in general, and guidance and admonition for those who fear Allah in particular. Both meanings are correct.



﴿وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوا وَأَنْتُمْ الْأَعْلَوْنَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٣٩﴾﴾ إِنَّ يَمَسُّكُمْ فَرَحٌ
فَقَدْ مَسَّ الْقَوْمَ فَرَحٌ يُرْسَلُ ﴿١٤٠﴾ وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلُهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ
الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَيَتَّخِذَ مِنْكُمْ شُهَدَاءَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٤١﴾ وَلِيُمَحِّصَ اللَّهُ
الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَيَمْحَقَ الْكٰفِرِينَ ﴿١٤٢﴾ أَمْ حَسِبْتُمْ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ وَلَمَّا يَعْلَمِ اللَّهُ
الَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا مِنْكُمْ وَيَعْلَمَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٤٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ تَمَنَّوْنَ الْمَوْتَ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ
تَلْقَوْهُ فَقَدْ رَأَيْتُمُوهُ وَأَنْتُمْ نَنْظُرُونَ ﴿١٤٤﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٣٩-١٤٣)

- 3:139. So do not lose heart nor grieve, for you will overcome if you are [truly] believers.
- 3:140. If you have suffered a blow, the [disbelieving] people have suffered a blow like it. Such days [of varying fortunes] We give to people by turns, so that Allah may know those who believe and so that He may choose martyrs from among you. And Allah does not love the wrongdoers.
- 3:141. And so that Allah may purify the believers and destroy the disbelievers.
- 3:142. Did you think that you would enter paradise when Allah has not yet seen who among you will strive hard [in jihad] and has not seen who will remain steadfast?

3:143. You did indeed wish for death before you met it; now you have seen it with your own eyes.

Allah (ﷻ) says, encouraging His believing slaves, strengthening their resolve and raising their spirits:

﴿So do not lose heart nor grieve﴾ that is, do not weaken physically, and do not let your hearts be filled with grief because of the calamity that has befallen you and the trial you have gone through. Grief in the heart and physical weakness will only make the calamity worse for you and give your enemy an advantage over you. Rather you should be of good courage and be steadfast, ward off grief and strengthen your resolve to fight your enemy.

Here Allah tells them that it is not appropriate or befitting for them to lose heart and feel grief when they will overcome by virtue of their faith and hope of the support and reward of Allah. The believer who is certain of what Allah has promised of reward in this world and the hereafter should not feel like that. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿for you will overcome if you are [truly] believers﴾.

Then He consoles them for what they suffered of defeat and explains the great wisdom that resulted in that:

﴿If you have suffered a blow, the [disbelieving] people have suffered a blow like it﴾ so you and they are equal in terms of blows suffered, but you have hope in Allah that they do not have, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿...If you are suffering hardships, they are also suffering hardships; but you hope for something from Allah that they cannot hope for...﴾
(*an-Nisâ' 4: 104*)

One of the lessons that we learn from that is that Allah may give worldly comforts to both believers and disbelievers, those who are righteous and those who are evildoers, and Allah alternates the fortunes of people, one day for this group and one day for the other

group, because this world will come to an end, unlike the hereafter, which is only for those who believe.

﴿so that Allah may know those who believe﴾ this is another lesson: Allah tests His slaves with defeat and trials in order to distinguish the believer from the hypocrite, because if the believers were always victorious in all battles, people would enter Islam without really wanting it. But if various kinds of trials occur in some battles, those believers who truly want Islam in good times and bad, in ease and in hardship, will become distinct from those who are not like that.

﴿and so that He may choose martyrs from among you﴾. This is another lesson, because martyrdom is one of the highest statuses before Allah, and there is no way of attaining it without the means that lead to it. By His mercy towards His believing slaves, He has made available means of attaining it even though it is hard for them, so that they may attain what they want of high status and eternal blessing.

﴿And Allah does not love the wrongdoers﴾ who wrong themselves and refrain from fighting in His cause. It is as if this is an implicit criticism of the hypocrites, stating that they are hated by Allah, and that is why He held them back from joining the fight in His cause.

﴿If they had truly wanted to go forth, they would surely have made preparations to do so, but Allah disliked their going forth, so He made them lag behind, and it was said to them: Stay behind with those who are staying behind.﴾ (at-Tawbah 9: 46)

﴿And so that Allah may purify the believers﴾. This is another lesson, that Allah purifies the believers thereby from their sins. This indicates that martyrdom and fighting in Allah's cause expiate sins, and Allah also makes the believers distinct from the hypocrites, so that they may rid themselves of them and know the believer from the hypocrite.

Another lesson we learn is that Allah decrees that in order to destroy the disbelievers; in other words, it is a means of eradicating

them through (divine) punishment, because if they prevail they will go to extremes and increase in wrongdoing, which will make them deserving of an expedited punishment. This is out of mercy towards His believing slaves.

Then Allah says: ﴿Did you think that you would enter paradise when Allah has not yet seen who among you will strive hard [in jihad] and has not seen who will remain steadfast?﴾. This appears in the form of a question but serves as a statement that it is not as you think. In other words, do not think, and do not let it cross your mind, that you will enter paradise without facing hardship and putting up with difficulties in the cause of Allah and seeking His pleasure. For paradise is the highest of aspirations and the best thing for which people compete. The greater the goal, the greater the means of attaining it and the deeds by which one reaches it. The life of ease and comfort (in the hereafter) cannot be attained except by giving up a life of ease and comfort (in this world).

But if a person prepares himself and trains himself to face the hardships of this world that one may go through for the sake of Allah, bearing the end result in mind, these trials – for those who have insight – will turn into gifts at which he feels joy and does not worry. This is the grace of Allah that He bestows upon whomever He wills.

Then Allah (ﷻ) rebukes them for not being steadfast with regard to what they wished for and hoped would take place: ﴿You did indeed wish for death before you met it﴾. That was because many of the Companions (رضي الله عنهم) had missed the Battle of Badr, and they wished that Allah would cause them to witness a battle so that they could do their utmost. Allah said to them: ﴿now you have seen it with your own eyes﴾ so why did you not remain steadfast? This is not appropriate and it is not good, especially for one who wished for that and got what he wished for. What he should have done is strive his utmost.

This verse indicates that there is nothing wrong with wishing for martyrdom, because Allah (ﷻ) approved of their wishes and did not criticise them for that; rather He criticised them for not acting upon their wishes. And Allah knows best.



﴿وَمَا مُحَمَّدٌ إِلَّا رَسُولٌ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ أَفَإِنْ مَاتَ أَوْ قُتِلَ انْقَلَبْتُمْ عَلَىٰ أَعْقَابِكُمْ وَمَنْ يَنْقَلِبْ عَلَىٰ عَقْبَيْهِ فَلَنْ يَصُرَ اللَّهُ شَيْئًا وَسَيَجْزِي اللَّهُ الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ وَمَا كَانَ لِنَفْسٍ أَنْ تَمُوتَ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ كِنْتُمْ مُوَجَّلًا وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَمَنْ يُرِدْ ثَوَابَ الْآخِرَةِ نُؤْتِهِ مِنْهَا وَسَيَجْزِي الشَّاكِرِينَ ﴿١٤٥﴾﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ١٤٤-١٤٥)

- 3:144. Muhammad is no more than a Messenger, and [other] Messengers passed away before him. If he dies or is slain, will you then turn on your heels? Those who turn on their heels do not harm Allah in the slightest, but Allah will reward those who are grateful.
- 3:145. No soul can die except by Allah's leave, and at an appointed time. Whoever desires the reward of this world, We will give him thereof, and whoever desires the reward of the hereafter, We will give him thereof. And We will reward those who are grateful.

﴿Muhammad is no more than a Messenger, and [other] Messengers passed away before him﴾ that is, he is not the first of the Messengers; rather he is like the Messengers who came before him, whose job was to convey the messages of their Lord and carry out His commands. They are not immortal and their remaining alive is not a condition of obeying the commands of Allah; rather what people are required to do is worship their Lord at all times and in all circumstances. Hence

He said: «If he dies or is slain, will you then turn on your heels?» by abandoning what he brought of faith or jihad and the like.

«Those who turn on their heels do not harm Allah in the slightest»; rather they only harm themselves and Allah has no need of them. He will cause His religion to prevail and will grant victory to His believing slaves. When Allah (ﷻ) rebuked those who turned on their heels, He praised those who remained steadfast with His Messenger (ﷺ) and obeyed the command of their Lord: «but Allah will reward those who are grateful». Gratitude can only be by being a true slave of Allah in all circumstances.

In this verse Allah (ﷻ) gives instructions to His slaves that they should be in such a state that their faith cannot be shaken and they should not lose their resolve to adhere to some of its requirements because of the loss of a leader, even if he was great. That state can only be attained by making preparations in all matters of their religion, by having many qualified people who could step in so that if one is lost, another can take his place. The aim of ordinary people should be to establish the religion of Allah and strive in His cause as much as possible, and they should not be too attached to one leader rather than another. Thus their affairs will be in order and they will be in good shape.

This verse also offers the greatest proofs of the virtue of the greatest *ṣiddeeq*, Abu Bakr, and his companions who fought the apostates after the death of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), because they were foremost among those who are grateful.

Then Allah (ﷻ) tells us that all souls have an appointed time of death, by Allah's leave and in accordance with His will and decree. If it is decreed for a person to die, he will die even if that is with no apparent cause, and if He wills that a person will live, even if he is exposed to all causes of death, nothing will harm him before he reaches his appointed time (of death). That is because Allah has willed and decreed that he should live until the appointed time:

﴿..when their appointed time comes, they will not be able to delay it for a single moment or bring it forward.﴾ (al-A'raf 7: 34)

Then Allah tells us that He will give reward to people in this world and in the hereafter, according to what they hope for:

﴿Whoever desires the reward of this world, We will give him thereof, and whoever desires the reward of the hereafter, We will give him thereof﴾.

And Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿On all – both the latter and the former – We bestow of the bounty of your Lord. Verily, the bounty of your Lord is not denied [to anyone]. See how We have bestowed more on some than on others [in this world], but verily the hereafter will have higher ranks and greater degrees of excellence for some over others﴾ (al-Isrâ' 17: 20-21)

﴿And We will reward those who are grateful﴾. Allah does not mention what their reward is, to indicate how great and abundant it will be, and so that it will be known that the reward will be commensurate with the level of gratitude.



﴿وَكَايْنٍ مِّن نَّجِيٍّ قَاتَلَ مَعَهُ رِيثِيُونَ كَثِيرٌ فَمَا وَهَنُوا لِمَا أَصَابَهُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَمَا ضَعُفُوا وَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ وَمَا كَانَ قَوْلَهُمْ إِلَّا أَن قَالُوا رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَإِسْرَافَنَا فِي أَمْرِنَا وَثَبِّتْ أقدامَنَا وَأَنْصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ فَكَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْآخِرَةِ وَحَسَنُ ثَوَابٍ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٤٨﴾﴾ (سورة

آل عمران: ١٤٦-١٤٨)

3:146. How many of the Prophets fought [in Allah's cause], and multitudes of devout men fought alongside them, but they never lost heart because of the suffering they endured in Allah's cause, nor did they weaken [in resolve] nor yield. And Allah loves those who are steadfast.

- 3:147. All they said was: Our Lord, forgive us our sins and our excesses in our conduct, make firm our foothold and grant us victory against the disbelievers.
- 3:148. So Allah gave them reward in this world and the excellent reward of the hereafter. For Allah loves those who do good.

This passage offers consolation to the believers and encourages others to follow their example and do as they did. This is something that has happened before, and it is the way of Allah that could happen again.

﴿How many of the Prophets fought [in Allah's cause], and multitudes of devout men fought alongside them﴾ that is, large numbers of their followers, in whose hearts the Prophets had instilled faith that led them to do righteous deeds, and they suffered death, injuries and so on.

﴿but they never lost heart because of the suffering they endured in Allah's cause, nor did they weaken [in resolve] nor yield﴾ that is, their courage never weakened and they did not tire physically or yield, that is, they did not give in to their enemies. Rather they remained patient and steadfast, pulling themselves together and carrying on. Hence Allah says: ﴿And Allah loves those who are steadfast﴾.

Then He mentions what they said, seeking victory from their Lord: ﴿All they said﴾ in those difficult circumstances ﴿was: Our Lord, forgive us our sins and our excesses in our conduct﴾. Excess means overstepping the mark and doing what is forbidden. They realised that sins and excesses are among the main causes of troubles, and that ridding themselves of these sins was one of the main means of attaining victory, so they asked their Lord to forgive them.

Moreover, they did not rely on their efforts to keep them steadfast; rather they relied on Allah and asked Him to make their foothold firm when meeting the disbelieving enemies in battle, and to grant them

victory. Thus they combined patience and steadfastness, and avoided the opposite thereof, in addition to repenting, seeking forgiveness and asking their Lord to grant them victory. So it is no wonder that Allah granted them victory and caused them ultimately to prevail, in this world and in the hereafter. Hence He said:

﴿So Allah gave them reward in this world﴾ in the form of victory and booty

﴿and the excellent reward of the hereafter﴾, which is attaining the pleasure of their Lord and eternal bliss that is free of anything that might spoil it. That is only because they strove their utmost for His sake, so He granted them the best reward. Hence Allah says:

﴿For Allah loves those who do good﴾ and do their best in worshipping their Creator and interacting with people. Part of doing good is to act like those who are described here when striving in jihad against the enemy.



﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِن تَطِيعُوا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يَرُدُّوكُمْ عَلَىٰ
 أَعْقَابِكُمْ فَتَنْقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ بَلِ اللَّهُ مَوْلَاكُمْ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ النَّاصِرِينَ
 ﴿١٥٠﴾ سَنُلْقِي فِي قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الرُّعْبَ بِمَا أَشْرَكُوا بِاللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يُنَزَّلْ
 بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَمَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ وَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿١٥١﴾﴾ (سورة آل

عمران: ١٤٩-١٥١)

- 3:149. O you who believe! If you obey those who disbelieve, they will make you turn on your heels, and thus you will turn back as losers.
- 3:150. Nay, Allah is your Protector, and He is the best of helpers.
- 3:151. Soon will We cast dread into the hearts of the disbelievers, because they ascribed partners to Allah, for which He had

not sent down any authority; their abode will be the fire, and wretched is the abode of the wrongdoers!

Here Allah forbids the believers to obey the disbelievers, whether they be hypocrites or polytheists, for if they do so, they intend only to do them harm; their goal is to bring them back to disbelief, which leads only to doom and loss.

Then Allah states that He is their protector and helper; this is glad tidings that He will take care of them by His kindness and protect them from all kinds of evil.

This provides encouragement for them to take Him alone as protector and helper, to the exclusion of all others. One aspect of His protection and help is that He promised them that He would cast dread into the hearts of their enemies among the disbelievers; this refers to great fear that would prevent them from achieving many of their goals. And He did indeed do that: when the polytheists departed after the battle of Uḥud, they discussed amongst themselves, saying: How could we have left after killing whom we killed and defeating them without eradicating them? They thought of going back, but Allah instilled dread in their hearts, so they left disappointed.

Undoubtedly this was the greatest help, because, as mentioned above, Allah helps His believing slaves in one of two ways: either He cuts down a section of the disbelievers or He disgraces them, so that they retreat in utter disappointment. In this case, the latter is applicable.

Then Allah mentions the reason why dread was cast into the hearts of the disbelievers:

﴿because they ascribed partners to Allah, for which He had not sent down any authority﴾ that is, it was because of the rivals and idols they took as gods instead of Him, which they did on the basis of their evil ulterior motives, with no proof or evidence, and they no longer sought protection from the One, the Most Merciful.

Hence the polytheists were in dread of the believers, and they had no strong support, and no one to turn to at times of hardship and distress. This was the situation in this world, and the hereafter is worse. Hence Allah said: ﴿and wretched is the abode of the wrongdoers﴾; because of their wrongdoing and transgression, the fire will become their final abode.



﴿وَلَقَدْ صَدَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ إِذْ تَحُسُّونَهُم بِإِذْنِهِ ۗ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَشِلْتُمْ وَتَنَزَّعْتُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَعَصَيْتُمْ مِمَّا أُرِيكُمْ مَا تُحِبُّونَ ۚ مِنْكُمْ مَن يُرِيدُ الدُّنْيَا وَمِنْكُمْ مَن يُرِيدُ الْآخِرَةَ ۚ ثُمَّ صَرَفَكُمْ عَنْهُمْ لِيَبْتَلِيَكُمْ ۗ وَلَقَدْ عَفَا عَنْكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٥٢﴾﴾

(سورة آل عمران: ١٥٢)

3:152. Allah did indeed fulfil His promise to you when you, with His permission, were killing them, until you faltered and quarrelled among yourselves about the [Prophet's] orders, and disobeyed after He had shown you what you desired [of booty]. Among you are some that seek worldly gains and some that seek rewards in the hereafter. Then He made you flee from them in order to test you but He forgave you, for Allah is most gracious to the believers.

﴿Allah did indeed fulfil His promise to you﴾ of help; He helped you against them until they began to flee, and you started killing them, then you caused trouble for yourselves and helped your enemy against you, when you faltered
 ﴿and quarrelled among yourselves about the [Prophet's] orders﴾ and thus ignored Allah's command to be united and not disagree. But you disagreed. Some said: We should remain in our positions where

the Prophet (ﷺ) stationed us; but others said: Why should we stay when the enemy has started to flee and there is no longer any danger? Thus you disobeyed the Messenger (ﷺ) and ignored his instructions after Allah had shown you that which you love, namely the putting to flight of your enemies. What is required of the one whom Allah blesses with that which he loves is greater than that which is required of others, and in this particular case what was required was something specific; however, in general terms what is required is obedience to the commands of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ).

﴿Among you are some that seek worldly gains﴾; they are the ones who caused all these troubles

﴿and some that seek rewards in the hereafter﴾; they are the ones who adhered to the instructions of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and remained where they had been ordered to stay.

﴿Then He made you flee from them﴾ that is, after you did these things, Allah caused you to flee from them. The course of events turned in the enemy's favour, as a test and trial from Allah to you, in order to distinguish between the believer and the disbeliever, the obedient and the disobedient, and so that by means of this calamity Allah might expiate for you that which you had brought about. Hence Allah said: ﴿but He forgave you, for Allah is most gracious to the believers﴾ that is, He is most gracious to them, as He blessed them with Islam, guided them to His religion, forgave them their bad deeds and made them steadfast at the time of calamity.

By His grace towards the believers, He does not decree for them any good or any calamity but it is ultimately good for them. If something good happens to them, they give thanks and He grants them the reward of those who are grateful; if something bad happens to them, they bear it with patience and He grants them the reward of those who are patient.



﴿ إِذْ تَصْعَدُونَ وَلَا تَكُونُ عَلَىٰ أَحَدٍ وَالرَّسُولُ يَدْعُوكُمْ فِي آخِرِنَاكُمْ فَأَتَيْنَاكُمُ غَمًّا يَمِيرُ لِكَيْلًا تَحْزَنُوا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا مَا أَصَابَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ ثُمَّ أَنْزَلَ عَلَيْكُم مِّن بَعْدِ الْغَمِّ أَمْنًا نَّعَاسًا يَغْشَىٰ طَآئِفَةً مِّنكُمْ ۖ وَطَآئِفَةٌ قَدْ أَهَمَّتْهُمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ يَظُنُّونَ بِاللَّهِ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ ظَنَّ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَقُولُونَ هَل لَّنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ مِن شَيْءٍ قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَمْرَ كُلَّهُ لِلَّهِ يُخْفُونَ فِي أَنفُسِهِم مَّا لَا يُبْدُونَ لَكَ يَقُولُونَ لَوْ كَانَ لَنَا مِنَ الْأَمْرِ شَيْءٌ مَّا قَاتَلْنَا هَهُنَا قُلْ لَوْ كُنْتُمْ فِي بُيُوتِكُمْ لَبَرَزَ الَّذِينَ كُتِبَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَتْلُ إِلَىٰ مَضَاجِعِهِمْ وَلِيَبْتَلِيَ اللَّهُ مَا فِي صُدُورِكُمْ وَلِيُمَحَّصَ مَا فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

﴿١٥٣﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٥٣-١٥٤)

- 3:153. [Remember] when you were fleeing, paying no heed to anyone, and the Messenger at your rear was calling you back. So Allah gave you distress upon distress by way of requital, so that you should not grieve for what you missed or for what befell you. For Allah is well aware of what you do.
- 3:154. After that distress, He sent down calm on a group of you who were overcome with slumber, while another group cared only about themselves, harbouring thoughts about Allah that were untrue – thoughts of ignorance. They said: Do we have any say in the matter? Say: All matters belong to Allah. They conceal in their hearts what they do not disclose to you. They say: If we had had any say in the matter, we would not have been killed here. Say: Even if you had remained in your homes, those for whom death was decreed would certainly have gone forth to the place of their death; but [all this happened] so that Allah might test and purify what is in your hearts. For Allah knows well what is in [your] hearts.

Here Allah (ﷻ) reminds them of the state they were in at the time when they fled from the battle, and He rebukes them for that:

«[Remember] when you were fleeing, paying no heed to anyone» that is, no one among you cared about anyone else or looked at him; rather your only concern was to flee and save yourselves from the battle.

But in fact there was no great danger, because you were not the closest of the people to the enemy or in the battlefield. Rather «the Messenger at your rear was calling you back». He was the closest to the enemy, and he was saying:

«Come to me, O slaves of Allah!» (A very odd hadith recorded by Ibn Katheer and Ibn Hajar)

But you did not pay attention to him or respond to his call. Fleeing in and of itself is blameworthy, but failing to respond to the call of the Messenger (ﷺ), to whom you should give precedence over yourselves, is even worse.

«So Allah gave you distress upon distress» that is, the distress of missing out on victory and booty, the distress of fleeing, and that distress which made you forget all others, which was hearing that Muhammad (ﷺ) had been killed.

«by way of requital» that is, requital for your deeds.

But Allah, by His grace and kindness towards His slaves, caused all of these things to be good for His believing slaves, as He said: «so that you should not grieve for what you missed» of victory and booty «or for what befell you» of defeat, killing and wounding. When you realised that the Messenger (ﷺ) had not been killed, all of these calamities became insignificant in your eyes, and you rejoiced in his survival, which was a consolation for all calamities and trials. How great are the hidden benefits and wisdom in calamities and trials.

All of that is based on His knowledge and complete awareness of your actions, both visible and hidden. Hence He said: «For Allah is well aware of what you do».

It may be that what is meant by the words: ﴿so that you should not grieve for what you missed or for what befell you﴾ is: He decreed that this distress and calamity should befall you, so that you would get used to it and become accustomed to being patient and steadfast at the time of calamities, and it would become easier for you to bear hardship.

﴿After that distress﴾ that befell you
 ﴿He sent down calm on a group of you who were overcome with slumber﴾.

Undoubtedly this was mercy and kindness towards them, that brought reassurance to their hearts and made them feel at peace, because one who is in a state of fear cannot be overtaken by slumber, because of the fear in his heart. But when the fear is removed from his heart, then it becomes possible for him to slumber.

This group whom Allah blessed with slumber were the believers who had no concern other than establishing the religion of Allah, attaining the pleasure of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), and acting in the interests of their Muslim brothers.

As for the other group, who ﴿cared only about themselves﴾, they had no other concern, because of their hypocrisy or the weakness of their faith. Hence slumber did not overtake them as it did others. ﴿They said: Do we have any say in the matter?﴾ This is a question that expresses disapproval; in other words they were expressing despair, thinking that victory would never be attained at all. They thought negatively of their Lord and His religion and Prophet (ﷺ); they thought that Allah could not cause His religion and His Messenger (ﷺ) to prevail, and that this defeat was the final blow to the religion of Allah.

Allah said in response to them:

﴿Say: All matters belong to Allah﴾; this includes what He decrees and what He prescribes; all things are subject to the will and decree

of Allah, and ultimate victory will be for His close friends and those who obey Him, no matter what setbacks they may face.

﴿They﴾ that is, the hypocrites ﴿conceal in their hearts what they do not disclose to you﴾. Then Allah describes what it is that they are concealing:

﴿They say: If we had had any say in the matter﴾ that is, if our opinion concerning this battle had been listened to, ﴿we would not have been killed here﴾.

This is criticism on their part, and disbelief in the will and decree of Allah; it also shows that they regarded the opinion of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), and that of his Companions, as foolish, and that they thought highly of themselves. But Allah responded to them by saying: ﴿Say: Even if you had remained in your homes﴾, which were far away from the places of killing, ﴿those for whom death was decreed would certainly have gone forth to the place of their death﴾. Measures taken to protect oneself – no matter how great they may be – are only of benefit if they are not opposed by the divine will and decree. If they are opposed by the divine decree, they will be of no benefit at all; rather the decree of Allah concerning life and death, which is written in *al-Lawh al-Mahfūdh*, will inevitably come to pass.

﴿but [all this happened] so that Allah might test and purify what is in your hearts﴾ that is, so that He might test what is in them of hypocrisy, faith or weakness of faith, and purify them of the whispers of the Shayṭān and the bad characteristics that stem therefrom.

﴿For Allah knows well what is in [your] hearts﴾ and what you conceal. His knowledge and wisdom dictate that He should decree events by means of which what is hidden in people's hearts will become apparent.



﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَوَلَّوْا مِنْكُمْ يَوْمَ الْتَقَى الْجَمْعَانِ إِنَّمَا اسْتَزَلَّهُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ بِبَعْضِ مَا كَسَبُوا وَلَقَدْ عَفَا اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٥٥)

3:155. As for those of you who fled on the day the two armies met, it was only because the Shayṭān made them slip, on account of some of their deeds. But Allah has pardoned them, for Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Forbearing.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us about those who fled on the day of Uḥud and what caused them to flee; it was because of the whisper of the Shayṭān, who gained control over them because of some of their sins. Hence they are the ones who let him have control and power over them, because of the sins they committed; sins are his vehicle and the passage by which he enters. If they had remained obedient to their Lord, he would not have had any power over them. Allah says elsewhere:

﴿Verily, you will have no power over My slaves...﴾ (al-Isrā' 17: 65)

Then Allah tells us that He has pardoned them, after they had committed actions for which they could be held accountable, otherwise if He had brought them to account, He could have eradicated them. ﴿for Allah is Oft-Forgiving﴾ to the sinners, by means of guiding them to repent and seek forgiveness, and by means of calamities that expiate sin.

﴿Most Forbearing﴾; He does not hasten their punishment for one who disobeys Him; rather He gives him respite and calls him to repent and turn to Him. Then if he repents and turns to Him, He accepts it from him and makes him like one who did not commit any sin. To Him be praise for His kindness.



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَقَالُوا لِإِخْوَانِهِمْ إِذَا ضَرَبُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ
أَوْ كَانُوا غُرَىٰ لَوْ كَانُوا عِنْدَنَا مَا مَاتُوا وَمَا قُتِلُوا لِيَجْعَلَ اللَّهُ ذَٰلِكَ حَسْرَةً فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ
وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَارُ ۗ وَيُؤْتِي مَا يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١٦١﴾ وَلَٰكِنْ قُتِلْتُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ مُتُّمَّ

لَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرَحْمَةٌ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُونَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ وَلَئِن مُّتُّم أَوْ قُتِلْتُمْ لَإِلَى اللَّهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿١٥٨﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٥٦-١٥٨)

- 3:156. O you who believe, do not be like the disbelievers, who say of their brethren, when they are travelling through the earth or go forth on a military campaign: If they had stayed with us, they would not have died, or been slain, for Allah will make such thoughts a source of anguish in their hearts. It is Allah Who gives life and death, and Allah sees well all that you do.
- 3:157. And if you are slain in the cause of Allah, or die, forgiveness and mercy from Allah are far better than all they could accumulate.
- 3:158. And if you die, or are slain, it is unto Allah that you will be gathered.

Here Allah forbids His believing slaves to be like the disbelievers who do not believe in their Lord or in His will and decree, whether they are the hypocrites or others.

He forbids them to be like them in any respect, especially in this particular matter, which is that they say to their brothers in faith or in blood, «when they are travelling through the earth» that is, travelling for the purpose of trade «or go forth on a military campaign», and it so happens that some of them are killed or die, they say something contrary to the concept of the divine decree: «If they had stayed with us, they would not have died, or been slain». This is a lie on their part, because Allah (ﷻ) says: «Say: Even if you had remained in your homes, those for whom death was decreed would certainly have gone forth to the place of their death» (3: 154).

But this lie is not going to benefit them; rather Allah will cause this statement and this belief to be a source of anguish in their hearts, which will lead to the calamities having a greater impact on them. As for those who believe in Allah, they realise that this is the will of

Allah, so they believe and submit to His will, and Allah guides their hearts and makes them steadfast, which reduces the impact of the calamity for them.

Allah says, refuting them: ﴿It is Allah Who gives life and death﴾ that is, He is the only One Who does that, and no precaution can ward off the divine decree.

﴿and Allah sees well all that you do﴾, and He will requite you for your deeds and your disbelief (in the divine decree).

Then Allah (ﷻ) tells us that there is nothing wrong with, and there should be no reservations about, being killed or dying in His cause; rather it is something for which people should compete, because it is a means that leads to forgiveness and mercy from Allah, which is better than what people accumulate of worldly gains. If people die or are killed, no matter how it happens, their return is to Allah and He will requite each person for his deeds.

So where can people flee except to Allah, and what do people have to hold on to except the rope of Allah?



﴿فِيمَا رَحِمَهُ مِنَ اللَّهِ لِنْتَ لَهُمْ وَلَوْ كُنْتَ فَظًّا غَلِيظَ الْقَلْبِ لَانْفَضُّوا مِنْ حَوْلِكَ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمْ وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ فَإِذَا عَزَمْتَ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَوَكِّلِينَ ﴿١٥٩﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٥٩)

- 3:159. 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. So pardon them, and ask for [Allah's] forgiveness for them; and consult them in matters of importance. Then, when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah, for Allah loves those who put their trust [in Him].

That is, by Allah's mercy to you and your Companions, He has blessed you in that you have been gentle with them and humble and kind towards them, and you showed a good attitude towards them, so they rallied around you and loved you, and they followed your commands.

«If you had been harsh» that is, if you had shown a bad attitude «or hard-hearted, they would have dispersed from around you» because this would have put them off and would have made them dislike the one who had a bad attitude.

A good attitude in a religious leader attracts people to the religion of Allah, in addition to what this leader himself will attain of praise and reward from Allah. In contrast, a bad attitude in a religious leader will put people off their religion and make them hate it, in addition to what the leader will incur of blame and punishment from Allah. If Allah says this about this infallible Messenger (ﷺ), then how about anyone else?

Is it not of the utmost necessity and importance to follow the example of his noble attitude and to treat people as he treated them, with gentleness, a good attitude and a soft approach, following the commands of Allah and attracting the slaves of Allah to the religion of Allah?

Then Allah (ﷻ) instructs him to pardon them for what they did and their shortcomings with regard to him, and to ask for forgiveness for them for their shortcomings with regard to the rights of Allah, thus combining pardon with kind treatment.

«and consult them in matters of importance» that is, in matters that require consultation and thinking. The benefits of consultation in both religious and worldly matters are unlimited and include the following:

- Consultation is an act of worship that brings one closer to Allah.

- It is an act of gentleness that makes people feel part of the decision-making process and removes any (negative) thought that could cross their minds when serious decisions need to be made. If one who has a position of authority gathers together people of prominence and wisdom, and consults them concerning some event or incident, that will make them feel at ease and make them love him, and they will realise that he is not some sort of tyrant; rather his main focus is on the general interests of all. Thus they will spare no effort and will do their utmost in obeying him, because they will realise that he is striving to serve the interests of all. This is in contrast to those who are not like that, because it is unlikely that they will be sincere in loving or obey him willingly; if they do obey him, it will be insincere and incomplete.
- Consultation sheds light on new ideas, because it brings many minds together to make the right decision.
- Consultation usually leads to the right decision; the leader who consults others in decision-making will hardly ever reach the wrong conclusion. Even if a wrong decision is made or the goal is not met, he will not be to blame (because it will have been a collective decision). If Allah says to His Messenger (ﷺ) – who is the most perfect of people in reasoning, has the most abundant knowledge and is the smartest – ﴿and consult them in matters of importance﴾, then how about others?

Then Allah says: ﴿Then, when you have taken a decision﴾ that is, when you have decided upon something after consulting others, if consultation is needed,

﴿put your trust in Allah﴾ that is, rely on the power and strength of Allah, not on your own strength and power

﴿for Allah loves those who put their trust [in Him]﴾ and turn to Him.



﴿إِن يَنْصُرْكُمُ اللَّهُ فَلَا غَالِبَ لَكُمْ وَإِن يَخْذُلْكُمْ فَمَن ذَا الَّذِي يَنْصُرْكُم مِّن بَعْدِهِ ۗ وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٦٠)

3:160. If Allah helps you, none can overcome you; if He forsakes you, who is there, after that, who can help you? In Allah, then, let the believers put their trust.

That is, if Allah sends to you His support and help, ﴿none can overcome you﴾, even if they gather against you all the people of earth, with all their numbers and weapons, because no one can overcome Allah; He has subjugated all people and has taken hold of their forelocks, so no living being moves or stands still except by His leave.

﴿if He forsakes you﴾ and leaves you to your own devices ﴿who is there, after that, who can help you?﴾ You will inevitably be defeated, even if all people help you. In this there is an implicit command to seek the help of Allah and rely on Him, and to admit that you have no strength and power of your own. Hence Allah says: ﴿In Allah, then, let the believers put their trust﴾. The fact that Allah is mentioned at the beginning of this phrase indicates that they should put their trust in Him alone and in no one else, because it is known that He is the only supporter, so relying on Him is indicative of belief in His oneness which will help you reach your goal, whereas putting your trust in anything else is a kind of associating others with Him which is of no benefit at all, rather it is harmful.

In this verse is a command to put one's trust in Allah alone, and the level of trust will be commensurate with the level of the individual's faith.



﴿وَمَا كَانَ لِنَبِيٍّ أَنْ يَغْتَلَّ وَنَنْبَأُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ثُمَّ تُوَفَّى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٦١)

3:161. It is inconceivable that a Prophet would ever misappropriate anything from the war booty. Anyone who does so will carry it with him on the Day of Resurrection. Then every soul will be paid in full what it has earned and no one will be wronged.

The word translated here as misappropriation, or taking things by stealth, from the war booty may also refer to dishonesty in any position of authority. It is haram according to scholarly consensus; in fact it is a major sin, as indicated by this verse and other texts. Allah (ﷻ) tells us that it is not appropriate or befitting for a Prophet to misappropriate anything, because misappropriation – as is well known – is one of the gravest of sins and the most shameful behaviour. Allah (ﷻ) protected His Prophets from committing any action that might cause shame or undermine their status, and He made them the best of people in manners and attitude, the purest in soul and the best; He made them free of any shameful deeds and made them fit to receive His message and learn His wisdom.

﴿...Allah knows best where to place His message...﴾ (al-An'âm 6: 124)

As soon as a person learns of any of them, he will be certain that they are free of anything that could be a source of shame or criticism, and he will not need to examine what was said about them by their enemies, because knowing that they are Prophets requires one to reject anything bad that is attributed to them. Hence the wording of the verse indicates that it is impossible that they could do such a thing:

«It is inconceivable that a Prophet would ever misappropriate anything from the war booty» that is, it is not possible; that is impossible for one whom Allah has chosen to be His Prophet (ﷺ).

This is followed by the warning to anyone who misappropriates anything from the war booty:

«Anyone who does so will carry it with him on the Day of Resurrection» that is, he will come carrying it on his back, whether it was an animal or goods or anything else, so that it will be a cause of punishment to him on the Day of Resurrection.

«Then every soul will be paid in full what it has earned», whether it was misappropriation of the war booty or anything else; each person will be given his reward or punishment in full, according to his earnings

«and no one will be wronged» that is, nothing will be added to their bad deeds and nothing will be detracted from their good deeds.

Look at the careful wording in this verse. When Allah speaks of the punishment for misappropriation of war booty, and says that the person will come on the Day of Resurrection carrying what he stole, mentioning requital in full for the misappropriation of war booty on its own may give the wrong impression that those who commit other sins may not be requited in full; therefore, He mentioned requital in full in general terms, as being applicable both to the one who misappropriates war booty and others (who commit other sins).



﴿ أَفَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانُ اللَّهِ كَمَن بَاءَ بِسَخَطٍ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَمَأْوَهُ جَهَنَّمُ وَيَتْسَلَّى الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٦٢﴾ هُمْ دَرَجَاتٌ عِندَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦٣﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٦٢-١٦٣)

- 3:162. Is the one who seeks the good pleasure of Allah like the one who incurs the wrath of Allah, and whose abode is hell, a hapless journey's end?
- 3:163. They vary greatly in rank in the sight of Allah, and Allah sees well all that they do.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us that the one whose aim is to please his Lord and who strives hard to do so and the one who does not do that and who persists in sin and incurs the wrath of his Lord are not equal. They are not equal according to His judgement and wisdom, and according to people's common sense.

﴿Is one who is a believer like one who is an evildoer? They are not equal.﴾ (as-Sajdah 32: 18)

Hence Allah says here: ﴿They vary greatly in rank in the sight of Allah﴾ that is, all of them vary in rank and status, according to the differences in their deeds.

Those who seek the pleasure of Allah and strive to attain high status and lofty positions, Allah will grant them reward by His grace and generosity, commensurate with their deeds. But those who seek that which displeases Allah and strive to go down to the lowest level will be requited according to their deeds. Allah (ﷻ) sees all that they do and nothing is hidden from Him; rather He knows it and it is recorded in al-Lawḥ al-Maḥfoodh. He has appointed His noble, trustworthy angels to record it and preserve it accurately.



﴿لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِهِ
وَيُزَكِّيهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَإِن كَانُوا مِن قَبْلُ لَفِي ضَلَالٍ

مُبِينٍ ﴿١٦٤﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٦٤)

3:164. Allah conferred grace upon the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from among themselves, reciting unto them His revelations, purifying them, and teaching them the Book and wisdom, although before that they had been in manifest error.

This grace that Allah has bestowed upon His slaves is the greatest blessing; indeed it is the basis of all blessings. This refers to His blessing them with this noble Messenger (ﷺ) through whom Allah saved them from misguidance and protected them from doom, as He says:

«Allah conferred grace upon the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from among themselves», whose lineage, character and language they knew; he was one of their own people and tribe, sincere and compassionate towards them, reciting to them the revelations of Allah, teaching them the words and meanings

«purifying them» of polytheism, sin, bad characteristics and all bad manners.

«and teaching them the Book» – either the Qur'an itself is what is meant by «the Book», or what is meant by «the Book» here is literacy, thus He has blessed them by teaching them how to read and write, by means of which one may acquire knowledge.

«and wisdom» that is, the Sunnah, which is the twin of the Qur'an; or it may refer to saying and doing the right thing at the right time, and understanding the subtleties of Sharia. Thus Allah combined for them the learning of the rulings and the means of implementing them with the means of attaining the benefits and fruits of the rulings. Thus they superseded everyone else by virtue of these great blessings, and they were devout and knowledgeable people.

«although before that» that is, before the sending of this Messenger (ﷺ) «they had been in manifest error», not knowing the path that would lead them to their Lord or how to cleanse and purify their souls; rather whatever appeared attractive to them in their ignorance, they did it, even if that contradicted the rational thinking of the world.



﴿أَوْلَمَّا أَصَبْتَكُمْ مُصِيبَةً قَدْ أَصَبْتُمْ مِثْلَهَا قُلْتُمْ أَنْ هَذَا قُلٌ هُوَ مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٦٥﴾ وَمَا أَصَابَكُمْ يَوْمَ التَّحِي الْجَمْعَانِ فَيَاذِنْ اللَّهُ وَبِعَلَّمَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٦٦﴾ وَبِعَلَّمَ الَّذِينَ نَافَقُوا وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ تَعَالَوْا قَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَوْ ادْفَعُوا قَالُوا لَوْ نَعْلَمُ قِتَالًا لَاتَّبَعْنَاكُمْ هُمْ لِلْكَافِرِينَ يَوْمِئِذٍ اقْرَبُ مِنْهُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ يَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ مَا لَيْسَ فِي قُلُوبِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَكْتُمُونَ ﴿١٦٧﴾ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا لِأَخْوَانِهِمْ وَقَعَدُوا لَوْ أَطَاعُونَا مَا قَاتَلُوا قُلُوبًا فَادْرَأُوا عَنْ أَنْفُسِكُمُ الْمَوْتَ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿١٦٨﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٦٥-١٦٨)

- 3:165. How is it that, when a calamity befalls you whilst you had inflicted twice as much [on your enemy], you say: Where has this come from? Say [to them]: It has come from your own selves. Verily Allah has power over all things.
- 3:166. What befell you on the day the two armies met happened by Allah's leave, in order that He might test the believers,
- 3:167. and in order to know those who are hypocrites. They were told: Come, fight in the cause of Allah, or at least defend yourselves. They said: If we knew there was going to be fighting, we would certainly follow you. They were that day nearer to disbelief than to faith, saying with their lips that which was not in their hearts, but Allah has full knowledge of all they conceal.
- 3:168. [They are] the ones that said of their [slain] brethren, while they themselves stayed behind: If only they had listened to us they would not have been slain. Say: Avert death from your own selves, if what you say is true.

This is consolation from Allah to His believing slaves, when calamity befell them on the day of Uḥud and approximately seventy of them were killed. Allah said: ﴿you had inflicted twice as much [on

your enemy]» that is, on the day of Badr, when you killed seventy of their prominent figures and captured seventy more. That should make it easier for you and reduce the impact of the calamity, even though you and they are not equal, for your slain are in paradise and their slain are in hell.

«you say: Where has this come from?» That is, where did this calamity and defeat come from?

«Say [to them]: It has come from your own selves» when you disputed and disobeyed after He showed you what you desired (of booty), so you only have yourselves to blame; beware of doing that which may lead to your doom.

«Verily Allah has power over all things», so avoid thinking negatively of Allah, for He is able to grant them victory, but He has perfect wisdom in testing you.

«...Thus [are you commanded]. If Allah had so willed, He could have exacted retribution upon them [without you fighting], but He [commands you to fight] in order to test some of you by means of others...» (*Muhammad 47: 4*)

Then Allah states that what befell them of killing and defeat on the day the two armies, the Muslim army and the polytheist army, met at Uḥud, happened by His leave and in accordance with His will and decree that cannot be avoided and must inevitably come to pass.

When the divine decree comes to pass, there is no option but to submit to it and accept it, for there is great wisdom behind His decree and it brings great benefit, and it is ordained so that the believers might be made distinct from the hypocrites who were commanded to fight and were told: «Come, fight in the cause of Allah» that is, to defend and protect the religion of Allah, seeking His pleasure «or at least defend yourselves» and your families and city, even if you do not have any good intentions.

But they refused to do that, and gave excuses, saying: «If we knew there was going to be fighting, we would certainly follow you» that

is, if we knew that there would be fighting between you and them, we would follow you. But this was a lie; they knew and were certain, as was everyone else, that these polytheists were filled with hatred and rage towards the believers because of what the believers had inflicted on them (at Badr), and that they had spent a great deal of wealth and gathered all they could of men and weapons, and had come with a huge army, intending to attack the believers in their city, and they were very eager to fight them.

When such is the case, how could it be imagined that there would not be any fighting between them and the believers, especially when the Muslims had come out of Madinah to face them? This is impossible, but the hypocrites thought that this excuse would fool the believers.

﴿They were that day﴾ that is, at that time when they failed to come out with the believers

﴿nearer to disbelief than to faith, saying with their lips that which was not in their hearts﴾. This applies in particular to the hypocrites, who say and do what they think is the opposite of what is in their hearts. For example, they said: ﴿If we knew there was going to be fighting, we would certainly follow you﴾. But they did indeed know that there would be fighting.

This verse is quoted as evidence for the principle of “doing the lesser of two evils so as to ward off the greater, and doing that which serves a lesser interest when it is not possible to do that which serves a greater interest.” The hypocrites were commanded to fight for the sake of the religion, but if they could not do that, then they should at least defend their families and city.

﴿but Allah has full knowledge of all they conceal﴾ and He will cause it to be shown to His believing slaves and He will punish them for it.

﴿[They are] the ones that said of their [slain] brethren, while they themselves stayed behind: If only they had listened to us they would

not have been slain» that is, they combine staying behind from jihad with objecting to and disbelieving in the will and decree of Allah. Allah said in response to them: «Say: Avert» that is, ward off «death from your own selves, if what you say is true», that if they had listened to you, they would not have been killed. But you are not able to do that and you cannot do it.

This passage indicates that a person may have some characteristics of disbelief and some of faith, and he may be closer to one than the other.



﴿ وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ ﴿١٦٩﴾
 فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَهُمْ يَحْتَفُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا
 خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ ﴿١٧٠﴾ ﴿١٧١﴾ ﴿١٧٢﴾ ﴿١٧٣﴾ ﴿١٧٤﴾ ﴿١٧٥﴾ ﴿١٧٦﴾ ﴿١٧٧﴾ ﴿١٧٨﴾ ﴿١٧٩﴾ ﴿١٨٠﴾
 اللَّهُ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٨١﴾ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٦٩-١٧١)

- 3:169. Do not think of those who are slain in Allah's cause as dead. Nay, they are alive with their Lord, receiving provision,
- 3:170. rejoicing in what Allah has bestowed upon them out of His bounty, sharing glad tidings that for those who have yet to join them, of those whom they left behind, they will have no fear, nor will they grieve;
- 3:171. Rejoicing in the favours and bounties of Allah, and at the awareness that Allah will not cause the reward of the believers to be lost.

These verses speak of the virtue and honour of the martyrs, and what Allah has blessed them with of His grace and kindness. They also offer consolation to the living for the loss of those who were slain

and motivation to fight for the cause of Allah and offer themselves for martyrdom.

﴿Do not think of those who are slain in Allah's cause﴾ that is, in jihad against the enemies of Islam, seeking thereby to make the word of Allah supreme

﴿as dead﴾ that is, it should not enter your mind that they are dead and lost, and that they are no longer enjoying the pleasures of the life of this world that those who are too cowardly to fight and have no desire for martyrdom may be worried about losing.

﴿Nay﴾ they have attained something greater than that for which people in this world compete, for ﴿they are alive with their Lord﴾ in the realm of honour. The phrase ﴿with their Lord﴾ is indicative of their high status and their closeness to their Lord

﴿receiving provision﴾ of various kinds of delights that cannot be known or described, except by the One Who blessed them with it.

Moreover, they are ﴿rejoicing in what Allah has bestowed upon them out of His bounty﴾ that is, they are very happy with it, delighted with it and rejoicing in it. That is because it is so beautiful, abundant and great, and there is immense joy when attaining it and there is nothing to spoil that joy.

For them, Allah combined the physical joy of the provision and the spiritual joy, with the joy of that which He bestows upon them out of His bounty. Thus their joy and happiness is complete, and they are ﴿sharing glad tidings that for those who have yet to join them, of those whom they left behind﴾ – that is, they give one another the glad tidings that their brothers who have not yet joined them will come and will attain the same as they did.

﴿they will have no fear, nor will they grieve﴾ that is, they rejoice that they will have nothing to worry about for themselves or their brothers, which is a sign of perfect joy

«Rejoicing in the favours and bounties of Allah» that is, congratulating one another for the greatest thing for which congratulations may be given, namely the blessings, grace and kindness of their Lord «and at the awareness that Allah will not cause the reward of the believers to be lost»; rather He causes it to grow and appreciates it, and He increases it by His grace to an extent that their efforts did not reach.

These verses affirm the blessings in *al-barzakh* and confirm that the martyrs enjoy the highest status with their Lord; in *al-barzakh* the souls of good people meet one another and visit one another, giving glad tidings to one another.



﴿الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَالرُّسُولِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْقَرْحُ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا مِنْهُمْ
وَاتَّقُوا أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧٢﴾ الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدِ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاتَّقَوْهُمْ
فَرَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ ﴿١٧٣﴾ فَانْقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَىٰ
أَرْضِهِمْ لَمْ يَنْتَسِبْ لَهُمْ سُوءٌ مَا نَفَعْنَا اللَّهُ مِنْ آلِهِمْ وَاللَّهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٧٤﴾ إِنَّمَا ذَلِكُمُ
الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَآءَهُ. فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُوا اللَّهَ إِن كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٧٥﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران:

(١٧٥-١٧٢)

- 3:172. Those who answered the call of Allah and the Messenger, even after sustaining injuries, those who do good and fear Allah will have an immense reward;
- 3:173. those to whom people said: The people have gathered against you, so fear them. But it [only] increased them in faith. They said: Allah is Sufficient for us, and He is the best disposer of affairs.

- 3:174. And they returned with grace and bounty from Allah, and no harm touched them, for they pursued the pleasure of Allah. And Allah is the Possessor of abundant grace.
- 3:175. It is only the Shayṭân who instils fear in [the hearts of] his followers. Do not fear them, but fear Me, if you are [true] believers.

When the Prophet (ﷺ) came back from Uḥud to Madinah, and heard that Abu Sufyân and the polytheists with him were thinking of coming back to Madinah, he called on his Companions to go out, so they went out, despite the injuries they had sustained, in response to the call of Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), and in obedience to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ). When they reached Ḥamra' al-Asad, some people came to them and told them: «The people have gathered against you» and are thinking of eradicating you. They said this in order to scare them and cause alarm, but that only increased them in faith and trust in Allah.

«They said: Allah is Sufficient for us» that is, He is the One Who will protect us from all that is causing us concern
 «and He is the best disposer of affairs» that is, He is the One Who is in control of His slaves' affairs and looks after their interests.

«And they returned with grace and bounty from Allah, and no harm touched them». News reached the polytheists that the Messenger (ﷺ) and his Companions had come out to pursue them, and some of those who had stayed behind (from Uḥud) regretted it (and had now joined the Prophet [ﷺ]). Thus Allah instilled dread in the polytheists' hearts, and they continued on their way back to Makkah, while the believers returned with grace and bounty from Allah, as He blessed them by inspiring them to go out despite the state they were in (having sustained injuries in the battle) and to put their trust in their Lord. Moreover, He had decreed for them the reward of a complete campaign, because of their doing their best in obedience to their Lord

and refraining from sin. Thus they attained great reward, and that was by Allah's grace towards them.

«It is only the Shayṭân who instils fear in [the hearts of] his followers» that is, the one who tried to scare (the believers) by instilling fear of the polytheists, and telling them that the polytheists had gathered against them, was no more than one of the callers of the Shayṭân, who ended up scaring his own followers among those who lacked faith or were weak in faith.

«Do not fear them, but fear Me, if you are [true] believers» that is, do not be afraid of the polytheists who are followers of the Shayṭân, for their forelocks are in the Hand of Allah and they cannot do anything but by His decree. Rather you should fear Allah Who supports His friends who fear Him and respond to His call.

This verse speaks of the obligation to fear Allah alone, and tells us that this is one of the requirements of faith. A person's fear of Allah will be commensurate with the level of his faith; this is the praiseworthy kind of fear that deters a person from doing that which Allah has forbidden.



﴿وَلَا يَحْزَنُكَ الَّذِينَ يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ إِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ أَلَّا يَجْعَلَ لَهُمْ حِزْبًا فِي الْآخِرَةِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧٦﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ اشْتَرُوا الْكُفْرَ بِالْإِيمَانِ لَنْ يَضُرُّوا اللَّهَ شَيْئًا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٧٧﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٧٦-١٧٧)

- 3:176. Do not be saddened by those who rush into disbelief; not the least harm will they do to Allah. It is Allah's will that they will have no share in the hereafter; theirs will be a grievous punishment.
- 3:177. Those who purchase disbelief at the cost of faith; not the least harm will they do to Allah, but theirs will be a painful punishment.

The Prophet (ﷺ) cared deeply about people and strove hard to guide them, and he would be saddened if they did not follow guidance. Hence Allah (ﷻ) said:

﴿Do not be saddened by those who rush into disbelief﴾ because of their great love for it and their eagerness to attain it.

﴿not the least harm will they do to Allah﴾ for Allah will support His religion and His Messenger (ﷺ), and His will and decree will come to pass despite them. So do not worry about them or be concerned about them; rather they are only harming and striving to harm themselves, by missing out on faith in this world and incurring the painful punishment in the hereafter. They have become insignificant in Allah's sight and it is His will that they should have no share of His reward in the hereafter. He has forsaken them, so He did not guide them to that to which He guided His close friends and those for whom He willed good, by His justice and wisdom, because of His knowledge that they were not fit to be guided and were not receptive to guidance, because of their bad attitude and intentions.

Then Allah tells us concerning those who chose disbelief over faith, and desired it like one who desires something he likes and gives his wealth to buy the thing he desires:

﴿not the least harm will they do to Allah﴾; rather their action backfires and harms them. Hence He said:

﴿but theirs will be a painful punishment﴾. How could they harm Allah in the slightest, when they have no interest at all in faith but they have the strongest desire to disbelieve in the Most Merciful? Allah has no need of them.

Allah has prepared for His religion people other than them among His righteous slaves, and He has prepared for His religion – among those with whom He is pleased with to support His religion – people of deep insight and reason, strong-willed men. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say: Believe in it, or do not believe. Verily, those who were given knowledge before it,⁴ when it is recited to them, fall down on their faces in prostration.﴾ (al-Isrâ' 17: 107)



﴿وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنَّمَا نُمَلِّ لَهُمْ خَيْرٌ لِّأَنفُسِهِمْ إِنَّمَا نُمَلِّ لَهُمْ لِيَزْدَادُوا إِفْسًا
وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٧٨)

3:178. Those who disbelieve should not think that the respite We give them is good for them. We only grant them respite so that they may increase in sinfulness; theirs will be a humiliating punishment.

Those who disbelieved in their Lord, rejected His religion and fought His Messenger (ﷺ) should not think that Our leaving them alone in this world, not destroying them, and giving them respite is good for them or is because of Our love for them. No, that is not the case at all. It is not as they claim; rather that is for something bad that Allah wills for them, and it serves to increase their punishment in addition to the original punishment. Hence Allah says: ﴿We only grant them respite so that they may increase in sinfulness; theirs will be a humiliating punishment﴾. Allah (ﷻ) gives the wrongdoer respite so that he may increase in his transgression and go further in his ingratitude, so that when Allah seizes him, it will be the seizing of One Who is Almighty, All-Powerful (cf. 54: 42). So the wrongdoers should beware of this respite, and not think that they can escape the Great, the Most High.

⁴ Namely the People of the Book (Jews and Christians).



﴿ مَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيَذَرَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ حَتَّىٰ يَمِيزَ الْخَبِيثَ مِنَ الطَّيِّبِ وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ لِيُطْلِعَكُمْ عَلَى الْغَيْبِ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يَجْتَبِيٰ مِنْ رُسُلِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ فَتَأْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ وَإِن تَوَّابُونَ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٧٩)

- 3:179. On no account will Allah leave the believers in the condition in which they are now, until He distinguishes the evil from the good, nor will He disclose to you the secrets of the unseen. But Allah chooses of His Messengers whom He will [to receive knowledge thereof]. So believe in Allah and His Messengers: And if you believe and guard against evil, you will have an immense reward.

By His wisdom, Allah does not leave the believers as they are, mixed with the hypocrites, with no distinction between the two groups; rather He distinguishes the evil from the good, the believer from the hypocrite, the sincere from the insincere.

Nor is it in accordance with His wisdom to disclose to His slaves matters of the unseen concerning what He knows about them. His great wisdom dictated that He should test His slaves with various trials which will distinguish the evil from the good. So Allah sent His Messengers and enjoined people to obey them, follow them and believe in them, and He promised them a great reward in return for believing and guarding against evil. Thus people are divided, according to whether they follow the Messengers, into two groups: obedient and disobedient, believers and hypocrites, Muslims and disbelievers, so that on this basis they will be rewarded or punished, and so as to make manifest His justice, grace and wisdom to His creation.



﴿وَلَا يَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ هُوَ خَيْرًا لَّهُمْ بَلْ هُوَ سَرَّهُمْ
سَيُطَوَّقُونَ مَا بَخُلُوا بِهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ وَلِلَّهِ مِيرَاتُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

خَيْرٌ ﴿١٨٠﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٨٠)

3:180. Those who covetously withhold what Allah has granted them by His grace should not think that it is good for them; rather it is bad for them, for the things which they covetously withheld will be hung around their necks on the Day of Resurrection. To Allah belongs the inheritance of the heavens and the earth; and Allah is well aware of what you do.

This refers to those who covetously withhold that which Allah has given to them by His grace of wealth, status, knowledge and other blessings, and commanded them to give some of it to His slaves in a manner that does not harm them, but they withheld it and kept it for themselves, and were too miserly to give to the slaves of Allah; they thought that it was better for them, when in fact it was bad for them in both spiritual and worldly terms, in this world and in the hereafter.

﴿for the things which they covetously withheld will be hung around their necks on the Day of Resurrection﴾ that is, what they withheld will be made like a collar on their necks, with which they will be punished, as it says in the *ṣaḥeeḥ* hadith:

«The miser's wealth will appear to him on the Day of Resurrection in the form of a bald-headed venomous snake with two fangs in its mouth which will hold him with its jaws, then it will say: I am your wealth, I am your treasure.» (Muslim)

Then the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) recited this verse in confirmation of that. These people who thought that their miserliness would benefit them and help them will find that it will turn out to be the opposite,

and it will become one of the greatest causes of harm and punishment for them.

﴿To Allah belongs the inheritance of the heavens and the earth﴾ that is, Allah (ﷻ) is the Lord of all dominion, and all dominions will be returned to their real Lord. All people will leave this world without having any dirham or dinar, or any other possessions. Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿Verily, it is We Who will inherit the earth and all who are upon it, and to Us they will be brought back.﴾ (*Maryam 19: 40*)

Think about how Allah mentions the initial reason (not to be miserly) and the ultimate reason, both of which should make one refrain from withholding that which Allah has given him.

First of all, He said that what a person has in his possession or in his hands is from Allah and His blessing. It does not belong to the individual; rather, were it not for the grace and kindness of Allah towards him, he could not have gained any of it. Thus his withholding of it is tantamount to withholding the bounty and kindness of Allah; Allah's kindness to him dictates that he should be kind to other people, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...Be good to others, as Allah has been good to you...﴾ (*al-Qasas 28: 77*)

Whoever realises that whatever he possesses is by the grace of Allah will not withhold that which is surplus to his needs and that it will not harm him to give; rather he will benefit (from giving) both spiritually and financially, his faith will increase and he will be protected from troubles and problems.

Secondly, He says that what is in people's hands will all return to Allah; He will inherit it all, and He is the best of inheritors. Therefore there is no reason to withhold anything when it is going to be removed from your possession and go to someone else.

Thirdly, Allah mentions the reason that has to do with the requital, as He says: ﴿and Allah is well aware of what you do﴾. So if He is

aware of all your deeds – which implies that He will reward for good deeds and punish for bad deeds – no one in whose heart is an atom's weight of faith will refuse to give, because giving will be requited with reward, and he would not be happy to withhold it, because that leads to punishment.



﴿لَقَدْ سَمِعَ اللَّهُ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ فَقِيرٌ وَنَحْنُ أَغْنِيَاءُ سَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَالُوا وَقَتْلَهُمُ الْأَنْبِيَاءَ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ وَنَقُولُ ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيقِ ﴿١٨١﴾ ذَلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمْتُمْ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٨٢﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٨١-١٨٢)

- 3:181. Allah has heard the words of those who say: Truly, Allah is poor and we are rich! We shall certainly record their words and their killing the Prophets unjustly, and We shall say: Taste the punishment of the scorching fire!
- 3:182. This is because of what your hands sent on ahead. For Allah is never unjust to [His] slaves.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us about the words of those evildoers, who said the most abhorrent and stupid things. He states that He has heard what they said, He will record it along with their evil deeds, namely the killing of the sincere Prophets, and He will punish them in the most severe manner, and it will be said to them, in response to their saying that Allah is poor and we are rich: ﴿Taste the punishment of the scorching fire﴾, which will burn and penetrate from the outside of the body to the inside. This punishment is not injustice from Allah towards them, for He ﴿is never unjust to [His] slaves﴾; rather He declares Himself to be above that.

Rather this is the return for what their hands sent on ahead of shameful and evil deeds that lead to them deserving punishment and being deprived of reward.

The commentators stated that this verse was revealed concerning some of the Jews who said these words, and mentioned that one of them was Finhâş ibn 'Âzoorâ', one of the leading Jewish scholars of Madinah. When he heard the words of Allah:

﴿Who is he that will lend to Allah a goodly loan?...﴾ (al-Baqarah 2: 245)

– and:

﴿...and lend to Allah a goodly loan...﴾ (al-Hadeed 57: 18)

– he said these words, by way of arrogance and audacity, may Allah curse him. Hence He mentioned what they had said, and stated that this was not something new on their part; rather they had done similar evil deeds before, namely ﴿their killing the Prophets unjustly﴾ (3: 181). What is meant by describing that deed as unjust is that they had the audacity to kill the Prophets even though they were well aware of the abhorrent nature of the deed. They did not do it out of ignorance and misguidance; rather it was out of rebelliousness and stubbornness.



﴿الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عٰهَدَ اِلَيْنَا اَلَّا نُوْمِنَ لِرِسُوٰلِ حَتّٰى يٰٓاْتِنَا بِقُرْبٰنٍ
تَاْكُلُهٗ النَّارُ فَلَ قَدْ جَآءَكُم رُسُلٌ مِّن قِبَلِ الْبَيِّنٰتِ وَاِلٰذِى قُلْتُمْ فَلِمَ
قَتَلْتُمُوهُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٨٣﴾ اِنْ كَذَّبُوْكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ رُسُلٌ مِّن قِبَلِكَ
جَآءُو بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ وَالزُّبُرِ وَالْكِتٰبِ الْمُنِيْرِ ﴿١٨٤﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٨٣-١٨٤)

- 3:183. They [also] said: Allah has commanded us not to believe in any Messenger until he makes an offering that the fire [from heaven] will consume. Say: There came to you Messengers before me, with clear signs and with the sign you have mentioned. Why then did you kill them, if you are telling the truth?

3:184. Then if they reject you, Messengers before you were also rejected, even though they came with clear signs, the scriptures, and the Book of Enlightenment.

Here Allah tells us about these liars who said: «Allah has commanded us» that is, He has given us instructions «not to believe in any Messenger until he makes an offering that the fire [from heaven] will consume». Thus they combined telling lies about Allah and limiting the sign of the Messengers to that which they suggested of this obvious fabrication, whilst stating that if they did not believe in a Messenger who did not make an offering that would be consumed by fire (from heaven), then by doing so they would be obeying their Lord and adhering to His command. It is known that Allah supported every Messenger He sent with signs and proofs on the basis of which people would believe in him, and He did not limit it to what they suggested, yet despite that they said something false that they did not adhere to or act upon.

Hence Allah commanded His Messenger (ﷺ) to say to them: «Say: There came to you Messengers before me, with clear signs» that proved their truthfulness «and with the sign you have mentioned», of making an offering that the fire (from heaven) consumed. «Why then did you kill them, if you are telling the truth?» that is, in their claim that they would believe in a Messenger who made an offering that the fire (from heaven) consumed. Thus it becomes clear that they were lying, being stubborn and contradicting themselves.

Then Allah consoles His Messenger (ﷺ), and says: «Then if they reject you, Messengers before you were also rejected» that is, this is normal on the part of the wrongdoers; it is their custom to disbelieve in Allah and reject the Messengers of Allah. Their rejection of the Messengers of Allah is not because of any defect or shortcoming in what they brought, or because the proof was not clear. Rather the

Messengers ﴿came with clear signs﴾ that is, rational evidence and scriptural proof ﴿the scriptures﴾ that is, the Books that were sent down from heaven, that could not be brought by anyone but the Messengers ﴿and the Book of Enlightenment﴾, that sheds light on the rulings ordained by Allah and explains what they contain of rational and beautiful teaching. It also sheds light on true events. But this was their way, to not believe in the Messengers who were like this, so do not be saddened by them and do not worry about them.



﴿كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَائِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ وَإِنَّمَا تُوَفَّقُونَ أُجُورَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فَمَنْ رُحِّحَ
عَنِ النَّارِ وَأَدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ الْفُرُورِ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٨٥)

(سورة آل عمران: ١٨٥)

3:185. Every soul will taste death, and only on the Day of Resurrection will you be requited in full [for your deeds]. Whoever is saved from the fire and admitted to paradise will have triumphed, for the life of this world is nothing but a fleeting vanity.

This verse highlights the reality of this world in order to put people off being overly concerned with it because of its transient nature, for it is a fleeting vanity that dazzles with its adornment and deceives with its ostentatious displays, but it will come to an end and people will pass on to the realm of eternity, when they will be requited for what they did in this world, good or bad.

﴿Whoever is saved﴾ that is, brought out ﴿from the fire and admitted to paradise will have triumphed﴾ that is, he will have attained the greatest victory of escaping from the eternal punishment and reaching the gardens of delight in which there is that which no eye has seen,

no ear has heard, nor has it ever entered the mind of man. What this verse means is that whoever is not saved from the fire and admitted to paradise has not triumphed; rather he is doomed to eternal misery and suffering.

This verse contains a subtle reference to joy and punishment in al-barzakh, and that people will be partially requited therein for what they did, and they will taste the reward or punishment of what they did in this world. This may be understood from the words ﴿and only on the Day of Resurrection will you be requited in full [for your deeds]﴾. In other words, requital in full for one's deeds will only come on the Day of Resurrection; before that, (there will be some degree of requital) in al-barzakh, and even in this world, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere: ﴿We will surely cause them to taste a lesser punishment before the greater punishment...﴾ (as-Sajdah 32: 21)



﴿ تَتَّبَلُّونَ فِي أَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ وَلَتَسْمَعُنَّ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا
الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا أَذًى كَثِيرًا وَإِنْ تَصَابِرُوا
وَتَتَّقُوا فَإِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٨٦)

3:186. You will certainly be tried and tested in your possessions and in your persons; and you will certainly hear much that is hurtful, from those who were given the Book before you and from those who ascribe partners to Allah. But if you are patient and fear Allah, that is something that must be adhered to [as it is enjoined by Allah].

Here Allah addresses the believers, and tells them that they will be tested with regard to their possessions or wealth, in terms of obligatory and encouraged spending, and that their wealth will be exposed to

being used up in Allah's cause; they will also be tested with regard to their persons, by being required to carry burdens that are too heavy for many people, such as jihad in Allah's cause, in which they may be exposed to exhaustion or being killed or captured; or by being faced with sickness that may affect a person himself or those whom he loves.

﴿and you will certainly hear much that is hurtful, from those who were given the Book before you and from those who ascribe partners to Allah﴾, such as impugning you and your religion, your Book and your Messenger.

There are a number of benefits in Allah's telling His believing slaves of that, such as the following:

- His wisdom dictates that these things should happen, in order to distinguish the sincere believer from others.
- Allah (ﷻ) decrees these things for them because of what He wills of good for them, in order to raise them in status, expiate their bad deeds, and increase them in faith and certainty. When He told them of that and it came to pass as He said:

﴿...they said: This is what Allah and his Messenger had promised us, and the promise of Allah and His Messenger is true. And it only increased them in faith and submission.﴾

(al-Aḥzâb 33: 22)
- Allah told them about that in order to make them get used to such things happening and to bear it with patience if they did happen, because then they would be prepared for it happening, which would make it easier to bear. This would make them better able to cope with it and would prompt them to resort to patience and fear of Allah. Hence He said: ﴿But if you are patient and fear Allah﴾ that is, if you bear with patience whatever trials and tests befall you with regard to your possessions and your persons, and whatever hurtful words the wrongdoers address to you, and you be mindful of Allah whilst being patient, by intending it for His sake and hoping to draw close to Him, without going to

extremes or overstepping the mark in showing patience, such as showing patience in situations where it is not appropriate to do so and in which your role is to wreak vengeance upon the enemies of Allah, then ﴿that is something that must be adhered to [as it is enjoined by Allah]﴾ that is, it is one of the things that one must adhere to and compete in, and no one is helped to attain it except people of strong resolve and high ambition, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿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.﴾ (Fussilat 41: 35)



﴿وَإِذْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ لَتُبَيِّنُنَّهُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَكْتُمُونَهُ، فَنَبَذُوهُ وَرَاءَ ظُهُورِهِمْ وَأَشْرَوْا بِهِ، ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۗ فَبِئْسَ مَا يَشْتَرُونَ ﴿١٨٧﴾ لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَفْرَحُونَ بِمَا أُوتُوا وَيُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يُحْمَدُوا بِمَا لَمْ يَفْعَلُوا فَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّهُمْ بِمَفَازَةٍ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿١٨٨﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٨٧-١٨٨)

3:187. And [remember] when Allah took a covenant from those who were given the scripture, that they should make it known and clear to humankind, and not conceal it; but they cast it behind their backs, and sold it for a small price; what a wretched trade they made!

3:188. Do not think that those who rejoice in what they have done, and love to be praised for what they have not done – do not think that they can escape the punishment. Theirs will be a painful punishment.

The covenant is a confirmed, binding promise. Allah (ﷻ) took this covenant from everyone to whom He gave the scriptures and taught

knowledge, that they should teach the people whatever they need of what Allah taught them, and they should not conceal that from them or withhold it, especially if the people ask for it or if something happens that necessitates teaching them, because everyone who has knowledge must, in that case, disclose it and explain that which distinguishes truth from falsehood.

Those who were guided fulfilled that duty properly and taught the people some of that which Allah had taught them, seeking the pleasure of their Lord and out of compassion towards other people, and for fear of committing the sin of concealing it.

As for those who were given the scripture, the Jews, Christians and others like them, they cast these covenants behind their backs and did not care about them. Thus they concealed the truth and made falsehood manifest, out of audacity and carelessness in transgressing the limits set by Allah, and out of negligence concerning the rights of Allah and the rights of other people. But all they got in return for that concealment was a small price, which is what they obtained of positions of leadership and a miserable amount of wealth from the foolish ones who follow their whims and desires and give precedence to their desires over the truth.

«what a wretched trade they made» because it is the most miserable and cheap trade; what they gave away in this exchange – which was explaining the truth which leads to eternal happiness and serves people's interests, both spiritual and worldly – is the most important and greatest of aims. They only chose that which is vile and base, and gave up that which is sublime and precious, because of their misfortune and insignificance, and because they were not fit for anything other than that for which they were created.

Then Allah says: «Do not think that those who rejoice in what they have done» of evil actions and falsehood in word and deed

﴿and love to be praised for what they have not done﴾ that is, for the good things that they have not done and the truth that they have not spoken. Thus they combined doing and saying evil things, and rejoicing therein, with love of being praised for good things that they have not done.

﴿do not think that they can escape the punishment﴾ that is, they are not in any position to be saved from it; rather they deserve it and it will inevitably befall them. Hence Allah says: ﴿Theirs will be a painful punishment﴾.

This verse includes the People of the Book who rejoiced in the knowledge that they had, but they did not follow the Messenger (ﷺ), and they claimed that they were in the right in everything they did and said. The same applies to everyone who follows innovation in word or deed, rejoicing in it, calling others to it and claiming that they are in the right whilst others are in the wrong, as the innovators do.

This verse indicates that if the one who likes to be praised for what he does of good deeds and following the truth does not have the aim of showing off and enhancing his reputation, then he is not to be blamed. Rather this is something that one may seek, and He may reward in this manner those who do and say good things for His sake. Allah grants this reward to people of special standing who ask Him for that, as Ibrâheem (ؑ) said:

﴿And grant me an honourable renown among the later nations.﴾ (*ash-Shu'arâ* 26: 84)

And Allah says:

﴿Peace be upon Nooh among all nations. Thus do We reward those who do good.﴾ (*as-Sâffât* 37: 79-80)

And the worshippers of the Most Merciful say:

﴿...and make us good examples for those who fear You.﴾ (*al-Furqân* 25: 74)

This is one of the blessings that Allah bestows upon His slaves, and one of His favours for which thanks must be given.



﴿وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ﴾ (سورة آل عمران:

(189)

3:189. To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth; and Allah has power over all things.

That is, He is the Sovereign of the heavens and the earth, and all that is in them of all types of creatures; He controls them with perfect might and power, so no one can resist Him or frustrate Him.



﴿إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٨٩﴾ الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَمًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَطْلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ﴿١٩٠﴾ رَبَّنَا إِنَّكَ مَن تَدْخِلِ النَّارَ فَقَدْ أَخْرَجْتَهُ، وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِن أَنْصَارٍ ﴿١٩١﴾ رَبَّنَا إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا مُنَادِيًا يُنَادِي لِلْإِيمَانِ أَنْ ءَامِنُوا بِرَبِّكُمْ فَآمَنَّا رَبَّنَا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوبَنَا وَكَفِّرْ عَنَّا سَيِّئَاتِنَا وَتَوَقَّنَا مَعَ الْآبَرَارِ ﴿١٩٢﴾ رَبَّنَا وَءَايَاتِنَا مَا وَعَدْتَنَا عَلَىٰ رُسُلِكَ وَلَا تُخْزِنَا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّكَ لَا تُخْلِفُ الْمِيعَادَ ﴿١٩٣﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران: 190-194)

3:190. Verily in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for people of understanding,

3:191. People who remember Allah, standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides, and reflect upon the creation of the heavens and

the earth, [with the thought]: Our Lord, You have not created all this in vain. Glory be to You! Save us from the punishment of the fire.

- 3:192. Our Lord, whomever You cause to enter the fire, You have surely brought to disgrace, and the wrongdoers will have no helpers.
- 3:193. Our Lord! We have heard a caller calling [us] to faith, [saying]: Believe in the Lord, and we have believed. Our Lord, forgive us our sins, expiate our bad deeds, and cause us to die in the company of the righteous.
- 3:194. Our Lord, grant us what You have promised to us through Your Messengers, and do not disgrace us on the Day of Resurrection, for You never break Your promise.

Here Allah tells us that ﴿Verily in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for people of understanding﴾. This encourages people to think deeply, examine these signs and contemplate the creation. He left the word ﴿signs﴾ ambiguous, and did not state explicitly what it points to, as an indication of the great number and ubiquitous nature of those signs. That is because in creation there are amazing signs that dazzle those who look upon them, convince those who ponder them, attract the hearts of those who are sincere and strengthen the faith of people of understanding.

But the details of what these signs contain are impossible for any person to list or even comprehend some of them. In conclusion, what we see in them of greatness, the vastness and order in the movement of heavenly bodies, point to the greatness of their Creator and His power, which encompasses all things. Their perfection, precision and beauty point to the wisdom of Allah, His control over all things and the vastness of His knowledge. The benefits they bring to people are indicative of the vastness of Allah's mercy, the all-encompassing

nature of His grace and kindness, and the necessity of being grateful to Him.

All of that indicates that the heart should only be attached to its Creator and originator, and should do its utmost to seek His pleasure, and not associate with Him any of those who have not even an atom's weight of power over themselves or others on earth or in heaven.

Allah has intended these signs only for people of understanding, namely the people of reason, because they are the ones who benefit from that and who contemplate the signs with reason, and do not merely look at them with their eyes.

Then Allah describes the people of understanding as being: ﴿People who remember Allah﴾ in all circumstances, ﴿standing, sitting, and lying down on their sides﴾. This includes all types of remembrance of Allah, both verbal and in the heart. That includes praying standing; if that is not possible, then sitting; and if that is not possible then lying on one's side.

﴿and reflect upon the creation of the heavens and the earth﴾ that is, so that they may reach the conclusion intended (that there is a great Creator). This indicates that reflection is an act of worship, and is one of the characteristics of the close friends of Allah. When they reflect upon these things, they realise that Allah did not create them in vain, and they say:

﴿Our Lord, You have not created all this in vain. Glory be to You﴾ and exalted be You above all that is not befitting to Your Majesty; rather You created it in truth, for truth, and including truth.

﴿Save us from the punishment of the fire﴾ by protecting us from doing bad deeds, and helping us to do righteous deeds, so that we might attain thereby salvation from the fire. This is an implicit prayer for paradise, because – if Allah protects them from the punishment of the fire – they will attain paradise. But as this fear is entrenched in their hearts, they call upon Allah referring to that which most concerns them.

﴿Our Lord, whomever You cause to enter the fire, You have surely brought to disgrace﴾ that is, because he has incurred the wrath of Allah and of His angels and close friends, and has become subject to inescapable shame.

Hence Allah says: ﴿and the wrongdoers will have no helpers﴾ to save them from His punishment. This indicates that they will enter it because of their wrongdoing.

﴿Our Lord! We have heard a caller calling [us] to faith﴾, namely Muhammad (ﷺ). What is meant is: he is calling the people to faith, and encouraging them to believe in the major and minor matters of faith

﴿and we have believed﴾ that is, we hastened to respond to him. This is an acknowledgement on their part of the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon them, and an expression of joy in that blessing, asking Him by virtue thereof to forgive their sins and expiate their bad deeds, because good deeds erase bad deeds. The One Who blessed them with faith will bless them with complete security (on the Day of Resurrection).

﴿and cause us to die in the company of the righteous﴾. This supplication implies guidance to do good and refrain from evil, by virtue of which one will become one of the righteous and will continue in that path and remain steadfast until death.

When they mentioned Allah's guiding them to faith and beseeched Him to complete His favour, they asked Him to reward them for that, and to fulfil what He had promised to them on the lips of His Messengers, of victory in this world and the attainment of Allah's pleasure and paradise in the hereafter, for Allah (ﷻ) does not break His promise. Allah answered their prayer and accepted their request, hence He says:



﴿فَأَسْتَجَابَ لَهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ أَنِّي لَا أُضِيعُ عَمَلَ عَمَلٍ مِّنْكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ بَعْضُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْضٍ ۖ فَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا وَأُخْرِجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَأُودُوا فِي سَبِيلِي وَقُتِلُوا وَقَاتَلُوا لَا يَكْفُرُنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ ۖ وَلَا ذُنُوبُهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ بِجَنَّتِ بِحَرِيِّ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ نُورًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ حُسْنُ الثَّوَابِ ﴿١٩٥﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٩٥)

3:195. Their Lord has answered them: Never will I allow to be lost the work of any of you, be he male or female; you are both the same in that respect. Those who have left their homes, and been driven out therefrom, and suffered harm for My sake, and fought and been slain, verily, I will expiate their bad deeds, and admit them to gardens through which rivers flow, a reward from Allah; with Allah is the best reward.

That is, Allah answered their supplication (*du'ā'*) and said: I will not allow the work of any of you, male or female, to be lost; each of you will receive the reward of his or her deeds in full.

﴿you are both the same in that respect﴾ that is, all of you are equal in terms of reward and punishment.

﴿Those who have left their homes, and been driven out therefrom, and suffered harm for My sake, and fought and been slain﴾: they combined faith and migration, leaving behind what one loves of homeland and property, seeking the pleasure of their Lord and striving in the cause of Allah.

﴿verily, I will expiate their bad deeds, and admit them into gardens through which rivers flow, a reward from Allah﴾, Who grants abundant reward to His slave for little effort.

﴿with Allah is the best reward﴾ such as no eye has seen, no ear has heard, nor has it ever entered the mind of man. Whoever wants that, let him ask Allah for it by virtue of his obedience, and strive to draw close to Him by whatever means he can.



﴿لَا يَغُرُّكَ تَقَلُّبُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فِي الْبِلَادِ ﴿١٩٦﴾ مَتَّعٌ قَلِيلٌ ثُمَّ مَا لَهُمْ جَهَنَّمَ
وَبَيْتِ الْمَوْتِ ﴿١٩٧﴾ لَكِنَّ الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٌ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ
خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا نُزُلًا مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِلْأَبْرَارِ ﴿١٩٨﴾﴾ (سورة آل عمران:

(196-198)

- 3:196. Do not be deceived by the [uninhibited] movement of the disbelievers throughout the land:
- 3:197. It is only a brief enjoyment; their ultimate abode is hell, what a wretched resting-place!
- 3:198. But for those who fear their Lord are gardens, through which rivers flow, to abide therein forever, a welcoming gift from Allah; and that which is with Allah is best for the righteous.

These verses offer consolation (to the believers) for what the disbelievers have of pleasure and enjoyment in this world, and freedom of movement for the purposes of trade, earning a living and leisure, and different kinds of power and prevalence at various times. All of that is ﴿only a brief enjoyment﴾ that will not last; rather they will enjoy it for a while, then they will be punished for it for a long time. This is the best state that the disbeliever may be in, and you see how it will end.

As for those who fear their Lord and believe in Him – in addition to attaining honour and joy in this world, they will have: ﴿gardens, through which rivers flow, to abide therein forever﴾.

If it so happens that in this world they encounter misery, hardship, suffering and difficulties, that will be insignificant in comparison to eternal delight, good living, happiness and joy (in the hereafter); it will be a gift in the form of a trial. Hence Allah (ﷻ) says: ﴿that which is with Allah is best for the righteous﴾. The righteous are those whose

hearts, words and deeds are righteous. The Most Magnificent, Most Merciful will grant them an immense reward and eternal victory, by His grace.



﴿ وَإِنَّ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ لَمَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِاللَّهِ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِمْ خَشِعِينَ لِلَّهِ لَا يَشْتَرُونَ بِعَايَتِ اللَّهِ ثَمَنًا قَلِيلًا ۗ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿١٩٩﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَصْبِرُوا وَاصْبِرُوا وَرَاطِبُوا ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٢٠٠﴾ (سورة آل عمران: ١٩٩-٢٠٠)

- 3:199. Verily, among the People of the Book, there are those who believe in Allah, and in what has been sent down to you and what was sent down to them, humbling themselves before Allah. They do not sell the revelations of Allah for a small price. These will have their reward with their Lord; verily Allah is swift in reckoning.
- 3:200. O you who believe, be steadfast and stand firm, be on the alert, and fear Allah; that you may prosper.

That is, some of the People of the Book are guided to goodness; they believe in Allah and they believe in what has been sent down to you and what has been sent down to them. This is the faith that is beneficial; it is not like the faith of one who believes in some of the Messengers and Books, and rejects others.

Hence – because their belief was comprehensive and real – it became beneficial for them, which led them to humble themselves before Allah and submit to His Majesty, which made them follow His commands, heed His prohibitions and adhere to His limits.

These are People of the Book and knowledge in the true sense, as Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿...Among His slaves, only those who have knowledge truly fear Allah...﴾ (Fâtir 35: 28)

A sign of their complete humility before Allah is that they ﴿do not sell the revelations of Allah for a small price﴾. So they do not give precedence to worldly interests over religious interests, as is done by the deviant people who conceal that which Allah revealed and sell it for a small price.

These people have come to know the truth of the matter and realised that it is the greatest loss to be content with that which is cheap and inferior, and to give it precedence over religious commitment, or to focus on some base desires of the *nafs* and overlook the truth, which is the greatest gain and triumph in this world and the hereafter; thus they give precedence to the truth, explain it, call others to it and warn against falsehood. Therefore Allah rewards them for that; He promised them a great reward and told them that it is near and that He is swift in reckoning, so that they will not think that what Allah promised them is slow in coming, because whatever is coming and there is no doubt about it is in fact near.

Then Allah urges the believers to do that which will bring them to prosperity, which is victory, happiness and success. The way to attain that is to adhere to patience, which means disciplining oneself to do that which one finds hard, such as refraining from sin, being steadfast at the time of calamity and adhering to commands that one finds burdensome. So Allah commands them to be patient in all these cases. Standing firm means being patient and steadfast, and resisting the enemy in all circumstances.

Being on the alert means staying in the place where there is a fear the enemy could reach, keeping a lookout for the enemy and preventing them from reaching their goals, so that they (the believers)

may prosper, attain what they want in both religious and worldly terms and in the hereafter, and be safe from that which they fear.

Thus we learn that there is no way to attain prosperity without being steadfast, standing firm, and being on the alert as mentioned. Those who prosper only do so by means of these things, and people only miss out on prosperity because they overlook these things or some of them.

This is the end of the commentary on Soorat *Al 'Imrân*.
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.

