



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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



﴿قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ
مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِلزَّكَاةِ فَاعِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِفُرُوجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ
﴿٥﴾ إِلَّا عَلَىٰ أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُومِينَ ﴿٦﴾ فَمَنِ
ابْتَغَىٰ وَرَاءَ ذَلِكَ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُونَ ﴿٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِنَتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ
﴿٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَىٰ صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِينَ
يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١١﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ١-١١)

- 23:1. The believers have indeed attained true success,
23:2. Those who humble themselves in their prayers,
23:3. who turn away from all that is vain,
23:4. who are active in giving zakâh,
23:5. and who restrain their carnal desires,
23:6. except with their wives or any slave women they may own, for
then they are free of blame.

- 23:7. But whoever seeks anything beyond that, such are the transgressors.
- 23:8. Those who are faithful to their trusts and pledges,
- 23:9. and who are diligent in their prayers,
- 23:10. such will be the heirs
- 23:11. who will inherit paradise; they will abide therein forever.

Here Allah praises and commends His believing slaves, highlighting their success and bliss, and the means by which they attain that. This implicitly urges us to acquire the same characteristics and encourages us to do so. So the individual should take stock of himself and others, measuring against these standards; thus he will know what he and others have of faith, and the level and extent of that faith.

«The believers have indeed attained true success» that is, they are victorious, blessed and successful, for they have attained everything that one may seek. Among the perfect attributes of the believers who believe in Allah and in the Messengers is the fact that they «humble themselves in their prayers».

Humble focus in prayer means presence of mind before Allah (ﷻ), bearing in mind how close He is. Thus the believer's heart is comforted, his mind is put at rest, his movements become still and he is not distracted, as he stands humbly before his Lord, focusing on everything that he says and does in his prayer, from beginning to end. Thus he dispels devilish whispers and bad thoughts. This is the essence and purpose of prayer, and this is what will be written down in the individual's record.

With regard to prayer in which there is no humility and focus of mind, even though it may be valid and rewardable, the reward for it will be commensurate with the person's level of focus and understanding of what he says.

«who turn away from all that is vain», which is words in which there is nothing good and no benefit. They turn away from it out of dislike for it, and so as to protect themselves and rise above it; if they pass by (people engaged in) idle talk, they pass by with dignity (25: 72). As they turn away from all that is vain, it is even more apt that they should turn away from that which is prohibited.

If a person can rein in his tongue and keep it under control – speaking only of that which is good – then he will be in control of all his affairs, as the Prophet (ﷺ) said to Mu'adh ibn Jabal (*radiya Allâhu 'anhu* – may Allah be pleased with him) when he gave him advice: «The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Shall I not tell you of the basis of all of that? I said: Yes, O Messenger of Allah. He took hold of his own tongue and said: Restrain this.» (A sound hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah)

One of the praiseworthy characteristics of the believers is that they restrain their tongues and refrain from vain talk and saying that which is prohibited.

«who are active in giving zakâh» that is, they give zakâh on their wealth of all types, thus purifying themselves by giving up bad attitudes and bad deeds. So they do well in worshipping the Creator and in focusing humbly in their prayer, and they do good to His creation by giving zakâh.

«and who restrain their carnal desires» and refrain from *zinâ* (unlawful sexual relationships). Part of restraining their carnal desires is avoiding anything that leads to that which is unlawful, such as looking, touching and so on. So they restrain their carnal desires and refrain from illicit relationships with anyone except «their wives or any slave women they may own, for then they are free of blame» if they have intimate relations with them, because Allah (ﷻ) has permitted that.

«But whoever seeks anything beyond that» that is, beyond the wife or the female slave

﴿such are the transgressors﴾ who have gone beyond what Allah has permitted to that which He has prohibited, and have the audacity to transgress the limits set by Allah.

The general meaning of this verse indicates that *mut'ah* marriage (temporary marriage) is prohibited, and the woman in such a marriage is not a wife in a true sense, with the intention of permanent marriage, nor is she a slave. *Tahleel* marriage²⁵ is prohibited for the same reason.

The words ﴿or any slave women they may own﴾ indicate that in order for it to be permissible to have intimate relations with a slave woman, it is stipulated that one should own her entirely. If a man has a part-share in ownership of a slave woman, it is not permissible to have intimate relations with her, because he does not fully own her; rather she belongs to him and to someone else. Just as it is not permissible for two husbands to share a free woman, it is not permissible for two masters to share a slave woman.

﴿Those who are faithful to their trusts and pledges﴾ that is, they are faithful to them, knowing the terms thereof and adhering to them, and they are keen to fulfil the conditions and implement what they promised. This is general in meaning and applies to all trusts that have to do with the rights of Allah and those that have to do with the rights of people. Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Verily, We offered the Trust to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains, yet they refused to undertake it and were afraid of it. But man undertook it...﴾ (*al-Ahzāb* 33: 72)

²⁵ *Tahleel* marriage: after a third *talāq*, a woman cannot go back to her husband unless she has married another man, in a genuine marriage, then been divorced by him:

﴿And if he divorces her [the third time], she will not be lawful for him again until she has married another husband...﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 230)

Tahleel marriage is a marriage for the purpose of making her permissible for her first husband by marrying her, consummating the marriage, and then divorcing her; it is haram, and it does not make the woman permissible for her first husband.

Everything that Allah has enjoined upon His slave is a trust, and the slave must adhere to it by complying with it fully. This also includes things that are entrusted to people, such as property or wealth, secrets and so on. The individual must pay attention to both and must fulfil both types of trusts.

﴿Verily, Allah commands you to render back trusts to those to whom they are due...﴾ (an-Nisā' 4: 58)

The same applies to pledges, including pledges between people and their Lord, and pledges that people make amongst themselves. They must be faithful to them and fulfil them, and it is forbidden to be heedless and negligent with regard to them.

﴿and who are diligent in their prayers﴾ that is, they persist in offering them on time, in the prescribed manner, fulfilling their conditions and doing all the essential parts thereof. Allah praises them for their humble focus and diligence in prayer, because they cannot be in good shape unless they do both. Whoever persists in praying without humbling themselves, or humbles himself without being diligent in prayer, is falling short.

﴿such﴾ that is, those who are described in these terms ﴿will be the heirs who will inherit paradise﴾. The word translated here as ﴿paradise﴾ (*firdaws*) refers to the highest part of paradise, the middle and best of it, because they attained the best of praiseworthy attributes. Or it may be that what is meant is all of paradise, so that this includes all the believers of varying levels, each according to his situation.

﴿they will abide therein forever﴾ and will never leave it, nor will they want to move from it, because it contains the most perfect, best and most complete delights, without anything to spoil their joy or undermine their happiness.



﴿ وَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِنْ طِينٍ ﴿١٢﴾ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاهُ نُطْفَةً فِي قَرَارٍ مَكِينٍ ﴿١٣﴾ ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ عِظْمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظْمَ لَحْمًا ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَاهُ خَلْقًا آخَرَ ۗ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ ﴿١٤﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ لَمَيْتُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ تُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ ﴾ (سورة

المؤمنون: ١٢-١٦)

- 23:12. Indeed We created man from the finest extract of clay,
 23:13. Then We placed him as a drop of semen in a safe repository.²⁶
 23:14. Then We made the drop of semen into a clinging clot, then We made the clinging clot into a lump of flesh, then We made the lump of flesh into bones, and clothed the bones with flesh, and then We brought it forth as another creation.²⁷ So blessed be Allah, the best of creators.
 23:15. Then after that you will surely die,
 23:16. then on the Day of Resurrection you will surely be raised up.

In this passage Allah mentions the stages through which the human being passes, from the beginning of his creation until his ultimate destiny. He mentions the initial creation of the father of humankind, Adam (ﷺ), and tells us that He created him ﴿from the finest extract of clay﴾ that is, the clay was extracted and taken from all over the earth, hence Adam's descendants vary according to what type of land they were collected from. Therefore some of them are good, some

²⁶ v. 12 refers to the creation of Adam (ﷺ) and the following verse refers to the creation of his offspring.

²⁷ This may refer to when the soul is breathed into the developing foetus, or it may refer to the different stages of human development throughout life. (al-Baghawi)

are bad, and some are somewhere in between; some are easy-going, some are harsh and some are somewhere in between.

«Then We placed him» that is, the human being «as a drop of semen» proceeding from between the backbone and the ribs (86: 7), which then settles «in a safe repository», namely the uterus, where it is protected from harm.

«Then We made the drop of semen» that had settled (in the uterus) before that «into a clinging clot» that is, red blood, forty days after the drop of semen was placed in the safe repository.

«then We made the clinging clot» after forty days «into a lump of flesh» that is, a small piece of flesh, the size of a mouthful of food.

«then We made the lump of flesh» which was soft «into bones» which were hard.

«and clothed the bones with flesh» that is, We made the flesh like a cover for the bones, as We made the bones a framework for the flesh. That is in the third forty-day period.

«and then We brought it forth as another creation» into which the soul is breathed, so it goes from being inanimate to being an animate, living being.

«So blessed be Allah» that is, exalted and glorified be He, the One Who does abundant good, «the best of creators»:

«Who created all things well and initiated the creation of man from clay, then He made his offspring from the extract of an insignificant fluid. Then He fashioned him and breathed into him the soul which He created for him. He gave you hearing, sight and intellect; little it is that you give thanks.» (as-Sajdah 32: 7-9)

He has created all things well and man is one of the best of His creations; indeed he is the best of all, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Verily We have created man in the best of conditions.» (at-Teen 95: 4)

Hence the elite of humankind are the best and most perfect of creatures.

«Then after that», after being created and after your souls have been breathed into you, «you will surely die» in one of your stages of your journey.

«then on the Day of Resurrection you will surely be raised up», then you will be requited for your deeds, both good and bad. Allah (ﷻ) says:

«Does man think that he will be left unchecked? Was he not a drop of semen emitted, then he became a clinging clot, then [Allah] formed him and fashioned him, and made from him two genders, male and female? Is not He Who has done that able to bring the dead to life?»
(*al-Qiyāmah* 75: 36-40)



﴿وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعَ طَرَائِقَ وَمَا كُنَّا عَنِ الْخَلْقِ غَافِلِينَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ فَأَسْكَنَتْهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنَّا عَلَى ذَهَابٍ بِهِ لَقَادِرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ فَأَنْشَأْنَا لَكُمْ بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ لَّكُمْ فِيهَا فَاوِكُهُ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَشَجَرَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ طُورِ سَيْنَاءَ تَنْبُتُ بِالذَّهْنِ وَصَبِغٍ لِّلْأَكْلِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ١٧-٢٠)

- 23:17. We have created above you seven heavens [one over the other], and We have never been negligent towards Our creation.
- 23:18. We send down water from the sky in due measure and We cause it to remain on the earth; and verily, We are able to take it away.
- 23:19. And by means of this water We bring forth for you gardens of date palms and vines, in which you have many fruits and from them you eat.
- 23:20. And We bring forth a tree [the olive] which grows on Mount Sinai, producing oil and a condiment for all to eat.

Having mentioned the creation of man, Allah (ﷻ) now tells us of his place of dwelling and how plentiful are the blessings of all kinds that He bestows:

﴿We have created above you﴾ as a canopy for the earth and serving the interests of people

﴿seven heavens﴾ that is, seven heavens, one above the other, adorned with the stars, the sun and the moon. And He has placed therein that which serves people's interests.

﴿and We have never been negligent towards Our creation﴾ – just as Our creation encompasses all created beings, Our knowledge also encompasses all that We have created. So We do not neglect any created being or forget it; We do not create anything and then forsake it. We do not neglect the heaven so that it falls upon the earth, and We do not forget the tiniest creature in the depths of the sea or the remotest wilderness. There is no creature but We send its provision to it.

﴿There is no creature that lives on the earth but its sustenance is guaranteed by Allah. He knows its dwelling place and its resting place...﴾ (Hood 11: 6)

Allah (ﷻ) often mentions together His act of creation and His Knowledge, as in the verses in which He says:

﴿How could He Who created not know His own creation, when He alone is the Knower of subtleties, the All-Aware?﴾ (al-Mulk 67: 14)

﴿...He is the Creator of all, the All-Knowing.﴾ (Ya Seen 36: 81)

That is because the creation of all created things is the strongest rational evidence for the knowledge and wisdom of their Creator.

﴿We send down water from the sky in due measure﴾ as provision for you and your livestock, as much as will suffice you. He does not give less, so that it is not enough for the earth and trees, for that would not serve the purpose. And He does not make it excessive so that it could destroy people's houses, and plants and trees would not

be able to survive. Rather He sends it down when it is needed, then He diverts it when it could cause harm if it persisted.

﴿and We cause it to remain on the earth﴾ that is, We send it down to the earth, then it settles there and by the power of the One Who sent it down, all kinds of plants are brought forth. He also causes it to settle and be stored in the ground, readily available; it does not go so deep that no one could reach it.

﴿and verily, We are able to take it away﴾ either by not sending it down in the first place, or by sending it down then letting it disappear into the ground so that not one could reach it, or by causing it not to achieve the purpose intended by it. This is Allah's warning to His slaves that they should show gratitude to Him for His blessings, and they should think, if they were to lose these blessings, what harm would result from that. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Say: What do you think, if your water were to disappear under the ground, then who could bring you accessible water?﴾ (*al-Mulk* 67: 30)

﴿And by means of this water We bring forth for you gardens of date palms and vines﴾. Allah (ﷻ) singles out these two plants for mention, even though other kinds of plants also grow by means of it, because of their virtue and benefits that make them superior to other plants. Hence He mentions others in general terms: ﴿in which﴾ that is, in those gardens ﴿you have many fruits and from them you eat﴾, such as figs, citrons, pomegranates, apples, and so on.

﴿And We bring forth a tree [the olive] which grows on Mount Sinai﴾ this refers to the olive tree. It is singled out for mention because the place where it grows is in greater Syria, and because of its benefits, some of which He mentions here: ﴿producing oil and a condiment for all to eat﴾ that is, it produces oil which is used for lamps and as a condiment that is eaten. And it has other benefits also.



﴿وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً لِّتُنذِرُوا بِطَوْبِهَا وَلِكُمْفِيهَا مَنفَعٌ كَثِيرَةٌ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٢١-٢٢)

23:21. And verily in livestock animals too there is a lesson for you. We give you to drink of that [milk] which is in their bellies; you have many other benefits from them, and of their [meat] you eat.

23:22. And on them, and on ships, you are carried.

That is, among other blessings that He has bestowed upon you, He has made to be of service to you the livestock animals, namely camels, cattle and sheep. In them there is a lesson for those who reflect, and there are benefits for those who avail themselves thereof.

﴿We give you to drink of that [milk] which is in their bellies﴾, which is produced alongside faeces and blood: pure milk, palatable to those who drink it (16: 66).

﴿you have many other benefits from them﴾, namely their wool and hair; He has given you dwellings made from the skins of livestock, which you find light to handle when you travel and when you halt (16: 80)

﴿and of their [meat] you eat﴾, which is the best food, their meat and fat.

﴿And on them, and on ships, you are carried﴾ that is, He has made them like ships for you on land, on which you and your goods are carried to lands that you could not (otherwise) reach without great hardship (16: 7). And He has also made for you ships which carry you and your goods, whether few or many, across the sea.

The One Who bestowed these blessings and favours of all kinds, and has been very generous towards you, is the One Who deserves

all gratitude and all praise, and deserves that you should strive hard to worship Him and not use His blessings to disobey Him.



﴿وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَقَالَ يَتَقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَقَالَ الْمَلَأُوا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ مَا هَذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِثْلُكُمْ يُرِيدُ أَنْ يَفْضَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَوْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ لَأَنْزَلَ مَلَائِكَةً مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهَذَا فِي آبَائِنَا الْأُولَىٰ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا رَجُلٌ بِهِ جِنَّةٌ فترِصُوا بِهِ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ انصُرْنِي بِمَا كَذَّبُونِ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ أَنْ اصْنَعْ الْفُلَکَ بِأَعْيُنِنَا وَّوَحَّيْنَا فَإِذَا جَاءَ أَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُّورُ فَاسْلُكْ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَئِینَ وَاَهْلَکَ إِلَّا مَنْ سَبَقَ عَلَیْهِ الْقَوْلُ مِنْهُمْ وَلَا تَحْطِیْنِی فِی الَّذِینَ ظَلَمُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُّغْرَقُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَإِذَا اسْتَوَيْتَ أَنْتَ وَمَعَكَ عَلَى الْفُلَکِ فَقُلِ الْمُعْتَدِلُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِی نَجَّیْنَا مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِینَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَقُلْ رَبِّ انزِلْنی مُنزلاً مُّبَارکاً وَأَنْتَ خَبِیرُ الْمُتَرِیِّینَ ﴿٢٩﴾ إِنْ فِی ذَٰلِکَ لَآیَاتٍ وَإِنْ کُنَّا لَمُبْتَلِینَ ﴿٣٠﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٢٣-٣٠)

- 23:23. Indeed We sent Nooh to his people. He said: O my people, worship Allah; you have no god but He. Will you not then fear Him?
- 23:24. But the chieftains of his people who disbelieved said: This one is no more than a man like yourselves who wants to make himself superior to you. If Allah had so willed, He could have sent down angels [as messengers]. We have never heard of such a thing from our forefathers.
- 23:25. He is no more than a man in whom there is madness. So bear with him for a while.
- 23:26. Nooh said: My Lord, help me, for they have rejected me.
- 23:27. So We inspired him: Build the ark under Our supervision and in accordance with Our inspiration. Then, when Our command comes and water gushes up out of the earth, let on board a pair

- from every species, and your family, except those against whom the sentence has already been passed. And do not plead with Me concerning those who did wrong, for they will surely be drowned.
- 23:28. Once you and those who are with you are settled on board the ark, say: Praise be to Allah, Who has saved us from the people who are given to wrongdoing.
- 23:29. And say: My Lord, cause me to land at a blessed landing-place, for You are the Best of those who bring to land.
- 23:30. Surely in that there are signs; for, verily, We always put [man] to the test.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the message of His slave and Messenger Nooh (ﷺ), who was the first Messenger whom He sent to the people of this earth. He sent him to his people, who used to worship idols, and he instructed them to worship Allah alone, saying:

﴿O my people, worship Allah﴾ that is, devote your worship to Him alone, because worship is not valid unless it is sincerely devoted to Him alone.

﴿you have no god but He﴾ this is a declaration of the invalidity of the divinity of anything other than Allah, and is an affirmation of the divinity of Allah (ﷻ), for He alone is the Creator and Provider, Who is perfect in all ways; all others are the opposite of that.

﴿Will you not then fear Him?﴾ And give up what you are doing of worshipping idols and statues that were made in the image of righteous people, and they worshipped them alongside Allah.

He continued doing that, calling them in private and in public, night and day, for one thousand less fifty years, but they only increased in stubbornness and aversion.

﴿But the chieftains of his people who disbelieved﴾ that is, the nobles and leaders

﴿said﴾ by way of objecting to their Prophet Nooh (ﷺ) and warning others against following him:

﴿This one is no more than a man like yourselves who wants to make himself superior to you﴾ that is, he is only a human being like you; his aim in claiming prophethood is to prove his superiority over you, so that he will be followed; otherwise, what makes him superior to you when he is just like you? This objection continued to be raised among those who reject the Messengers.

But Allah gave a sufficient response on the lips of His Messengers, as in the passage in which He says:

﴿... They said: You are but human beings like ourselves! You want to turn us away from that which our forefathers used to worship; then bring us some clear proof. Their Messengers said to them: Indeed, we are but human beings like yourselves, but Allah bestows His favour upon whomever He wills of His slaves...﴾ (Ibrâheem 14: 10-11)

They stated that this was the blessing and favour of Allah, and they had no right to put restrictions on Allah or object to Him for bestowing His favour on them.

In this case, the people of Nooh said: ﴿If Allah had so willed, He could have sent down angels [as messengers]﴾. They used the concept of the divine will to raise objections on a false basis. Although Allah could have sent down angels as messengers if He had so willed, He is Most Wise, Most Merciful, and His wisdom and mercy dictate that the Messenger should be human, because humans cannot be directly addressed by angels, and an angel could only have appeared to them in the form of a man, in which case they would have become confused and raised the same objections again.

﴿We have never heard of such a thing﴾ namely the sending of a Messenger ﴿from our forefathers﴾. What proof is there in the fact that they never heard of the sending of a Messenger to their forefathers? For they do not have full knowledge of what happened in the past, so they should not make that ignorance the basis of their argument. Even

if we assume that no Messenger was sent to their forefathers, either their forefathers were guided, so there was no need for a Messenger at that time, or they were not guided, so let them praise their Lord and give thanks to Him for singling them out for a blessing that did not come to their forefathers, and they were never aware of it. They should not let the fact that a blessing did not reach others be a cause of ingratitude for a favour bestowed upon them.

﴿He is no more than a man in whom there is madness. So bear with him﴾ and wait ﴿for a while﴾, until death comes to him.

The arguments they gave to justify their rejection of their Prophet are indicative of their extreme ingratitude and stubbornness, and demonstrate that they were extremely ignorant and misguided. These specious arguments do not justify their rejection in any way, as we have mentioned; rather they were self-contradictory and flimsy in and of themselves.

By saying ﴿This one is no more than a man like yourselves who wants to make himself superior to you﴾ (23: 24), they affirmed that he was a man of rational thinking who was scheming against them in order to put himself above them and become their leader, and – moreover – there was a need to warn against him so that no one would be deceived by him.

How could that be in harmony with their other argument against him, when they said: ﴿He is no more than a man in whom there is madness﴾ (23: 25)? Can this be anything other than the specious argument of one who is misguided and confused? All he is trying to do is find any justification for his aversion to the truth, without knowing what he is talking about! But Allah insists on exposing and disgracing those who oppose Him and His Messengers.

When Nooh realised that his call was only increasing them in aversion, he said: ﴿My Lord, help me, for they have rejected me﴾. He asked his Lord for help against them out of anger for the sake of

Allah, as they neglected His command and rejected His Messenger. Nooh said:

﴿...My Lord, do not leave on earth a single living soul from among the disbelievers. For if You leave them, they will mislead Your slaves and will beget none but wicked disbelievers.﴾ (Nooh 71: 26-27)

And Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿Indeed, Nooh called upon Us, and how excellent was Our response!﴾ (as-Saffat 37: 75)

﴿So We inspired him﴾ when We answered him, telling him of a means to save himself before the punishment came.

﴿Build the ark﴾ that is, the ship ﴿under Our supervision and in accordance with Our inspiration﴾ that is, in accordance with Our instructions to you and with Our help, for you are under Our care and supervision, as We see you and hear you.

﴿Then, when Our command comes﴾ to send the flood with which they were to be punished,

﴿and water gushes up out of the earth﴾ that is, when springs burst forth from the earth

﴿let on board a pair from every species﴾ that is, take on board the ark a male and female of every animal, so as to maintain the offspring of all animals that were created on earth by divine wisdom.

﴿and your family﴾ that is, take them on board too,

﴿except those against whom the sentence has already been passed﴾, such as his son.

﴿And do not plead with Me concerning those who did wrong﴾ that is, do not pray to Me to save them, for it has already been willed and decreed that they will be drowned.

﴿Once you and those who are with you are settled on board the ark﴾ that is, when you have embarked and it has sailed with you on the waves, then praise Allah for saving you and keeping you safe.

﴿say: Praise be to Allah, Who has saved us from the people who are given to wrongdoing﴾. Allah taught Nooh and those who were with

him to say these words in thanksgiving to Him, praising Him for saving them from the evildoers and from following their path and sharing their punishment.

﴿And say: My Lord, cause me to land at a blessed landing-place, for You are the Best of those who bring to land﴾ that is, there is another blessing that is yet to come, so pray to Allah for it, namely that Allah should make it easy for you to land at a blessed landing-place. And Allah answered his supplication, as He tells us elsewhere:

﴿...and the decree was fulfilled. The ark came to rest on Mount al-Judi and it was said: Away with the wicked people!... It was said: O Nooh, disembark with safety granted by Us, and with blessings upon you and some of the communities [who will spring from] those who are with you...﴾ (Hood 11: 44-48)

﴿Surely in that﴾ that is, in this story ﴿there are signs﴾ which indicate that Allah alone is deserving of worship, and that His Messenger Nooh was truthful and his people were liars. This is indicative of Allah's mercy towards His slaves, as He carried them in the loins of their father Nooh, in the ark, when He drowned the people of the earth.

The ark is also one of the signs of Allah. He tells us elsewhere:

﴿Verily, We have left it as a sign; is there then any who will pay heed?﴾ (al-Qamar 54: 15)

Hence signs are mentioned in the plural, because this refers to a number of signs and indications, ﴿for, verily, We always put [man] to the test﴾.



﴿قُلْ أَنشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنَآءَ آخَرِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَأَرْسَلْنَا فِيهِمْ رَسُولًا مِنْهُمْ أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۗ أَفَلَا تَنْقُوتَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَقَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا الْآخِرَةِ وَأَتْرَفْنَاهُمْ

فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا مَا هَذَا إِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يَأْكُلُ مِمَّا تَأْكُلُونَ مِنْهُ وَيَشْرَبُ مِمَّا تَشْرَبُونَ
 ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَئِنْ أَطَعْتُمْ بَشَرًا مِثْلَكُمْ إِنَّكُمْ إِذَا لَخَسِرُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ أَيْدِكُمْ أَنْتُمْ وَإِذَا مِتُّمْ وَكُنْتُمْ
 تُرَابًا وَعِظْمًا أَنْتُمْ مُخْرَجُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ هَيَّاتَ هَيَّاتَ لِمَا توعَدُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ إِنْ هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا
 الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوثِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا رَجُلٌ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا وَمَا
 نَحْنُ لَهُ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ انصُرْنِي بِمَا كَذَّبُونِ ﴿٣٩﴾ قَالَ عَمَّا قَلِيلٍ لَيُصْبِحُنَّ نَادِمِينَ
 ﴿٤٠﴾ فَأَخَذْتَهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ بِالْحَقِّ فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ غَسَاءً فَبَعْدًا لِلْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٤١﴾

(سورة المؤمنون: ٣١-٤١)

- 23:31. Then We raised up after them another nation.
- 23:32. We sent to them a Messenger from among themselves, [who said]: O my people, worship Allah; you have no god but He. Will you not then fear Him?
- 23:33. But the chieftains of his people who disbelieved and denied the meeting in the hereafter, and upon whom We had conferred ease and comfort in the life of this world, said: This one is no more than a man like yourselves who eats what you eat, and drinks what you drink.
- 23:34. If you obey a man like yourselves, then indeed you will be losers.
- 23:35. Does he promise you that when you have died and become dust and bones, you will be brought forth [alive, from your graves]?
- 23:36. Far-fetched, utterly far-fetched is what you are promised.
- 23:37. There is nothing beyond our life in this world; we die and we live,²⁸ and we will not be resurrected.
- 23:38. He is no more than a man who fabricated lies against Allah; we will never believe in him.
- 23:39. [Their Prophet] said: My Lord, help me, for they have rejected me.

²⁸ That is, one generation dies and is succeeded by another. (*al-Kash-shāf*)

23:40. Allah said: Before long they will surely come to regret it.

23:41. So the blast overtook them in all justice and We made them like refuse swept away by a torrent. So away with the wicked people!

Having mentioned Nūḥ and his people, and how He destroyed them, Allah now says:

﴿Then We raised up after them another nation﴾. What appears to be the case is that they were Thamood, the people of Ṣāliḥ (ﷺ), because this story is similar to theirs.

﴿We sent to them a Messenger from among themselves﴾, one of their own people whose lineage, position and honesty they knew well, so that it would be easier for them to follow him, if he was one of them, and they would be less likely to resent him. He proclaimed the same message to them as all the Messengers proclaimed to their nations, calling them to ﴿worship Allah; you have no god but He﴾. All the Messengers brought this message, and it is the first thing to which they called their nations, instructing them to worship Allah and telling them that He alone is deserving of that, and forbidding them to worship anything other than Him, and telling them that doing so is wrong and invalid. Hence he (the Messenger who was sent to that nation) said: ﴿Will you not then fear Him?﴾ That is, fear your Lord and avoid these images and idols.

﴿But the chieftains of his people who disbelieved and denied the meeting in the hereafter, and upon whom We had conferred ease and comfort in the life of this world﴾ that is, the leaders, who combined disbelief and stubbornness with denial of the resurrection and requital, and whose life of ease in this world had made them arrogant, said, in opposition to their Prophet, rejecting his message and warning others against him:

﴿This one is no more than a man like yourselves﴾ that is, of the same type as you

«who eats what you eat, and drinks what you drink»), so what makes him superior to you? Why was an angel not sent who does not eat or drink?

«If you obey a man like yourselves, then indeed you will be losers» that is, if you follow him and make him your leader, when he is just like you, then you will prove that you are people who have no intelligence and you will regret what you have done. This is very odd, because the losers who will feel true regret are those who do not follow him and do not submit to him, whilst the ignorant and most foolish are those who are too arrogant to submit to a human being whom Allah chose for His revelation and blessed with His message, but they sank to the level of worshipping trees and rocks.

This is like the verse in which Allah tells us that they said:

«They said: What! Are we to follow a single human from among ourselves? Then we would surely have fallen into error and madness! Has the message been sent to him alone, out of all of us? Nay, he is an insolent liar.» (*al-Qamar 54: 24-25*)

When they denied and rejected his message, they denied the teachings he brought about the resurrection after death and requital for deeds, and they said:

«Does he promise you that when you have died and become dust and bones, you will be brought forth [alive, from your graves]? Far-fetched, utterly far-fetched is what you are promised» that is, what he promises you of resurrection after you have disintegrated and become dust and bones is very unlikely. But their view was flawed, because they thought that, according to their own abilities, it was not possible (to be resurrected). They compared the ability of the Creator to their own ability; exalted be Allah far above that. They denied His power to bring the dead back to life, and they thought of Him as lacking in power, but they forgot that He created them the first time, and that for the One Who created them from nothing, recreating them after they have disintegrated is easier, although both are easy for Him. Why did

they not deny their initial creation, and why did they stubbornly reject that which is visible and tangible (their own existence)?

There is further proof, which is that the One Who gives life to an earth that is dead will revive the dead, for He has power over all things. Even more proof is to be found in His response to those who denied the resurrection, as He said:

﴿But they deem it strange that a warner has come to them from among themselves, and the disbelievers say: This is a strange thing indeed! What! When we have died and have turned into dust [will we be brought back to life]? That is farfetched indeed!﴾ (Qâf 50: 2- 3)

Allah said in response to them:

﴿Indeed, We know what the earth consumes of them; with Us is a record that preserves everything.﴾ (Qâf 50: 4)

﴿There is nothing beyond our life in this world; we die and we live﴾ that is, some people die and some people live and we will not be resurrected﴾. ﴿He is no more than a man in whom there is madness﴾ (23: 25), and that is why he brought what he brought, of proclaiming the oneness of Allah and affirming the resurrection. ﴿So bear with him for a while﴾ (23: 25) that is, forget about punishing him by killing him or otherwise, out of respect for him, and because he is insane and is not to be brought to task for what he says. In other words, according to their false claim, there is no reason to argue with him concerning the validity of what he has brought, because they already believed that it was false. Now the issue was whether they should punish him or not. According to their claim, their so-called mature thinking dictated that they should let him be and not punish him, even though they had good reason to do so (according to their claim). Is there any worse stubbornness and disbelief than this?

Because their disbelief was so firmly entrenched, and the warning was to no avail, their Prophet prayed against them and said: ﴿My

Lord, help me, for they have rejected me» that is, by destroying them and disgracing them in this world, before the hereafter. «Allah said», in response to his supplication: «Before long they will surely come to regret it».

«So the blast overtook them in all justice» – there was no injustice or unfairness; rather it was justified because of their wrongdoing. The blast overtook them and destroyed them all.

«and We made them like refuse swept away by a torrent» that is, like dry stubble and refuse swept away by a torrent, that is cast up on the sides of the wadis. Elsewhere Allah says:

«Verily, We sent against them a single blast, and they became like dry sticks...» (al-Qamar 54: 31)

«So away with the wicked people!» That is, in addition to their punishment, they will be cast far away, cursed and condemned by all people.

«Neither heaven nor earth wept for them, nor were they given respite.» (ad-Dukhan 44: 29)



﴿ ثُمَّ أَنْشَأْنَا مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ قُرُونًا آخَرِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾ مَا تَسْبِقُ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلَهَا وَمَا يَسْتَعْتِرُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا رَسُولَنَا تَتْرًا كُلَّ مَا جَاءَ أُمَّةٌ رَسُولَهَا كَذَّبُوهُ فَاتَّبَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ بَعْضًا وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَحَادِيثَ فَبِعَدَا لِقَوْمٍ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٤٢-٤٤)

23:42. Then We raised up after them other nations.

23:43. No nation can bring its appointed time forward, nor can they delay it.

23:44. Then We sent Our Messengers in succession; every time there came to a nation their Messenger, they rejected him. So We caused them to follow one another [to destruction], and made

them into cautionary tales. So away with the disbelieving people!

That is, then after these stubborn disbelievers We raised up other nations, each nation at a particular time, for an appointed term that could not be brought forward or put back. And We sent to them Messengers, one after another, so that they might believe and turn to Allah.

But disbelief and rejection of the message continued to be the customary attitude of the wicked, disbelieving and sinful nations. Every time its Messenger came to a nation, they rejected him, even though each Messenger brought signs that would be sufficient basis for humans to believe. In fact the very message and teachings of the Messengers prove that what they brought is true.

﴿So We caused them to follow one another [to destruction]﴾, and none of them remained; their dwellings stood empty after they were gone

﴿and made them into cautionary tales﴾ that those who came after them told about them, and they became lessons to the pious and punishment to the disbelievers; their disgrace was accompanied by their punishment.

﴿So away with the disbelieving people!﴾ How wretched and unfortunate they are and what great losers they are!



﴿ثُمَّ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ وَأَخَاهُ هَارُونَ بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٤٥﴾ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَئِهِ
فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا وَكَانُوا قَوْمًا عٰلِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَقَالُوا أَنْوْمِنُ لِبَشَرَيْنِ مِثْلِنَا وَقَوْمُهُمَا لَنَا عٰبِدُونَ
﴿٤٧﴾ فَكَذَّبُوهُمَا فَكَانُوا مِنَ الْمُهْلَكِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَىٰ الْكِتٰبَ لَعَلَّهُمْ
يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٤٥-٤٩)

- 23:45. Then We sent Moosâ and his brother Hâroon with Our clear signs and compelling proofs
- 23:46. To Pharaoh and his chiefs. But they showed arrogance and were haughty people.
- 23:47. They said: Should we believe in two men like ourselves, when their people are subject to us?
- 23:48. So they rejected them both, and were among those who were destroyed.
- 23:49. We gave Moosâ the Book so that they might be guided.

A long time ago, I (as-Sa'di) heard one of the scholars whose name I do not remember saying that after sending Moosâ and sending down the Torah, Allah stopped punishing the nations with eradication, and He prescribed jihad as a way to deal with stubborn deniers. I do not know from where he took this opinion, but when I reflected upon these verses, along with the verses in Soorat al-Qaşaş, I realised how he reached that conclusion. As for these verses, Allah referred to the doomed nations who followed the path that led to their destruction, then He tells us that He sent Moosâ after them, and He sent down to him the Torah which contained guidance for people. This cannot be refuted by the suggestion that Pharaoh was punished by drowning, because that was before the revelation of the Torah. As for the verses in Soorat al-Qaşaş, they are very clear; when Allah mentioned the destruction of Pharaoh, He said:

﴿We gave Moosâ the Book after We had destroyed the previous nations, as enlightenment for humankind, and as guidance and mercy, so that they might pay heed.﴾ (al-Qaşaş 28: 43)

This clearly indicates that He gave him the Book (the Torah) after the destruction of the transgressing nations, and Allah tells us that He sent it down as enlightenment for humankind, and as a guidance and mercy.

The same point is made in Soorah Yoonus, where Allah tells us:
 ﴿Then after him, [that is, after Nooh] We sent Messengers to their [own] peoples; they came to them with clear signs, but they would not believe what they had already rejected beforehand. Thus do We seal up the hearts of the transgressors. Then after them We sent Moosâ and Hâroon...﴾ (Yoonus 10: 74-75)

And Allah knows best.

﴿Then We sent Moosâ﴾ ibn 'Imrân, the one who whom the Most Gracious spoke directly (*kaleem ar-Rahmân*)

﴿and his brother Hâroon﴾ when he asked his Lord to make him his partner, and He answered his request.

﴿with Our clear signs﴾ that point to their sincerity and the truthfulness of that which they brought

﴿and compelling proofs﴾ that is, clear evidence that was so powerful that it could overwhelm and impact people's hearts because of its strength. Thus the hearts of the believers submitted to it and clear proof was established against the stubborn. This is like the verse in Soorat al-Isrâ' in which Allah says:

﴿We gave Moosâ nine clear signs [and told him]: Ask for [the release of] the Children of Israel. When he came to them. Pharaoh said to him: O Moosâ, indeed I think you are bewitched. Moosâ said: You know full well that none but the Lord of the heavens and the earth has sent down these [signs] as clear evidence. Verily, O Pharaoh, I think that you are doomed!﴾ (al-Isrâ' 17: 101-102)

﴿We gave Moosâ nine clear signs﴾; hence the leader of the stubborn recognised the truth but stubbornly rejected it. ﴿[and told him]: Ask for [the release of] the Children of Israel﴾ by means of these clear signs. But ﴿Pharaoh said to him: O Moosâ, indeed I think you are bewitched﴾. So Moosâ said to him: ﴿You know full well that none but the Lord of the heavens and the earth has sent down

these [signs] as clear evidence. Verily, O Pharaoh, I think that you are doomed!﴾. And Allah says:

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

Allah says here: ﴿Then We sent Moosâ and his brother Hâroon with Our clear signs and compelling proofs to Pharaoh and his chiefs﴾, such as Hâmân and other leaders

﴿But they showed arrogance﴾ that is, they were too arrogant to believe in Allah and they showed arrogance towards His Prophets.

﴿and were haughty people﴾ that is, their character was haughty and they oppressed people and caused mischief in the land, hence they behaved in an arrogant manner, which was not surprising in their case.

﴿They said﴾ out of arrogance and pride, warning the weak-minded and trying to present an argument in order to mislead: ﴿Should we believe in two men like ourselves...?﴾. This is exactly what those who came before them said; they had a similar mentality in terms of disbelief, so their words and deeds were similar, and they denied the blessing of the message that Allah had bestowed upon them by sending the message to them.

﴿when their people﴾ namely the Israelites ﴿are subject to us﴾ that is, they are enslaved and forced to do heavy labour for us. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿And [remember] when We delivered you from the people of Pharaoh, who were subjecting you to grievous torment, slaughtering your sons and letting your womenfolk live; in that was a great trial from your Lord.﴾ (al-A'râf 7: 141)

– so how can we follow them after having been followed? How can these people become leaders over us?

Their argument was similar to what the people of Nooh said:

﴿...Should we believe in you when only the lowest people follow you?﴾ (ash-Shu'arâ' 26: 111)

﴿... We do not see you as anything but a human being like ourselves. Nor do we see that any follow you but the lowest among us, those who are rash and undiscerning...﴾ (Hood 11: 27)

But it is well known that this argument is not fit to ward off the truth, and it is merely stubborn denial. Hence Allah says: ﴿So they rejected them both, and were among those who were destroyed﴾ by drowning in the sea, whilst the Israelites were looking on.

﴿We gave Moosâ the Book﴾ – after Allah destroyed Pharaoh and saved the Israelites along with Moosâ, he was able to lead them on the basis of the teachings he received from Allah and to practise the rituals of His religion openly. Allah promised to send down the Torah to him over forty nights, so he went to meet his Lord as ordained. Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿And We inscribed for him in the Tablets all manner of admonition and an explanation of all things...﴾ (al-A'raf 7: 145)

Hence He says here: ﴿so that they might be guided﴾ that is, by knowing the details of the commands and prohibitions, reward and punishment, and so that they might know their Lord by His names and attributes.



﴿وَجَعَلْنَا ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمَّهُ آيَةً وَآوَيْنَهُمَا إِلَىٰ دِيْوَارِ يَاسَافٍ وَجَعَلْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ كُفَّارًا كَذِبًا﴾ (سورة

المؤمنون: ٥٠)

23:50. And We made the son of Maryam and his mother to be a sign; We caused them to dwell on high ground, on a plateau with flowing streams.

That is, We blessed 'Eesâ ibn Maryam, and We caused him and his mother to be among the wondrous signs of Allah, as she conceived

him and bore him without a father, he spoke in the cradle as an infant, and Allah caused other miracles to happen at his hands.

﴿We caused them to dwell on high ground﴾ that is, in an elevated place. This – and Allah knows best – was at the time of giving birth. ﴿on a plateau with flowing streams﴾ that is, with flowing water, based on the fact that Allah says elsewhere:

﴿...for your Lord has provided a stream close at hand.﴾ (Maryam 19: 24)

– that is, beneath the place where you are, because it is high. The word translated here as a ﴿stream﴾ refers to a spring of water.

﴿Shake the trunk of the palm tree towards you; it will drop fresh ripe dates upon you. Eat and drink, and be content...﴾ (Maryam 19: 25-26)



﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوا مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَاعْمَلُوا صَالِحًا إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٥١﴾ وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ أُمَّتُكُمْ أُمَّةً وَاحِدَةً وَأَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُونِ ﴿٥٢﴾ فَتَقَطَّعُوا أَمْرَهُم بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُرًا كُلٌّ حِزْبٌ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ فَذَرَهُمْ فِي عَمْرَتِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ أَيَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّمَا نُمِدُّهُم بِدِينٍ مِّن مَّا لَدَيْنَا وَمِن مَّا لَدَيْنَا لَآ يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٥١-٥٦)

- 23:51. O Messengers, eat of that which is wholesome and do righteous deeds, for I am well aware of all that you do.
- 23:52. Verily this religion of yours is one religion, and I am your Lord, so fear Me alone.
- 23:53. But people divided into sects, each group rejoicing in what it has.
- 23:54. So leave them in their confusion for a while.
- 23:55. Do they think, because We grant them wealth and sons,
- 23:56. that We hasten to them all that is good? Nay, they do not understand.

This is a command from Allah (ﷻ) to His Messengers to eat wholesome food, which is goodly and permissible provision, and to show gratitude to Allah by doing righteous deeds that are good for their physical and spiritual well-being in this world and the hereafter. Here He tells them that He is well aware of all that they do, for every deed they do and every effort they make is known to Him, and He will requite them for it in full, with the best reward. This indicates that all the Messengers were all agreed on the permissibility of wholesome food and the prohibition on that which is bad, and they were all agreed on promoting righteous deeds of all types, even though what is enjoined may vary at different times.

Hence the Prophets and their teachings are agreed on those righteous deeds that are appropriate at all times, such as the command to affirm the oneness of Allah, to devote worship solely to Him, to love Him, to fear His punishment and to hope for His reward, as well as righteousness, truthfulness, fulfilling covenants, upholding ties of kinship, honouring parents, showing kindness to the weak, poor and orphans, being kind and compassionate towards people, and other righteous deeds. Hence the scholars, those who had knowledge of the previous scriptures and wise men at the time when Allah sent Muhammad (ﷺ) found as evidence for the truth of his prophethood the type of deeds that he enjoined and forbade, as happened in the case of Heraclius and others. Because he enjoined the same as the Prophets who came before him had enjoined, and he forbade the same as they had forbidden, this proved that he was one of them, unlike liars and charlatans who inevitably enjoined evil and forbade good.

Hence Allah (ﷻ) said to the Messengers: ﴿Verily this religion of yours is one religion﴾ that is, your community – O Messengers – is one community, agreed upon one religion, and your Lord is One. ﴿so fear Me alone﴾ by complying with My commands and refraining from that which I have prohibited.

Allah enjoined upon the believers the same as He enjoined upon the Messengers, because they follow their example. Allah says:

﴿O you who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided for you, and be grateful to Allah, if it is Him you worship.﴾ (*al-Baqarah* 2: 172)

What is required of all those who follow the Prophets and others is to comply with that and act upon it, but the wrongdoers and fabricators insisted on disobedience, hence Allah says:

﴿But people divided into sects﴾ that is, those who claimed to be followers of the Prophets divided their religion into sects, each group rejoicing in what it has that is, rejoicing in what it had of knowledge and religion, claiming that they were right and everyone else was wrong, even though those who were right among them were those who followed the path of the Messengers, by eating wholesome and lawful food and doing righteous deeds, whilst all others were wrong.

﴿So leave them in their confusion﴾ that is, in the midst of their ignorance of the truth and their claims to be right

﴿for a while﴾ that is, until the punishment befalls them, for no exhortation or rebuke will benefit them. How could it benefit one who claims to be following the truth and hoping to call others to his path.

﴿Do they think, because We grant them wealth and sons, that We hasten to them all that is good?﴾ That is, do they think that the fact that We give them abundance of wealth and children indicates that they are good and blessed people, and that they will have the best in this world and the hereafter, and that this is only the first portion for them? That is not the case.

﴿Nay, they do not understand﴾ rather We give them respite and a reprieve, and We provide them with blessings so as to increase them in sin and so that their punishment will be stored up for them in the hereafter, and so that they may rejoice in what they are given:

﴿...until, when they were rejoicing in what they had been given, We seized them suddenly...﴾ (*al-An'ām* 6: 44)



﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ هُمْ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ رَبِّهِمْ مُتَّقُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾
 وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ لَا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ مَا آتَوْا وَقُلُوبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ
 رَاجِعُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَهُمْ لَهَا سَابِقُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَلَا تَكُلْفُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا
 وُسْعَهَا وَلَدَيْنَا كِتَابٌ يَنْطِقُ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٥٧-٦٢)

- 23:57. Verily those who are filled with reverent awe of their Lord,
 23:58. And who believe in the revelations of their Lord,
 23:59. And who do not ascribe partners to their Lord,
 23:60. And who give what they give [of charity], their hearts filled
 with apprehension, knowing that they will return to their Lord,
 23:61. Those are the ones who hasten to do good deeds, and they are
 foremost in attaining them.
 23:62. We do not place on any soul a burden greater than it can bear.
 We have a record [of their deeds] that speaks the truth, and they
 will not be wronged.

Having mentioned those who combined bad deeds with feeling secure, and claimed that the fact that He had given them worldly abundance was indicative of their goodness and virtue, Allah (ﷻ) mentions those who combined doing good with fear of Him:

﴿Verily those who are filled with reverent awe of their Lord﴾ that is, they are apprehensive and their hearts are filled with awe due to fear of their Lord, that He will judge them on the basis of justice; in that case there will be no good deeds left to their credit, and they think negatively of themselves, that they have not carried out their duties towards Allah (ﷻ) in a proper manner, and they are afraid of losing their faith. Because of the knowledge that they have of their Lord and what He deserves of glorification and honour, their fear and worry dictate that they should refrain from that which causes them to fear sin and falling short in obligatory duties.

«And who believe in the revelations of their Lord» that is, when His revelations are recited to them, it increases them in faith. They also ponder and reflect upon the verses of the Qur'an, and thus the meanings of the Qur'an become clear to them, as do its majestic nature and harmony; its lack of contradiction; what it calls to of knowing Allah, fearing Him and putting one's hope in Him; and what it says about requital. That will increase them in faith in ways that cannot be expressed in words.

They also reflect upon the signs in the universe, as Allah says elsewhere:

«Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the alternation of the night and the day, there are indeed signs for people of understanding.» (*Āl 'Imrān 3: 190*)

«And who do not ascribe partners to their Lord» that is, they do not openly ascribe partners to Him, by taking anything other than Allah as an object of worship, calling upon it and putting their hopes in it, and they do not ascribe partners to Him in hidden or subtle ways, such as showing off and the like. Rather they are sincerely devoted to Allah alone in their words and deeds, and in all situations.

«And who give what they give [of charity]» that is, they give of themselves what they are instructed to give, giving whatever they are able to of prayer, zakāh, Hajj, charity and so on. But at the same time, «(their hearts [are] filled with apprehension)» that is, they fear that when their deeds are presented to Him and they stand before Him, they will not save them from the punishment of Allah, because they know their Lord and are aware of what He deserves of all kinds of worship.

«Those are the ones who hasten to do good deeds» that is, in the arena of competing to do good deeds, their main concern is that which will bring them closer to Allah, and they are focused on that which could save them from His punishment. Whatever good deed they hear

of or have the opportunity to do, they hasten to make the most of it and do that good deed. They look at the close friends and chosen ones of Allah who are ahead of them and on their right and left, hastening to do all that is good and striving to draw close to their Lord, and they try to compete with them. As the one who is racing and competing with others may go ahead because of his efforts and striving, or he may not do so because of his shortcomings, Allah (ﷻ) tells us that these people are among the category who will be foremost, as He says: ﴿and they are foremost in attaining them﴾ that is, good deeds. They will attain the pinnacle, for they competed with the first rank. Moreover, it was already decreed by Allah that they would be among those who are blessed and those who are foremost.

Because Allah mentioned their hastening to do good and their being foremost in that regard, some people may imagine that what is required of them and others is something that is too difficult and hard, He tells us that He does not place ﴿on any soul a burden greater than it can bear﴾ that is, the burden is only as much as a person can bear, and there will still be some strength left over; it is not something that will exhaust all his strength. This is by His mercy and wisdom, so as to make the path to Him easy and so that there will always be people who are racing on that path to Him.

﴿We have a record [of their deeds] that speaks the truth﴾ which is the first Book in which all things are written, and it reflects exactly all that takes place. Hence it is true.

﴿and they will not be wronged﴾ that is, nothing will be detracted from their good deeds and nothing will be added to their punishment or sins.



﴿بَلْ قُلُوبُهُمْ فِي غَمْرَقٍ مِّنْ هَذَا وَهُمْ أَعْمَلُ مِنْ دُونِ ذَلِكَ هُمْ لَهَا عَمِلُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا
أَخَذْنَا مَتْرَفِهِمْ بِالْعَذَابِ إِذَا هُمْ يَجْتَرُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ لَا يَجْتَرُوا الْيَوْمَ إِنَّا كَرَمْنَا لَاتُصْرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ قَدْ

كَانَتْ آيَاتِي تُنَالِي عَلَيْكُمْ فَكُنْتُمْ عَلَيَّ أَعْقِبِيكُمْ نُنَكِّصُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ مُسْتَكْبِرِينَ بِهِ سَامِرًا
تَهْجُرُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٦٣-٦٧)

- 23:63. But their hearts are utterly heedless of this [the Qur'an]; and they have, besides that, other [evil] deeds which they will continue to do
- 23:64. Until, when We seize the affluent amongst them with punishment, they will cry for help.
- 23:65. [It will be said to them:] Do not cry for help today, for you will receive no help from Us.
- 23:66. My revelations were recited to you, but you used to turn on your heels
- 23:67. Out of pride [in being the custodians of the Sacred Mosque], talking nonsense far into the night [about the Qur'an].

Here Allah tells us that the hearts of the disbelievers are utterly heedless, because they are steeped in ignorance, wrongdoing, negligence and aversion that prevent them from reaching out to this Qur'an. Therefore they are not guided by it and nothing of it reaches their hearts.

﴿When you recite the Qur'an, We place between you and those who do not believe in the hereafter a hidden barrier,²⁹ and We have placed covers on their hearts so that they will not understand it, and deafness in their ears...﴾ (al-Isra' 17: 45-46)

Because their hearts are utterly heedless of it, their actions are commensurate with their state of stubbornness and disbelief, which will result in their punishment.

﴿and﴾ but ﴿they have, besides that﴾ that is, besides these deeds

²⁹ That is so that they will not understand it, as a punishment for their (stubborn) disbelief. (at-Tabari)

﴿other [evil] deeds which they will continue to do﴾ that is, they should not find it strange that the punishment has not yet befallen them, because Allah is giving them respite so that they may finish doing all the deeds that they are meant to do according to the divine decree. When they have done that and completed them all, they will move on in the worst state to face the wrath and punishment of Allah.

﴿Until, when We seize the affluent amongst them﴾ that is, those who live a life of ease and are only used to a life of affluence, luxury and enjoyment, and have not experienced hardship; when We seize them ﴿with punishment﴾, and they feel its touch,

﴿they will cry for help﴾ that is, they will scream in pain, because something has befallen them other than what they are used to. They will cry for help, but it will be said to them:

﴿Do not cry for help today, for you will receive no help from Us﴾ – because no help or support will come to them from Allah, they will not be able to help themselves and no one else will be able to help them.

It is as if it will be said to them: What is it that has brought you to this state? ﴿My revelations were recited to you﴾ so that you might believe in them and accept them, but you did not do that; rather ﴿you used to turn on your heels﴾ that is, you went backwards. By following the Qur'an they could have advanced, but by turning away from it they went backwards and became the lowest of the low.

﴿Out of pride [in being the custodians of the Sacred Mosque], talking nonsense far into the night [about the Qur'an]﴾. The commentators said that what is meant is that they were proud of it, and the pronoun (rendered here as ﴿[in being the custodians of the Sacred Mosque]﴾) refers to the Kaaba or the Haram. In other words, they felt proud before people because of that, and they said: We are the people of the sanctuary. therefore we are better than others and of higher status than them.

﴿talking nonsense far into the night﴾ that is, gathering and talking by night around the Kaaba. Talking nonsense refers to saying bad things

about this Qur'an. The way in which the disbelievers responded to the Qur'an was by turning away from it and telling one another to do that.

﴿Those who disbelieved said: Do not listen to this Qur'an; make noise when it is recited, so that you may drown it out.﴾ (Fussilat 41: 26)

And Allah said concerning them:

﴿Do you then wonder at this discourse [the Qur'an] and laugh [at it], and not weep, while you remain heedless?﴾ (an-Najm 53: 59-61)

﴿Or do they say: He has made it [the Qur'an] up himself?...﴾ (at-Toor 52: 33)

As they had all these bad manners and attitudes, it is no wonder that they deserved the punishment, and when they fell into that they had no one to support them or save them, and they were rebuked at that point because of these bad deeds.



﴿أَفَلَمْ يَدَّبَّرُوا الْقَوْلَ أَمْ جَاءَهُمْ مَا لَمْ يَأْتِ آبَاءَهُمُ الْأَوَّلِينَ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٦٨)

23:68. Have they not pondered the words [of Allah], or is it that there has come to them that which did not come to their forefathers?

﴿Have they not pondered the words [of Allah]﴾ that is, have they not reflected on the Qur'an and pondered its meanings? In other words, if they had pondered it, that would have led them to faith and would have prevented them from disbelieving. But the calamity that befell them was due to their turning away. This indicates that reflecting upon the Qur'an leads to all that is good and protects against all that is evil, and what prevented them from reflecting upon it was the fact that there were locks upon their hearts.

﴿or is it that there has come to them that which did not come to their forefathers?﴾ that is, or is what prevented them from believing

the fact that there came to them a Messenger and Book that had not come to their forefathers, so they were content to follow the path of their misguided forefathers, and they objected to anything that differed from that? Therefore they and others like them among the disbelievers said, as Allah tells us:

﴿Likewise, We never sent any warner before you to a city but its affluent ones said: We found our forefathers following a certain path, and we are following in their footsteps.﴾ (az-Zukhruf 43: 23)

The warner responded to them by saying:

﴿...Even if I bring you better guidance than that which you found your forefathers following?...﴾ (az-Zukhruf 43: 24)

Will you follow it even if your aim is to follow the truth? And the answer exposed their real thinking, as they said:

﴿...Verily, We disbelieve in that with which you have been sent﴾ (az-Zukhruf 43: 24)



﴿أَمْ لَمْ يَعْرِفُوا رَسُولَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَهُم مِّنْكَرُونَ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٦٩)

23:69. Or is it that they do not know their Messenger well enough,³⁰ so they reject him?

That is, is what prevented them from following the truth the fact that their Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ) was not known to them, therefore they denied him and said: We do not know him, we do not know how sincere he is, so let us wait and see how he is, and ask

³⁰ On the contrary, the disbelievers of Quraysh knew him very well, as he had grown up in their midst, and his good character, honesty and sincerity were so well known to them that they called him *al-Ameen* (the trustworthy one).

those who know him about him? But that was not the case, for they knew the Messenger (ﷺ) very well indeed; young and old alike knew that he had all good characteristics, and they knew him to be sincere and honest, to the extent that before his mission began they used to call him *al-Ameen* (the trustworthy one). So why did they not believe him when he brought them the truth with all honesty and sincerity?



﴿أَمْ يَقُولُونَ بِهِ حِنَّةٌ بَلْ جَاءَهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَأَكْثَرُهُم لِلْحَقِّ كَارِهُونَ﴾ (سورة

المؤمنون: ٧٠)

23:70. Or do they say that there is madness in him? Rather he has brought them the truth, but most of them are averse to the truth.

﴿Or do they say that there is madness in him?﴾ that is, do they say that he is insane, and this is why he said what he said? For if a person is insane, no one listens to him and his words do not count, because he murmurs nonsense and foolish words.

Allah said, refuting this suggestion on their part:

﴿Rather he has brought them the truth﴾ that is, he has brought them that which is confirmed and based on truthfulness and justice, in which there is no difference or contradiction. So how could there be madness in the one who brought it?! Could he be anything but a person who is at the highest level of perfection in terms of knowledge, rational thinking, and good manners and attitude? Rather the reality is that what prevented them from believing was that ﴿he has brought them the truth, but most of them are averse to the truth﴾. The greatest truth that he brought them was the command to devote worship solely to Allah and to abandon everything else that is worshipped besides Allah. It is well known that they were averse to that and found it strange, so the fact that the Messenger (ﷺ) brought the

truth when they were averse to the truth in the first place is what made them deny the truth. It was not because they doubted or rejected the Messenger (ﷺ) himself. This is like the verse in which Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...It is not you they disbelieve; rather it is the revelations of Allah that the wrongdoers deny.﴾ (al-An'ām 6: 33)

If it is asked: why was not the truth in accordance with their whims and desires, so that they might believe and hasten to submit? The answer is given in the following verse:



﴿وَلَوْ أَتَبَعَ الْحَقُّ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ لَفَسَدَتِ السَّمَوَاتُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ بَلْ أَتَيْنَهُمْ بِذِكْرِهِمْ فَهُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِهِمْ مُعْرِضُونَ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٧١)

23:71. If the truth had been in accordance with their desires, the heavens and the earth, and all those who are therein, would have been brought to ruin. In fact We have given them that which would bring them honour [that is, the Qur'an], but they turn away from that which would bring them honour.

﴿If the truth had been in accordance with their desires, the heavens and the earth, and all those who are therein, would have been brought to ruin﴾ the reason being that their whims and desires are based on wrongdoing, disbelief, mischief, and bad manners and deeds. Therefore if the truth had followed their whims and desires, the heavens and the earth would have been brought to ruin because of the corruption of conduct and control that would be based on oppression and injustice. Therefore the heavens and the earth can only be kept in good order on the basis of truth and justice.

﴿In fact We have given them that which would bring them honour﴾ namely this Qur'an, which motivates them to do all that is good, and

in which is their pride and honour if they adhere to it, and through it they could become leaders of humankind.

﴿but they turn away from that which would bring them honour﴾ because they are doomed and are not guided;

﴿... They have forgotten Allah, so He has forgotten them...﴾ (at-Tawbah 9: 67)

– and they:

﴿... forgot Allah, so He caused them to forget themselves...﴾ (al-Hashr 59: 19)

The Qur'an and the one who brought it are the greatest blessing that Allah bestowed upon them, but their only response was to reject it and turn away. Can there be any deprivation worse than this? Can there be anything beyond that but the utmost loss?



﴿أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ خَرْجًا فَخَرَّاجُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرَّزِقِينَ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٧٢)

23:72. Or is it that you ask them for some recompense? But the recompense of your Lord is better, and He is the best of providers.

That is, are they being prevented from following you, O Muhammad (ﷺ), by your asking them for payment if they respond:

﴿...recompense which they find too burdensome?﴾ (al-Qalam 68: 46)

– and they find it burdensome to follow you, because of what you would take from them of recompense and payment? That is not the case; ﴿But the recompense of your Lord is better, and He is the best of providers﴾. This is like what the Prophets said to their nations:

﴿O my people, no recompense do I ask of you for this...﴾ (Hood 11: 51)

– and:

﴿...my reward is with Allah alone...﴾ (Hood 11: 29)

In other words, they were not calling people to Allah in hopes of what they could get of their wealth; rather it was out of sincerity towards them and a desire to guide them to that which was in their best interests. In fact the Messengers were more sincere to people than their own selves. May Allah grant them the best of rewards on behalf of their nations and enable us to follow their example in all our affairs.



﴿وَإِنَّكَ لَتَدْعُهُمْ إِلَىٰ صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ عَنِ الصِّرَاطِ لَنُكَرِبُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٧٣-٧٤)

23:73. Surely you [O Muhammad] are calling them to a straight path.

23:74. But indeed those who do not believe in the hereafter are deviating from that path.

In these verses Allah mentions every means that may lead to faith and He mentions obstacles to faith; He highlights how corrupt the obstacles are, one after another. Among the obstacles, He mentions the fact that their hearts are utterly heedless of this (the Qur'an) (23: 63); they did not ponder the words of Allah (23: 68); they followed in the footsteps of their forefathers; and they said that there was madness in their Messenger (ﷺ), as we have discussed above.

Among the things that would lead them to faith, Allah mentioned: reflecting upon the Qur'an; accepting the blessings of Allah with appreciation; acknowledging the sublime attributes, sincerity and honesty of the Messenger Muhammad (ﷺ), and that he was not asking for any reward, rather his efforts were for their benefit and in their interests, and that what he called them to is the straight path which is easy to follow because it is straight and leads to the goal in the shortest way, and he called them to a religion of ease that is based on pure monotheism. What is meant is: you, O Muhammad

(ﷻ), are calling them to the straight path, which requires the one who seeks the truth to follow you, because what you are calling them to is something that is in harmony with rational thinking and common sense, and through that path they may attain all their interests. What other path will they follow if they do not follow you? They do not have any other alternative that could suffice them so that they would not need to follow you, because they ﴿are deviating from that path﴾, drifting away from the path that leads to Allah and to His paradise; what they are following is nothing but misguidance and ignorance.

The same applies to everyone who goes against the truth; he will inevitably deviate in all his affairs. Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿But if they do not respond to you, then know that they only follow their own desires, and who is more astray than one who follows his own desires, without any guidance from Allah?...﴾ (al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 50)



﴿وَلَوْ رَحَّمْنَاهُمْ وَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهِمْ مِنْ ضُرٍّ لَلَجُّوا فِي طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ فَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَمَا يَنْضَعُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَابًا ذَا عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ إِذَا هُمْ فِيهِ مُبْلِسُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٧٥-٧٧)

- 23:75. If We showed them mercy and relieved their misfortunes, they would persist in their transgression, wandering blindly in their misguidance.
- 23:76. We have already seized them with punishment, but they did not humble themselves before their Lord, nor did they beseech Him.
- 23:77. Until, when We open upon them a gate of severe punishment, they will be plunged into utter despair.

This highlights the extent of their foolishness and stubbornness: if harm befalls them, they call upon Allah, asking Him to grant them

relief so that they may believe, or He may test them so that they may come back to Him, then if He grants them relief, they persist in their transgression, wandering blindly in their misguidance; that is, they wander blindly in their disbelief.

Similarly, Allah mentioned their state when they board ships: they call upon Him, professing sincere devotion to Him alone, and they forget those whom they ascribed as partners to Him. But when He delivers them, they spread mischief throughout the land by ascribing partners to Allah and otherwise (10: 22-23).

﴿We have already seized them with punishment﴾. The commentators said that what is meant here is the hunger and famine that they experienced for seven years. Allah tested them thereby so that they might turn back to Him in humble submission. But it was to no avail; not one of them benefited from it.

﴿but they did not humble themselves before their Lord﴾ that is, they did not submit to Him

﴿nor did they beseech Him﴾ or acknowledge their need of Him; rather they went through that then they recovered, as if nothing had happened to them, and they continued in their misguidance and disbelief. But ahead of them is a punishment that cannot be warded off, as Allah says:

﴿Until, when We open upon them a gate of severe punishment﴾ such as their being killed on the day of Badr

﴿they will be plunged into utter despair﴾ that is, they will give up hope of all good and will find themselves surrounded by all ills and all causes that lead to that. So let them pay heed, before there befalls them the severe punishment of Allah that cannot be warded off, unlike worldly punishments that may cease, such as those with which Allah disciplines His slaves.

Allah (ﷻ) says elsewhere:

﴿Corruption and disorder have appeared on land and sea³¹ because of what people's hands have earned. Thus Allah causes them to taste the consequences of some of what they have done, so that they may turn in repentance.﴾ (ar-Room 30: 41)



﴿وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنشَأَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَلَهُ اخْتَلَفُ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٧٨-٨٠)

- 23:78. It is He Who has given you hearing, sight and intellect; little it is that you give thanks.
- 23:79. And it is He Who has created you on the earth, and unto Him you will be gathered.
- 23:80. It is He Who gives life and causes death, and He controls the alternation of night and day. Will you not then understand?

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us of the blessings that He has bestowed upon His slaves, which should prompt them to give thanks to Him and fulfil their duties towards Him.

﴿It is He Who has given you hearing﴾ so that you may understand what you hear, and benefit with regard to your religious and worldly affairs.

﴿sight﴾ so that you may understand what you see, and benefit from it when you go about your business.

﴿and intellect﴾ that is, reason by means of which you understand things, and by means of which you are distinguished from the animals.

³¹ This refers to the widespread occurrence of troubles such as drought, fires and floods, poor yield of crops, decline of fish stocks, market stagnation and difficulty in earning a living. That is because of people's sins, including neglect and abuse of the natural environment.

If you did not have hearing, sight and intellect, and you were deaf, blind and dumb, what would your condition be? What would you miss out on of essentials and luxuries?

Will you not then give thanks to the One Who has bestowed these blessings upon you, and affirm His oneness and obey Him? Little is it that you give thanks, even though the blessings come to you continuously.

﴿And it is He﴾, may He be exalted, ﴿Who has created you on the earth﴾ and He has caused you to spread throughout the earth, in all directions, and has given you the power to bring forth benefits from the earth; He has made it sufficient for your livelihood and dwelling.

﴿and unto Him you will be gathered﴾ after your death, and He will requite you for what you did on earth of good and evil, and the earth on which you dwelt will speak of what happened.

﴿And it is He﴾ alone, may He be exalted, ﴿Who gives life and causes death﴾ that is, the One Who has control over life and death is Allah alone.

﴿and He controls the alternation of night and day﴾ so if He willed, He could make the day everlasting, then what god other than Allah could bring the night so that you could rest therein? And if He willed, He could make the night everlasting, then what god other than Allah could bring you light? Will you not then see?

﴿By His mercy He has made for you night and day, so that you may rest therein and seek His bounty, and so that you may give thanks.﴾

(al-Qaṣaṣ 28: 73)

Hence Allah says here: ﴿Will you not then understand?﴾ And realise that the fact that He alone bestowed upon you all these blessings, hearing, sight and intellect, He alone caused you to spread out on earth, He alone gives life and causes death, and He alone controls night and day, dictates that you should devote your worship to Him alone, with no partner or associate, and you should refrain

from worshipping those that cannot bring benefit or ward off harm, and have no control over anything at all; in fact they are incapable in all ways, so if you had any common sense, you would not do that.



﴿ بَلْ قَالُوا مِثْلَ مَا قَالَ الْأَوَّلُونَ ﴿٨١﴾ قَالُوا أَإِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظْمًا أَوْنَا لَمَعْبُوثُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ لَقَدْ وَعِدْنَا نَحْنُ وَمَا بَأْسُنَا هَذَا مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا أَسْطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٨١-٨٣)

- 23:81. On the contrary, they say the like of what the earlier peoples said.
- 23:82. They said: What! When we have died and have turned into dust and bones, will we really be raised up?
- 23:83. We and our forefathers have been promised this before; it is nothing but tales of the ancients.

That is, rather these disbelievers all follow the same path as their predecessors who disbelieved in the resurrection and thought it highly unlikely, and said: ﴿What! When we have died and have turned into dust and bones, will we really be raised up?﴾ That is, this is something that cannot be imagined and is incomprehensible – according to their claim.

﴿We and our forefathers have been promised this before﴾ that is, we are still being promised that the resurrection will happen, we and our fathers before us, but we have not seen it and it has not happened yet.

﴿it is nothing but tales of the ancients﴾ that is, it is nothing more than their stories and nightly entertainment that they used to talk about to pass the time, otherwise it has no reality. Thus they disbelieved when Allah had shown them signs greater than the resurrection, for example:

﴿Indeed, the creation of the heavens and the earth is a greater matter than the creation [or recreation] of humankind...﴾ (Ghâfir 40: 57)

﴿Producing arguments against Us and forgetting his own creation. He says: Who can give life to bones that have crumbled to dust?﴾ (Yâ Seen 36: 78)

﴿...You see the earth dry and barren, but when We send down rain upon it, it stirs and swells, and brings forth beautiful plants of every kind.﴾ (al-Hajj 22: 5)



﴿ قُلْ لِمَنِ الْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٨٥﴾ قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ ﴿٨٦﴾ سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلَا نُنْقِطُ ﴿٨٧﴾ قُلْ مَنْ يَدْعُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ فَأَنَّى تُسْحَرُونَ ﴿٨٩﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٨٤-٨٩)

- 23:84. Say [O Muhammad]: To whom does the earth and all that is on it belong, if you know [the answer]?
- 23:85. They will say: To Allah. Say: Will you not then pay heed?
- 23:86. Say: Who is the Lord of the seven heavens and the Lord of the Mighty Throne?
- 23:87. They will say: [They belong] to Allah. Say: Will you not then fear Him?
- 23:88. Say: In Whose Hand is the dominion over all things, and He protects, while against Him there is no protection,³² if you know [the answer]?

³² Allah may offer protection to whomever He wills against harm intended by others, but no one can offer protection against any harm or punishment that Allah may decree against a person. (at-Ṭabari)

23:89. They will say: In Allah's [Hand]. Say: Then how can you be so deluded?

That is, say to these people who disbelieve in the resurrection and regard others as equal to Allah, using as evidence against them that which they themselves affirm and acknowledge – of the oneness of Allah's Lordship and that Allah alone is the Lord – to prove what they denied of the oneness of Allah's divinity and that He alone is deserving of worship. Thus He uses as evidence that which they affirm and accept about the creation of these mighty created entities, in order to prove that which they deny of His ability to raise the dead, which is easier than the creation of these mighty entities.

﴿To whom does the earth and all that is on it belong﴾ that is, who is the Creator of the earth and everything on it of animals, plants, inanimate objects, seas, rivers and mountains? Who is the Sovereign thereof, who is in control of it? If you ask them about that, they will inevitably say that it belongs to Allah. So if they affirm that, then say to them:

﴿Will you not then pay heed?﴾ That is, will you not think of that of which Allah reminded you, which is known to you and is firmly based on your common sense, but may be absent from your mind when you are heedless on occasion?

In fact, if you think and ponder, you will realise that the Sovereign of all that is the only One Who deserves to be worshipped, and attributing divinity to one who is controlled (by Allah) is one of the most obvious of falsehoods.

Then He moves on to something that is greater than that, as He says:

﴿Say: Who is the Lord of the seven heavens﴾ and all that they contain of stars and planets

﴿and the Lord of the Mighty Throne﴾ which is the highest, vastest and greatest of all created things. Who is it that created it, controls it and manages it in various ways?

﴿They will say: [They belong] to Allah﴾ that is, they will affirm that Allah is the Lord of all that.

So say to them, when they affirm that: ﴿Will you not then fear Him?﴾ and avoid worshipping incapable created things, and fear the Almighty Lord Who is perfect in might and great in authority?

Here we see gentle words, as Allah says ﴿Will you not then pay heed?﴾ (23: 85) and ﴿Will you not then fear Him?﴾ (23: 87). This is exhortation by using gentle words in order to appeal to the heart, as is quite clear.

Then He moves on to their affirmation of that which is more general than all of the above, as He says:

﴿Say: In Whose Hand is the dominion over all things﴾ that is, the sovereignty of all things, in both the upper and lower realms, all that we can see and all that we cannot see?

﴿and He protects﴾ His slaves from evil, warding off hardship from them and guarding them against that which would harm them

﴿while against Him there is no protection﴾ that is, no one can protect anyone against Allah or ward off harm that Allah wills. Indeed, no one can intercede with Him except by His leave.

﴿They will say: In Allah's [Hand]﴾ that is, they will affirm that Allah is the Sovereign of all things, the Protector against Whom there is no protection.

﴿Say﴾ to them, when they affirm that, so as to establish binding proof against them:

﴿Then how can you be so deluded?﴾ That is, have you lost your minds, as you worship that which you know has no sovereignty over you and has no share of dominion, and is incapable in all aspects, and you failed to devote your worship solely to the Almighty, omnipotent Sovereign Who controls all things? The minds that led you to this

conclusion can only be deluded, and they have undoubtedly been deceived by the Shayṭān, who made that fair-seeming to them by turning the facts upside down; thus their minds became deluded.



﴿بَلِ آيَاتِنَاهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾ مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذَا لَذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلَّ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ ﴿٩١﴾ عَلِيمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَتَعَلَّى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٩٢﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٩٠-٩٢)

(٩٢)

- 23:90. In fact We have brought them the truth, but they are indeed liars.
- 23:91. Allah has never begotten a son, nor is there any god besides Him. [In that case,] each god would have taken full control of what he had created, and each would have rushed to gain supremacy over the others. Glory be to Allah and [exalted be He] far above what they ascribe [to Him].
- 23:92. Knower of the unseen and the seen; exalted be He far above the partners they ascribe to Him!

Here Allah says: Rather We have brought the truth to these deniers of truth, truth that is based on truthful news and fairness in commands and prohibitions. So what is the matter with them, that they do not acknowledge it, when it is most deserving of being followed? They have no other alternative to that except lies and wrongdoing, hence Allah says: ﴿but they are indeed liars. Allah has never begotten a son, nor is there any god besides Him﴾. We know that this is a lie on the basis of what Allah and His Messengers have told us, and on the basis of sound reasoning. Therefore Allah (ﷻ) pointed out, on the basis of rational evidence, that it is impossible for there to be two gods, as He says: ﴿[In that case]﴾, if there were other gods besides Him, ﴿each

god would have taken full control of what he had created» that is, each of the two gods would have taken control of his own creation, independently of the other, and he would have tried to resist and stand up to the other gods.

«and each would have rushed to gain supremacy over the others», then the one who gained the upper hand would have become the supreme god, otherwise if they continued to resist one another without any gaining the upper hand, then the universe could not have come into existence and it cannot be imagined that it would have existed with such precise order that astounds the mind. Think for example of the sun, moon, planets and stars; you will realise that since they were created they are moving according to one system and one order, and all of that is subjugated to the power of Allah and controlled and directed on the basis of wisdom to serve all people's interests; that is not limited to the interests of some and not others. You will never find any problems or contradictions or resistance in the least of their movements. So could it be imagined that all of that is the work of two gods or two lords? «Glory be to Allah and [exalted be He] far above what they ascribe [to Him]». The way it is run implies and indicates that its controller is One God, perfect in His names and attributes. All created things are in need of His care as their Lord and His divine help. As they cannot exist or continue to exist without His care as their Lord, and their well-being cannot be sound and cannot be maintained except by worshipping and obeying Him alone, Allah points out the greatness of His attributes by referring to one of them, namely His all-encompassing knowledge, as He says:

«Knower of the unseen» that is, that which is hidden from our eyes and our knowledge of what must exist, what cannot exist and what may exist.

«and the seen» which is what we can see of that.

«of the unseen and the seen; exalted be He far above the partners they» namely those who have no knowledge except what Allah has told them «ascribe to Him».



﴿ قُلْ رَبِّ إِمَّا تُرِيدُنِي مَا يُوعَدُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾ رَبِّ فَلَا تَجْعَلْنِي فِي الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُرِيكَ مَا نَعِدُهُمْ لَقَادِرُونَ ﴿٩٥﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٩٣-٩٥)

- 23:93. Say: O my Lord, if You show me that which they are warned of,
 23:94. My Lord, then do not include me among the people who are given to wrongdoing.
 23:95. We are surely able to show you that of which We have warned them.

Allah established strong proof against the disbelievers, but they did not pay any attention to it and did not submit to it; therefore the punishment became inevitable and they were warned of its coming, and Allah instructed His Messenger (ﷺ) to say: ﴿O my Lord, if You show me that which they are warned of﴾ that is, whenever You show me their punishment and You cause me to be present at that time, ﴿My Lord, then do not include me among the people who are given to wrongdoing﴾ that is, protect me from these sins that they have been committing that incur Your punishment, and protect me also from the punishment that befalls them, because when the general punishment comes, it includes both the sinner and others.

Allah says, regarding the closeness of their punishment: ﴿We are surely able to show you that of which We have warned them﴾ but if We delay it, that is for some reason, otherwise We have the power to inflict it upon them at any time.



﴿ أَدْفَعْ بِالنِّفْتِ هِيَ أَحْسَنُ السَّنِيَةِ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾ وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ ﴿٩٧﴾ وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَنْ يَحْضُرُونِ ﴿٩٨﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ٩٦-٩٨)

- 23:96. Repel evil with that which is better; We know best what they allege.
- 23:97. And say: My Lord, I seek refuge with You from the goading of the devils.
- 23:98. And I seek refuge with You, my Lord, lest they come near me.

This is part of the good manners and attitude that Allah enjoined upon His Messenger (ﷺ), as He said:

﴿Repel evil with that which is better﴾ that is, when your enemies mistreat you, in word or deed, do not respond with bad treatment, even though it is permissible to react to an offender with an equal offence; rather ward off mistreatment by being kind to them, for that is generosity on your part to the wrongdoer.

The good that is achieved thereby is that his mistreatment towards you will be reduced immediately and in the future, and it is more effective in bringing the wrongdoer back to his senses and is more likely to make him regret it and cause him to repent from what he has done.

It will also cause the one who forgives to attain the description of being a doer of good, by means of which he will suppress his enemy the Shayṭān. Thus he will be entitled to reward from his Lord, as Allah (ﷻ) says:

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

– and:

﴿...Repel evil with that which is good, whereupon he between whom and you there was ill feeling will become like a close friend. But none can attain that except those who are patient, and none can attain it except one who is blessed with a great share of good and righteousness.﴾ (*Fuṣṣilat* 41: 34-35)

«We know best what they allege» that is, what they say of words that imply disbelief and rejection of the truth. Our knowledge encompasses all of that, but We have been forbearing and have given them respite, and We have shown patience towards them, but they are committing wrong against Us and are denying Us, so you – O Muhammad (ﷺ) – should bear with patience what they say, and respond to them with kindness. This is what is expected of the pious slave in response to humans who mistreat them.

As for devils who mistreat people, kindness is of no benefit in this case, for the Shaytân only calls his party to be the inhabitants of the blazing fire. So what is expected (of humans) in response to him is to follow the instructions given by Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ).

«And say: My Lord, I seek refuge with You» that is, I seek protection in Your strength and power, and I acknowledge that I have no power or strength of my own,

«from the goading of the devils. And I seek refuge with You, my Lord, lest they come near me» that is, I seek refuge with You from the evil that may befall me because of their attempts to harm me, and their goading and their touch; and I seek refuge with You from the evil that results from their coming near and from their whispers. This is seeking refuge with Allah from all evil and its origin, which includes seeking refuge from all the temptations of the Shaytân, and from his touch and whispers. If Allah grants His slave refuge from this evil and answers his prayer, he will be safe from all evil and will be enabled to do all good.



﴿ حَقَّ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ ﴿٩٩﴾ لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ
 كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ ﴾ (سورة المؤمنون:

- 23:99. Until, when death comes to one of them, he says: My Lord, send me back,
 23:100. so that I may do the righteous deeds that I have failed to do. Nay, it is but a word he says. And behind them is a barrier, until the day they are resurrected.

Here Allah (ﷻ) tells us about what happens to one of the negligent wrongdoers when he is dying: in that situation, when he sees his fate and realises the abhorrent nature of his deeds, he is filled with regret, so he asks to go back to this world, not to enjoy its physical joys and indulge in its pleasures, rather he says: ﴿so that I may do the righteous deeds that I have failed to do﴾, for I neglected my duty to Allah.

﴿Nay﴾ there is no going back and no respite, for Allah has decreed that they will not go back
 ﴿it﴾ that is, his statement that he wishes to go back to this world
 ﴿is but a word he says﴾ that is, it is mere words that will not benefit the one who says them or bring him anything but regret and sorrow. Moreover, he is not sincere in that, for even if he were sent back, he would surely go back to that which was forbidden to him (cf. 6: 28).

﴿And behind them is a barrier, until the day they are resurrected﴾. It is a barrier between two things, between this world and the hereafter. During that period between death and the resurrection, those who obeyed Allah will enjoy bliss and those who disobeyed Him will be punished, so make preparations for that and be ready for it.



﴿ فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَلَا أَنْسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلَا يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ﴾ (١٠١) ﴿ فَمَنْ ثَقَلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ، فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴾ (١٠٢) ﴿ وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ، فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فِي جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ ﴾ (١٠٣) ﴿ تَلْفَحُ وُجُوهُهُمُ النَّارَ وَهُمْ فِيهَا كَالِحُونَ ﴾ (١٠٤)

أَلَمْ تَكُنْ آيَاتِي تُنَالُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَكُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا غَلَبَتْ عَلَيْنَا شِقْوَتُنَا
 وَكُنَّا قَوْمًا ضَالِّينَ ﴿١٦﴾ رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْهَا فَإِنْ عُدْنَا فَإِنَّا ظَالِمُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَ
 أَخَشِرُوا فِيهَا وَلَا تَكَلِّمُونِ ﴿١٨﴾ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِي يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا آمَنَّا فَاغْفِرْ
 لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ فَاتَّخَذْتُمُوهُمْ سِخْرِيًّا حَتَّى أَنْسَوَكُمُ ذِكْرِي وَكُنْتُمْ
 مِنْهُمْ تَضْحَكُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ إِنِّي جَزَيْتُهُمُ الْيَوْمَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا أَنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْفَآئِزُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ قُلْ
 كَمْ لَيْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ عَدَدُ سِينِينَ ﴿٢٢﴾ قَالُوا لَيْتُنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمِ فَسْخِلِ الْعَادِينَ
 ﴿٢٣﴾ قُلْ إِنْ لَيْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا لَّوْ أَنَا كُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ ﴿سورة المؤمنون: ١٠١-١٠٤﴾

(١١٤)

- 23:101. Then when the Trumpet is blown, there will be no ties of kinship between them on that day, nor will they ask after one another.
- 23:102. Then those whose good deeds weigh heavily in the balance will be the successful ones.
- 23:103. And those whose good deeds weigh lightly in the balance are the ones who will lose their own souls; in hell they will abide forever.
- 23:104. The fire will burn their faces, and they will grin therein, with shrivelled lips.
- 23:105. [It will be said to them:] Were not My revelations recited to you, but you used to reject them?
- 23:106. They will say: Our Lord, our misfortune³³ overwhelmed us, and we were people who went astray.
- 23:107. Our Lord, deliver us from this. Then if we return [to evil], we will indeed be wrongdoers.
- 23:108. Allah will say: Away with you! Be humiliated therein and do not speak to Me.

³³ What is meant is that they were controlled by their whims and desires, which led to them being overwhelmed by that misfortune. (al-Qurtubi)

- 23:109. Among My slaves there were some who said: Our Lord, we believe, so forgive us and have mercy upon us, for You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy.
- 23:110. But you treated them with ridicule, so much so that [ridicule of them] made you forget all remembrance of Me, and you used to laugh at them.
- 23:111. I have rewarded them this day for their patience and steadfastness; verily it is they who have triumphed.
- 23:112. Allah will say: How many years did you remain on earth?
- 23:113. They will say: We remained there for a day, or part of a day. But ask those who keep count.
- 23:114. Allah will say: You only remained there for a short while, if you had but known.

Here Allah tells us of the horrors of the Day of Resurrection, and what will happen on that day of disturbing and alarming events. When the Trumpet is blown for the resurrection, all people will be gathered for an appointed day, and there will befall them such terror that it will cause them to forget the ties of kinship which are the strongest ties between people, so it is more likely that other ties will be utterly forgotten. No one will ask anyone else about his situation, because each one will be preoccupied only with his own self, for he will not know whether he will be granted salvation after which there will be no misery, or he will be doomed after which there will be no happiness. Allah (ﷻ) tells us that on that day:

﴿...a man will flee from his own brother, and from his mother and his father, and from his wife and his children. Every one of them, on that day, will have too many concerns of his own to care about anyone else.﴾ (*Abasa* 80: 34-37)

On the Day of Resurrection, there will be some stages during which the hardship will become very intense and will have a great impact, such as when the Balance is set up to differentiate between people's

deeds, and their deeds will be examined on the basis of justice, to measure what is in a person's favour and what is against him. Even the smallest particles of good and evil will show up in that reckoning.

«Then those whose good deeds weigh heavily in the balance» so that their good deeds outweigh their bad deeds, «will be the successful ones», for they will be saved from the fire and will deserve paradise, and they will be praised and commended.

«And those whose good deeds weigh lightly in the balance» so that their bad deeds outweigh their good deeds, and they are overwhelmed by their sins,

«are the ones who will lose their own souls»; in comparison to this loss, any other loss is easy to bear. But this loss will be difficult to bear, for nothing can help them to withstand and recover from this loss, for it is eternal loss and everlasting doom. They will lose their own souls, that could have attained eternal happiness, but they missed out on this everlasting bliss in nearness to the Most Generous Lord. «in hell they will abide forever» and will never emerge from it. This warning is addressed, as we have mentioned above, to those whose bad deeds overwhelm their good deeds. This can only be applicable to the disbeliever. Based on that, he will not be taken to task in the sense of weighing between his good deeds and bad deeds, because the disbelievers have no good deeds to their credit. Rather their deeds will be counted and listed, then they will be shown to them and they will be made to admit them and will be disgraced thereby. As for the one who is basically a believer, but has done so many bad deeds that they outweigh his good deeds, even if he enters hell, he will not abide therein forever, as is indicated by the texts of the Qur'an and Sunnah.

Then Allah (ﷻ) mentions the bad fate of the disbelievers:

«The fire will burn their faces» and overwhelm them on all sides, until it touches all parts of their bodies and the flames will burn their faces. «and they will grin therein» that is, they will grimace, and their lips will shrink from the intensity and gravity of the situation with which they are faced.

It will be said to them, by way of rebuke and blame: ﴿Were not My revelations recited to you﴾ and were you not called to believe in them, and were they not presented to you so that you might reflect? ﴿but you used to reject them﴾ wrongfully and stubbornly, even though they were clear revelations that pointed out truth and falsehood, and explained who was in the right and who was in the wrong.

At that point they will admit their wrongdoing, at the time when admitting it will be of no benefit.

﴿They will say: Our Lord, our misfortune³⁴ overwhelmed us﴾ that is, the misfortune that resulted from wrongdoing, turning away from the truth and turning to that which is harmful, forsaking that which is beneficial, overwhelmed us.

﴿and we were people who went astray﴾ in their deeds, even though they knew that they were doing wrong. In other words: we acted in this world like one who is lost, misguided and foolish. This is like another verse which tells us that they will say:

﴿...If only we had listened or understood, we would not be among the inhabitants of the raging fire.﴾ (*al-Mulk 67: 10*)

﴿Our Lord, deliver us from this. Then if we return [to evil], we will indeed be wrongdoers﴾ but they will be lying when they make this promise, for they are as Allah (ﷻ) says:

﴿...And even if they were sent back, they would surely go back to that which was forbidden to them...﴾ (*al-An'am 6: 28*)

Allah (ﷻ) has left them no argument, and has left no excuse for them; He causes them to live in this world long enough to be reminded and understand the reminder, and for the evildoer to be deterred. So Allah will say, in response to their request:

﴿Be humiliated therein and do not speak to Me﴾. These words – we ask Him to keep us safe and sound – are the worst rebuke that the

³⁴ What is meant is that they were controlled by their whims and desires, which led to them being overwhelmed by that misfortune. (al-Qurtubi)

evildoers may hear in terms of shame, censure, humiliation and loss, for it will cause them to despair of all good and will bring tidings of all ills. These words and wrath from the Most Merciful Lord will be harder for them to bear and more effective in causing them pain than the torments of hell.

Then Allah mentions that which brought the punishment upon them and deprived them of mercy:

﴿Among My slaves there were some who said: Our Lord, we believe, so forgive us and have mercy upon us, for You are the Most Merciful of those who show mercy﴾, so they combined faith which leads to righteous deeds, calling upon their Lord to forgive them and bestow mercy upon them, seeking to draw close to Him by calling upon Him as their Lord, expressing gratitude to Him for blessing them with faith, and speaking of the vastness of His mercy and kindness. This is indicative of their submission, humility and humbleness before their Lord, and their fear of His punishment and their hope for His mercy.

These are the leaders of humankind and the best of them, ﴿But you﴾, O base disbelievers who were lacking in reason and wisdom, ﴿treated them with ridicule﴾ and mocked them and looked down on them to such an extent that you were distracted by that foolish behaviour.

﴿so much so that [ridicule of them] made you forget all remembrance of Me, and you used to laugh at them﴾. This is what made them forget the reminder; they were distracted by the ridicule of them. Their forgetting of the reminder encouraged them to ridicule them, so that the one exacerbated the other. Can there be anything worse than this audacity?

﴿I have rewarded them this day for their patience and steadfastness﴾ in obeying Me and in putting up with your annoyances, until they came to Me.

﴿verily it is they who have triumphed﴾ by attaining eternal bliss and salvation from hell. This is like the verse in which Allah says:

﴿But on that day those who believed will laugh at the disbelievers.﴾

(al-Mutaffifeen 83: 34)

﴿Allah will say﴾ to the disbelievers, by way of blame, for they were foolish because, within this short time, they committed every evil that led to them incurring His wrath and punishment, and they did not do what the believers did of good deeds that led to them attaining eternal happiness and the pleasure of their Lord: ﴿How many years did you remain on earth? They will say: We remained there for a day, or part of a day﴾. Their saying this is based on the fact that they will regard their stay on earth as having been very short. This is what it implies, but their words will not tell the exact length of their stay, or specify it. Hence they will say: ﴿But ask those who keep count﴾.

In their case, they will be very distracted with something else, namely the tremendous punishment, from knowing the exact number of years. So Allah will say to them: ﴿You only remained there for a short while﴾ whether you know the number or not, ﴿if you had but known﴾.



﴿أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١١٥﴾ فَتَعَلَىٰ اللَّهُ الْمَالِكُ
الْحَقُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْكَرِيمِ ﴿١١٦﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ١١٥-١١٦)

23:115. Did you think that We created you without purpose, and that you would not be brought back to Us?

23:116. So exalted be Allah, the True Sovereign; there is no god but He, Lord of the magnificent Throne.

﴿Did you think﴾, O people, ﴿that We created you without purpose﴾ that is, in vain, so that you might eat, drink, have fun, and enjoy the pleasures of this world, and We would leave you alone without any commands or prohibitions, reward or punishment? Hence He says:

﴿and that you would not be brought back to Us﴾ – and did this never cross your minds?

﴿So exalted be Allah, the True Sovereign; there is no god but He, Lord of the magnificent Throne﴾ for He is truly the Sovereign of all creation and He is truthful in His promise and warning, and He is the One Who is worthy of worship, because of the perfect attributes He possesses

﴿Lord of the magnificent Throne﴾ so it is more appropriate that He should be the Lord of everything beneath it, and that He would not create you in vain.



﴿وَمَنْ يَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ لَا بُرْهَانَ لَهُ بِهِ فَإِنَّمَا حِسَابُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَقُلْ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ وَارْحَمْ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّاحِمِينَ ﴿١١٨﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون:

(١١٨-١١٧)

23:117. Whoever calls upon any other god besides Allah, for which he has no proof, his reckoning will only be with his Lord. Verily the disbelievers will never prosper.

23:118. So say: My Lord, forgive and have mercy, for You are the best of those who show mercy.

That is, whoever calls upon other gods besides Allah, without having any proof or evidence to support what he believes – for everyone who calls upon anything other than Allah has no proof for that; in fact the evidence all points to the falseness of his way, but he turns away from that proof wrongfully and stubbornly – will come to his Lord, and He will requite him for his deeds, and he will not attain anything of success, because he is a disbeliever, and ﴿Verily

the disbelievers will never prosper», because their disbelief is an obstacle to success.

«So say», calling upon your Lord, with sincere devotion to Him alone,

«My Lord, forgive» us so that we may be safe from harm, and have mercy on us, so that by Your mercy we may attain all that is good.

«for You are the best of those who show mercy». Whoever shows mercy to people, Allah is better for them than him, for He is more merciful towards His slave than a mother towards her child, and He is more merciful towards him than he is to himself.

This is the end of the commentary on Soorat al-Mu'minoon.

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

