

A Presentation to Muslims

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ

In The Name of Allah, The Beneficent, The Merciful

"O ye who believed! Obey Allah, and obey the Apostle, and those charged with authority among you".¹

(***'Those charged with authority'*** are only the twelve sinless Imams (as) and; at the time of occultation, Sources of Imitation, who are learned, pious, and just, should be referred to.)

في إكمال الدين في حديث عن جابر الجعفي عن جابر بن عبد الله الانصاري قال: قلت: يا رسول الله عرفنا الله ورسوله، فمن اولي الامر الذين قرن الله طاعتهم بطاعتك؟ فقال (ص) هم خلفائي يا جابر، وأئمة المسلمين بعدي أولهم علي بن أبي طالب، ثم الحسن والحسين، ثم علي بن الحسين، ثم محمد بن علي المعروف في التوراة بالباقر وستدرکه يا جابر فإذا لقيته فاقرأه مني السلام. ثم الصادق جعفر بن محمد، ثم موسى بن جعفر، ثم علي بن موسى، ثم محمد بن علي، ثم علي بن محمد، ثم الحسن بن علي، ثم سمعي وكنيي حجة الله في أرضه، وبقيته في عبادته ابن الحسن بن علي، ذاك الذي يفتح الله على يديه مشارق الارض ومغاربها

In 'Ikmal-ud-Din' a tradition, through 'Jabir-il-Ju'fi', is narrated from Jabir-ibn- Abdillah thus:

I said:

"O Messenger of Allah, we have known Allah and His Apostle; then who is 'Ulil-Amr', those that Allah has made their obedience the same as your obedience?"

Then, the Prophet (S) said:

'O Jabir! they are, after me, my successors and the Guides of Muslims; the first of them is Ali-ibn-Abi Talib; then (Imam) Hassan, and (Imam) Husain; then Ali-ibn-il-Husain; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali, known in the Torah as Baqir, whom you will see.

O Jabir! When you visit him, give my regards to him. After him, there is Sadiq, -Ja'far-ibn-Muhammad; and after him Musa-ibn-Ja'far; then Ali-ibn-Musa; then Muhammad-ibn-Ali; then Ali-ibn-Muhammad, then Hassan-ibn-Ali; and after him (there comes) Al-Gha'im whose name and sir-name is the same as mine. He is Allah's Authority on the Earth and His Remainder amongst His servants.

He is the son of (Imam) Hassan-ibn-Ali (a. -Askari). This is the very personality by whose hands Allah will open the Easts and Wests of the world. [2](#)

"قال الله تعالى: "وما ينطق عن الهوى إن هو إلا وحي يوحى"

"Nor does the Apostle speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed".[3](#)

قال النبي (ص): "إني تارك فيكم التقلين، كتاب الله حبل ممدود من السماء إلى الأرض وعترتي أهل بيتي، وإن اللطيف الخبير أخبرني أنهما لن يفترقا حتى يردا علي الحوض فانظروا بماذا تخلفوني" وفي حديث آخر: "لن تضلوا ما إن تمسكتم بهما"

The Prophet (S) said:

"I leave behind me two weighty (very worthy and important) things:

The book of Allah (i.e. the Quran), which is a stretched string from the heaven to the earth, and my progeny, my Ahlul-Bait; for verily Allah, The Merciful, The Aware, informed me that never, never, will these Two get separated from each other until they meet me at the Houd of Kawthar (the Pond of Abundance).

Therefore, be careful and contemplate on how you will treat them (after me)"

...and in another tradition it is added:

"Never, never, shall you get astray if you attach yourself to these two".[4](#)

Abul-Hassan-ir-Rida (as) said:

"May the Mercy of Allah be upon the servant who Keeps alive our commandment"

I asked him (as) how the one could keep your commandment alive.

He (as) said:

"He (can) learn our sciences and teach them to people. In fact if people knew (the merits) and goodnesses of our speech, surely they would follow us." [5](#)

An Oath to the Dawn!

There are five awakening oaths at the beginning of the Surah.

At first, it says:

"By the Break of Dawn,"

"And the Ten Nights;"

The term /fajr/ originally means 'break open', and since the light of the dawn breaks the gloom of night it is called /fajr/.

We know that the meaning of /fajr/ is two fold:

(1) /fajr-i-kaob/ 'the false dawn' which rises without extending laterally and appears to be black, presenting itself like an obstacle on the horizon, and is compared to the tail of a Fox whose narrow end is onto the horizon and its conical shaped end is in, the mid-sky,

(2) /fajr-i-sadiq/ 'the true dawn' and is like a stream with white water that becomes visible, rising, filling the horizon with its whiteness and thereafter, spreads throughout the sky with a special brightness by which the night ends and the day begins.

It is the time when everything by which fasting would be broken becomes unlawful to the faster, and when the Morning Prayer can, then, be performed.

Some commentators have carried the term /fajr/, in this verse, to its absolute meaning, that is; whiteness, which is certainly one of the signs of Allah's Greatness. It is a reference point in the lives of human beings and all earthly creatures, and the prime glory of the victorious light and the end of faded darkness when the calm sleep ends and the movement of living creatures begins. It is for this very life that Allah swears by it.

However, some commentators have said that it means 'break of dawn at the beginning of Muharram'.

Still, others have commented on it as meaning 'break of dawn on the day of the Feast of Sacrifice' where the important rituals of the pilgrimage to Mecca are fulfilled and it follows close to the Ten Nights. Finally, there are some who have commented on it as meaning 'break of dawn for the month of Ramadan', or 'break of dawn on Fridays'.

All in all, the verse has such a broad meaning which involves all, the above commentaries, though some of its examples are clearer and more important than the others.

Some have considered its meaning even beyond this and have said that the objective point for the term 'break of dawn' is 'any light that glitters in the dark'.

Therefore, the glitter of the light of Islam and Muhammad (S) in the gloom of ignorance at that time, is one of the examples of

/fajr/ 'break of dawn'.

Also, the glitter of the break of dawn for the Rise of Hazrat Mahdi (the twelfth Imam) (as), when the world will be completely darkened by corruption, transgression and injustice, is considered to be another example of this⁶

The rise of Imam Husain (as) on the bloody plains of Karbala, is another example, when he pulled back the black curtains of deceit revealing the tyrannies of the Ummayyides and unveiling the real face and nature of those devils. Furthermore, all the true revolutions that have occurred in the history of the world, against disbelief, ignorance, transgression and cruelty are, also, examples of /fajr/.

Even the first light of wakefulness that appears in the darkened hearts of sinners and makes them move to repent, is

/fajr/ 'break of dawn'.

Of course, this is an expansion on the concept of the verse, while the apparent meaning of the verse has the same meaning /fajr/ with the sense of 'the break of dawn'.

The oath

'By the Ten Nights'

is generally understood to be the first ten nights of Zul-Hajj; nights which are witness to the largest and most devoted gathering of Muslims in the world, and this is an idea which is narrated by Jabir-ibn-'Abdillah in a tradition from the Prophet (S).⁷

Some have also commented on them to mean 'the last ten nights of Ramadan' in which the nights of /qadr/, (when the Qur'an was revealed) are hidden:.

Some have meant

'the Ten Nights'

to be the first ten nights of Muharram; the first Arabic lunar month.

It is also possible to combine these three commentaries together.

Some narrations, containing the hidden meanings of the Qur'an, say that /fajr/ refers to the existence of

Imam Mahdi (as), and

/layalin-'asr/ 'ten nights'

refers to the ten sinless Imams who came before him (as), and /saf/' even' refers to Hazrat Ali (as) and Fatimah Zahra (sa); the latter term is mentioned in the next verse.

In any event, the oath to these ten nights is an evidence of their great importance, since oaths are always made to very important things.

"By the Even and the Odd"

Commentators have cited many different meanings for the terms /saf/' and /watr/' 'even and odd' mentioned in this verse: Some of them have given twenty meanings,⁸ while some others have gone further and narrated over thirty–six meanings. ⁹

The following are the most important ones:

1. The objective point, here is the 'even' and 'odd' numbers. According to this commentary, Allah has sworn by all even and odd numbers, they are figures around which all calculations and regularities revolve, and cover the existing universe.

It seems as if He had said: 'By the regulation and calculation'. In fact, in the world of existence the most important things are regularity, calculation and numbers which shape the main foundation of Man's life.

2. The objective meaning of /Saf/' is 'creatures' because they are all in pairs, and the objective point of

/watr/'odd'

is 'Allah', Who is unique and has no equal.

In addition, created things are all combined, by substance and existence which, in philosophy, are called 'combined pairs'. The only infinite entity which is non–material is Allah. (This meaning has been used in some narrations from the sinless Imams). ¹⁰

3. The objective idea of 'even and odd' is that all the creatures of the world, in one respect or another, are either 'even' or 'odd'.

4. The meaning refers to prayers, some of which are 'even' from the point of the number of 'rak'at' and some are 'odd'. (This idea has been narrated from the sinless Imams (as), too.) Or it means the elective prayers of 'Shaf' (two rak'ats) and 'Watr' (one rak'at) at the end of 'the night prayers'.

5. The meaning of /Saf/' is the day of /tarwiyah/ (the eighth day of Zul–Hajj when the pilgrims, in Mecca, travel to 'Ararat), and /watr/' is the 'Arafah Day, when the pilgrims in Mecca remain at 'Arafat. Or /Saff/' is

the day of the 'Feast of Sacrifice', (the tenth of Zul-Hajj) and /watr/ is the day of Arafah. (This commentary is also mentioned in narrations from the sinless Imams).

The main thing is that if the Arabic sign /al/, in these two terms, is used in general, all the above meanings can be applied, as each of these commentaries indicates only one example from the given examples of /saff/ 'even' and /watr/ 'odd'. Mentioning each of them does not mean that it is the exclusive interpretation, but that it is one clear example among the rest.

However, if /al/ refers to a particular even and odd number, here concerning the former oaths, two meanings are the most appropriate. The first is that the objective point is the day of the 'Feast of Sacrifice' and the day of arafah', which corresponds with the first ten nights of Zul-Hajj, and the most important pilgrimage rituals are practised, then.

Or, pertaining to the oath

'By the break of Dawn';

the objective point is concerning the prayers which are said at the end of the night and before the break of day, which is the most suitable time for praying and supplicating to Allah; particularly when both of the commentaries are mentioned in the narrations cited from the sinless Imams (as).

For the final oath in this group, it says:

"And by the Night when it departs."

What an interesting concept!

The movement of the night is in relation to night, itself, (the term /yasr/ based on /Surah, /to walk at night' here is written as an analogy instead of /yasri/ due to the pause at the end of the verse) as if

'night'

were a living creature with senses and movement and travelled in the darkness by itself, moving toward a bright dawn.

Yes, the oath is taken to the darkness which moves to the light; a moving darkness, not a stationary one. Darkness is frightening when it becomes fixed and immobile, but when there is movement unto the light, it becomes valuable.

Some people have said that the gloom of night is moving over the face of the earth and basically, it is that very moving night which is useful and livable, that is, night alternates—continuously with day. So, if night stopped permanently on one half of the globe, both the dark and the sunlit halves would die.

What does

'Night'

mean here? Does it mean every night or is it a special definite night? Again, there is no agreement among the commentators. If /al/, the Arabic definite article, is used in a general sense, it refers to all the nights, which itself is a blessing from the gifts of Allah and is a phenomenon from the great phenomena of creation.

Although, if it refers to a definite night, relating to the previous oaths, it means the night before 'the Feast of Sacrifice' when the pilgrims of Mecca go from 'Arafat to the Sacred Monument, /muzdalafah/, and spending the night in that sacred place, go toward Mina at sunrise. (This commentary is also cited in some narrations from the Sinless Ones).

Those who, themselves, have seen the view of 'Arafat and the Sacred Monument, at night, know how thousands and thousands of people move here and there in the same way and feel that night, with all its entity, is moving.

The pilgrims, in reality, do move here and there, but the movement of night is so vast that it seems the whole world, heavens and earth are moving.

This condition is felt only when a person, himself, visits the place on the night before 'the Feast of Sacrifice' and sees, with his own eyes the exact meaning of this verse:

"And by the night when it departs."

In any case, night, with either meaning it has (general or definite), is one sign among the many signs of the Divine Dignity, and is one of the very important factors in the existing world. It moderates the temperature of the weather. It gives calmness to every creature, and prepares a still and quiet atmosphere for worship and supplication to Allah.

The night before 'the Feast of Sacrifice', which is called 'the gathering night', is also one of the most wonderful nights of the year at the Sacred Monument, /muzdalafah/.

Furthermore, if these five items (the oath by break of dawn, the Ten Nights, Even, Odd, Night when it departs) can be considered as relating to the specific days of Zul-Hajj and the great rituals of Hajj, their relationship will be clear.

And, if it is not clear yet, a collection of great events of the divine creation and divine religious rituals are pointed out, which are signs of the Dignity of Allah and are a wonderful phenomenon in the existing world.

After expressing these meaningful awakening statements, it says:

"Is there (not) in this an oath for those who have sense?"

The term /hijr/ here means 'sense, understanding' and originally means, anything forbidden', for instance, it is said: the judge forbade him to use his wealth'. A skirt is also called /hijr/, meaning protection and forbidding others entrance, and since /'aql/ 'wisdom' also forbids man from doing wrong deeds it has been rendered /hijr/ the word /'aql/, itself, means 'keeping back'; therefore, the rope with which the leg of a camel is hobbled is called /' iq'al/.

What are these oaths for? There are two possibilities. The first is that they are for the sentence of verse 14:

"Surely your Lord is ever watchful".

The second is that what they are for is not mentioned, but means that they are about the punishment of the wrong doers. The meaning may be found in verse 13, in that, a scourge of diverse chastisement will be poured on the unbelievers and transgressors. In this way, the oaths and what they are for can be made clear.

Surah Fajr, Verses 6–14

أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِعَادٍ

إِرمَ ذَاتِ الْعِمَادِ

الَّتِي لَمْ يُخْلَقْ مِثْلُهَا فِي الْبِلَادِ

وَتَمُودَ الَّذِينَ جَابُوا الصَّخْرَ بِالْوَادِ

وَفِرْعَوْنَ ذِي الْأَوْتَادِ

الَّذِينَ طَغَوْا فِي الْبِلَادِ

فَأَكْثَرُوا فِيهَا الْفَسَادَ

فَصَبَّ عَلَيْهِمُ رَبُّكَ سَوْطَ عَذَابٍ

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَبِالْمِرْصَادِ

6. ***"Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the 'Ad (people),"***
7. ***"Of the (city of) Iram with lofty pillars,"***
8. ***"The like of which were not created among (other) cities?"***
9. ***"And the Thamood (people) who hewed out the (huge) rocks in the valley"***
10. ***"And Pharaoh- of the many stakes"***
11. ***"Who (all) transgressed in the land,"***
12. ***"And made much corruption therein "***
13. ***"Therefore did your Lord pour on them a scourge of diverse chastisement:"***
14. ***"Surely your Lord is ever watchful."***

"Your Lord is Ever Watchful"

The following verses, contain some meaningful oaths about the punishment of the transgressors, of which a few powerful ancient nations are referred to; each of which had great authority in their own right, but were arrogant and went astray.

They did not believe and disobeyed Allah, and these verses illustrate their painful destiny to show the pagans of Mecca and other similar nations, who were probably much weaker than them, to understand their own status and awaken them from their neglectful sleep.

"Have you not seen how your Lord dealt with the 'Ad (people),"?

The term

Itaral 'see',

here means 'know or understand', but since the story of these sects were so clear and known to all, it seems that the people of later generations had also been able to see them With their own eyes. In this verse of course the addressee is the Prophet (S), but the warning is for all.

The 'Ad people with their prophet Hud (as), are, as some historians believe, mentioned separately in two groups:

(1) the first lived in very ancient times and they are called in Qur'an

'ad-al-ula/ (the early generation of 'Ad)[11](#)

who probably used to live in prehistory,

(2) a remnant from the former group, also known by the name 'Ad, existed during recorded history, which may be about 700 B.C., and lived in Ahqaf, Yemen at the southern end of the Red Sea. The people

were tall and strong in stature and likewise, were considered excellent fighters.

Moreover, they were very advanced in their material civilization, having lofty buildings in large cities with cultivated lands of verdant fields and luxuriant gardens.

Some others say that 'Ad is the name of an ancestor of the people, and a tribe was usually called by the name of its ancestor.

"Of the (city of) Iram with lofty pillars,"

Opinions are divided about the name 'Iram' as to whether it is the name of a person or a sect or a city.

In Kashshaf, Zamakhshari cites, from some others, that 'Ad was a son of 'Aus (Uz), the son of Iram (A'ram), the son of Sham (Shem), the son of Nuh (Noah). And since the name of the ancestor of a tribe was used for the tribe, the 'Ad people were also called Iram.

Still others believe that Iram is the same as

'ad-al-ula' (the early generation of 'Ad)

and that 'Ad is the second group of people. Then, there are others who believe that Iram is the name of a city and the land where they lived,¹² and corresponding with the next verse, Iram is the name of their matchless city.

The term /'imad/ means 'pillar' whose plural form is /'umud/.

According to the first commentary it points to the strong pillar-like stature of the people of 'Ad; and taking the second commentary into consideration, it points to their great, lofty buildings with strong pillars, both of which illustrate the strength and the power of the 'Ad people, but the second commentary, i.e., the great lofty pillars of their buildings is more appropriate.

That is why in the next verse, it says:

"The like of which were not created among (other) cities?"

The sense, here shows that the meaning of Iram is 'a city' and does not mean sect or tribe, and this may be why some great commentators have accepted that this is the correct commentary, and we have preferred it, too.

Some of the commentators have told long stories about the recent excavated beautiful, supposed city of Iram, in the deserts of Arabia, and the lands of Eden, speaking of its high, splendid buildings and its extraordinary jewellery. Of course, they seem more mythical or dreamlike than real.

There is no doubt, however, that the people of 'Ad were of the strongest and the most advanced people

of their time and their cities were the best. As the Qur'an says, there was not any city like that among other cities.

There are many stories told about Shaddad, who was a son of 'Ad, and Shaddad's Paradise. [13](#) These stories are told by people and written in books so abundantly and frequently that 'his paradise' and 'the gardens of Iram' are used proverbially in the language, but they are all myths developed over time which have some roots in reality.

Then, the Qur'an refers to the second group of transgressors of ancient times and says:

"And the Thamood (people) who hewed out the (huge) rocks in the valley"

The Thamood were among the most ancient of people, and whose prophet and warner was Salih. They lived in a land between Medina and Damascus named / wadi-al-qura/ and had an advanced civilized life with comfortable houses and lofty buildings.

Some have said that 'Thamood' was the name of the father of the tribe and so, they took their name from him.

The term /jabu/ is originally from /jaubah/ which means 'low land', so, it is used with the sense of 'to split, cleave, or cut out any piece of land'. An answer is called /jawab/ because it cleaves the air when it comes out from the mouth of the speaker and reaches the ears of the listener, or because it carves out a question and puts an end to it.

In any case, here it means cutting the rocks of the mountains and making safe and sound houses as Surah Hijr, No. 15, Verse 82 says about the Thamood people:

"Out of the mountains did they hew (their) edifices, (considering themselves) secure."

Similar to this idea, it is also mentioned in Surah Shu'ara, No. 26, verse 149:

"And you hew houses out of the mountains exultingly",

but here the word

/farihin/ 'exultingly',

is an evidence to show that they lived with pleasure and were making merry in those houses.

Some have said that the Thamood were the first people who carved the rocks--and produced firm houses inside the mountains for themselves to live in.

The term /wad/, which was originally /wadi/, means 'river bed, or flood route' and sometimes it has been used with the meaning of 'valley' since the flood waters pass through valleys at the base of the

mountains.

Here, the second meaning is more apt to explain the word, because as it is understood about these people, from the verses of the Qur'an and also from the above verse, they used to build their houses in the mountain sides to make safer living quarters.

A tradition from the Prophet (S) says that on his way to the North of Arabia, riding on horse back for the battle of Tabuk, he reached the valley of Thamood, and ordered the others to make haste, because they were in a cursed land. [14](#)

Undoubtedly, the Thamood had an advanced civilization with grandiose cities in their time, but, the descriptions written about them are exaggerated and mythical. For example, some commentators have written that they had one thousand seven hundred (1700) cities all made of stone.

Then, the third group is spoken about:

"And Pharaoh - of the many stakes"

The meaning, in the form of a question, is: 'Did you see what Allah did to the Pharaohs who were powerful, but transgressed and were cruel?'

The term /autad/ is the plural form of /watad/ which means 'peg or stake'.

The reason why Pharaoh was called

/Oi-l-autad/ 'of the many stakes'

has three different interpretations:

The first is that he possessed a large army, many of whom used to live in tents. The army tents were made firm and stable by using stakes.

The second is that Pharaoh persecuted those whom he hated by ordering that their hands and feet be fastened to the ground with stakes; or that they be laid on a piece of wood and their hands and feet nailed to it with stakes, and thereby confining them and leaving them to die.

This commentary is mentioned in a tradition from Imam Sadiq (as). [15](#) As it is understood from history, Pharaoh even persecuted and killed his wife, 'Asiyah, in the same manner, when she followed on the path of Moses and confessed the faith.

The third is that

'many stakes'

means 'a large army camp ready to fight'.

Of course, these three interpretations do not contradict each other and all of them may be combined in the meaning of the verse.

In conclusion, referring to the behavior of these three groups, it says:

***"Who (all) transgressed in the land,"
"And made much corruption therein,"***

Corruption, which consists of any tyranny, transgression, cruelty and lust, was, in fact, one of the results of their disobedience, and any disobedient people will finally sink entirely into the depths of corruption.

Then, in a meaningful, but short sentence, it points to the painful punishment of all those groups, saying:

"Therefore did your Lord pour on them a scourge of diverse chastisement"

The term /saut/ means 'a scourge' but originally meant 'to mingle', then it has been used in the sense of 'a whip' (woven with strips of leather and the like). Some have resembled it to a kind of punishment which will be mingled with the flesh and blood of Man, and which causes him extreme pain.

Hazrat Ali (as) says in one of his sermons:

"By Allah Who sent the Prophet (S) with faith and truth, you will be severely examined as if vigorously shaken through a sieve, and thoroughly blended as if stirred in a cooking pot". [16](#)

The term /sabb/ originally means 'to pour water' and here it refers to the graveness and continuity of the punishment. It may refer to the clearing from the land of these disobedient ones. But, on the whole, from all the meanings of /saut/ the first one, i.e., 'scourge' is the most suitable. It is a term that is also used in current vocabulary.

This short statement illustrates the various chastisements which were cast on those groups of people.

The 'Ad people were destroyed by a terrible blast of cold wind, as the Qur'an says:

"And 'Ad, they were destroyed by a furious Wind exceedingly violent" [17](#).

About the Thamood, it says:

"But the Thamood, they were destroyed by a terrible Storm of thunder and lightning!" [18](#)

The Pharaoh and his men were utterly drowned in the Nile River:

"...and We drowned them all " [19](#).

Finally, as a warning to all, it says:

"Surely your Lord is ever watchful."

The term /mirsad/ is derived from /rasada/ which means 'lie in wait' and also 'an ambush, or a place of observation'. It is usually used for a place where persons have to travel through a pass in which someone is lying in wait to strike them.

On the whole, it means that no one should think that he can escape from the divine punishment, because all are under His authority and Power and whenever He wills, He may administer His punishment.

It is obvious that Allah is not confined to a particular place and time and does not lie in wait in a pass, but, it means that His Power is over all transgressors, tyrants and sinners.

On this subject, a tradition from Hazrat Ali (as) says:

"Surely your Lord is capable of recompensing the doers of sin for their evil deeds". [20](#)

A tradition from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"Imirsadl is a bridge on 'the Way over Hell' on which a person who has transgressed another person cannot pass". [21](#)

In fact, the divine ambush is not limited merely to the Hereafter and that known passageway over Hell, it is also watchful of the transgressors in this world. The punishment cast on the aforementioned three groups of people is an illustration of this.

The term

/rabbika /'your Lord'

touches on the meaning that Allah's law, for the punishment of the ancient, arrogant nations, is, also true for every sect including one's own, which is a solace for the Prophet (S) and the believers both, to know that their spiteful enemies cannot escape from the wrath of Allah and the disbelievers should also know that those who are more powerful and miserly than themselves can be destroyed easily by a violent storm, a sound or even lightning.

Then, by doing their wrong actions, how do they think that they can be saved from divine punishment?

In a tradition from the holy Prophet (S), it says:

"Ruh-al-Amin (Gabriel) informed me that at the time when Almighty Allah gathers, in the Hereafter, all creatures from the earliest ones to the latest ones, He will bring Hell nigh and set

/sirat/ 'the way'

over it. The way is thinner than a hair and sharper than a sword, and there are three bridges over it. On the first bridge honesty, grace and affection are waiting; on the second one, prayer; and on the third, Justice of the Lord of the worlds.

All people will be ordered to pass over it, then those who had been dishonest and cruel will stop on the first bridge, and those who had been neglectful in their prayers will stop on the second bridge, and those who finally pass on to the third will be faced with the Justice of Allah.

This is the meaning of (the verse:)

‘Surely your Lord is ever watchful’.

In one of his sermons, Hazrat Ali (as) says:

“If Allah has allowed time and opportunities to any tyrant, it does not mean that He has completely lost control over him. He can wait before bringing down His punishment which none can escape and no one can offer protection from it, not even death...”²²

Surah Fajr, Verses 15-20

فَأَمَّا الْإِنْسَانُ إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَأَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَكْرَمَنِ

وَأَمَّا إِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ فَيَقُولُ رَبِّي أَهَانَنِ

كَلَّا بَلْ لَا تُكْرِمُونَ الْيَتِيمَ

وَلَا تَحَاضُّونَ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ

وَتَأْكُلُونَ التُّرَاثَ أَكْلًا لَمًّا

وَتُحِبُّونَ الْمَالَ حُبًّا جَمًّا

15. 'And as for man, whenever his Lord tries him and honours him, and blesses him, he says, 'My Lord has honoured me!'

16. "But when He tries him and straitens for him his subsistence, he says, 'My Lord has disgraced

me'."

17. "Nay! but you honour not the orphans!"

18. "Nor do you encourage one another to feed the needy!"

19. "And you devour the inheritance - all with greed,"

20. "And you love wealth with (an) ardent love."

Do Not Be Proud of Receiving His Blessings Nor Disappointed When He Puts You in Dire Straights

After the previous verses, which are full of warning to the oppressors and threaten them by mentioning the divine punishments, the following verses refer to the divine trials as a scale for His rewards and punishments. Trial is considered as one of the most important concerns in Man's life.

"And as for man, whenever his Lord tries him and honours him, and blesses him, he says, My Lord has honoured me'."

One does not realize that the trials from Allah are sometimes given through blessing and sometimes occur through disaster. Neither the abundance of blessings should cause Man to be proud nor should disasters make him disappointed, but impatient Man forgets the essence of the trial in both cases and when he receives the blessings of Allah he thinks that He has honoured him and that the blessings are the sign of that honouring.

It is noteworthy that in the first verse it says: Allah 'honours him and blesses him', but at the end of the verse Man is scorned because of feeling himself honoured by Him. This is for the reason that in the first case of honouring it means 'Bounty' and the second means 'Nearness to Allah'.

But, when He tries him and puts him in dire straits for his subsistence, he says:

"My Lord has disgraced me."

Despair covers him thoroughly and he becomes disturbed and displeased with Allah, forgetting that these are some of the ways Allah tests him; a trial in which is the key to Man's development and consequently, causes him to deserve rewards, and if he disobeys, causes him to deserve punishment.

These two verses warn that neither the blessing is the reason for the proximity to Allah, nor is adversity and the lack of blessings the evidence of being far from Him. They are but diverse factors by which, Allah, according to His Wisdom, examines people.

It is the human being who sometimes becomes proud, and sometimes hopeless, because of his limited capacity to understand and endure. Surah Fussilat, No. 41, verse 51 also says:

"When We bestow favours on man, he turns away, and gets himself remote on his side (instead of coming to Us) and when Evil seizes him, (he comes) full of prolonged prayer!"

Also, Surah Hud, No. 11, verse 9 says:

"If We give man a taste of Mercy from Ourselves, and then withdraw it from him. Behold! He is in despair and (falls into) blasphemy".

These two verses, in addition to relating the various kinds of divine trials, also conclude that one being blessed abundantly or being deprived of some blessings by Allah, is not a sign of special favour and high rank for him or a disgrace for him, but the only standard has always, and in all respects, been 'Faith with Virtue'.

There have been many prophets who were involved in diverse kinds of tasks and calamities in this world, and in contrast, there have been many cruel pagans who, possessed every kind of facility in this life. This is the nature of life in the present world. By the way, this verse also points indirectly to the philosophy of the existence of disasters and painful events.

Then, attention is paid to the deeds that cause Man to be far away from Allah and to be caught in the grips of His punishment.

Pointing to the fact that wealth is not evidence to the high rank of a person with Allah, it says:

"Nay! But you honour not the orphans!"

"Nor do you encourage one another to feed the needy!"

It is worth noting that the verse does not speak about 'feeding the orphans', but it speaks about 'honouring the orphans'.

This is because the subject matter about an orphan is not only his hunger, but that sympathy, as a remedy for his deficiencies, is more important than his hunger, alone. An orphan should not be put in conditions which make him feel misery and worthlessness, just because of his being orphaned. He should be respected and honoured so that he does not feel the lack of his parents. That is why in some Islamic texts, affection and sympathy for orphans is considered especially important.

A tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) says:

"There is no servant who touches an orphan's head, affectionately, except that Allah will bestow on him, on the Day of Judgement, as many rays (of blessings) as the number of the orphan's hair. [23](#)

Also Surah Duha, No. 93, verse 9 says:

"Therefore, treat not the orphan with harshness".

This is just opposite to the treatment that ignorant people in the faithless ancient societies showed and also the same is true today in the disbelieving, modern ones which not only use different schemes and make various tricks to oppressively take the orphan's property, but abandon him in the society so that he

tastes his plight in the most bitter of ways.

As is understood from what was said, respecting an orphan is not limited to preserving his property, but, according to some commentaries, it has a broader meaning which covers both that sense and many other matters.

The term /tahaddun/ is based on /haqq/ which means 'to incite anyone', denoting that feeding the indigent is not enough, but people ought to encourage each other to do this good deed until the time when it actually becomes a custom in the society.

In Surah Haqqah, No. 69, Verses 33–34 the subject is counted as being parallel to the lack of faith in Almighty Allah, thus:

***"This was he, that would not believe in Allah Most High,"
"And would not encourage the feeding of the indigent".***

Then, pointing to their third disgraceful action and reproaching them, it says:

"And you devour the inheritance -all with greed,"

Surely, devouring the lawful inheritance is not blameworthy, so, the reproach, in this verse, may be for one of the following:

1. It means 'to assemble the wealth of one's own and that of others', because the term /lamm/ originally means 'to assemble, to collect', and some commentators such as Zamakhshari in his book 'Kashshaf', have commented on it especially with the sense of 'the collection of lawful and unlawful wealth'.

In particular, the pre-Islamic Arabs used to disinherit women, children and minors. They collected their interests and took it all for themselves as if it were their own inheritance. They believed that only those who were fighters and strong enough to take part in plunders should inherit property, since most of their wealth would be gained through plunder and pillage.

2. Whenever they inherited property, in their own right, they did not usually donate anything to the poor and the deprived members of their society. When they donated nothing from the inherited property for which they suffered naught, they will certainly have economic excess to the income which they earned by effort and endeavour. This is a great shame.

3. It means 'devouring the orphan's inheritance and the rights of the minors' and there have been many examples of some selfish disbelieving persons who, having an opportunity of receiving an inheritance, pay no attention to orphans or minors' interests, and take the most advantage of the property of these defenceless persons. This is the greatest defect and the most disgraceful sin.

However, all three commentaries can be considered together.

Then, the fourth despicable trait of theirs is mentioned:

"And you love wealth with (an) ardent love."

They are worldly, mammonish people who love amassing wealth. Such people surely do not care whether the wealth is lawful or unlawful and of course, never pay the rights of Allah, or do not pay them completely. Also, such people whose hearts are occupied, completely, by the love of money, cannot have the love of Allah in their hearts, either.

Thus, after mentioning Man's trial by blessing and disaster, the Holy Qur'an directs our attention to the fourth great examination in which these sinful people failed. The examinations are about the treatment toward orphans, feeding the needy, devouring the lawful and unlawful interests of inheritance, and finally, the trial of gathering wealth without any regard for the limits.

It is interesting to note that all these trials are monetary and in fact, if one passes the financial trials, other trials will be easy for him.

It is the wealth of this world that causes Faith to decay, and the greatest faults found in human beings are based on this.

There are some people who are trustworthy with a limited amount of wealth, but when the amount is great they tend to surrender to the temptations of Satan and commit treason. The real believers are those, who under any condition and with any amount of wealth, are honest and observe the rights of others, whatever they are (obligatory or recommended).

These are those who are believers and are virtuous. They are trustworthy and pious, indeed, and can be counted as the best of friends. They are also pure and honourable in other affairs aside from financial ones. The emphasis in the above verse, regarding financial trials, is for the same reason.

Surah Fajr, Verses 21-26

كَأَلَّا إِذَا دُكَّتِ الْأَرْضُ دَكًّا دَكًّا

وَجَاءَ رَبُّكَ وَالْمَلَكُ صَفًّا صَفًّا

وَجِيءَ يَوْمَئِذٍ بِجَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَذَكَّرُ الْإِنْسَانُ وَأَنَّى لَهُ الذِّكْرَى

يَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي قَدَّمْتُ لِحَيَاتِي

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُعَذِّبُ عَذَابَهُ أَحَدٌ

وَلَا يُوثِقُ وَثَاقَهُ أَحَدٌ

21. ***"Nay! When the earth is crushed with crushing upon crushing,"***

22. ***"And comes (the command of) your Lord and the angels in ranks arrayed,"***

23. ***"And Hell, That Day, if brought (face to face), - on That Day will man remember, but how will that remembrance profit him?"***

24. ***"He will say: O, would that I had forwarded (good deeds) for (this) my life!"***

25. ***"For none can punish like His punishment on That Day,"***

26. ***"Nor can anyone bind like His binding."***

They Will Awaken On a Day When It Is Too Late

In the former verses the transgressors who love the wealth of the world and oppress the rights of others are described. In these verses the oppressors are warned that there will be a Reckoning Day and a violent punishment waiting for them. So, they should expect it.

At first it says:

"Nay!"

that is, it is not as they think such that there will be no record and a Reckoning Day, and they should not think that the worldly property which Allah has given them is for their honouring and not for their trial.

Then it continues:

"...When the earth is crushed with crushing upon crushing."

The term /dakk/ originally means 'a level land' so, then, it is used in the sense of 'to pound the hills and buildings level, into dust', and /dakkih/ is 'a platform levelled and flat for sitting'. The repetition of /dakk/, in the verse is for emphasis.

On the whole, the idea touches on the earthquakes and the horrible events at the end of this world and the beginning of the Resurrection.

There will be such a great revolution in all creatures that all mountains cleave as under and the land will be levelled and smooth as Surah Taha, No. 20, verses 105–107 say:

"They ask thee concerning the Mountains: Say, 'My Lord will Uproot them and scatter them as dust;"

"He will leave them as plains smooth and level"

“Nothing crooked, or curved with thou see in their place’.”

When the first stage of the Resurrection ends, that is, after the dissolution of the world, the second stage will begin and all human beings will return to life again, they will be present for the Divine Judgement:

“And comes (the command of) your Lord and the angels in ranks arrayed”.

The angels will surround all who are attending the gathering place of resurrection to carry out Allah’s command to them.

This is an outline on the glory and greatness of That Day and the inability of Man to escape from the grips of Justice.

The term

/ja’a rabbuka/ ‘your Lord comes’

means that the command of the Lord comes for verifying Mankind’s reckoning.

Or, it means that the signs of the appearance of Allah’s Glory and Greatness come.

Or, still, it means that the appearance of the knowledge of Allah will come on That Day in such a way that no one can deny it, in so much as all will see His Supreme Being with their own eyes. In any case, it is certain that His coming does not mean a material coming which would mean that He has a body and needs space to move in; He is far superior to that of having bodily properties.

This very idea is mentioned in a tradition from Imam Ali–ibn–Musa–al–Riza (as).[24](#)

A witness to this commentary is Surah Nahl, No. 16, verse 33 which says:

“Do the (ungodly) wait until the angels come to them, or there comes the command of the Lord (for their doom)?”

The term

/saffan saffal/ ‘in ranks arrayed’

points to the idea that the angels will enter the Hereafter in different rows, or perhaps the angels, of every heaven, will be in a row and surround the human beings there.

“And Hell, That Day, if brought (face to face), – on That Day will man remember, but how will that remembrance profit him?”

It is understood, from this verse, that Hell is movable and approaches the wrongdoers, the same as Heaven does for the Righteous:

"To the righteous, the Garden will be brought near"²⁵.

Some commentators tend to define, metaphorically, the appearance of Heaven and Hell in front of the eyes of the good-doers, and the wrong doers, and while there is no evidence available to contrast their evident meaning, still it is better to simply leave them as such.

Nevertheless, the facts of the Hereafter are not precisely clear to us and the circumstances, there, are completely different with those here so, it is of little concern whether, on That Day, Heaven and Hell move from one place to another or not.

A tradition about the Prophet (S) denotes that when the above verse was revealed he turned pale. That change was hard for his companions to bear, so, some of them went to Hazrat Ali (as) and told him of the event.

He came and kissed the Prophet (S) between his two shoulders and said:

"O, Messenger of Allah! May my parents be thy ransom, what has happened today?"

The Prophet (S) answered:

"Gabriel came and recited this verse (the current verse) to me".

Ali said that he asked the Prophet (S) how Hell would be brought (face to face), and he replied:

"Seventy thousand angels will drag and bring it by seventy thousand halters. Hell is so unyielding that if it were left free, it would bum all. Then I will stand against Hell (Jahannam) and it will tell me that it has no business with me and Allah has forbidden my flesh for it.

On That Day, all will be busy with their own affairs, but Muhammad (S) will say:

*'O, Lord! My community! My community.'*²⁶

Verily, when a sinner observes this, he may be shaken and awakened. A kind of grief and sorrow may envelop him and he will become regretful for his past wrongful deeds, but this regretfulness profits him naught.

Man will desire to come back to this world and recompense his dark past, but there will be no gate open to return. He wants to repent for his faults, but it is too late. He wishes to do good deeds to repay his evil deeds, but the Records of Deeds will be rolled up.

Hence, it is for this that he cries and

"He will say: O, would that I had forwarded (good deeds) for (this) my life!"

It is noteworthy that he does not say: 'for my future life' but he says:

'for (this) my life',

as if the term

'life'

is not used for anything but the life in That World; and the fleeting life of This World, which is full of pain and suffering, is not counted as life.

Surah Ankabut, No. 29, Verse 64, says:

"And the life of this world is nothing but play and amusement but verily the Home in the Hereafter -that is life indeed, if they but know".

Truly, those who devoured the wealth of orphans, did not feed the needy, took the lawful and unlawful inheritance from others, and loved the property of this world with all their hearts, will wish, on That Day, that they would have forwarded some good deeds for their next life, which is eternal and is, indeed the real life. However, this wish is useless and will not benefit them.

Then, in two short sentences, it describes the violence of the divine punishment on That Day:

"For none can punish like His punishment on That Day,"

And why not? Those oppressors, who committed the worst vices in this world, will be punished, on That Day, so that the like of which, had not been seen before. Just as the righteous will be rewarded, to such an extent that no one could have imagined it before; since Allah is the Most Merciful to those who show mercy, and vice versa.

"Nor can anyone bind like His binding,"

Neither His

'binding'

nor His

'chastisement'

can be compared with anything else. Why should He bind and chastise? Because they oppressed the helpless servants of Allah, in this world as much as they could and persecuted them with the worst of tortures, they themselves should be tightly bound and chastised.

Surah Fajr, Verses 27-30

يَا أَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ

ارْجِعِي إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَةً

فَادْخُلِي فِي عِبَادِي

وَادْخُلِي جَنَّاتِي

27. "(It will be said to some) O, you serene soul!"

28. "Come back to your Lord well-pleased (with Him) and well-pleasing (Him),"

29. "So enter among My servants,"

30. "And enter into My Garden."

O, You Possessor of the Serene Soul!

In contrast to the previous verses about the terrible chastisement of the transgressors and the lovers of this world in the Hereafter, the following verses are about the calmness of the righteous on Doomsday.

The Qur'an addresses them very kindly and says:

"(It will be said to some) O, you serene soul!"

"Come back to your Lord well-pleased (with Him) and well-pleasing (Him),"

"So enter among My servants,"

"And enter into My Garden."

How interesting and delightful these words are; full of grace, peace, tranquility and confidence!

It is a direct invitation from Allah to the souls who are at peace with confidence, because of their Faith.

Allah invites them to return to Him, to their Possessor, and Cherisher. It is an invitation combined with mutual satisfaction; the satisfaction of the lover with the beloved and the satisfaction of the beloved lover, the one being worshipped.

Consequently, he is being honoured with the crown of servitude and being placed in a position of high rank by Him.

Then, he is invited to enter the Garden with the words,

'And enter into My Garden'

which denotes that the host is only Allah, Himself.

What An Invitation! What a Host! What Serenity!

The term

/nafs/ 'soul',

here means the spirit of Man, and the term

/mutmainnah/ 'serene'

denotes to the peace and rest that is attained by Faith, as the Qur'an says:

"...now surely by Allah's remembrance are the hearts confident"²⁷.

Such a soul is both confident in Allah's promises and is sure of the way he has chosen. He is aware of both excesses and afflictions and also about the disasters and terrible events of this world but has faith in Allah's Mercy. The most important point here is the soul's confidence in that, even in the great horror of the Hereafter he is at peace and rest.

Some commentators believe that the objective point of

'Come back to your Lord'

is 'returning to His virtue and Mercy', but, it is better to say 'return to Him, Himself', i.e., to be placed close to Him, which is a spiritual return not a corporal or spatial one.

Does this invitation to return to the Lord occur only in the Hereafter, or at the time of departure of the soul from the body?

The context of the verses, of course, refers to the Hereafter, but the meaning of the verse, by itself, is broad and general.

The term

/radiyah/ 'well-pleased'

is used, because the soul will see that all of the promises for the divine rewards are perfectly true and also so great that they are beyond his imagination. The soul-will receive Allah's Mercy and Grace, so much so that he will become utterly delighted.

And the word

Imardiyyah/ 'well-pleasing'

is used to mean that 'his deeds' have been contentedly accepted by Allah.

Such a servant, with these characteristics who has attained the rank of perfect submission and has reached true servitude which is donating all for Allah's sake, and has joined 'the high ranks' will certainly have no abode, but Heaven.

Some commentaries denote that these verses were revealed about 'Hamzah, Saiyed-ash-Shuhada', but regarding the Surah, which is Meccan, this attitude is indeed a kind of verification, not used for the occasion of revelation, as it was also mentioned about Imam Husain, at the beginning of the Surah.

It is interesting to note that a narration from Imam Sadiq (as) which is cited in 'al-Kafi' says that one of his companions asked whether a believer may become discontented when his soul is being taken.

He (as) replied:

"By Allah, No! When the angel of death comes to take his soul the believer shows restlessness and the angel says:

'O, Lover of Allah! Be not upset! By He Who has appointed Muhammad (S) to prophethood, I am more sympathetic to you than a kind father. Look carefully!'"

He looks carefully and sees Prophet Muhammad, Amir-al- Mo'mineen Ali, Fatimah, Hasan, Husain and other Imams from their descendents (as). The angel tells him to look and see that they (as) are all his friends.

He opens his eyes and watches. A caller from Almighty Allah suddenly beckons and says:

"O, you serene soul! Come back to your Lord well-pleased (with Him) and well-pleasing (Him). So enter among My servants. And enter into My Garden".

At that moment there is nothing better and more beloved than that his soul separates from his body as soon as possible and moves unto his Lord. [28](#)

Supplication

O Lord! Uplift us to such a peace and rest that we can discern this beautiful invitation.

O Lord! To attain this rank is not possible save by Your Grace. Please bestow on us Your Grace and Mercy.

O Lord! Certainly Your Graciousness will not decrease if You count us among the possessors of the 'Serene Soul'. We seek it from You. Please cast a favor over us and forgive us.

O Lord! We know that this rank is not prepared except by our remembrance of You. Leave us with the success of this remembrance.

1. 4:59
2. Ikmal-ud-Din, Vol. 1, p. 253; with nearly similar meaning, in Yanabi-ul-Mawaddah, p. 117
3. 53:3,4
4. Ma'luni-ul-Akhbur, p. 90, tradition 2, & Musnad Ahmad-ibn-Hanbal, Vol. 3, p. 17, and other books from the Sunnite School and Shi 'ah School mentioned in Ihqaq-ul-Haqq, Vol 9, p. 309 to 375
5. Ma'ani-ul-Akhbar, p. 180 & 'Uyun-i-Akbar-ur-Rida, Vol. 1, p. 207
6. Borhan Commentary, vol, 4, p. 457, Tradition 1, narrated from Imam Sadiq (as).
7. Abulfutuh Razi, Commentary, vol. 12, p. 74.
8. Fakhr-i-Razi Commentary, vol. 31, p. 164.
9. al-Mizan, 'Allamah Tabatabaie Commentary, vol. 20, p. 406; Ruh-al-Ma'ali, al-Tahrir wat-Tahayyur Commentary, vol. 30, p. 120.
10. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 485, narrated by Abusa'id Khidry from the Prophet (S).
11. Surah Najm, No.53, Verse 50
12. Kashshaf Commentary, vol. 4, p. 747, and Qartabi also narrated this idea in his commentary.
13. Hayat-al-Qulub, vol. 1, p. 107.
14. Ruh-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 425.
15. Nur-uth-Thaqalayn, vol. 5, p. 571; 'Ilal-ush-Sharayi', Tradition, 6
16. Nahj-ul-Balagha, Sermon 16 (Arabic Version).
17. Surah Haqqah, No.69, verse 6
18. Surah Haqqah, No.69, verse 5
19. Surah Zukhruf, No 43 verse 55
20. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 487.
21. Majma'-al-Bayan. vol. 10, p. 487.
22. Nahj-ul-Balagha, Sermon 100, (Arabic Version).
23. Bihar-al-Anwar. vol. 15. p. 120 (old edition).
24. al-Mizan Commentary, vol. 20, p. 416.
25. Surah Shu'ara, No. 26, verse 90
26. Majma'-al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 489. (A similar meaning is mentioned in Durr-al-Manthur; al-Mizan, vol. 20, p. 415.)
27. Surah Ra'd, No. 13, verse 28
28. al-Kafi, vol. 3, Chapter: Believers and the Departure of the Soul, Tradition 2.

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