

Surah al-Ghafir, Verses 46 – 63

Surah al-Ghafir – Verse 46

النَّارُ يُعْرَضُونَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَعَشِيًّا وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ أَدْخِلُوا آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ أَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ

46. The Fire, they are exposed to it, morning and evening. And on the Day when the Hour will be established [it will be said]

Between death and Resurrection lies a period in which sinners find out that their abode is Hellfire. Thus the blessed Verse says that their excruciating torment is the fire in which they suffer every morning and evening.

Pharaoh's people are ordered to taste the most excruciating torment. It is worthy of note that mention is made of Pharaoh's family, companions, and adherents who were all astray. When they become entangled with such dire fate, Pharaoh will have a far worst fate in store for him.

Secondly, the Verse says that they will taste Hellfire every morning and evening, but they will taste the worst excruciating torment on the Day of Resurrection which explicitly indicates that the former torment will be that of purgatory to be inflicted after this world and prior to the Day of Resurrection and will entail tasting Hellfire.

Such torment will make soul shiver with terror and will also affect the body.

Thirdly, the phrase:

“morning and evening” (ghadw wa ‘ashi)

may either refer to the progression of the torment, as it is said he is our pest morning and evening, i.e. at all times, or it makes reference to the discontinuity of the purgatorial torment, i.e., torments will be inflicted upon them in the morning and in the evening when they were engaged in merry making and boasting their power.

The expression:

“morning and evening”

should not be a source of wonder as to the existence of times of the day in purgatory, since Qur’anic Verses reveal that there will be morning and evening even in the Hereafter as it is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an:

“And they will have therein their sustenance, morning and evening”¹.

It is not inconsistent with the permanence of the Bounties of Paradise, as reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an:

“Its provision is eternal and so is its shade”²

since there exists the possibility that despite the permanence of provisions and sustenance, certain Bounties be bestowed upon the people of Paradise.

Surah al-Ghafir – Verse 47

وَإِذْ يَتَحَاوُونَ فِي النَّارِ فَيَقُولُ الضُّعَفَاءُ لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعًا فَهَلْ أَنتُمْ مُغْنُونَ عَنَّا نَصِيبًا مِنَ النَّارِ

47. And when they will dispute [and producing arguments] in the Fire, the weak will say to those who were arrogant: “Indeed we followed you. Are you able to take from us some portion of the Hellfire?”

The preceding Verses treated of Divine Wrath against Pharaoh’s family. These Verse reflect the dialogs of the arrogant and Pharaohs down the centuries with their flattering companions and supporters in Hell.

Thus it is said in this Verse:

“When they will dispute [and producing arguments] in the Fire, the weak will say to those who were arrogant: “Indeed we followed you. Are you able to take from us some portion of the Hellfire?”

The weak say unto the arrogant that they were their followers but they wonder whether they could take some of the torments of Hellfire in lieu of them.

“The weak”

refers to those who were not intellectually independent and blindly followed the chiefs of disbelief referred to in the Holy Qur’an as the arrogant.

Their followers in Hell indubitably know that their chiefs like them are entangled with Divine torment in Hell and are not able in the least to protect them. A question is raised here as to the grounds lying behind their request from their former chiefs as to taking from them some portion of Hellfire.

A number of Qur’anic exegetes maintain that it was their habit to seek refuge in them upon being afflicted with severe afflictions as a consequence of which they are unconsciously reacting likewise. However, it would be better to say that such request is a kind of derision and reproach toward them so that they know that all their claims were false and groundless.

It is worthy of note that the Commander of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as) in a sermon delivered on one of the days of Ghadir called people to monotheism and bade them to follow those whom God appointed as leaders.

Reminding people of the Verse in question, he asked:

“Do you know what arrogance is? It is failure to obey those whom you are supposed to follow. Arrogance is to regard yourselves superior to them. There are recurrent instances in which the Holy Qur’an treats of the same such that if man reflects upon it, the Holy Qur’an provides him with admonitions and impedes him from committing evil deeds.”

In fact, Imam ‘Ali (as) intended to warn that there was no excuse for those who consigned the Noble Prophet’s (S) testament on the Day of Ghadir and followed others.³

Surah al-Ghafir – Verses 48 – 49

قَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا إِنَّا كُلٌّ فِيهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ حَكَمَ بَيْنَ الْعِبَادِ

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ فِي النَّارِ لِخَزَنَةِ جَهَنَّمَ ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ يُخَفِّفْ عَنَّا يَوْمًا مِنَ الْعَذَابِ

48. Those who were arrogant will say [in reply]: “We are all in this [Fire]! Indeed Allah has judged

between [His] servants [justly]!”

49. And those in the Fire will say to the keepers of Hell: “Call upon your Lord to alleviate for us the torment for a day!”

No one will be able to carry the burden of others on the Day of Resurrection. How one who is the Fire save others from torment?

According to the blessed Verses in question, the arrogant will say:

“We and you are in Hellfire and share the same fate and God judged between His servants with justice. Had we been able to render you help, we would have helped ourselves. We cannot do anything here.

We may neither ward off torment from you nor from us, nor are we able to take from you some of your torment. God never chastises anyone without any reason. Whoever has committed evil will be chastised accordingly.

Our burden of sins is heavier than yours since we were in error ourselves and sent you to error as well. Had we been able to do anything, we would have done something for ourselves. You have also committed sins for having followed us out of your free choice. You could believe in God as some you did and saved themselves from torment.”

When all of them lose their hope, they seek refuge in the angels of torment.

Verse 49 is saying that when they become totally desperate, they turn to the keepers of Hell and angels of torment:

“and those in the Fire will say to the keepers of Hell: “Call upon your Lord to alleviate for us the torment for a day!”

They know that there is no escape from Divine chastisement, but they merely request that Divine torment be alleviated from them for one day so that they may be able to take a rest and are content with the same.

Surah al-Ghafir – Verse 50

قَالُوا أَوْلَمَ تَكُ تَأْتِيكُمْ رُسُلُكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ قَالُوا بَلَىٰ قَالُوا فَاذْعُبُوا وَمَا دُعَاءُ الْكَافِرِينَ
إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ

50. They [keepers of Hell] will say: “Did there not come to you, your Messengers with miracles?” They will say: “Yes.” They will reply: “Then call [invoke God Almighty]! And the invocation of the

disbelievers is nothing but in vain!”

Conversion to belief in God upon tasting Divine Wrath shall be of no avail, since repentance upon death shall be in vain. Upon drowning, Pharaoh repented his sins, but it was said unto him that now it will be of no use since you committed sins without repentance⁴.

According to the blessed Verse in question, keepers of Hell will say:

“Now that you are entangled with Divine torment, you may invoke God Almighty as you wish; however, you are supposed to know that disbelievers’ invocations will not be answered and they will be in vain.

You confess that Divinely appointed Messengers came unto you with clear proofs and miracles, but you ignored them and disbelieved. Therefore, your invocations will be fruitless since God Almighty will never answer disbelievers’ prayers.”

A number of Qur’anic exegets maintain that the last sentence indicates that keepers of Hell say unto disbelievers:

“You may invoke God yourselves, since we are not supposed to invoke God Almighty without His Permission.”

The sentence demonstrates that when angels lack such permission, the gates to deliverance are all closed and disbelievers’ invocations will not be answered.

Surah al-Ghafir – Verses 51 – 52

إِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيَوْمَ يَقُومُ الْأَشْهَادُ

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ الظَّالِمِينَ مَعَذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ وَلَهُمْ سُوءُ الدَّارِ

51. Indeed We will truly make triumphant Our Messengers and those who believe in this mundane life and on the Day when the witnesses will stand forth [to bear witness],

52. The [same] Day when wrong doers’ excuses will be of no use. Theirs will be the curse, and theirs will be the evil abode.

It is Divine practice to render support to Messengers and believers. It is a Divine Promise that Truth becomes victorious over falsehood. Verse 51 is saying:

“Indeed We will truly make triumphant Our Messengers and those who believe in this mundane life and on the Day when the witnesses will stand forth [to bear witness].”

Such support is emphatically unconditional and boundless; as a consequence of which it entails different triumphs, including becoming victorious in arguments, battles, sending down Divine torment upon opponents and causing their perdition, and also sending down invisible succors invigorating hearts and souls through Divine Favor.

In Verse 51 we come across a new expression concerning the Day of Resurrection – the Day when the witnesses will stand forth [to bear witness]. The word ***ashhad*** is the plural form of shahid (“witness”).

Different interpretations have been produced as to the identity of such witnesses which are all consistent with each other:

1. Angels recording deeds,
2. Messengers bearing witness concerning their peoples,
3. Angels, Messengers, and believers who bear witness to deeds of mankind.

The expression is worthy of attention referring to the point that on that Day when all people shall gather together, witnesses shall rise to bear witness. Being disgraced on that Day is the worst as victory on that Day is the best. God shall support His Messengers and believers on that Day and shall make them more prestigious.

Nonetheless, that Day is the day of disgrace and misfortune for disbelievers and wrong doers as reflected in Verse 52:

“The [same] Day when wrong doers’ excuses will be of no use. Theirs will be the curse, and theirs will be the evil abode.”

Firstly, their excuses before witnesses shall be of no avail and they shall be disgraced at that great tribunal; secondly, they shall be deprived of Divine Mercy and Divine curse shall befall on them; thirdly, they shall suffer physical chastisement and torment in the worst abode, in Hellfire.

It would be of interest to make mention of some Qur’anic Verses concerning Messengers and Divine Succor bestowed upon Messengers and believers in order to provide further exposition for :

“Indeed We will truly make triumphant Our Messengers and those who believe in this mundane life and on the Day when the witnesses will stand forth [to bear witness].”

“If you help God, He will help you”⁵.

Noah’s (as) deliverance:

“We delivered him and those with him on the ship”⁶.

Abraham’s (as) deliverance:

“O Fire! Be cold and safe [for Abraham]”⁷.

Lot’s (as) deliverance:

“When We saved him and his family all”⁸.

Joseph’s (as) deliverance:

“Thus We established Joseph on the land”⁹.

Shu’ayb’s (as) deliverance:

“We saved Shu’ayb and those who believed with him”¹⁰.

Salih’s (as) deliverance:

“And thus We do deliver the believers”¹¹.

Hud’s (as) deliverance:

“We saved Hud and those who believed with him”¹².

Jonah’s (as) deliverance:

“And We saved him from sorrow”¹³.

Jesus’ (as) deliverance:

“I will take you and raise you to Myself”¹⁴.

The Noble Prophet of Islam’s (S) deliverance:

“Indeed We have given you a manifest victory”¹⁵.

Believers’ deliverance:

“And Allah has already made you victorious at Badr when you were a weak little force”¹⁶;

“Then Allah did send down His reassurance on the Messenger (S) and on the believers”¹⁷;

“He it is Who sent down reassurance into the hearts of the believers that they may grow more in faith”¹⁸;

Answering the prayers of Noah, Jonah, Zachariah, and Job (as)¹⁹;

Answering the invocations of righteous believers:

“And He answers the invocation of those who believe and do righteous good deeds”²⁰.

Divine Deliverance of Prophets and believers manifests itself in diverse forms as follows:

“To strengthen your hearts”²¹;

“Allah will keep firm those who believe with the word that stands firm in this world”²².

“Then his Lord answered his prayers”²³;

“My Lord! Leave not one of the believers on the earth!”²⁴.

“Indeed We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs”²⁵.

“We had conferred given the family of Abraham a great kingdom”²⁶.

“Truly Allah has given you victory on many battlefields”²⁷.

“And Verily Allah sent down upon him His reassurance and helped him with invisible hosts”²⁸.

“So We took retribution from them. We drowned them in the sea”²⁹.

“Is it not enough for you that your Lord should help you with three thousand angels sent down?”³⁰.

“And He cast terror into their hearts”³¹.

“He it is Who has sent His Messenger (S) with guidance and the religion of truth to make it victorious over all religions.”³²

“The We saved him and those with him on the ship”³³.

“Surely Allah weakens the deceitful plots of the disbelievers”³⁴.

Therefore, man is in need of Divine deliverance at all times.

Surah al-Ghafir – Verses 53 – 54

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْهُدَى وَأَوْرَثْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْكِتَابَ

هُدًى وَذِكْرَى لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

53. And verily We gave Moses (as) the Guidance and We made the Children of Israel to inherit the Scripture [the Torah],

54. A guide and a reminder for men of understanding.

Guidance is a Divine Favor and all people, even the Prophets, are in need of it.

Thus, the blessed Verses in question say:

“We gave Moses (as) the Guidance and We made the Children of Israel to inherit the Scripture [the Torah].”

The Divine Guidance bestowed upon Moses (as) embraces a broad semantic range which includes Prophethood, Revelation, the Scripture (Torah), the Guidance granted to him in order to fulfill his mission, and the miracles granted to him.

The expression inheritance connoting the Torah indicates that Children of Israel could avail themselves of it down the generations non gratia like the property inherited without toil, though they misused this Divine inheritance.

Verse 54 further adds that this Scripture was Divine Guidance a reminder for men of understanding. The difference between guidance (hidaya) and reminder (dhikra) is that the former indicates the inception of something whereas the latter designates reminding what one has already heard and believed in it, but he has consigned it into oblivion. In other words, the Scripture is the origin and the means of progression of guidance.

However, men of understanding, rather than the blind biased and obdurate ignorant, reap the harvest in the beginning and thereafter. Intellection and fear of God are the prerequisites of understanding Divine teachings.

Surah al-Ghafir – Verse 55

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَاسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْبِكَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْإِبْكَارِ

55. Therefore be patient. Indeed, the Promise of Allah is true, and ask forgiveness for your sin and glorify the praises of your Lord in the time period after the noon till sunset and in the time period from early morning or sunrise till evening.

In this blessed Verse, God Almighty gives three injunctions of significance to the Noble Prophet (S). Although they are addressed to the Noble Prophet (S), but they are in fact given to all people.

The blessed Verse in question opens with the injunction:

“Be patient as the Promise of Allah is true.”

He is asked to be tolerant against his enemies' obduracy, enmity, and sabotage and also against the ignorance, weakness, negligence, and the harms of a number of his friends. He is asked to be patient

against unchecked passions and anger since the key to victory is patience against vicissitudes at all times.

God's Promise to make him and his followers victorious is true. Believing in the truth of Divine Promise encourages him and makes him to persevere against vicissitudes and difficulties.

He is many a time asked to be patient at all times, as it is reflected in the Verse in question and elsewhere, and at times, specific instances are mentioned, e.g.:

“So bear with patience all that they say and glorify the praises of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its setting. And during a part of the night glorify His praises and after the prayers”³⁵;

“And keep yourself patiently with those [your seemingly poor followers] who call on their Lord morning and evening, seeking His Face and let not your eyes overlook them”³⁶.

All the victories of the Prophet (S) and early Muslims were the fruits of patience and perseverance. Even today, one may not vanquish so many enemies and solve so many problems without the same.

The second injunction says:

“Ask forgiveness for your sin.”

Owing to his infallibility, the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) did not commit sins, but as mentioned above, such Qur'anic expressions concerning the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) and other Prophets (as) indicate relative sins, since at times, some of the deeds which are regarded as good deeds and acts of devotion for ordinary people are considered as sins for Prophets (as):

(“The good deeds of the righteous are the sins of those close to God Almighty”).

They are not supposed to avoid preferable acts for one single moment. Owing to their exalted station and understanding, they are supposed to stay away from such acts and they should ask forgiveness whenever they commit the same.

A number of Qur'anic exegetes maintain that sins committed by Muslims are ad hoc intended or those sins committed against the Noble Prophet (S), and asking forgiveness is arbitrary and devotional; however, these interpretations are not seemingly possible.

The last injunction says:

“Glorify the praises of your Lord in the time period after the noon till sunset and in the time period from early morning or sunrise till evening.”

The Arabic word *‘ashi* designates “afternoon till before sunset” and *abkar* is used in the sense of “early morning.”

They may indicate these two times when man is prepared to praise and glorify Allah, since he has not preoccupied himself with daily affairs or he has finished them.

The expression may demonstrate the continuity of praising and glorifying God Almighty throughout the day and night, as we say, for instance, take care of him morning and night,” by which we mean at all times.

Some have also maintained that such praises and glorification refers to morning and evening prayers or all daily prayers; however, the contextual content of the Verse encompasses a broader semantic range and daily prayers may solely be regarded as their instances.

It is worthy of note that these three comprehensive injunctions aim at purification of the self for gaining victories through Divine Favor. They may be used as the provisions required for proceeding on the path toward attainment of significant goals.

It is incumbent upon man to endure the vicissitudes of life and its obstacles, purify his heart of sins and any other impurities, and embellish it with the remembrance of the Lord.

Such embellishment depends upon praising God Almighty for His Perfection and glorifying Him for His being far from any imperfection. Such praise and glorification of God Almighty sheds light onto His servants' hearts, absolves them of impurities, and adorns them with perfect attributes.

Surah al-Ghafir – Verse 56

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي آيَاتِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطَانٍ أَتَاهُمْ إِن فِي صُدُورِهِمْ إِلَّا كِبْرٌ مَّا هُمْ بِبَالِغِيهِ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ

56. Indeed those who dispute about the Ayat (Verses, Signs) of Allah without any authority having come to them, there is nothing else in their breasts except pride. They will never have it [nor shall they reap the fruits of their disputes]. Therefore, seek refuge in Allah. Indeed it is He Who is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.

Disputation with the Truth springs from vanity rather than sensibility and the vain obdurate may not achieve their goal which is leadership.

Thus the blessed Verse says:

“Indeed those who dispute about the Ayat (Verses, Signs) of Allah without any authority having come to them, there is nothing else in their breasts except pride.”

As mentioned above, the word ***mujadala*** indicates “disputation and illogical discussions,” though the same is also employed in the semantically broader sense of truth and falsehood.

The expression:

“any authority having come to them”

lays emphasis on the meaning of disputation since authority (sultan) designates the argument substantiating a claim which leads to one’s superiority over the other party.

The phrase:

“having come to them”

alludes to the arguments revealed by God Almighty and the emphasis on Revelation is due to the fact that it is the most assuring way of substantiating the true claims.

Divine Ayat which were subject to disputation refers to the miracles and Verses of the Holy Qur’an and the relevant discussions regarding Origin and the Hereafter, at times referred to as sorcery, madness, stories of the ancients (asatir al-awwalin)!

Therefore, the blessed Verse bears witness to the fact that disputes Originate from vanity and arrogance, since the arrogant and the vain, owing to their keen interest in themselves are indifferent to others and regard their own thought and words true and those of others as false hence their persistence in the veracity of their baseless claims.

The Arabic particle:

inna (“indeed”)

indicates that the such claims originate from vanity and arrogance; otherwise, how may one insist on one’s claims without producing evidence and arguments?

The word:

“breasts” (sudur)

refers to hearts which in turn designates “soul, thought” recurrently attested in Qur’anic Verses.

Some Qur’anic exegetes interpret the word:

kibr (“arrogance, vanity”)

in the aforesaid blessed Verse as hasad (“envy, jealousy”) and maintain that disputants envy the Noble Prophet’s (S) exalted spiritual and worldly station and rank; however, the word kibr does not denote

hasad but it may connote it, since the vain and the arrogant are usually envious as well and wish all bounties for themselves and grieve when others enjoy them.

The blessed Verse further adds:

“They will never have it [nor shall they reap the fruits of their disputes].”

They intend to satisfy their own vanity and arrogance and rule the society, but they shall not reap anything but degradation and debasement. They will neither achieve their vain goals nor will they be able to nullify the truth through their baseless disputes.

The blessed Verse closes with Divine Injunction to the Noble Prophet (S):

“Therefore, seek refuge in Allah. Indeed it is He Who is the All-Hearer, the All-Seer.”

God Almighty hears their baseless disputes and sees their vicious deeds and conspiracies. The point is that not only the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) but also all believers treading the Path of Truth are supposed to seek refuge in God Almighty in the vicissitudes of life and against insensible disputants.

It is for the same reason that against the tempest of Zulaykha’s lust, Joseph (as) says:

“I seek refuge in Allah! Truly, he [your husband] is my master! He made my living in a great comfort! Indeed wrong doers will never be successful”³⁷.

Verse 27 of the Chapter in question reads:

“Moses (as) said: ‘Indeed I seek refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every arrogant person who believes not in the Day of Reckoning!’”³⁸.

Surah al-Ghafir – Verse 57

لَخَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَكْبَرُ مِنْ خَلْقِ النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

57. The creation of the heavens and the earth is indeed greater than the creation of mankind; yet, most of people know not.

If we take a glance at the grandeur of the creation of the world of existence, we will never find ourselves superior to others.

Since one of the most significant issues disputed by disbelievers against the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is Resurrection, the blessed Verse in question explicitly raises the issue saying:

“The creation of the heavens and the earth is indeed greater than the creation of mankind; yet, most of people know not.”

One Who is Able to create such celestial bodies and galaxies with such grandeur and set them in order will not be incapable of raising the dead. Some people are too ignorant to understand such truths.

Most of Qur’anic exegetes maintain that the blessed Verse is a response to disbelievers’ disputes against Resurrection.³⁹

Some also hold that the blessed Verse may be a response to the arrogant who consider their narrow minded though great; however, compared to the grandeur of the world of existence, they were not but an iota. The latter is not too remote from the contextual meaning of the Verses, but taking the following Verses into account, the former interpretation sounds more appropriate.

Thus, ignorance is mentioned in this blessed Verse as one of the reasons of false disputes. The issue of vanity and arrogance was already raised and the two, i.e., ignorance and vanity, are closely intertwined since vanity springs from ignorance toward one’s limited extent of knowledge.

Surah al-Ghafir – Verse 58

وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرُ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَلَا الْمُسِيءُ قَلِيلًا
مَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ

58. And not equal are the blind and those who see; nor are [equal] those who believe and do righteous good deeds and those who do evil. Little do you remember.

Those who neglect understanding truths are like the blind. Some of the people do not know and some of those who know refuse to acknowledge the truths.

In an explicit comparison, the blessed Verse depicts the state of the ignorant arrogant against understanding believers, saying:

“And not equal are the blind and those who see; nor are [equal] those who believe and do righteous good deeds and those who do evil.”

The blind refers to the ignorant whose eyes are covered by the veils of vanity and arrogance thus hindered from perceiving the truth. Au contraire, the seers is a reference to those who perceive the Truth in the light of knowledge and logical arguments.

Are they equal? Now, are the believers who do righteous good deeds on a par with vicious and evil

doers? The former comparison aims at knowledge and understanding and the latter makes a reference to the reflection of such knowledge in their deeds.

The point is that seers perceive their humbleness and the grandeur of the world of existence; as a consequence of which they are aware of their state and rank, but the blind solely perceive their spatial and temporal states rather than their surrounding world, that is why they make mistakes concerning their own existence at all times and are entangled by vanity and arrogance which lead them to doing evil deeds.

It is also possible to make use of the twain clauses of the blessed Verse to the effect that having faith and doing righteous good deeds make man see and disbelief and committing evil deeds render him blind such that the blind are impeded to draw a distinction between truth and falsehood.

Surah al-Ghafir – Verse 59

إِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَأْتِيَةٌ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

59. Indeed the Hour is surely coming, there is no doubt about it, yet most men believe not.

Doubts concerning the coming of Resurrection originate from disbelievers' ignorance of Divine Omnipotence and Omniscience.

The blessed Verse in question explicitly and decisively apprises people of the coming of Resurrection, saying:

“Indeed the Hour is surely coming, there is no doubt about it, yet most men believe not.”

“Indeed” (inna),

“surely” (la- in la-atiyatun),

and

“there is no doubt about it” (la rayba fi-ha)

recurrently emphasize that the Day of Resurrection shall definitely arrive. Many arguments for the substantiation of the coming of Resurrection are to be found in Qur'anic Verses and there are also attestations of the issue as a certainty without providing arguments.

According to Raghīb's Mufradat, the word:

sa'a (“hour”)

is originally employed in the sense of a division of time and since the coming of Resurrection and Reckoning of deeds shall be carried out instantly, the word in question is used to convey the idea.

The expression is to be found in tens of Qur'anic Verses in the same sense; however, it is employed at times regarding the Resurrection per se at times concerning the end of the world and the beginning of Resurrection.

Since the twain are closely intertwined and they both occur unexpectedly, they are referred to as:

“the Hour.”

The clause:

“yet most men believe not”

is not a reference to the ambiguity and concealment of Resurrection, but it designates that one of the significant reasons lying behind denial of Resurrection is inclination toward liberty in taking unconditional use of worldly possessions and concupiscence.

Furthermore, boundless and vain desires impede man from reflection on the coming of Resurrection and expressing his belief in the same.

Surah al-Ghafir – Verse 60

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ
جَهَنَّمَ دَاخِرِينَ

60. And your Lord said: “Invoke Me, I will respond to your [invocation]. Indeed those who scorn My worship, they will surely enter Hell in humiliation.”

God Almighty asks us to invoke Him despite the fact that He is All-Aware of our needs, but invoking Him entails consequences.

The preceding Verses included warnings against disbelievers and the vain; however, the blessed Verse in question, He promises the repentant to bestow His Bounties and Favors on them, saying:

“And your Lord said: ‘Invoke Me, I will respond to your [invocation].’”

Many an exegete maintain that invocation herein and also in numerous traditions cited in their exegeses under the blessed Verse in question as to invocation and its Divine Rewards refers to its literal sense.

Nevertheless, following Ibn ‘Abbas, the exeget of repute, some other Qur’anic exegetes hold that invocation attested herein may designate monotheism and worshipping God Almighty, i.e.

“Worship Me and believe in My Unity.”

However, the former interpretation sounds more appropriate.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question makes mention of a number of points:

God Almighty wants believers to invoke Him in their devotions.

Answering prayers follows invocation, but we know that it is a conditional Promise, since solely prayers are answered that they have the required qualifications as to the invoker and the subject of invocation. The point was already raised and a detailed discussion on the same as well as on its philosophy and true meaning are to be found under 2:186.

Prayer is a form of worship since the word worship is applied to it in the blessed Verse in question.

Those refraining from invoking God Almighty are thus severely warned:

“Indeed those who scorn My worship, they will surely enter Hell in humiliation.”

Numerous traditions narrated from the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) and Imams (as) clearly refer to the significance of invocation.

A number of the instances include:

According to a Prophetic tradition:

*“Invocation is worshipping God.”*⁴⁰

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as), the Noble Imam is asked:

“What do you say about two persons who entered a mosque and one of them established more prayers and the other invoked God Almighty in more devotions. Which one enjoys a more exalted state?”

The Imam replied:

“Both did righteous good deeds.”

He was again asked:

“I know that, but which one is superior to the other?”

The Noble Imam replied:

*“The one who invoked God in more devotions is higher in rank. Have you not heard that invocation is the greatest worship?”*⁴¹

It is reported that Imam Baqir (as) was asked on the excellence of invocation.

He replied:

*“There is nothing more excellent than invoking God Almighty in devotions and no one is more detested before God Almighty than one who is too arrogant to invoke him to bestow His blessings and bounties on him.”*⁴²

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that there are stations on the Path toward God Almighty whose attainment is solely possible through invocation. If one fails to invoke Him, nothing will be granted to him. Therefore, invoke God Almighty to grant you His Favors, since if you knock at any door and persevere, it will be finally opened to you.”

According to some traditions, invocation is even considered to entail more excellence than recitation of the Holy Qur’an, since it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S), Imam Baqir (as), and Imam Sadiq (as) that invocation is more excellent than the recitation of the Holy Qur’an.⁴³

A brief analysis may lead to the profound contextual meaning of these traditions, since invocation of God Almighty in devotions leads man to knowing God Almighty that is the best possession for him on the one hand and makes him perceive that he is in need of Him and he should be humble before Him, cast away vanity and arrogance resulting in misfortunes and disputes concerning the Signs and Verses of God Almighty on the other.

Thus, man feels inferior before His Pure Essence. It is through invoking God that man perceives that Bounties are bestowed by God Almighty; as a consequence of which he loves Him thus strengthens his spiritual nexus with His Presence.

It is in this vein that man perceives that he is in need of Divine Favors and feels the obligation to submit to Him and obey His Command.

Besides, when man understands that answering prayers is not unconditional, but it depends on sincerity of intention, purity of heart, repentance from committing sins, and meeting the demands of friends and the needy, he will purify his heart and endeavors to avoid from excesses and impurities.

Furthermore, invocation leads to self confidence and impedes man from sinking into hopelessness and encourages him to make further attempts to attain to his goals.

Finally, a significant point is to follow this brief discussion.

According to Islamic traditions, invoking God is required when man spares no effort in attaining to his

goals, but his endeavors are of no avail; it is then that he invokes God Almighty to render him help. In other words, man may not invoke God Almighty in lieu of making his efforts, since in this case, his invocations will not be definitely answered.

As per a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

“There are four groups whose invocations will not be answered: one who stays at home and asks God to grant him sustenance.

It is said unto him:

‘Did I not ask you to endeavor?’

One who hurts their spouse and the latter prays to God to help them get rid of them.

It is said unto them:

‘Did I not permit you to get divorce?’

One who squanders their possessions but invokes God to provide them with sustenance.

It is said unto them:

‘Did I not provide you with injunctions as to moderation and economy? Did I not command you to manage your financial affairs wisely?’

One who loans their possession to someone without any witness and the receiver of the loan denies the receipt. The lender invokes God Almighty to make the denier acknowledge the loan.

It is said unto them:

‘Did I not command you to take witnesses upon lending your possessions to others?’”⁴⁴

It is needless to say that in such instances, such people do not take the required care as to making efforts and taking the precautions and entangled themselves by the undesirable consequences thereof and their invocations in this vein will not be answered.

Now it has been clarified why many an invocation are not answered: some people to desist from making efforts and seek refuge in prayers, but God Almighty shall never answer them. There exist other reasons for prayers not being answered; for instance, many a time, man makes mistakes as to distinction between gains and losses.

At times, he invokes God Almighty wholeheartedly to grant him something which is not to his interest and later on he may notice that his request was not to his interest.

For example, a patient or a child may ask their nurses to provide them with delicious foods but acting upon their requests will aggravate their ailment or their lives may be jeopardized. In such cases, the Most Compassionate and the Most Gracious Allah will never answer prayers but saves them for their Hereafter.

Furthermore, answering prayers are subject to conditions mentioned in Qur'anic Verses and Islamic traditions⁴⁵. It is mentioned in numerous traditions that committing certain sins, e.g. malevolence, hypocrisy, delaying the establishment of daily prayers, slander, consumption of unlawful food, failure to pay alms tax and expending in Allah's Cause impedes prayers from being answered.⁴⁶

The discussion closes with a significant tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as).

In his *Ihtijaj*, Tabarsi cites a tradition from the Imam (as):

“The Noble Imam was asked:

‘Does God Almighty not ask His servants to invoke Him and He will answer the prayers?’ We see many people in need who pray but their prayers are not answered. We see many wronged people who invoke God to render them victorious over wrong doers but they are not helped.’

The Imam (as) said:

‘Woe unto you! No one invokes Him whose prayer is not answered. However, the wrong doers’ invocations are not accepted unless they repent.

The prayers of the wronged will be answered and the evils are warded off and at times they are not apprised of the same or the rewards are abundantly saved for them for their time of need (Day of Resurrection). Whenever His servants invoke Him to grant them something against their benefits, He will not answer such prayers.⁴⁷

Surah al-Ghafir – Verse 61

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ اللَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوا فِيهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَذُو فَضْلٍ عَلَى
النَّاسِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُونَ

61. Allah, it is He Who has made the night for you that you may rest therein and the day for you to see. Truly, Allah is full of Bounty to mankind; yet, most of mankind give no thanks.

It is solely the Creator of the day and night and the Provider of our needs Who is worthy of being invoked. Since invoking God is secondary to knowing Him, the following Verse treats of the truths which

raise the level of human understanding and meets one of the requirements of invocation which is setting one's hope in its being answered.

The blessed Verse says:

“Allah, it is He Who has made the night for you that you may rest therein and the day for you to see,”

since the darkness of night leads to the obligatory stoppage of daily activities on the one side and darkness per se engenders serenity and resting of body and soul and light leads to motion and activity on the other.

The blessed Verse says:

“the day for you to see”

so as to brighten the living environment and prepare it for all activities. It is worthy of note that ***mubsiran*** indicates “seeing” and thus depicting the day actually emphasizes making people see.

The blessed Verse further adds:

“Truly, Allah is full of Bounty to mankind; yet, most of mankind give no thanks.”

The precise order of the night and day and the consecution of light and darkness are instances of Divine Bounties and Favors bestowed upon servants considered among significant factors of the life of mankind and other living beings.

There will not be life and motion without light. Without temporary darkness, all creatures will be weakened and plant will wither. However, most of people take no account of such Divine Great Bounties and pass them unnoticed.

It is worthy of note that we normally expect a pronoun for the second

al-nas (“people, mankind”),

namely:

“Truly, Allah is full of Bounty to mankind; yet, most of them give no thanks,”

but the use of

“mankind”

instead of pronoun may indicate that uncultured mankind are ingratiated for Divine Blessings, as it is reflected elsewhere in the Qur'an48:

“and man is indeed an extreme wrong doer, a disbeliever.”⁴⁹

However, if man happens to have seeing eyes and a wise heart to perceive “the showers of His Boundless Mercy have penetrated to every spot and the banquet of his unstinted liberality is spread out everywhere,” he will unconsciously express his gratitude and praise before God Almighty and will feel humble and inferior before Divine Mercy and Glory.

Surah al-Ghafir – Verse 62 – 63

ذَلِكُمُ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ لَّا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَآَنَى تُؤْفَكُونَ

كَذَلِكَ يُؤْفَكُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ يَجْحَدُونَ

62. That is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of all things: there is no god but Allah. How then are you turning away [from the Path of Truth]?

63. Thus were turned away those who used to deny the Ayat (Verses, Signs) of Allah.

God Almighty Who is the Lord of mankind and the Creator of all beings is worthy of praise. One who does not set his hope in the Origin of existence will deviate from the True Path.

The blessed Verse 62 opens with the Unity of Divine Lordship and closes with the Unity of Creatorship and Lordship, saying:

“That is Allah, your Lord, the Creator of all things: there is no god but Allah.”

Abundant Divine Bounties actually indicate His Lordship and expediency of His Acts. Creatorship of all things reveals His Unity of Lordship, since the Creator of all beings is the Possessor and Fosterer of them.

We know that Divine Creatorship does not designate that He creates all beings and then leaves them on their own, but all beings of the world of existence enjoy His Emanations at all times and such Creatorship is inseparable from Lordship. It is evident that God Almighty is solely worthy of praise and Divinity.

Thus,

“the Creator of all things”

serves as an argument for

“That is Allah, your Lord”

and

“There is no god but Allah”

is the conclusion.

Verse 62 closes thus:

“How then are you turning away [from the Path of Truth]?”

The question raised is:

“Why do you turn away from worshipping God Almighty and instead you turn to idolatry?”

It is noteworthy that tu’fakun is a verb in the passive voice designating that they make you turn away from the Path of Truth, as if idolaters are so weak minded that they lack free choice in their course of action.

Verse 63 lays emphasis on the foregoing points, saying:

“Thus were turned away those who used to deny the Ayat (Verses, Signs) of Allah.”

The verb form yajhadun derives from j–h–d designating denial of something entertained in one’s heart, i.e. believing in something and denying the same or believing in the denial of something but proving the same.

Stingy and closefisted people who pretend to be poor are called jahd and ard jahda is applied to a land with less plants.⁵⁰ Some other lexicographers define jahd and juhud as thought accompanied by knowledge.⁵¹

Thus, the semantic range of jahd entails some obduracy and/or enmity against God Almighty.

Such people confront with truths with such attribute and they merely turn away from the Path of Truth, since a truth seeking man who is submitted to Divine Will may solely attain to the Truth which requires purification of the self and fearing God Almighty as a prerequisite for believing in Him, as reflected in the Holy Qur’an⁵²:

“This is the Book whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to the God fearing pious.”

2. 13:35
3. Misbah by Shaykh, apud Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 4, p.526.
4. 40:85
5. 47:9
6. 10:73
7. 21:69
8. 37:134
9. 12:21
10. 11:94
11. 21:88
12. 21:66
13. 10:
14. 3:55
15. 48:1
16. 3:123
17. 9:26
18. 48:4
19. 21:76
20. 42:26
21. 8:11
22. 14:11
23. 12:34
24. 71:26
25. 57:25
26. 4:54
27. 9:4
28. 9:4
29. 7:136
30. 3:124
31. 59:2
32. 61:9
33. 29:15
34. 8:18
35. 51:39-40
36. 18:28
37. 12:23
38. 40:27
39. Fakhr Razi's Majma' al-Bayan; Kashshaf; Ruh al-Ma'ani; Tafsir Safi; Ruh al-Bayan.
40. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 8, p. 528.
41. Ibid, p. 529.
42. Kafi, vol. 2, Bab Fadl al-Du'a ("Chapter on the Excellence of Invocation"), p. 338.
43. Makarim al-Akhlaq, apud al-Mizan, vol. 2, p. 34, under 2:186.
44. Usul Kafi, vol. 2, Bab Du'a ("Chapter on Invocation"), hadith 2.
45. for details, see the exegesis of 2:186
46. Ma'ani al-Akhbar, apud Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 4, p. 534.
47. Tafsir Safi, under the blessed Verse in question.
48. 14:34
49. Tafsir al-Mizan; Ruh al-Ma'ani, under the blessed Verse in question.

50. Raghīb's Mufradat, under j-h-d.

51. Lisan al-'Arab, apud Jawhari.

52. 2:2

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