

Surah al-Hadid, Verses 16 – 29

Surah al-Hadid – Verse 16

أَلَمْ يَأْنِ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَنْ تَخْشَعَ قُلُوبُهُمْ لِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَمَا نَزَلَ مِنَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا يَكُونُوا
كَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِتَابَ مِنْ قَبْلُ فَطَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَمَدُ فَقَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَكَثِيرٌ مِنْهُمْ
فَاسِقُونَ

16. Has not the time come for the hearts of those who believe to be softened and humbled by Allah's Reminder, such that they be not amongst those upon whom the Divine Book was revealed and the term was prolonged for them and so their hearts were hardened and many of them were disobedient to Allah?

Different occasions of Revelation have been mentioned for the blessed Verse in question including the following. Once the Noble Prophet's (S) adherents lived a hard life in famine in Mecca but after their migration they attained to abundance and bounties.

Thus, the hearts of some of them were hardened whereas their faith, certitude, and devotion were supposed to be increased owing to their acquaintance with the Holy Qur'an.

Thus, the blessed Verse was revealed to serve as a warning to them.¹ It is worthy of note that all the awakening and severe warnings reflected in the preceding blessed Verses and the account of the hypocrites' and disbelievers' dire fate on the Day of Resurrection lead to the conclusion in the blessed Verse in question by saying that the hearts of believers should be humbled against remembrance of God Almighty and Divine Revelation and they should not be like those, including Jews and Christians, upon whom Divine Books were sent down, but they kept aloof from the Prophets. They lived long but failed to remember God Almighty.

Their hearts were hardened and many of them were sinners and disobedient to Divine Commands.

The Arabic verbal form takhsha‘a derives from kh–sh–‘ denoting "observe manners against a notable person or an important truth."

It is crystal clear that when man remembers God Almighty in the bottom of his heart, listens to the blessed Verses revealed unto the Noble Prophet (S), and befittingly reflects upon the same, his heart must be softened and humbled. However, some believers are harshly criticized in the blessed Verse in question by asking why their hearts are not humbled by such things but they, like many former nations, have plunged into neglect and negligence.

Such neglect leads to the hardening of heart which in turn ends in disobedience to God Almighty. Would it be consistent with their claim to having faith to simply ignore such significant issues, be submitted to comfortable life, and being immersed in the pleasures of the flesh?

"The term was prolonged for them"

may reflect the temporal distance between them and their Prophets, long life and endless desires, Divine torment not being sent down for a long time, or all of them, since each of which may lead to neglect and hardening of heart that in turn leads to disobedience to Divine Command.

It is narrated from Imam ‘Ali (as):

*"Do not hasten as to anything before its term arrives unless you will regret your haste. The distance between you and Truth should not be long as it will harden your hearts."*²

It is narrated from Jesus (as) that it is incumbent upon believers not to speak for long without remembrance of God Almighty otherwise it leads to hardening of heart and hardened hearts are remote from God Almighty.³

Surah al-Hadid – Verse 17

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا قَدْ بَيَّنَّا لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُونَ

17. Know that Allah gives life to the earth after its death! Indeed, We have made clear the Signs to you, if you but reflect [upon them].

Since giving life to dead hearts through remembrance of God Almighty and attainment to spiritual life in the light of humbleness and obedience to the Holy Qur’an to a great extent resembles the life giving rain drops rejuvenating dead lands, the blessed Verse in question says:

"Know that Allah gives life to the earth after its death."

The blessed Verse is saying that We elucidated Our Signs in the world of creation as well as Our Verses such that you may reflect upon them. The blessed Verse actually makes a reference to rain giving life to dead lands and to giving of life to dead hearts through remembrance of God Almighty and the Holy Qur'an revealed to the pure heart of Muhammad (S). Both of them deserve reflection.

Thus, reference has been made to the twain in Islamic traditions. In this vein, it is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that the blessed Verse in question refers to giving life to the earth through propagation of justice following the effacement of injustice.⁴

It is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) concerning the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question that God Almighty shall give life to earth following its death by Imam Mahdi (may God Almighty hasten his arrival) and the death of the earth reflects the disbelief of its inhabitants and disbelievers are dead.⁵

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Musa ibn Ja'far (as):

*"God Almighty gives life to dead hearts through the light of wisdom, the same manner that He gives life to the earth by sending down blissful rains on it."*⁶

It goes without saying that these exegeses actually reflect the clear meanings of the blessed Verse and by no means restrict the contextual meaning of it.

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 18

إِنَّ الْمُصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُصَدِّقَاتِ وَأَقْرَضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُضَاعَفُ لَهُمْ وَلَهُمْ أَجْرٌ
كَرِيمٌ

18. Indeed, those men and women who have given Allah goodly loans, their rewards shall be increased manifold, and theirs shall be an honorable good reward.

The blessed Verse in question is saying that men and women believing in God Almighty, acknowledging the Prophetic call, and expending their possessions for Allah's Satisfaction are favored by Him and great rewards shall fall into their shares.

Expending in Allah's Cause is so significant that although God Almighty is the Possessor of all things, He is so Gracious to His servants that He encourages them to expending in His Cause by saying that it is like giving Him goodly loans reflecting that in the same manner that loans will be reimbursed, expending in Allah's Cause will be returned manifold.

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 19

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ وَالشُّهَدَاءُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ أَجْرُهُمْ
وَنُورُهُمْ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ

19. And Those who believe in Allah and His Messengers, they are the sincere believers and the witnesses with their Lord; they shall have their reward and their light. But those who disbelieve and deny Our Signs, they shall be the dwellers of the Fire.

The blessed Verse makes mention of sincere believers as those who believed in God Almighty and Prophetic calls.

The Arabic intensified form siddiq

("sincere")

denotes one acting upon sincerity and truth in all his deeds, words, and beliefs and his outward reflects his inward and his inward is absorbed in the sea of spiritual and intuitive knowledge and sincerity.

Such people live according to truth and they will be rewarded for their righteous deeds and their light is the reward of their sincere belief. Au contraire, those who denied Divine Signs and Verses and belied the Prophets shall be friends and people of Hell.

According to Tabarsi, the eminent Shi'i scholar, Harith ibn Mughayra narrates from Imam Baqir (as) who in turned narrated traditions from the Noble Prophet (S), saying:

"Whoever of you knows the Imam of his time and awaits his authority resembles one who awaiting the rise of the riser (may Allah hastens his arrival) from the Noble Prophet's (S) descendants wages war in Allah's cause or he is likened to one martyred in the Noble Prophet's pavilion."

Then, the Imam (as) said that there is a Qur'anic Verse in this regard and upon inquiring as to which Verse, he recited:

"And Those who believe in Allah and His Messengers, they are the sincere believers and the witnesses with their Lord; they shall have their reward and their light. But those who disbelieve and deny Our Signs, they shall be the dwellers of the Fire."⁷

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 20

اعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا لَعِبٌ وَلَهُوٌ وَزِينَةٌ وَتَفَاخُرٌ بَيْنَكُمْ وَتَكَاثُرٌ فِي الْأَمْوَالِ
وَالْأَوْلَادِ كَمَثَلِ غَيْثٍ أَعْجَبَ الْكُفَّارَ نَبَاتُهُ ثُمَّ يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مَصْفُورًا ثُمَّ يَكُونُ حُطَامًا
وَفِي الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَغْفِرَةٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَرِضْوَانٌ وَمَا الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا مَتَاعُ
الْغُرُورِ

20. Know that the worldly life is only play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting among you, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children. [It is] the likeness of vegetation after rain, thereof the growth is pleasing to the farmer; afterwards it dries up and you see it turning yellow; then it becomes straw. But in the Hereafter [there is] a severe torment and forgiveness from Allah and good pleasure. And the life of this world is only a deceiving enjoyment.

Since love for the mundane world is the origin of all sins and the springhead of all errors, the blessed Verse presents a telling depiction of the worldly life, its different stages, and the motives dominating each stage by saying:

"Know that the worldly life is only play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting among you, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children."

The five cycles of human life consist of neglect, amusement, luxury, boasting, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children. Childhood is spent in neglect, ignorance, and amusement. Adolescence is spent in playfulness and escaping from serious issues to amusement.

Youth is spent in lust, love, and luxury. Then, man reaches the fourth stage when man is inclined toward prestige and boastfulness. Finally, the fifth stage is when man is preoccupied with gaining more possessions and having more children.

The early stages are nearly determined by advancement in years, but later stages vary in different people and stages like gaining further possessions may occupy man to the end of his life. Some maintain, however, that each of the said stages occupies eight years of life totaling to forty years when man's character is fixed.

The blessed Verse proceeds with a similitude as to the beginning and the end of worldly life, saying:

"[It is] the likeness of vegetation after rain, thereof the growth is pleasing to the farmer; afterwards it dries up and you see it turning yellow; then it becomes straw."

The Arabic word kuffar herein denotes farmers since the word kufr originally denotes covering and since

farmers sows the seeds by covering it by soil. Nonetheless, some exegetes maintain that the word is employed herein in the sense of disbelievers, since worldly possessions may solely deceive disbelievers and inspire wonder in them.

The Arabic word hutam denotes shattering and breaking into pieces and it is also applied to the straw scattered by wind. The word ghayth denotes good rain. The verbal form yahiju is employed in two senses: withering of plants and excitement.

It is worthy of note that human stages lasting seventy years and beyond are reflected in plants within a period of several months. Man may sit by the farmland and witness in brief the transience of life.

The blessed Verse proceeds with the fruits of life saying that consequent to one's deeds, either severe torment or Divine Satisfaction may fall into man's share. Finally, the blessed Verse ends by saying that worldly life is nothing but deception. The Arabic word ghurur denotes deception and mata' signifies the means of using something.

Thus, the blessed Verse is saying that worldly life is the means of deception, namely it serves as the means of deceiving oneself and others. It is worthy of note that the means of deception applies to those who regard mundane life as their final goal. They attach themselves to and rely on it. they set their final goal on gaining further possessions.

However, if the bounties of the mundane world serve as the means of attaining to exalted human values and everlasting happiness, it will be like the farm of the Hereafter and a bridge which may be employed to attain to sublime goals. Attending to the world and its bounties as a passageway and temporary place of residence may lead man to two different orientations.

It may either lead to quarrels, corruption, injustice, tyranny, disobedience, and neglect or it may lead to awareness, awakening, sacrifice, brotherhood, and forgiving. In other words, what leads disbelievers to deception and chastisement may lead believers to growth, development, and Divine Forgiveness and Satisfaction.

Surah al-Hadid – Verse 21

سَابِقُوا إِلَىٰ مَغْفِرَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ وَجَنَّةٍ عَرْضُهَا كَعَرْضِ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أُعِدَّتْ لِلَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرُسُلِهِ ذَٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

21. Race with one another in hastening toward Divine Forgiveness and Paradise whose width is as the width of the heaven and the earth, prepared for those who believe in Allah and His Messengers. That is the Grace of Allah which He bestows on whom He is pleased with. And Allah

is the Owner of Great Bounty.

The preceding blessed Verse reflects that human deeds in this world will entail either severe torment or Divine Forgiveness and Satisfaction. The blessed Verse in question emphasizes racing in hastening toward Divine Forgiveness.

Thus, the blessed Verse says:

"Race with one another in hastening toward Divine Forgiveness and Paradise whose width is as the width of the heaven and the earth, prepared for those who believe in Allah and His Messengers."

Divine Forgiveness is actually the key to Paradise encompassing the heaven and the earth which is now prepared for believers.

It is noteworthy that making a reference to Divine Forgiveness prior to receiving glad tidings of being admitted to Paradise delicately reflects the truth that so long as man is not absolved of sins, he will not deserve to being admitted to Paradise and be near unto Divine Threshold.

It is also worthy of note that racing toward Divine Forgiveness may be carried out through its means, including repentance and compensation for missed obligations and basically obedience to God Almighty and refraining from committing sins.

The blessed Verse ends by saying:

"That is the Grace of Allah which He bestows on whom He is pleased with. And Allah is the Owner of Great Bounty."

Undoubtedly, such vast Paradise with its great bounties may not be attained by such insignificant deeds, but it is Divine Grace, Mercy, and Favor that such great reward is bestowed against such insignificant deeds. Man may not expect otherwise, since rewards are always consistent to the generosity of the one bestowing rewards.

Thus, the expression clearly reflects that Divine Rewards are not bestowed on the basis of insignificant deeds, but they are Divine Bounties and Favors.

Surah al-Hadid – Verse 22

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِّن قَبْلِ أَنْ نَبْرَأَهَا
إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

22. No calamity befalls on the earth or in yourselves but it is inscribed in the Tablet before We bring it into existence. Verily, that is easy for Allah.

The world of existence is well-measured and prior to becoming existent, all phenomena have been recorded.

Thus, to lay further emphasis on refraining from mundane attachments and not being affected by worldly possession and loss, the blessed Verse says:

"No calamity befalls on the earth or in you but it is inscribed in the Preserved Tablet before We bring it into existence. Verily, that is easy for Allah."

Calamities like earthquakes, floods, tempests, and different blights and also human afflictions like death, ailments, and undesirable occurrences have all been pre-ordained and recorded in the Preserved Tablet aiming to test mankind in encountering vicissitudes.

However, it is worthy of note that the calamities mentioned in the blessed Verse in question are solely inevitable ones beyond human control.

The same theme is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an8:

"And whatever of misfortune befalls you is the consequence of what your hands have earned. And He is Oft-Forgiving."

The twain blessed Verses interpret each other reflecting that afflictions befalling man fall into two categories, the first of which include numerous chastisements and atonements of sins, e.g. injustice, treason, deviation, and neglect, constituting the consequence of our deeds.

The second category includes the inevitable afflictions beyond human control affecting individuals and societies aiming at trials. These two categories are discrete. Thus, many Prophets, friends of God Almighty, and pious believers were afflicted by such calamities for their trial or promotion of exalted states such that those who are nearer unto Divine Threshold suffer further calamities.

There is a precise philosophy for such afflictions which were mentioned above in discussions on theology, Divine Justice, and afflictions.

In this vein, it is narrated that upon Imam 'Ali ibn al-Husayn Zayn al-'Abidin's (as) arrival in shackles and fetters at Yazid's meeting, the latter turned to the Imam (as) and recited Verse 30 from Surah al-Shura9:

"And Whatever of misfortune befalls you, it is because of what your hands have earned. And He is Oft-Forgiving,"

sarcastically connoting that the afflictions of their family are the consequences of their deeds. However, the Imam (as) refuted his claim by saying that the blessed Verse had not been revealed about them, but

another blessed Verse had been sent down as per which God Almighty had preordained such afflictions for them for the upkeep of the Islamic faith. 10

It is worthy of note that afflictions befalling the unjust aim at warning them, but those befalling believers are the means of trial and growth and those befalling Allah's friends aim at promotion of their exalted states. 11

According to another tradition:

"Afflictions of the unjust are for warning them, those befalling believers are for trial, and those befalling Allah's friends are for promotion of their states."

It is noteworthy that:

"And verily it is easy for Allah"

reflects that recording so many afflictions in the Preserved Tablet is facile for Allah. The Preserved Tablet indicates Divine Omniscience reflected in the world of creation and the system of causality governing it.

Surah al-Hadid – Verse 23

لِكَيْلَا تَأْسَوْا عَلَىٰ مَا فَاتَكُمْ وَلَا تَفْرَحُوا بِمَا آتَاكُمْ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ

23. In order that you may not grieve at the things that you fail to achieve, nor rejoice at what has been given to you. And Allah likes not prideful boasters.

Now let us turn to the philosophy of preordination of such afflictions in the Preserved Tablet as reflected in the Holy Qur'an:

"[You are afflicted with such calamities such that] you may not regret the things that you fail to achieve, nor rejoice at what has been granted to you."

The twain brief clauses actually present a solution to one of the sophisticated issues of the philosophy of creation. Man faces unpleasant entanglements and problems in the world of existence and many a time raises the question as per which what are the reasons lying behind such excruciating calamities when God Almighty is Most Gracious, Most Merciful, and Most Compassionate?

Such calamities aims at warning man that he should not be attached to mundane possessions and glories, since the world is but a passageway or a bridge by which you are not supposed to be allured.

You are not supposed to regard it to be everlasting, since such attachment is the bitterest foe to your happiness as it makes you forget God Almighty and impedes your path toward development. Such afflictions serve as sirens alerting the neglectful and whips struck upon dormant souls. They symbolize intransience of the world.

The point is that worldly possessions allure men and make them forget God Almighty. They wake up when the caravan has departed for long and they are abandoned in the desert.

Thus, God Almighty preordained afflictions and vicissitudes such that human soul may ascend to such elevated states that he may not be affected by pleasant and unpleasant occurrences.

After the occurrences in Karbala', Zaynab (as) said:

*"I did not notice but pleasant occurrences preordained by God Almighty."*¹²

It is narrated that in his last moments in the battlefield, Imam Husayn (as) said:

*"O Lord! I am satisfied with Your Satisfaction and I am patient in Your afflictions."*¹³

Imam 'Ali (as) likened his eagerness to martyrdom to that of the infant to its mother's breast.¹⁴ If man becomes aware the reasons lying behind afflictions, he will not be envious, avaricious, wrathful, and hateful, since he knows that all afflictions have been wisely preordained.

If we know that Divine Bounties entail obligations, we will not rejoice at them and if we know that we have to compensate for them on the Day of Resurrection, we will not regret at losing them. The blessed Verse ends by saying that God Almighty does not favor the vain. The Arabic words mukhtal and fakhur denote arrogant and boastful respectively.

Surah al-Hadid – Verse 24

الَّذِينَ يَبْخُلُونَ وَيَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبُخْلِ وَمَنْ يَتَوَلَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ

24. Those who are misers and enjoin people to miserliness. And whosoever turns away from expending in His Cause and giving loans, then Allah is Rich, Worthy of all praise.

The blessed Verse in question elaborates on the aforesaid points and depicts the vain arrogant, saying:

"Those who are misers and enjoin people to miserliness."

Severe attachment to mundane possessions requires arrogance and vanity which in turn require miserliness and enjoining others to the same. Such people are miserly since they regard mundane

possessions as the means of arrogance and vanity.

They do not intend to lose them. But enjoining others to miserliness is owing to the fact that if others happen to be generous, they will be disgraced. Secondly, since they favor miserliness, they enjoin something by which they are enamored. God Almighty emphatically enjoins others to expend in His Cause and refrain from miserliness. Such encouragement does not stem from the need of His Pure Essence.

The blessed Verse ends by saying:

"And whosoever turns away from expending in His Cause and giving loans, then Allah is Rich, Worthy of all praise."

He is needless but all need Him, since He is the Origin of all things. He is also Worthy of all praise, since He encompasses all Perfect Attributes.

Although

"miserliness"

(bukhl) mainly reflects miserliness in expending possessions, but the semantic range is broader such that it includes miserliness in imparting knowledge, acting upon obligations, and the like.

In this vein, mention will be made of some traditions.

Imam 'Ali (as) said:

*"Do not consult with the miserly."*¹⁵

Once circumambulating at night, Imam Sadiq (as) thus invoked God Almighty:

*"O Lord! Keep me from miserliness."*¹⁶

The Noble Prophet (S) said:

*"The true miser is one who hears my name but refrains from saluting me."*¹⁷

The Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) said:

*"Glancing at the miserly and associating with them hardens man's heart."*¹⁸

Imam 'Ali (as) said:

*"Miserliness is the attire of poverty and destitution."*¹⁹

Imam 'Ali (as) said:

The miserly are humiliated among their friends and beloved ones."²⁰

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The best of you are your generous and chivalrous people and the worst of you are the miserly. Beneficence toward brethren and making efforts to meet their demands reflect pure faith."

Imam Ridha (as) said:

*"The miserly are remote from God Almighty, Paradise, and people."*²¹

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 25

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ
وَأَنْزَلْنَا الْحَدِيدَ فِيهِ بَأْسٌ شَدِيدٌ وَمَنَافِعُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلِيَعْلَمَ اللَّهُ مَن يَنْصُرُهُ وَرُسُلَهُ
بِالْغَيْبِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ قَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ

25. Verily, We have sent Our Messengers with clear proofs and sent with them the Scripture and the Balance that mankind may keep up justice. And we brought forth iron wherein is mighty power as well as many benefits for mankind that Allah may test who it is that will help Him and His Messengers in the unseen. Verily, Allah is All-Mighty, All-Invincible.

As mentioned in the preceding blessed Verses, racing toward Divine Mercy, Forgiveness, and Paradise requires the leadership of Divinely appointed leaders, the blessed and most significant Verse in question treats the same and precisely elucidates the goal behind sending the Prophets and their Prophetic calls, saying:

"We sent down Our Messengers with clear proofs and sent with them the Scripture and the Balance that mankind may keep up justice."

"Clear proofs"

(bayyinat) covers a broad semantic range embracing the miracles and intellectual arguments of Divinely appointed Messengers.

The singular noun 'Book' (kitab) connoting Scriptures reflects the unity of their spirit and truth, although their contents are further perfected with the passage of time and human development. The word 'Balance' (mizan) denotes the means of weighing but undoubtedly herein connotes its immaterial significance, namely something by which all human deeds may be assayed.

The word balance reflects Divine Commands and Laws thereby a distinction may be made between truth and untruth and good and bad. The Holy Qur'an is the clear proof and the Scripture and it elucidates Divine Laws and Commands. In other words, the Holy Qur'an constitutes three dimensions.

The goal of sending the Prophets, such great men, with such perfect equipment, is to keep up equity and justice.

It is worthy of note that the clause:

"that mankind may keep up justice"

reflects moves on the part of mankind rather than the Prophets making people keep up justice.

In other words, the blessed Verse is saying that people must grow such that they keep up justice themselves. Nonetheless, despite the exalted state of ethics, belief, and fear of God Almighty in any society, there are still people who disobey to God Almighty and stand in the way of keeping up equity and justice.

Thus, the blessed Verse proceeds to say:

"And we brought forth iron wherein is mighty power as well as many benefits for mankind that Allah may test who it is that will help Him and His Messengers in the unseen. Verily, Allah is All-Mighty, All-Invincible."

Thus, the three means of Divinely appointed Messengers may lead to their final goal when supported by the guarantee of making use of iron and its mighty power."

However, some maintain that the expression

"We have sent down"

reflects the alien origin of iron, but the fact is that such expressions connote the bounties bestowed from higher to lower levels and since all resources are with God Almighty and He created iron for different benefits of it, the expression:

"We have sent down"

is used herein.

In this vein, it is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as):

*"Sending down connotes its creation."*²²

It is worthy of note that the Arabic word ba's denotes severity, intensity, power, and might and it connotes war and struggle as well. Thus, some Qur'an exegetes maintain that it signifies military

equipment employed for invasion and defense.

Thus, it is narrated from the Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) that the word in question connotes weaponry and other things.²³ Such instances clearly reflect its applicability. The word 'benefits' (manafi') reflects any use made by man of iron.

We know that iron makes many a contribution in human life and its discovery made a new epoch in the history of mankind known as the Iron Age.

The discovery altered all spheres of human life reflected in the dimensions of the word 'benefits' in the blessed Verse in question that also refers to another goal behind sending the Prophets and sending down Scriptures and the creation of certain means like iron, saying that God Almighty sent them to know who assist Him and His Messengers in the Unseen.

Divine Omniscience herein reflects the objective actualization of His Knowledge, namely it reveals that who will rise to render support to God Almighty and His religion and thus rise toward the upkeep of equity and justice and who will refrain from acting upon such great obligation. Thus, one of the main goals is to test mankind and screen and purify them.

"Assisting God Almighty undoubtedly reflects support His religion and Messengers and propagation of truth, equity, and justice, although God Almighty is in need of no one but all beings are in need of Him.

Thus, the blessed Verse ends with:

"Indeed Allah is All-Mighty, All-Invincible."

He may turn the entire world upside down in one single moment and cause the perdition of all enemies and the triumph of His friends. However, the main goal of sending down the Messengers is the growth and development of mankind, thus they are called to assist the religion of truth.

Thus, it is narrated from the Noble Prophet (S):

"Only swords may make people rise and swords are the keys to Paradise and Hell."

Thus, Divinely appointed leaders hold the Scripture in one hand and the sword in the other. They begin with calling people to truth and justice by logical arguments, but if they fail to acknowledge the truth, they have to use force to make them believe.

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 26

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا النُّبُوَّةَ وَالْكِتَابَ فَمِنْهُمْ مُهْتَدٍ

وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ

26. And verily, We sent Noah and Abraham and placed in their offspring Prophethood and Scripture. And among them there are some who are guided; but many of them are sinners.

The Prophets were appointed by God Almighty rather than by mankind. The preceding blessed Verse generally treated of sending the Prophets, but the blessed Verse in question deal with the Arch-Prophets, beginning with Noah and Abraham (as) and the Arch-Prophets, saying that God Almighty vested Prophethood and Scriptures with their offspring; nonetheless, all their offspring failed to benefit from such great heritage and Bounties. Some of them found Divine Guidance in their light, but many of them were faithless, corrupt, and disobedient to Allah.

Prophethood began with Noah (as) and it was passed down to Abraham (as) and other Arch-Prophets. Then, it was passed down to some of their offspring. However, a limited number benefited from the Light of Guidance, but the majority of mankind went astray.

Surah al-Hadid – Verse 27

ثُمَّ قَفَّيْنَا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِم بِرُسُلِنَا وَقَفَّيْنَا بِعِيسَىٰ ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْإِنْجِيلَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي
قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوهُ رَأْفَةً وَرَحْمَةً وَرَهْبَانِيَّةً ابْتَدَعُوهَا مَا كَتَبْنَاهَا عَلَيْهِمْ إِلَّا ابْتِغَاءَ
رِضْوَانِ اللَّهِ فَمَا رَعَوْهَا حَقَّ رِعَايَتِهَا فَآتَيْنَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ وَكَثِيرٌ مِّنْهُمْ
فَاسِقُونَ

27. Then, We sent after them Our Messengers and We sent Jesus, son of Mary (as), and gave him the Gospel. And We ordained in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy. But the monasticism which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them, but they only aimed at pleasing Allah, but they did not observe it with the right observance. Therefore, We gave those among them who believed their reward; but many of them are disobedient to Allah.

The blessed Verse treats of sending the Prophets in succession by God Almighty for guiding mankind and sending Scriptures upon them such that God Almighty has provided mankind with Guidance imparted to them through His Messengers.

He also appointed Jesus, son of Mary (as), to Prophethood and sent down the Gospel unto him and made the hearts of his adherents merciful and compassionate. The compassion of Jesus¹ (as) people was like that of our Noble Prophet, Muhammad (S), such that concerning his companions, the Noble Prophet (S) said that there had been compassionate people among them.

Jesus' (as) people were so compassionate that if they were boxed in the ear, they not only did not take vengeance but also they turned the other side of their faces.

Today, Christians claim the same attitude and take pride in it but we notice that they cause the destruction of millions or billions of people by inventing weapons of mass destruction for their expansionist policies and they are even prepared to cause the destruction of their co-religionists.

"But the monasticism which they invented for themselves, We did not prescribe for them, but they only aimed at pleasing Allah, but they did not observe it with the right observance."

The Arabic word ruhbaniiyya

(***"monasticism"***)

is cognate with ruhban ("monastic, monk").

The latter, cognate with ruhba

(***"fear"***)

is applied to someone who is most pious, ascetic, and God fearing. The word designates a Christian monastic living in seclusion for worshipping God, asceticism, and fear of God Almighty.

The blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty did not oblige them to follow monasticism, but they were merely asked to gain Divine Satisfaction. In other words, monasticism was not in the Christian doctrine, but Christians innovated it later on.

Early monasticism was rather moderate, but it turned toward deviation, error, and corruption and it was misused to ensnare people. Thus, monasteries were turned into centers of corruption and abnormalities penetrated into the Christian faith.

Therefore, the blessed Verse is saying that their goal was set upon Divine Satisfaction, but they failed to observe it duly and appropriately. Thus, God Almighty rewarded those who believed, but the majority of them were disobedient and sinners.

It is owing to the same reason that monasticism has been severely criticized and condemned by the Islamic faith and the well-known tradition:

"There is no monasticism in Islam"

is mentioned in numerous Islamic sources.²⁴

In his exegetic work titled Majma' al-Bayan, Tabarsi narrates from Ibn Mas'ud that once he was mounted beside the Noble Prophet (S) when the latter asked:

"Do you know what was the origin of Christian monasticism?"

He replied:

"God Almighty and His Messenger know better."

He said:

"after Jesus (as), the disobedient and tyrants manifestly committed sins and disobeyed Divine Commands and believers could not tolerate their disobedience. Thus, Christian believers waged three wars with them and many monotheists fell in battles and few of them survived.

They said that if they waged further wars with them, all monotheists would fall and thought it would be better to leave the world to them and each of them live a life of seclusion and devotion in caves until Muhammad promised by Jesus (as) would arrive.

They had been leading a monastic life until I was appointed to the Prophetic call. Some of them believed in me, acknowledged my Prophethood, followed my injunctions, and were rewarded, but some of them failed to believe and perished."

Then, the Noble Prophet added:

"O Ibn Mas'ud! Do you know where the monasticism of my community lies?"

I replied:

"God Almighty and His Messenger know better."

He replied:

"Migration, jihad in Allah's Cause, establishing prayers, fasting, paying alms tax, obligatory and supererogatory pilgrimage to Mecca, and rendering serves to Muslims."25

Surah al-Hadid - Verse 28

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَآمِنُوا بِرَسُولِهِ يُؤْتِكُمْ كِفْلَيْنِ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَيَجْعَلْ لَكُمْ نُورًا تَمْشُونَ بِهِ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

28. O you who believe! Fear Allah and believe in His Messenger such that He will give you a double portion of His Mercy and He will give you a light by which you shall walk in this world and the Hereafter and He will forgive you. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

The blessed Verse may address the Christians mentioned in the preceding blessed Verse encouraging them to truly observe monasticism and turning away from the world and believe in the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) after Jesus (as) such that they receive the rewards for believing in Jesus (as) and Muhammad (S).

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet that those Christians who believed in him truly observed monasticism.²⁶ It is worthy of note, however, that the preceding Verse and the one in question may be interpreted independently thereby Muslims may deepen their belief in God Almighty and His Messenger (S).

The phrase:

"a double portion of His Mercy"

(kiflayn min rahmatih) may connote Divine Light and Divine Forgiveness.

It may also reflect the portions mentioned elsewhere²⁷ in the Holy Qur'an:

"O Lord! Give us in this world that which is good and in the Hereafter that which good."

It is also said that the twain portions are rewards for believing in the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) and former Prophets, since any Muslim is obliged to believe in and respect all former Prophets and their Scriptures.

Finally, pious believers shall be rewarded by Forgiving and absolution of sins, without which no Bounty shall be pleasing to man. In other words, man is supposed to feel secure from Divine torment and then he may find his path through the light of belief and fear of God Almighty and finally receive double portions of Divine Mercy.

It is noteworthy to say that according to the traditions narrated from Ahl al-Bayt (as), the word:

"light"

(nur) in this blessed Verse is applied to the infallible Imam representing Divine Light and followed by people.

Surah al-Hadid – Verse 29

لَيْلًا يَعْلَمَ أَهْلُ الْكِتَابِ أَلَّا يَقْدِرُونَ عَلَى شَيْءٍ مِّنْ فَضْلِ اللَّهِ وَأَنَّ الْفَضْلَ بِيَدِ اللَّهِ
يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ

29. So that the people of the Scripture may know that they have no power whatsoever over the Grace of Allah [and all double privileges and blessings belong to them] and that Grace is in His Hand to bestow it on whomsoever He wills. And Allah is the Owner of Great Bounty.

The blessed Chapter opened with glorification of Allah and ends with Divine Grace. It is reflected elsewhere in the Holy Qur'an²⁸ that those among the People of the Scripture who believe in the Islamic faith shall be rewarded twice (ajrahum marratayn). The same theme is to be found in these blessed Verses.

Addressed to Muslims it is said that if they fear Allah and believe in the Noble Prophet of Islam, they shall also be rewarded twice, such that the people of the Scripture may not imagine that Muslims may not receive double portions of Divine Mercy and such portions solely belongs to them.

Taking into account the blessed Verses including the phrase

"Great Bounty"

(fadhl 'adim), it is elucidated that Great Bounty connotes Guidance, Paradise, Divine Forgiving, Prophethood, Following Divine Satisfaction, and possession of accurate insight and distinction which is not employed for mundane Bounties. All-Wise Allah selects certain people to receive His Grace. Thus, Divine Grace is dependent upon His All-Wise Will rather than our imaginations.

Finally, the blessed Verse in question may be a response to the ambitions and groundless claims of some Jews and Christians claiming that Paradise and Divine Grace solely belong to them and others are deprived of them:

("And they say, 'None shall be admitted to Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian.' These are their own desires. Say [O Muhammad!]: 'Produce your proof if you are truthful.'")²⁹.

O Lord! All Grace and Mercy are in Your Hand. Do not deprive us of such Great Grace and Mercy.

1. Majma' al-Bayan; Durr al-Manthur.

2. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 78, p. 83.

3. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 9, p. 328.

4. Rawdha Kafi; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.

5. Ikmal al-Din; Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.

6. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 78, p. 308.

7. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan; Tafsir Safi; Tafsir Burhan, under the blessed Verse in question.

8. 42:30

9. 42

10. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, p. 247; 'Ali ibn Ibrahim's Tafsir.

11. Tafsir Nur.

12. Sayyid ibn Tawus' Luhuf.

13. Luhuf and Maqatil sources.
14. Nahj al-Balagha, sermon no. 5.
15. Nahj al-Balagha, epistle no. 53.
16. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 70, p. 301.
17. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 73.
18. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 75, p. 53.
19. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 74, p. 238.
20. Ghurar al-Hikam, vol. 1, p. 53.
21. Safinat al-Bihar, under s-kh-y.
22. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
23. Ibid.
24. Majma' al-Bahrayn, under r-h-b; Ibn Athir's al-Nihaya.
25. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan; Tafsir Safi; Tafsir Makhzan al-'Irfan; all under the blessed Verse in question.
26. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan.
27. 2:201
28. 28:54
29. 2:111

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