

Surah al-Qamar, Verses 33 – 55

Surah al-Qamar – Verses 33–35

كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوطٍ بِالنُّذُرِ

إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حَاصِبًا إِلَّا آلَ لُوطٍ نَّجَّيْنَاهُمْ بِسَحَرٍ

نِعْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا كَذَلِكَ نَجْزِي مَنْ شَكَرَ

33. The people of Lot (as) belied the Warnings.

34. Indeed, We sent against them a violent gale along with stones, except the family of Lot (as), them We saved in the last hour of the night,

35. The rescue was a Favor from Us. Thus We reward him who gives thanks.

The second blessed Verse in question is saying that the people of Lot (as) denied their Prophet's (as) Prophetic Call and Revelation; as a consequence of which Divine Torment was sent down upon them in the form of a harsh gale pouring down stones over them. The Arabic word *hasib* is employed in the sense of violent gale moving sand and stones.

All the people of Prophet Lot (as) perished by that harsh gale with the exception of the family of Prophet Lot (as) who were rescued at dawn. The third blessed Verse is saying that the deliverance of the family of Prophet Lot (as) was a Divine Favor. The blessed Verse closes by saying that God Almighty thus rewards those who are thankful.

It is a reference to the fact that one who does not disobey God Almighty as a token of gratitude for His Favours and Bounties, but obeys Divine Commands and His Messengers, will find Divine Support and Assistance at all times in the face of hardships and vicissitudes in this world and the Hereafter.

Surah al-Qamar – Verse 36

وَلَقَدْ أَنْذَرَهُمْ بَطْشَتَنَا فَتَمَارَوْا بِالنُّذُرِ

36. And Lot (as) indeed had warned them of Our Wrath, but they were engaged in disputes regarding Our Warnings!

Prophet Lot (as) strove to warn his people of Divine Torment, but they entertained doubts regarding his Prophetic Call and Divine Revelation and ignored warnings and persisted in committing their vicious deeds until they were afflicted by Divine Torment.

Surah al-Qamar – Verses 37–39

وَلَقَدْ رَاوَدُوهُ عَن ضَيْفِهِ فَطَمَسْنَا أَعْيُنَهُمْ فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي وَنُذِرِ

وَلَقَدْ صَبَّحَهُم بُكْرَةً عَذَابٌ مُّسْتَقَرٌّ

فَذُوقُوا عَذَابِي وَنُذِرِ

37. And they indeed sought to shame his guests through conversing with each other. Therefore, We blinded their eyes. Then taste My Torment and My Warnings."

38. And indeed an abiding torment seized them early in the morning.

39. "Then taste My Torment and My Warnings."

The people of Prophet Lot (as) went to the extreme in transgressing bounds. Qur'an exegetes report that a number of angels entered Prophet Lot's (as) home in human form with beautiful and resplendent visages.

The people of Prophet Lot (as) intended to enter his home and derive pleasure out of their company

asking the Prophet (as) to leave them unto them and entered into disputes with the Prophet (as). Prophet Lot (as) provided them with wise counsels against their will but it was of no avail. They shattered the gate and entered his home.

Upon their insistence as to transgressing bounds, Gabriel said unto Prophet Lot (as) to leave his people unto them. Upon their entrance, Gabriel struck its pinion onto their eyes and blinded them such that no traces were left of their eyes. The disobedient people rose and stumbled in perplexity and shouted that Lot (as) had cast his spell unto them.

The second and the third blessed Verses are saying that when the people of Prophet Lot (as) went to the extreme in their disobedience and rebellion, they were afflicted with a permanent torment such that they all perished and were sent to Hellfire.

Then it was said unto them:

"Taste the torment regarding which Our Messenger, Lot (as), had warned you but you belied his warning."

Surah al-Qamar – Verse 40

وَلَقَدْ يَسَّرْنَا الْقُرْآنَ لِلذِّكْرِ فَهَلْ مِنْ مُدَكِّرٍ

40. And indeed, We have made the Qur'an easy to comprehend. Then is there anyone who will receive admonition?"

The blessed Verse 40 reiterates the meaningful and awakening statement:

"We have made the Holy Qur'an facile to understand. Then, is there anyone who will receive admonition and remember it?"

Nonetheless, the people of Prophet Lot (as) failed to receive admonition neither from Warnings nor from torments. Now, will those who are impure by committing the same sins, regret their vicious deeds and repent?

Surah al-Qamar – Verses 41-42

وَلَقَدْ جَاءَ آلَ فِرْعَوْنَ النَّذِيرُ

كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا كُلِّهَا فَأَخَذْنَاَهُمْ أَخَذَ عَزِيزٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ

41. And verily, warners came unto the people of Pharaoh.

42. But, they belied all Our miracles. Therefore, We seized them with a Seizure of the All-Mighty, the Omnipotent.

The fifth and the last people mentioned in this series of blessed Verses are the people of Pharaoh. However, a brief reference is made thereof since the account of the people of Pharaoh is mentioned in detail in different Qur'anic Chapters.

The blessed Verse 41 is saying that Divinely appointed warners came unto them one after the other. The people of Pharaoh does not only include his family and kith and kin but it encompasses all his followers as well, since although the Arabic word al is often used in the sense of family but it may also be employed in a general sense.

The contextual meaning of the blessed Verse in question makes a reference to the latter sense. The Arabic word nudhur is the plural form of nadhir denoting "warner." Nadhir may be either a human being or an incident warning mankind against the consequences of their deeds.

The former sense may herein allude to Moses (as) and Aaron and the latter one may make a reference to the nine miracles worked by Prophet Moses (as). However, the following blessed Verse reflects that the latter sense is being intended.

The blessed Verse 42 exposes the reaction of the people of Pharaoh against the two eminent Prophets (as) and their warnings saying that the people of Pharaoh denied Divine Signs. These arrogant wrong-doers belied all Divine Signs unexceptionally and regarded all of them as lies, magic, or coincidence.

The blessed Verses in question encompass a wide range of meanings including intellectual and narrational arguments and miracles. However, taking into account another blessed Verse¹ according to which God Almighty provided Moses (as) with nine crystal clear miracles, it becomes evident that these miracles are being intended herein.

Witnessing only one of these miracles with prior notice and then removal of the affliction through the Prophet's (as) invocation will suffice to convince the truth seeking man. But if one happens to be obdurate, all the miracles of the earth and the heaven may not suffice to convince him. It is at such time that only Divine Torment should be inflicted upon disobedient people and shatters their brains.

As it is mentioned in the blessed Verse in question;

"We seized them and chastised them"

and the seizure is done by One who may not be vanquished since He is All-Mighty and Omnipotent.

The expression mentioned in this account is unprecedented in others since the people of Pharaoh were above all proud of their might and rank and their sovereignty was well-known. However, God Almighty is saying that He seized them by His Might so that it may be known to all that such groundless might and grandeur is nothing against Divine Omnipotence and Glory.

It is a source of surprise that the great Nile, the source of their mighty, wealth, prosperity, and civilization was Divinely appointed to cause their perdition. It is even more surprising that small beings like locusts, frogs, and a kind of insect called qumal vanquished them rendering them desperate and led to their perdition.

Surah al-Qamar – Verses 43-44

أَكْفَارُكُمْ خَيْرٌ مِّنْ أَوْلَائِكُمْ أَمْ لَكُمْ بَرَاءَةٌ فِي الزُّبُرِ

أَمْ يَقُولُونَ نَحْنُ جَمِيعٌ مُّنتَصِرُونَ

43. Are your disbelievers better than these? Or have you immunity in the Divine Scriptures?

44. Or they say: "We are a great multitude backing each other and no might may conquer us."

After recounting the accounts of the ancients and the torments and chastisements of disobedient sinful peoples, the blessed Verses in question address Meccan polytheists asking them:

"Are you disbelievers better than those of the ancients? Is there immunity and quarter for you in Divinely revealed Scriptures? Is there any difference between you and the peoples of Pharaoh, Lot (as), and Thamud? They were afflicted with tempests, earthquakes, and lightning owing to their disbelief, disobedience, wrong-doing and sinfulness.

Why do you imagine that you will not suffer the same fate? Are you better than them or your disobedience, animosity, and disbelief less than theirs? Why do you think that you are immune from Divine Torment? Do you have a quarter attested in Divine Scriptures? Such claim is indubitably untrue and you have no evidence to prove it."

According to the second blessed Verse, they say that they are a great united multitude who take vengeance upon their enemies and conquering them. The Arabic word jami' in this blessed Verse is applied to a community who possess mighty and proceed toward a goal.

The word muntasir lays further emphasis on the same meaning since it denotes triumphant and taking

vengeance. It would be of interest to note that the preceding blessed Verse was in the form of address, but the blessed Verse in question and the following ones speak about disbelievers in the third person which connotes a kind of humility, namely they do not deserve to be addressed by God Almighty any further.

In short, if they claim to possess such might, it is groundless, since the peoples of Pharaoh, Thamud, 'Ad, and the like of them were mightier than them, but they could not resist in the least against Divine Torment dispersing them like a violent tempest blowing onto hay, let alone such insignificant and desperate people.

Surah al-Qamar – Verses 45-46

سَيُهْزَمُ الْجَمْعُ وَيُوَلُّونَ الدُّبُرَ

بَلِ السَّاعَةِ مَوْعِدُهُمْ وَالسَّاعَةُ أَذْهَى وَأَمْرٌ

45. Their multitude will be put to flight soon and they will show their backs unto each other.

46. Nay, but the Day of Resurrection is their appointed time and that Day will be more grievous and bitterer.

In order to refute their false claims, the blessed Verses in question decisively predicts them so that they know that their multitude will be soon defeated and they will show their back. It would of interest to know that the verbal form sayuhzamu ("they will be soon defeated") originally denotes pressing a dried up object such that it is shattered but it is figuratively employed in the sense of defeating and shattering hosts.

The expression may allude to the point that although they seem to be unified but they are inflexible and may be shattered by a heavy pressure. Au contraire, believers are unified but flexible and may thereby resist hardships and vicissitudes.

It is also worthy of note that the Arabic word dubur ("rear") is the opposite of qubul ("front") and the former is herein employed to indicate show one's back in battlefield. Such prediction realized in battles like Badr and finally the seemingly mighty hosts of disbelievers were defeated and put to flight.

The second blessed Verse is saying that defeat and misfortune do not fall into their share in this world but their appointed place shall be the Day of Resurrection when more horrible and bitterer chastisements shall be in store for them. Thus, they should await a bitter defeat in this world and a bitterer and more

horrible defeat in the Hereafter.

The superlative adjective adha

("more grievous")

connotes that they shall be entangled with an incurable affliction. Finally, it is known that one of the aspects of the inimitability of the Holy Qur'an is inclusion of news of the Unseen an instance of which is to be found in the blessed Verse in question. Is such news from the Unseen with such decisiveness and explicitness not regarded as a miracle?

Surah al-Qamar – Verses 47-49

إِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِينَ فِي ضَلَالٍ وَسُعُرٍ

يَوْمَ يُسْحَبُونَ فِي النَّارِ عَلَىٰ وُجُوهِهِمْ ذُوقُوا مَسَّ سَقَرَ

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ

47. Indeed, sinners are in error and blazing flames.

48. The day when Hellfire shall burn their faces, it will be said unto them: "Taste Hellfire!"

49. Indeed, We have created all things in its proper measure.

The first twain blessed Verses treat of the torments of evil-doers and sinners who may be the disbelievers warned against torment in the preceding blessed Verse or it may generally allude to those who disobey God Almighty and Divine Signs.

In short, disbelievers shall be dragged into Hell and it shall be said unto them:

"Taste the heat and hardship of saqar, one of the levels of Hell."

The third blessed Verse in question is saying that it may be imagined that these torments are consistent with sins thus it further adds that God Almighty created everything in its due measure. Their excruciating torments in this world and the severe chastisements in the Hereafter and all creation are well measured.

The earth, the heaven, animate and inanimate beings, human limbs and organs, and all the means of life

and sustenance have been created in due measure and there is nothing without measure in this world, since God Almighty is All-Wise and all His Acts are based on His Wisdom and Omniscience.

Surah al-Qamar – Verses 50-51

وَمَا أَمْرُنَا إِلَّا وَاحِدَةٌ كَلَمْحٍ بِالْبَصَرِ

وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا أَشْيَاعَكُمْ فَهَلْ مِنْ مَدَّكِرٍ

50. And Our Commandment is but a fast one as the twinkling of an eye.

51. And verily, We caused the perdition of your likes; then is there anyone who will receive admonition?

Divine Acts are carried out Well-Measured, Wise, and Fast. Thus the blessed Verse 50 is saying that Divine Command is but One and it is done as fast as the twinkling of an eye. Whatever He wills, He merely says "Be" and it will come into being.

Even the Arabic imperative form "kun" ("be") is employed due to linguistic restrictions of human language; otherwise, Divine Will is on a par with the realization of His Will. Thus, We God Almighty issues the Command as to Resurrection, everything will be resurrected in the twinkling of an eye and new life shall be given to bodies.

Likewise, on that Day, when God Almighty wills to chastise sinners by lightning, loud cries heard from the heaven, earthquake, tempests, and harsh gales, solely one single Command shall suffice to realize everything. They all serve as Warnings to sinners that they know that God Almighty is All-Wise and His Wills are decisive so that they may be aware of the evil consequences of disobeying His Commands.

The blessed Verse 51 addresses sinners and disbelievers once more and draws their attention to the fate of ancient peoples saying that God Almighty caused the perdition of peoples who were like you aforetime. Is there anyone who will remember and receive admonition, namely awakens and takes a lesson?

Surah al-Qamar – Verses 52-53

وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ فَعَلُوهُ فِي الزُّبُرِ

وَكُلُّ صَغِيرٍ وَكَبِيرٍ مُسْتَطَرٌّ

52. And everything they have done is noted in Records of deeds.

53. And any deed, small and large, is written down.

The blessed Verses in question makes a reference to the fundamental principle that the deeds committed by ancient peoples were not effaced following their death but whatever was done by them was recorded in the Records of their deeds; likewise your deeds are being recorded and preserved for the Day of Reckoning. The word zubar is the plural form of zabur denoting book but it is herein employed in the sense of the Record of deeds committed by mankind.

In order to lay further emphasis, the second blessed Verse adds that the Record of deeds shall be a complete and all inclusive record on the Day of Resurrection, such that upon receiving their Records of deeds, sinners shall cry:

"Woe unto us! What kind of Record is this that leaves neither a small thing nor a big thing, but has recorded it with numbers,"²

The Arabic word mustatir ("written down, recorded") is cognate with satr ("line, queue"), originally denoting "line" be it the line of people or trees or words on a page. As it is commonly employed in the last sense, the same occurs to mind. It is another warning to such ignorant sinners.

Surah al-Qamar - Verses 54-55

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَنَهَرٍ

فِي مَقْعَدٍ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ مَلِكٍ مُّقْتَدِرٍ

54. Indeed, the God fearing shall be in the midst of Gardens and Rivers.

55. In a place of truth, near the Omnipotent Lord.

The Qur'anic tradition is that it presents righteous good-doers and evil-doers, the good and the bad by comparing them, since differences become more obvious in comparison. Following a reference to the fate of wrong-doing disbelievers, the blessed Verses in question briefly allude to the happy fate of the God fearing saying that the God fearing shall abide amidst Gardens and rivers of Paradise in the expanse of Divine Favors and Bounties.

The Arabic nah(a)r denotes abundantly flowing water and at times, it connotes expanse, great favor, and resplendent light. Thus, it may allude to the expanse of divine Favors and Bounties and the light of Paradise and its vastness.

The second blessed Verse in question which is the last Verse of the Chapter further depicts the place of the God fearing:

"They abide in a place of truth, near the Omnipotent Lord."

The blessed Verse provides an interesting depiction of the place of the God fearing in which two characteristics are being enumerated. Firstly, it is the place of truth. Neither falsehood nor vanity may penetrate it. It is thoroughly true.

All Divine Promises as to Paradise shall be realized there and their veracity shall be made crystal clear. Secondly, it is close to God Almighty. The Arabic word 'ind ("near, close to") ad hoc connotes spiritual, rather than material, proximity to the Omnipotent Lord. All Favors and Bounties rest in His Sovereignty and Lordship. Thus, He shall not deprive His guests of any Favor. He is the only One Who is All-Aware of what He has prepared for them.

It would be of interest to note that the last twain Verses treat of the Bounties and Rewards of the people of Paradise.

Firstly, mention is made of the material Bounties like vast Gardens and Rivers in Paradise and secondly, mention is made of their great spiritual Reward, namely presence at the Threshold of Proximity to the Omnipotent Lord such that man is prepared at different intervals so that his soul soars on high encompassed with vitality and happiness.

Particularly, expressions like Lord, Omnipotent, and place of truth all reflect the permanence and intransience of such spiritual proximity and presence.

1. 17:101

2. 18:49

Source URL:

<https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-17/surah-al-qamar-verses-33>