

Surah al-Rahman, Verses 56 – 78

Surah al-Rahman – Verses 56–57

فِيهِنَّ قَاصِرَاتُ الطَّرْفِ لَمْ يَطْمِئِنَّهُنَّ إِنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

56. In both Gardens of Paradise shall be chaste females restraining their glances, desiring none except their husbands with whom no man or jinni has had intercourse.

57. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Five Divine Blessings of the twain Gardens in Paradise were enumerated in the preceding blessed Verses and the blessed Verse 56 treats of the six Blessing – chaste spouses in Paradise. The blessed Verse is saying that there shall be women in those palaces in Paradise who restraining their glances solely look at their husbands and love no one but them and no jinni or man has ever touched them. Thus, they shall be virgin and undefiled in any respect.

It is narrated on the authority of Abudhar Ghaffari that the woman in Paradise shall say unto her husband:

*"By the Glory of my Lord! I find nothing better than you in Paradise. Praise be to God Almighty Who married me unto you."*¹

The Arabic word *tarf* denotes "eyelid" and since eyelids move while glancing, it figuratively connotes "glance." Thus, the expression *qasirat al-tarf* denotes "[females] restraining [their] glances" connoting that they love their husbands.

It is one of the best merits of a woman to solely think of her husband and only love him. The Arabic verbal form yatmithhunna ("they menstruate") deriving from t-m-th ("menstruate, deflorate") ad hoc connotes that females in Paradise shall be virgin.

The blessed Verse 57, addressed to jinn and men, poses the question anew:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 58-59

كَأَنَّهُنَّ الْيَاقُوتُ وَالْمَرْجَانُ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

58. They are like rubies and coral.

59. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

The blessed Verse 58 further depicts spouses in Paradise saying that they are like rubies in terms of rosiness and purity and like coral in terms of whiteness and beauty. When the colors of rubies and coral, namely red and white, intermingle, a very beautiful color will be produced.

Ruby is a mineral which is usually red in color. Coral is a marine animal like branches and twigs of trees whose colors include white and red, but the white kind is seemingly intended herein.

The blessed Verse 59 again asks the question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 60-61

هَلْ جَزَاءُ الْإِحْسَانِ إِلَّا الْإِحْسَانُ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

60. Is there any reward for good other than good?

61. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

By the word good (ihsan) mentioned herein, doing righteous good deeds and doing good to others are intended.²

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"The blessed Verse

'Is there any reward for good other than good'

*applies to believers and disbelievers, since whoever does good to another, the latter is supposed to return the good done to him."*³

Imam 'Ali narrates from the Messenger of Allah (S) that God Almighty said:

*"Is the reward of the one to whom I have bestowed Favor is other than Paradise?"*⁴

In short the blessed Verse in question is saying that those who have done righteous good deeds in this world shall be granted Divine Rewards.

The blessed Verse 61 repeats the question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 62-63

وَمِنْ دُونِهِمَا جَنَّتَانِ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

62. And besides these two Gardens, there are two other Gardens.

63. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Resuming the discussion the two Gardens in Paradise in store for the God fearing and the enumeration of Divine Blessings, the blessed Verse 62 makes mention of two Gardens in Paradise located on a lower level reserved naturally for those who are on a lower level of belief in and fearing God Almighty.

In other words, there is a hierarchy in terms of belief in God Almighty and doing righteous good deeds. Thus, the blessed Verse in question is saying that two other Gardens are to be found on a level lower than that of the aforementioned Gardens. There are two interpretations for the blessed Verse one of which was already mentioned.

According to the other interpretation, the phrase:

"besides these two"

(min dunihi) connotes that there are two other Gardens for the same believers who may enjoy themselves in those two Gardens as well, since man seeks diversity by nature and is delighted by the same. Nonetheless, taking into account the contextual meaning and the traditions narrated regarding the interpretation of the blessed Verse in question, the former interpretation is seemingly more consistent.

Thus, according to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):5

"Do not say that Paradise is one since God Almighty says that besides those two Paradises, there are two others. Do not say either that there is solely one level, since God Almighty says some levels are higher than others and the difference in levels is a matter of degrees."

In this vein, there is a Prophetic tradition according to which

"Two Paradises are from gold for those near to God Almighty and two Paradises for the people of the Right Hand."

The blessed Verse 63 poses the oft-repeated rhetorical question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman – Verses 64-65

مُدَّهَا مَّتَّانِ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

64. [The two Gardens appear] dark green [in color owing to the density of trees].

65. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

The Arabic word madhamma deriving from d-h-m is cognate with idhimam denoting raven black color

herein connoting a garden seeming black due to the density of its trees. Since such color reflects utmost freshness of plants and trees, the expression designates utmost verdure of the twain Paradises.

According to a number of traditions, water, verdure, and beauty engender happiness and delight.⁶

The blessed Verse 65 further asks:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 66-67

فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ نَضَّاخَتَانِ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

66. In the two Gardens shall be two springs gushing forth.

67. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

The Arabic word nadhdhakh denotes:

"gushing forth."

Thus, the blessed Verse 67 is saying that in those two Gardens, two springs shall be gushing forth. It goes without saying that looking at natural landscapes is the best delight. Water is a Blessing and its gushing forth is another Blessing.

The blessed Verse 67 further poses the rhetorical question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 68-69

فِيهِمَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَنَخْلٌ وَرُمَّانٌ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

68. In the two Gardens there shall be fruits and date-palms and pomegranates.

69. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Regarding the fruits of Paradise, the blessed Verse 68 is saying that there is abundance of fruits and those like dates and pomegranates in the two Gardens. The Arabic word fakiha is certainly quite broad in its range of senses encompassing all kinds of fruit, but the significance of dates and pomegranates are mentioned owing to their significance.

Some Qur'anic exegetes falsely maintain that semantically speaking, the Arabic word fakiha excludes dates and pomegranates. Lexicographers disagree with this baseless view. Basically, specific in lieu of general in cases of expressing privileges and merits is quite common. In short, dates and pomegranates have their prime of place among fruits in Paradise, since they are rich in vitamins.⁷

The blessed Verse 69 repeats the rhetorical question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman – Verses 70-71

فِيهِنَّ خَيْرَاتٌ حَسَنَاتٌ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

70. There shall be women of fair face and good character in those Gardens.

71. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

The blessed Verse 70 further treats of other Divine Blessings, saying that there shall be women fair of face and good of character in these two Paradises. The Arabic word khayr generally connotes spiritual and immaterial good and beauty and the word husn generally designates beauty of looks and appearance.

A tradition narrated regarding the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question enumerates many good characteristics for women in Paradise which may allude to those of women in this world and serve as a model for all women.

Such characteristics include: kindness in speech, cleanliness and purity, restraining from inflicting harms on others, and turning away their glances from those outside the circle of kinship. In short, all the physical and non-physical beauties expected in a desirable spouse may be found in them.

Likewise the blessed Qur'anic Verse expresses such good characteristics in a terse phrase:

"of fair face and good characters"

(khayrat hisan).

According to a Prophetic tradition:

*"Women in Paradise have fair faces and good characters."*⁸

It is also mentioned in narrations that:

"of fair face and good characters"

refers to righteous good women in this world who shall be fairer than wide-eyed huri's in Paradise.⁹

The blessed Verse 71 repeats the question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 72-73

حُورٌ مَّقْصُورَاتٌ فِي الْخِيَامِ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

72. Wide-eyed huri's of Paradise guarded in pavilions.

73. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Further depicting the women in Paradise, the blessed Verse 72 is saying that they are huris guarded in pavilions in Paradise. The word hur is the plural of hawra' denoting a woman the pupils whose eyes are raven black and the whiteness is quite transparent. It is also applied to women of fair complexion. The word maqsurat connotes that they only belong to their husbands and they are well guarded from others.

The Arabic word khiyam is the plural of khayma denoting:

"pavilion."

According to Islamic traditions, pavilions in Paradise are unlike those of this world in terms of vastness and beauty. It also worthy of note that according to lexicographers and lexicologists, the Arabic word

khayma, besides denoting pavilion and tent, is also applied to wooden or any round dwelling place.

It is also said that the Arabic word designates dwelling places which are made of stones and the like. 10

The blessed Verse 74 reiterates the rhetorical question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 74-75

لَمْ يَطْمِئِنَّ أَنْسٌ قَبْلَهُمْ وَلَا جَانٌّ

فَبِأَيِّ آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكذِّبَانِ

74. Whom no man or jinni has touched before people of Paradise.

75. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

The blessed Verse 74 enumerates another characteristic of huris in Paradise, saying that they have been touched neither by any jinni nor by any man. In other words, they are virgin.

Thus, by:

"women of fair face and good characters"

good and righteous women of this world are intended who have solely intercourse with their husbands.

However,

"untouched"

(lam yatmithhunna) is the attribute of huris in Paradise.

According to other Qur'anic Verses, men and women who are married to each other and are amongst the believers and the people of Paradise shall join each other in Paradise and shall enjoy their lives in the best manner there. According to traditions, owing to their invocations and righteous good deeds, such women are more exalted than huris in Paradise. 11

The blessed Verse 75 poses the oft-repeated question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 76-77

مُتَكِّئِينَ عَلَى رُفْرَفٍ خُضْرٍ وَعَبْقَرِيٍّ حِسَانٍ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

76. Reclining on couches covered by the best and the most beautiful green fabrics.

77. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

The blessed Verse 76 provides the last depiction of the Blessings in Paradise, saying that the inhabitants of the twain Paradises recline on couches covered by the best and the fairest green fabrics.

The Arabic word *rafr* originally denotes spread tree leaves, but it is figuratively applied to beautiful and colorful fabrics which are similar to garden landscapes. The word *'abqari* originally denotes any rare or unrivalled person or thing.

Thus, the word is applied to scholars rare amongst people. It is also said that *'Abqar* was the name of a city in which silk fabrics were made.¹² The original sense is obsolete and the Arabic word *'abqari* refers to an ingenious person who is hard to find. The Arabic word *hisan* is the plural form of *hasan* denoting "good, beautiful."

In short, all these expressions reflect that all things in Paradise, including fruits, food, palaces, mansions, carpets, and couches are all the best and unrivalled in terms of quality. However, it is worthy of note that such expressions may not fully express such great and unique concepts but they solely reflect shadows of them same.

The blessed Verse 77 poses the oft-repeated rhetorical question for the last time:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

It is saying that immaterial or even material Blessings in this world or Blessings of Paradise have encompassed you, but at times, owing to vanity and neglect, you consign them to oblivion and forget the One Who bestows all these Blessings and also those which you expect to fall into your share in future. Which of these Blessings do you deny?

Surah al-Rahman - Verse 78

تَبَارَكَ اسْمُ رَبِّكَ ذِي الْجَلَالِ وَالْإِكْرَامِ

78. Blessed is the Name of your Lord, the Owner of Majesty and Honor.

All Blessings, beauties, rewards, and recompenses are manifestations of Divine Lordship. Thus, the last blessed Verse of the Chapter in question is saying that the Name of your Lord Who is Majestic and Glorious is Blessed and Intransient. The Arabic word tabarak is cognate with bark denoting "camel breast."

Since camels lie down somewhere without moving and their breasts touch the earth, the word connotes constancy and intransience. As remaining capital engenders many a benefit, useful things are referred to as mubarak, the worthiest being for such designation is the Pure Divine Essence, the Source of all Good and Blessings.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question is saying that Great and Glorious is the Name of your Lord Who is the Absolute Owner of Glory, Greatness, Magnanimity, Graciousness, and Bountifulness. The blessed Chapter opened with the Divine Attribute "the Most Gracious" (Rahman) denoting the Vastness of Bounties and Graciousness of the One Lord, following which different kinds of His Bounties and Blessings are enumerated.

The blessed Chapter ends in the Name of the Owner of Glory and Greatness, connoting that what He bestows springs solely from His Greatness and reflects His Glory and Magnanimity.

It is saying that you are supposed to glorify the Origin of Bounties by praising His Attributes of Glory and Greatness.

Some Qur'anic exegetes say that His Name alludes to all His Attributes and His Attributes are in His Pure Essence and the expression:

"Owner of Majesty and Glory"

makes a reference to all His Most Beautiful and Glorious Attributes.

"Owner of Majesty"

alludes to His Negative Attributes and "Owner of Glory" refers to His Positive Attributes.

It would be of interest to read a few traditions in this vein.

It is narrated from the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) that someone invoked God Almighty in his presence, saying:

"O Owner of Majesty and Glory!"

The Noble Prophet (S) said:

*"Now that you invoked God Almighty by this Attribute, your prayer shall be answered. You ask Him to grant you anything you desire."*¹³

According to a Prophetic tradition, the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) noticed that a man was standing while establishing prayers. Following genuflection (ruku'), prostration (sujud), salam, and tashahhud, he invoked God Almighty and called Him by His Attributes, Owner of Majesty, Owner of Glory, the Living (Hayy), the Ever Standing (or Self-Existent; Qayyum), the Noble Prophet (S) said:

*"This man called Allah by a Great Name that whenever one calls Him by that Attribute, He shall answer his prayers."*¹⁴

A tradition is narrated from Imam Baqir (as) regarding the exegesis of the blessed Verse in question according to which he said:

*"We are Divine Majesty and Glory as He cherishes us by making his servants obey us."*¹⁵

It goes without saying that the family of the Prophet (S) solely calls people unto God Almighty and obedience to Him. They are like guides and beacons and life boats in the agitated sea of this mundane life. Thus, they are the instances of Divine Bounties bestowed by the Owner of Majesty and Glory, since God Almighty provides people with Guidance through His friends.

O Lord! You are the Owner of Majesty and Glory. By Your Majesty and Glory! Do not deprive us from Bounties and Blessings of Paradise. O Lord! We deny none of your Blessings, but consider ourselves encompassed by them. Grant us Your Blessings at all times. Amen O Lord of the worlds!

1. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question.

2. Tafsir Rahnama; Tafsir Nur.

3. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan; Tafsir al-Mizan.

4. Shaykh Tusi's Amali, vol. 1, p. 182.

5. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan.

6. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 59, p. 44.

7. Fifteen nutritive elements and five vitamins are reportedly found in dates. Furthermore, some parts of date palms are rich in medicinal ingredients. Regarding pomegranates, according to a number of Islamic traditions, they are the best of fruits (sayyid al-fakiha; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 6, p. 63). Nutrition experts enumerate many qualities for pomegranates, including refining the blood, richness in Vitamin C. Other good qualities have also been mentioned for sweet and sour pomegranates, including: strengthening the stomach, gums, the eyes, treatment of choleric fevers, jaundice, scabies, chronic ulcers, and

diarrhea.

According to a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as):

"Let your children eat pomegranates as they lead to their faster growth"

(Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 66, p. 164).

According to another tradition,

"Eating pomegranates by children makes them speak earlier"

(Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 66, p. 165).

It is also narrated from Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as):

"Pomegranates were the Messenger of Allah's (S) most favorite fruit."

(Usul Kafi, vol .6, p. 352).

8. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.

9. Usul Kafi, vol. 8, p. 156.

10. Lisan al-'Arab; Majma' al-Bahrayn; al-Munjid.

11. Tafsir Durr al-Manthur, p. 151; Usul Kafi, vol. 8, p. 156.

12. Abu al-Futuh Razi's Tafsir.

13. Tafsir Durr al-Manthur, vol. 6, p. 153; Tafsir Nimuna, under the blessed Verse in question.

14. Ibid.

15. Tafsir Burhan; Tafsir Safi, under the blessed Verse in question.

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