

## Surah al-Taghabun, Chapter 64

(Mutual Loss and Gain)

Section (juz') 28

Number of Verses: 18

### General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

#### *In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*

The blessed Chapter, revealed in Medina, has eighteen Verses and the designation of the Chapter derives from making mention of the Day of Resurrection in the ninth Verse as the Day of Mutual Loss and Gain (taghabun).

The Arabic word taghabun denotes mutual defraud and gaining personal benefits. The point is that on the Day of Resurrection, everyone aims to save oneself and put the blame on others. The blessed Verses of the Chapter in question bear stylistic resemblance to Chapter 57 (Surah al-Hadid) and they seemingly constitute a summary of the latter.

The blessed Chapter opens with Divine Unity and proceeds with warning people against watching their deeds and according attention to the Day of Resurrection and closes with urging people to expend in Allah's Cause and turn away from mundane attachments.

### The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that whoever recites Surah al-Taghabun in as a part of his religious obligations or on other occasions, he will be amongst the people of Paradise on the Day of

Resurrection<sup>1</sup> provided that he acted upon Qur'anic and Islamic Injunctions.

## Surah al-Taghabun – Verse 1

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*

يُسَبِّحُ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ لََّهُ الْمُلْكُ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ ۗ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ  
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

**1. Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth glorifies Allah. His is the Dominion and to Him belong all the praises and He is Omnipotent to do all things.**

Aiming at gaining and maintaining power, the rulers in this world commit vices, but God Almighty is the Sovereign glorified by all the world of existence and He never wrongs anyone. It is worthy of note that praise belongs to the One Who is Free from any defect or shortcoming.

Thus, the blessed Verse opens with the glorification of God Almighty and it proceeds to treat of His glorification in genuflexion and prostration before Him. Furthermore, it is common knowledge that all creatures in the world of existence possess some sort of perception and accordingly glorify Allah. However, it is unfortunate that some men, failing to worship and glorify God Almighty and committing sins, act inharmoniously.

As mentioned earlier, the blessed Verse opens with the glorification of God Almighty, the Sovereign Lord Whose Omnipotence sways the entire world of existence, saying that whatever exists in the heavens and on the earth glorify God Almighty.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that to Him belong Ownership and Sovereignty thereby all praises belong to His Pure Essence and He is the Omnipotence Lord.

Since the glorification of all the creatures of the world and different interpretations have been mentioned above, there is no need to reiterate them. Such glorification and praise reflect His Omnipotence and Ownership of all things, since Divine Majestic and Beauteous Attributes lie in the same.

## Surah al-Taghabun – Verse 2

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ فَمِنْكُمْ كَافِرٌ وَمِنْكُمْ مُؤْمِنٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ

**2. He it is Who created you and granted you freedom such that some of you are disbelievers and some of you are believers. And Allah is the All-Seer of what you do.**

The antecedent of the pronoun

**"He" (huwa)**

is the word Allah in the preceding Verse. Besides being a Divine Attribute, the pronoun reflects that you are created by the Lord Who is the Absolute Owner and Sovereign, though some of you amongst human beings have shown ingratitude to the Lord following your creation and disbelieved Divinity and failed to glorify and praise the All-Glorious and All-Majestic God Almighty.

Nonetheless, some of you submitted to Divine Command and believed in and followed the Path of Truth. You are supposed to know that God Almighty is All-Aware of what you have concealed in your hearts.

Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the blessed Verse indicates that man is free in committing his deeds, since he ascribes the Creation of mankind to himself. God Almighty is the One Who created you, but following the Creation, some of you disbelieved and some of you believed. In other words, men enjoyed the free choice to either believe or disbelieve.

The blessed Verse refutes the claims of the Ash'aris and the determinists who maintain that belief and disbelief stem from Divine Will, since God Almighty may accept or refuse to accept the belief or disbelief.

Furthermore, the deterministic claims are against Divine Justice and entail certain restrictions in tormenting the disbelievers, amongst which mention may be made of the nullification of sending Messengers and Revelation of Scriptures and Guidance as well as Divine Promises and Warnings.

In other words, determinists are supposed to abandon mankind like beasts, since God Almighty wills that some people believe in Divine Unity and others refuse to do so. Such unfounded claim stands against common sense and the beliefs held by all the wise the world over who maintain that man is capable of learning.

Furthermore, man is capable of making free choices rather than being predestined to act in any way. Man's deeds reflect his beliefs as a consequence of which the blessed Verse says that God Almighty is All-Aware of your deeds rather than saying God Almighty is All-Aware of your disbelief and belief.

## Surah al-Taghabun – Verse 3

خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَوَّرَكُمْ فَأَحْسَنَ صُوْرَكُمْ ۗ وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ

**3. He created the heavens and the earth with truth and He fashioned you in your mothers' wombs and made good your shapes. And to Him is the return.**

The blessed Verse in question proceeds with further elaboration on creation and the goals behind it, saying that God Almighty created the heavens and the earth out of Truth and there is a precise and true systematicity as well as Wise and True goals behind the creation of the world.

The blessed Verse further treats of the creation of man and urges us to proceed from the realm of the horizons and enter that of the souls, saying that He fashioned you with a comely and pleasing shape granting man a pleasant appearance and an embellished heart enlightened by reason and wisdom. God Almighty created specimens from the entire world of existence in man such that as put by Imam 'Ali (as), macrocosm is epitomized in microcosm.

However, the blessed Verse closes by saying that the final return of all things is toward God Almighty. Man is a constituent element of the organic world of existence. In terms of creation, the entire world in harmoniously proceeding toward a single goal, proceeding from the lowest degrees toward the proximity of the Boundless Being, the Infinite Existence of God Almighty.

The expression

**"He fashioned you in your mothers' wombs and made good your shapes"**

includes the outward appearance and the inward form in terms of the body and the soul. A brief glimpse at the creation of man's body and soul reflects that he is the most beautiful of the beings in the world of existence and God Almighty created this being in the best form and His Omnipotence is manifest therein.

## Surah al-Taghabun – Verse 4

يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُسْرُونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِّذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ

**4. He knows what is in the heavens and on earth and He knows what you conceal and what you**

**reveal. And Allah is the Omniscient of what is in the breasts.**

The best means to abstain from committing sins and maintaining the Fear of God Almighty is that He is Omniscient and All-Aware of our deeds. His Omniscience is not restricted to temporal and spatial spheres, but He is All-Aware of what is manifest and what is concealed as He is Omniscient of all things in the heavens and on the earth.

Since man is created for a great goal, he is supposed to be under Divine Supervision at all times. The Lord is Fully Aware of his outward appearance and his inward feelings and intentions. Thus, the blessed Verse is saying that God Almighty is All-Aware of what is in the heavens and what is on the earth and He is All-Aware of what you manifestly do or conceal the same. He is All-Aware of the intentions and the beliefs in the breasts.

The blessed Verse depicts Divine Omniscience in three stages: firstly, His Omniscience of all the creatures in the heavens and on the earth; secondly, His Omniscience of all the deeds of mankind irrespective of what they conceal or what they manifest; thirdly, particular emphasis is laid on inward intentions and beliefs and what predominates over human heart and soul.

Being aware of Divine Omniscience may greatly affect man's growth such that it may serve as a warning to man according to which no matter how far he may proceed and to whatever goals he may attain and whatever intentions he may foster in his heart and whatever moral traits he may have, they are all manifest before Divine Omniscience.

Attending to such truth indubitably may greatly contribute to human growth. Such teachings pave the way for man to attain to the goals of creation and tread the path of development and spiritual growth. In short, man is not abandoned on its own but he is under Divine Supervision.

## **Surah al-Taghabun – Verse 5**

أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ نَبَأُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ فَذَاقُوا وَبَالَ أَمْرِهِمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

**5. Has not the news reached you of those who disbelieved aforetime? They tasted the evil consequences of their deeds in this world and an excruciating torment will be in store for them in the Hereafter.**

The Arabic word wabal attested four times in the Holy Qur'an designates anything leading to loss and all the Qur'anic instances of the word connote mundane hardships and entanglements.

Divine torment is not restricted to those in store for people on the Day of Resurrection, but it may befall people in this world as well instances of which include the drowning of Noah's people, Hud's people

being afflicted with gale, Salih's people being tormented by the awe inspiring cries from the heaven, Lot's people being stoned, and the people of the Elephant who tasted their dire fate by the burning rocks falling upon them.

One of the most effective means of fostering and warning is to make mention of the fates of ancient peoples.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question briefly mentions the fates of some of the disobedient peoples addressing people

***"Has not the news reached you of those who disbelieved aforetime? They tasted the evil consequences of their deeds in this world and an excruciating torment will be in store for them in the Hereafter?"***

The blessed Verse is saying that you pass by the ruined cities on your way to Sham and other places witnessing the dire consequences of their wrong-doing and disobedience and read about them in historical works. Those people tasted torments and trod the path of perdition by tempests, torrents, lightning, earthquakes, and gales in this world and excruciating torments are in store for them in the Hereafter.

## **Surah al-Taghabun – Verse 6**

ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُ كَانَتْ تَأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَقَالُوا أَبَشْرٌ يَهْدُونَنَا فَكَفَرُوا وَتَوَلَّوْا ۗ<sup>٦</sup>  
وَاسْتَغْنَى اللّٰهُ ۗ<sup>٦</sup> وَاللّٰهُ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ

***6. That was because there came unto them their Messengers with clear proofs but they said arrogantly: "Shall mere men guide us?" Thus, they disbelieved and turned away. But Allah was not in need of belief and obedience. And Allah is Needless and Worthy of all praise.***

The demonstrative pronoun

***"that" (dhalika)***

alludes to the preceding blessed Verse, namely you are not supposed to imagine that God Almighty never wrongs anyone by afflicting him with excruciating torments in this world and the Hereafter, but the point is that He apprised mankind of the ultimatum by sending Messengers and revealing Scriptures and miracles such that the wise may entertain no doubts as to the veracity of the Prophetic Calls.

Nonetheless, some people disbelieved out of arrogance and failed to believe on the pretext that Messengers were human beings like them and how they may obey their likes unaware of the truth that

they Messengers resemble people in form but they are attached to the metaphysical, higher realm from which they have obtained Divine Emanations and impart the same unto people.

God Almighty is Needless of people's belief and disbelief. He is absolutely Needless of all existent beings.

## Surah al-Taghabun – Verse 7

زَعَمَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَنْ لَنْ يُبْعَثُوا ۗ قُلْ بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّي لَتُبْعَثُنَّ ثُمَّ لَتُنَبَّؤُنَّ بِمَا عَمِلْتُمْ ۗ وَذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ

**7. The disbelievers pretend that they will never be resurrected. Say: "Yes! By my Lord, you will certainly be resurrected, then you shall certainly be apprised of what you did and that is easy for Allah.**

The Arabic word za'm denotes unfounded claim and allegation and all the Qur'anic attestations of the world connote criticism. Imam Sadiq (as) is reported as saying that all the Qur'anic attestations of the word za'm connote falsity.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the blessed Qur'anic Verse enjoins the Noble Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) to say that by my Lord! You shall be all resurrected and you shall be certainly apprised of your past deeds and it is easy to do for God Almighty. The blessed Verse opens with a decisive response to the unfounded claims of those who deny Resurrection with a tone in which emphasis and swearing are intertwined, reflecting the firm belief of the warner, namely the Noble Prophet (S).

The blessed Verse in question proceeds by saying that such thing is easy for God Almighty to do. We know that those who denied Resurrection cast doubts on the possibility of resurrecting the rotten bones turned into dust.

Thus, the blessed Verse is saying that the Omnipotent Lord shall have not difficulty in resurrecting them, since He created the world of existence ex nihilo and resurrecting the dead is more convenient than creating the creatures.

Some Qur'anic exegetes maintain that the oath

**"By my Lord!"**

serves as a delicate allusion to Resurrection, since Divine Lordship requires that the path to man's development and growth within the limits of the mundane and worthless life be not ineffectual. In other words, so long as we do not acknowledge Resurrection, Divine Sovereignty and His fostering mankind

on the path of growth would be meaningless.

## Surah al-Taghabun – Verse 8

فَأْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَالنُّورِ الَّذِي أَنْزَلْنَا ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ

**8. Therefore, believe in Allah and His Messenger and in the Light which We have sent down. And Allah is All-Aware of what you do.**

The word Light (nur) in this blessed Verse connotes the Holy Qur'an as it is reflected in the opening of Chapter 14 (Surah Ibrahim):

**"We have sent down a Book unto you such that you may lead mankind out of the shadows of polytheism, ignorance, and discord into the Light of monotheism, knowledge, and unity."**

The preceding blessed Verses treated of disbelief in God Almighty, His Messengers, and Resurrection leading peoples of the aforesaid to torments, though the blessed verse in question is warning people against treading the path of the ancient people who tasted dire fates, but they are urged to believe in God Almighty and His Messengers.

Traditions reflect that the Light mentioned herein connotes the Infallible Imams (as), since they are the embodiments of the Holy Qur'an. Imam Baqir (as) is reported as saying that they are those who shed light on the believers' hearts.<sup>3</sup> Belief is valuable when it encompasses belief in God Almighty, His Messengers, and the Scripture and it is accompanied by action.

## Surah al-Taghabun – Verses 9-10

يَوْمَ يَجْمَعُكُمْ لِيَوْمِ الْجَمْعِ ۗ ذَٰلِكَ يَوْمُ التَّغَابُنِ ۗ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ وَيَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا  
يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّئَاتِهِ وَيُدْخِلْهُ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا ۗ ذَٰلِكَ  
الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۗ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ

**9. Remember the Day when Allah will gather you on the Day of Gathering, that will be the Day of**

***mutual loss and gain. And whoever believes in Allah and performs righteous good deeds, He will absolve him of his sins and will admit him to Gardens under which rivers flow to dwell therein forever. That will be the great salvation.***

***10. But those who disbelieved and denied our Āyat [proofs, Verses, Signs], they will be the dwellers of the Hell to dwell therein forever. And worst is that destination.***

The Arabic word taghabun connotes that on the Day of Resurrection the envies and regrets shall be manifest when disbelievers regret for having failed to believe, the disobedient regret for having failed to do righteous good deeds, and believers regret to having failed to do further righteous good deeds.

Tokens of such regretful people are mentioned in traditions including:

1. One whose two days be the same.<sup>4</sup>
2. Arrogance and vanity in this world entails poverty in this world and regret and loss in the Hereafter.<sup>5</sup>
3. One who deprives himself of night prayers.<sup>6</sup>
4. One who turns away from struggling in Allah's Cause.<sup>7</sup>

Two groups stand in lines against each other on the Day of Resurrection: the losers and the saved. Glad tidings and warnings are supposed to accompany each other in education. The blessed Verse 9 bears the glad tidings of the everlasting Paradise and the blessed Verse 10 warns against the everlasting Hell for disbelievers. The way out of regret and loss is belief and righteous good deeds.

It is worthy of note, however, that the blessed Verses in question depict the Day of Resurrection saying that you shall be gathered on the Day of Resurrection, Reckoning, and Recompense.

The Day of Gathering is one of the names of the Day of Resurrection recurrent references to which are attested in the Holy Qur'an, including 56:49–50:

***"Say those of olden and those of later times shall be all gathered together for appointed Meeting of a Known Day."***

It clearly reflects that the Resurrection of all mankind shall be on one single Day. The blessed Verse 9 is saying that that Day shall be the Day of Mutual Loss and Gain when losers and winners shall be recognized. It shall be on such Day that those who have incurred loss in this world shall be known to others.

Treating of the states of the believers on that Day, the blessed Verse proceeds to say that those who believe in God Almighty and does righteous good deeds shall be absolved of his sins by God Almighty and he shall be admitted to Gardens of Paradise beneath whose trees rivers flow to dwell therein forever and it shall be a great success.

The blessed Verse 10 is saying that those who disbelieved and denied Our Signs are the people of the Hell to dwell therein for good and they shall have a dire fate. Disbelief and denial of Divine Signs are herein mentioned as the Causes leading to misfortune as they stand against belief and righteous good deeds. Thus, mention is made herein of the everlasting Paradise and the great salvation and also of the everlasting Hell and the dire fate.

## Surah al-Taghabun – Verse 11

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ ۗ وَمَنْ يُؤْمِن بِاللَّهِ يَهْدِ اللَّهُ قَلْبَهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

**11. No calamity befalls but by the Leave of Allah and whoever believes in Allah, He guides his heart. And Allah is the Omniscient.**

The blessed Verse makes a reference to the afflictions and the painful torments in this world perhaps to the effect that such afflictions have always served as pretexts for disbelievers to deny Justice in this world. Such reference may also reflect that there are impediments on the path to true belief and doing righteous good deeds without confronting them the believer may not succeed. Thus, the link between the blessed Verse in question and the preceding Verses becomes manifest.

The blessed Verse opens by saying that no affliction befalls on mankind without Allah's Leave.

All the happenings in this world indubitably depend upon Divine Leave, since the Unity of Divine Acts requires that nothing may realize in the world of existence without Divine Will, but since befalling of afflictions has always raise questions, emphasis is laid upon it. It is worthy of note, however, that Divine Will reflects Divine Existential Will rather than His Legislative Will.

The significant question raised here is this: Do many of these afflictions befall on mankind consequent to the wrong doings of the oppressors and the will of the tyrants or man is entangled with them owing to his ignorance, negligence, and committing vices or they all befall on mankind owing to Allah's Leave?

To provide a response to this question one may say that all the Qur'anic Verses dealing with afflictions reflect that they are of two kinds: those essential to the nature of human life absolutely unaffected by human will, e.g. death and some of the natural excruciating disasters and those which are somehow affected by human will.

Regarding the first category, the Holy Qur'an says that they are all dependent upon Divine Leave. Concerning the second category, the Glorious Qur'an says that they are the consequences of human acts.

Therefore, one may not use such pretexts and regard all afflictions befalling on mankind by Allah and thereby remain inactive against wrong doers and refrain from confronting them. One may not even refrain from addressing and encountering ailments, blights, poverty, and ignorance. It is worthy of note, however, that the afflictions stemming from human acts befall man upon Divine Leave and any cause is rendered ineffectual upon His Will.

The blessed Verse proceeds with bearing glad tidings to the believers saying that God Almighty guides the believers' hearts such that they never abandon hope in the face of afflictions nor be turned restless. Man is granted Divine Guidance when he is grateful for Divine Bounties, patient in the face of afflictions, and submits to Divine Decree.

The Guidance of the heart embraces a broad semantic range from patience, gratitude, being content with Divine Satisfaction, submission to Divine Will to uttering the formula

***"To Allah we belong and to Whom we return."***

Some Qur'an exegetes have treated with one of these attributes, though the blessed Verse covers all of them.

The blessed Verse closes with

***"and Allah is the Omniscient"***

which may briefly reflect the causes behind the afflictions in store for fostering His servants out of His Infinite Knowledge aiming at giving warnings against arrogance and vanity such that His servants may not consign into oblivion their obligations and refrain from disobedience to Him.

## **Surah al-Taghabun – Verses 12-13**

وَأَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ ۚ فَإِن تَوَلَّيْتُمْ فَإِنَّمَا عَلَىٰ رَسُولِنَا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ

اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ وَعَلَىٰ اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ

***12. Obey Allah [in terms of the injunctions prescribed in Divine Law] and obey the Messenger [with respect to his commands and traditions], but if you turn away, then the obligation of Our Messenger is merely to convey the Message clearly.***

***13. Allah! There is no god but He. Therefore, in Allah let the believers put their trust.***

Since the knowledge of the origin and Resurrection, mentioned in the previous blessed Verses, certainly affects obedience to God Almighty and the Noble Prophet (S), the blessed Verse in question is saying that it is incumbent upon the believers to obey God Almighty and His Messenger (S).

It goes without saying that obedience to the Noble Prophet (S) reflects obedience to God Almighty, since he does not say anything of his own. The imperative verbal form obey (ati'u) reflects herein that obedience to the Noble Prophet (S) stems from obedience to God Almighty.

Furthermore, obedience to God Almighty rests in obeying Divine Laws but obeying in His Messenger concerns to the interpretations of Divine Laws and execution of the same. Thus, one is fundamental and the other is ancillary.

The blessed Verse proceeds to say that if you turn away and fail to obey the Noble Prophet (S), he is not obliged to make you obey, since His Messenger (S) is only obliged to clearly convey the message. It is incumbent upon him to impart the Truth, but if you fail to obey Divine Command, you have to pay for the consequences of your disobedience. It entails an implied warning.

The blessed Verse 13 makes a reference to the question of Divine Unity in worshipping God Almighty serving as an argument for the requirement of obedience to Divine Command, saying that Allah is the One besides Whom there is no object of worship, hence the believers are supposed to solely put their trust in Him.

No one else is worthy of being worshipped, since Ownership, Omnipotence, Omniscience, and Needlessness solely belong to Him and all beings besides Him are in need of Him. Consequently, they are not supposed to bow down to and obey none but Him. Thus, the believers are to put their trust in Him and invoke solely Him in their prayers.

## Surah al-Taghabun – Verse 14

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ مِنْ أَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَأَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُمْ ۚ وَإِنْ تَعَفَّوْا  
وَتَصَفَّحُوا وَتَغْفِرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

**14. O you who believe! Indeed, amongst your wives and your children are your enemies [since they make you turn away from treading the Divine Path]. Therefore, beware of them! But if you pardon, overlook, and forgive their faults, then know that Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Gracious.**

The Arabic words

'afw ("pardon"),

***safh*** ("***forgiveness***"),

and

***maghfira*** ("***remission***")

constitute the three steps to be taken against the faults of others including spouses and children. Regarding the Occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Verse in question, Imam Baqir (as) is reported as saying that when some men intended to migrate from Mecca to Medina, their wives and children beseeched them to swear that they did not leave them since they would be abandoned without them.

Some men yielded to their persistence and intended to stay. Then, the blessed Verse was revealed warning them against yielding to their wives' and children's requests. There were some men who said unto their families that if they refrained from accompanying them in their migration and joined them later in Medina, they would not be welcome by no means. They were ordered to consign to oblivion the past and welcome the reunion and the Qur'anic Verse addresses such issue.<sup>8</sup>

The preceding blessed Verses treated of the unconditional obedience to God Almighty and His Messenger (S), though since excessive affection for possessions and families constitute one of the impediments in treading the Path of Truth, the blessed Verse in question warns Muslims in this respect saying:

***"O you who believe! Some of your wives and children are your enemies. Beware of them."***

Whenever you intend to act upon Divine Ordinance, e.g. migration in Allah's Cause, they beseech you to refrain from obedience to God Almighty and His Messenger (S) and thereby impede you from being granted such great Bounty.

At times, they wish that you were dead so as to possess your possessions. It is needless to say that all wives and children are not like that and the partitive proposition min ("from") designates the same connotation. The point is that some of them are like that and the believers are supposed to beware of them.

It is worthy of note, however, that such enmity is at times disguised as affection and good intention, though enmity and mal intention rest behind such affection aiming at procurement of personal benefits.

The significant point is that man may at times be perplexed at dilemmas when one way leads to God Almighty and the other toward one's family. Believers are not supposed to entertain any doubts since Divine Satisfaction precedes all things and salvation in this world and the Hereafter lies in the same.

Since family members may use the injunction as a pretext for violence, vengeance, and going to the extreme, the blessed Verse proceeds to say that if you overlook and forgive their faults, God Almighty will forgive you, since He is Oft-Forgiving and Most Gracious.

Thus, if they repent and apologize for their faults and join you following your migration, do not turn away from them, but forgive them as you invoke God Almighty for forgiveness.

The blessed Verse is saying that the believers, besides being decisive in maintaining their beliefs and refraining from yielding to the entreaties of their families as to deviate from the straight path, are supposed to endeavor to forgive the faults of others in the same manner that they invoke God Almighty for forgiveness since it is through such affection and forgiveness that they may invite them to obey God Almighty.

## Surah al-Taghabun – Verses 15-16

إِنَّمَا أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَأَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ ۗ وَاللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُمْ وَأَسْمِعُوا وَأَطِيعُوا وَأَنْفِقُوا خَيْرًا لِّأَنْفُسِكُمْ ۗ وَمَنْ يُوقَ شُحَّ نَفْسِهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

**15. Your riches and your offspring are only a trial and Allah with Him is the great reward grants rewards to those who stand the trial.**

**16. Therefore, fear Allah as much as you can. Listen to and obey His Words and expend in His Cause. That is better for you. And whoever is delivered from his own covetousness, then, they are the saved.**

The Arabic word fitna connotes the pains, afflictions, hardships, and entanglements which serve as trials. It also connotes the conspiracies and corruptions by enemies.

The Holy Qur'an9 enjoins the believers to struggle against them such that there remains no corruption. It would be of interest to note that possessions and families are both means of trial and the embellishments in this world<sup>10</sup>. In this vein, Imam 'Ali (as) is reported as saying that the believers are supposed to seek refuge in God Almighty in the face of trials quoting the blessed Verse in question.<sup>11</sup>

If we believe that possessions serve as means of trial, we will not be perturbed by their scarcity since standing such trials will be easier in this way. Possessions are supposed to be accrued through legitimate means and they should be expended in legitimate causes. The believers are obliged to pay the alms tax and thereby show their gratitude.

Children are also means of trial, since parents should accord due attention with respect to selecting worthy spouses for them, pay the religiously lawful mahr, i.e. the bridal money to the spouse, the

children's healthy feeding, having affection for them, fostering and educating them in terms of matrimony, and pay utmost attention to their proper upbringing.

All these steps are hard trials and in case the parents be able to fulfill their obligations and thereby stand the trial, they will have their shares in all the righteous good deeds committed by their children.

Some of the spouses and children entertain enmity but all of them serve as means of trial. Thus, foregoing the affection for possessions and children constitute a great Divine Obligation for which God Almighty grants great Rewards. The blessed Verse in question reflects that possessions and children serve as means of trial for the believers and if they stand the trial, they will be granted great Divine Rewards and Bounties.

God Almighty tries man at all times in order to make him tread the path of growth. Man is tried by different things and possessions and children serve as some of the most significant means of trial, since man's affection for possessions on the one hand and his affection for his children on the other serve as hard trials and man may not stand them and thereby fail to achieve Divine Satisfaction.

The Arabic adverbial form

***innama*** ("***nothing but***")

is employed herein to reflect restriction connoting that above all, affection for possessions and children serve as means of trial.

In this respect, Imam 'Ali (as) is narrated as saying:

*"No one is supposed to say*

*'O Lord! I seek refuge in You from the trials,'*

*since there are trials for each and everyone through possessions, however meager, and children and the life of this world serves as the crucible in which man is tried.*

*If anyone intends to seek refuge in God Almighty, he is to seek refuge in Him from errors, since God Almighty says:*

***'Beware that possessions and children are means of trial.'***"<sup>12</sup>

In this vein, many a Qur'anic exegete and traditionist narrate that once the Messenger of Allah (S) was delivering a sermon on the pulpit when Hasan and Husayn (as) who were small children at the time entered and as they toddled. The Noble Prophet (S) noticed them.

He descended from the pulpit and embraced them saying:

*"God Almighty is True in saying that your possessions and children are means of your trial. When I noticed that they toddled, I could not exercise patience. I cut my words short and came to embrace them."*<sup>13</sup>

It is worthy of note, however, that such conduct served as a warning to all the Muslims so that they may recognize the exalted ranks of Imam 'Ali's (as) and Hadhrat Fatima's children.

A tradition is transmitted on the authority of Bura' ibn 'Azib, the well-known Prophet's Companion, in Sunni sources as per which he saw Hasan ibn 'Ali (as) on the Noble Prophet's (as) shoulders saying that he loved him and invoked God Almighty to love him as well.<sup>14</sup>

According to some other traditions, when the Noble Prophet (S) was prostrating in his prayers and Husayn (as), while still a small child, sat on the Noble Prophet's (S) shoulders, he did not impede him from doing so and such conduct reflects the exalted ranks of these two Imams (as).<sup>15</sup>

The blessed Verse 16 draws a conclusion by saying:

*"Fear God Almighty as much as it is within your capacity and listen to and obey His Injunctions and expend in His Cause since it would be better for you."*

The blessed Verse opens with an Injunction, as per which the believers are supposed to refrain from committing sins, since fear of God Almighty mostly reflects refraining from committing sins. Then, the blessed Verse proceeds to say that believers are supposed to listen to Divine Injunctions as the preliminary of obeying God Almighty.

Particular emphasis is laid on expending in Allah's Cause as one of the most significant Divine Trials making mention of the point that such things will be all to their benefit (khayr), though the word encompasses a wide semantic range. The emphatic expression reflects that those who save themselves from avarice and covetousness will be saved.

The Arabic word shuhh denotes both niggardliness and avarice and we know that these two vices are amongst the worst impediments to man's deliverance, since they impede man from expending in Allah's Cause and doing righteous good deeds.

Man may save himself from these two vices and achieve happiness through seeking Divine Grace from the bottom of his heart and striving toward the purification of one's self. It is narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that whoever pays the alms tax guarantees his happiness.<sup>16</sup>

It is worthy of note, however, that it solely includes one of the instances of refraining from niggardliness and avariciousness rather than encompassing all its semantic scope. It is also narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) that he circumambulated the Ka'ba from night to morning invoking God Almighty at all times to keep him from his niggardliness and avariciousness.

One of the Imam's companions asked him:

*"May my soul be your ransom! I just hear this invocation of yours tonight. Why do you not make another invocation?"*

The Imam (as) replied:

*"What is worse than niggardliness and avariciousness since God Almighty says:*

***'And whoever is delivered from his own covetousness, then, they are the saved.'***"<sup>17</sup>

## Surah al-Taghabun – Verses 17-18

إِنْ تُقْرِضُوا اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا يُضَاعِفْهُ لَكُمْ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ شَكُورٌ حَلِيمٌ

عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

**17. If you lend Allah a goodly loan, He will double it for you and will forgive you. And Allah is Most Prepared to appreciate and the Most Forbearing.**

**18. He is the All-Knower of the unseen and seen, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.**

To encourage believers to expend in Allah's Cause and refraining from niggardliness and covetousness, the blessed Verse 17 is saying that if you lend Allah a goodly loan, He will make it two folds for you and He will forgive you.

He is Most Prepared to appreciate and reward and He is Most Forbearing. Such wondrous expression is recurrently attested in the Holy Qur'an with respect to expending in Allah's Cause. God Almighty who is the Creator of the world of existence and He bestows all Bounties and owns all things asks us to lend Him a goodly loan and receive a twofold compensation in return.

He forgives us and appreciates our lending Him a goodly loan. Better rewards, affection, and compensation are unimaginable. It is impossible to transcend such Majesty and Graciousness. Our possessions all belong to Him but we will receive such great Rewards in return for lending such goodly loan. Such Reward reflects the significance of expending in Allah's Cause on the one hand and the Infinite Bounties bestowed upon His servants on the other.

The Arabic word qardh originally denotes "sever, cut," though when it is accompanied by the word hasan "good" it connotes separation from one's possessions and expending the same in a good cause. The

Arabic verbal form yudha'if deriving from the root dh-‘-f, denotes making twofold or manifold, though in terms of expending in Allah's Cause, according to the Holy Qur'an, it may reach seven hundred fold and may even exceed the same<sup>18</sup>.

The clause

***"He will forgive you"***

reflects that expending in Allah's Cause leads to the forgiveness of one's sins.

The adjective

***shakur ("Most Ready to appreciate")***

is a Divine Attribute indicating that God Almighty is Most Ready to appreciate the righteous good deeds of His servants by granting great Rewards. His Patience (hilm) reflects His forgiving of sins and lack of haste in chastising the servants.

The blessed Verse is also saying that God Almighty is All-Aware of the seen and the unseen and He is the Omnipotence, the All-Wise. God Almighty is All-Aware of what His servants do in private and in public.

He is Omniscient of what they expend in His Cause. If He asks them to lend Him a goodly loan, it does not reflect His need and lack powerlessness, rather such request indicates His Infinite Affection and Grace. Such great Rewards in return for expending in His Cause reflect His Wisdom.

Therefore, the five Divine Attributes mentioned in the blessed Verse in question and the preceding One are all related to the encouragement to expend in His Cause, though according attention to such Attributes makes man more steadfast in his obedience to God Almighty and refraining from committing sins and grants him the spirit of fear of God Almighty, will power, and encouragement.

Finally, it would be of interest to make reference to a Prophetic tradition according to which no infant is born unless five Verses from Surah al-Taghabun are written on its skull<sup>19</sup> by which the last five blessed Verses concerning worldly possessions and children may be intended.

The inscription of these five blessed Verses on the skull reflected the certainty of the contents of these Verses applicable to all human beings without any exception. It clearly indicates that such dispositions are to be found in mankind.

*O Lord! Render us aid in such great trial regarding affection for possessions and families.*

*O Lord! Assist us in warding off niggardliness, avariciousness, and covetousness since turning away from such vices leads to deliverance and salvation.*

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1. Majma' al-Bayan.
  2. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn.
  3. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn under the blessed Verse in question.
  4. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 71, p. 173.
  5. Ibid, vol. 72, p. 173.
  6. Ibid, vol. 83, p. 127.
  7. Ibid, vol. 7, p. 262.
  8. The exegetic work by 'Ali ibn Ibrahim, Tafsir Nur, Tafsir Durr al-Manthur, and other exegetic works.
  9. 2:193
  10. Chapter 17
  11. Nahj al-Balagha, aphorism 93.
  12. Nahj al-Balagha, aphorism 93.
  13. Tafsir Majma' al-Bayan, under the blessed Verse in question; Tafsir Qurtubi; Tafsir Ruh al-Ma'ani; Tafsir Fi Hilal al-Qur'an; Tafsir al-Mizan.
  14. Muslim's Sahih, vol. 4, p. 1883, the Chapter on the Merits of Hasan and Husayn (as), tradition 58.
  15. Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 43, p. 296, tradition 57.
  16. Majma' al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 301.
  17. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 5, p. 346.
  18. 2:261
  19. Ruh al-Bayan, vol. 10, p. 24.

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