

## Surah al-Zukhruf, Verses 64– 89

### Surah al-Zukhruf – Verses 64 – 65

إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ مُسْتَقِيمٌ

فَاخْتَلَفَ الْأَحْزَابُ مِنْ بَيْنِهِمْ فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ عَذَابٍ يَوْمِ أَلِيمٍ

**64. Verily Allah! He is my Lord and your Lord. So worship Him. This is the Straight Path.**

**65. But the sects from among themselves differed. So woe to those who do wrong from the torment of a painful Day.**

The main message of Jesus (as) is to call people to Monotheism. God, the Creator of all beings is solely worthy of worship.

The blessed Verse 64 says that He is truly my Lord and your Lord. Only worship Him. It is the Straight Path which finally leads to Closeness to God Almighty.

The pronoun:

**“he” (huwa)**

is one of the Most Beautiful Divine Names whose antecedent is Allah.

It refers to the Indivisible or Non-Composite (basit) Being who is Imperceptible through human senses. He is your Lord and my Lord and we are solely supposed to obey Him so that through such obedience to Him you may attain to excellence and felicity and His Infinite Mercy.

Verse 65 refers to the point that following the Call of the prophets with their indubitable proofs, wise sayings, scriptures, and many a miracles each of which bear testimony to the truth of their call, woe to those who have done wrong to themselves and deserve excruciating torment for their opposition to prophetic calls.

## Surah al-Zukhruf – Verses 66 – 67

هَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ إِلَّا السَّاعَةَ أَنْ تَأْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ

الْأَخْلَاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ إِلَّا الْمُتَّقِينَ

**66. Do they only wait for the Hour that it shall come upon them all of a sudden while they are unaware?**

**67. Friends on that Day will be foes to each other except the pious.**

The Day of Resurrection shall come all of a sudden and no one is aware of the Hour of its occurrence:

**(“It shall come upon them all of a sudden while they are unaware”).**

All friendships not based on piety and fear of God will turn into enmity:

**(“Friends on that Day will be foes to each other except the pious”).**

The preceding Verses made mention of obdurate idolaters, deviants, and polytheists of the people of Jesus (as) and the Verses in question depict their end. Verse 66 says:

**“Do they only wait for the Hour that it shall come upon them all of a sudden while they are unaware?”**

The rhetorical question expresses the real circumstances of such people according to which those who do not listen to anyone providing advice out of one’s kind heart and thereby paves the path for his perdition.

In this respect, it is said that such a person waits for his own death! The word **“Hour” (sa’a)** in this Verse and many other Verses indicate the Day of Resurrection, the happenings of which occur immediately as if they all happen in one single hour. However, the word at times signifies the last moment of the world. Since the two meanings are not too far from each other, it may indicate both.

The coming of the Day of Resurrection to occur all of a sudden is depicted in the blessed Verse in question. Two points are here raised: firstly, its sudden occurrence (baghtatan), and secondly, people being uninformed of the hour of its occurrence.

It is needless to say that something may suddenly occur but we are informed of it beforehand and prepare ourselves to encounter its aftermath; however, it would be unfortunate when a dire incident occurs all of a sudden and we happen to be totally unaware of its occurrence.

The sinful live in such state, in other words, they are caught by surprise to the extent that according to some traditions narrated from the Noble Prophet of Islam (S):

*“The hour shall come when (people are preoccupied with their daily affairs) men milk ewes and [other] me unroll fabric [for trade];”*

then the Noble Prophet (S) recited the blessed Verse:

***‘Do they only wait for the Hour that it shall come upon them all of a sudden while they are unaware?’”<sup>1</sup>***

It would be very painful to be unaware of an irretrievable occurrence and be caught in surprise.

Verse 67 depicts the state of the friends extending their hands toward each other in pursuit of corruption and the gaudy mammon saying:

***“Friends on that Day will be foes to each other except the pious.”***

The word:

***‘akhilla’ (“friends”)***

is the plural form of khalil (“friend”) derives from khulla (“friendship”).

Depicting the scenes of the Day of Resurrection, the Verse in question clearly reveals that the word:

***“Hour”***

also used in the preceding Verse indicates the Day of Resurrection, when all bonds of friendship break off unless those established for God and in His Name.

It is natural that such friendships turn into enmity on that Day since each and every of them reckons the other as the one leading him to misfortune and hopelessness, saying:

*“You showed me the wrong way and called me to tread it. You were the one who embellished the world for me and encouraged me to be preoccupied with its gaudy adornments. You made me sink in neglect, ignorance, and vanity and thereby made me unaware of my dire end.”*

Yet, the bonds of friendship of the pious are everlasting since they are established on everlasting values whose fruitful consequences shall be more evident on the Day of Resurrection and thereby they place them on a firmer basis.

It is natural that friends render assistance to each other in daily life and if their friendship be based on evil and corruption they will be accomplices in their sins and crimes; however if their friendship be based on good and discretion, they will be associates in recompense. Therefore, it is not surprising to know that the former will turn into enmity and the latter into firmer friendship.

It is reported from Imam Sadiq (as):

*“Know that any friendship which is not for God will turn into enmity and animosity on the Day of Resurrection.”*<sup>2</sup>

The following Verse is actually an interpretation of the characteristics and states of the God fearing pious and a depiction of their glorious fate. God will thus address them on the Day of Resurrection:

***“O My servants! Today you do not have to entertain neither fear nor grief.”***

What an interesting message! A Message which is immediately sent by God to humanity opening with the best depictions:

*“O Allah’s servants!”*

The Message removes the worst concern on that Day, a Message that removes all past grieves from hearts. This Message bears the four aforesaid merits.

## **Surah al-Zukhruf – Verses 68 – 70**

يَا عِبَادِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ تَحْزُنُونَ

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَكَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ

ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ أَنْتُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ تُحْبَرُونَ

**68. [God says unto them:] My servants! No fear shall be on you this Day, nor shall you grieve.**

**69. Those who believe in Our Ayat [Verses, Signs, Proofs] and are submitted [to Truth] at all times.**

**70. Enter Paradise, you and your wives in happiness.**

Submission to the Will of God Almighty guarantees security from fears and perils on the Day of Resurrection.

Serenity will precede benefiting from Bounties in Paradise:

***“No fear shall be on you this Day, nor shall you grieve”***.

Having faith is insufficient; we have to be totally submitted to Divine Will.

The phrase:

***“O servants!”***

in the blessed Verse in question is addressed to the God fearing pious admitting them to Paradise on the Day of Resurrection free of excruciating grieves and fears of torments and afflictions experienced by people in this world.

Such believers do not have to entertain sorrow for their past lives since they did not waste their mundane life. They will neither regret nor grieve on the Day of Judgment. The Verse proceeds with saying that the pious shall benefit from Divine Infinite Mercy and Bounties.

Verse 69 makes a reference to certain characteristics of God’s servants who are praised for worshipping God. Those are the ones who believed in Divine Signs (or Verses, i.e., the Holy Qur’an) and totally and unconditionally submitted to His Commands and Injunctions imparted to them through His Messenger, Muhammad ibn ‘Abd Allah (S).

These God fearing, pious, and endeared servants are further depicted by two more clauses, i.e.,

***“Those who believed in Our Ayat and submitted to our Command.”***<sup>3</sup>

They are those who are addressed by such glorious appellations and benefit from such divine Bounties. In fact, the two aforesaid clauses provide a precise depiction of their belief and practice. Faith (iman) specifies the firm bases of their beliefs and submission to the Will of God (islam) explicates their act of submission to Divine Commands and Injunctions.

Verse 70 says:

***“Enter Paradise”***

which is addressed to the pious by the Most Gracious and All-Great Allah. Thus, their host is actually

God who invited His company and now is asking them to enter Paradise.

Then mention is made of the first Bounty to be bestowed upon them, i.e.,

***“you and your wives.”***

It is evident that being with faithful and kind spouses is a source of pleasure for both men and women since they were their partners in mundane sorrows and now they may be their partners in happiness in the Hereafter.

The Verse further says unto believers that they may enjoy happiness such that your faces may be illumined by it.

The verb form:

***tuhbarun (lit. “you are happy”)***

derives from hibr (“compose thoughts effectively) and at times it is employed in the sense of the features of happiness reflected in countenance.

The word hibr (pl. ahbar) is also used to refer to scholars since they affect human societies, as it is reported from the Command of the Faithful, Imam ‘Ali (as):

*“Scholars will live to the end of the world, their persons will be lost but their works will live on in hearts.”*<sup>4</sup>

## **Surah al-Zukhruf – Verse 71**

يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِصِحَافٍ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَأَكْوَابٍ وَفِيهَا مَا تَشْتَهِيهِ الْأَنْفُسُ وَتَلَذُّ الْأَعْيُنُ  
وَأَنْتُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ

***71. Vessels and cups of gold will be passed round them; [there will be] therein all that inner-selves could desire and all that eyes could delight in and you will abide therein forever.***

The words ***sihaf*** (plural form of sahfa) and akwab (plural form of kub) are applied to “large vessels” and “goblets” respectively.

It is to be noted as well that the pleasures of the eye will be in harmony with other wishes of the people of Paradise:

***(“eyes could delight”).***

The blessed Verse promises believers that they will enjoy all kinds of Divine and luxurious Bounties

reserved for them in Paradise, e.g. gold bowls and jars and the Bounties of the people of Paradise are generally divided into three kinds:

1. Whatever the inner-selves of the people of Paradise wish shall be prepared for them
2. They shall enjoy all the pleasures of the soul and flesh
3. The last one which is the highest of Bounties is that the people of Paradise shall reside there forever.

## Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 72 - 73

وَتِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي أُورِثْتُمُوهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

لَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ كَثِيرَةٌ مِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ

**72. This is the Paradise which you have been made to inherit because of your deeds which you used to do.**

**73. Therein for you will be fruits in plenty of which you will eat.**

According to traditions, God has specified for each person a place in Hell and another place in Paradise.

The people of Paradise inherit the place of the people of Hell in Paradise and the people of Hell inherit the place of the people of Paradise in Hell.<sup>5</sup>

The issue of inheriting Paradise is mentioned in different Verses, an instance of which is:

**“These are indeed the inheritors who shall inherit Paradise and dwell in it forever”<sup>6</sup>.**

To make it clear that so many Bounties in Paradise are bestowed upon the

God fearing for their deeds, the blessed Verse 72 says:

**“This is the Paradise which you have been made to inherit.”**

It is of interest to learn that on the one hand the recompense of past deeds are mentioned and on the other hand mention is made of

**“inheritance”**

which usually denotes some gain fallen into someone’s share with no pain at all. It demonstrates the fact

that human deeds serve as the pivot of his deliverance but what he receives for them far exceeds the recompense of his deeds.

Some exegetes maintain that the allegory makes a reference to what mentioned above according to which for each and every person two dwelling places are reserved in Paradise and in Hell; people of Paradise inherit the place reserved in Paradise for the people of Hell and the people of Hell inherit the place reserved in Hell for the people of Paradise!

Verse 73 makes mention of the fruits of Paradise which are amongst the best Divine Bounties, saying:

***“Therein for you will be fruits in plenty of which you will eat.”***

According to a tradition:

*“No one picks up the fruits of trees in Paradise unless two folds shall grow instead of them.”*<sup>7</sup>

Such Bounties constitute some of the invigorating Bounties in Paradise to be granted to those who are faithful and do righteous good deeds.

## **Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 74 - 76**

إِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِينَ فِي عَذَابٍ جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ

لَا يُفْتَرُ عَنْهُمْ وَهُمْ فِيهِ مُبْلِسُونَ

وَمَا ظَلَمْنَاهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا هُمُ الظَّالِمِينَ

***74. Indeed sinners will be in the torment of Hell to abide therein forever.***

***75. [The torment] will not be lightened for them and they will be plunged into destruction with deep regrets, sorrows, and in despair therein.***

***76. We wronged them not, but they were wrong-doers.***

The verbal form:

***mublisun*** (“they grieve in despair”)

derives from iblas (“grief with despair”). The word Iblis may also connote that he is hopeless of Divine Mercy. The blessed Verse 74 says that human evil deeds will take him to Hell and Divine Chastisement is fair.

Whenever the Holy Qur’an mentions the Bounties promised to believers, it usually warns disbelievers to torments and au contraire, whenever It warns disbelievers against torments, It promises believers that they will be granted Bounties in Paradise.

The reason may lie in the fact that man should at all times stay between awe and hope; as a consequence of which the Noble Prophet of Islam (S) is by Divine Word, a mercy to the world but at the same time is a bearer of good tidings and a warner.

It is to be noted in the mean time that believers will enjoy infinite Bounties and will stay in Paradise forever; au contraire, disbelievers and sinners will taste many a torment in Hell and will stay there for good.

The following Verse says that their torment will not be lightened and they will lose their hope for deliverance.

Verse 76 serves as a reminder as per which it is not to be imagined that those who will be admitted to paradise to enjoy the Bounties there had some inborn quality and they did not struggle willfully to do righteous good deeds; au contraire, it may not be supposed that those who will end up in Hell to be afflicted with such torments had some inborn defect in them and they did not commit evil deeds without their will.

This is the false belief maintained by Ash’aris which is inconsistent with Divine Justice. Had it been like this, evil doers would have been wronged. Yet, The Essence of Divine Unity is far from chastising His weak servant because of his inborn quality driving him to committing sins.

Therefore, God Almighty reminds the people of Hell and torment in many a Qur’anic Verse that He did not wrong them but they did wrong knowingly and out of their own will as a consequence of which they deserve chastisement which is fair. It is through His Justice that everything is placed in order and thanks to His boundless Mercy, He may forgive anyone He wills.

## **Surah al-Zukhruf - Verse 77**

وَنَادُوا يَا مَالِكُ لِيَقْضِ عَلَيْنَا رَبُّكَ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ مَا كُنْتُمْ

**77. And they will cry: “O Keeper [of Hell]! Let your Lord make an end of us.” He will say: “Indeed you shall abide forever [and there shall be no death].”**

The inhabitants of Hell ask for assistance from anyone.

At times, they ask help from believers:

*“Look at us so that we may use your light?”*

and at times they extend their hands toward tyrant chiefs:

*“Would you deliver us from Divine Wrath?”*

They sometimes beseech the keepers of Hell to render them aid. They ask them to make an end of them, but it will be of no avail.

The blessed Verse in question says that the people of Hell seek refuge with the keeper of Hell out of the severity of torment and ask them in supplication:

*“O Keeper [of Hell]! Let your Lord make an end of us.’ He will say: ‘Indeed you shall abide forever.’”*

## **Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 78 - 80**

لَقَدْ جِئْنَاكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَكُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كَارِهُونَ

أَمْ أُبْرَمُوا أَمْراً فَإِنَّا مُبْرَمُونَ

أَمْ يَحْسَبُونَ أَنَّا لَا نَسْمَعُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ بَلَىٰ وَرُسُلْنَا لَدَيْهِمْ يَكْتُبُونَ

**78. Verily, We have brought the truth to you, but most of you have a hatred for the truth.**

**79. Or have they plotted some plan? Then We too are planning.**

**80. Or do they think that We hear not their secrets and their private counsel? [Yes We do] and Our messengers are by them, to record [everything].**

God Almighty is the Origin of Truth and angels are responsible for recording the recompense of acknowledging the Truth or failing to do so.

Divine recompense is consistent with our deeds and He will not chastise anyone without carrying out evil

deeds or making decisions to commit them:

*“Or have they plotted some plan?”*

Disbelievers unknowingly imagine that God Almighty is unaware of their secret plans. The first two Verses confirm the preceding Verse to the effect that the Essence of Divine Unity addresses disbelievers and in reply to those of them who seek deliverance says that He clarified for them the Path of Truth in this world; in other words, He sent His Messengers to guide them but they disliked to follow the Straight Path.

They not only failed to acknowledge the Message imparted to them by prophets but also they persisted in their opposition to and denial of Divine Word and made attempts at their persecution; as a consequence of which God Almighty rendered their torment more severe and the same bears testimony to the fact that Divine Retribution is consistent with human deeds.

Verse 80 asks disbelievers whether they imagine that God Almighty is unaware of their secrets and inward hatred and opposition to the Message and what they whisper into the ears of each other. Then it provides the reply saying that it is not as they have imagined since if they hear the words of each other and they are unaware of what they entertain in their hearts, God Almighty hears their words and is aware of their secrets and see their deeds. He is well informed of their oppositions to Muslims and their secret counsels and the most noble of recorders (kiram al-katibin), i.e., the angels in charge of recording human words and deeds, are present at your side and listen and record whatever they say or they do.

The All-Hearing (sami') and the All-Seeing (basir) are two of the Most Beautiful Divine Names. It is also said that the two Divine Names indicate His Pre-eternal Knowledge, i.e., His Omniscience embraces all intelligible phenomena.

As mentioned above, the two Divine Names may also allude to the fact that whatever you perceive through your senses of vision and hearing is known through Divine Immediate Knowledge ('ilm huduri) since all contingent beings are embraced by His Omniscience:

*“Nothing is excluded from His Knowledge even if it be an iota in the heaven or on the earth”*

## **Surah al-Zukhruf – Verses 81 – 82**

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمَنِ وَلَدٌ فَأَنَا أَوَّلُ الْعَابِدِينَ

سُبْحَانَ رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

**81. [O Prophet (S)] say: “If the Most Gracious [Allah] had a child, then I am the first of Allah’s worshippers [to respect that child].**

**82. Glorified is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of the Throne! Exalted is He from all that they ascribe [to Him].**

The Creator of the world is needless of children and whenever there is any word concerning any possible defect of Him, we are supposed to glorify Him. In the preceding Verses, particularly the opening Ones, mention was made of Arab polytheists who reckoned angels as Allah’s daughters and the foregoing Verses included accounts of Jesus (as) and his Call to people concerning Divine Unity and obedience to Him.

The blessed Verses in question negate these false beliefs from another viewpoint saying:

**“If the Most Gracious [Allah] had a child, then I am the first of Allah’s worshippers [and I were the first person to respect the child and to obey him].”**

The theme of Verse 81 is intricate to a number of Qur’anic exegetes as a consequence of which they have resorted to different justifications some of which sound quite queer; nonetheless, the Verse is by no means intricate.

It is a method of interest employed in confronting obdurate people.

An instance of employing the method would be when someone falsely claims that a certain individual is a man of knowledge but he is not so, we might say that had he been knowledgeable, we would have been the first people to follow him so that he may reflect upon his false claim and make attempts at finding an argument to substantiate it and when he fails to produce such argument, he may be awakened from his neglect.

It is also worthy of note that

**“serve” (‘a-b-d)**

is not employed everywhere in the sense of “worship” and at times it is used in the senses of “obey; respect” and it is used ad hoc in the latter sense.

Verse 82 clearly rejects these false claims saying:

**“Glorified is the Lord of the heavens and the earth, the Lord of the Throne! Exalted is He from all that they ascribe [to Him].”**

The Creator and Possessor of the heavens and the earth is the Lord of the Great Throne is needless of children since His Existence is Infinite, Embracing all the world of being. He is the Creator of the world of creation.

Children are required by those who die and beget children to continue their progeny. Children are needed by those who need aid and company at the time of incapacity and solitude. Finally, children indicate corporeality and contingency. The Creator of the Throne, the heaven and the earth has no need for children.

***“Lord of the Throne” (rabb al-‘arsh)***

follows

***“Lord of the heaven and the earth” (rabb al-samawat wa ‘l-ard)***

is an instance of enumeration of the general following the specific, since

***“Divine Throne”***

implies the world of existence which is ruled by God Almighty.

It is also possible that

***“the Throne”***

alludes to the metaphysical world as the opposite of

***“the heavens and the earth.”***

## **Surah al-Zukhruf – Verse 83**

فَذَرَّهُمْ يُخَوِّضُوا وَيَلْعَبُوا حَتَّىٰ يَلْقُوا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِي يُوعَدُونَ

***83. So leave them [these idle talkers alone] to speak nonsense and play until they meet the Day which they have been promised.***

God Almighty usually provides the unworthy with respite and leaves them alone for some time following sending down Guidance. When producing arguments and warnings be of no effect, the other party is supposed to be left alone in the same manner that a kind physician desperately leaves his obdurate patient alone.

The blessed Verse in question is addressed to the Messenger of God (S) asking him to leave alone the ignorant people preoccupied with mundane affairs who regard the Creator of the world to natural phenomena and attribute false ascriptions to Him.

They may not be guided; therefore, leave them alone to be immersed in vanity until the Day of

Resurrection arrives which has been promised to them.

## Surah al-Zukhruf - Verses 84 - 85

وَهُوَ الَّذِي فِي السَّمَاءِ إِلَهٌُ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَهٌُ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيمُ الْعَلِيمُ

وَتَبَارَكَ الَّذِي لَهُ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَعِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَإِلَيْهِ  
تُرْجَعُونَ

**84. It is He Who is the only God worshipped in the heaven and the only God to be worshipped on the earth and He is the All-Wise, the Omniscient.**

**85. And Blessed is He Whom belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them and with Whom is the knowledge of the Hour and to Whom you will be returned.**

He Who possesses Infinite Knowledge and Wisdom is worthy of being worshipped. The blessed Verse 84 says that the Creator of the heaven and the earth is the One Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth.

He has placed everything in its proper place in the precise system of creation and He is Fully Aware of the generation and corruption of worldly phenomena and His Immediate Knowledge embraces everything and all entities in this world are under His Guardianship.

Qur'anic exegetes ad hoc take

**“God”**

in the sense of Object of Worship and maintain that God is the One Who is the Creator and the Object of Worship of the inhabitants of the heavens, the earth, and the Throne.

The word:

**“God”**

may allude to Divinity and Creativeness since God Almighty, praise be to Him, is the Creator of the heavens, the earth, and their inhabitants and is also their Breeder and Educator as it may be comprehended from the close of the Verse:

**(“He is the All-Wise, the Omniscient”)**

since His creation is based on His Infinite Wisdom and Knowledge and a firm basis and it is done in the best possible manner.

Verse 85 indicates Divine Greatness, Sovereignty, and Majesty saying that the Almighty is the Creator of the heavens, the earth, and whatever exists between them and they are all embraced by his Infinite Sovereignty and Almightyness. He is of Everlasting and Boundless Bounties.

***“And with Whom is the knowledge of the Hour,”***

i.e., He is the only One Who is aware of the hour of Resurrection and restoration and return of all things in within his Almightyness.

The blessed Verse in question enumerates five Divine Attributes, namely Lordship, Divinity, Wisdom, Knowledge, and Possession [of all things]. These five Divine Attributes include all Most Beautiful Divine Names and His other Names branch off from these five Attributes.

## **Surah al-Zukhruf – Verse 86**

وَلَا يَمْلِكُ الَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ الشَّفَاعَةَ إِلَّا مَنْ شَهِدَ بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُونَ

***86. And those whom they invoke instead of Him have no power of intercession – except for those who bear witness to the truth knowingly [e.g. Jesus (as) and the angels who know where the objects of intercession lie].***

Intercession is acceptable but only those who bear witness to the truth may intercede for others. The blessed Verse is about the false belief held by polytheists imagining that idols or others such as angels and Jesus (as) could intercede on their behalf and save them from torment.

The Verse is saying that no one may intercede except those who bore witness to the truth knowingly. The Verse indicates that verbal testimony is insufficient in matters of faith but it must be borne out of knowledge and certitude. It may also allude that interceders solely intercede on behalf of believers in Divine Unity.

## **Surah al-Zukhruf – Verse 87**

وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ

***87. And if you ask polytheists who created them, they will surely say: “Allah.” How then do they***

### ***turn away [from God]?***

Meccan polytheists believed in Allah's creative act, but they were entangled in polytheism regarding Divine Sovereignty, Grace, and intercession and associated gods with Allah in these respects.

Addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) the blessed Verse says:

*“O Muhammad (S)! If you ask these polytheists who created them, they will emphatically say that Allah created them.”*

### ***“How then do they turn away [from God]?”***

Surprisingly, they, out of their primordial disposition, seriously confess that God is their Creator, but they turn away from him and worship idols and gods and in the mean time ask Him to answer their prayers. Thus, they render themselves inflicted with everlasting torment and destruction.

## **Surah al-Zukhruf – Verses 88 – 89**

وَقِيلِهِ يَا رَبِّ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ قَوْمٌ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

فَاَصْفَحْ عَنْهُمْ وَقُلْ سَلَامٌ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ

**88. And Our Prophet says: “O Lord! Verily, these are a people who do not believe.**

**89. [Now that you have lost your hope to guide them to the Straight Path] then turn away from them and say: “Peace [unto you]! But they will come to know [what their recompense shall be].**

*Qilihi* like *qawlihi* is an infinitive denoting “to say.” Confronting obdurate people, prophets seek refuge with God. They are asked to leave obdurate polytheists alone rather than enter into disputation with them lest they happen to be defeated.

The blessed Verses in question reveal the Noble Prophet's (S) complaint against the obdurate and insensible people. The Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) complains that he talked to them day and night and made attempts at bearing glad tidings and warnings.

He related the dire fate of the ancient peoples who refrained from believing in Divine Unity. He warned them against Divine Retribution and heartened them that if they turn away from error, they will be rewarded by Divine Bounties.

In short, he did his level best to guide them to the Straight Path of the Islamic faith, but they were not affected by his words and they failed to believe in God. Now God knows best as what to do with them.

The last Verse includes Divine Injunction to His Prophet (S) to leave them alone. He is reminded that turning away from them does not entail refusing to talk to them, violence, and aggression.

He is asked to say unto them:

***“Peace [unto you]!”***

The gentle word connotes neither friendship nor greeting, but it indicates separation and alienation.

It resembles the gentle words mentioned elsewhere in the Holy Qur’an:

***“And when the foolish address them with bad words, they reply back with mild words of gentleness”***<sup>8</sup>.

The word peace ad hoc indicates indifference accompanied with dignity. In the mean time, he warns them with a meaningful sentence lest they imagine that the separation and farewell indicate that God has nothing to do with them.

The Verse closes with the clause:

***“But they will come to know.”***

*O Lord! Make our bonds with thee and your saints firmer day by day so that they may intercede on our behalf.*

*O Lord! Protect us from any kind of manifest and latent polytheism. Amen O Lord of the world!*

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1. Ruh al-Bayan [Exegesis], vol. 25, p. 89.
  2. ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim’s Exegesis, apud Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol.4, p. 612.
  3. ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim’s Exegesis, apud Nur al-Thiqalayn, vol. 4, p. 612.
  4. Nahj al-Balagha.
  5. Maraghi’s Exegesis.
  6. 23:10–11
  7. Ruh al-Bayan Exegesis, vol. 8, p. 392.
  8. 25:63

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