

Heart of the Quran:

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A Commentary to

Surah Al Yasin





Heart of the Quran: A Commentary to Sura al Yasin
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Chapter 1

Foreword

Everything has a heart and the heart of Quran is Surah Yasin.

A tradition that all commentators have quoted from reliable books, states that everything has a heart and the heart of Quran is (Surah) Yasin.[1]

When we consider the totality of the organs of body as one unit, its center is the heart. From this center is directed the administration of the body. So far as it is warm, the body remains alive and when it fails, the body dies.

Heart of the Quran is Surah Yasin

The comparison of Surah Yasin with the heart, in this narration, conveys the importance of this Surah. Though the entire Quran is a miracle and the Word of God, the special merits found in this blessed chapter particularly, can be better understood by referring to the narrations, which describe the extraordinary excellence and benefits available through regular recitation of this Surah.

Two points, which are probably the basis of this comparison, are as follow:

Muhammad ('s) is the heart of universe

Muslims know well that the best of God's creation is man. God has granted him intelligence and the ability to know Him and to worship Him exclusively, so that he may understand that his creator and the creator of everyone and everything else is Only One God and hence he should worship none but Him:

And I have not created the jinn and the men except that they should serve Me. (51:56)

According to Quran, the creation of the entire universe too, is to make all understand that, in His Words:

He it is Who created for you all that is in the earth. (2:29)

The Holy religion whose foundation is based on understanding and which considers that the measure of nearness to God is the understanding of Truth is Islam. Islam names the one who conveyed it to the world, Muhammad ('s), as the foremost in knowing Allah and that he ranks first in this knowledge and in worship of God. The Quran, which has been revealed to his heart, testifies this Truth.

The Faithful Spirit has descended with it, Upon your heart that you may be of the warners... (26:193-194)

This foreword can make one easily and nicely understand that the heart of the universe is the Holy Prophet Muhammad ('s), as mentioned that: "Had it not been for you, I would not have created the heavens." Thus all the beings were made existent through the agency of Muhammad ('s).

'Yasin' is the chief of prophets, Muhammad ('s)

Also this Surah, which especially pertains to Muhammad, becomes the heart of Quran just as Muhammad himself is the heart of the world of existence. Of all its verses, the first verse of this Surah addresses Muhammad ('s) as the chief of all divine messengers. The Holy Quran says on oath that he Muhammad ('s) is among the True Messengers sent by the Almighty Allah.

After some verses, it is clearly stated that We (God) gave place to all manifest things and organized beforehand through the effort of the soul of Muhammad ('s). The Holy Quran tells us that all the worlds of existence are wrapped up and placed in him; that the center and heart of the universe is Muhammad ('s).

Surah Yasin has all the themes of Quran

Another noticeable point is that Surah Yasin has all the original themes of the entire Quran. The basis of Quran is the knowledge of our coming to this world and about things to come after death in the Hereafter. The requisite of knowing God is the knowledge about God's messengers. The trail of these aims has struggle against disbelievers and polytheists, arguments showing correctness of theists and wrongfulness of others and finally the stories of paradise and the people of paradise and the bounties therein as well as hell and hell dwellers and sorrows therein. Throwing an overall glance at this leads us to conclude that the basic subjects of

Quran are related to origin of life, the Hereafter and calling people towards religion and they have all come together in this Surah. Other things are the offshoots of these issues. Therefore, the heart of the Holy Quran are the verses of knowledge about God; that the Creator and Recaller is God and this Surah narrates them with explanation.

Argument of monotheism

And what reason have I that I should not serve Him Who brought me into existence? And to Him you shall be brought back...(36:22)

The above verse is the statement of the believer of 'Ilyaaseen' in this Surah, which shows why one must worship Only One God, explaining that the only Manifester is One God towards Whom all are to return. Both the First creation and the hereafter are one and the same. Then why shouldn't we honor and accept the One Who has brought us from non-existence into existence and granted us every kind of bounty?

Various kinds of foods are signs of God

And a sign to them is the dead earth: We give life to it and bring forth from it grain so they eat of it. And We make therein gardens of palms and grapevines and We make springs to flow forth in it, That they may eat of the fruit thereof, and their hands did not make it; will they not then be grateful? (36:33-35)

Among the Signs of God for monotheists is the enlivening of the dead earth. He brings out therefrom grains and provides food for living beings. He creates gardens of date palms and grapevines, and makes rivers to flow for the growth of natural fruits; from which vinegar, juices and all permitted eatables and drinks come for all living beings. So that the creatures may relish them and praise and be thankful to the Creator Lord of all these bounties.

Creation of pairs and of days and nights

Glory be to Him Who created pairs of all things, of what the earth grows, and of their kind and of what they do not know. And a sign to them is the night: We draw forth from it the day, then lo! They are in the dark; And the sun runs on to a term appointed for it; that is the ordinance of the Mighty, the Knowing. And (as for) the moon, We have ordained for it stages till it becomes again as an old dry palm branch.

Neither is it allowable to the sun that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day; and all float on in a sphere. (36:33-35)

Altogether perfect and absolutely faultless is Allah Who created all pairs from things growing from the soil and from male, female, figure and shape or existence and quality, and from that which is not known to people. Paying attention to the way of creating pairs, we reach to the One Who created them and know that He is free of every fault or error and that He possesses every possible virtue.

Among all the signs of God, are day and night, and rising and setting of sun. He made night restful and means of peace, calmness and relaxation, and caused the day to be bright and shining, fit for activities and for obtaining livelihood. He also made the sun, like all stars, run towards its abode so that it may go on moving along with its system in the limitless space. He made the moon change its shape systematically from crescent to full moon and from full moon to its disappearance so that it may be possible to calculate lunar months and also to know the time of night from the rising and setting, as the Quran says:

...that you might know the computation of years and the reckoning...(10:5)

Likewise the verse:

...nor can the night outstrip the day... (36:40)

hints that days and nights are subject to the Will of Almighty God. None can dare overtake one another. They must move in the manner decreed by the Lord, in a fixed way whereby night enters day and day in night. In the beginning of spring and autumn, days and nights are equal in length. Thereafter from the start of autumn till the start of summer, days become longer and nights shorter and, thereafter gradually, length of days decrease and that of nights get increased until the beginning of fall when days and nights, for the second time, become equal in length and thereafter, the days becomes shorter and nights longer till the night of the winter solstice and the earlier part of the winter. Then the days becomes longer and nights shorter until the end of winter and the start of spring. This goes on continuously. This regular and fixed system, which is due to the inclination of the earth's axis, is a great sign showing the knowledge, power and wisdom of the Creator.

The ship and other means of transportation are also signs of God

And a sign to them is that We bear their offspring in the laden ship. And We have created for them the like of it, what they will ride on. And if We please, We can drown them, then there shall be no succorer for them, nor shall they be rescued, But (by) mercy from Us and for enjoyment till a time. (36:41-44)

Among the signs of God are ships, which pass over water, carrying passengers. In what nature has He made the wood and metal enabling them to overcome water and what intelligence and ability of knowing nature and qualities of materials He has granted to man that he assembles different materials to make a ship that floats on water, automobiles that run on earth and planes that fly in the atmosphere; so much so that he also sends rockets between stars.

And We have created for them the like of it, what they will ride on. (36:42)

Also sometimes to make man realize that the actual power is God, He occasionally causes a ship to sink and a plane to crash so that people may understand that help should be sought from none but Only One God, the same Lord Who caused the ship, the car and the plane to move. The same Almighty Allah is powerful enough to disconnect the cause from effect. Hence no protection from destruction is available except through His mercy until the fixed time and the destined hour arrives.

...and for enjoyment till a time. (36:44)

Animals are signs for men

Do they not see that We have created cattle for them, out of what Our hands have wrought, so they are their masters? And We have subjected them to them, so some of them they have to ride upon, and some of them they eat. And therein they have advantages and drinks; will they not then be grateful? (36:71-73)

Yet another sign of God for monotheists and the worshippers of Only One God, is the creation of quadrupeds over whom He gave control to

man. Carrying on their business, they eat their flesh, drink their milk and use them for riding and cultivating fields. The noteworthy point is:

We have subjected them to them...

Meaning: We have given them in the service and control of mankind. How were they humbled so that man is able to take all this work from them and they do not revolt? For the sake of truth, shouldn't such a Lord be thanked? Shouldn't man be grateful to Him?

Resurrection—the second Islamic belief

The second part of the basic idea of Quran is related to Resurrection, which is also mentioned in this chapter. Proofs are cited to support the arguments. Among such evidences is the enlivening of the dead earth, which, besides proving the existence of the Creator, also proves that He is able to resurrect. In other words, enlivening dead earth is a sign of the life-giver and also of His power to enliven the dead.

Another remarkable argument for Resurrection is in the last verses of this chapter:

And he strikes out a likeness for Us and forgets his own creation. Says he: Who will give life to the bones when they are rotten? Say: He will give life to them Who brought them into existence at first, and He is cognizant of all creation, He Who has made for you the fire (to burn) from the green tree, so that with it you kindle (fire). Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like of them? Yea! and He is the Creator (of all), the Knower. His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it: Be, so it is. (36:78-82)

Here God alludes to the incident of the polytheist who crushed decayed bones in front of the Holy Prophet ('s) and said, "Who is there to give life to this when it is decayed and rotten?" God says, "He puts forth an example to me and asks", 'How this rotten bone can be enlivened again,' whereas he has forgotten his own creation."

Tell him, "the One Who created him will resurrect him (after he is dead) and He is well aware of His entire creation."

As you have observed, a single argument, which is easily understood by all, suffices to prove Resurrection; and the argument is such that it leaves no scope for doubt.

Resurrection, Paradise and Hell

And they say: When will this threat come to pass, if you are truthful? They wait not for aught but a single cry which will overtake them while they yet contend with one another. So they shall not be able to make a bequest, nor shall they return to their families. And the trumpet shall be blown, when lo! from their graves they shall hasten on to their Lord. They shall say: O woe to us! who has raised us up from our sleeping-place? This is what the Beneficent God promised and the apostles told the truth. There would be naught but a single cry, when lo! they shall all be brought before Us; So this day no soul shall be dealt with unjustly in the least; and you shall not be rewarded aught but that which you did. Surely the dwellers of the garden shall on that day be in an occupation quite happy. They and their wives shall be in shades, reclining on raised couches. (36:48-56)

This chapter also mentions the beginning of resurrection at the blow of the horn and how people would be raised and then it describes the luxurious conditions of the dwellers of paradise and the abject destiny of those condemned to Hell.

On that day, the inmates of paradise would be reclining in comfortable couches with their wives, and fruits, and all that they desire would be readily available to them. They would be greeted with 'Peace' from the Merciful Lord.

As for the others, the Quran says:

And get aside today, O guilty ones! Did I not charge you, O children of Adam! That you should not serve the Shaitan? Surely he is your open enemy... (36:59-60)

Likewise, in the story of Habib Najjar (Believer of Ilyaaseen), there is a mention about the Barzakh Paradise (in grave or during the period between death and resurrection).

Invitation towards truth and help to messengers

In the story of Habib Najjar, God mentions his conversation with disbelievers and the opponents of messengers, and brings proofs of truthfulness of messengers, the fallacy of deniers and their blindness and disbelief in the punishment of the Hereafter. He also teaches a lesson in the matter of remaining steadfast (on truth) as to how the believer of Ilyaaseen, while inviting all towards Truth and in supporting the divine callers, showed courage till his death. It is mentioned how, soon after the release of his soul from body, the believer entered the paradise of Barzakh (grave life). He wishes: How nice if my people know that my Lord has forgiven me and placed me among the honorable ones.

It was said: Enter the garden. He said: O would that my people had known; Of that on account of which my Lord has forgiven me and made me of the honored ones! (36:26-27)

There also is the description of torments to which the deniers will be subjected after the messengers have concluded their arguments soundly:

And We did not send down upon his people after him any hosts from heaven, nor do We ever send down.

It was naught but a single cry, and lo! They were still. (36:28-29)

The above verses mention how death overtook everyone with a terrible shriek resulting in loss for them both in this world and in Hereafter. This also provides a lesson for the deniers.

These verses also highlight the merit of Jihad (endless struggle for Truth) until one achieves martyrdom and on the other hand describes the deprivation of the deniers of Truth. There is also mention of the requitals from God for both types of people.

Imamat—An exalted divine rank

As mentioned before, this chapter contains the main themes of the Holy Quran in a discreet manner. One of the important subjects of Quran is 'Imamat' (leadership of the community after the Prophet). Imam is the impeccable representative of God and His created Great Name (Isme Azam), which is comprehensive of all Names and has all True elegant and majestic virtues. In one of the verses there is a description of the proficiency, knowledge and ability of the Imam, which is a manifestation of the knowledge and power of God:

Surely We give life to the dead, and We write down what they have sent before and their footprints, and We have encompassed everything in a manifest leader (Imam-e-Mubeen). (36:12)

This verse indicates that the Imam has knowledge of everything and he is the master of everything. That is, he is the representative of God in every sense. It also indicates that his holy spirit encircles all the worlds and all things and that he is the trainer of all existing things and a manifestation of the Name of Lord. Hence, in the commentary of the verse:

And the earth shall beam with the light of its Lord... (39:69)

It is mentioned that the earth beams with the light (noor) of its Creator. Here the Imam is called Lord of the Divine Throne (Rabbul Arsh).

Indeed, the true recognition of Imam and his being verified as Divine Light (Noor) is the basis of Faith and hence the greatest of all bounties. And in this verse, a brief phrase “and We have encompassed everything in a manifest leader” declares this reality of Imamat.

The Dominion of Everything is in the control of God

Therefore glory be to Him in Whose hand is the kingdom of all things, and to Him you shall be brought back. (36:83)

As we have stated in the beginning, this chapter contains an introduction to all the main points relating to the origin of creation and the end of everything. Here we say that the summary of all the topics of this chapter is treasured in its last verses.

Kingdom (Malakoot), according to Islamic terminology, is the world corresponding to rulership or state. In other words, it is the world of command in comparison to the created world and both, in fact, belong to God, the god of creation and command.

Surely your Lord is Allah, Who created the heavens and the earth in six periods of time, and He is firm in power; (7:54)

Everything in the world has a soul and a command (decree or control). Without control, kingdom is impossible. In other words, the universe is

not created without command, as mentioned in the famous panegyric of Mir Fandarski:

The sky has so many beautiful and elegant stars. Here what is below is in accordance with or like what is above.

It is proved by logic and scholastic theology that everything has a controller; that just as the created world is entirely created by God, the Command also belongs to God and, therefore, the sphere of Command too, like the created world, is in the hand of Only One God.

The Quran says with regard to animals:

...there is no living creature but He holds it by its forelock... (11:56)

The return of all is also towards Him

...and to Him you shall be brought back. (36:83)

Man is moving towards perfection and the cause of his coming to this world and of undergoing sorrows and pains is for attaining perfection. Those who have not destroyed their faith would be perfected by God at the time of death, which is the moment of meeting the Lord:

Whoever hopes to meet Allah, the term appointed by Allah will then most surely come; and He is the Hearing, the Knowing. (29:5)

And also:

Allah takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that die not during their sleep; then He withholds those on whom He has passed the decree of death and sends the others back till an appointed term; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect. (39:42)

Others have their shortcomings corrected in the stages of Barzakh (grave life) and some on the Day of Judgment. At last, if the character of man has not been destroyed he will, attain the desired perfection when the world ends, either in Barzakh or in Qiyamat. But those who died as disbelievers or polytheists and who destroyed their human character would be like animals, rather worse than animals:

...they are as cattle, nay, they are in worse errors...(7:179)

Heart of Quran—the best title for this book

After reading the above you will agree that the title “Heart of Quran” is the best and most appropriate one and is also in accordance with the words of the immaculate Imam (‘a).

The commentary of this holy chapter in a light and simple style and its narration commonly comprehensible, is one of the Divine bounties upon Ayatullah Syed Abdul Husain Dastghaib (d.b.). In consonance with his usual style it is replete with examples and stories to support the evidences of the subjects discussed. He has adopted an attractive variety in explanations and refrained from wordings, which may bore the reader or hearer. Thus he has made easy for laymen the study of difficult religious subjects.

This commentary on Surah Yasin was given in lectures during the holy month of Ramadan and thereafter the material was transcribed and published in book form.

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\$\$ Section [Introduction]

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

This year, during the Holy month of Ramadan, the topic of our discussion is a Surah of the Holy Quran. It encompasses attachment to Quran, recitation of Quran and both the introduction to Quran as well as truths from Quran.

Surah Yasin is the heart of the Holy Quran. As mentioned in narrations, everything has a heart and the heart of Quran is Surah Yasin. Various aspects of monotheism (Tawheed) are explained in this Surah, likewise there are topics related to the Hereafter and logical proofs for the same. There is also mention of Prophethood, messengership, the right path and righteousness. Pray that the Almighty God grant us a light (noor), which we may take with us to our graves.

‘Yasin’ means ‘O Chief of the Messengers!’

In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
Ya Seen. (36:1)

‘Ya-sin’ is among the cryptic letters (Horoof-e-Muqatta-aat) at the beginning of some chapters of Quran, which total to fourteen. They are Alif laam meem, Ha meem, alif laam meem raa, Taa haa, Haa meem a’in seen qaaf, Yaa seen, Kaaf he ye a’in saad, Qaaf and Noon. They occur together in a sentence the meaning of which is described in various narrations. The best among them is that these letters are a secret matter between God and His Beloved (the Holy Prophet). This is a reserved matter between the speaker and the hearer, that is, between God and Muhammad (‘s). All other Quranic words and letters are for the understanding of others (humans and jinns).

Some other reasons are also mentioned. Especially in connection with ‘Yasin’, Ibne Abbas is reported to have said that, as per lexicon, it means either man or the perfect man (Muhammad). Another explanation is that ‘Yaa’ is an addressing word (O!); ‘Seen’ is the first letter of the name Syedul Mursaleen (Chief of Messengers) or Syedul Bashar (Chief of Humans). So Yasin means “O Muhammad (‘s).” Thereafter it says, “Verily, you are among those who are sent (as messengers).”

On the basis of this, about that which pertains to us, we begin our discussion. Otherwise Yasin is among the ‘Cryptic Letters’ and the opening words of some Quranic chapters the real meaning of which is with the God Almighty.

Quran commands truth—it is unwavering and wise

(I swear) by the Quran full of wisdom... (36:2)

The Arabic letter ‘Waw’, translated as ‘by’ is for oath. Quran is also the collection of a total of 114 Surahs from Surah Fatiha to Surah Naas.

Al-Hakim—The Holy Quran is often mentioned by a number of titles. Among them is ‘Al-Hakim’. It means either the Hâkim (Ruler) or the one who issues commands discriminating between truth and falsehood about everything. If you want to ascertain whether a belief or a meaning is right or not, refer it to Quran and it would become clear.

Or it could be Al-Hakim—Meaning: Unwavering, straightforward and unchanging. Even the slightest falsehood cannot enter it.

Falsehood shall not come to it from before it nor from behind it... (41:42)

It is a strong impenetrable fort and God Himself is the protector of Quran.

Surely We have revealed the Reminder and We will most surely be its guardian. (15:9)

Whenever someone intends to interfere with it, death overtakes his heart.

Then We would certainly have cut off his aorta. (69:46)

So, although fourteen centuries have passed, this Quran is the same Quran, which existed fourteen centuries ago. There has been no change in it during this span of time. Among the earliest copies of Quran is one transcribed by Ali ('a), one in the handwriting of Ibne Masood from the first century and thereafter a copy in the handwriting of Imam Sajjad ('a) and so on... In this same Jame Masjid, a copy was found from its interior pillars and was given to us, which is still there. Its three lines are compound and one golden. It is dated 800 Hijri. Over seven hundred years have passed but if you compare it with copies printed recently, you will find that it is exactly the same.

This Quran is different from Old and New Testaments. The Jews and the Christians cannot claim that books in their hands are exactly those, which were revealed by Almighty God. After a hundred or a hundred and fifty years after Isa ('a), they collected the memorized material, sermons, letters and speeches and named the collection 'The Bible'. This collection is written by someone who was born more than a century after Isa ('a).

The third meaning is Hakim, the possessor of Wisdom (Hikmat). Read any part of the Holy Quran and you will find knowledge and truth along with warnings and matters in accordance with nature and means of guidance. Reading it cures ignorance. Quran is the fountainhead of wisdom and it makes its reader wise and intelligent. Whoever understands the meaning of Quran becomes wise and intelligent.

Oath is for emphasizing the truth

Here the Arabic 'waw' (Meaning, 'By') is for oath taking. "By the wise Quran". The first question that arises is why should one swear by the Quran? And, secondly, why before the polytheists who had no faith in Quran at all?

The reply is that it is customary for the speaker to put forth proof of what he wants to say. If it is not accepted and it is required to be further

emphasized, the speaker swears or vows. Here the speaker is Most Merciful Lord. So He swears for emphasizing His statement.

The Lord of the Universe has, for the guidance of this man, provided several evidences of Tawheed (Oneness of God), Resurrection and the Right Path and for Prophethood of the Messenger. Now He vows by the truthfulness of this Quran and avers that Muhammad is the messenger; that he does not speak anything of his own wish; that Resurrection is a fact. He swears and says all this on oath so that the hearer may not leave the company of Muhammad; and the hearts, which are stubborn, might melt at this.

Secondly the oath is resorted to so that the hearer may realize and understand the greatness of the thing by which He has sworn. The Quran is so great that God vows by it.

Swearing by the sanctified objects of polytheists is mockery

As for the question that what is the benefit of swearing by Quran for polytheists? In reply we ask, "Should the sanctities of the polytheists be sworn by?" For example, to swear by the idol!? In such a case they would themselves know that it is a mockery. Idols do not possess any dignity by which one may swear, whereas the swearing is for emphasis. If one who has not faith in the idol swears by it before an idolater, the idolater would not only not pay any attention; rather he will take it as a mockery or derision. So how can the sanctities of idol worshippers be sworn by? It would not serve any purpose.

Since the Quran, the Word of God, is the greatest, He swears by it.

Therefore, the believers must respect Quran more than anything else. They should not talk when the Holy Quran is being recited:

And when the Quran is recited, then listen to it and remain silent, that mercy may be shown to you. (7:204)

When you recite the Quran, be respectful to it. Do not extend your legs towards or in front of it. Do not put anything on top of the Holy Book. Every kind of respect is essential for the Holy Quran as it is the Word of the Lord of the worlds.

There also is equality or equilibrium. The Progeny of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ('s) has equal importance. Ali ('a) and his eleven descendants according to the tradition of Two Weighty things (Hadith Thaqlain) as well as on the basis of the tradition of "Two fingers joined together" are as respectable as the Quran. Joining his forefinger and middle finger, the Holy Prophet ('s) is reported to have said, "For the

Muslims after me, I have my vicegerents. They are two great things.” He said that both are important in their respective places; that one does not have superiority over the other.[2]

Notes:

[1] Chapter 36 of the Holy Quran.

[2] Safinatul Bihar, vol.1, p.132

Chapter 2

1-4

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Ya Seen. I swear by the Quran full of wisdom... Most surely you are one of the apostles, On a right way. (36:1-4)

Titles of the Prophet in Quran

It is reported in *Kashshaf-e-Haqiqat* that Ja'far bin Muhammad as-Sadiq ('a) said: The Almighty Lord has remembered my grandfather, the Messenger of God, by several names. First 'Muhammad' in the verse:

Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Apostle of Allah and the Last of the prophets (33:40)

Second: 'Ahmad' as He has said:

And when Isa son of Marium said: O children of Israel! Surely I am the apostle of Allah to you, verifying that which is before me of the Taurat and giving the good news of an Apostle who will come after me, his name being Ahmad, (61:6)

Third: 'Abdullah' when He says:

And that when the servant of Allah (Abdillah) stood up calling upon Him, they well nigh crowded him (to death). (72:19)

Fourth and fifth: 'Taha' and 'Yasin'. By 'Taha' is perhaps meant 'Taalubush Shafat' (One who intercedes) and by 'Yasin' 'O! Syedul Bashar' (Chief of men). It may also be that 'Yasin' denotes 'perfect man'. Anyway He swears by the Quran, which contains wisdom. There are various sciences and lessons in it as well as many truths, wisdoms, admonitions and warnings. It is, therefore, proper that he (Holy Prophet)

may have the adjective 'Hakim' as the conveyer of Quran, which is from the 'Hâkim' (Ruler), that is Allah.

Like a hundred teachers!

I swear by the Quran full of wisdom... Most surely you are one of the apostles, (36:2-3)

The polytheists were denying the messengership of the last Prophet. In this holy verse the Lord of the worlds swears by the Quran, which itself is a true testimony to the messengership of Muhammad ('s). This shows extreme nicety of the holy verse, which, if you ponder over it, has both sworn and presented a proof of its stand. Quran itself is a witness to the truth that Muhammad ('s) is a Messenger of God!

According to Holy Quran and the unanimous stand of all historians, Muhammad ('s) never went to any school, he never read any book, he never held a pen in his hand, and he never had a teacher:

And you did not recite before it any book, nor did you transcribe one with your right hand, for then could those who say untrue things have doubted. (29:48)

Then how is it that this book (Quran) is full of the foremost and the latest sciences? And whatever is necessary for mankind, a variety of sciences. Is there any room for doubting that it is sent only by Almighty God? It is before your own eyes that Muhammad ('s) passed forty years of his life in Mecca. He has not come from any other place. Is there anyone who can claim that he had a teacher or he went to a school? So these sciences are definitely not his own. Necessarily they are from Almighty God. How nice has someone expressed this in these couplets:

**How wonderful that my beloved never went to any school.
Nor he wrote anything and yet he has become equal to two hundred teachers.**

Secondly, the Quran challenges the Arabs who were considered at the pinnacle of eloquence: Join all of you together and try to compose even a Chapter like a Chapter of this Quran.

Say: If men and jinn should combine together to bring the like of this Quran, they could not bring the like of it, though some of them were aiders of others. (17:88)

Eternal miracle for an everlasting religion

Every messenger had a miracle with him. When he passed away, his miracle also went away with him. For example, when Moosa ('a) used to cast his staff, it turned into a serpent, when he hit a rock with his staff, twelve springs gushed therefrom. Isa ('a) used to enliven the dead. But when he ascended to the heavens his miracle also went away with him. But in the case of Muhammad ('s), his miracle remains till the Day of Judgment and that miracle is the Holy Quran. Just as his religion (Islam) is present, it will on the Day of Resurrection, testify his truthfulness that the one who brought it (Quran) is the messenger of God, sent by God Himself. It is impossible for one who never attended any school to compose even a verse like that of Quran; which is full of eloquence and rhetoric. Each verse testifies to the fact that he is the last Prophet.

Who is a Prophet? Difference between a Prophet and a Messenger

'Messenger' has an added specialty over a Prophet. It denotes one who gives news (Naba) and who has been given the news. Prophet means the 'sent one' (Mursal). We have a tradition of Imam Sadiq ('a) wherein it is mentioned that people asked him the difference between a Messenger and a Prophet. He said, "A Messenger is one who hears the voice but does not see the angel who is giving him the news from the unknown. A Prophet is one who also sees the angel bringing revelation from God. He hears the voice of revelation and he is ordained to guide people and invite them towards God. Being sent by God he is called a Prophet of Allah. Messenger means one who has been given information and he is more general and the divine command to invite people might or might not have been given to him."

It is mentioned in some narrations that once Abu Zar asked the Prophet ('s), "What is the number of Messengers?" He replied, "134 thousand." He was again asked, "How many of them are Prophets?" The reply was: 313.[3] Those who were appointed to call people towards God were three hundred and thirteen in number.

The next verse:

On a right way. (36:4)

is a predicate after predicate. Truly, you are among those who were sent from God for the call (message) and guidance of the people.

Moreover, you are on the right path. Everyone who obeyed you is also on the right path.

True path in this world and in the Hereafter

Relevant to this verse, it is appropriate to discuss about 'Sirat' or the Path. 'Sirat' in this world and in the Hereafter, is a subject we speak about several times daily: O God! Guide us to the right path.

What is the difference between Path in this world referred here, and the Path in the Hereafter, crossing which is obligatory?

Firstly, in Persian, 'Sirat' means Right Path. The road leading to anything is called 'Sirat'. 'Sirat' is any means of reaching that thing or goal. Sometimes, the aim pertains to space. If you want to go to the holy city of Mecca, you say: The road or path to Mecca is by this way. If the aim is spiritual, the path to it is of course the one appropriate to it. For example when somebody is ill, the way to health is a doctor and taking medicine and also refraining from certain things. Here it is the 'Sirat' to physical health. Or, for instance in trade or business the Path is market, shop, commodity, buying and selling. In case you want to become a doctor, the Path to it is to study and join a medical college and so on.

Monotheism—the true path of proximity to God

If your aim is proximity of God and lasting welfare, entering paradise, salvation and approaching the Lord of the Worlds then what is the Path for it? What path should you take so that you may reach paradise and attain nearness to the Lord of the worlds? Doubtlessly there is a path for it. There is nothing, which does not have a way or means. For all those who aim to get nearer to God, knowledge and spiritual ranks, their path is the being of Aale Muhammad ('s). In this chapter of Yasin, it is mentioned that Monotheism (worship of Only One God) is the True Path or Sirat-e-Mustaqeem (the straight path). So worship Only One God, not anyone or anything else.

Similarly, anyone who deviates during the journey does not reach his destination and does not attain his aim. One who sins or rebels, has deviated from the path of worshipping God because he has turned his back to the aim and has proceeded on the way to Hell. It is impossible for one to adopt a path going east and hope to reach west. One who indulges in sin cannot get nearer to Husain ('a). One who sows watermelon cannot get colocynth and vice versa:

The apostle believes in what has been revealed to him from his Lord, and (so do) the believers; they all believe in Allah and His angels and His books and His apostles; We make no difference between any of His

apostles; and they say: We hear and obey, our Lord! Thy forgiveness (do we crave), and to Thee is the eventual course. (2:285)

What path do we tread? Do we walk the road of selfish desires, passions and Satan? Or we are on the path, which leads to Muhammad, Paradise and nearness to God? Only Truthfulness and selflessness lead to the House of God. Only this is the Straight Path (Siratul Mustaqeem).

We recite at least 17 times daily: (O God!) *Keep us on the right path.* O Lord, be it that I am not of those about whom You have said:

(These are) they whose labor is lost in this world's life and they think that they are well versed in skill of the work of hands. (18:104)

One who is drowned in ignorance thinks that he will reach paradise very soon but he does not know that he is racing towards retrogression and is about to fall.

Sin is a fall from the path of worship

Many a time, one who is sinning constantly like usurping other's property is carrying the complaint of the one he has wronged. So he is always in a state of downfall. He has no other alternative but to pray to God: O God! Please make me return towards You and make me repent before You. This much is mentioned in the Holy Quran and in narrations. So make haste in repenting. Truly, none but an infallible has no downfall. But one should soon repent. He must, without wasting a moment return towards the path of worship. Once your tongue commits a sin like speaking abusively and shamelessly, step away from repeating such a thing at once. Make up with those you have wronged. Be lawful so that God may forgive you. Say: I seek the forgiveness of Allah and towards Him I turn (Astagfirullaah Wa Atoobu Ilaih).

Every sin cuts off the road of truth. It would be same tomorrow on the Day of Judgment. Deviation from the path of worship in this world will cause the sinner to fall in the fire of Hell in the Hereafter.

As a perfect example, imagine a moth that circles a lamp. It imagines that the flame is a window of salvation.[4] Man also thinks that passions are life-giving nourishments and imagines that attractive dress and passionate desires are means of happiness. Just as the moth is destroyed so also would be one who keeps himself warm with passions.

The love of desires, of women and sons and hoarded treasures of gold and silver and well bred horses and cattle and tilth, is made to seem fair

to men; this is the provision of the life of this world; and Allah is He with Whom is the good goal (of life). (3:14)

No risk to the wall of a community that has a supporter like you

But there is a good tiding in this tradition that the Holy Prophet ('s) said, "And I raise them up and save them from hellfire."

As far as possible, try to increase your connections with the Holy Prophet ('s). Make it a rule to send more and more *salawat* on him and his Ahle Bayt ('a) especially in the Holy month of Ramadan. It will help you walk the right path in this world also.

O, one who weeps for Husain ('a)! Repent with the auspiciousness of Husain ('a). Come out of the darkness of sins and reach the light through seeking forgiveness. I know about some people who were saved from their downfall through the grace of their attachment with Ahle Bayt ('a) and they resorted to repentance.

The outward aspect of the meaning will be known tomorrow on the Day of Judgment. When they pass that Sirat Bridge, which passes over hell. A difference will be maintained there between people. For some that bridge would be thinner than human hair and sharper than a sword.

Ali—the distributor of Paradise and Hell

There is a narration about Prophet Muhammad's High Station (*Maqam-e-Mahmood*), which you mention in the Ziyarat of Ashura. It is a part of the Field of Gathering. All the Messengers, saints and righteous people, chief of whom is Muhammad, would be present there.

It is a lofty pulpit of light having a thousand steps. On the first step is the seal of the Prophets, Muhammad ('s) and on the next one, Lion of God Almighty (Asadullah Al-Ghalib), Ali bin Abi Talib ('a). On all other steps would be the rest of the Messengers, Prophets, and righteous people according to their status. At the base would be the believers, who would also gain entry to that high place. In this praised location (*Maqaame-e-Mahmood*), for which the Holy Prophet prays, an extraordinarily and extremely handsome angel comes to the Holy Prophet ('s) and says, "I am Rizwan, the keeper of Paradise." He brings with him the key of the gate of Paradise and says, "I have been ordered to hand over the key to the gate of Paradise to your honor." Thereafter, an extremely frightening angel comes up and says, "I am the keeper of hell and I am commanded to hand over the key of hell to your honor." The Holy Prophet says, "O Ali! Take up these keys; the division of people for entry to paradise and hell is in your hand." [5] The Holy Prophet ('s) himself announces, "I am also coming and setting on, on the Sirat. Anyone

who has permission from Ali ('a) can cross the bridge of Sirat happily and luckily."

If the master does not intercede on the Day of Judgment in our favor, we will take offence against the decorator that he made us ugly. (Persian couplet)

It is mentioned in an authentic tradition that, on that Day, all would be wailing, "O God! Be merciful to me, save me, save me." There would be only one gentleman who would appeal, "O Lord! Save my Ummah, my Ummah (Followers)", and that person is Muhammad ('s).[6]

It is mentioned in Khasais of Shaykh Sadooq, that when the Holy Prophet ('s) narrated the prophecy of Husain's martyrdom to Zahra ('a) till he even described the grave of Husain ('a) he said, "Tomorrow, on the Day of Judgment, I will intercede in favor of anyone who visits the grave of Husain ('a)." The most hope-filled sentence is that the Holy Prophet said, "I myself would search that person so that I may give salvation to him; even if he is in a deep cavity he would get salvation." [7]

Would such a person have any sign? Yes, it would be written on his forehead in radiant writing: Here is the one who visited the grave of Husain.

Notes:

[3] Safinatul Bihar

[4] "And you rush towards hell fire like moths..." (Safinatul Bihar, vol. 2, pg.28)

[5] Biharul Anwar, vol. 4

[6] Safinatul Bihar, vol. 2, pg., 28.

[7] Khasais al Husainiyah Shaykh Ja'far Shustari

Chapter 3

5

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful
A revelation of the Mighty, the Merciful. (36:5)

Absolute honor is for only One God

A revelation of the Mighty, the Merciful. (36:5)

It means that the revealed Quran is from the omnipotent and Most Wise God. Two of the beautiful names (Asmaa-e-Husna) of God are mentioned here. Mighty (Azeez) is from 'Izzat', meaning predominance, might and power. God has power over all things.

Merciful (Raheem) is from 'Rahmat' and 'Raafat'—The reason for this is that you should know that your God is absolutely needless of you and your prayers and worships; and also your guidance.

If the entire universe becomes disbelieves it cannot put even a dot on His Greatness. (Persian couplet)

Absolutely Mighty is God alone. He never needs anything. If everyone in the world becomes faithful it will not add an iota to His Kingdom. Likewise, if everyone becomes denier and sinful, nothing would be diminished from His Kingdom. Whatever invitation to His worship and obedience He has extended is by way of mercy and compassion as He has a lot of love for His creation, His slaves and servants. He is Most Kind (Raheem). His Mercy demands that man must not be destroyed. Man should not turn away from his well being. The revelation of the Holy Quran is a demand of that Mercy.

Otherwise, had He wished to act in accordance with the appellation of Mighty, the demand of His Might would have been indifference. But since He is Merciful, He did not leave man to himself, instead He guided him. This revealed Quran is from God Who is Merciful and Mighty too and it is due to His Mercy that He sent Muhammad ('s):

And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds. (21:107)

He sent a mercy for all in the name of Muhammad ('s) to hold the hands of all the human beings. But some did not want to benefit from this mercy. They wronged and oppressed themselves and thus deprived themselves of this mercy.

So that you may warn of that which they did not fear

That you may warn a people whose fathers were not warned, so they are heedless. (36:6)

The first word, 'that' denotes a goal. It means that the Almighty and All Wise God revealed Quran for warning man, that is this community, the people of Mecca and the Arab peninsula.

"Whose fathers were not warned," has two aspects: First, the Arabic word 'Maa' (not) is negative and not conjunctive. That whose forefathers did not fear may now fear. It hints towards the time of interval (fitrat). The period between the prophethood of Isa ('a) and Muhammad ('s) is called the age of Interval. God sent no messenger during this period. Of course, there existed the deputies and legateses of Isa ('a) and the earth was not void of the Proof (Hujjat) of God, but no Messenger Prophet who brings message from God and His revelation had come for nearly six hundred years. In this verse Allah says, "We have sent you, as their fathers were not warned in the intervening period."

The second aspect is that if the Arabic word "Maa" is a conjunction it would hint towards their forefathers before the time of Isa ('a), so that you may warn them by which their ancestors were frightened, that is their ancestors whom the past prophets had warned.

Warning and admonishment—main activity of the prophets

The focus here is on the phrase "That you may warn a people..." In the Holy Quran, the aim of sending prophets and messengers is described, especially of the last Prophet. as:

...as bearers of good news and as warners...(2:213)

The messengers were harbingers of good tidings and also warners from Almighty God. They give good tidings to the faithful who fear God and perform good deeds. Every human being who obeyed God benefits from the everlasting welfare and divine bounties. Muhammad ('s)

arrived and gave good tidings to the faithful that if they perform good deeds, a great reward awaits them.

Rightly directing, that he might give warning of severe punishment from Him and give good news to the believers who do good that they shall have a goodly reward, (18:2)

The Quran also says:

(As for) those who say: Our Lord is Allah, then continue in the right way, the angels descend upon them, saying: Fear not, nor be grieved, and receive good news of the garden, which you were promised. (41:30)

According to traditions, for such people the angel of death, would be kinder than their mothers. It indeed deserves congratulations that those of us who fast would be pardoned by God and it is a matter of great happiness for us.

Traditions say that there are two joys for the one who fasts: One at the time of breaking of fast (Iftar), which indeed is a spiritual pleasure if man breaks the fast with proper attention to God. Then, he himself experiences the spiritual happiness. Secondly, the happiness at the time of meeting his Lord, at the time of his death.[8] You hearkened to the Command of Allah and fasted for His sake; and refrained from eating and drinking, so now:

Eat and drink pleasantly for what you did beforehand in the days gone by. (69:24)

Your Lord is not ungrateful. He does not overlook the tiniest of your deeds.

I give another good tiding for my dear youths: Anyone whose eye falls on a stranger lady and he refrains from looking at her again by looking upwards or bowing his head down, God grants him two things at once: the coolness of faith which he tastes at once, that is, he experiences and understands the coolness of faith and spiritual delight. Another pleasure is at the moment of death. A Hourie accompanies him in the grave and in Barzakh. She is the same one who has been reserved for him.

A narration says, "One who glances at a (stranger) woman, but instantly looks away at the sky or turns his gaze down; before he could remove his gaze fully, Allah marries him to a black-eyed Hourie and He

creates such a freshness of belief in his heart that he is extremely delighted.”[9]

Thus the Prophet is the warner, the frightener. O’ one who omits the Prayer! At the time of your death the angel of death would be very hostile to you. When you die faithless you are dying a denier’s death and are on equal footing with him. Fifty calamities are prepared for you.[10]

O’ usurer! You will arrive in the Field of Gathering with a belly full of fire. O’ one who misappropriated an orphan’s property! You are devouring fire unknowingly. But the reality would dawn on you after death.

(As for) those who swallow the property of the orphans unjustly, surely they only swallow fire into their bellies and they shall enter burning fire. (4:10)

O’ oppressor! Each and every bit of others’ rights (swallowed by you) would be demanded from you. You will be asked to repay them. If don’t have anything to repay, you will have to bear the burden of the sins of others (whom you oppressed). Thus your burden and punishment would be multiplied so that Divine Justice may be established.[11]

It may be stated here, by the way, that this is a warning not merely for the people of the Arabian Peninsula. Muhammad (‘s) is the warner for all the people till the Day of Judgment.

And We have not sent you but to all the men as a bearer of good news and as a warner...(34:28)

You should be hopeful and enthusiastic about good tidings and fearful of the warnings.

Acceptance of Islam means that good tidings given by Muhammad (‘s) inspire you to perform good deeds and warnings given by him restrain you from sins. Otherwise you are falsely claiming: Islam is my religion; Quran is my (Holy) book. You claim that Quran is a code of conduct, but do you follow it honestly?

The Prophet of Islam has given you so many good tidings. Get up early in the predawn hours. Wake up a quarter or half an hour before Sahri (predawn mealtime) and do not miss the eleven units of Salatul

Shab (Late night prayers). Do not neglect begging forgiveness from God.[12]

Much frightening but less dreadful

Here it is said: "That you may warn". I have been told that people say behind me that all I talk about is death and all that is frightening. My answer is the same reply given by Shaykh Shustari who says: They say the Shaykh is so much frightening the people. Well, the Shaykh does frighten, but who amongst you have become afraid? Do you know anyone who did not sleep due to his fear, who shed tears because of the fear of grave and hereafter or who left sinning due to a fearful heart?

The hearts have hardened. Negligence has overtaken the souls. Otherwise had the heart been listening, it would have trembled, but you sit at the base of the pulpit as a pastime or for seeking blessings (Thawaab). There are very few who truly desire to be admonished and get salvation.

Utbah trembles on hearing the Quran

Let us see a narration in this connection. The Meccan polytheists were enraged at the religious propagation of Prophet ('s). One of their chiefs, Utbah was quite proficient in eloquence and rhetoric. They persuaded him to go and confront the Prophet ('s) and find out some way of silencing him.

Utbah said, "First let me go alone and see what should be done." He went to the Holy Prophet ('s) and said, "Recite your poetry for me." The Prophet said, "I am not a poet!" Utbah again said, "Let me hear your words." The Holy Prophet said, "These are not my words; it is the Word of the Lord of the Worlds." Utbah said, "Okay, read the same for me."

Now the reader is Messenger of God and despite the coarseness of his ears, Utbah listened. The Prophet ('s) recited Surah Ha Mim Dukhan to him. When he reached the verse:

I have warned you of a scourge like the scourge of Ad and Samood.
(41:13)

Utbah in spite of all his ferocity broke down. He put his hand on the holy mouth of the Holy Prophet saying, "Please, for the sake of kindness, it is enough."

The Holy Quran shook such a hardcore disbeliever. The News given by Quran made him tremble. So when he returned to the polytheists, Abu Jahl and others taunted him saying, "Have you also become a follower of Muhammad?" Utbah said, "No, but his speech is neither poetry

nor a lecture. It is not a composition of any human being. It has put me on fire.”

I too intend to admonish you. Prophet Muhammad admonished so that, till the Day of Judgment, people may fear:

And certainly We have made the Quran easy for remembrance, but is there anyone who will mind? (54:17)

How many verses has he brought? He brought verses describing torments of Hell:

And food that chokes and a painful punishment, (73:13)

Likewise are verses about the nasty and frightening keepers of Hell.

O you who believe! Save yourselves and your families from a fire whose fuel is men and stones; over it are angels stern and strong, they do not disobey Allah in what He commands them, and do as they are commanded. (66:6)

But, how strange that hearts have hardened. Even those who read Quran do not read with an intention of being affected by it. Read Quran with a thoughtful and pondering mind, not merely mechanical recitation. Of course, that too brings rewards. But it is less beneficial (than what is recited thoughtfully). Woe unto those in the eyes of whom Hereafter is only a story. As Ali ('a) has said in *Nahjul Balagha*, when one of us dies, we entrust his body to the grave and then return, and gather around his inheritance, as if nothing has happened:

There surely came over man a period of time when he was a thing not worth mentioning.(76:1)

You never think that you will have fifty stations and the duration of each of them is a thousand years.

He regulates the affair from the heaven to the earth; then shall it ascend to Him in a day the measure of which is a thousand years of what you count. (32:5)

Balance (Mizan) is for Muslims

We say, it is for disbelievers; there tortures are not for us, while it is mentioned in the second volume of *Bihar* that Imam Zainul Aabedeen ('a) says, "The Balance and detainment is for Muslims who performed good as well as bad deeds."

And others have confessed their faults, they have mingled a good deed and an evil one; may be Allah will turn to them (mercifully); surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (9:102)

Otherwise, a disbeliever has no accounting; he has done no good that his sins and virtues be compared:

These are they who disbelieve in the communications of their Lord and His meeting, so their deeds become null, and therefore We will not set up a balance for them on the day of resurrection. (18:105)

In the Quranic commentary of Nishapuri, there is a story of a school-boy who had gone to school in good health but, when he returned from the madressa, he had fever and finally was bedridden. His father asked, "What happened?" The boy replied, "Today the teacher reminded us of this Quranic verse:

Fear the Day which will turn a child into an old person.

The fear is so terrible and I am worried about the hardship of that Day." Finally the child died and the father wailed said on his grave, "My son, you had a pure nature and a holy heart that is why the Quran impressed you. O father! Your black heart too should die of fear."

It is narrated that before attending the station for accounting (in Hereafter) we have to remain in a state of amazement for forty years[13]. What we face in the grave is called the state of amazement. O honorable friend! Have you ever decided what you should think? Have you made preparations for tomorrow's Day of Judgment? Don't you have to face the Holy Prophet, Imam Ali and Fatima ('a)?

Notes:

[8] Safinatul Bihar, vol.2, pg.64

[9] Miraatul Kamaal of Mamqani

[10] Tradition and its explanation is given in vol. 2 of Gunahane Kabira (The Greater Sins). Please refer to what has been mentioned about the one who leaves Prayer.

[11] Biharul Anwar vol.3

[12] Biharul Anwar vol.3

[13] Kifayatul Muwahideen

Chapter 4

5-9

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

A revelation of the Mighty, the Merciful. That you may warn a people whose fathers were not warned, so they are heedless. Certainly the word has proved true of most of them, so they do not believe. Surely We have placed chains on their necks, and these reach up to their chins, so they have their heads raised aloft. And We have made before them a barrier and a barrier behind them, then We have covered them over so that they do not see. (36:5-9)

Holy Prophet shown all ways and kingdoms

This Quran, which is full of intelligence and wisdom, is the Word of the Lord of the Worlds Who is needless of His creation. But it is the demand of His Mercifulness that he shows man the right and true path so that man may fear his falling down (into Hell) from the Sirat Bridge (in the Hereafter). "That you may warn a people..." So, O Prophet! Frighten by this Quran those, whose forefathers were not warned, and hence they remained unaware.

I have already said that it denotes the intervening period between two prophets. For six hundred years before the arrival of the Holy Prophet ('s), they did not have any prophet to warn them.

...so they are heedless.

But then God did a favor upon man and sent His Light or Radiance in the form of Muhammad ('s). God showed all the paths to Muhammad ('s) including this world and the Hereafter, the angels, the Dominion and Paradise and Hell so that he may warn the creation. He showed the Divine Kingdom to the Holy Prophet during the Night of Ascension so that he may warn the people.

Meccan polytheists being people of hell, news from the unseen

Certainly the word has proved true of most of them, so they do not believe.

That is, your truthfulness became indisputable. What is meant by this? At the beginning of creation God addressed Satan:

Get out of this (state), despised, driven away; whoever of them will follow you, I will certainly fill hell with you all. (7:18)

This proved true in the case of most of them (People of Mecca) that they would go to Hell. This verse is one of the Divine secrets or prophecies from the unseen that, according to Quran, these polytheists will not believe till their last and will not follow Muhammad ('s).

...so they will not believe.

That is they are not believers. How is it so? Let us read on and it will soon become clear.

Yokes in necks and barriers both in front and behind

Surely We have placed yokes on their necks, and these reach up to their chins, so they have their heads raised aloft.

And We have made before them a barrier and a barrier behind them, then We have covered them over so that they do not see. (36:8-9)

These verses either relate to Qiyamat or they are by way of example. Despite all kinds of warnings, they did not fear and hence We gave this punishment to them. This is the apparent meaning of these two verses. A deeper pondering is needed here. Most of the commentators have mentioned three reasons. One: That these two verses pertain to the Hereafter. That it would happen thus in Qiyamat. Another aspect is that it is by way of example; that it is a parable; that nothing of this kind is actual but their condition is like that of a man tied from neck to chin by chains and whose face is up in the air, they cannot understand anything.

But the third aspect, which appears better, is like this: It is a truth among practical truths. What has been mentioned will appear before us with out present physical bodies. Yokes are placed around you. You cannot comprehend anything. Barriers are set before you eyes. Behind your back is another big screen. This meaning is explained in another

description as to what is a “yoke?” If this word is understood, everyone will himself follow what it denotes.

Passions and aspirations make one blind and deaf

We have iron yokes around our necks. Thus we cannot see what is before our feet, obviously. But this holy verse pertains to the truth and is aimed at our soul and heart. One is unable to see in any direction as the yokes have restricted his senses. The yokes are, in a sense, fallen on our heart and soul in such a way that it makes us raise our heads up in bewilderment. It can be said that these yokes are our desires and aspirations, longings of passion and love for material world, power, and lust. Wherever they arise they make one blind as well as deaf.

Everyone whom his passions, desires and aspirations have blinded and deafened does not see what is in front of him. In front of him is his house in the grave; he sees everything except his grave “before them”.

Everyone who looks into himself and looks justly finds a similar rank in himself. The ignorant and careless think about everything except their own death. They are afraid of everything but a death of disbelief.

He also does not see what is behind him. He has forgotten all his sins.

Most truly and appropriately, God owns up and says, “We did it.”

And We have made...

We decided it, but it were you only who desired it. God gives everything to you and you compromised the Hereafter for this world.

God releases water for Firaun also

There is a narration in Majlisi’s *Hayat-ul-Quloob* regarding Firaun. The people said, “You claim divinity since a long time. The waters of Nile have dried up. Since you claim to be God, make the waters of this river run again.” Firaun said, “All right, I will do so.”

He came out of the city with his army. In the desert, he told his soldiers, “Remain in your place until I myself come out and make the river flow.” Then he hastened to a remote place from where he could not be seen by anyone and where no one was present. He dismounted from his horse threw down his crown, fell on the ground headlong and said, “O Lord of the Worlds! I know very well that I am a liar. But I do not want the Hereafter. I desire only this worldly kingdom. Do not disgrace me. My God! I know that everything is in Your Power. I beg You make the waters of this river flow again.” Soon the water began to flow.

Do not be amazed that He grants anyone his or her heartfelt desires. Firaun himself said, “I want the world and I do not need the Hereafter”,

just as Satan did not want the Hereafter and desired that he should live in this world till the Day of Judgment.

No one is dejected in His court

Implicitly, no one should say that resumption of water was due to the waywardness of man; it is not so. Common sense says that it is not the work of human beings. God is extremely merciful. He does not deprive even His enemies. No one returns empty handed from His court. So one should say, "O God! Who did not deprive even Firaun who claimed to be god, when he came to Your Court bowing down before You, today we are your guests, observing fasts and we have come to Your house (Mosque). Please remove the yokes around our hearts. These yokes have dragged us down and do not allow us to think about the Hereafter. Passions and desires have chained us, but Thou art Merciful. Be kind to me! How will you deprive the friends when You don't even reject the foes?

Chapter 5

10-11

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

And it is alike to them whether you warn them or warn them not: they do not believe. You can only warn him who follows the reminder and fears the Beneficent God in secret; so announce to him forgiveness and an honorable reward. (36:10-11)

So far we have discussed that man is not forcibly taken to paradise or hell. Whatever one gets is as per one's choice. When Allah says,

Surely We have placed chains (yokes) on their necks...

Actually it means: They are yokes, you yourself have prepared. God Almighty coils them around your neck to apprehend you. Never say that God caught me like this. Rather you had wished it and you opted for passions and love for worldly things. You are blind as well as deaf. Man himself erects barriers in front and behind himself. He does not look at the consequences and his aspirations are unlimited. They have extended to such an extent that we do not look even at our old age. The aged one also is so much drowned in desires that he does not look at death that is fast approaching him (in front) and at his past sins (behind).

Desires extend to a number of years whereas one does not know what will happen tomorrow and whether one will remain alive the next day. These far-fetched desires turn into yokes on intelligence or become so active that man loses the capital of his life? He does not see the mortality of this world and the permanence of Hereafter. About one who goes down to such a downfall, God says:

And it is alike to them whether you warn them or warn them not: they do not (or will not) believe.

A heart immune to good counsel is dead

You may warn them or you may not, it will make no difference. It does not affect his heart because it is already dead and is unmoved by admonishments.

If someone's leg becomes numb they say, "Let us see if it moves? Does it shake or not?" They pierce it with a needle. If it creates no feeling they say that the leg is dead and hence useless. What remains then without a living heart? However much you warn it, it is not fearful.

Dead (are they), not living, and they know not when they shall be raised. (16:21)

The nature of man has become corrupted. He understands nothing except matter and material things. Yes, he does fear that his income will decrease, his prestige will fall and his rank will be taken away. But if you tell him that, 'As you have committed a sin you will be detained at the stage of accounting', he is not afraid.

It is mentioned in vol. 10 of *Biharul Anwar* that once the Holy Prophet ('s) recited the following verses before the Muslims:

And surely Hell is the promised place of them all: It has seven gates; for every gate there shall be a separate party of them. (15:43-44)

On hearing these verses, Ali ('a) began to tremble like a sparrow soaked in water on a freezing winter day.

If there is life, its signs are also present. If the heart is alive, glad tidings or warnings have effect on it. If the heart is dead, it won't be affected even if you recite the whole Quran before it. Yet if there is even an iota of life in a heart it will be affected sooner or later.

it is nothing but a reminder and a plain Quran, that it may warn him who would have life, (36:69-70)

That is the Quran is only to admonish those who are alive in the hearts.

You can only warn him who follows the reminder and fears the Beneficent God in secret...(36:11)

Also until one has a living heart in ones breast one cannot be affected by the Quran positively.

Surely you do not make the dead to hear, and you do not make the deaf to hear the call when they go back retreating. (27:80)

If it has any life there is hope that it would be affected by admonishments. One's (Human) nature must not have been destroyed, as one is naturally inclined towards the Quran.

Most of the Meccans have dead souls and they will not believe. They run away even on hearing the word 'Hereafter'. But those whose nature is existent they:

fear the Beneficent God...

Signs of the lowest degree of faith

Sometimes man begins to think whether he has Faith or not. If death arrives will I die a believer or not? A saying of Imam Baqir ('a) says, "The first degree of Faith is in one whom every sin make him restless and whom every good deed gladdens. He indeed is a believer." This shows that he believes in divine reward and punishment in the Hereafter, especially when admonished. It shows that he is receptive to admonitions and thus obviously there still is life in his heart.

There are many examples where man is oblivious of imminent dangers. The best one is quoted by Shaykh Sadooq (r.a.) from the religious authorities. Let us see what the parable says and apply it to ourselves.

Temporal well and drinking delight with a thousand stings

A man passing through a forest fell down in a well. He clung at a log of wood, that was jutting out, to save himself. Looking downwards, he saw a python with its mouth wide open. He also observed that a white rat on one side and a black one on the other was gnawing the log he clung to. The wood was getting thinner and thinner. Verily, how frightened he was? But, then, his eyes fell on a corner of the well and he saw some honey spilled from a pot on the ground and honeybees buzzing around it.

Now the wretched fellow forgot the python and the rats, and became entranced with the honey, thinking how lucky he would be to get it!

In this parable, the well is this material world and all that it has, the python is death and the wooden log held in the middle is man's age or

life span, which is being chewed by the two mice signifying day and night. They are continuously reducing the life span so that he may fall to death. Honey denotes sweet tasting worldly passions. Every bite of this delight is accompanied by thousands of stings and troubles.

Absolute happiness or pleasure is found neither in this world nor in feasting, dressing up or sex. It is available only in the Hereafter where enjoyment is not accompanied by any pain, provided you reach there with the light of piety and Love of Ahle Bayt.

Chapter 6

12

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. Surely We give life to the dead, and We write down what they have sent before and their foot-prints, and We have encompassed everything in a manifest Imam. (36:12)

This world is hidden and the Hereafter is visible

The hearts of most of the Meccans were dead.

Surely you do not make the dead to hear, and you do not make the deaf to hear the call when they go back retreating. (27:80)

It means that you cannot make the dead hear anything. Whatever you say or may not say would not make any difference at all. They are not going to believe. It is so in every age. In every city, there are many whom you may frighten with punishment but they will not stop sinning. So who fears?

Only he fears who follows the admonition.

A verse of Quran that you recite before him creates an effect in him. They say, "He fears God." Some say, "Secretly" (without seeing God with physical eyes). Such a person (with a live heart) fears God even where there is no one except God. But most of the commentators have said it means covering or veil. So long as one does not die, one is in a covering; that is, there is a curtain between him and God, angels, grave and the other world. When death comes, all this appears before him clearly. So fearing is important only now (while one is alive) and when one does not see the above things. When one dies and actually sees the Divine Kingdom fear is not of any use.

Fearfulness of Yusuf in secrecy

Quran narrates that when Zulaikha caught hold of Yusuf in a closed room, she threw her veil on an idol saying, "It is not proper to commit a bad deed before you." Yusuf said, "How is it that you are mindful of a lifeless idol while I should not be mindful of the Omniscient Lord?"

O' the one who keeps other people's wealth unlawfully! There is no proof against you, but God knows it. Others may not be able to recover these possessions, however, God is able to do it. One who has fear in his heart is alive. Admonishments can benefit him. Those are the true worshippers (who pray and fast during Ramadan). Fasting is an act purely for God:

...so announce to him forgiveness and an honorable reward...(36:11)

The Arabic equivalent of 'forgiveness' above indicates a general or indefinite adjective for magnifying something. It means a great admonition accompanied by a valuable prize. Definitely, God will compensate suitably.

So their Lord accepted their prayer: That I will not waste the work of a worker among you, whether male or female, the one of you being from the other; they, therefore, who fled and were turned out of their homes and persecuted in My way and who fought and were slain, I will most certainly cover their evil deeds, and I will most certainly make them enter gardens beneath which rivers flow; a reward from Allah, and with Allah is yet better reward. (3:195)

Tastes 'Kauthar' at the last moment and dies

Since you turned towards Him, He would not neglect you, especially with regard to the dear youths in the earlier part of their lives.

At the time of death they would be allowed to taste the water of Kauthar (the Divine delicious stream).

Eat and drink pleasantly for what you did beforehand in the days gone by. (69:24)

They fasted for one whole month. They desired food and drink but refrained for the sake of and to please Only One God. "So now taste this drink at the hand of the King of Guidance, Moon of Guidance, Lion of God, that is, Asadullah al Ghalib Ali bin Abi Talib ('a)." There are still some believers whose breath has not yet stopped, but who continue to

taste from it. There is a narration from Imam Baqir ('a) wherein he is reported to have said on oath that such noble people will not die until they taste the Kauthar water.

The moment of death is indeed very hard. How can one taste something good at that time? But we should know that once he tastes that divine water offered by the Cup-bearer of Kauthar (Imam Ali) he gives up his life happily.

I know of a man who was on his deathbed. At his last moment, people around him experienced a wonderful fragrance of musk and the departing believer said, "Please leave me alone the Imam is arriving."

Can one in charge of orphans' property who due to the fear of Allah did not misappropriate a single penny and gave up everything be like one who usurped the orphans' rights without any qualms?

Shall We treat those who believe and do good like the mischief-makers in the earth? Or shall We make those who guard (against evil) like the wicked? (38:28)

News of Resurrection is a good tiding for the virtuous and a warning for sinners

This is one of the proofs of Resurrection. Life after death must be true, otherwise it would be against Divine wisdom. One who denies the world of reward and punishment has denied God. The final result of this grand universe would be seen in the form of the Great Grace of God in the Hereafter. Today's worldly life is an active first phase of sowing the seeds and the time of harvest is the Hereafter, after death.

Surely We give life to the dead...

"O Muslims! Congratulations to you. We enliven the dead. O disbelievers! Beware!"

When a man dies, his dress changes. He gets a fresh life. Physical body and headaches go away. He gets another body which is fine and without material losses. It is a repose from incompetence. It is the result of a material body. Various kinds of pains belong to the physical body. The Barzakh body needs no doctor or medicine.

Once an old lady came to the Holy Prophet ('s) and, inter alia, said to him, "Please pray that God admits me to paradise." The Holy Prophet ('s) who wanted to bring in some humor said, "There would be no old

women in paradise.” The poor aged woman began to weep. The Prophet said, “Old ladies become youthful and then enter paradise.”[14]

Surely We give life to the dead...

Immediately after death, the soul gets connected with the facsimile body, which is exactly like this our present body. The earthen body goes away and a shadowless, fine body takes its place.

...and We write down what they have sent before and their footprints...

Every deed of yours is cognized by the Lord of the Worlds. Every work that you did for God is a great deed. We record it, not only in your scroll of deeds but also in the Protected Tablet (Lauhe Mahfooz). All good and bad deeds are being noted.

Children and everlasting deeds are the imprints we leave at death

...their footprints...

Most commentators say that “...what they have sent before,” means what you sent forth before your death and “...their footprints...” means that which you get after your death. According to some narrations, after death, man is disconnected from all things except, firstly: Children. If possible, train you children nicely with piety and entrust them to the society. Every good deed performed by them would benefit their parents in the other world also.

Second: An everlasting good deed. For example, you published a religious book. You benefit from it even after your death. Charitable trusts too are among the everlasting imprints. If possible, one may spend some of his wealth in the path of God without depriving his children.

Income of a salt mine and mourning for Husain (‘a)

Once the late Al Haajj Shaykh Abdul Husain Tehrani, teacher of Haji Noori, said from a pulpit, “Last night I had a dream. I saw one of the state nobles, Nasiruddin Shah having a huge apartment and he was in a very good condition. I said to him, ‘I have known you when I was in Tehran. I could see that your deeds were not deserving for this present good condition.’ He replied, ‘Yes, but I have been granted this position after my death due to one thing. I had a salt mine in Taliqan. I had willed that its income be sent to Najaf-e-Ashraf during Ashura (First ten days of

Muharram) of Husain ('a) so that people may arrange mourning ceremonies.'"

When the Shaykh said these words, the late Haajj Shaykh Nazar Ali Taliqani spoke up from the base of the pulpit, "I am from Taliqan and I testify that this is a true dream. The salt mine still exists and the afore-said person's will is still in force." [15]

It is mentioned in narrations that, in later ages, the dead will get no benefit from the living. You can see what they are doing to the charities. How much misappropriation is going on? They are actually oppressing the dead. [16] The poor fellows hoped to derive the rewards for mourning of Husain ('a) and feeding people in his name and for that purpose they bequeathed their property, thus should they be oppressed by misappropriation?

Among the deeds of everlasting benefit are wells, canals and trees. Until they last, they benefit the person who dug such canals or planted such trees.

And the everlasting deeds are better for you.

Hours from man's age after death

The Holy Prophet ('s) has given us glad tidings when he said that after death, there is to come an hour when a treasure will be opened so extensively that if it is distributed among all the people of hell they will become happy. That will be due to the hour, which you spent in remembrance of God. There also will be an hour when you will see so much pain and trouble that if that pain is distributed among all the people of paradise they will become gloomy and restless. That is the hour, which you spent in sinning. Do not think that such deeds and misdeeds will go away with the wind. No, they will not vanish or blow away.

An hour is also to arrive which is neither like this nor like that and that is the time, which you spend in lawful activities. Of course, they also cause regret because if you only knew you would have spent these hours also in the path of God.

Notes:

[14] Safinatul Bihar vol.2 pg. 538

[15] Darus Salam Haji Noori

[16] These lectures were delivered five years prior to the Islamic Revolution of Iran. It is hoped that now charities are operated honestly.

Chapter 7

13-15

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

And set out to them an example of the people of the town, when the messengers came to it. When We sent to them two, they rejected both of them, then We strengthened (them) with a third, so they said: Surely we are messengers to you. They said: You are naught but mortals like ourselves, nor has the Beneficent God revealed anything; you only lie. (36:13-15)

Arguments and quarrels with Prophets

Allah says, "We have recited verses telling the story of Antioch and of the arrival of three divine messengers. We have spoken about all this either directly or indirectly. It is known that Isa bin Maryam sent two persons. People beat them up and also imprisoned them. Then he sent a third one by the name Shamoon. He brought the two out of prison. Then together they went to the markets and bazaars and invited people towards monotheism of 'There is no god except God', towards denial of idols and temples, and called them towards Only One God and instilled the fear of the Hereafter in their hearts.

As reported by some, about forty persons believed in them but all others indulged in arguments and quarrels and then also fought them. In the beginning, their argument that, "You are nothing but humans like us. There is no difference between you and us. On what basis did God give you revelation and send you to us? The Beneficent Lord has not revealed anything on you."

It is the same argument put forward by 'Wathniya' group who said: All men are similar and of one kind. There is no distinction of one from the other. If the call of the prophets is correct, then God should send an angel. The Holy Quran quotes their argument and then refutes it.

God Almighty says in Surah Anam:

And they do not assign to Allah the attributes due to Him when they say: Allah has not revealed anything to a mortal. (6:91)

The implication of these words is that God has left man in ignorance absurdly and did not make them aware of what will happen after their death. Is it proper to put such an allegation upon the Lord of the worlds? If God leaves man in darkness it would be injustice to man. Tomorrow, on the Day of Judgment, all would say, "O God! Why did You not send a Messenger to us so that we would have followed him?"

O our Lord! Why didst Thou not send to us an apostle, for then we should have followed Thy communications before that we met disgrace and shame. (20:134)

Arguments would not have been completed for them with evidence.

Is man's need of a guide less than the arching of eyebrows?

Shaykh Abu Ali Sina explicates man's need of prophets. He says, "Man's need of a divine messenger is greater than the jutting out of eyebrows. Let us try to find even one person whose eyebrows do not jut out. Besides beautification of face, the arching of eyebrows serves as a drain for the forehead perspiration so that there may be no damage to eyes. Moreover, it is a shade, saving eyes from brightness of light (it controls light falling on eyes)." Then he says, "When God does not overlook a need like this, how would He neglect the matter of sending guides for man?"

But if they say an angel should be sent to guide man and that as he would not be a human being, they would follow him without reservations and thus it would be the completion of argument for all, the Qur'an's response is as follows:

And if We had made him angel, We would certainly have made him a man, and We would certainly have made confused to them what they make confused. (6:9)

The messenger must be a human being so that he may sit with them and speak to them. If he is not from the human race he will have no resemblance with man. That is why He says, "Had We wished We would have sent an angel as a guide. But then too he would be necessarily sent in the form of a human being and We would have given him a human face and form and dressed him like humans."

Acceptance without seeing is more important

At another place Allah says, "If We send an angel in his original form and style and appoint him a guide for men, all of them would die."

And they say: Why has not an angel been sent down to him? And had We sent down an angel, the matter would have certainly been decided and then they would not have been respited. (6:8)

The Unseen World has predominance over this world and the angel is from the other world. The Angel belongs to the world of incorporeal beings. How can he be sent for you? If he comes with the same corporeal attributes to the world then there is no such world. Secondly, if an angel appears here it would be visible. What is needed is that one should put faith in the Unseen.

Of course, Almighty God has, also given him (the Prophet) some distinction so that people may not say that the messenger also is like us. He has knowledge and power with him. He must also have a miracle. So they brought dead persons to life and so on.

Reverting to our discussion, these three persons said,

Our Lord knows that most surely we are messengers to you.

That is Allah knows and He testifies that we are His messengers towards you. Your denial and your giving a lie to us causes no effect on the main point, that is, on our being the Messengers.

And nothing devolves on us but a clear deliverance (of the message).

Our responsibility and duty is no more than to convey His message to you in a clear manner. We are only entrusted by God Almighty to bring God's invitation to you explicitly. You may accept it or not. We have conveyed the concepts of monotheism and hereafter to you.

The people turn back and utter nonsense:

They said: Surely we augur evil from you; if you do not desist, we will certainly stone you, and there shall certainly afflict you a painful chastisement from us.

Meaning: We think you are inauspicious and a cause of trouble for us. If you do not leave, we will stone you to death. And we will torture you painfully.

A tanner falls unconscious in perfume market

In *Tafsir Ruhul Bayan*, in explanation of this verse, a story poem is mentioned and we shall quote it here due to its relevance:

It is said that once a tanner, along with a street sweeper (both of whom were accustomed to dirt and bad smell), came to a market and passed by the shops of perfumers. When the fragrance of perfume reached the nose of the poor tanner, he gave a sigh and fell unconscious. The perfume sellers sprinkled essence of rose and other fragrant flowers on his face, which worsened the condition of the poor tanner. When his companion (the sweeper) saw this, he at once understood the matter. He went aside, brought some dirt and put it near the nose of his companion who soon recovered.

People gathered round him and asked, "O competent physician! What is this wonderful medicine that cured this man?"

The sweeper said, "I am neither Plato nor Aristotle. The fact is that our engagement is always with dirt and dirty things. What have we to do with flowers and fragrance and the smell of roses?"

This story hints at the humanity of man and his being conversant with the higher world. O resident of paradise! If you have perfected your job, the name of death should remind you of your original abode (paradise). If during a long journey, you meet someone coming from your hometown, how do you gather round him and seek the news of your country from him? All your liking is about your native place.

O' the one whose native place or residence is Paradise, a place of everlasting rest and comfort, that place is after your death. It is near God. You are now on earth, the alien country. During nights you pray in Dua Abu Hamza Thumali: O my God! I am an alien in this world, so have mercy on me. The real destination, the true location (Maqad-e-Sidq), where you will never have any discomfort, is paradise.

Three bounties of paradise, which are better than paradise

There are three bounties in paradise, which for the people of paradise, are more precious than paradise itself and more delightful: Firstly, the pleasure of God or the spiritual bliss. Secondly, the neighborhood of Muhammad, Ali and the Ahle Bayt ('a) and thirdly, the call of a caller who says: O people of paradise! No exit from here forever. Now there will be no death, no annihilation. This bounty of permanent life gives a pleasure more than paradise itself.

Here this world is alien land (Daarul Ghurbaa). The sign of your being lucky is that you should have longing for your original native place, not that you get frightened by the name death and the other world, and imagine it to be inauspicious. Have you not seen some people who do not even utter the word death? Hearing about someone's death they exclaim, "What happened! Why!" This is so because they do not belong to the other world. If one becomes an inhabitant of the Hereafter he likes death and is eager to die. He would not be like Jews who claim to be the chosen people but Quran challenges them:

Say: O you, who are Jews, if you think that you are the favorites of Allah to the exclusion of other people, then invoke death if you are truthful. (62:6)

On the other hand the true believers ardently desire to meet their Lord.

Whoever hopes to meet Allah, the term appointed by Allah will then most surely come...(29:5)

If there is one who does not like everlasting bliss and bounties, if one becomes restless at the name of death, it shows that he has not yet become a man of that world. Otherwise he should be happy just by remembering that world.

I don't know whether you are thinking about tomorrow or not. In what way and in which state do we die? Quran has described two kinds of death. In one case, the one who is dying, at the time of his or her death, he or she rises up happily and with extreme pleasure, accompanied by angels.

Those, whom the angels cause to die in a good state, saying: Peace be on you: enter the garden for what you did. (16:32)

Another kind of death is when the angels of death whip the face and back.

But how will it be when the angels cause them to die smiting their backs. (47:27)

Chapter 8

18-21

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

They said: Surely we augur evil from you; if you do not desist, we will certainly stone you, and there shall certainly afflict you a painful chastisement from us. They said: Your evil fortune is with you; what! if you are reminded! Nay, you are an extravagant people. And from the remote part of the city there came a man running, he said: O my people! Follow the messengers; Follow him who does not ask you for reward, and they are the followers of the right course; (36:18-21)

Attributors of bad omens to others suffer badly

The people of Antioch, instead of considering the messengers of God as auspicious for them, attributed bad omens to them and said, "If you do not stop talking like this, we will stone you and give you a painful torture. Do not talk about God and Hereafter in this town. Get out of here at once."

The messengers replied, "Your bad omen is with you. Adversity is only with you." If you are warned about idol making it is not a concocted talk. Is this word of admonition ominous and sinister? Is it a bad word if you are asked to make prearrangement for the next world after death?

You are in abomination yourself from head to toe. Your adversity is the very belief of yours. You think that wood is lucky, which is a calamity, which you yourselves bring upon yourself. Everyone who attributes bad omen to others himself gets its bad result. He is not harmed by outsiders.

By the way, people cast bad omens to others and then get badly affected themselves. This is self-made trouble. For example you come out of house and the very first person you see is a blind person; or you see a dead body. You say, "Alas! What is going to happen to me today?" Or if the eye falls on a sick person, one returns home saying, "Today I will not

go to work.” Or, as it used to happen in olden days, when people were preparing to go on a journey. If then a bird moved from their left side, they considered it to be a bad omen and they postponed their journey. Even today, some people think that owl is an inauspicious bird. If it sits on roof they imagine it to be a bad sign. They also regard the crowing of a crow as a sign of bad luck. Likewise, in the night of Wednesday or Sunday, if someone arrives to visit a sick person they regard it a bad omen, whereas, there is no reservation for these two days in this world of existence, rather they are also like all other days of the week. If some think that this visit worsened the condition of the sick person, it is superstition. As a general rule, such bad omens do not have any external harm. The incorrect and superstitious belief itself brings adverse effect. Its misfortune clings to them. This suffering is due to the falseness of belief and due to the sinisteress of that point.

Muhammad (‘s) never made a sortilege

You should be respectful towards the last Prophet, Muhammad (‘s). Throughout his life he never resorted to bad omen and he always hated it. On the contrary, he was pleased with good augury. You too must be like that. For example if you come out of your house and see Mirza Nasrullaah. You can say, “Good, good! Help (Nasr) of God is with us.” God would surely fulfill this.

It is mentioned in the events of the Holy Prophet (‘s) that once, while migrating, a man came to him. The Prophet asked, “What is your name?” The man replied, “Abu Bardah.” The Prophet said, “Our work became cold.” That is it was nice.[17] Then he asked, “To which tribe do you belong?” The man replied, “Bani Aslam.” The Holy Prophet said, “We are in safety”.[18] This is taking good augury and it is a tradition of the Holy Prophet. Strengthen our hopes with respect to what we encounter. Hope for good results. Thus you have relied on God hoping for good, which you would surely get. If you expect bad as a result of improper belief, coldness from the Grace of God may overtake you. It then is due to inauspiciousness in your own self. You did not see God. Instead you looked at the creation. The adversity of imagining bad omen is by way of polytheism and disbelief whereas hoping for good is through guidance of God.

...what! if you are reminded!

Meaning: If we warn you along with admonitions, should you abuse us? Is the response to admonition hitting with stick and stone? We are

your well-wishers. We are showing the path of salvation and to remedy your inner diseases, but:

Nay, you are an extravagant people.

You yourselves are extravagants. You are exceeding limits. Whoever crossed limits of moderation, acted absolutely against wisdom in his behavior with God and His creation and even with himself or herself, as well as with spouse, children and relatives is an extravagant. Every extremism is extravagance. To abuse an admonisher is extremism. There are many people who become angry if they are advised.

Supporters of prophets slain

And from the remote part of the city there came a man running,

In this populous town that was twelve miles in length the three sages did not leave a single area without giving people therein an invitation towards Oneness of God and Hereafter. According to some narrations the number of persons who accepted their admonition and put faith in them were not more than forty. Then, one day, the unbelievers caught them all, installed gallows and put the believers to death. They pierced their necks and hanged them on gallows so as to torture them painfully before killing them. While this cruelty was being meted out to good people, its news reached the convent of Habib Najjar at the other extreme of the town.

Habib Najjar rises up to support the messengers

And a believing man who hid his faith said... (40:28)

Habib Najjar had concealed his faith and he apparently worked as a carpenter spending half his income in the path of God (charity) and using half for himself. This sage came out of his monastery and saw that the lives of the messengers were in danger. He tried his best to reach them soonest and save their lives. Almighty Allah, praises the supporter of His Messengers in this verse of the Holy Quran.

Three persons who took lead in putting faith.

A narration quoted in the Quranic commentary Durre Manthur says that Habib Najjar was the second of the preceding ones (Sibaaq) among all men.[19] It denotes one who is having great status among people after

the messengers. There are three such persons in the nations. The first is the believer of the people of Firaun.

And a believing man of Firon's people who hid his faith said: What! Will you slay a man because he says: My Lord is Allah, and indeed he has brought to you clear arguments from your Lord? And if he be a liar, on him will be his lie, and if he be truthful, there will befall you some of that which he threatens you (with); surely Allah does not guide him who is extravagant, a liar: (40:28)

Whose details are given in Surah "Ha Mim" Fussilat who came in the way of the killing of Moosa ('a) and prevented Firaun from assassinating him.

Second is the believer of Yasin, the same Habib Najjar about whom the Holy Quran says:

And from the remote part of the city there came a man running...

The third is the king of Wilayat, the Victorious Lion of Allah, Ali bin Abi Talib ('a) who supported the Holy Prophet ('s) while no one from the Muslims preceded him in accepting Islam.

Moreover, it is the same person who testified to the Prophethood of Muhammad ('s) six hundred years before his advent in this world. It is mentioned in books of history that Habib Najjar was one of those who had seen the prophecy of the advent of the Prophet Muhammad ('s) in the heavenly books and also read about the attributes of the Holy Prophet and had put faith in him.

A sympathetic savant and selfless truth-teller is worth following

This noble man who was a believer in Only One God rushed to the scene and cried, "O people! Follow the messengers." Obey them who do not want any recompense. This is the proof of Prophethood. O wise people! If someone has three attributes, viz wisdom, selflessness and truthfulness, then reason demands that he must be followed.

Everyone who has wisdom and who also has no selfishness and is also speaking nothing but truth is such that his guidance must be accepted. If there is a doctor, a specialist of some illness and if you know that he has no lust for money and who examines your children without any personal gain, then reason demands that you act upon his instructions. But if he is not knowledgeable or only after moneymaking, then it would not be advisable to act on his instructions.

This noble soul said:

O my people! follow the messengers; Follow him who does not ask you for reward,

Meaning: O People! Follow the messengers who do not ask for anything from you, neither wealth nor kingdom, name or fame in exchange of this guidance. Do they have any material desire? No! Thus this is the proof of their Prophethood.

and they are the followers of the right course;

That is they are rightly guided.

What is wealth? Lure a child with it. Muhammad is aware of the Hourie so how can he overlook the divine invitation for the sake of a woman? And kingdom? It is nothing except adversity. He accepted the hardship and painfulness of Prophethood and suffered tortures inflicted by people.

Messengers never demand compensation for propagation

They never demanded any wages:

Indeed my recompense is upon Allah.

In the final days of the Prophet's life some people assembled and said among themselves, "Muhammad ('s) has to entertain many guests. His expenditure is high. Let us give him some money as he has many rights over us. The following verse was revealed:

Say: I do not ask of you any reward for it but love for my near relatives; (42:23)

You intend to compensate Muhammad ('s), but it is only God Who will do this. If you so desire, then do one thing: as a token of recompense of his messengership, be kind and behave nicely with his household, which is also for your own good.

Say: Whatever reward I have asked of you, that is only for yourselves; my reward is only with Allah, and He is a witness of all things. (34:47)

It is clearly mentioned in the Holy Quran that what I asked from you in the form of friendship and 'Khums' is also for you and only for your benefit.

Notes:

[17] In Arabic "Barada" means cold – Tr.

[18] In Arabic "Salama" means 'Safety'

[19] Tafsir Noorus Thaqaalain vol. 4, pg. 384

Chapter 9

20-21

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

And from the remote part of the city there came a man running, he said: O my people! follow the messengers; Follow him who does not ask you for reward, and they are the followers of the right course; (36:20-21)

As we have said, when they wanted to kill the messengers, the man of God, Habib Najjar, who was living at the farthest end of the town, swiftly rushed to help the religion of God and to assist the messengers. He said, "O my people! Follow the messengers. Obey them who do not ask for any remuneration from you and who themselves are rightly guided."

We have also said that there are two proofs of messengership. Wisdom and intelligence demand that if one has these two virtues then his word must be accepted. Firstly, he should be well informed and rightly guided. He must have walked on the path and then should give news of it.

Who is more fit for being a guide worthy of obedience, the one who shows the right path or the one who is unaware of the path and himself in need of a guide?

Say: Is there any of your associates who guides to the truth? Say: Allah guides to the truth. Is He then Who guides to the truth more worthy to be followed, or he who himself does not go aright unless he is guided? (10:35)

If one who is ignorant and unaware says, "Follow me," then obeying such an ignorant person is not correct. It is not proper for one to go after every voice, to follow every group or party. Incorporate the whole and entire divine law in your life schedule.

If somebody asks you to follow him, you should see whether he himself is following and obeying the truth? May be he is on the wrong side.

Cheaters talk of reforms in deceitful words

The second condition is that one should not be selfish. Making a show of sympathy, cheaters attract me with various talks. They talk of reforms and claim to be reformers. They feign sympathy of workers and poor whereas they are very fond of status and always desire coming to power or have a lust for wealth.

Just see what is their aim in talking like this? All false groups do like this whether communists or Christians. For example, take the institution of Pope. They run hospitals in various cities while propagating Christianity undercover. What is their intention behind these hospitals? Why have they embraced Christianity? If one leaves monotheism and adopts trinity does he become rightly guided? No, rather they want to increase their numerical strength and then exploit the people.

Refer to *Anisul A'laam* of Late Fakhrul Islam. He has exposed these facts. They have nothing to do with religion, reform and morality. If they talk about these things, it is for exploitation. They have material aims and interests, which are not heavenly or divine in any way.

Dawood earned his livelihood by making armors

A narration from Imam Sadiq ('a) is found in the book *Man laa yahzuruhul faqeeh* according to which Dawood ('a) received a revelation from God, "O Dawood! Your every deed is good except that is you do not know any craft and therefore live off the public treasury."

Dawood ('a) appealed to God, "O Lord! Grant me a skill that I may not have to take anything from the public treasury." Thus God made iron soft for his hand.[20] Then he began to make armours and sell them for three hundred dirhams each. He spent half that amount in the path of God and the remaining half on his needs so that people may know that he had no eye on public treasury and then they may believe in what he says to them.

Ali ('a) worked on plantations so that people may rest assured that he had no lust for money and position. He used to carry dates on his shoulders and sowed them with his own hands. After taking all this trouble and after taking so much pain, when the fruits arrived he sold the produce for twelve thousand dirhams and gave away all of it to the poor without taking a dirham home.

One day he ascended the pulpit and announced, "O People! Prepare for your journey to the Hereafter. Fear God's anger." They now

understood that Ali ('a) tells the truth; that he has no self interest and he desires neither wealth nor rulership.

Noteworthy points from the life of Muhammad ('s)

Books of narrations have recorded all the specialties of the Holy Prophet's ways of eating, dressing, living and socializing. Among those books is Tabarsi's *Makarimul Akhlaq* also, wherein all such things are recorded. In the chapter of food it is mentioned that Anas says, "I prepared food for the Holy Prophet for nine years. There was a she goat in the Prophet's house that I mulched. Ladies in the holy house made barley bread. Sometimes there were dates and salt to eat with bread."

Ayesha said, "During the Prophet's lifetime sometimes no food was cooked for forty days at a stretch. Prosperity started after his passing away."

Biharul Anwar mentions about the Prophet's clothes that once people brought a piece of cloth for him. It was fourteen meters long. Then they doubled it and put it under the Prophet as a mattress. When he used to get up he used to put it on his shoulder like a cloak.

During the last two or three years of his life, the Prophet's body weakened to some extent and he used to say, "Surah Hud made me thin, old, and weak." In some other narrations it is mentioned that Surah Naba and Surah Hud made the Holy Prophet weak. The wives said, "Make his mattress four fold as his body has become very weak." That night he slept a little more and woke a little late at dawn. Looking at the softness of mattress he said, "You have done injustice to me. The earlier state was better."

House of the Holy Prophet and returning of trusts at the time of his passing away

From the viewpoint of living – It was in this very place where his holy grave is now situated. There were nine rooms plus one room for Zahra (s.a.). But what a strange house! In fact it was a small cottage having mud walls and its roof was made of bamboo.

Ghazzali has quoted one of the teachers that it would have been better had the residences of the Holy Prophet ('s) been kept in their original condition so the coming generations might have been impressed by the Prophet's piety and austerity. Had he wished, he could have constructed a house with gold and silver bricks. But he used to say, "I like to live like the poorest people of my community."

Thus was the lifestyle of our Prophet. It is written in *Naskihut Tawarikh* that at his last moments the Holy Prophet ('s) called Imam Ali ('a), handed over a purse containing some dirhams to him and said, "O

Ali! Give this to the poor.” Then, addressing himself, the Prophet said, “O Muhammad! What will you do if this money remains with you at the time of your death?”

This is the lifestyle of one about whom God said:

He does not demand any recompense from people.

He himself is rightly guided and he has no self-interest at all and only such a personality is a divine guide.

Selfless Jurist and instructions without wages

Now behold! From Shia viewpoint, the Imam’s representative and a religious jurist (Marjaa-e-Taqleed) should also be one without desires and lusts. He himself must be a strong believer with certainty, he must have no material interest and he also should never wish that more and more people follow him.

Therefore, guidance in lieu of wages is invalid. Some have created doubtful variations. They say the topic is not guidance. It is not Amr Bil Maroof and Nahy Anil Munkar (Ordering good and prohibiting bad things), but that it applies to deputyship of the founder for quoting traditions or making people weep etc. People come and go. It is necessary that someone makes them active. This is the way of reasoning from pulpits nowadays.

Ibne Ziyad also was deceived by his own words

Ibne Ziyad also once tried to put in motion the problem of Kerbala. Deceiving words came from pulpits. After prayers he ascended the pulpit, gave a sermon and said, “Is revolt not a bad thing? Of course it is bad. Well, now Husain has revolted so let him be removed.”

No one got up to say, “You have raised a revolt, you created anarchy in peaceful Kufa, how much blood did you spill?”

Had Husain (‘a) any lust for luxuries and comforts of this life or had he any desire for rulership and kingdom, he would have joined Yazid soon after the death of Muawiyah. But, then Husain (‘a) is the son of Ali (‘a) who said, “O world! You may fool others except me.” Ali (‘a) is not your buyer; that is, your buyer is Muawiyah.

Well, can one who has recognized Husain (‘a) have any doubt about his truthfulness and the correctness of his claim?

Notes:

[20] Surah Saba 34:10

Chapter 10

22-23

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

And what reason have I that I should not serve Him Who brought me into existence? And to Him you shall be brought back; What! shall I take besides Him gods whose intercession, if the Beneficent God should desire to afflict me with a harm, shall not avail me aught, nor shall they be able to deliver me? (36:22-23)

One who manifests is worthy of worship

The noble believer Habib Najjar argues before the community of polytheists, "What has happened to me that I should not worship the One Who made me manifest (created me) and also made me return towards Him?"

The messengers say, "You must worship the One Who brought you from non-existence into existence when, before that, you were nothing."

There surely came over man a period of time when he was a thing not worth mentioning. (76:1)

Thereafter He has, from a drop of sperm, manufactured this wonderful body and a strange structure.

"He created me" is a proof showing the aptness of worshipping Only One God, Who is the Creator. He is the Owner and you are owned (by Him), a slave and a servant, and the Master is the Lord of the worlds. For what did He create various kinds of woods, vegetables, stones, iron, angels, jinn's or man except that all should worship Him and Him alone? You must be humble before Him. Humility before and fear of anyone or anybody else is wrong. None of those others are creators; they have not created anything.

Is He then Who creates like him who does not create? Do you not then mind? (16:17)

Fear of and hope from Only One God to Whom all have to return

And to Him you shall be brought back...

Commentators say that here is a hint at the degree or rank of fear and hope. O ignorant! When you die, you return to God. Therefore, you should worship Him with a hope to get reward from Him. O idol worshipper! Do you return to the idol after your death?

Surely we are Allah's and to Him we shall surely return. (2:156)

Do something by which the One towards Whom you are returning may be pleased with you and not the created ones and created things that are as weak as you are.

It is the same with regard to fear. Your return is towards your creator. So fear Him so that you may not be a target of His displeasure. Let it not be so that when you die you may be like a runaway slave whereby you are dragged to Him with a blow and degradation.

How can I worship something that cannot make me needless?

What! Shall I take besides Him gods...

Antioch was the country of Sabean people, the worshippers of stars and angels. They had carved idols in the shape of angels for worshipping. He says, "Should I give up the worship of the Beneficent God? Should I adopt another god? Should I worship a star, angels or even a cow, as some simple fellows do?"

Whose intercession, if the Beneficent God should desire to afflict me with a harm, shall not avail me aught, nor shall they be able to deliver me?

That is if the Lord God wishes that I should suffer a loss or harm, all the false gods cannot reach me even if they desire. They cannot save me even if all of them help each other fully. Their recommendation cannot help me and they cannot give me salvation.

There is a story about the question that the late Shaykh Ahmed Bahraini put to a Zoroastrian, "Why do you worship fire and prostrate before it?" That fire worshipper replied, "So that tomorrow, on the Day

of Judgment, it may not burn me.” The Shaykh said, “Very well, now here am I who never cared for fire. I am putting my hand in it. You also may do so. Let us see whose hand this fire does not burn? Fire has no conscience whereby it may differentiate between the one who worshipped it and who did not.”

Things worshipped by polytheists are also like this and so are animals and angels. They can never do anything against the Will of God.

In that case I shall most surely be in clear error...

That is, I will be falling into a clear waywardness if I worship them despite seeing that they are unable to do anything. We can say the same for those who worship the rulers.

“I entrust my daughters to God”

Muslims should not claim, “By the grace of God, we do not worship idols.” Because if you consider anyone or anything other than God as able and mighty, then you also are like those polytheists.

It is written in *Layaliul Akhbar* that: A great monotheist scholar was about to breathe his last. The ruler of the time came to see him. He stood near his head and inquired about his condition. The scholar said, “My departure is very near.” The ruler said, “If you need anything, tell me so that I may fulfill it.” The scholar said, “You cannot fulfill my need.”

The ruler said, “I have heard that you have some teenaged daughters. Allow me to admit them to my harem.”

“How can I entrust them to you when God, Who created them is there, asked the scholar, “Perhaps you may die earlier. Then what is the use?”

What! Shall I take besides Him gods...

That is inspite of the ever-existent God, should I make anyone else my support and make him a center of my hope, fear and trust?

Husain (‘a), while departing from his women and children, had said, “Allah is my successor for you.”

Anybody who makes anyone or anything, except Only One God, a center of his hope and support, be it wealth, position or a friend, is totally deviated.

Habib Najjar dies in torture

To the best of his ability Habib Najjar helped the messengers but the people pounced upon him. Some have written that they threw him down

and kicked him so much that his entrails and intestines came out. Then they suffocated him, threw him in a well and filled it up.

Others have written that they stoned him and hit him so much that he died. Some say they pierced his shoulder and hanged him by the wall of a well until he died gradually under torture.

After being attacked by the disbelievers, Habib Najjar knew that he was about to be killed. So he turned towards the messengers and said,

Surely I believe in your Lord, therefore hear me.

Some famous scholars say the messengers said this. Habib said, "O Sages! Be witness that I also, like your honors, worship your Lord Almighty. Thus his last word was faith in the Lord of the worlds, so he said, "Hear me and be witnesses."

Asking for testification of faith is desirable

The explanation of this verse is mentioned in some narrations of the Prophet and Imams ('a). They have recommended that when a believer falls ill and is likely to die he should open the door of his house for worshippers. Then when he feels he is returning to his or her Lord the faithful person should reiterate his faith in "There is no god, except Allah and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah", and in the finality of the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet and in Ali being the friend (Wali) and vicegerent of Allah.

It is emphatically mentioned in traditions that one should say, "Hasan and Husain are the sons of the Prophet of Allah and the nine descendants of Husain are the saints of Allah and the Imams of the believers. And indeed the death is truth and the Paradise and the Hell is truth...These are my beliefs. So give witness tomorrow on the Day of Judgment."

Regarding the meaning of the verse:

They shall not control intercession, save he who has made a covenant with the Beneficent God. (19:87)

Some narrations on this are recorded in *Usul Kafi* and *Tafsir of Ali bin Ibrahim Qummi*. They asked, "How to make a will better?" The Imam replied, "First narrate your true beliefs clearly. At that time, if you have minor children, appoint a guardian for them, if you have a lot of money, make a will in respect of one third of it so that it may be given in charity

after you pass away. If you do not have much wealth then let the said one third remain with your legal heirs so that they may benefit from it.

If among your relatives there are some who are poor and also do not have heirs then fix something from the said one third for them.”

In *Urwathul Wuthqa* it is mentioned in the chapter about the rules regarding the wills that the dying person should announce his beliefs.

It is written in Shaykh Tusi’s *Misbah* that witness should be called from the audience around the death bed and a written testimony should be obtained from them that so and so, son of so and so, gives witness and testifies his belief in the Oneness of God and the messengership of Muhammad (‘s) and the Imamate of Ali (‘a) and his eleven sons and about the truth of death and Resurrection on the Day of Judgment and paradise and hell...

The signed paper is then placed with the two green branches and buried along with the dead. I can’t say what is the exact explanation for this.

An amazing story about testification to faith

Haji Noori writes in *Darus Salam*: Once in Najaf-e-Ashraf a man named Syed Muhammad Faqihi who was a good scholar, told me one night, “If possible please lend me the book *Misbahul Faqih* (by Shaykh Tusi).” I said, “Well, I will bring it for you tomorrow evening.” Next day I brought *Misbah*, which is about supplications, and handed it over to that person. He came again the next night and said, “I request you to do something for me. Please do it.” Noori said, “I am at your service.” He said, “Please you and the great Jurist (Maraja) come to my place and have breakfast with me tomorrow morning.” I told this to the late scholar who accepted the invitation. When we arrived the next morning, I saw two great scholars, the late Shaykh Jawwad Najafi and Syed Muhammad Husain Kazmi and his two students sitting there. Thus we were six persons in all. After the breakfast, the host went in and brought the same book of Tusi (*Misbah*) and said, “Dear Sirs! Please hear these beliefs of mine and then be witnesses.”

The late Haji Noori says, “I took *Misbah* from him and read.” I said, “Imam has said, ‘The one who is about to die should do this’ while you are hale and hearty.” Thus implying that he was not covered by this narration. But Shaykh Muhammad Tabrizi said very humbly, “Why do you restrain me from a good deed? May be this narration applies to me.” I said, “All right, you know better.” Then he reiterated his beliefs one by one with such humility that it made all of us weep. Then he said, “Now it is your turn to give testimony.” All those present there also gave witness.

That evening he returned the *Misbah* of Shaykh to me and said, "I am also giving you this letter. Please give it to the respected scholars and others to put their seals on it." I took the letter and had it attested by the respected scholars. The following night a man came and said, "Sir, your friend is not able to attend the dawn prayer, you should visit him." Next day, I went to see him with the scholars. He passed away on the seventh day.

Haji says, "I wonder how he knew that he was nearing his death!"

Today's death of adversity

Nowadays sudden deaths overtake more and more people and one is unable to make a will because of unexpected and sudden heart failure or accident etc. However, one must try ones best to act on this narration and keep the Hereafter in mind. If possible you may act as per this narration.

Majlisi (r.a.) acted cautiously and wrote down his beliefs while he was hale and healthy and asked forty people to witness it. They also endorsed his note by writing: There is not doubt in the faith of Majlisi.

In this age, is it done this way in our hospitals? How pitiable is this condition? Worse is that they expect health from the physician and medicines, that is, they die in polytheism.

Chapter 11

26-27

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

It was said: Enter the garden. He said: O would that my people had known; Of that on account of which my Lord has forgiven me and made me of the honored ones! (36:26-27)

So far we have discussed upto the verse meaning that Habib Najjar, the believer, supported the messengers, admonished the people and wished well of all saying, "O negligent man! These messengers do not ask anything from you. They want from you neither wealth nor kingdom. They only remind you of God. They have brought proofs also. Now should I not fear God Who created me and to Whom I have to return?" But, instead of hearing his words and accepting his sincere advice, they fell on him, kicked him fatally and spilled out his intestines. Then they threw him in a well and filled it up.

Some have said that they sawed his skull. His only crime was that he favored the truth and gave admonition.

Some have written that they pierced his neck and hanged him over a well to die a slow death.

Come to the Barzakh Paradise, O helper of Religion!

Regarding this verse some commentators have said that no sooner than this supporter of the messengers was killed a voice came to his holy soul, "Enter Paradise." The Divine Command came, "Enter the garden of God." Of course, here what is meant is the paradise in the grave (Barzakh) not the paradise of the Hereafter after the Day of Judgment.

The paradise of the grave is from the moment of death till Qiyamat. It starts from the moment the soul departs from the body. Barzakh is mentioned in the following verse of Quran:

...and before them is a barrier until the day they are raised. (23:100)

Barzakh is the intermediary state from the hour of death till the Day of Judgment. It is not like this world where there are so many impurities. Nor is it like the Hereafter where everything is pure and fine. It is between the two. Barzakh exists now. It is in this universe but it is veiled from this world. It is hidden from matter and feelings. This material eye cannot observe it. Now consider air, which is existent and our body too exists but yet we cannot see air because it too thin (rare).

It is the defect of our eyes that we cannot see anything except matter and material things. After being released from this body the bodies and forms of Barzakh, which are not material, can be seen. What God has promised in the Holy Quran applies to both the paradise of the Hereafter as well as to the paradise of Barzakh. As soon as the soul gets separated from the body, a good tiding is given, "Enter the Paradise." All the sins of a martyr in the path of God are pardoned instantly because no deed is greater than martyrdom.[21]

I wish they might see my position

When Habib Najjar, the martyr, saw the bounties of God he said,

O would that my people had known; Of that on account of which my Lord has forgiven me and made me of the honored ones!

That is I wish my community, these neglectful people who are drowned deep in material activities and lustful passions should know what God has bestowed me with. How kind and loving behavior Almighty God shows to the faithful after their death. Would that my people knew that my Lord has included me among the rewarded and honored people.

The believer uttered this sentence and God quoted his words for you and me so that we may be inspired and we may also adopt the path of the honored ones. How does God grant honor, status and glories in the Barzakh life? It is also mentioned in narrations that as soon as the soul of a believer departs from his body, angels from the higher world greet him with flowers and lead him to the Divine Throne (Arsh).

The one in whose view death is perdition

Death is not annihilation or extinction. Why do you consider death an end to everything? Why are you fearful of death? You are a Muslim and you believe in the Holy Quran. One who does not believe in Quran should fear death as they think that it is perdition or doom. But why should believers fear death? Why do they cry and complain so much at

the demise of a near and dear one? Has he become extinct? To think so is disbelief in Quran and traditions. If he is not annihilated then why do they act so and what is all this?

This body was like an animal and yet it was riding the one who was running it. It has now become free through death. In the words of Imam Sadiq ('a), "There was a bird in a cage. Now the door of the cage has opened and the bird became free." In other words, it was a pearl in a box. Now it has come out of the box and has begun to glitter and shine.

The spiritual world is also in this limitless space but it is hidden from this material world.

Of course, it is human nature and relationships demand that when one departs earlier it affects the survivors. So there is no harm in being thus affected and also there is no harm in weeping. What is essential is that there must be no excessive complaints and crying.

It is necessary to understand that death is first a meeting or a union. It is the first enjoyment of fruits from the bounties promised by God. You undertook fasts for one full month of Ramadan. Now it is time to enjoy its reward. It is the period of encashing life long savings.

Fix your place in paradise while you are here

Every one of us after we are born is being surrounded (by our relatives). They pick us up and we become happy. We experience happiness both in the cradle and in the laps of our mothers.

Then God takes away all of the material bounties, home and life, wife and children on the last day from you. Just as you had arrived naked, they make you bare. From your clothing, you take only the shroud with you. Muhammad ('s) is the caller from God. O people! Do such deeds whereby your life after death may be insured. You should be pleased when they want to take you away (to the grave). Prepare your place in the Hereafter while you are yet here. How will you do it? Just hear it from Muhammad ('s). It is reported that the Holy Prophet said, "Most of you, O women! Are hell dwellers as you are deniers?" They replied, "We have put faith (how are we 'disbelievers'?)." The Holy Prophet said, "You are 'disbeliever' of your husbands. You are not performing your duty towards them, as it is necessary to obey your husbands."

They asked, "Now what should we do?" He replied, "Spend in the path of God." [22]

Especially with regard to your relatives, do such deeds that your house in the Hereafter may be prepared before you go there. *Send before you proceed.*

Send a soft bedding to your grave. None will bring it later; therefore you must send it in advance. (Persian couplet)

A man owned a large quantity of date fruits. He made a will that the Holy Prophet ('s) may give away the lot in the path of God after his death. So when he died, the Holy Prophet ('s) gave away those dates in charity. A piece fell on ground. The Holy Prophet ('s) picked it up and said, "Had he (that man) himself given this one in the path of God it would have been better for him than the giving of this whole lot after his death." [23]

I long for you at my last moment

O Muslims! They have not yet carried you away. Prepare your paradise in grave just now. Take benefit from you body, wealth and heart. Put faith in God and perform good deeds through your body and wealth here only so that, at the time of your death, your love for Aale Muhammad ('a) may make you restless to meet Ali ('a) who will come to see you. He would desire to release you. Truly, you must be eager to meet your beloved. Your heart should be turned away from everything else and you must be ready to give up your life happily.

Divine callers have told you what things destroy your house. They have also described the calamities of the life.

O the one who fasted! Indeed you have performed a very good deed. But do not backbite with this tongue. You have built a house, now do not demolish it. Do not dishonor a believer otherwise the house you built in Ramadan would be destroyed.

Notes:

[21] Safinatul Bihar, vol.2, pg. 687

[22] Safinatul Bihar, vol.2, pg. 588

[23] Layaliul Akhbar, pg. 277

Chapter 12

26-29

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

It was said: Enter the garden. He said: O would that my people had known; Of that on account of which my Lord has forgiven me and made me of the honored ones! And We did not send down upon his people after him any hosts from heaven, nor do We ever send down.

It was naught but a single cry, and lo! they were still. (36:26-29)

When they killed the believer of Aale Yasin in front of the messengers whom also they killed, he was told, "Enter paradise." And as he entered paradise, he said, "I wish my community should know that my Lord has absolved me of all sins and placed me among the honored ones. Would that those who killed me knew how much forgiving God is?"

Messengers and divine callers are true well-wishers of all, as they have nothing but sympathy. They want that this creation (people) should get salvation and bliss from God though they are beaten up and even killed at their hands. Yet they never cursed them, but showed only sympathy and said, "I wish these ignorant people accept our admonition and understand."

As we have mentioned, this paradise is in the grave and it is for the believer to enjoy from the hour of his death until the Day of Resurrection. Though if one is a believer but had committed some sins and died without repentance, one remains in torture in Barzakh for a certain time until one's account is finally cleared. Sometimes he gets enough punishment in Barzakh to clean his past sins and so when he comes to the field of Gathering on the Day of Judgment, he does not have to account for any more sins.

Some commentators have said that in the verse, "It was said: Enter the garden," the news must have been given before the killing of this believer because there is no mention of his killing. Actually it is not so because the same verse shows that the death took place earlier, "And We did not

send down upon his people after him any hosts from heaven, nor do We ever send down.” The words ‘after him’ indicate that it is after his death and hence it is not necessary to specify that he was killed.

A martyr enters paradise at the very moment of his martyrdom

There is one more fine point here. It is not said, “They killed him and it was said to him,” in order to show the contiguity. For example saying that as soon as he was killed he entered paradise. The Quranic wording indicates emphatically that when the last moment of the martyr arrived he was already in his place in paradise; that there was no time gap at all.

Imam Sadiq (‘a) is reported to have said in respect of some noble Shias that there is no distance between you and what will brighten your eyes except the reaching of your life to your neck. You at once reach the place promised by God.

Words of Imam Hasan (‘a) in his last moments

Fifteenth of Ramadan is the auspicious birth anniversary of Imam Hasan (‘a), the elder grandson of Prophet (‘s). In this connection, let us read a narration about the last moments of Imam Hasan (‘a).

In *Amali*, Tusi has quoted in the chapter of the martyrdom of Imam Hasan Mujtaba (‘a) that at the time of his departure from this world, his brother Husain (‘a) was at his bedside. His hand was in Husain’s hand. Husain (‘a) asked, “My brother! How are you?” The Imam said, “This is the last day of my life in the world and the first day of my life in the Hereafter, while I am restless due to separation from you and other relatives.”

According to this narration, he immediately added, “I seek pardon from God for what I said. I long to see my grandfather, the Holy Prophet (‘s) and my father, Amirul Mo-mineen (‘a) and my mother Fatima (s.a.). Though I regret the separation from Husain in this world yet I will be very happy to reach my grandfather.”

You too, believing men and women, should be like this. Though you suffer separation from your near and dear ones, you also reach the mercy of the Lord and the nearness to the great good personalities in the Hereafter. In the Barzakh life of grave, you meet the holy spirits of those who proceeded there before you, your friends who are awaiting you.

And whoever obeys Allah and the Apostle, these are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favors from among the prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the good, and a goodly company are they! (4:69)

So you will need friends after your death, friends with perfect faith, all true and truthful ones having true love and affection.

Also there is no jealousy in paradise and if there is any jealousy in someone he would never enter Paradise.

Friendship becomes manifest there. Believers meet their brothers, who are brothers in the true sense. World like relationship is not there at all.

Hereafter is a place of gathering together. In the Holy Quran, God had promised at two places in Quran that the believer and his children would be together at one place. As for example in the verse:

And (as for) those who believe and their offspring follow them in faith, We will unite with them their offspring... (52:21)

And their affection will be of the highest quality.

We killed them all with a shriek

And We did not send down upon his people after him any hosts from heaven, nor do We ever send down. It was naught but a single cry, and lo! they were still. (36:28-29)

These two verses describe God's anger. A believer is very dear to Him. Killing of a believer is a very serious misdeed. The Merciful Lord describes His favor and support to Habib Najjar. According to one narration, at that very moment (when Habib was martyred), and as per another narration the next day and according to a third tradition, after three days thereafter, God decided to punish the oppressors. A wit prior to description He says, "After they killed My favorite servant, We did not send on them any army from heaven – they never deserve that We may send any troops from the sky to finish them. So We annihilated them merely with a heavenly shriek."

According to a tradition, God ordered Jibraeel to smite them with a frightening cry or shriek. Who can bear the sound of Divine anger? Man is weak. Just look at our own weakness and observe our deeds.

A weak person who disobeys the strong

It is said that once a born-rich person who oppressed others and committed sins went to a religious lecture. One sentence of the speaker changed his condition. It was, "I wonder how a weak person can disobey the strong One?"

He pondered over his weakness and changed his thoughts and deeds completely. It was as if an arrow had pierced his heart, which overturned his lifestyle. He turned towards God.

A time comes when you want to say a word but you cannot utter even a word. You are unable even to move your hand. You become weaker than a mosquito.

Thus Allah says, "We did not send on the community of Habib, after him, an army from heaven and it also does not befit us to do (such a little work which was not necessary for them)."

Our chastisement was but a cry and a shriek and instantly all became silent. The kind of shriek it was is known only to God, which uproots the heart from its position, strangles the throat or kills man due to fear while man has no strength to bear it.

Umar bin Abdul Aziz falls hearing the cry

It is written in *Hayatul Haiwan* that: It was spring season during the caliphate of Umar bin Abdul Azeez and he was sitting on this throne. The atmosphere changed and rainy winds arrived with many clouds and dazzling flashes of lightning, and the caliph fell down from his throne. The terrible fright shook him.

Yahya bin Muaz Razi who used to give beneficial admonishments said, "O Caliph! This is the fear of the Beneficent Lord."

If lightning, thunder and the arrival of rains and good tidings of bounties shake you so much, how would you respond to the sound of Divine anger?

After the departure of the Last Prophet ('s) such kinds of calamities, which generally used to kill all at a time were postponed by the blessing of the Prophet of mercy.

And We have not sent you but as a mercy to the worlds. (21:107)

Devastating calamities were postponed but occasional punishment is there. A few years ago some earthquakes struck Iran and they could also be a kind of divine warnings.

Alas for the servants! there comes not to them an apostle but they mock at him. (36:30)

Meaning: Woe unto such people. Ever since the creation until the time of the Last Prophet ('s) whenever a warner arrived from God, they made fun of him.

Now, we are also like this. There are people in the Islamic world who, on seeing a religious man, make fun of him. They deride him when he tries to stop an evil. They call him reactionary. They pay no attention to the promises and warnings of the Holy Quran. Rather, as a matter of fact, they give no ear to it like the community of Noah; who used to put their fingers in their ears to avoid hearing the words of their prophet.

And whenever I have called them that Thou mayest forgive them, they put their fingers in their ears...(71:7)

Now, in fact, one does not even come to the masjid to hear the admonitions, to understand the path to success and to hear the invitation or the call of divine messengers.

Words of Imam Sajjad ('a) and guidance of a man

It is reported in the chapter pertaining to the forbearance of Imam Sajjad ('a), that the Imam was passing through a lane of Medina with a cloak on his shoulders. One of the mean fellows of the city told his companions, "Let me put my hand today on Ali bin Husain ('a)." To make fun of the Imam, he caught and pulled the Imam's cloak from behind. The Imam turned back and said, "The Day is to come when every wrong doer will be a loser. O Wrongdoers! Your loss will become manifest on the Day of Judgment. God's frowning will terrorize you, but you are making a mockery of these truths. This world has made you mad, deceiving you fully but very soon you will wake with the cry of death."

And leave those who have taken their religion for a play and an idle sport, and whom this world's life has deceived...(6:70)

Chapter 13

30-31

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Alas for the servants! there comes not to them an apostle but they mock at him. Do they not consider how many of the generations have We destroyed before them, because they do not turn to them? (36:30-31)

Qiyamat is a bright day in comparison with this dark world

We are talking about the verse:

Alas for the servants...(36:30)

It explains the condition of man in the grave and in the Hereafter and it reveals hidden truths. There are and were people who mocked the messengers and those who followed these 'callers towards God', who invited the people to Hereafter. How pitiable and disgraceful will be their condition on the day when truth is manifested.

Quran refers to resurrection as 'the Day', for example, day of gathering, day of Qiyamat, day of recompense and so on. Why is it called a 'day'? There is no sun in the Hereafter, like we have in this world:

When the sun is covered...(81:1) And the sun and the moon are brought together, (75:9)

On the gathering ground of Mahshar there will be no shining of sun but radiance of Muhammad ('s).

So, on the basis of this, what does 'day' denote? Day is bright compared to night, which is dark. In this world, there is darkness. Truth is hidden and inner conditions are veiled. Truth is not visible. From the moment of death begins the real dawn for the opening up of secrets. For example, however much you want to recognize Ali ('a) you will not be able to do so fully and perfectly as he is hidden. From the moment of death, the grave life opens. Now you may visualize the highness and greatness of Ali ('a) as much as you can. With the powerful hand of God,

good people will enjoy divine bounties and the evil ones will taste the divine chastisement. Thus it is night (full of darkness) from the hour of birth till death and after death it is day, which reveals all truths.

Let there be the manifestation of truth. At that time those who mocked the messengers will realize their arrogance. Then they will realize what befalls them. They will see that those whom they had mocked have gained lofty ranks.

In king's company and manifestation of truth

Here I narrate a story from the book *Faraj baad az shiddah*.

A justice-loving king ruled over a part of India and when he died, he was succeeded by his son who also was as good and justice loving and sympathetic as his father. But there was a rebellion in his kingdom and the good-natured prince thought if fighting took place there would be much bloodshed and anarchy would prevail. So he thought it would be better if he himself left the kingdom. While leaving he put on a royal coat studded with costly jewels with a view that it would help him in adverse conditions. He did not take any money or food with him and went to forest on foot. He set off at night and next morning he rested under a tree by a stream. There he saw a man with a load on his back. The prince thought that this was also a traveler whom he could accompany in his journey and he might also be having food with him. At last that man came near him and sat down, spread his tablecloth, ate and did not say even a word to the prince. The prince also, due to self-respect and shame, could not say that he was hungry. At last both began to travel together and again at dinnertime the man with food ate inviting his fellow traveler to join him.

Thus for two days and nights this runaway king moved along with this miserly man without eating anything. On the third day, naturally, the king had no strength to walk further. He separated from that man and traveled alone. Then suddenly he saw a city where a house was under construction. He asked the man in charge of construction work, "Can I get some work here?" The contractor agreed. The refugee king asked for his wages early and he got them. Then he bought some food, ate it and started working with enthusiasm. The builder noted that this was not a professional laborer and that he seemed a noble personality possessing royal traits.

So he mentioned this to the respectable lady who owned the building under construction. She called for the strange laborer and in the evening he was brought in her presence. She understood the nobility of the man

at first sight, hosted him and offered her hand in marriage to him. The king prayed to God to let him live there, as there was no other place.

Thus he passed three years with this noble lady and benefited from her generosity but during all these years he did not divulge to her who he actually was. After three years, he recognized a man from his native land that was searching for someone. The king asked him, "What is the news about India?"

The man replied, "We had a good and just king. But there was rebellion; the rebels grabbed the throne and ruled over us for three years committing much injustice all this time and oppressing us severely. At last people could bear it no longer and they killed the rebels. Now they are searching for the real king so that if he is found he may be reinstated on the throne to rule judiciously over us. Thus we are now in search of him.

The king made himself known and also showed his royal coat to prove the veracity of his claim. Then he informed the lady of the facts and told her, "I am now going. If I get the throne without trouble, I will send my men to bring you home." The messenger returned to India and gave the news to his countrymen. Along with their army the people arrived to welcome him and placed him on his throne without any trouble.

While fleeing his kingdom the king had realized how difficult it was to travel alone penniless, so he ordered that inns should be constructed at intervals for travelers and that at every such halting place the travelers should be given provision for three days. He also ordered, "If a foreigner comes to our city he should be brought to me so that if he needs anything I may help him."

After a few days that miserly man who had accompanied the king in his journey for three days also arrived in the city. The king recognized him at once and asked, "Do you know me?" "You are the king," he replied. "No, I am that same man who was in your company for three days," reminded the King. The fellow was severely ashamed and wished that earth should split and swallow him.

The king told him, "Do not be afraid, you will not see anything but good from me." Then he ordered that the newcomer should be given a room in the royal palace. He made him dine with him and provided him various facilities and honors. At night he provided a royal bed to him and gave him the best of slave girls. After sometime the slave girl came to the king and reported, "Your guest is dead in sleep."

"Do you think he has died?" asked the king. So they went back and saw that it was so. The king said, "This man has drowned in extreme sorrow and grief and a feeling of shame. I had intended it to be so."

Hit by deep desires after revelation of facts

O man! All of us here are to be hit by deep regret except those who value the message of divine messengers in this world. They would then express their sorrow:

Alas for the servants!

They would understand what God had said and how they were indifferent towards the divine scholars and messengers. They would also understand how the Lord of the worlds only increased His bounties upon them despite such disrespect on their part. They indulged in ungratefulness and mockery, yet God showered them with bounties and behaved mercifully with them. Woe unto man when this reality is manifested.

In the first station in Qiyamat, the first forty years will be those of amazement and astonishment. Thereafter it would be shame in facing the Holy Prophet ('s). It is narrated that the feeling of shame will cause perspiration so profusely that man would wish that he should be sent to hell to escape this situation.[24]

How We annihilated the ancient people?

At that time the Almighty would tell threateningly to those who had mocked His messengers' invitation, "Look at your predecessors (who had done so earlier)."

Do they not consider how many of the generations have We destroyed before them...

Meaning: Look what has happened to those who had mocked the divine prophets earlier. You Arabs do pass, during your travels through places they inhabited. You repeatedly see the habitats of Prophet Lut etc; how we turned them upside down. How We destroyed them who paid no heed to the invitation of divine messengers.

They do not believe in it, and indeed the example of the former people has already passed. And even if We open to them a gateway of heaven, so that they ascend into it all the while, they would certainly say: Only our eyes have been covered over, rather we are an enchanted people. (15:13-15)

So take lesson from this. Before you, some had revolted and disobeyed. From among them were the people of Pharaoh whom We

drowned. Also We pushed some deep in earth. To some We killed by a thunder like the killers of Habib Najjar.

So each We punished for his sin; of them was he on whom We sent down a violent storm, and of them was he whom the rumbling overtook, and of them was he whom We made to be swallowed up by the earth, and of them was he whom We drowned... (29:40)

So do not be like them. They were destroyed because they did not return to Us in repentance.

This Ummah is blessed for taking lesson from the predecessors

A religious figure has said with regard to this community, that it is the blessed community because it is the last one that has learnt from the mistakes of the past people and thus became eligible for divine mercy. One who comes first is likely to fall down without noticing a hole in the path, but one who follows, looks at those who fall and avoids the peril.

Thus Allah says, "You are the blessed Ummah. You saw what happened to the community of Lut, Salih and Hud. You read about them in history and saw their remnants while traveling. Why do you not take lesson therefrom?"

Notes:

[24] Biharul Anwar, vol.4

Chapter 14

32-25

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

And all of them shall surely be brought before Us. And a sign to them is the dead earth: We give life to it and bring forth from it grain so they eat of it. And We make therein gardens of palms and grapevines and We make springs to flow forth in it, That they may eat of the fruit thereof, and their hands did not make it; will they not then be grateful? (36:32-35)

All come up before God, willingly or otherwise

Allah says:

Do they not consider how many of the generations have We destroyed before them, because they do not turn to them? (36:31)

It means that don't you see how the past people were destroyed by Us? You should take lesson from their fate and not adopt their ways. People imagine death means destruction; that it is annihilation forever whereas what is meant is passing away from this world and arriving in the world of requital. As we have said, death, from the superficial viewpoint of man, is absolute annihilation. But from the point of view of intelligence and religion, death is not for anyone. Rather it is a change of place and dress.

And all of them shall surely be brought before Us. (36:32)

That is, without exception, each and everyone will come to Us. No one would ever be able to escape or remain absent. Allah says in Surah Rahman: O group of men and jinn! If you have power to cross the regions of the earth and the skies, do so.

O assembly of the jinn and the men! If you are able to pass through the regions of the heavens and the earth, then pass through; you cannot pass through but with authority. (55:33)

In the explanation of this verse it is mentioned that on the Day of Judgment, angels of the first heaven would surround the grand field of gathering. They in turn would be surrounded by angels of the second heaven and so on till the angels of the seventh heaven. Then a voice will be heard: O groups of men and jinn! If you can cross these parameters, escape from this horizon.

All have to appear before the supreme court of Divine Justice. Two divine functionaries would be there with each and every person.

And every soul shall come, with it a driver and a witness. (50:21)

They will not be able to move either this side or that. Guards would there along with them. At their hint one will have to march on upto the highest court of God.

Let me be sacrificed for the one who does not need a pusher or watcher and who comes up on his own and submits his accounts himself readily. That is the 'Mumzaroon' – Those who will come up. The place for meeting with God is mentioned here as 'Meeqaat-e-Ilaahi':

Shall most surely be gathered together for the appointed hour of a known day. (56:50)

He also gives proof of this in other verses, that is, proofs of the Return and Resurrection; rather of practical monotheism.

Sign of Qiyamat—enlivening of a dead earth

And a sign to them is the dead earth... (36:33)

The Arabic word 'Ayat' means sign, proof and evidence. Here it is a sign to show that you have to live in another world after your death where all your good fortune will come out openly.

They say: How this rotten and decomposed body will come to life again? Look at the earth beneath your feet and observe how God gives it life after it has dried and was dead.

Life and death of everyone and everything is like this. Earth also has life and death. Its death has grades and levels. One of its grades is

growing and not growing. The season of fall and winter is death of earth. The beginning of spring is life for earth. How much life grows with it and is added to it. The earth wherein no movement was seen is lashed with spring breeze. Seeds show up their heads in the form of plants. All sorts of vegetables and grass grow. Who gave it this life? Did it happen itself? Why couldn't it do so in fall and winter? This fresh life is a proof of the life after death, that is, Resurrection.

From a grain of wheat, he gives seven hundred or even more

And a sign to them is the dead earth: We give life to it and bring forth from it grain so they eat of it.

Here 'grain' means a corn seed. The chief grains are wheat, barely, lentils and rice etc. By way of development, a seed of wheat becomes a ear or cluster. Thereafter, a seed gives seventy to seven hundred seeds. This shows God's Might and indicates that the universe is being directed by a limitless power.

You sowed a date seed. Then it bears branches and leaves producing hundreds of dates, each of which contains the same seed stone. This is manifestation of God's powerful might. The One Who created wheat also gave you teeth to eat it. Who created taste in your tongue and Who made this date fruit so sweet in taste?

Whether movement in quality or quantity, every movement requires a mover. Nothing shakes without a shaker. Every cluster of grapes, in the beginning, is smaller than a seed of wheat. But then gradually it increases in size. Who gives it this quantitative movement and who evolves it with a fixed order and regularity?

The grape fruit, in the beginning, was very sour and then it gradually sweetened. Sometimes its extreme sweetness sickens man. Every movement or turn requires a mover, a driver, or pusher. Who is behind the quantitative and qualitative changes in grapes? Is it anyone except Only One God? He gives life to a dry barren earth. He makes the grass to grow. As Sadi Shirazi has said:

The clouds, the winds, the moon, the sun, the sky, all are doing their work.

So that you may eat your bread and may not remain heedless.

All of them are working for you and are at your service.

It is, therefore, not just on your part not to obey (The Almighty God)

Germination of a seed is a sign of resurrection

Monotheism is clearly understood from this verse from the aspect of resurrection. The farmers know that the seed they sow in the earth, after getting water, is changed. The seed was hard when placed in the soil but after it settled down and got water, it sprouted. Thereafter, it turns green and raises its head from the ground. Half of it comes up and half remains under ground. Half of it secures its root and base and the other half looks after its top and stem.

The point to be noted here is that after its disintegration who has given it a new life again? Only One God! Exactly like my body and your body. You ask what is going to happen after its disintegration? You have seen the events in this world how there is life after death. Why do you not think of hereafter?

And certainly you know the first growth, why do you not then mind? (56:62)

The bones will be disintegrated and after the Almighty wills they would again be resurrected. There will be a life-giving blow making all atoms and molecules alive again.

And the trumpet shall be blown, when lo! from their graves they shall hasten on to their Lord. (36:51)

Of course there would be changes therein. This time the body would be subtle, especially if it is of the people of paradise. It is mentioned about the female dwellers of paradise that the houries will be jealous of them as these (women of paradise) will be extremely fine and beautiful. The substance of body is the same substance but appearance is changed. Of course its deeds will be like those of the angels. God willing, nothing but good will be done by them. On the other hand those who will be punished will get hard and coarse bodies corresponding to the harshness of divine torture.

And We make therein gardens of palms and grapevines and We make springs to flow forth in it, (36:34)

That is, look at these gardens of dates and grapes, which are just before your eyes; where was this sweetness? From where did it come? Say, 'Praise be to Allah, Allah is the Greatest, from the inner fold of dry wood from earth and from water.' What a wonderful drawing of essence in this

systematic and well-organized manner. How it reached in this form to each and every cell of the fruits! What a marvelous relationship between a seed and the complete fruit! Indeed He is powerful over everything...

After this Quran says:

and We make springs to flow forth in it, that they may eat of the fruit thereof, and their hands did not make it; (36:34-35)

God produces both sweet juice and sour vinegar from grapes

...and their hands did not make it...

Meaning it is 'We' not the people, who has created these fruits. It is God Who created grapes but man extracts juice from them, which is pleasing to taste. Similarly he makes vinegar from grapes, which was among the diet of messengers.

...will they not then be grateful?

Meaning: Are you then not thankful? O ungrateful one! O disloyal fellow! Should you not be thankful to God Who granted you such precious and delicious things? Is it not necessary for you to chant His praise constantly?

Praising of the intermediary is good provided its being intermediary is not forgotten. But the fact is that One in Whose hand is the original or main bounty must be thanked. None should be made partner in this main thanksgiving and appreciation.

If the water supply is stopped to you who is it that makes palatable water available to you?

Say: Have you considered if your water should go down, who is it then that will bring you flowing water? (67:30)

Whatever bounty reaches us, it is from Him and there is no bounty for us except from God.

And whatever favor is (bestowed) on you it is from Allah; then when evil afflicts you, to Him do you cry for aid. (16:53)

Bounty worship or benefactor worship

Though the comparison is rather awkward, there is no harm. Does a dog, with all of its lowness, give more importance to a bounty or to its benefactor? Dog is, indeed, a benefactor worshipper, not bounty worshipper. It harkens to the call of the owner of the house, not to its food.

Several times, its owner forgets to feed it, but the dog does not ignore him. It remains meek; it flatters him, and wags its tail for him.

It is an animal and does not have more intelligence than this. But you, O man! In spite of the fact that God gave you intelligence, why did you forget your Benefactor? You knew your Lord and you said: There is no god except Allah. Now, do you have anything to do with the Benefactor or with the bounty (given by him)? Are you a Benefactor worshipper or a bounty worshipper?

Since God has granted the precious bounty to you, you should praise and glorify Him alone so that He may increase the bounty.

If you are grateful, I would certainly give to you more, and if you are ungrateful, My chastisement is truly severe. (14:7)

In fact it is prohibited to say, "Such and such food has harmed me." Rather, you should say, "I was not fit for that food." Of course foods having opposite effects should not be taken together.

It is narrated that, among reasons of chastisements like squeeze of grave, is thanklessness for bounties. So, to avoid such ungratefulness, kiss the bread and respect it, let it not fall down and be trampled.

It is a must for all of us to repent from the bottom of our hearts for whatever thanklessness has been shown by us. There are things about which we did not realize that they are great bounties of Allah. For example, we did not consider a son a big bounty from God. But when he died we say, "God took him away from me." Now this is ungratefulness.

We should say, "O God! Whatever we have is only from You. There is no God except You. We are monotheists. We are thankful people and we are shamed of our past when we did not realize that all bounties were from You. I seek forgiveness from You and I turn towards You (in repentance).

Chapter 15

33-35

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

And a sign to them is the dead earth: We give life to it and bring forth from it grain so they eat of it. And We make therein gardens of palms and grapevines and We make springs to flow forth in it, That they may eat of the fruit thereof, and their hands did not make it; will they not then be grateful? (36:33-35)

Eat dates and grapes and be thankful

These verses are related with the Uniqueness of God and the Hereafter and the proofs of both are very clear. You have seen how life is blown in to a dead dry earth:

We give life to it and bring forth from it grain...

Various kinds of seeds grow out of it, which you eat – that is date trees and grapevines. Rivers are made to flow between them. So eat these fruits, think upon it and derive a lesson. Eat and be grateful and thankful to God by recognizing and worshipping Him. Be God worshippers. See who is their Originator. Also remember that what you see is only a drop, which shows the Might of God. The greater thing is God's power, which will be clear to you in the world, which is after death.

And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down but in a known measure. (15:21)

Dry and wet (fresh) dates are from the original sweetness, treasured in the higher world, which you will taste after your death. Then you will understand and realize what true sweetness is. All the greenery, flavor and fragrance are stored with the Lord of the worlds.

He is the bestower of bounties covering you (like the animals)

...will they not then be grateful?

An animal eats from the bounties of God and does nothing else. Its job is to graze and chew on barley and alfa alfa and that is all. But it is the duty of man to eat and go to the giver of this food and thank Him. Otherwise what is the difference between Him and the animal?

...and eat as the beasts eat, and the fire is their abode. (47:12)

Human intellect demands that he must be humble before the Benefactor, the Almighty God. Man must not be a denier (Kafir/ungrateful). 'Kufr' means cover, that is, covering or hiding. O the one who wears the bounty given by God and does not consider it to be from God, God is needless.

Allah, (there is) no god but He, the Ever living, the Self-subsisting by Whom all things subsist. (3:2)

Thanking God is better only for you. It is mentioned in the Holy Quran that if you show thankfulness to God He will add to that bounty. If you do not realize that the bounty is from God and if you do not appreciate it, the chastisement of God is very severe.

...and if you are ungrateful, My chastisement is truly severe. (14:7)

Wife, a divine bounty and thanklessness with regard to it

Among the bounties bestowed by God is a good wife. This bounty is mentioned in the Holy Quran at several places. It is narrated in *Usul Kafi* that, second to Faith, nothing is higher in rank than a wife who safeguards and protects the faith of man. Such a wife is a sign of God that brings peace and love to her husband.

And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them, and He put between you love and compassion...(30:21)

But some people do not regard her as a divine bounty and turn ungrateful. In marriage functions and likewise in matrimony, which is an occasion of having invocations answered, they indulge in sins and show ungratefulness to God with regard to this bounty.

A thankful companion of Prophet Dawood in paradise

There is a brief story on the topic of thankfulness.

Prophet Dawood ('a) once prayed to God to show him his companion in paradise from among the faithful persons God loved. Came the voice from the unseen, "Tomorrow morning, go to the gate of the city and see who it is."

Next morning when Dawood ('a) went to the city gate he met Mata, father of Yunus, carrying some firewood on his shoulders, in search of a buyer. Then came a man who bought that wood. Dawood stepped forward, shook hands with him, hugged him and then asked, "Is it possible for you to have me as your guest today?" Mata replied, "It would be my pleasure. Come along."

Mata bought some flour and salt with the firewood money to suffice three persons, viz, he himself, Dawood and Sulaiman. Finally he baked bread. Then before eating that bread, Mata raised his head towards the sky and said with tears running down his cheeks, "O Lord! It was You Who had sown the tree from which I obtained this wood. You gave me strength and ability to do this work. You also gave me capability to carry its burden. You sent its buyer. The wheat from which I got this flour was also created by You and Only You. You made all this possible whereby we are now able to use Your bounty."

Dawood turned towards Sulaiman and said, "Thankfulness enhances a man's status."

Bounties of life, wealth, and thankfulness for it

A great wise man has said, "Do not go on saying, 'O' God! give me, give me,' rather say, 'O Lord! Make me thankful to You for Your bounties. Make me realize the truth so that I may be grateful to You by appreciating Your bounties.'"

Now these hours in the Holy month of Ramadan are divine bounty. Ask those who have died. They yearn to be in the world to earn its benefits. Really we should repent over our ungratefulness during these precious nights (Shab-e-Qadr) of Ramadan, because we did not appreciate the divine bounties. We did not recognize the Real Benefactor. We destroyed the bounty by utilizing it inappropriately. Frittering away of wealth is also ungratefulness. You should either eat or feed with it but do not squander money by extravagant spending like carpeting the staircases etc. Give it to a person who has no money. You should take benefit from this divine bounty and not waste it.

Thankfulness with regard to money is to spend it in the path of God

Haji Noori has described a story in *Darus Salam*. A devoutly pious worshipper had been busy in his worship for several years. He was informed in one of his dreams that Almighty God had decided that, "Half of your life span will be spent in poverty and in the other half you will be rich and wealthy. Now it is for you to choose which part of your life you prefer first". He replied in that dream, "I have a wise wife. Let me consult her." Of course there is no harm in consulting a pious lady who is intelligent and not mad after wealth and worldly desires.

The wise lady said, "Choose the first half for ease and needlessness." Thus their wealth began to increase from the next morning. Then the wife said, "O man! As promised by God, just as He gives you bounty, you too should spend it in His path." So wealth came to one hand and it was given to the poor and spent in God's path with the other. Thus half of his age passed. Now, he awaited poverty. But there was no change. God's bounties continued to rain on them as before. He asked, "O God! How is it like this?"

He was informed, "You thanked Us for the bounties so We increased them further."

If you are grateful, I would certainly give you more, and if you are ungrateful, My chastisement is truly severe. (14:7)

Thankfulness of wealth is to spend it in God's path, and similarly, squandering it away is ingratitude and thanklessness.

Chapter 16

36-38

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Glory be to Him Who created pairs of all things, of what the earth grows, and of their kind and of what they do not know. And a sign to them is the night: We draw forth from it the day, then lo! They are in the dark; And the sun runs on to a term appointed for it; that is the ordinance of the Mighty, the Knowing. (36:36-38)

We created pairs from earth

In the description of the proofs of God's Might and Wisdom, also in knowing God and Resurrection, is mentioned the knowledge about Divine power and intelligence and of making the dead alive again.

Glory be to Him Who created pairs of all things, of what the earth grows, and of their kind and of what they do not know.

The apparent meaning of this Holy verse is that without any blemish or error is God Who created pairs of all that grows from earth, like vegetables and also yourselves.

Previously man had no knowledge of these pairs. Earlier commentators have said that 'pairs' means 'kinds and sorts' created by God. Some others said that it means composition and combination of matter and giving of form to matter.

Wind and insect pollination

The above interpretations were due to unawareness of the important subject of the machinery of creation. Uptil now, man was ignorant of the fact that the matter of pairing or coupling refers to the entire universe. Formerly they believed that the case was such only in date trees in addition to living animals or animate things. Therefore, they thought that the date tree has male and female genders and hence a part from male should be given to the female tree in order to get fruits. But at last it

became known that not only the date or palm tree every plant needs pollination.

Firstly, it is not correct to say that pair means kinds and sorts; rather it is so in Persian, where the word denotes coupling or mating of male and female. The Almighty Lord wants to state in this verse that the entire machinery of creation has pairing. It is not exclusive for animals and date trees; rather in all trees the male cell reaches the female organ. Winds are also agents of pollination.

And We send the winds fertilizing, (15:22)

It (the air or wind) takes the male particles, which fertilize the female tree. Insects are also among the agents of pollination. They sit on male portions of some plants and carry them on their legs to the female parts of other plants.

Exploding of the atom proved the pairing of things

...and of what they do not know.

Perhaps the hint is towards what has lately been discovered about the atom. Hitherto it was considered that the atom is indivisible but lately man has succeeded in splitting it with the help of advanced technology and discovered that the atom also has a pair, an active and a passive partner. It has electrons and protons. So, one of the miracles of the Qur-anic knowledge is that since man could not believe that all things have pairs, upto the basic unit (atom), he said that pairs meant kinds and sorts. But finally, the fact was revealed that God has created pairs of everything.

And of everything We have created pairs that you may be mindful...and of their kind... (51:49)

It is worth pondering about the astonishing roles of the male and female in creation of a third living being. Imam Sadiq ('a), in one of his talks to Mufaddal reminds of the same subject. Think deeply over the reproductive organs and in the manner of coupling and conception. The more you think the more you are amazed.

Night—a sign of God and having benefits

And a sign to them is the night:

Think deeply over the signs and proofs of Allah's Might. How the day and the night occur? Apparently it is due to the movement of sun around the earth but actually it is due to the rotation of the earth around its own axis. Thus 24 hours of a day and a night occur. Think over these points.

And a sign to them is the night:

How does night occur? Allah caused the night and removed the day to provide peace and rest for all creatures so that they can relax in the darkness.

With reference to the words, "We draw forth from it the day..." some commentators say that it denotes 'taking out' as there are the words "from it". But if drawing out means 'digging out' it should have been Arabic 'an' and not 'min' as is the case. Hence it means taking away the light We brought darkness. We took away the brightness of the atmosphere, so darkness fell.

...then lo! they are in the dark;

If His overwhelming Power had not made the earth rotate, for example, and there had been a bright day forever, then the benefits hidden in the night would not have been available. Moreover, were the sun to shine all 24 hours at one point, it would have burnt the place.

The Sun moves towards its resting place

And the sun runs on to a term appointed for it...

According to some it conveys that the sun is moving and it is the movement of it going around the earth. Now this is against the facts. The sun along with its constellation system is moving towards a very big star, Nasr and which is finally named 'Wakaa'. When it reaches the star, the age of the constellation of sun will come to an end. Thus the resting place of the sun is that huge star. That will be the time when it will be Resurrection (Qiyamat). It is also said in modern astronomy that the constellation of the sun is in its last age. When the sun will fall from its course, its brightness will cease, just like our own age. When its end arrives all the signs of our life will also end. This movement of the sun is not eternal and it will one day reach its resting place.

...that is the ordinance of the Mighty, the Knowing.

Meaning that this is the great and powerful Will and plan of God Almighty Who is Most Wise and Intelligent. He has the super most power over all things and He is fully aware of His entire creation.

Force of gravity ensures safety of the universe

And (as for) the moon, We have ordained for it stages till it becomes again as an old dry palm branch. Neither is it allowable to the sun that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day; and all float on in a sphere. (36:39-40)

Just think over the system of night and day. During your fifty years of age have the days and the nights changed? They have not even slightly strayed away from their course. They have run neither faster nor slower (earlier or later), from their fixed course. Neither the sun overtakes the moon nor the moon overtakes the sun. How great the force of gravity is! The sun is situated millions of miles away yet it has a pull over the earth and other planets while the moon is subdued by the earth. A balance between the spheres and their orbits has been created. Why is it so?

Crescent moon and the lunar calendar

The crescent moon seen on the first day of the month is like a curved thread. Its size doubles the next night. Then by the thirteenth and fourteenth night a whole round moon is sighted. Then from the sixteenth it goes on thinning until in the last night, called moonless night, it disappears completely; so the counting of days of the month may be known. The Quran explains this in a clear way:

He it is Who made the sun a shining brightness and the moon a light, and ordained for it mansions that you might know the computation of years and the reckoning. Allah did not create it but with truth; He makes the signs manifest for a people who know. (10:5)

As for the words:

...as an old dry palm branch.

They compare the appearance of the moon to an old withered branch of date palm curved like an arch, yellow and weak. If you look at the moon in the last nights of the month you will find that it is exactly so.

It is also like the last phase of my and your age. Repentance has much value now and not when one sees the angel of death.

We have ordained for it stages...

There are 27 stages for the moon. Look at it night by night, to follow its course. Zamakhshari has written in *Rabiul Abrar*, quoting *Sharhe Sahifa* that it was the night of fourteenth of the month when Imam Sajjad ('a) woke up before dawn for Tahajjud prayers. He put his hands in the can of water for making ablution. When he raised his head towards the sky he observed the moon. He remained in that position until the Muezzin (caller from the minaret of the mosque) cried: "God is the Greatest (Allahu Akbar)."

Most surely in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of the night and the day there are signs for men who understand. (3:190)

Observe the greatness of God in the sky; planets in the limitless space, especially according to modern scientific research all these things are indeed amazing.

A big world is woven in the body of man

Here is a hint regarding the analogy between the outer horizons and man's inner self: As said by Ali ('a), "Have you imagined that yours is a little body? The truth is that a great world is rolled within you."

Whatever is in the outer world is also found in the inner being of man. The existence of man is also like that of the night and the day. Just ponder, over this example:

Egyptian commentator Tantanavi has given a very nice explanation of the flowing of blood in our entire body. From the top of head to the toe of foot, the flow of blood is connected with the heart and it is being cleaned therein. The blood thus purified in the heart then runs through veins and reaches all the organs. In half of the body there is always black blood and in the other half red (fine). Every minute the blood circulates in our bodies. The black blood is like the night and the pure blood like day.

Day of the soul is remembrance of God and its night is mindlessness

Your soul also has days and nights. Its night is being regardless of God. It is darkness. You (your soul) do not see the truth and reality. Alas, if we sin, it is like a dark and cloudy night.

Or like utter darkness in the deep sea: there covers it a wave above which is another wave, above which is a cloud, (layers of) utter darkness one above another... (24:40)

Likewise its day is the remembrance of God. The part of your life, which passed in remembering God, is bright.

For men of God, night is like a world-brightening day; for such bright persons there is no dark night at all.

This fact becomes quite clear from the very moment of death and thereafter its truth is realized. Woe, unto him whose night is joined with resurrection. The darkness of immorality is very bad. False beliefs push him in such a difficult bottleneck that, in the words, of the Holy Quran, he cannot see even his own hands.

...when he holds out his hand, he is almost unable to see it; and to whomsoever Allah does not give light, he has no light. (24:40)

Contrary to it there are faithful men and women whose light or brightness runs before and in front of them and this shedding of light (Noor) is from their right side.

Ali is right and Muawiyah wrong in everyone's life

Shaykh Shustari (r.a.), in the matter under discussion that whatever is in the greater world is also found in the little world (in ourselves), says: In your existence there is Muhammad and also there is Abu Jahl. In your life are both Habeel Qabeel. He thus makes important analogies. Your Abu Jahl is the same ignorance, mindlessness and pride in your self. The humility for truth in your heart and mind is Muhammad. Let not Abu Jahl in your selves overcome Muhammad.

Ali means justice and truth. Muawiyah means oppression, injustice and falsehood. Let not oppression overcome justice and truth.

Religious blindness due to prohibited acts

A man once described his dream among friends. He said, "I saw Imam-e-Zaman ('a) in my dream." His right eye was blind. Firstly it is strange that one who does not believe in the Imam can see him in his dream. It may be confused thoughts or superstition, or it could be having some hidden meaning.

I told myself that if I do not reply to him, he might imagine that Imam-e-Zaman ('a) has something to do with this. Hence, I said, "This Imam-e-Zaman ('a) is there in your own self. Your own religion is blind. I tell you from this pulpit publicly that the work you do and which is not legal has made you blind." The man went away and abstained from bad deeds.

Sometimes it also so happens that this unlucky fellow allows negligence and ignorance to overpower him whereby he becomes another Ibne Muljim. Hate and jealousy against others chain him from head to foot.

Chapter 17

41-44

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

And a sign to them is that We bear their offspring in the laden ship. And We have created for them the like of it, what they will ride on. And if We please, We can drown them, then there shall be no succorer for them, nor shall they be rescued, But (by) mercy from Us and for enjoyment till a time. (36:41-44)

Among all other signs and proofs of God's bounties is the subjugation of the sea for mankind. Allah has made this huge ocean along with its great depth and fearsome animals subservient to man. This ocean is indeed such that if man looks at it, he is frightened. The giant waves, when in motion, are really fierce. Yet man has overpowered it so that he can sail on its surface for trade, tourism and past time. By constructing a ship he rides it with a strong heart and travels for miles and miles. He catches fish and obtains other marine products. He brings out pearls etc. Now he even does mining in the seabed. Man makes the loaded ship move over the waves of the sea.

Camel, the ship of desert and the airplane also are from God

And We have created for them the like of it, what they will ride on.

We created things like the ships and many other things for you. For example the camel, which is a ship of desert. In the words of modern day commentators, aeroplanes flying in air are also made by God. They also are like the ships. The electricity and steam too are from God Almighty. Man has only assembled the parts with the help of his intelligence which is again provided by God.

And if We please, We can drown them, then there shall be no succorer for them, nor shall they be rescued,

Meaning, if We desire, We can drown the seafarers with a huge wave. The protector is Only One God, not the ship. Automobiles and airplanes too are like it. Be it in sea or in the air, the protector is only God. If He wants to kill, there is none to save.

But (by) mercy from Us and for enjoyment till a time.

That is, the safety is Our Mercy until its time (of death) does not arrive. God saves and protects it till that time.

Worship only one God with your body and wealth

These Holy verses contain all the signs and proofs of God's might, wisdom, divinity and Lordship. It necessitates that, O man! As it is God Who has put the land and the sea under your control, you must obey Him. It is Only One God Who created for you all these varieties of food, bounties, drinks and grains. It is He and only He Who created all these vegetables and fruits for you. So you must be thankful to Him and you must not be slack in worshipping Him physically and monetarily.

Physical worship acts through tongue and body organs are prayer, fasting, hajj and ordering good and prohibiting evil. All these are bodily worship acts and thankfulness.

Monetary worship acts are connected with man's relationships.

...and keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them...
(2:3)

In all divine religions, Prayer and Zakat are ordered jointly. If there is bodily or physical worship but no worship through wealth, then it is incomplete. Fasting is there in its place, but providing breakfast and giving predawn food is also a must. Though the Lord Almighty revealed these verses with regard to the people of Mecca, it is applicable to all humanity till the Day of Judgment.

Take precautions regarding past and present sins

Meccans were extremely unlucky with regard to physical worship. When they were told, "Fear God, mend your manners, offer prayers", they used to mock it. When they were told, "Why do you not offer Prayers? Why do you not observe fasts?" They would retort, "Why does God need my Prayer and fasts." Well, but you surely need to worship so that God may, as a reward give you bounties in the Hereafter.

And when it is said to them: Guard against what is before you and what is behind you, that mercy may be on you. (36:45)

The best explanation for “What is in front of you”, as mentioned in *Kashaf-e-Haqaiq*, is provided by Imam Ja’far Sadiq (‘a) who is reported to have said, “It denotes sins attracting divine punishment and torture. They are being asked, ‘Look at your sins, see what you have forwarded for your life in grave.’”

Instead of sending sweet smell and fragrance for your Hereafter (life after death) you have forwarded fire.

Another reason is also given that “what is before you” indicates the present sins and “what is behind you” means the past sins.

...that mercy may be on you.

Though the reply has not been explained in detail it becomes apparent by the next verse.

They are turning away their faces from the signs of God

And there comes not to them a communication of the communications of their Lord but they turn aside from it.

When the verse of Quran is recited to them, they turn away their faces. When it is said to them, “Fear the chastisement of Barzakh (grave life)”, their response is the same. Be they the legislative verses or verses explaining religious beliefs, all are from God. None of the Divine Words about bounties and creations etc has any effect on them. What about the physical worships? Of course we should apply them to ourselves. May be they apply to us. There are applicable to all though the verses were revealed in the context of Meccans.

God Himself would have given to the poor

And when it is said to them: Spend out of what Allah has given you,

When it is said to them, “Out of what God has given to you, you should give some of it to the needy in the path of God,” for example: Khums, one fifth of whatever you have saved at the end of the year after taking care of your expenses etc. Actually this is very easy but they reply, “Had God wished, He Himself would have given it to them (the poor people).”

...those who disbelieve say to those who believe: Shall we feed him whom, if Allah please, He could feed?

O shopkeeper! If you know that your sales boy is short of money, you should support him by giving an advance.

The unbelievers replied to those who recommended them to help the needy, "Should we feed those whom had God wished to feed, He would have fed? Actually God wished that they should remain hungry and needy."

You are in naught but clear error.

That is you are clearly misguided and you do not know that you are encouraging begging. Now the fact is that these people themselves are in clear misguidance.

God's will with regard to free will of man

Will of God is of two kinds, the destined nature and the legislative will. The first kind is for example that if God willed that rain must come at a certain time or that He decides that the lifespan of such and such person must end by such and such time. This is not changeable.

The second Will is with regard to the legislative aspect that God wishes that man should incline himself towards good, should offer Prayer and observe fasts etc.

Example of destined nature: God desired that a donkey and a cow must always remain bowed (like in Rukoo during Prayer). But in respect of man, He wishes that man must genuflect (Rukoo) willingly and thus, with his own intention understand the Might and Greatness of God. He must recite, "Glory be to the Lord, the greatest, and praise be to Him."

Insects live in dust. They have no option but to remain so. But man is commanded that he should, with self-intention and self will, prostrate before Only One God so that he be rewarded and get a fitting rank. God wants that, if one is poor, then those who are needless should feed him and fulfill his needs.

Wealth and poverty—a test for the people

God has not created all the people alike. In every age, some are rich and some poor so that they may be tested.

and We have made some of you a trial for others... (25:20)

O Mr. Millionaire! God has given you a lot so that you may support thousands of helpless people; that your own spiritual ailments may be cured. If the curtain is raised, everyone will sigh over his illnesses.

Spending in the path of God cures you from such diseases, so be generous.

In case of the poor also, the truth is that if in spite of needfulness, he maintains his self-respect, then it in itself is a great blessing. If you remain patient and forbearing you earn everlasting rewards. The poor who is patient, is also as lucky as a rich man who spends in the path of God willingly. Both earn good rewards. This is the legislative wish of God that both the rich and the poor should benefit.

A miser is deprived of paradise. It is narrated that a generous disbeliever is nearer to Paradise than a miserly believer.

There is no hope for such a miserly Muslim. If he dies with such animal-like characteristics there is no hope of his salvation.

When a dog from outside comes to another area what do the other dogs of that area do? They chase away the new dog, fearing that the newcomer would participate in enjoying the bones available in their area.

O co-workers! What are you doing with your co-workers? The remedy of miserliness is to give away and I have said this repeatedly. Illness of heart cannot be cured by doing what you want, so spend in the path of God from what you love most.

By no means shall you attain to righteousness until you spend (benevolently) out of what you love... (3:92)

You must not give away what you do not like for yourselves.

O you who believe! spend (benevolently) of the good things that you earn and of what We have brought forth for you out of the earth, and do not aim at what is bad that you may spend (in alms) of it, while you would not take it yourselves unless you have its price lowered... (2:267)

Building on rented land

A man came to the house of Ali ('a). When he saw that necessities of life were very short and unorganized in that house he asked, "O Ali! You are the Caliph of Muslims. Why is your house in such a condition?" Ali ('a) replied, "A wise man does not build properties on rented land. Whatever we possess, we have forwarded for the next life."

To give more importance to a rented place is against wisdom.

One day, Bahlool was in a graveyard. There came the vizier of Haroon and asked him, "How is it that you are not leaving the graveyard?"

Bahloul replied, "Yes, there is more peace here. No one has to do anything with me here. If I go to the town or market, children and fools trouble me." The vizier said, "Do you have any dialogue with the dead?" Bahloul, "Yes. I stand by every grave and ask, 'When are you going to move out?' They reply, 'We are waiting for you. When you join us, we shall move out together.'"

Generosity of Imam Hasan and Imam Reza ('a)

The wealth you have is a loan to you, with which you can do something for your life after death. It is a very important matter. So much so that if one has got only a date, he should give half of it to the needy. Imam Reza ('a) divided his entire wealth in two parts thrice and every time he gave half of it in the path of God. Likewise, when Imam Reza ('a) used to sit for meals he used to take a utensil and put something from every available eatable for the needy. He used to recite:

But he would not attempt the uphill road, And what will make you comprehend what the uphill road is? (It is) the setting free of a slave, Or the giving of food in a day of hunger (90:11-14)

Chapter 18

45-52

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

And when it is said to them: Spend out of what Allah has given you, those who disbelieve say to those who believe: Shall we feed him whom, if Allah please, He could feed? You are in naught but clear error. And they say: When will this threat come to pass, if you are truthful? They wait not for aught but a single cry which will overtake them while they yet contend with one another. So they shall not be able to make a bequest, nor shall they return to their families. And the trumpet shall be blown, when lo! from their graves they shall hasten on to their Lord. They shall say: O woe to us! who has raised us up from our sleeping-place? This is what the Beneficent God promised and the apostles told the truth. (36:45-52)

Some theists also turn fatalists

When these deniers are told, "Come and take benefit from this wealth which Allah has given to you and feed the hungry and the weak from what God has provided you," they say, "If feeding them was a good deed, God would have fed them and would have given them food." This, in fact is fatalism. Sometimes, even some religious people are heard saying that whatever is good and nice is from Him or a similar cause. Others ascribe to God everything that is harmful or fatal. When riches arrive, they do not see God's hand in it. But when they are taken away they say that God has snatched it away. In other words, income is a substitute bounty. It turns into a forced bounty while it is taken away. When money comes they say it is the result of their own labor and art or craft, not from God. Then when the same wealth is lost or stolen, they say this has happened according to God's will. How is it that at the time of receiving it they did not see the Hand of God?

As I have said, both richness and poverty are Divine bounties. For the rich, it is by spending in the path of God, which reduces his miserliness

and he turns generous. For the poor it is a test and if he is forbearing, he is rewarded for the same and his ranks are raised in the Hereafter.

He takes away the lives with one shriek

And they say: When will this threat come to pass, if you are truthful?
(36:48)

This verse is about the Hereafter wherein they ask, "When would this promise of Qiyamat be fulfilled if you are truthful?" The promise of Resurrection along with its rewards and punishments has always been given by all the messengers of God. All of them drew the attention of people towards resurrection. People imagined it to be impossible and they asked, "When would this world of rewards and chastisement come up?"

In response Allah says,

They wait not for aught but a single cry which will overtake them while they yet contend with one another.

The first step to the Hereafter is death. It is the vanguard of the world of Barzakh (grave and Resurrection).

They wait not for aught but a single cry...

Meaning, that they are not waiting for anything except the shriek. The first scream mentioned in this verse is the scream of death, the killing shout. The next scream is the enlivening one that will make all the dead alive again.

Only one shriek is sufficient for taking away the life of this mankind. It would be a terrifying shriek by an angel, the Angel of Death. It is enough for the purpose and for which the angel has not to take any extra trouble.

In narrations relating to Meraj (Prophet's ascension) it is mentioned that, in the fourth sky, the Holy Prophet ('s) saw an angel with a serious face. He had formerly seen every angel having a happy disposition. In explanation, Jibraeel said, "This is the Angel of Death." The Holy Prophet ('s) then asked, "What is this tablet in front of him?" Jibraeel replied, "Names of all living ones are mentioned therein." The angel himself told the Prophet ('s), "When the time of death for anyone arrives, his name gets erased from this list. Then I, at once, take away his or her life; the entire world is like a table spread for me. Just as a man can easily and

quickly pick up anything of one's choice from the table-spread, I also can take up the life of anyone who is destined to die, very easily.

...a single cry which will overtake them while they yet contend with one another.

The shriek of death comes when they are disputing and quarrelling among themselves. It is mentioned that when the killer shriek comes, people would be busy in markets, buying and selling. The buyer has yet to take possession of the purchased thing and the cry is heard and none is able to do anything anymore.

I also may not return to my house

So they shall not be able to make a bequest, nor shall they return to their families.

That is they are unable even to make a will and to return home. Though everyone wishes to return home, meet the family members and make a will.

A few days ago, a healthy person died right in the bazar of Shiraz, suddenly before noon. He had no ailment whatsoever. Now does anyone else in Shiraz think it is quite possible that he also may not be able to return home? I should think of myself.

The wolf of death takes away a sheep from this flock suddenly and yet you can see how carelessly all these sheep are grazing! (Persian Couplets)

Also the cry of death comes when these people are in the midst of arguments and quarrelling. I had once seen that they became dumb while quarrelling. Blood pressure rose up and made them lifeless. Woe unto the unlucky fellow who died while sinning. Had he faith at that moment or not? Truly, you must fear that moment when the satans are, more than normally, intent to take away even if one has a particle of faith. They intensify their attack at the time of death. Of course, if there is faith in one's heart, the devil is unable to snatch it. God has promised:

...and Allah was not going to make your faith to be fruitless... (2:143)

That is He would not destroy your faith. However if faith is only on your tongue, the matter is different.

And among men is he who serves Allah (standing) on the verge, so that if good befalls him he is satisfied therewith, but if a trial afflict him he turns back headlong; he loses this world as well as the hereafter; that is a manifest loss. (22:11)

So one should pray: O God! Give me the Faith, which I may take with me (to grave). A Faith that was always with me, which must have been deeply rooted in my soul.

So let us find out the rightful

While explaining the making of wills some commentators have raised a noteworthy point. A man has become so weak and feeble that he is unable to say even a word or to make any will (before death), what to say about other things. So, those who are wise, take precaution, before they are in such a situation, which is sure to come. They themselves satisfy those who have rights over them so that the dispute may not continue to the other world.

Work until your hand is able to do something before you become totally helpless.

These were the vanguards of Qiyamat. These were the Cries of Death and Killing. The second blow (shout) will make all alive again.

With second blowing all become alive again

And the trumpet shall be blown, when lo! from their graves they shall hasten on to their Lord. (36:51)

We do not know the kind of the enlivening blow. According to a narration about Israfil, the angel in charge of blowing the trumpet, the said trumpet has two horns, one on the upper side and another on the lower. The cry is raised, "O decayed bones! O disintegrated flesh! Get up for accounting, come towards the field of accounting."

So, when this (second) trumpet is blown, without any delay, all rise up from their graves and run speedily towards their Lord for giving accounts of their deeds during their worldly lives. They say, "Woe unto us. Who made us rise from our graves? This was the same promise of God." Now either they say so themselves or it is the angels who reply thus that this is the same Divine promise and the messengers had told the truth.

A point about the grave and Barzakh

There is a point worth pondering about the grave. The Arabic word 'Marqad'=grave is a noun of place. It means the place of sleeping, a resting place. On the Day of Judgment, after raising their heads from the

graves, they say, "Who has raised us up from our sleeping places", whereas they were being chastised in the grave.

Haply I may do good in that which I have left. By no means! it is a (mere) word that he speaks; and before them is a barrier until the day they are raised. (23:100)

Everyone who passes away from this world is, in Barzakh, either in reward or in punishment until finally, he or she reaches either Paradise or Hell, in Qiyamat. He is punished in the grave for the sins committed by him during his life. Sometimes he is purified in this way. Here he says that he was in a "sleeping place" whereas, in fact, he was in Barzakh.

The explanation is that the factors before him are according to his strength and weakness. Life in the world, compared to Barzakh, is sleep. In Barzakh there is wakefulness and the stages in Barzakh are stronger than this world. Similarly, in grave, people are in sleep and they become awake in Qiyamat.

Those who have seen true dreams about the dead have attested this statement. In the book *Dastanhae Shaguft*, there are such examples. In *Darus Salam*, Haji Noori has also illustrated this.

Compared to Barzakh, Qiyamat is awakening

Qiyamat after barzakh is like waking up after sleep. The main effect is in Qiyamat. Whatever reward or punishment is there in barzakh is the midpoint. Whatever is considered as wakefulness in this world is, when compared with the life after death, a sleep. So when one will raise his head from the grave he will say, "Who woke me up?" His eye falls on the flames of hell, leaping out in mountain-like tongues. On one side are the harsh guardians of hell. There are ones who are bringing in people towards the field of accounting. On the other he sees frightening black faces.

And (many) faces on that day, on them shall be dust... (80:40)

He sees very strange things, which he had not seen even in Barzakh. This situation is so shaking that all kneel down.

And you shall see every nation kneeling down; (45:28)

All will cry: My life! My life! except Muhammad ('s) who will say: O God! My people! O Lord! Save and hear my followers. All will tumble

down. Pregnant women will, due to fright, abort their unborn fetus. Suckling mothers will become careless about their children. You will think that people are intoxicated but they are not so. Rather the Divine punishment is so severe.

On the day when you shall see it, every woman giving suck shall quit in confusion what she suckled, and every pregnant woman shall lay down her burden, and you shall see men intoxicated, and they shall not be intoxicated but the chastisement of Allah will be severe. (22:2)

One was chastised in the grave (Barzakh) also. But what is the punishment of the grave in comparison to the punishment of Qiyamat? A mosquito bite is nothing compared to the sting of a scorpion. Yes, all this is promised by the Divine Messengers, who saw and told the truth.

No one will be able to disobey the command to become alive

They wait not for aught but a single cry...

There will be only one Call. No one can disobey that order just like the call to die was also a single cry.

Imam Ali ('a) has said, "None among men has, nor will have, internal and outward strength like Sulaiman. He had power over men, jinn, birds and animals. Yet, at the moment of death, he too was absolutely weak and feeble. Who can disobey the Divine Command?"

Chapter 19

53-57

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

There would be naught but a single cry, when lo! they shall all be brought before Us; So this day no soul shall be dealt with unjustly in the least; and you shall not be rewarded aught but that which you did. Surely the dwellers of the garden shall on that day be in an occupation quite happy. They and their wives shall be in shades, reclining on raised couches. They shall have fruits therein, and they shall have whatever they desire. (36:53-57)

Qiyamat will arrive after the two blowings

And they say: When will this threat come to pass, if you are truthful?

They say, "Where is that which was promised by the Prophets?" They ask it by way of denial and mockery. The reply to them is, "You will have to face only two blows (or shouts): One calling all to die and another commanding all to rise up." Only God knows the interval between these two cries. There are various narrations regarding it. Angel Israfil who is near God will do the blowing. He has a trumpet, one end of which is towards the earth and another towards the sky. When he will blow it, all living creatures on earth will die and so also those who are in the sky.

And the trumpet shall be blown, so all those that are in the heavens and all those that are in the earth shall swoon, except such as Allah please; then it shall be blown again, then lo! they shall stand up awaiting. (39:68)

Then God shall command Israfil: Die. So he would also die. No one except Only One God will be alive.

In both the worlds, Only One God will remain and that is all. All others will be dead. (Persian Couplet)

Then a voice would call out, "For whom is the Kingdom, today?" That is, "Where are all those who used to say, 'My wealth, my kingdom'?" There would be none to reply. He Himself replies, "Only for the overpowering and dominant Lord."

Imam ('a) says, "During the interval between two blowings nothing would remain alive, the earth will become changed, mountains will turn into dust."

And they ask you about the mountains. Say: My Lord will carry them away from the roots. (20:105)

There will remain nothing like trees, mountains, vales and hills. Everything will be changed.

On the day when the earth shall be changed into a different earth, and the heavens (as well)...(14:48)

Manifestation of justice of God in Mahshar Field

When the blow to become alive will be blown, all those who will become alive will be present for the Divine Judgment in the Mahshar field of grand gathering. Everyone will arrive with two guards "Saiq" and "Shaheed".

And every soul shall come, with it a driver (Saiq) and a witness (Shaheed). (50:21)

No one will have the ability to disregard the command to arise. This is the day of the manifestation of the true justice of Almighty Allah. In the world of matter, justice does not become manifest, but here, even the tiniest of deed, weighing an atom's weight would not be disregarded.

This day no injustice would be done to anyone, be he a disbeliever or a believer, a sinner or a worshipper.

So this day no soul shall be dealt with unjustly in the least; (36:54)

If one has done a bad deed, he would not be punished more than what he is liable for. His good deeds will be taken into consideration and he would be rewarded for them. If he has not sinned, he will not be

punished. The punishment of every sin will be on the one who has committed it, not on anyone else.

And a burdened soul cannot bear the burden of another... (35:18)

Whatever chastisement is there, it is due to the deed of the person who has committed it and not because of someone else. If you lied or spoke vulgar words your own mouth would be dirty and foul smelling. Likewise, if you had recited salawat you will enjoy the fragrance of your own tongue.

And you shall not be rewarded except (for) what you did. (37:39)

Thereafter Allah mentions some statements of the people of paradise and some wailings of the people of hell. The believers will indeed hear both. Yearning for reward and fear of chastisement. The aim is that one should yearn for paradise by hearing such verses. Why are you so much afraid of death? It is because we have no yearning for paradise. It is so because we imagined death to be a frightening python.

Surely the dwellers of the garden shall on that day be in an occupation quite happy. (36:55)

Enjoyment of paradise bounties and unawareness of hell

This is the first praise in favor of the people of paradise. They are fully engaged in enjoyment. In Arabic, "Shughl" (engagement) means a preoccupation that prevents man from doing anything else. For example if one is engaged in construction work, he spends all of his labor and time in that business and pays no attention to any other job. It is called "Shughl". God put the people of paradise in such an enjoyment that they are oblivious to the sounds of *Mahshar*, shrieks of hell, cries of sinners, quacking of earth, frights and fears. So much so that even if ones own family members are in hell, one would be so much engaged with Divine bounties that one would pay no attention to them.

So unawareness from hell, its painfulness and hardships is such that no attention is paid to the people of hell, but only when God so wishes. Quran tells us that it is the time when a window is opened and they look at the people of paradise and shout out to them, "Have mercy on us. Please give us something from the bounties given to you by God."

And the inmates of the fire shall call out to the dwellers of the garden, saying: Pour on us some water or of that which Allah has given you. (7:50)

They will reply:

They shall say: Surely Allah has prohibited them both to the unbelievers. (7:50)

That is all those who left this world without Faith cannot get anything from these bounties.

The preoccupation that prevents one from paying attention to any other thing, is sometimes, due to fear and fright and sometimes because of longing. The people of paradise are in joy and happiness due to the bounties. This has made them unmindful of other things.

Wives of the people of paradise, a great divine bounty

Some commentators have said that there are two verses after the description of something about the preoccupation of the people of paradise: They and their wives are reclining on pillows under shade. Therein, for them, in this garden, is every kind of fruit and whatever they desire.

Fondness with heavenly wives is the activity of the people of paradise. Now, they are busy with fairies or believing women who belong to men who are admitted to paradise. We have mentioned repeatedly that every woman who has become worthy of paradise will be with her husband if he also is admitted therein or if he is given a place in paradise as a result of someone's recommendation or intercession. The real meeting is in paradise. Hoorul-eein is the fairy in praise of whom God has said:

In them are goodly things, beautiful ones. (55:71)

Their eyes never fall on anyone but their husbands. They are husband-lovers and husband-appreciators. They are as bright as rubies and pearls.

As though they were rubies and pearls. (55:57)

Copulation in Paradise reminds one of God's bounties

Another point is that there is a marked difference between the marriage in paradise and marriage in this world. None should imagine it to be similar. No, it is totally different. The first difference: Copulation in this world, besides carrying uncleanness at the time of gratification, also makes people neglectful. But, an intercourse in paradise makes one

mindful and aware. Singing and music in paradise comprises of glorification and praising of God. People once asked the Holy Prophet (‘s), “Is there any singing in paradise?” “No,” he replied, “It is of a higher rank.”[25] Imam Sadiq (‘a) is reported to have said that its example is that the trees of paradise will be singing[26]. It is also mentioned that if you hear the songs of the heavenly birds in this world you will faint.

Food of Paradise entails no refuse

You have heard that when Prophet Dawood (‘a) used to recite the Psalms in a melodious voice, birds and animals gathered round him in wilderness. Some of them were swooning and then never rising up. Dawood is a heavenly singer.

Leaves of heavenly trees too sing songs like “Glory be to God” and “Praise be to Allah”. They are indeed spiritual. The doors, windows and everything in paradise is also such, which make all remember God above all and the wife is also like that.

It is likewise in the matter of eating food. In this world first there is labor in earning food, then trouble in digesting it and then is the ejection of waste matter. But in paradise, there are no such troubles. Therefore, some great people have said that the people of paradise do not have anus and hence there is no problem of excreta. The food of paradise has nothing like waste and refuse to be ejected.

Hourie—manifestation of the mercy of the Beneficent and the Merciful

According to a narration, the Last Prophet said, “God has created a Hourie that has ‘In the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful’ on her lips which of course is Noor (Radiance). Similarly ‘Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah’ is inscribed on her forehead and ‘Ali is the Wali of Allah’ on her chin and ‘Al Hasan and Husain’ on her right and left cheek respectively.”

What a beauty and for whom? It can be known from these sentences and Holy names that they are for the monotheists, and who know God, who understand the meaning of Beneficent and Merciful and who must have acquired all the virtues of piety.

So they asked, “O Messenger of God! For whom are these Houries?” He replied, “For those who recite, ‘In the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful’ with due respect and honor.”

This is the first stage of ‘Ba’ of Bismillahirrehmaanirraheem. What to say about the complete meaning of it!

They and their wives shall be in shades, reclining on raised couches.

The people of paradise and their wives (especially if she was his wife in the world also) are promised by God that the believing husbands and wives will join one another. It is also mentioned in some narrations that even if one's son and wife are in a lower station they will be, as a result of the intercession of a Faithful, be joined with him. They would be reclining under shades or on thrones.

The tents in Paradise would be four farsakh by four farsakh (One farsakh is six kilometers). In them are heavenly thrones, which will be the restful place for the people of paradise and their spouses.

The Holy Prophet ('s) is reported to have said that a faithful man will enjoy a hundred virgins in a day in paradise and the astonishing fact is that they would again become virgins immediately thereafter.[27] As for his food, it is mentioned that he will have a hunger equal to a hundred men in this world and it will be, as mentioned repeatedly, without any of the worldly hardships.

Beauty equal to a hundred Yusufs

It is mentioned in some traditions that if a Hourie from paradise comes to this world, all the men here will faint because they do not possess the power of looking at such a beauty. For better understanding of this point, just pay attention to what is mentioned in Quran in the story of Prophet Yusuf and the ladies of Egypt. Though Yusuf ('a) was a human being, living in this material world, God gave him such elegance that the women cut their fingers instead of the fruit when they saw him. What is more curious is that they were not aware they are cutting their hands. So what can be said of the beauty and elegance of Paradise?

So when she heard of their sly talk she sent for them and prepared for them a repast, and gave each of them a knife, and said (to Yusuf): Come forth to them. So when they saw him, they deemed him great, and cut their hands (in amazement), and said: Remote is Allah (from imperfection); this is not a mortal; this is but a noble angel. (12:31)

So, whatever is there in Paradise it could be achieved only by making efforts. We should make efforts so that we may be able to look at that beauty or even better than that beauty, that is the beauty of Muhammad ('s) and His progeny.

There will be neither sun nor moon in the land of Mahshar. All the light will be the elegance of Muhammad.

A poet has mentioned in a nice way: Those who are talking bad of me should look at their own faces. Instead of the fruit, they all cut off their own hands!

Expansion of heart for perceiving the beauty

The following verse says that, for whomsoever God desires to guide He expands the heart of that person for understanding Islam.

Therefore (for) whomsoever Allah intends that He would guide him aright, He expands his breast for Islam, and (for) whomsoever He intends that He should cause him to err, He makes his breast strait and narrow as though he were ascending upwards; thus does Allah lay uncleanness on those who do not believe. (6:125)

Prophet Moosa also supplicated likewise:

O my Lord! Expand my breast for me, (20:26)

What is this expansion of heart? It is the ability to perceive beauty. He grants enough strength whereby one can see the beauty and enjoy it. In paradise, there is beauty inside beauty. But who is there to benefit from it? It is one whose heart has been expanded. He must have benefited from the splendor of Ali ('a). That is why I say, "Prepare yourself for paradise. Attain cleanliness and piety so that you may perceive the beauty." How can one who has not benefited from beauty himself understand the absolute beauty?

Brightness on the cheeks of Hourie is due to tears of the faithful

It is quoted in the book *Bahrul ma Arif* from a scholar who says, "They showed me a Hourie. I was astonished and asked, 'Who are you?' She replied, 'God has created me for you.' When I tried to get near to her, she distanced herself saying, 'The joining is after death.' Then I asked her, 'Please tell me how your cheeks are so radiant?' She replied, 'It is due to the tears you shed.'

So, whatever is there is due to Faith and acting according to it (good deeds).

And that man shall have nothing but what he strives for; And that his striving shall soon be seen; (53:39-40)

If you kept your soul healthy (performed good deeds), you are in the abode of safety (Paradise). On the contrary, if you have sickened yourself, you are in the land of disease (Hell).[28]

Shade of God's kindness over the inmates of Paradise

Some have also said that 'Shade' means honor, that is protection and safety from troubles and pains, just like a shade overhead that saves one from the heat of the sun. Thus whatever protects man from troubles and difficulties is called 'shade'. Hence we pray, "May God not remove His shade from our heads." It indicates that He is protecting them from hardships and the people of paradise and their wives are in safety from pains of all kinds.

According to one narration they (people of paradise) are under the Shade of the Throne of the Beneficent. They are under the shade of God's kindness.

They shall have fruits therein, (36:57)

Another pre-occupation of the people of paradise is enjoying heavenly fruits like apples, pomegranate and fresh dates. But we must know that only similarity is in names. The reality is different and their taste is a hundred thousand fold better.

...and they shall have whatever they desire.

That is whatever they like or desire is readily available to them. Is there any king in this world for whom whatever he wants is at once available? Rather, what is denied to him is more than what is given to him. God brought you in this world. He created the entire universe for you and created you for Himself and for the Hereafter. He created you for eternity, not for perishing. "You have been created for an everlasting life and not for annihilation." Deprived is the one who does not avail of these Divine bounties.

Notes:

[25] Safinatul Bihar, vol.1, pg.383

[26] Safinatul Bihar, vol.2, pg.328

[27] Layaliul Akhbar, pg. 507

[28] ...for it is (the benefit of) what it has earned and upon it (the evil of) what it has wrought...(Surah Baqarah 2:285)

Chapter 20

58-59

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Peace: a word from a Merciful Lord. And get aside today, O guilty ones! (36:58-59)

On that Day which is full of terror, hardships and harshness, the people of paradise are enjoying the bounties and tastefulness. There is no fear for them. Rather, they do not even think of those things

They and their wives shall be in shades, reclining on raised couches.

They and their wives are reclining on royal divine thrones under the divine shade.

They shall have fruits therein...

There are heavenly fruits for the people of paradise. As I have said earlier, the similarity is only in name while their qualities are very different. No one in this world can even imagine the fruit available in paradise as to what kind it would be. It has to be experienced and perceived, it cannot be explained. Whatever the description in this world, the reality is very much different.

...and they shall have whatever they desire.

Whatever they want or desire is easily and immediately available to them.

Allah directly salutes the people of Paradise

Peace: a word from a Merciful Lord. (36:58)

That is Salam to you. Its predicate is 'upon them' but another explanation is that it could be the object of the verb. That is, Salam on the people of paradise from the Merciful Lord.

The apparent meaning of this Holy verse is that the Salam is without any intermediary, directly from the Lord of the worlds. Salam for the Faithful is usually through mediators. At the moment of death, it is through the angel of death and his assistants.

Their salutation on the day that they meet Him shall be, Peace, and He has prepared for them an honourable reward. (33:44)

It is one of the indirect Salams. Then, after the faithful sits on the royal divine throne, twelve thousand angels arrive from the Lord of the worlds saluting him.

The appointees say that the faithful is currently with a Hourie. They seek permission to be present. Today is the day of honor, respect and manifestation of the dignity of the Faithful. The angels arriving from every gate say:

Peace be on you because you were constant, how excellent, is then, the issue of the abode. (13:24)

Greetings from God to you because of the patience you showed in the world. You were forbearing; you fulfilled your duties painstakingly. You remained steadfast facing hardships and calamities. You restrained yourselves in front of luring sins. Paradise is the dwelling place of the patient ones. No one arrives in paradise without showing patience. This residence and rank, which you got, is as a reward of your forbearance in your worldly life. This dwelling place is so very nice. O Faithful! Congratulations to you for achieving this position. You are among the lucky ones. Many congratulations, how nice is this great and high rank. The greatest news is about eternity. It is being intimated that this position will never end and you too are eternal.

In the world, if you possess even the best of mansions and gardens, you have to leave them in the end. Either the possessions go away first or the one who possesses them dies. Just also think about the sorrow, which one has to experience at the time of losing them.

Two big defects in a beautiful palace

It is written in *Tafsir Ruhul Bayan* that: One of the past kings founded a palace with an intention to make it unparalleled. Then, when it was

complete, he invited all sections of people to visit it. He also kept a notebook at the exit so that anyone who observes any defect may note it and then it can be removed.

When he checked the visitor book he saw that all had praised this palace except two, who had criticized it. The king called these two persons.

He asked them what defect they had noted. They replied, "There are two defects in this mansion. But what is the use when there is no remedy?" They also said, "We are afraid, if we mention our observation, the king may become angry." The king said, "No harm. Tell me what you feel."

They said, "The first defect is that this building will finally be destroyed and another is that its owner will depart from it. How can you fall in love with a thing, which is with you only for a little time?"

I want to point out that the house of the hereafter would be so really good and without defects that it would never be taken away from you, nor would it ever be destroyed.

Salam from God—what a great honor for the Faithful

Salamun Alaikum – O Believer! The direct Salam is for you. After those indirect Salams, in the sight of those who are intelligent and who know, is the great heavenly bounty in the form of this direct Salam. The bounties of God on one side and the bounty of a dialogue with Him on the other. God Almighty says direct Salam to His servants. This remembrance by God and that too with congratulations and praise!

If even once you say: O My Lord! I am Your servant

It makes Him happy on the Great Throne.

O handful of dust! God talks to you. Woe unto that fellow who gets lost in the worldly futile things and loses the opportunity of God speaking to him.

Salam is not only a greeting but also a great and important event, especially when it is from a spiritual person, messenger, Imam or angel. Then what to say when it is from God Himself! It is absolute safety and security. It is safety from every kind of pain, trouble or annihilation, from every illness, every weakness. So much so that there will be nothing like slumber, laziness or weariness.

A reward for what they used to do. They shall not hear therein vain or sinful discourse, (56:24-25)

The happiness is also absolute and there will be nothing like aversion, hatred or jealousy. If anybody has an iota of jealousy, his place is in the house of sick in hell so that he may become pure and clean. Thereafter he is admitted to the House of Safety, which is one of the names of paradise.

They shall have the abode of peace with their Lord, and He is their guardian because of what they did. (6:127)

There will be no trouble and illness. What is most important is that there will be no mortality or perishing.

Letter from the Lord to the Faithful servant

Prophet Muhammad ('s) is reported to have said, "After a believer is admitted to paradise, he will receive greeting from God Almighty, which is 'Salam from the Merciful Lord'". In this narration, it is mentioned under the heading of 'Correspondence' that an angel hands over to the believer a letter from the Lord of the Worlds. The letter is then opened and it would read as follows: This letter is from the Everlasting Lord and the Protector of everything and Who never dies. It is addressed to the one who too is alive and will never die. We are the Lord Whose intention is sufficient for attainment of everything. From this day, We have given you a thing whereby whatever you wish will happen within a moment.

Has whatever I said about paradise during the last two or three days evoked any longing in the speaker and the hearer? Have we or have we not become those who yearn for Paradise? You ought to be like that Shia of Ali ('a) who said: Had it not been destined by God, people who are faithful, might have desired that their souls should immediately leave the body and proceed towards the high world to enter the guest house of God.[29]

Are you ready to seek death?

What is meant is not that you should want to die. It is wrong. It is prohibited. Is there any benefit in it? Do you rightly imagine that, at the time of your death, you will be on the right path? May be you will first see hardships and punishments.

A man expressed to the Imam his desire for death. The gist of this narration is that the Holy Imam asked that man, "Have you made prior arrangements? Have you made provision for the journey? Suppose the hour of death has arrived. Have you readied yourself for it?" Rather you should say, 'O God! Give me respite so that I may prepare myself for the journey'"[30] In these Holy nights of Ramadan, I say: O Lord! Forgive me please. Of course this also is an introduction. Where is the real

longing for death so that pressure and trouble may decrease? One may repent.

And if Allah should hasten the evil to men as they desire the hastening on of good, their doom should certainly have been decreed for them... (10:11)

But this appeal to which Ali ('a) refers is with regard to longing for paradise, longing to meet God, consequent to a strong desire for reward and to avoid chastisement. He is also afraid of divine chastisement and fears the separation from God's friend and hence wants that his body should get rid of fear.

But you can see the current situation: People love everything except paradise and divine reward and they fear everything except God's anger and punishment!

It is distressing to go from company to loneliness

See how Fatima ('a) longed to meet God. You have heard that when the Holy Prophet merely informed her: You are the first among my household who will meet me, she became extremely happy. This is the sign of a friend of God.

Say: O you who are Jews, if you think that you are the favorites of Allah to the exclusion of other people, then invoke death If you are truthful. (62:6)

It is written in *Kashkol* of Shaykh Bahai that a man asked Imam Hasan ('a), "Why are we terrified of death?" He replied summarily that it is because you live in an inhabited place and for you the Hereafter is a lonely ruin. The one who has ruined his Hereafter and this world, who has nothing in that world becomes unhappy while leaving this world.

Sinners must get separated in Mahshar

And get aside today, O guilty ones! (36:59)

It means, 'Get away!' It is a destined order and not a matter of choice. In the beginning, a voice will be heard in the Field of Grand Gathering: "Get aside, O Sinners! Today". In the past world there was a veil over your deeds. Nothing was known. No one knew what was in the heart of others because a number of hypocrites had placed themselves among the believers. But today truth is manifest.

On the day when hidden things shall be made manifest, (86:9)

Here there is no scope for false claims. There is nothing except what is right, truthful and actual. The sinners must separate themselves from every side; by their appearance, words, place and time – The sinners must get aside until the forceful voice is heard: Whosoever is sinful, his face is black and whosoever is among the people of paradise, his face is bright. Thus the sinners would be recognized by their faces.

The guilty shall be recognized by their marks... (55:41)

Some of the sinners who were fond of monkeys and pigs will get their faces changed to these forms. Some will have the face of a dog. Some will arrive as ants because they were arrogant. The more one is mean at heart the more proud he is in his attitude. The proud fellow is not known here. How can it be known? Tomorrow in the field of Mahshar he will arrive in the form of a mean little lowly ant. Everyone will be recognized by his appearance that will tell what kind of a man he was in his worldly life. His belly is so bloated that he is unable to move. Everyone will know that he took usury. He was eating fire.

Those who swallow down usury cannot arise except as one whom Shaitan has prostrated by (his) touch does rise. (2:275)

They will not be asked, as they are known

So on that day neither man nor jinni shall be asked about his sin. (55:39)

They will not be asked anything as everything will be apparent in various ways and their own organs will witness as we have seen earlier.

The late Faiz has also quoted a narration in *Ainul Yaqeen*: Every drunkard entering the field of Mahshar will be holding a bottle of wine. Every violinist will be holding his violin, which would be thrashing his head. The Holy Quran also hints at this:

On the day that every soul shall find present what it has done of good and what it has done of evil... (3:30)

Everyone who had done a wrong and a bad deed would desire to distance himself from it; that this cup of wine and this instrument of

gambling should remain at a distance from him but they will not go away. Strange indeed is the situation on the Day of Judgment! Just read any chapter of the Holy Quran. It reminds one of that World of Tomorrow. Rather it makes us frightful.

Recite these supplications of Ali ('a) during the remaining nights of this Holy month: O God! Grant us safety from these frightening conditions of Qiyamat.

One who is guilty would be given the scroll of deeds in ones left hand. Everyone who is to go to paradise will get it in his right hand. This is a kind of differentiating the sinners. Everyone who will raise his head from the grave will say: Alas! Who raised us from our grave? This is a sign of one being guilty. On the other hand would be those who, emerging from the grave say: Thanks to God Who fulfilled His promise and made us the inheritors of land whereby we may live in this paradise. So how nice is the Reward of those who worked for God!

And they shall say: (All) praise is due to Allah, Who has made good to us His promise, and He has made us inherit the land; we may abide in the garden where we please; so goodly is the reward of the workers. (39:74)

Of course, in the world, everyone whose tongue was free, used to say whatever one liked. In hell also, the people of hell are in trouble and harassed by the tongues of one another. So it is mentioned in a narration that the hell dweller, due to feeling of shame, in the dangling of chains, will not even groan because of chastisement.

They will fall on hell fire like bats

You have a fire extinguisher for putting out the fire. In Qiyamat in the front would be the people of hell. They become separated from all. They arrive like that until they are turned away from the Sirat Bridge. The Holy Prophet describes that it is like a moth that leaps directly into the fire. Similarly the sinner criminals will fall in hell fire. Everyone will take his own place. The people of paradise also will take their place in the 'correct seat' (Maqad-e-Sidq).

And you shall see the angels going round about the throne glorifying the praise of their Lord; and judgment shall be given between them with justice, and it shall be said: All praise is due to Allah, the Lord of the worlds. (39:75)

O God! Grant us the Faith whereby we may understand this meaning. We are afraid of the humiliation on the Day of Judgment tomorrow. May we not be dishonored in front of the former and latter nations. O you, who are having self-respect and who like to be honored! Remove negligence from yourselves. Let your hearts not harden. Desires and passions, aspirations and negligence reduce faith, that faith, which makes you reach your place in the Hereafter.

Drag me to fire, perhaps I may wake up

In *Asrarus Salat* of Tabrizi, it is written in the story of the well known scholar Allamah Shaykh Muhammad Mazandarani that when this great man felt that he was being negligent, he used to go out of city into wilderness along with his son and a servant. The Shaykh first asked them, "Is it not necessary for you to obey my orders?" After the two said 'yes' the Shaykh said, "I am collecting fuel wood. You also do so." Then he lit the fire and told the two that they drag him towards the fire saying, "O aged sinner! Imagine that Qiyamat has come up." The scholar used to order them, "Drag me to the fire, that perhaps, the heat may awaken me."

When Ali ('a) fired the furnace of a destitute woman, he drew his face near that fire saying, "O Ali! Taste the heat of this fire. You have no ability to bear the fire of hell." [31]

Remembrance of death cures negligence

Negligence hinders the growth of faith. Faith is weak and negligence is more dangerous. Every one of you should, to the best of his ability, provide means of remembrance and admonition for himself. What come in the way of spiritual progress are the same aspirations and desires. [32] Unless and until you trample upon your desires and passions, how can you develop a longing to meet God?

Ali ('a) says, "Two things which worry me are your pursuit of desires and lengthening of your aspirations." [33] If you can see that death is near, you would slow down.

In the night of Ashura, Husain saw that Zainab was very restless. He employed a remedy for her and it made her quiet. It was the remembrance of death. "My grandfather was better than me. He passed away from this world and so was my father..."

Notes:

[29] Nahjul Balagha

[30] Safinatul Bihar, vol.2, pg.555

- [31] Biharul Anwar, vol. 9
- [32] Dua Abu Hamza Thumali
- [33] Nahjul Balagha

Chapter 21

60-61

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Did I not charge you, O children of Adam! that you should not serve the Shaitan? Surely he is your open enemy, And that you should serve Me; this is the right way. (36:60-61)

Reply to the sinners' objection

After the command to get separated is issued it is said, "O devil worshippers! O passion worshippers! Be apart. Your place is in the pit of hell. Today, honor is only for God worshippers." Of course, those who are guilty become unhappy. They raise an objection that their faults were not pointed out to them in the world but it is said to them, "We had made a covenant with you in the world. We had reminded you that you should not worship Satan."

God's covenant with man is mentioned in three stages: First in the stage at the beginning of creation, secondly relating to Adam the father of entire mankind, and thirdly, which is mentioned above, through the messengers who took promise from people that they would not worship the devil; that they must not follow Satan because "he is your open enemy." We recommended that you must worship Only One God, as the straight path is to worship the Beneficent, not the Satan. Before you, he has misguided many and has destroyed many.

Will you not then understand? Will you not realize how Satan destroyed them? We have concluded arguments for you so that you may not say, "O God! We did not know what are the divine books and where are the covenants with God?"

There are some points in this Holy verse, which demand deep reflection. Firstly, what does worshipping Satan mean? Secondly why is Satan inimical to man? And thirdly, how to protect ourselves from this open enemy?

Satan is one of the limitless creations of God

First, Satan is a creation like all other creations. God's creations are innumerable. We have yet not known even a millionth of that number. They put a drop of water under a microscope and find that there are millions of living organisms moving about in it, which were not visible to the naked eye.

One of the creations of God is Satan. In man, his earth related nature is overpowering and in Satan his fire related nature, which is full of heat. So if they open up our graves some years after our death, they will witness the overpowering nature related to earth and will see that the rest of all natures have perished. Satan has an overwhelming fiery nature, and hence he throws no shadow and is not visible to the physical eye.

The Holy Quran says:

O children of Adam! let not the Shaitan cause you to fall into affliction as he expelled your parents from the garden, pulling off from them both their clothing that he might show them their evil inclinations, he surely sees you, he as well as his host, from whence you cannot see them... (7:27)

The physical eye cannot see a fine and a subtle body. Secondly he, like humans, has reproduction and procreation. It is mentioned in narrations that three satans are born against each human being. It is not known how they copulate and procreate. May be they are a forced creation.

Why is he inimical towards man?

His enmity towards man is merely due to jealousy and pride. For example, whenever Satan rewards generously one of his two slaves without taking anything from the other slave he raises an objection saying, "Why did you give him more? This is ungratefulness (Kufr). It is an objection against the giver and the authority. Such is the jealousy between satanic co-workers. Has anything been decreased from your wealth and given to him?

Satan saw that God has given more benefits to the earthy man, Adam and His progeny. He understood that man can rise to such a position where even angels become his servants; that man has become the best creation. In order to confirm this God commanded that all must bow down before this best creation, viz. man. The jealousy and pride within Satan revolted and he objected to God's command.

I was an angel and the highest Paradise was my residence

Formerly Satan had a very high rank. Rather, it is narrated that he was the teacher of angels. He had a very high rank in the upper world, and

an honorable position. He had many followers. Despite this, jealousy and pride pushed him to eternal misfortune. "I am created of fire, which is higher."

He said: What hindered you so that you did not make obeisance when I commanded you? He said: I am better than he: Thou hast created me of fire, while him Thou didst create of dust. (7:12)

He said, "I should be nearer to you, not Adam who is created of dust." Objection against the divine decision is disbelief. When he announced his denial, came the angry command: Such haughtiness or jealousy in the House of God? Get out of here. You are among the mean and degraded ones.

He said: Then get forth from this (state), for it does not befit you to behave proudly therein. Go forth, therefore, surely you are of the abject ones. (7:13)

Whosoever raises his head in this Court becomes degraded. Everyone who thinks that he is something is one of the most unworthy fellows. What is desired in the House of God is meekness and humility.

You should be so lowly before God that you may not care for anyone other than Only One God. You must never believe in the greatness of anyone except Only One God. Who are you to say: I am noble, knowledgeable, pious of a high rank? Such announcements of I, I, have no real value. The first man in the world of creation, Muhammad ('s) says, "Poverty is my dignity, I am poor and I sit among the poor." It is related from Ali ('a) also that he said, "Neediness before God is my pride. I am needy and I sit with the needy."

In his Dua Arafah, Imam Zainul Aabedeen ('a) submits: I am the tiniest of the tiny. Rather I am smaller than even an atom. Anyone who has any air of greatness or highness is equal to Satan from this aspect.

It was on account of Adam that the wings of Satan burnt down. He was rejected and turned away forever. He had worshipped God for six thousand years in the heaven. His six- thousand-year worship went with the wind due to a single show of pride and jealousy. It is thus known that his enmity against Adam and his progeny is due to anger. Satan will never be your friend. He is your deadly enemy. You must also treat him as your enemy.

Surely the Shaitan is your enemy, so take him for an enemy... (35:6)

Do not follow him. He is a sure enemy of yours. By all means keep a safe distance from him.

These youths queuing up in this hot sun near a cinema house are following Satan. He will never leave you until you are totally destroyed.

The business of Satan is to rob you or destroy your deeds

I want to make it clear what Satan's enmity towards Adam and his progeny means. The aim of his enmity is that, he should try his utmost so that nobody from the progeny of Adam attains nearness of the Lord of the Worlds. If he can, he wants to take away and pull out the root of faith from everyone right from the first day of creation till the Day of Judgment. If it is not possible then he would do something whereby he may weaken one's faith. If he does not succeed in the matter of faith he tries his intrigues to spoil man's deeds. The worship of Satan is to obey him. So, never lend your ear to the voice of Satan and oppose him. Opposing Satan is worshipping God, the Beneficent.

And that you should serve Me; this is the right way. (36:61)

The Divine Law consists of obligatory and optional duties and recommended and detestable acts. To observe these matters is the right path. Satan is he who deviates man from this path, that is, he creates doubts and misgivings etc. He leads you to the prohibited things and/or makes you miss what is obligatory. Compromising with Satan means sin, guilt or crime. Whenever you indulge in a sin, if the curtain is lifted up, you would see that you have prostrated before Satan.

So do not worship the Satan. Satan is your enemy who would love to see you should die faithless. He does not leave you unless and until he fulfils his aim. Here is a story in this connection.

Satan replies to his slave

At the end of the book, *Muntakhabut Tawarikh*, it is quoted from a great scholar of Isfahan that he said: In one of the villages of Isfahan, a man was passing through the last moments of his life. I was called at his bedside. So I went and told him to say, "There is no god except Allah". The bedridden man repeated it. Suddenly came a voice from the left side of that room, "My slave tells the truth." I asked the man to recite "O Allah!" again came the voice, "Here I am, My servant." There was someone who replied to the bedridden person and when I asked, "Who are you?" The

reply was, "This man was my slave all his life. He was serving me. He is my devoted servant." Then he was asked, "Who are you?" "I am Satan," came the reply.

Thus when this man said, "My God", he actually meant the one he had worshipped all his life, that is the Satan. May dust fall on the head of the one who calls his enemy his deity.

What does Quran say:

And when they are cast into a narrow place in it, bound, they shall there call out for destruction. (25:13)

What do you recite in the supplication of dawn in Ramadan? You desire that you should not be yoked by Satan; that you should not obey his suggestions; that you should not worship and obey him. At the time of anger, you are mostly a slave of Satan. Your tongue becomes loose. You speak out indecent things, make false allegations, insult others and reveal secrets etc. Do not hand over your control to Satan. How pitiable! One should never be such that even though he has a Merciful and Kind Lord he turns his face away from Him! And towards whom is he turning? Towards his own enemy! God Almighty, the Messengers, and the Imams tell you: Be inimical to Satan. Oppose Satan. Is it proper that while he is inimical to you, you befriend him? How will you raise your head on the Day of Resurrection? The truth tellers told you: Treat him as an enemy. But, instead of treating him as your enemy, you obeyed his orders!

Weapons to fight the Satan

It is narrated that the last Messenger, Muhammad ('s) said, "Fasting is the weapon of a believer", "Fasting blackens the face of Satan." Such is the spiritual situation. "Charity breaks his (Satan's) back." [34]

If you want to suppress satan completely you should know that friendship in the path of God stifles him. You must love and befriend even your life partner and your children for the sake of God. Love your friend and companion for the sake of God, not for your own personal interests because they are the bounties of Allah. When you die, they will pray for you (on your behalf). They will say: "O Allah" and you will benefit from it. You should likewise, love your husband for the sake of God, as He secured and protected your honor and Faith through him. Similar is the case of man with regard to his wife.

A repenting heart cuts down Satan

O the one who wants to fight this enemy! Which is the other weapon? The Holy Prophet ('s) practically instructs you how to cut the main artery of Satan. Repentance cuts off the main artery of Satan's heart. So powerful is repentance that this weapon brings down Satan.

Who is one among us, who has not obeyed Satan? Probably at the moment of quarrelling, we almost worship Satan through anger against one another. Cutting off relations is also same. So come on. Let us, before its too late, compensate for our past misdeeds. Come and let us listen to our Lord. Let us make a real prostration before God Almighty. An alarm is being sounded for you from the divine throne. You must become a companion of the messengers, the martyrs, the pious ones and the virtuous.

And whoever obeys Allah and the Apostle, these are with those upon whom Allah has bestowed favors from among the prophets and the truthful and the martyrs and the good, and a goodly company are they! (4:69)

O believing lady! You must become a companion of Zahra ('a). O Gentleman! You should become a truly liberated man.

Men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the remembrance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of poor-rate; they fear a day in which the hearts and eyes shall turn about; (24:37)

Notes:

[34] Safinatul Bihar, vol.2, pg. 64

Chapter 22

60-63

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Did I not charge you, O children of Adam! that you should not serve the Shaitan? Surely he is your open enemy, And that you should serve Me; this is the right way. And certainly he led astray numerous people from among you. What! could you not then understand? This is the hell with which you were threatened. (36:60-63)

Meaning, “Did We not command you from Adam till the last Messenger? Did not all the messengers warn you, awakened you, and alerted you that you must never worship Satan who is your open and severe enemy? You should regard him as your enemy. If you befriend and follow him he will lead you to a very bad place. O Children of Adam! Beware and do not follow the paths of Satan. Do not walk on the footsteps of Satan, as he is your deadly foe.”

...and do not follow the footsteps of the Shaitan; surely he is your open enemy. (2:168)

We have already discussed something about the enmity of Iblees (Satan) and now we shall deal with the rest of this subject.

How to avoid the unknown enemy?

If someone asks, “How shall we flee from an unknown and unrecognized enemy?” The reply is, “Take him as a foe.” Well then, let us know some of his signs so that we may oppose him. First, I will give an example and thereafter, the aim will be explained. If a true believer informs you that today an armed gang will invade the town and hence the door of every house, the gate of every shop should be closed, common sense demands that precaution should be taken and all houses and shops must be closed down fast so that they may not be plundered.

Now, the one who is senseless and ignorant says, "This is either imagination or simplicity. Let us first find out whether they are Turk or Lor (from Loristan)? Are they Arab or non-Arab? Have they weapons or not?" What is the use of such questioning? This is stupidity; first of all you must lock up your houses and shops irrespective of whosoever the invaders may turn out to be. By the time you wait for details about their nationality, you will be destroyed.

Whether you know the whereabouts and type of enemy or not, you should get ready and stand up to face the situation so that you may not fall in his trap and be ruined. Is Satan alone or does he have helpers? How does he suggest evil? What is his army like? Now, do you want to be like that fool who had gone to Sho'ba?

Is Satan male or female?

A man went to Sho'ba who was one of the famous scholars of his time, and said, "I have a problem. Please solve it for me." "Sure," said the scholar. The man asked, "Does Satan have a wife?" Sho'ba remembered a verse of the Holy Quran, which establishes Satan's offspring. So he replied, "Satan does have children. It is likely that he marries and has wives also." The fellow further asked, "What is the name of his wife?" The scholar said, "Was I present in his marriage ceremony that I should know it?"

The fact is that you must remain alert in every possible way because he may overpower you. Block his path by worship of Allah:

And that you should serve Me; this is the right way. (36:61)

If you have adopted the path of Faith you rely on God, Satan will have no power on you.

Surely he has no authority over those who believe and rely on their Lord. (16:99)

But if you deviate from God's path, sins will make you fall in the trap of Satan. So beware. His trap means discarding your obligatory deeds and even leaving the traditions of the Holy Prophet ('s). Whatever God and His Messenger dislike is very dear to Satan. Satan hates prayers, Ramadan, fasts, charity, humility and every good deed. Satan also dislikes that there should be reconciliation between two persons who have had a disagreement.

O followers of Quran! Indeed Our Apostle has come to you explaining to you all this, lest you say, "There came not to us a giver of good news or a warner," so indeed there has come to you a giver of good news and a warner; and Allah has power over all things.

The Shaitan only desires to cause enmity and hatred to spring in your midst by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you off from the remembrance of Allah and from prayer. (5:19)

Satan is entirely displeased by every good deed. He orders everything that is prohibited by God and prohibits whatever God commands.

God says, "Spend for the poor in the path of God," and Satan suggests, "You will become old. You will be weak. You may become poor."

Shaitan threatens you with poverty and enjoins you to be niggardly... (2:268)

Then how do people fall in his trap even after recognizing him?

If it is asked, "How can a man knowing his enemy, accept his suggestions?" A Muslim believes and possesses the Quran. He knows that Quran is the Word of God. The Holy Quran says, "Satan sees you and you do not see him", as mentioned earlier.

Then how is he deceived and indulges in sins while he has already known the enemy and also his trap?

The reply is that the Satan's traps are commensurate with desires of the heart. The cause is that Satan has ability to put a cap of his choice on a man's head if man likes it. Whatever the Messenger of God asks for is against the selfish desires.

You see that, for getting a cinema ticket, you line up in hot sun and stand there for long so that you may pass some time as desired by your heart. But, at the time of prayer, the caller from the minaret of the mosque cries: Hasten towards prayer. Masjid is the house of God, so come towards God.

But that place (cinema house) is according to the inclination of heart (one runs to it) despite knowing that it is the abode of Satan. One knows that it will surely end in harm; that there is destruction in it and it is likely that one may have to suffer a lifelong disappointment and weakness thereafter. His eye falls on a woman or a girl. Various kinds of problems and corruptions arise from such senseless entertainments and from gambling and drinking. On the other hand, there is a program of Majlis,

supplications and remembrance of God, which is full of true friendship and amity. They know this and yet follow the heart's passions and despite certainty of destruction.

One prefers death to thirst

It is said that when the Umayyad caliph, Abdul Malik captured Kufa he fell in a big calamity. He developed the terrible illness of 'extreme thirst'. It seemed as if there was fire inside him. The more water he drank, the thirstier he became. The doctor said, "You should not take any water for 24 hours. The problem is serious because if you drink more water, you will die." The caliph was also very afraid. He decided not to take any water for the next 24 hours. But how long could he remain like a camel in waterless desert? So after a few hours he called for water even if it meant death. Thus he drank water and died since he could not bear the thirst.

Man can understand that he will have to suffer for entire life, but since the suggestion of Satan is agreeable to the heart, he follows the devil. Think of any sin. Satan has no ability to force man to indulge in it. Satan only creates doubts and inclination. He only invites and creates hopes of happiness.

But he can never compel man to commit a sin forcibly.

And the Shaitan shall say after the affair is decided: Surely Allah promised you the promise of truth, and I gave you promises, then failed to keep them to you, and I had no authority over you, except that I called you and you obeyed me, therefore do not blame me but blame yourselves... (14:22)

It is man himself who is following the inclinations of his heart. How does man commit a sin despite certainty of destruction? There have been people who having certainty about the Divine punishment did not stop disobeying God.

Let us pray: O Lord! Be Thou my friend and my helper so that I may subjugate my own heart and the Satan.

How to overpower Satan

It is narrated that the Messenger of God said, "Whenever a calamity befalls you, Satan ignites fire into you." Suppose your deceased son was still young, he suggests, "What a pity! Had he been alive he would have become a doctor or an engineer. He would have been a great support for his father." He goes on murmuring thus until you can bear it no more and say something against the divine Will. In this way, Satan wants you

in trouble. Therefore you must at once say, "Indeed we all belong to Allah and to Him we shall return."

Let us be rational. Who in this world has remained forever, that your son should? All are dying, one earlier and another later. So, oppose the satanic suggestions soonest otherwise many people have become lunatic due to such losses. (Impatient) people fall in mental illness and become psychiatric cases.

Secondly the Prophet says that if someone has ill-treated you and Satan instigates you saying: See, what he has done to you. He insulted you. Why do you not retaliate? Why are you silent? You must say: I myself have done worse than this to others. Do not always look at the wrongs committed by others on you.

Thirdly whenever you lose money; for instance a thief stole it and you suffered. If Satan makes you restless you must say: I thank God, Who lifted a burden from me. My responsibility has decreased.

More wealth means more responsibilities. If a rich man does not give Khums (even to the extent to one dirham) he has usurped the property of the orphans of Aale Muhammad ('s). Yes, those who do not pay Khums are worthy of curse. Or, for example, your relatives or kinsmen are in trouble or your neighbor is in distress and you are able to help them but you don't. Then you will be held responsible. But if your wealth is lost you will not be responsible any more.

Moreover, reply the Satan saying, "O devil! I myself have to go to the grave. What if I have lost my house? It was not my personal property. It was like a rented house. My life is but a short one." You must definitely fight the Satan when he makes wrong suggestions to you. Otherwise, he worsens the mental condition of people.

In Shiraz, there was a businessman who became bankrupt. He took to a corner of his house and sold out whatever he had and began to spend. One day, sitting his house, he calculated, "If I sell a thing today, how long can I subsist on its income?" He realized that it would be for three years. He slapped his forehead and said, "What would I do after three years? Would I sit on the road begging?" So he committed suicide by consuming poison. Thus Satan makes man submissive. Are you sure to live for another three years? Even if you do, your sustenance is with God. How many ups and downs will there be during this period? Thus Satan does not leave man until he becomes a denier or an ungrateful disbeliever. Such troubles befall everyone. We must accept the admonition of the Holy Prophet and Satan must be opposed in a proper way and he should never be followed or obeyed.

The Holy Prophet ('s) says that after every act of charity the Satan says, "You have lost your money. You are at loss. There are many wealthy persons having more than you but they do not spend on charities." Say to yourself at once, "What I spent is less than what I have," and look at those who gave away all their wealth.

Whenever you worship or pray he (devil) wants that you should feel proud of it. Say at once, "My sins are more than my good deeds." Whenever you recite Ziyarat of Ashura, he (Satan) wants that you should be proud. You must at once remember how many prohibited things have been spoken by this mouth; like lies, backbiting, false allegations, slander, insults....

Are these things not against the commands of the Holy Quran? Sometimes it so happens that Satan defrauds people in such a way that one is unable to understand until it is too late and then there is disbelief. So it is absolutely essential that we should seek refuge of God Almighty. Here is a tradition, which is both a story and a sure way to show Satan's deceit and the Kindness and Grace of God.

Worshipper deceived by false piety

It is mentioned in the fourteenth volume of *Biharul Anwar*: In Bani Israel, there was a worshipper always busy in prayers. Day and night, he used to remain engaged in prayers, fasts and late-night vigils. Satan did his best to decrease the worshipper's faith but failed. So he called out and a number of little satans gathered around him and asked, "What happened?" The Satan replied, "This worshipper has made me helpless. I have tried very much to deviate him from God worship but he has remained unshakable." One of the small devils got up and said, "I am prepared to deviate him by lust." The big Satan said, "You are mistaken, he is not a man of that type." Another one said, "I may deceive him by wealth." The Satan said, "You are also mistaken." Yet another small Satan said, "I will deceive him by piety." The big Satan said, "Yes, if there is any way, this is the one." Thereafter, he will be drawn towards allowed things, then towards the prohibited and finally he will be dragged into disbelief. Yes, you will be able to deal with him successfully."

So the Satan arrived, spread his prayer mat and began to worship by the side of that worshipper. He remained engaged in prayers without eating, drinking or sleeping for days at length. The worshipper was astonished and he expressed his desire to speak to him but the devil signaled, "Please do not disturb me."

The worshipper made repeated requests to speak to him and finally the devil said, "All right, what do you want?" The worshipper asked, "How could you attain this rank? You are engaged in worship without food or sleep. Don't you get tired?"

The Satan said, "First I sinned and then made such a repentance, that it made me much stronger in worshipping." "Please teach this unlucky fellow also," requested the worshipper. Satan told him, "Take these three dirhams, go to the town and enter such and such street and step in such and such house. Give this money to the prostitute living therein and sleep with her. Then make repentance and you will also achieve proximity to God as I have."

The silly worshipper lacking in knowledge could not understand that sinning can never bring one near to God. He was neither a scholar himself nor did he approach one to seek knowledge.

He came down from his hilltop, went to the town and sought directions to the prostitute's house. People wondered what business a worshipper had with a prostitute. However they justified that maybe he wants to reform her and make her repent.

The worshipper went to the woman's door who also wondered why a famous worshipper had come to her!

It seems this woman had Faith, because she asked, "What has brought you here? This is not a place for you!" The worshipper said, "It is none of your business. Take this money and do your job." The woman said, "No. You must tell me what the matter is?" At last when the woman insisted too much, the worshipper told her everything. He said, "A man worshipping more rigorously than me has guided me to visit you." The woman said, "O worshipper! Don't you know that avoiding a sin is better than committing it and then repenting over it? Is it proper to tear and then mend or it is better not to tear at all? How did you know that after committing this sin you would be able to repent and succeed? Suppose you succeed in making repentance, how do you know God would accept your repentance? How will you regain your honor and rank? That fellow was a Satan who wants to spoil your fortune and degrade your position."

The worshipper did not believe her till she said, "I am here. You go back and see if that man is still there. If you find he is still there, you may return and I would be ready for you."

By the way, whenever Satan is disgraced, he runs away immediately. When the worshipper came to his synagogue, the impostor was nowhere to be found.

God is kind to those who show kindness to others

The rest of this story is also interesting. That night was the last one in that woman's life for she died the next morning. The messenger of that time got revelation from God: You should attend the funeral of that woman. When the Prophet was astonished, came the voice from unseen: We have forgiven her because she retrieved one of My misguided servants. She did not allow My servant to commit a sin.

This lady was kind to the worshipper and she saw that if he commits a sin he would be doomed. God is the Kindest of all those who are kind. He showed kindness to that lady and pardoned her. God wants that His servants should come to His house and keep away from Satan.

So, as far as possible, make reconciliation between the creation and the Creator. Let not Satan assume power. God will be kind to you and to them also.

Satan's advises Nuh

A narration in *Khisal* of Sadooq says: After Prophet Nuh ('a) cursed and the entire community, except those who had put faith in him, were drowned, Satan came to him and said, "O Nuh! You have done a great service to us. You have reduced our workload and sent them all to hell. In return of this I intend to give you some advice."

Nuh ('a) initially drove him away but a voice from unseen urged, "Just see what he says. His word is true," that is, now he does not have any adverse aim to delude you.

So Nuh said, "All right what do you want to say?" The Satan said, "There are three instances when I don't leave a man until he commits a sin. One is staying with an alien woman in privacy." For example in a house or a closed room where none else can enter. Unless they are husband and wife they should never be alone like this, because the third of them is Satan who does not leave them until they succumb to temptation.

"Secondly in the condition of anger, which is very much liked by us. Third is in adjudicating or giving a decision." If the judge inclines towards one of the parties in dispute, he is ruined. In Islamic judiciary, utmost effort must be made to remain just.

Impartiality with contending parties

It is mentioned in the events of Amirul Mo-mineen ('a) that, in the time of Umar Ibne Khattab, a man went to court against Ali ('a). It was decided to approach Umar, the judge. Then Amirul Mo-mineen, along with the complainant, went to Umar. Umar called up the name of the complainant. For example he said: O Zaid! Please sit. But addressing Ali,

he said: O Abal Hasan! Imam Ali ('a) looked rather harshly at Umar who asked, "What happened?" Imam Ali said, "Why did you discriminate between us? You gave more respect to me by addressing me by my title, whereas you addressed him by name. You should have addressed both either by their names or by their titles." In a court case, it is not permissible for the Judge to give preference to one of the disputing parties. Likewise in greeting he should get up for both or for neither.

Women demanding rights have objected saying why they are deprived of the position of a judge when they have taken so much trouble, studied deeply and know all about the law?

Now in Islamic law, it is not allowed for a woman to be a judge. This is so because the woman is full of emotions and sentiments. Her perceptions are in beautification and making herself attractive.

What! that which is made in ornaments... (43:18)

A woman is not qualified to be a judge as it is impossible for her to judge a matter without involving her emotions.

Similarly rulership and Wilayat (authoritative sanctity) is also prohibited for woman as she cannot do full justice to the position.

Our jurisprudence is needless. We do not need to take orders from either east or west.

Understand the job of Satan

If someone asks, "Since I have not seen, nor do I see Satan, then how shall I not be deceived by him? How will I not follow him?" It is true that you don't see him, but surely you can understand his technique. You know that creating doubts and making inner suggestions is the main job of Iblees. When he wants to mislead he drops a suggestion in the man's heart in the words of others also, like for example, an improper friend. Come, we may go to such and such place and see how people opposed to Islamic revolution engage in idle talks of irreligiousness and communism. Let us observe the working of Satan. He either suggests himself or through the tongue of others.

How will you know that it is a Satanic suggestion? Well whatever is against Shariat is prohibited and who is it that orders against the commandment of God? Only Satan. So, in such circumstances, you must always remain alert. Some say, "If Satan is an enemy of man, then how does man obey him?"

Satan's instigation is accompanied by heart's inclination

Yes, this enemy has his traps. Passions and desires of heart are the traps of Satan. The heart is pleased with all that is prohibited by God. So the devil also inspires from there.

Here there is another test to understand this problem. Is this thought satanic or not? Just see if it is pleasing to your heart?

One of the shorter sayings of Ali ('a), in *Nahjul Balaghasays*: Paradise is surrounded by good and generous deeds and hell is surrounded by passions.

According to a narration, after the creation of Paradise Jibraeel asked, "O Lord! Who that would not come to this great house?" A voice said, "Look at the path that leads to it." He saw that there were pits, thorns, straws and ghouls and so on. That is, how many deprivations one must bear? One must control hunger for fifteen hours and control the tongue also. In short nights it is nice to sleep and very difficult to wake up early and yet one must pray the dawn prayer. Such is the path leading to Paradise. Money must be given less importance. A fifth of the profits must be spent in God's path. Jibraeel said, "If this is the path to Paradise then indeed there would be few buyers." It demands courage and requires self-control.

Likewise when hell was created, Jibraeel asked, "O God! Who is it that would willingly step towards this terrible torture?" Again came the voice, "Look at the paths leading to it." He saw that the ways were smooth and according to the desires of the heart. Its forms are gambling and adultery, overeating and all the things palatable to the heart, attractive and deceiving...Jibraeel said, "O God! Many would opt for this."

By God! Hell is so fearsome that it should not be exchanged with worldly pleasures. Think of the hour, which separate man from all relations, think of the grave, Barzakh and Resurrection. What more should I say!

Even if a single flame is reduced

Lessening of harm from any angle is always better. If fire burns one's hand but the legs are saved, it is better than getting the whole body burnt. Or if the body is burnt but the head is spared, it is better again. Even if only one flame is turned away, it would be a lot better. A degree of heat makes a lot of difference. The lesser the sins the better it would be. In the Dua of Imam Zainul Aabedeen ('a) you recite: O My Lord! I am making a condition with You. You also make a condition with me. Clear me of my past. From today, I will not turn towards any sin. I will not proceed on the path of hell. I will not turn away my face from the Beneficent. My Lord! I make this condition but the fulfillment of this covenant

is not possible unless You help me. My heart wants to fulfill my covenant. But what to do, I am powerless. I have made a pledge but please kindly help me. Please save me.

Someone asked the Imam, "If a believer makes a pledge not to sin but thereafter breaks that vow, what should he do?"

Imam said, "He must return and repent again."

"What if he repeats the breach?"

Imam said, "He should return again."

The questioner wondered and asked, "Sir, how many times such repentance is allowed after sinning?"

The Imam replied, "Even if one has broken Tawbah a hundred times he should again come with a true heart for repenting. God does forgive."

The questioner asked, "Will such attitude not decrease God's mercy?"

Imam replied, "It is wrong to think in this way. You must always have a good opinion about God. Come back, even if you have broken the Tawbah." [35]

Man, by nature is prepared and inclined for God-worship. The slave is obedient and humility is his instinct but he is on a crossroad. He will be the slave or servant of either the Beneficent or of Satan. He has no third option. He cannot say, "I will obey neither God nor devil." He has to choose between this world and the Hereafter. He will obey either his desires (Satan's suggestions) or God's Commandments. He would be either near God or near Satan.

Considering death near, is a sign of coming under God's guardianship

There is a narration in *Wafi* about one of the sermons of the Holy Prophet. In a sermon of either Friday or Eid, the Holy Prophet ('s) said, "O People! When someone goes in the guardianship of Satan, he forgets his death. Then he can see only his aspirations and desires. But if one enters the guardianship of the Beneficent Lord and of the Aale Muhammad ('a) his eyes are constantly on his death and he pushes back his aspirations and desires."

Such a person says, "Perhaps this is the last month of Ramadan in my life." He sees his death near.

In short it is to be either with God or Satan. Either you are connected to God related things or with Satan related things. There is no third way. If you did not prostrate before God, if you did not lower yourself before God then you have bowed before others than God, be that money, passion, power or fame. Everyone who is not a servant of God is a servant of

his desires and passions. It is mentioned in prophecies for the people of the last period of time that their women are their qibla (to bow to).

While God's path is:

And that you should serve Me; this is the right way. (36:61)

It comprises of performing obligatory acts and giving up the prohibited things. Satan's way is opposed to it. It consists of giving up commanded deeds and indulging in the unlawful. One has to be either obedient to God or obedient to Satan. Either one is worshipping or sinning. When you worship you are the servants of Allah and when you are sinning you are slaves of Satan. If you arrive in masjid early for Maghrib prayers, you are God's servant. If you turn your face towards the cinema house, you have obeyed the Satan. One of the Satan's sirens attracts his followers. What is his whistle or siren?

And beguile whomsoever of them you can with your voice... (17:64)

They are the sensual and obscene pictures displayed at the cinema houses, which attract the followers of the devil into the theatre.

Bigger ropes of Satan for Shaykh Ansari

It is mentioned in the events of Shaykh Ansari that once a student-scholar participating in discussions with him said, "I have seen a dream about you but I feel ashamed of relating it." The Shaykh said, "Do relate it." He said, "Last night I saw the Satan in my dream, carrying different kinds of thin and thick ropes. I asked him, 'For whom is the thick rope?' He replied, 'It is for your teacher, Shaykh Ansari. He requires much strength to pull him. Yesterday, I had applied much force to drag him to the bazar but he broke my ropes and ran away.' Now I do not know whether this dream has any truth in it or it is merely a disturbed vision (jumble of dreams)?"

The Shaykh smiled and said, "The cursed one has told the truth. Yesterday, some lady guests had been to my house. It was suggested to me that I should purchase some fruits for the guests while I did not have enough money for this purpose. Since I had a copy of Quran, I thought I would take it to the bazar and pawn it with the fruit seller in exchange of fruits so that I can take it later when I have the money. But when I approached the shop a thought came to me, "If you die, O Murtaza! How will you repay your debt?" So I retreated immediately and that was the breaking of that thick rope."

More noteworthy is the last part of this dream. That respected scholar says, "When I asked the devil, 'Where is my rope?' He just looked at me and replied, 'You do not require any rope.'"

On my word! You have no strength to restrain yourself if you see a picture at the cinema house or just hear a melodious song.

In the cinema hall, there is a gathering of beasts—What do you get from that gathering? But if you enter a masjid, with the total intention of remembering God and Aale Muhammad ('a) how many bounties you take from there? Pleasure of the heart is in Allah's remembrance. So sit for a while with those who have hearts so that you may understand the meaning of true happiness. If possible, right from the hour you wake up in the morning till you go to sleep at night, remain only on the path of God.

Tranquility and peace in the servant of God, restlessness in the path of Satan

But who is there such that he never deviates from the straight path of God worship and always runs away from Satan, the devil who is forever the internal enemy of every soul? The way of Satan is full of excitement and apprehension. Contrary to it, the path of God is all peace and security.

From the morning, look at the people in markets and offices. They are running after money and position with much anxiety, fear and restlessness. You do not find anyone who is contented; who is happy with what God has provided; who is not greedy, who considers God as the provider of sustenance. They all rely on themselves and suffer restlessness. Visit the hospitals to understand this trouble better. This restlessness is from Satan. You left the path of God worship and thus fell in restlessness.

You must be a servant and slave of Only One God in every condition. When you fall ill, it is God Who cures. If your relative passes away, it was God's will. It is He Who gives life and causes death. Objecting to God's will is against God worship. One Who had given life has now taken it back.

In every circumstance, you should rely only on God. Know that God is with you. It is only God Who solves difficult problems. When you go out of your house you must utter God's name and rely only on His decision. Whatever God wishes and whatever God did (must be accepted). This peace is the result of adopting God's path. If you listen to the evil suggestions of the devil you will fall on the way of Satan. Do not remain alone in the house because when you remain alone, the suggestions of

Satan will not leave you. Satan is always behind you. Excessive company of women results in immorality, therefore:

Men must guard women from slipping

Woman, due to her inclination to beauty and embellishments is mostly preoccupied with these matters, but man should reform her and makes her an obedient servant of God like he himself is. So fetch her out from the slavery of her self and of the Satan.

It is narrated that God praises a man who wakes up for night prayers and also wakens his wife for the same; that is to face and bow down before God.

In brief, to remain firm on God worship is very difficult. It is indeed hard not to fall in the trap of Satan day and night because the traps of Satan are very luring, hence the need of help from God.

Seek help from Prayer to repel Satan

The Holy Quran says:

Seek help from Prayer and fasting. (2:45)

God is kind to us even though we are made of dust. He has ordered that we must turn our face towards Him five times a day, to obtain the strength to evade the Satan. We must gain power from the presence of the Lord of the Worlds. We must offer Prayers so that our restlessness may decrease.

All are unlucky except those who pray. All have complaints and fears. They do not have enough power or strength to control themselves. They fall in greed due to fear of poverty. In how many prohibited things they indulge while saying: We worship only You and we seek help only from You. In every Prayer, we recite again and again: O My God! You be my helper and friend in every difficulty. If you offer two units of Prayer in every hardship, it becomes easy for you to bear it.

A nomadic woman and patience in calamity

In the book, *Mustatarf*, there is a story of a nomadic woman. A caravan of Hajj pilgrims arrived at her tent in the desert for taking some rest. So they sought permission and then entered her tent. The woman said, "O visitors to the House of God! You are welcome. My camels have gone to graze. I will host you when they return."

The woman left the tent but after some time shepherds arrived weeping and crying and told her that when her camels approached a well they became rowdy and pushed her son into the well. "Since that well is very deep there is no hope of your child's survival," they added.

The lady rushed to them and said, "We have guests. Please do not speak loudly, otherwise they will become sad. Attending nicely to guests is a must for Muslims." At once she ordered that a sheep be slaughtered to prepare food for the guests.

When the lady came to the guests they said, "We are extremely sorry that such a tragedy took place and we interrupted you at such moment." The lady replied, "Respected pilgrims! I never wanted that you should know this and be sorry for it. But now, that you have already known, allow me to offer two units of Prayer, because God says in Quran: Seek help through Prayer. So I must also, to gain patience, at this moment of calamity, offer Prayer." You see how the nomadic woman acted according to one verse of the Quran about Prayer.

Then the lady asked the pilgrims, "Who among you can recite the Quran?" One of them began to recite verses relating to forbearance. The lady said, "O God! If anyone in this world should have lived forever he would have been the Prophet ('s). My Lord! You have, in Your Quran, asked us to be patient and have promised us a good reward for doing so. I am being patient at this moment of losing my son. You also make him a partner in this reward. Please forgive my son."

Then she engaged herself in her routine work as if nothing had happened. This is the power of remembering God.

Inspire your children to offer Prayer

O the one who breaks down at every difficulty! You are catching fire. You begin to cry and shout. When someone harms you, what do you do? You have no ability to control yourself.

Surely man is created of a hasty temperament; being greatly grieved when evil afflicts him, and miserly when good befalls him, except those who pray, (70:19-22)

You are so weak that you cannot spend out of what God has given you. As you have no power, you fear that it will decrease. How disabled you are! Come, offer Prayer so as to get power and strength.

Come and make all efforts to make your children offer Prayer. Encourage your daughter from the age of seven and your son from twelve years. Inspire them. Do this, so that by the time they become responsible and answerable, they may themselves become regular in Prayer. If you show slackness in this matter, it will not be certain that, even after becoming major they would pray regularly. You must gradually explain to them the religious duties.

Notes:

[35] Usoole Kafi, Chapter: Taubah

Chapter 23

61-62

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

And that you should serve Me; this is the right way. And certainly he led astray numerous people from among you. What! could you not then understand? (36:61-62)

True path is the worship of one God

The Straight Path is that for which we, at least ten times daily, pray: O God! Guide us on the Straight Path. The path, which is the shortest way to the neighborhood of Muhammad ('s), not the bye lanes which are curved and deviating, so that we may not stray from our true aim. The road is so much deviated that it does not lead to paradise and even if it does it will be only after suffering and suspension for thousands of years in Barzakh and Qiyamat.

What is the Right Path? God Himself says:

And that you should serve Me; this is the right way.

It is the worship of Only One God (Monotheism), without in any way, worshipping the Satan or passions. Thus this is the Right Path.

Of course there is an important point in Monotheism. It is that one should be a God worshipper from every angle and in every aspect. It must never be sometimes God-worship and sometime devil-worship (worshipping anyone except God). Today in the Holy month of Ramadan we worship God, but tomorrow we tread the path of Satan. It shouldn't be that when you are negligent in Prayer, you follow the advice of Satan and fall out of the Right Path.

And most surely those who do not believe in the hereafter are deviating from the way. (23:74)

When you indulge in sin you have left the Path of God and proceeded on the way of Satan.

Pretence and conceit is falling away from path of worship

Of course this Path is a spiritual thing, which cannot be touched or felt physically. O the fasting believers! O the praying ones! If, God forbid, there is no purity of intention there is no monotheism. You would be a polytheist and a hypocrite. It has nothing to do with God. Or if there is one who is conceited and who imagines that he has done an extraordinary thing; for example, he is irked at some delay in food being served. You should know that it is nothing. There is no obligation. It is God Who grants and accepts. What are you and I? He gives a great reward of such little deeds. Who are we? How can our deeds become noteworthy? It is like "getting the locust's leg for king Solomon" Multiply it a million times!

So the Right Path is the worship of Only One God. It is giving up of sins and fulfilling obligatory matters.

Then, putting emphasis, He says:

And certainly he led astray numerous people from among you. What! could you not then understand? (36:62)

Man is endowed with intellect to benefit from admonition and to be warned. Animals have no intelligence and hence no duty is enjoined on them. It is man who must take a lesson. Thus Allah says how many people are there who are misled by Satan and destroyed by the devil. Have you no sense to understand this?

Qaroon is swallowed by the earth

It is very strange; nowadays everyone is running after money and they think that honor lies in wealth. O wealth worshippers! O you who are running on the path of Satan! Qaroon was richer than you all. No richness can ever reach the level of Qaroon. By the knowledge of Alchemy, which he got from Prophet Moses ('a), he gathered so much gold and silver that, in the words of the Holy Quran: He became so wealthy that a number of porters carried the keys of his treasures with difficulty.

Surely Qaroon was of the people of Musa, but he rebelled against them, and We had given him of the treasures, so much so that his hoards of wealth would certainly weigh down a company of men possessed of great strength. (28:76)

When the keys of his treasures were so heavy, what would have been the extent of his riches!

O rich gentlemen! However wealthy you may be, you cannot reach the level of Qaroon, but look at his end. According to a narration, first his wealth sank in the ground before his eyes and thereafter he himself also sank.

Thus We made the earth to swallow up him and his abode... (28:81)

How many millionaires have you seen in your life? What happened to their riches amounting to billions when they died? The wealthy fellow went away empty handed. Take lesson. Also look at the grave of that unlucky fellow who gathered money through usury.

O young man! Your eye fell on a strange woman and you were attracted. Just see where the followers of lust reached and what happened to them? How they fell in the traps of Satan?

A wise man should always beware of the satanic traps. O learned gentleman and O ignorant student! Look and deliberate what calamity befell such people.

...so his parable is as the parable of the dog; if you attack him he lolls out his tongue; and if you leave him alone he lolls out his tongue; this is the parable of the people who reject Our communications; therefore relate the narrative that they may reflect. (7:176)

Will you not take a lesson? Will you not be warned?

Adulteration brought calamity on the perfumer

The author of *Muntakhabut Tawarikh* writes that, in Kerbala, there was a perfumer who was famous for his piety and fear of God. When he fell ill and his illness prolonged, a friend went to see him and found that nothing remained in his house and everything was sold out. A straw mat, which used to remain under his feet, was now serving as his pillow. The businessman had come down in such a condition. Meanwhile his son came and said, "O father! Today we have no money to purchase your medicines." The sick man removed the mat from under his head and, giving it to his son, said, "Sell this also and let us see whether I recover or not."

The visitor asked, "What is all this?" The sick man replied, "In Kerbala, I was an agent of a limejuice company of Shiraz. I was

importing limejuice and selling it profitably. Once, Kerbala was caught in a widespread typhoid fever and doctors announced that lemon water was the best remedy for it. On the first day, I did nothing. On the second, I told myself, 'Why should I sell limejuice so cheap when there are so many buyers?' So I doubled and then multiplied its price and the people were forced to purchase it.

Seeing the shortage of limejuice I thought that all the stocks would be sold out even at that high price. So I added water to it and also prepared artificial limejuice. In this way, I gathered a lot of money, but after some-time, thereafter, I fell ill and became bedridden. For my treatment, I had to spend all I had earned from limejuice business. You can see that now the only straw mat I had, is also gone. Let us see if I can recover from my illness after this."

...most surely there is a lesson in this for those who have sight. (24:44)

It is not that this is only by way of punishment. Sometimes a slight punishment is given so that others may take lesson; otherwise the real chastisement is after death. Just think how many are destroyed in the path of passions? O dear youth! You should control your eyes right from the start.

Say to the believing men that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts; that is purer for them; surely Allah is Aware of what they do. (24:30)

If you look at an unrelated woman, you have fallen on the path of Satan. Then if you continue to gaze and fall in lust, where will you reach? In the beginning, it may appear light, but thereafter it will become very heavy.

First of all, why do you look there? In case it is by chance, then why do you continue to stare?

Look at the events being reported in daily newspapers. This is the result of following Satan in this world.

On that day We will set a seal upon their mouths, and their hands shall speak to Us, and their feet shall bear witness of what they earned. (36:65)

Habits are carried to the grave and Qiyamat. The verse says that today is the day when We will close the mouths and their hands will talk to Us and their legs will testify what they had done.

Let me tell you a word of wisdom: Whatever habit a man forms in this world it remains with him forever. It means that he is like that in grave or Barzakh and also in Qiyamat (Hereafter). The habit does not leave him. If one were habituated to foul language, one would always remain foul mouthed. When his eyes fall on the angel of death in his last moment, he will use bad language with him also and he would even abuse the angels. He would also be like that in the hell tomorrow.

If you have the habit of saying Bismillah before starting anything, tomorrow on the Day of Judgment, when your Scroll of Deeds is presented to you, you will say Bismillah, as was your habit in the world, and all your sins would be erased. You will ask, "What happened?" A voice will say, "O My servant! You called me by the Name of Beneficent and Merciful; so We also dealt with you mercifully." This is mentioned in a tradition also.[36]

Mouths of the claimants will be closed, their organs will testify

So if one's nature had been to refute the Truth, which was merely a claim, this habit will also not leave him. Here (in the Hereafter) also he will say, "I am telling the truth and I am pious", a hollow claim it would be. Or, for example, he owed something to somebody but never intended to return it so he would deny it flatly.

A liar will similarly take that habit to Barzakh and Qiyamat. When his Scroll of Deeds is given to him he at once says, "There is some mistake, when did I commit this sin?" Therefore, God had solved the problem beforehand; He seals the lying tongues. It is not so with a believer who himself would confess everything. He does not require the sealing of his tongue. He himself submits and bows his head. Woe unto the blatant liars and that too before the Almighty Lord!

Allah says, "Today, We seal the mouths. No one can refute the truth." Hands and feet are mentioned by way of examples; all the organs will testify what had been done using them. This is mentioned in several places in the Holy Quran.

And they shall say to their skins: Why have you borne witness against us? They shall say: Allah Who makes everything speak has made us speak, and He created you at first, and to Him you shall be brought back. (41:21)

When the parts of his body and his organs testify, what will the poor fellow do? Some have said that this witnessing will be for manifesting the sins. But how will it be done? Only He knows better. The sinners will ask their organs, "How are you able to speak and testify against us?" They will say, "We do not have any authority of our own. God made us speak."

Fortunate is one who turns towards God here in this world himself before he is made to stand before his Lord in His Supreme Court. The fortunate one becomes humble and lowly before his Lord and confesses about his sins. He himself says, "O Lord! I was a bad servant." He begs for pardon and makes no excuses. So now is the time that the eyes should shed tears, the tongue must seek pardon, for it will not remain in your mouth. The breathing will also not remain forever with you. You must repent just now, before your tongue is not able to say anything.

Voluntary surrender or forced arrest

If a runaway slave comes back himself, puts down his head at the feet of his master and seeks pardon, what will his master do? What about the other slave who is caught by the master and brought back in chains? He deserves to be punished. What will the Lord do with him? All these are divine affairs.

Doors of the House of God are always wide open. But sometimes respite is given. Except in this Holy month (of Ramadan), there are some conditions. He must come with a pious intention and sincerity. But in this Holy month, conditions are less. All are welcome. Appreciate the value of this month, which is about to end. This is the month of pardon. Though forgiveness of God is ever available, in this Holy month, this great guesthouse is open for everyone, whosoever one may be; even if one is liable to punishment (not fit for forgiveness). Yet, due to the holiness of Ramadan, everyone is welcome. Those worthy of hellfire are also forgiven, as mentioned in the Prophet's sermon of Shabania.

Notes:

[36] Tafsir Minhajus Sadiqeen

Chapter 24

63-65

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

This is the hell with which you were threatened. Enter into it this day because you disbelieved. On that day We will set a seal upon their mouths, and their hands shall speak to Us, and their feet shall bear witness of what they earned. (36:63-65)

God took covenant from the prophets about worshipping Only One God

Did I not charge you, O children of Adam! that you should not serve the Shaitan?

Meaning, O people! Did I not take promise from you that you will not worship Satan?

By this is meant either the ethereal world or it is an oath taken through knowledge and nature. Or it may mean the covenant obtained by God from the prophets and divine books, particularly through the Holy Quran and the last Prophet Muhammad ('s). Anyone who accepts Quran must know that monotheism or worship of Only One God is the foremost condition.

Muslim is one who has vowed that he will worship Only One God; that he will not worship the desires of his heart or the Satan. He will not obey but the commands of Only One God.

This is the Straight Path, which means monotheism, the worship of none or nothing but Only One God.

And certainly he led astray numerous people from among you.

This is mentioned so that the hearer may hate Satan worship. God says, "By all means and in every way, Satan has misguided many people

before you. So will you not take lesson?" Will you not think over it? Will you not look in front of you and observe how many people are led astray by the devil? Remember the fate of the people of Aad, Thamood, Lut, Pharaoh and Nuh.

How many people are there about whom everyone knows that they fell in Satan's trap and died faithless; who spent their life in sins following their desires and passions and became losers both in this world and in the Hereafter. Instead of making life long efforts to gather wealth only to leave it behind and then feel ashamed, O man! You should spend your life in worshipping God and in earning virtues and making good use of wealth. O intelligent man! Take lesson.

This is the hell with which you were threatened.

This is the same hell about which you were warned.

A hundred thousand ropes of hell in the hands of a hundred thousand angels

According to a narration related from Imam Sadiq ('a) hell has a hundred thousand ropes and that every rope is in the hands of a hundred thousand angels.[37] One hundred thousand angels are pulling hell towards the field of Grand gathering. What a frightening scene! The furious flames leaping out of hell are like mountains. The sight would makes everyone fall on their knees.

And you shall see every nation kneeling down... (45:28)

So much so that all except Prophet Muhammad ('s) will worry about their own selves. As mentioned in some narrations and in other verses of the Holy Quran, good tidings are given to some who will be protected from this terror.

Whoever brings good, he shall have better than it; and they shall be secure from terror on the day. (27:89)

Wilayat of Aale Muhammad is protection from the terror of Qiyamat

One who has accepted the guidance and friendship of Aale Muhammad ('s), if he had earned safety in his lifetime, if he had lived in the governance of his Master; he is now in safety and protection. An announcer would announce, "This is the hell of which you were warned. You were told to be afraid of it. Now you have reached here."

Enter into it this day because you disbelieved.

Here 'enter it' means go inside it or it may also denote 'taste it' – enter or taste the chastisement of God's anger because you were a denier.

Some scholars have mentioned a point about the word 'enter', which has occurred many times in Quran. There is a difference between the Arabic 'Islawhaa' and 'Udkhuloohaa'. It is generally understood that 'Islawhaa' means entering for good, that is, there will be no exit.

Going into hell is of two kinds. One is such that there is a way for exit after remaining in it for a time. 'Islawhaa' means stick in hell from where there is no exit. For all who die in a state of denial it is 'Islawhaa' – They do not stick permanently (without an exit) who did not give a lie to God turning their backs to Him. Those others, who were not disbelievers, will be released from hell one day.

A sinner believer will get salvation at last

However those who are not deniers and who did not give a lie to God and His Prophet but who had also done wrong deeds, about them Imam Ali bin Moosa Reza ('a) is reported to have said[38] that they will go to hell but will not remain therein forever. They will come out, at last, by intercession. God is able, due to His Kindness and Mercy to take us up with Faith from this world.

Thus the verse implies that you dwell in the fire from which there is no exit because of your denial.

On that day We will set a seal upon their mouths, and their hands shall speak to Us, and their feet shall bear witness of what they earned.

Today that is the Great Resurrection, O deniers! We seal your mouths and now your hands and feet will testify what you have done using them in the worldly life.

Tongues of the liars will be sealed, not of the confessors

In this Holy verses there is a point relating to: We will seal their mouths. Imam Reza ('a) says that it is for the disbelievers, that is those who died in a state of disbelief. Their tongue is sealed because the tongue of every denier is not truthful, neither in the world nor in the Hereafter. His tongue always utters falsehood. He denies makes false claims. Nothing makes a man's tongue truthful except Faith in heart, in the absence of which man falsely claims to be pious and it is habit for

such people. There is a proverb in Persian: No one says that his curd is sour.

The tongue of only that person is truthful whose heart is full of Faith. Prophet Muhammad ('s) is reported to have said, "By the One in Whose power is my life, the faith of anyone of you does not become good until his tongue is good and the tongue of one does not become good until his heart has become good." [39]

So long as the heart is sick, it has pride, it does not have humility and it is unwell. With a diseased soul the tongue too falls sick. Such a tongue can say nothing except make hollow claims of piety. One who is crooked here is crooked in the Hereafter as well, to such an extent that when his scroll of deeds is shown to him he says, "This is not mine."

In Qiyamat, truth is manifested. It is the Day when secrets are exposed. It is the absolute Truth (Haqqah).

Therefore a tongue, which is false and crooked, will be sealed for the establishment of justice and manifestation of truth. His organs will be made to speak. Hand will say what it did and foot will say where it went. What the eyes saw? The heart will say to what it harbored within itself.

And follow not that of which you have not the knowledge; surely the hearing and the sight and the heart, all of these, shall be questioned about that. (17:36)

Everything becomes so much open that by no means they can be denied. The legs will speak out: I had gone to such and such place. So much so that the tongue too will testify against itself.

Several witnesses in the court of divine justice

The Day of Resurrection will be the day of full and complete manifestation of Divine Justice. The good of the tiniest good deed will not be omitted. Organs of body will start speaking for the manifestation of Justice and for the finality of arguments.

In Islam, it is God's commandment that every fact can be established with the testimony of two just witnesses. This is clear argument of religion. There must be either self-confession or the appearance of two just and selfless witnesses with stipulated conditions. But tomorrow on the Day of Resurrection, notwithstanding that man himself is aware:

...your own self is sufficient as a reckoner against you this day. (17:14)

The fellow does not confess. But then so many testimonies begin to pour from every side that he has to submit willy-nilly. The first witnesses are his physical organs. Can he deny the testimony of his own organs? The second witness is the ground. Every part of earth on which one sinned will speak out. Likewise if he had worshipped God that part of earth will testify to that also.

On that day she shall tell her news... (99:4)

Time too will testify. Qiyamat is the world of gathering. The days of one's lifespan become a stage of time (existence) and it will testify how and what happened. We recite in the daily supplications of Imam Sajjad ('a): O day! You have ended and you will testify what I have done.

Among the witnesses are also the two recording angels. The Imam of every age will testify about the deeds of the people of his time. The Holy Quran also says:

And thus We have made you a medium (just) nation that you may be the bearers of witness to the people and (that) the Apostle may be a bearer of witness to you; and We did not make that which you would have to be the qiblah but that We might distinguish him who follows the Apostle from him who turns back upon his heels, and this was surely hard except for those whom Allah has guided aright; and Allah was not going to make your faith to be fruitless; most surely Allah is Affectionate, Merciful to the people. (2:143)

Also we recite in the Ziyarat Jamia that martyrs are witnesses of the world. The Imams are the witnesses over the deeds of the people of their respective age. Imam Hujjat Ibnul Hasan ('a) must be the witness of time and space on the day of Divine Justice. Angels will testify and so also all the organs of sinners.

No testimony against sinners who repent

Woe unto us if we have to stand up when this Divine Court is established. Imam Sadiq ('a) has given a good tiding. He says, as reported in the chapter of Repentance in *Usul Kafi*: When a servant indulges in a sin and then he repents over it (special repentance for this particular sin, as said by some) the angels recording the deeds are ordered: As this servant has repented, do not testify against him in the matter of this sin. Likewise the earth or ground is ordered: Do not testify against this person.

Thus God prevents witnesses from testifying against the one who has repented for his sin.

If one has made efforts for repentance, the witness is summoned to testify about his repentance. They say, "O Lord! This person was saying, 'Please pardon me (Al Afw)'; he has appealed for forgiveness." All the organs testify to his goodness.

...so these are they of whom Allah changes the evil deeds to good ones; and Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (25:70)

However the tongues of the believers are free. Sealing of mouth was the 'recompense' of one whose tongue had refrained from saying, "O God". But in the case of those who used to say all their life, "O Allah! There is no god except Allah, truly, truly we worship You...", their mouths are open here also.

Above all witnesses is the everlasting Almighty and Unique God. One of its reasons is that though acceptance or rejection (of truth) is voluntary, witnessing is not. The heart accepts or rejects whatever it likes. Mouths are being sealed. The exception is testimony to Truth and factuality. Nothing except truth is required and truth becomes manifest through limbs and organs. The tongue itself confesses the truth...

How limbs and organs testify?

Some have interpreted saying it means witness of the condition. When one comes in the Qiyamat gathering tomorrow, his appearance and condition testify what kind of a man he was.

The guilty shall be recognized by their marks... (55:41)

For example, fire erupts from his tongue or he is chewing his protruded tongue with his own teeth and blood and pus drip therefrom. All would know he had been a scholar without actions, that is, one who asked others to do good but did not do so himself. This condition shows his falsehood. Or a fellow arrives with a bloated stomach, so big that it is impossible for him to move because of its weight. This man took usury.

Those who swallow down usury cannot arise except as one whom Shaitan has prostrated by (his) touch does rise. (2:275)

The shapes will show what kind of a fellow one was in the world, and what sins one had committed. Therefore, if his forehead is radiant, it

means he was regularly prostrating to God. Bright foreheads are due to prostrations for God. Or the handing over of the scroll of deeds in the right hand indicates that he had done more good deeds.

In brief, some have said that the meaning of “speaking of organs” means testimony through condition or appearance as testified by the above verse (Surah Rehman 55:41).

However it seems that more correct is what most of the commentators have said and it is besides the witness through conditions, the apparent meaning of the Holy verse is that limbs and organs will speak out. Still clearer is the Holy verse:

And they shall say to their skins: Why have you borne witness against us? They shall say: Allah Who makes everything speak has made us speak... (41:21)

So, after the testimony of his limbs and organs, the poor fellow complains to his organs, “Why did you testify against me?” The organs reply, “God made us speak out (This is the meaning of another part of the same verse explaining that the God Who gave the faculty of speaking to all, made us also speak out).”

For God Almighty, making hands and feet speak is just like speaking of the tongue

The reason why some have interpreted in another way is because they thought that talking is only possible with the tongue, and so how can hands and feet talk? Hence they have interpreted that the witnessing will be by way of condition or appearance. The explanation is that speaking is not due to and only through tongue; it is only a lump of flesh. But God Almighty, with His subduing and overwhelming power decided that words should be heard by the moving of the human tongue at a particular place in the mouth, aided by the windpipe. It is only the Will of God and His making. No cause and effect is in question. Otherwise tongue of a cow and a donkey are bigger. Thus it is known that talking or speaking is merely the Will of God for man. This distinction is granted by God only to man. This is one of the innumerable honors given to man by God, the greatness of which can be appreciated by intelligence. Then the tongue becomes a translator of his thoughts, saying words like “Allah is the Greatest”, “Glory be to Allah”. An animal has no such sense and intelligence, so it cannot appreciate in this way.

Every intelligent person understands that the original faculty of speech is not restricted to the tongue. Rather it is a special gift from God

to man. The Almighty Lord of the Worlds Who made His Might manifest in this manner will make your fingers talk on the Day of Judgment. What difference is there between this part of the body and that? Do you remember that with this very finger you had pointed to such and such person to humiliate him? Or what you wrote, holding a pen by these fingers. You had misused these fingers to slap a believer. It is narrated that even the hair on one's body will begin to speak and testify.

Another proof is also mentioned in the Holy Quran in the verse referred above. Objection will be taken to these organs, "Why did you testify against us?" They will reply, "The Almighty God Who made all others speak made us also speak."

The ability to speak is common to all in this universe. All the particles of the existing universe, which in our eyes are dumb, from the view of the unseen world they are capable of speech.

The seven heavens declare His glory and the earth (too), and those who are in them; and there is not a single thing but glorifies Him with His praise... (17:44)

After death, man goes to the ethereal world. If now you understand, you can hear the voice in the cosmos. Walls and doors are saying, "Glory be to God". The organs of your own body also are glorifying God. Of course this glorification is beyond the comprehension of matter and hence man does not understand it.

...but you do not understand their glorification... (17:44)

Tomorrow, on the Day of Judgment, the same God Who has made all the particles of the universe speak in the spiritual plane, will make them speak and order them to confess what they had done in the world.

Even the tiniest deed will not be omitted and in that Grand Witness Box in the Supreme Court, witnesses will not be able to lie. They will testify absolutely truthfully. However they will not testify to sins for which man had sincerely repented, as mentioned in some narrations.

Count glorification on your fingertips, they will testify to it

There is a narration in the *Tafsir Ruhul Bayan* the summary of which is that the Holy Prophet ('s) told some women, "Say, 'Glory be to Allah' very often." In another tradition it is mentioned that, "During the ascension, I saw an angel busy making a palace. He was placing a gold brick and then a silver one. Then he stopped for a while." I asked him, 'Why

do you stop working?' He replied, 'Whenever a believer glorifies God, we build a house for him here. When he stops, we also halt the construction.'" So the Prophet said, "Count the glorifications on your fingertips. Tomorrow these fingertips will give witness for you." In the days of early Islam, there were no rosaries like we have today. People used to count recitations on their finger digits. Every finger has three digits. Ten fingers can count upto thirty.

These fingers will testify, "O Lord! This servant of yours had recited Your glory with these fingers."

Rosary (Tasbih) of Kербala soil is a part of Paradise

Let us see about the Tasbih. The first to prepare a Tasbih was Fatima (s.a.). She took up some soil from the grave of Hamzah, the leader of martyrs in Uhad and made a rosary for remembering Allah constantly and frequently.

In the days of Imam Sadiq ('a), he recommended, "Take benefit of the soil of Kербala for making rosaries. If such a rosary is made of the earth of the grave of Husain ('a), it will fetch rewards even without recitation."

Since the particles of the soil of the grave of Husain in Kербala themselves are busy glorifying God, the one holding its rosary will benefit even when he does not recite anything. Shaykh Shustari (a.r.) says, "This glorification is not like all other glorifications made by everything in the world. This one is extraordinary as it belongs to a part of paradise." A tradition says, "O Jabir! Visit the grave of Husain ('a). Verily Kербala is a part of paradise."

Notes:

[37] Biharul Anwar vol.3

[38] Uyoonul Akhbar

[39] Nahjul Balagha

Chapter 25

66-67

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

And if We please We would certainly put out their eyes, then they would run about groping for the way, but how should they see? And if We please We would surely transform them in their place, then they would not be able to go on, nor will they return. (36:66-67)

The apparent meaning of the verse is that if We wish We can rub out their eyes. The Arabic word 'Tamas' means rubbing out in such a way that no sign of it remains. 'Tamas' means total erasing and rubbing out after which there will not be any sign or mark that an eye existed at that place.

...then they would run about groping for the way,

That is they would proceed on a path, which is straight, without any curve, but they cannot see. How can one go on the right path whose eyes are totally removed?

And if We please We would surely transform them in their place, then they would not be able to go on, nor will they return. (36:67)

Meaning, if We wish we may disfigure them. Arabic word 'Maskh' means to transform the shape badly. It means to take away the beautiful shape of man and turn him into an ugly beast.

in their place,

That means, We can do this without any delay.

...then they would not be able to go on, nor will they return.

After this the path of going ahead or turning back is closed on them. They can neither advance nor retreat.

Deniers warned of the chastisement that befell the people of Lut

These two verses are among the most threatening verses from God for common disbelievers. Though, apparently, they were revealed in Mecca, they hint at all deniers. Everyone who did not believe in God and in the Hereafter and who said jokingly, "These are meaningless talks of the ancient people, it is superstition." If God wills, He makes such people blind in such a way that their eyes are also blotted out. He did the same to the rebellious people of Prophet Lut.

When the angels of punishment arrived at Lut's, his people rushed to his house demanding that the guests be handed over to them for committing sodomy. Lut admonished them in every manner but to no avail. Then Lut said in a sorrowful way, "If only I had the strength to deflect them."

One of these angels signaled and all of them became blind. No sign of an eye remained on their face.

And if We please We would certainly put out their eyes...

O one who has become bold in sinning and who is accustomed to voyeurism! God is able to blind you in such a way that there will not remain any trace thereof.

May the eyes be blind, which cannot see you

Here is one fine point to ponder. Why is the calamity of "Tamas" mentioned among several other calamities? The secret, perhaps, is that the punishment is proportionate to the sin. One who refuses to see the Truth, which is so manifest, deserves to be blinded. If you can observe the power of God and see life and death, how do you then deny Qiyamat?

A narration in *Usul Kafi* says: One of the wise sayings of Luqman is, "I wonder about the one who does not believe in Qiyamat and in becoming alive after his death when he dies and becomes alive every night and day." Sleep is the brother of death. When you are asleep it is your minor death. When you wake up it is as if you have become alive again. Thus you see life and death every day and night and ignore the truth asking, "Will we, after we are dead, become alive again?"

What! when we are dead and have become dust? That is a far (from probable) return. (50:3)

After this blindness they are unable to find the path.

but how should they see?

How will you see? So long as this bounty is not snatched away from you, observe the Signs of God. Take benefit from it. Know you Lord better. Do something for the accounting of the Day of Judgment.

Another hint is about the haste in punishment. The one whose heart is blind in this world will, on the Day of Judgment, find himself blind in the eyes also.

And whoever is blind in this, he shall (also) be blind in the hereafter; and more erring from the way. (17:72)

Meaning that if We want We can make them blind like their hearts are blind.

The lesson here is for the thankfulness for the bounty of the faculty of sight. A man's looking or seeing is different from the looking and seeing of a cow. His seeing signifies his taking lessons.

We would transform them according to their habits

And if We please We would surely transform them in their place, then they would not be able to go on, nor will they return.

Arabic "Maskh" means to change the shape into an ugly and a horrible one. Here it means changing man's shape into that of a beast. According to the lexicon it is a change for the worse. It could be transforming into a pig, monkey, snake or anything else. A narration says, "A monkey or a pig would look beautiful when compared to it." Allah says, "If We so wish We may disfigure them at their place. O one who left the path of religion and took the path of desires and passions! We may, if We so desire, change your outward appearance into your inward state."

Pig is an example of uncontrolled desires. It eats up every dirty thing and has no parallel in carnal desires. Sometimes it moves long distances while copulating. One who acts like a pig in gratifying his carnal desires and that does not fear committing a prohibited deed, is actually a pig. His face will, on the Day of Judgment, become like that of a pig. If God so wills, such disfiguration can take place here also and very swiftly.

Prophet Muhammad ('s) is reported to have said that Allah says about him in a Holy verse:

We have not sent you but as a mercy for the worlds. (21:107)

One of the mercies relating to the Prophet ('s) is that in case of past communities the people's internal conditions used to manifest very soon. Shapes of a number of people had been changed badly. But, for the followers of Muhammad ('s), God has put a veil over it.

A greedy scholar turned into a dog

According to a narration, a scholar believing in Torah, and his teacher were with Prophet Moosa ('a). When Moosa ('a) did not see them for quite a long time, he asked Jibraeel ('a) about their fate. Jibraeel replied, "Look at the gate of the house." Moosa saw a dog and exclaimed, "This is strange! What has happened?" His interior has become manifest in this way! Jibraeel said, "He was always after wealth."

The wealth worshipper man's interior is like an animal. An ant is very greedy in gathering provision. Anyone whose only ambition is to gather wealth is bound to get the shape of an animal in the Hereafter.

Inattentiveness in Prayer

Asrarus Salat by Shahid Thani (a.m.) has a tradition related from the Holy Prophet ('s): "One who turns his face this side and that, during Prayer, does he not fear that God Almighty will make his face like a donkey?"

The Shahid says, "What is meant here is the form of the heart." His otherworldly appearance will be like that of a donkey. He does not know before whom or in front of whom he is standing. What does he intend to do? We should try to emulate the Imams. Amirul Mo-mineen ('a) and Hasan Mujtaba ('a) were trembling at the time of Prayer. At least do not be disrespectful. One, who does not show respect for God Almighty, is no different from an animal.

If Allah wishes He can make the otherworldly appearance manifest here in this world also. But for this Ummah of Muhammad ('s) the matter is postponed till the Day of Judgment.

O Lord! Who displays the goodness and Who hides the bad deeds!

O God! Make my interior like my outward appearance, that is, good looking. May it not be so that I remain like a man in this world, but God forbid, I become an animal (in the Hereafter).

In a narration it is said that there are some whose faces are like men but their hearts like Satan's.

Chapter 26

66-68

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

And if We please We would certainly put out their eyes, then they would run about groping for the way, but how should they see? And if We please We would surely transform them in their place, then they would not be able to go on, nor will they return. And whomsoever We cause to live long, We reduce (him) to an abject state in constitution; do they not then understand? (36:66-68)

Haste in punishment to prevent the convict from flight

So far we have discussed upto the point where God mentions two kinds of chastisements for the disbelievers. It is also a warning to those whom God gave eyes to see the signs of God and take lesson. He made you look at the growing of vegetables from the earth, to understand the Might of God. At the end of this Surah, He says that such seeing should give you the proof of the hereafter. But what a pity that they normally drown themselves in the bounties but never see the One Who gave these bounties!

Verily a man to whom God gave eyes but he does not see and observe the signs of God's Might deserves that he should be blinded. So He says, "They are such that their eyes should be wiped out." Man is born with under-developed senses like an insect, which only has the feelings of touch and taste. He gains other faculties gradually. At the end of his life he again, if he gets a long life, becomes like a newborn child. His sight and hearing go away and his memory stops functioning. God, Who takes away these powers gradually in the old age of man, can do this in an instant in the Hereafter.

Moreover just as these verses are arguments for the former people, they are for Muslims also so that they may take lesson.

Benefit from the bounty of youth

O Youths! Who have not yet reached the old age, derive benefit from the bounty of youth. Your body is perfect and healthy. As long as your ears function, listen to the sermons of knowledge and morals. So far as your eyes can see, look at the signs of God and take lessons, read traditions and Quran. So long as your legs are working, attend and go to the gatherings of knowledge and see learned people and attend masjids and Holy graves.

Gain honor, be it in genuflection (Rukoo), prostration or while standing in Prayer. In every condition take benefit of the God-given strength.

Imam Sadiq ('a) reportedly, used to recite the recitations of bowings and prostrations etc. five hundred times (the narrator says that he counted only this much). It is mentioned in *Kashful Ghummah* that Imam Sajjad ('a) used to recite words of divine glorification and submission a thousand times. But as the age advances, this strength does not remain. Man is not able to arise at mid-night in winter, to make ablution and try to remain in prostration for an hour.

Make the most of five things before the arrival of their opposites

It is quoted in Majlisi's *Ainul Hayat* that the Holy Prophet ('s) once said, "O Abu Zar! Take benefit of five things before you face their opposites. Youth before old age," Religious responsibility starts from the beginning till at the most thirty-three or forty years of age. Beyond forty it is old age. O those who have not reached forty! Appreciate your youthfulness. Do not spend your prime life in wrongdoing. Inability in childhood, mischief making in youth and weakness in old age! When would you worship God?

Take full benefit of your needlessness before you enter the state of neediness. Before you are unable to do things, do as many good deeds as possible. A man who is healthy and safe must make most of these bounties before they are taken away from him or he falls ill.

One of the scholars fell in trouble. He was unable to speak as he was in a coma. O those who are able to move your tongues easily! Remember that a time will come when you will want to utter the Kalima (Testimony of faith) or a word by your tongue but you will not be able to do so. So take benefit of your ability now.

A man faces several calamities in his life. One who is well to do now should make provision for the onward journey towards God by remembering Him more and more. He should act before he is disabled.

The most important matter is that man must make the most of his life before his death. Every breath is a pearl, which leads you towards God as mentioned in a supplication of Imam Zainul Aabedeem ('a). Seek it

from God in right earnest. My Lord! Kindly make me successful in what I will be asked tomorrow on the Day of Judgment. Give me respite in the few years, which are left from my life so that I may pass them completely in Your worship and in Your service.

God makes you strong from a weak state and again returns you to weakness

From the first moment of conception in womb, from the very start of creation, it is strengthening and gaining of physical abilities. Man's creation is complete after four months. Then, after the blowing of spirit in the body, the baby gets strength to be born physically.

Surely We have created man from a small life-germ uniting (itself): We mean to try him, so We have made him hearing, seeing. (76:2)

The last period of attaining strength, as per a narration from Imam Sadiq ('a), is the age of thirty-three. Perhaps, it is so in most cases. One who attains the age of thirty-three years is the one for whom it is said: He has reached the age of perfection. It is stagnation from the age of thirty-three to forty years, during which the strength neither increases nor decreases. After this, it is the downward line on graph, the arch showing a marked decline of strength.

"Nakasa" in Arabic means returning or coming back. Now one returns to weakness after gaining strength. Just as his strength was growing year after year upto the age of thirty-three, now after forty, it goes on decreasing. Whatever was given to him is now being taken back:

Allah is He Who created you from a state of weakness then He gave strength after weakness, then ordained weakness and hoary hair after strength... (30:54)

The teeth, which grew from childhood, now begin to weaken. "Nakasa" in creation means growing weakness in the body. It may reach to such an extent that one becomes absolutely senseless knowing nothing.

And Allah has created you, then He causes you to die, and of you is he who is brought back to the worst part of life, so that after having knowledge he does not know anything... (16:70)

Weakness shows up year after year or even earlier

Some have mentioned that from the age of forty it is declining and taking away of strength and ability, which man can see himself in his appearance year after year. For example, if one takes his photograph at the age of forty-one and if he looks at his physical features after a year comparing it with the previous year's photo, he would notice the weakness himself. This decline can be seen every month between fifty and sixty years. By the passing of every month one notices his weakness. This downward trend can then be seen on a weekly basis from the age of sixty to seventy years. Then from seventy to eighty years one can observe this change on a daily basis. From eighty to ninety years it is noticed every hour. After that there is decline with every breath.

Then, if he still remains alive he again becomes like a baby. All his faculties are gone and he understands nothing. Such is the case most of the time. Of course, some see this decline even before forty and in others it is after a long time. But, according to a tradition of the Holy Prophet ('s), "The life span of most of my Ummah is between sixty and seventy years." [40]

Another narration says that those who are between sixty and seventy are in the battlefield of death.

There is a tradition in vol. 3 of *Biharul Anwar* wherein the narrator says, "We were with Imam Sadiq ('a) on the outskirts of Medina. The Imam looked at Uhad Mountain and asked the narrator, 'Can you see the crevice in the mountain?' 'Yes sir", I replied. The Imam said, 'But I can see it no more.' When I asked, "What happened?" He replied, "I have become old. Weak eyesight is a sign of old age. The second sign is the bending of back and the third feebleness of legs."

So understand that you are in control of God

...do they not then understand? (36:68)

The first thing to be understood by man is this weakness, which proves that he is under the absolute control of God.

And He is the Supreme, above His servants... (6:61)

It is clear to you where He brought you from your cradle and then again brought you back towards weakness. Therefore, know that you are under nourishment of someone else Who makes you youthful and then makes you aged; Who gives you strength and then takes it back. It is not in your control.

Three wishes of the prince

In the details about Alexander, it is mentioned that he once asked the prince of a country annexed by him, "Be my attendant and come along with me. I will give you whatever you ask." The prince said, "I have only three needs if you can fulfill them. Firstly make me retain my youth forever." "I cannot do that for myself," confessed Alexander. The prince continued, "Secondly, ensure that I remain healthy and strong and lastly, make me immortal." Alexander said, "I cannot provide any of these and neither can anyone else."

All this is by the Source of Power, God Himself. All doctors with all their medical appliances, aids and equipments cannot stop, defer, or postpone death. So everyone should know that they are helpless servants in total control of God alone.

Allah sets forth a parable: (consider) a slave, the property of another, (who) has no power over anything... (16:75)

Attain good abilities by forty

Do you not ponder over your weakness and frailty so that you may realize that the giver and recollector, the preserver, the bestower of strength and the confiscator is He and only He? Stop being egoistic as you are actually a subject ruled over by the Supreme King, that is Allah; so your attitude and behavior should also be like that of a subject.

Also do you not realize from this decline of strength that this would finally end in death? So, until you reach the age of decline make the most of your strength. During the remaining years of your life, provide oil for the lamp of life, which would be put out some day; so that when it is off you may have something with you. Before the end of your life, do something for yourself. That is why it is said, "Toil until you have not reached the age of forty." Cultivate good habits and desired virtues. Be an intelligent servant and subject. Whatever you earn by the age of forty will remain with you thereafter.

Notes:

[40] Biharul Anwar, vol. 3

Chapter 27

67-68

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

And if We please We would surely transform them in their place, then they would not be able to go on, nor will they return. And whomsoever We cause to live long, We reduce (him) to an abject state in constitution; do they not then understand? (36:67-68)

We can make your exterior like your interior

Allah says:

And if We please We would surely transform them in their place

The hint is towards the end of deniers and polytheists who revolt despite so many verses being recited to them. They have blinded their internal eye. It deserves that, "We also make them blind in such a manner that they cannot see and recognize their path." Thus they deserve to be disfigured by Us. We may dry them up wherever they are so that they become like a stone whereby they may not be able to move forward or backward. They deserve this treatment. Those who do not shiver at such admonishment deserve that their faces become like their hearts.

Their mentality is like beasts. They are like wolves or other carnivorous animals. It is, therefore, better that We make their exterior like their interiors like We did with the People of Sabt; who, when they woke up found themselves transformed into monkeys and pigs.

So, if We wish We can do this, but it is a divine strategy to give respite, perhaps they may return to the right path. Had it been so that every man who sinned is put to instant chastisement there would be no life on earth any more.

And if Allah had destroyed men for their iniquity, He would not leave on the earth a single creature... (16:61)

Rather, they should be given respite. Perhaps, they may feel ashamed and show regret. Even if they do not regret they cannot escape from the kingdom of God. Where can a sinner servant flee from God's reach? God can take revenge from him any moment. It is divine mercy that you are treated kindly, but when you cross the limits, God puts you to shame.

Husain releases the stuck hands

A sinful man was so reckless that he did not hesitate to look at and touch a stranger lady and he committed such a sin in the precincts of the Holy Ka'ba at Hajre Ismail, where people pray for forgiveness. A woman had clung to the curtain of Ka'ba when that fellow placed his hand over that of the lady's. Suddenly the hands got stuck and a shameful scene was created. According to what is mentioned in *Manaqib*, they were taken to a Qazi in the masjid who said, "There is no way to separate these hands except by cutting them apart with a knife."

It was the time of the arrival of Husain ('a) to the mosque. So when he came, these two persons were brought to him. The Imam first took a promise from the man that he would never again indulge in such a sin. Then he prayed to God Almighty, brought his own hand between the stuck up hands and separated them.

Her face stuck when she turned it during Prayer

It is mentioned in volume 12 of *Biharul Anwar* that a woman had a bent back whose husband took another wife. The second wife was always on the look out for her rival. One day, her husband came home when she was praying. He went in to the first wife while the second wife in the state of Prayer, turned her face to see what the man was doing. Her neck remained in that condition forever.

The respected scholar, Shahid Thani has also narrated this event in his book *Asrarus Salat*. Thus one who turns the face this way or that during Prayer should be afraid that God might make his face like that of an ass.

The poor woman requested her husband to call for a physician. All who knew were of the opinion that if the neck is turned forcibly it may break the bones. At once they came to Imam Moosa bin Ja'far ('a) who asked her to perform repentance. After she made a sincere repentance, the Imam extended his Holy hand and corrected her neck.

Prevent open breach of fasting

O sinners and reckless people! It is heard that eating and drinking openly during the fasting month has become common. Are those Muslim shopkeepers who see people openly breaking the fasting rules like this and keep quiet, in the words of Ali ('a), they are the living dead. O

moving corpse! O silent spectators! Do you not fear God? You must prevent and prohibit such shameless disobedience of divine laws. Even if one is a traveler, he should not eat or drink openly during Ramadan.

That Allah can change the condition and appearance of people is proved by the changes in our body as we become older.

And whomsoever We cause to live long, We reduce (him) to an abject state in constitution; do they not then understand? (36:68)

Honoring the aged protects one from the great terror

Islam has made many recommendations in favor the old and aged people. It is obligatory for every Muslim to take care of his aged father and mother. If you give them discomfort, first of all, it is possible that you will see its result in this world. If you are spared here, your Hereafter is certainly in danger. Besides this, every Muslim has the duty respecting aged people. Everyone whose hair has become grey while he or she was a Muslim is entitled to respect from every Muslim. If he is unable to walk properly, give him support by placing your hand under his arm. If he needs anything it must be provided to him. Help him in every way. Among the things, which protect one from the fear of the Day of Judgment, is "Honoring the hair, which has become grey in the state of Islam".

...do they not then understand?

How is it that one who has observed gradual changes during the lifetime, does not think of the Almighty God's might to disfigure or remove faces? Just look at your photograph taken in youth and compare it with your face in the mirror. "Verily We are able to turn him into forms, which are worse than monkeys and swines."

Abilities ripen in old age

Man is having two directions: Creation and Command.

...surely His is the creation and the command; blessed is Allah, the Lord of the worlds. (7:54)

Man has a body and a soul and the matter of decline refers to "creation" (physique or body construction). Bodily strength goes on decreasing so much so that he becomes the lowest in ability like a senseless baby. However, as for the soul, it can take man to perfection; but only if

from his youth, he has strengthened, perfected and purified it. If he has reformed himself by the age of forty and become a real human, that is, he has freed himself from love of wealth, sensuality, materialism etc. If he has become a perfect monotheist, and is not affected by anyone except Allah; he has nothing like lust, jealousy, miserliness, hypocrisy and he does not harm anyone, he is a reformed man. A dog bites a man and not the other way round, but there are some who use their teeth like dogs, with a difference that, whereas a dog injures a body, this fellow injures the heart of a man. Thus if one reforms himself in ones youth, one improves himself in such a way that all the virtues become habits. Then these virtues improve and become perfect after forty.

Woe unto him who became undisciplined during his youth, turned towards every prohibited thing, became self-seeker, self-worshipper and comfort lover. By the age of forty, these habits become stronger.

It is narrated that if one does not improve himself by forty, the Satan kisses his forehead saying, "May I be sacrificed for the one from whom no one can hope for good." [41]

And whomsoever We cause to live long, We reduce (him) to an abject state in constitution...

It is said that this decline is for the body, not for the soul. "We reduce him to an abject state in constitution". Though his body goes on weakening, his spirit becomes stronger in old age, regarding the virtues cultivated during his youth. If he had been a generous person in his youth and was also kind and forgiving, his virtues become stronger in his old age so much so that he is ready to sacrifice his life in the path of God. While seeing the angel of death, he gives up his life happily.

This life which was given to me by the friend as a trust.

When I see His face, I submit it to him readily. (Persian Couplet)

Woe to the one who hoarded wealth and did not spend out of it in the way of Allah. This miserliness and lust intensify during old age.

When a faithful virtuous man reaches the age of ninety. A voice is heard: O prisoner of God on earth, God has pardoned all of your past and future sins.

Thus in advanced age, man is humility from head to toe. That is why Muslims are ordered, "O Muslims! Respect old people. Be kind to them; honor them."

Prime time worships recorded in the old age scroll of deeds

Look at the old and aged people. God keeps calamities away from the places where they live, because they have earned God's mercy. [42]

If he had appreciated his youthfulness, all good deeds of his prime time, will be recorded for old age that has come to him or her.

It is mentioned in narrations that if one had worshipped God during youth it will be recorded in his scroll even if he is unable to worship in his age of infirmity.

O those who have not yet reached the age of forty, move your hands and feet so that you get its reward hereafter.

Imam Zainul Aabedeen ('a) prays, "O Lord! Extend my life as long as I spend it in Your worship. But when my life turns into a grazing field for Satan, and when it begins to be spent in Your disobedience, when I turn away from the path of Your worship, give me death before Your anger falls on me and I become entitled to Your chastisement." [43]

Notes:

[41] Layaliul Akhbar

[42] Biharul Anwar, vol. 3

[43] Sahifa Sajjadiyah

Chapter 28

69

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

And We have not taught him poetry, nor is it meet for him; it is nothing but a reminder and a plain Quran, (36:69)

Allegation of magic on the Prophet and Quran

Then, after God threatened the deniers of God and the Hereafter, saying, "If We wish, We may blind them or disfigure them", He refutes the allegation of the polytheists against Muhammad ('s). Every falsehood, since it does not have any other weapon, resorts to false allegation to make things appear skewed. They try to show that they are right and the opposite party wrong. By a slanderous accusation they intended to prove that a group of people has become misguided. As the Meccans were not investigative type, even if they believe a single word of their allegations, it would be effective.

When the polytheists of Mecca saw that the word of the Holy Prophet was gaining ground and Islam was advancing, people were attracted towards Quran, believing youths mocked idol worship and distanced themselves from the path of their parents, they met together to ponder what they should do to counter Muhammad ('s) and his followers. Walid was one of their leaders and he addressed them, "There is nothing we can do against Quran except that we may say that it is magic. Let us spread the rumor that Muhammad is a magician and that Quran also is his magic. If anyone questions our propaganda – first of all people are not so intelligent – yet, even if someone asks where that magic is? We may say, it is magic as it creates differences between people, just as magic creates enmity between people, Muhammad also is making youths oppose their parents. He has separated youths from our idols."

Poetry is a creation of the poet's imagination, having no reality

A period of time passed and this allegation about magic became old so they made another false allegation that Muhammad was a poet, which this verse refutes.

So, now our discussion is on poetry and poet. First of all, what is poetry? The theme, subject and production of which is not real. It is imagination, superstition, fancy and illusion, having nothing to do with reality. It is an arrangement of words conveying the poet's thoughts in certain rhythm and on certain meters to make them more effective and attractive. For example, one says, "All this is mere poetry," which means that it has nothing factual; only the words are attractive. Therefore, it is a proverb in Arabic "Best is that which is most false."

For instance, Firdosi versifies the duel between Rustam and Asfandiyar and says when Rustam arrives in the battlefield: The hoofs of horses made the earths became six and the skies eight.

Can anything be further from the truth? Yet it sounds nice. Thus poets sing wonderful things in praise as well as in condemnation. They can even turn an oppressor into a first class man of justice and similarly, show a just person to be a tyrant.

Anyway, the Meccans alleged, "You are a poet. You are making verses for this Quran, which does not contain any truth, being mere imagination." So the Quran says:

And We have not taught him poetry, nor is it meet for him...

That is We did not teach him poetry. Nor does it befit him.

it is nothing but a reminder and a plain Quran,

The Prophet is a divine personality; a teacher sent by God and taught by God, while a poet has only imagination. What poet imparts knowledge and perfection to society?

Quran has in fact condemned poetry.

And as to the poets, those who go astray follow them.

Do you not see that they wander about bewildered in every valley?
And that they say that which they do not do, (26:224-226)

Didactic poems, panegyrics and elegies for Ahle Bayt ('a) is good poetry

Thus we now know what condemned poet and poetry mean? It means condemnable are those who present falsehood in a pleasing form. However if one uses beautiful and effective words in defense or in praise of truth, it is not at all objectionable, such as a didactic poem, panegyric or elegy of Ahle Bayt. Since such poetry is more effective, its rank is also high and hence it is desirable. Therefore Quran says, "Except those who believe and do good and remember Allah much," Such truth-teller poets are exempted from condemnation as they have faith and they do good. Such poets restrain from falsehood and they do not praise one who is not praiseworthy, and do not condemn those not liable for condemnation.

There are poets who sing eulogies for oppressors. They lie and sing worthless songs for payment from the public treasury. If they are given fewer amounts, they start condemning them. There are such examples in modern journalism also. The dethroned Shah used to send millions of dollars to foreign periodicals that they may not publish facts, rather they may show the opposite and sing his praises.

However, the journalists too, like poets, can support truth through their pen and serve the Muslim world just as they are capable of concealing the truth and supporting Israel.

Poetry is an undesirable way of earning livelihood

The poetry of Sadi, especially, is not condemnable as they are words of admonition. Islam has not condemned such poetry. It is said: A stomach filled with blood and pus is better than a stomach filled through poetry. However, that poetry is not condemnable which truthfully describes the gracefulness of Ahle Bayt and gives admonition, and which speaks against the enemies of Ahle Bayt and the polytheists. During the earlier days of Islam, the polytheists had poets who sang against the Holy Prophet and Islam. Then there also were some poets who had become Muslims, who fittingly opposed the poetry of the false poets making them angry. They condemned which was false and anti Islam.

It is mentioned in *Tafsir Majmaul Bayan* that once the Holy Prophet ('s) asked Hisaan to climb the pulpit and recite his poetry condemning the polytheists. After he completed the recitation, the Holy Prophet said, "Your poetry is deadlier than poisoned arrows for the polytheists." It really was so. Poetry relating to the caliphate and guardianship of Ali ('a) was also recited by Hisaan at Ghadeer Khum. In that connection, the Holy Prophet ('s) told him, "So long as you assist us, you will be supported by the Holy Spirit." This was a hint at Hisaan's deviation after the passing away of the Holy Prophet when he inclined towards Muawiyah. Indeed, it was one of the miracles of the Holy Prophet that he did not

pray unconditionally in favor of Hisaan. Hisaan, in his last days, turned towards Muawiyah and recited eulogies for him, while at the same time composed poems condemning Ali ('a). Thus his end was bad. Therefore, the Prophet had said, "As long as you are on the right path, helping the truth, you will get support from the Holy Spirit."

If one says the truth and gives truthful admonition he is very much worthy of praise and respect.

Poetry of Husain bin Hajjaj in the presence of Syed Murtaza and Aale Booyah

This relates to the 19th of Ramadan when Ali ('a) was struck by the poisonous sword of Ibne Muljim: In the year 300 Hijri, Masood bin Aale Booyah came to Najaf Ashraf. Izzudaulah had discovered a treasure, which he intended to spend on the grave of Ali ('a). So he sent Masood to Najaf and he engaged in the aforesaid construction work. At that time, Husain bin Hajjaj, the famous poet of those days was composing couplets in praise of Ali ('a). He had also composed a poem with regard to the Imam's tomb, which he recited in the presence of Aale Booyah and Syed Murtaza, the representative of the syeds: O the owner of the white dome in Najaf.

Indeed, his poetry is wonderful and he has brought together the virtues of Ali in it. Every couplet gladdened the hearts of Ali's friends and made his foes distraught. His poetry went to the extent of taunting the caliphs and Abu Hanifah, which was against dissimulation. Therefore Syed Murtaza stopped him, saying it was enough.

The poet was displeased and he left the meeting as he thought that instead of being praised he was ordered to stop the recitation. He went home in a sorrowful state of mind and that night he saw Ali ('a) in his dream. He was saying, "Do not be gloomy, O Ibnul Hajjaj. I have issued orders for redressal. Tomorrow, the Syed will come to you. You may remain seated in your place so that your honor is maintained."

Syed Murtaza also was a very great man. Apparently too he was a chief of Sadat (Syeds). In his dream, he also saw his ancestor, Ali ('a), who appeared angry. So he asked, "O Master! I am your sincere son. What made you wrathful against me?" He replied, "Why did you break my friend's heart?"[44] Now, go to him tomorrow, apologize and also make recommendation in his favor to Ibne Booyah (so that he may give him a good reward)."

So, the Syed also, notwithstanding all his honor and rank, got up and went to Ibne Hajjaj. As he reached the door of Ibne Hajjaj said loudly from his seat, "The Master who has sent you here has also asked me not

to get up from my seat.” The Syed replied with all humility, “I have heard and I have obeyed.” Then he himself came to Ibne Hjjaj and sought pardon, took him to Aale Booyah and explained to him that he has earned the pleasure of Ali (‘a). A robe of honor and a permanent pension was granted to the poet.[45]

Reverting to our topic, we can say that most of the time, poetry is falsehood and it spreads untruth, while Quran is absolute truth and it separates falsehood from truth.

Most surely it is a decisive word, And it is no joke. (86:13-14)

Quran, the reminder of God and the hereafter

Poetry is nothing but mindlessness towards God and hereafter, whereas Quran makes man remember God, His virtues, His actions and the Hereafter.

Poetry rouses passions but Quran turns man towards God. There can be no comparison between the Heavenly Preacher and the poet and his poetry.

...nor is it meet for him...

That is it is unfitting and becoming of him to recite poetry. Quran is clear admonition. It is a reminder. It is life-giving. Its laws enliven and sustain individuals and the society. Every society, which follows it, is alive forever if God wills.

Our society has, due to the grace of Quran, become free from the clutches of imperialists, colonialists and rebels. Our heads are now high and hereafter, under the shade of the Holy Quran, we shall live honorably forever.

Human life is affected by Quran

That it may warn him who would have life, (36:70)

That is one who is alive. What kind of living or life is mentioned here? Of course, it is not an animal or a vegetable life. The vegetable life is always in growth. As regards animal life, it is under the influence of instinct. Rather, what is meant here is the heart or soul of man. Its sign is hope in God. One who is inhuman does not have this sign. It is man who realizes that everything is in the hands of Only One God. Therefore he

relies only on God. His hope and his fear, both are connected to God. Quran is for such living persons.

...and (that) the word may prove true against the unbelievers.

Meaning what was told about the disbelievers came to be true. Here 'Word' perhaps means the threat of hell. Verily the deniers are worth entering hell. They are those who have no life of humanity in them. They are dead and soulless. They are blind and deaf and unable to understand or realize anything.

And certainly We have created for hell many of the jinn and the men; they have hearts with which they do not understand, and they have eyes with which they do not see, and they have ears with which they do not hear; they are as cattle, nay, they are in worse errors; these are the heedless ones. (7:179)

Notes:

[44]The poets of Ahle Bayt were indeed always ready to sacrifice their lives and their lives were really in danger as they were very strongly attached to Ahle Bayt.

[45] Waqaaya Al-Aiyaam of Khayabani

Chapter 29

71-76

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Do they not see that We have created cattle for them, out of what Our hands have wrought, so they are their masters? And We have subjected them to them, so some of them they have to ride upon, and some of them they eat. And therein they have advantages and drinks; will they not then be grateful? And they have taken gods besides Allah that they may be helped. (But) they shall not be able to assist them, and they shall be a host brought up before them. Therefore let not their speech grieve you; surely We know what they do in secret and what they do openly. (36:71-76)

God created the quadrupeds for you

Let us ponder on the above verses. Did this man not see whom God has given intelligence? Does he not see that We created him with Our hands and created the quadrupeds, which are owned by them? Just think upon it. Firstly, how We created and secondly, how We gave them under your control; that is man is now their owner. God decided thus. Otherwise, the One Who is their Creator is also their Owner in the true sense. If God does not make it man's property, man would not be able to benefit from them. God created sheep so that man may take benefit from them in various ways. He may eat its nice meat and consume its milk and use its wool for clothing. There is nothing in this animal from which man does not benefit. So much so that even its hoofs are used in medicines.

Benefits of riding and use of milk, meat and wool

And therein they have advantages and drinks;

How delicious is the milk of these quadrupeds! What a great benefit they have in serving as beasts of burden and their meat and wool is useful too.

...will they not then be grateful?

Are you not then thankful? Unless man becomes thankful and realizes the bounty of God, what is the difference between him and an animal? In the animal like matters of eating, sleeping, passions and anger, man and animals are alike. In the matter of art and craft too, some animals are intelligent. There is no difference in things that end in death. The only exceptions are truthfulness, knowing God and the Hereafter. For example, man should aim to be a physician that he may serve people. If his aim is merely material, then he gets its reward only here (in this worldly life). Anyway, whatever is related with humanism and the value of which remains forever is the virtue of knowing the Benefactor, appreciation of the bounties and thankfulness to God.

Rebels try to achieve Godship behind the excuse of idols

And they have taken gods besides Allah that they may be helped. (36:74)

Allah says, "We gave these bounties to man. We put camels, cows, and sheep under his control. They also ride some of them." What a wonderful mount a camel is; it is the ship of the desert. This man, instead of knowing God better and thanking Him more, and never forgetting Him, carves out, in place of God, imaginary gods in the form of idols. At the head of such wayward people are the false Gods who are rebels against God. Minds get diverted to idols of stone and wood. The truth is that these idols are shields for the rebels. They feign Godship from behind these idols. Idols and temples are mere pretexts.

During the days of Pharaoh, idols and idol worship were rampant and Pharaoh, in the name of (or as) the God of gods, was defrauding the people.

All dictators are such and they all practice polytheism against God. These dictators demand from people what God demands from man. God commands man to carry out His orders and to accept whatever He says. Sultans, Kings, and Shahs are also like that. It is nothing but royal decrees against divine commandments!

Mobilized armies have no ability to help

(But) they shall not be able to assist them, and they shall be a host brought up before them. (36:75)

Meaning those who are taken as helpers instead God have no ability to render any help. Troops are ready but cannot do anything. For example, during the Islamic Revolution of Iran thousands of American advisers along with half a million troops armed with modern weapons were present to protect the kingdom of Muhammad Reza Shah to protect the interests of America. But, when God decides, none of them could be of any avail. Despite all the mobilized armies of imperialists there was no one to help the Shah.

Therefore let not their speech grieve you; surely We know what they do in secret and what they do openly. (36:76)

Their talk should not grieve you as We know what they hide and what they declare. If the non-believers sting you, you will not be harmed. The disbelievers taunt about the belief in monotheism but the believer must be pleased with his God and remain steadfast.

In order to weaken the spirit of Iranian people during the revolution they spread threats and rumors. They played a new mischief daily in one place or another, but the hearts of the faithful are strong due to their faith and reliance on God. The God, Who made them reach here, will, if He so decides, bring them to perfection. The victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran was not the handiwork of men; it was God's. It was totally beyond the material means. So, just as our eye was only on God in the beginning it should remain so hereafter also.

Chapter 30

77

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Does not man see that We have created him from the small seed? Then lo! he is an open disputant. (36:77)

Benefits of remembering ones origin

On many occasions in the Holy Quran, God had reminded man how he was created. He was a puny sperm. It is commanded that man must always remember this. Allah says, "Man must obligatorily ponder over this." He should think deeply and see from what he is created, from a drop of gushing water which came from between the back of his father and breasts of his mother.

So let man consider of what he is created. He is created of water pouring forth, coming from between the back and the ribs. Most surely He is able to return him (to life). (86:5-8)

Thus man should never forget from what he is created. What is desired from such pondering is to understand the beginning and it also proves the Hereafter. The third benefit is that it makes man give up the animal like habits such is ignorance, ego, pride and selfishness.

Proof of origin through embryo

From the viewpoint of proof of the origin, when an intelligent man thinks over it, he sees that he was a drop of semen, which is detestable. Then the Designer Lord drew a wonderful picture! He formed the heart, liver, brain and all other parts and organs of body. Then see the arrangement of bones from a fluid and that too in a dark and uneven place. In the words of Quran: In three-fold darkness of the umbilical membrane, the womb and the abdomen.

Is it ever possible that all this should happen automatically and without any higher power? Can there be an effect without a cause, a

creation without a creator? Reason and intelligence do not accept this. Such a wonderful creation! The more man ponders over his own creation, more he understands and realizes the Might of God.

The second rising must also occur

Regarding the second rising or the Hereafter, after man pays attention, he sees that first he was an embryo. The semen came out of the passage. It contained or it was made up of liquids spread all over the body. It is only by the Might of God that these liquid particles gather in semen. That is why ejaculation makes the whole body sluggish.

According to a narration, they once asked the Imam ('a), "Why is it so that after urination, it is enough purification to wash only the organ and parts to be washed during ablution, whereas ejaculation requires washing of the entire body?" Imam replied, "Particles of semen come from all the parts of the body."

On another occasion too he (man) was diffused and scattered because semen is obtained from food that man eats. A portion of it also is released in the form of semen. What was his food? Rice, wheat and vegetables, which also were scattered in the earth. These scattered particles got together to form food. They entered the body of the father and then gathered in the form of semen at one place. Thus you have gone through collection and scattering twice during your life. So, after your death also, your body will get scattered and again recollected. Are you astonished at this third occasion?

Does not man see that We have created him from the small seed?
(36:77)

In the next verse also He says:

And he strikes out a likeness for Us and forgets his own creation.
(36:77)

That is, he has forgotten his own creation and therefore, astonishingly asks as to how God will gather or recollect the rotten bones?

Mention of the first and the last condition removes ego

The third benefit of mentioning man's origin is improvement of man himself. He realizes that he is born of a despicable drop. His beginning was dirty and smelly. So will be his corpse, dirty and stinking. Then what is there to be proud of and to be egoistic?

One of the reforms that such admonition brings is submission to Almighty God and acceptance of every truth. When he thinks that in the beginning I was merely a drop. What did my Lord do to this drop? He gave eyes and ears.

There surely came over man a period of time when he was a thing not worth mentioning. (76:1)

He also provided a tongue, hands and feet. He remembers such great bounties of God and becomes thankful to the One Who granted all this. He should be thankful unless he is blind and deaf and does not understand how great and precious these bounties are.

How much submissive you should be to the Lord Who gave so many precious and invaluable bounties to you? One who denies this truth is, first of all, inimical to his own Lord. In fact he is denying God.

Then lo! he is an open disputant.

That is, he is an open enemy. O the one who is unmindful of your own origin! You say, "I am, but there is no God." How foolish and silly you are! You enter into altercation and hostility! This is because you do not think. Otherwise you will be thankful, not hostile. You must never forget your original and initial weakness so that you may not become a rebel like this.

Your rebellion is because of ignorance, negligence, and unmindfulness. *Tafsir Ruhul Bayan* has mentioned an Arabic proverb:

A fellow didn't know shooting. I gave him daily lessons. When he was able to shoot, he shot, first of all, me. The one who knew nothing of poetry, when I taught poetry, he first of all, sang in my condemnation.

A third example

I saw a puppy and I brought him home to feed. When it grew up, first of all, it has bitten me!

Man's condition is also like this. He had nothing and God gave him everything. Now he denies God and does not accept the One Who gave him all kinds of bounties and abilities. He believes in his own being but not in God's existence. He does not accept his responsibility and forgets his connection with God, that is, the eternal self-existence of God. He believes in self-reliance and independence for himself, which in itself is blasphemy, and finally he does not submit to Truth.

Chapter 31

77-80

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

Does not man see that We have created him from the small seed? Then lo! he is an open disputant. And he strikes out a likeness for Us and forgets his own creation. Says he: Who will give life to the bones when they are rotten? Say: He will give life to them Who brought them into existence at first, and He is cognizant of all creation, He Who has made for you the fire (to burn) from the green tree, so that with it you kindle (fire). (36:77-80)

Seeing with mind and heart is more important

Did not man see what We created him from? The Arabic word for “see” is “Yara” whose apparent meaning is seeing with the eye, but here it means seeing with the eye of intelligence or mind, because, it is more important and more powerful than seeing with physical eyes. Knowledge gained from physical sources can be faulty and the eye is more likely to err, but knowledge is important. If a thing is seen and it causes or provides knowledge then it is right. Many a time it so happens that there are things before ones eyes but one cannot know about them. You must also have experienced this. You cannot pay attention, because, mind is somewhere else. So, seeing with the eye is of any value only when it results in knowledge and understanding. Eyes cause mistakes in understanding on a number of occasions. When one spins a fireball speedily you see a circle of fire but actually there is only a single fireball. The effect of spinning creates an illusion of a circle of fire.

Thus what is most important is to understand the fact. “Does not man see” means that he has not known or understood the absolute truth, which is higher than physical perception? We created him from semen. Now he is arguing, quarreling and contending with Us! He cites an example and dispersing rotten bones, asks, “Who can enliven these powdered bones?”

Particles of the body are not beyond the knowledge of God

Say: He will give life to them Who brought them into existence at first... (36:79)

Meaning that One Who created him first and brought him into existence from non-existence will create once again. Is the second creation more difficult than the first one? On the first occasion, even the particles of bones were not there. If it is said that these particles are scattered at various places, He replies:

...and He is cognizant of all creation...

He is more knowledgeable about each and every creation of His. Everything is included in the knowledge of God. In the next verse, He gives a fine description to mention the vastness of His knowledge. Whenever one is astonished, if one is reminded of God's limitless power, it becomes easy for him to understand. It is wrong for man to try to measure the power of God on the basis of his little knowledge. For your little power it may be difficult to recreate man from dust, but God's might cannot be measured in this way. He Who created once can create it again.

Fire from vegetation

God creates for you green and dry trees. Water and fire are opposites. But the Mighty Hand of God brought water and fire together at one place without fire destroying water or water destroying fire.

He Who has made for you the fire (to burn) from the green tree, so that with it you kindle (fire). (36:80)

Generally commentators have said that here it means trees of Narkh and Afaa, which are found in Arabia. There is a special quality in them, that if two of their pieces are rubbed together they produce fire. They used to serve as matchsticks, as rubbing them together produced fire.

...so that with it you kindle (fire).

That is, it becomes your lighter or igniter. In olden days, when there were no matches people used flint stone and these two trees also served as matchsticks. Generally, all trees have water and fire in them. The

matter, which causes fire, is there in all. Of course, fire appears after the subjugation of its wetness. It is either dried up or the heat of sun subjugates that wetness or liquidity. Thus what the commentators have said about the Narkh and Afaa trees, is apparently on account of their being lighters of that time. Otherwise, this quality is present in every tree.

Thereafter, God reminds, on the whole, of truths about the machinery of heavens (skies) and the earth.

Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like of them? Yea! and He is the Creator (of all), the Knower. (36:81)

Cannot the One Who created the grand universe, along with innumerable spheres in space, create their lives (from men)? There are in the space thousands of galaxies. In every galaxy there are thousands of spheres and the distance between them must be measured in terms of light years!

O the one whose greatness is seen in the skies. (Supplication)

It is narrated that once Imam Reza ('a) said, "What God has created on earth is a mere drop when compared with the first sky (heaven). What is in the first sky if compared with the second sky is like a drop in a sea. Such is the truth with regard to the skies upto the seventh one and the Arsh (The Divine Empyrean)..." "Can man say how many ants are there in a street? It is mentioned about Baitul Mamoor that God daily creates seventy thousand angels. They come into the said house (Baitul Mamoor) and leave it. This continues constantly in such a way that their next turn will not come until the Day of Judgment. So, God knows everything about His creations.

It is mentioned in *Nahjul Balagha*: An army of angels is always in a state of standing up and an army in bowing and in army in prostration. A group is constantly weeping due to fear of God.

He has created everything and Only He knows His creations and His great friends. Otherwise, it is impossible for others to reckon, count or compute them.

Chapter 32

78-81

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

And he strikes out a likeness for Us and forgets his own creation. Says he: Who will give life to the bones when they are rotten? Say: He will give life to them Who brought them into existence at first, and He is cognizant of all creation, He Who has made for you the fire (to burn) from the green tree, so that with it you kindle (fire). Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like of them? Yea! and He is the Creator (of all), the Knower. (36:78-81)

Man's decisions are based on limited knowledge

We were discussing about the deniers of Hereafter and the Day of Judgment. Man looks at the machinery of the universe with his short sight and issues statements or decisions. He says, "A man who died has become dust. The dust has got scattered and then transformed into other matters. How can these scattered elements be recollected or gathered again? How can a body be reconstructed? How can it be re-enlivened?" Then he thinks about the Day of Judgment and expresses wonder on Paradise. Today, there are four milliard people. What about their number from the beginning to end? How can so many people be accommodated in Paradise or Hell?

Such vain thoughts make him deny what God says in the Holy Quran. We have said earlier that Ibne Abi Khalaf once came with Abu Jahl, crushed a bone with his hand and scattered its particles saying, "Who will make this alive when it has totally rot and scattered far and wide?"

Its reply is only one sentence, "Look at the absolute and limitless powder and might of God." Unless man does not realize this Might of God, he cannot but express such astonishment. There are three statements about these verses: One, attention to the origin of man's body.

Who brought them into existence at first...

That is One Who created him for the first time. What was his beginning? There was neither bone nor flesh, neither a vein nor skin. One Who constructed man with these things will reconstruct him once again. Dispersion or scattering of particles never takes them out of God's knowledge. As regards doubts about the eater and the eaten one also, it is said that the original elements are preserved, wherever they may be.

...and He is cognizant of all creation,

Second statement:

He Who has made for you the fire (to burn) from the green tree, so that with it you kindle (fire).

The maker is the same who devised it in such a manner that the green tree (Afaa) when pressed, water comes out of it. But when its branch is pressed and rubbed with the branch of the Narkh tree, sparks and fire come out. Can He then not make the dead alive again? He can surely reconstruct man from his scattered particles.

Creation of the skies is more wonderful than the creation of man

The third statement:

Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like of them? Yea! and He is the Creator (of all), the Knower.

Here is a rhetorical question. Would the One Who created heavens and the earth not be able to enliven the dead? The machinery of heavens is much greater than the creation of man and earth and whatever is in it.

Certainly the creation of the heavens and the earth is greater than the creation of the men, but most people do not know. (40:57)

There are innumerable heavenly bodies in the outer space and some of them are millions of times bigger than earth. Only God knows what is therein. They move in a fixed manner and determined distances are maintained between them. There are also millions of galaxies and their orbits. Again every galaxy has millions of suns, some of them being millions of times bigger than our sun, which is one million and three hundred thousand times bigger than our earth.

Light travels at a speed of three thousand kilometers per second and sun's light takes eight minutes and eighteen seconds to reach earth. How long is the distance? There also are stars so distant that it would take a light year for their light to reach us. For some it would take a hundred light years, some, a thousand light years, some even a million light years just to be seen by us. There are even some stars whose light, since their creation, has not yet reached us yet.

It is said that if a train is sent from earth to reach, say our sun, it would require 350 years to reach there. If they shoot a missile to the sun it would take twelve years to hit there.

Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth...

Is not the One Who is the Creator of such huge heavenly bodies, able to make the like of them? Here "them" means "Like man".

Grades of man and substitutes of that which cannot be dissolved

Another reason of saying, "the like of them", according to some researchers, is such that it requires a little foreword. It is that man has stages. His first stage is the material body: Flesh, bones and skin. Another stage is the facsimile body, which is devoid of matter.

The third stage is breathing and the fourth is soul and intelligence. From these, some are in the same first stage, which is always subject to changes. The rest of the stages are invariable. First when man is created, the food that man eats is digested and it assimilates into the body. The food, which is taken, takes its place. When one becomes ill one is unable to digest food and thus one becomes lean and thin. The body gets diluted and it has no substitute. In brief, food turns into blood and the foodstuff reaches every part of the body.

In other words, the body, systematically and regularly, undergoes changes. It gets diluted and is replaced by another thing. Thus this flesh and skin is in a state of constant change. That which grants it unity and synthesis is a soul or a spirit. Souls, intellect and the facsimile body are such that they never change. Rather they inch towards perfection. Our present body is like or similar to the body thirty or forty years ago, it is not 'the same body'.

What is resurrected is 'the similar body' not 'the body'

When man dies, the body made of flesh and skin turns into dust. But the similar body and its soul and spirit remain as they were. In Qiyamat the body with flesh and skin will appear with changes. The body of Hereafter will be a body that will not have impurities and its

requirements. In our present body, if we do not wash and shave for two or three weeks, or if it does not get sleep, if its impurities (excreta etc) are not driven out, it causes illness and trouble. In the body of the Hereafter there will be no such impurities and the body would be refined.

About the refinement of body in Hereafter, Imam Sadiq ('a) is reported to have said, "The body of a pious man is like gold mixed with dust. To make it arise, come rain. Then those golden particles of a believer's body get reconstructed and are brought to the Gathering Field."

The body of the Hereafter is like the worldly body, not exactly the worldly body. Hence, as explained earlier, our body of today is 'like our body' which was thirty or forty years ago, not exactly that body. Thereafter, the Lord Almighty says:

Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like of them?

That is God is able to create similar bodies, though the soul, spirit and mind or intelligence are the same.

Position of the eye and the extra intestine

Yea! and He is the Creator (of all), the Knower.

Yes, it is so. God is able and He is very creative (Creator of everything), very wise. Gods being the Creator is in the sense of His innumerable creations, His multiple actions having no limit. The machinery of creation (universe) has no limits. He is Wise. Wisdom is from Him. When you look at this vast machinery, you realize that its Creator is Most Wise. Is the Creator of my body and your body Wise or not? Had the eye been placed on the chest, besides looking ugly, the aim of it would not have been fulfilled. Even if all the intelligent persons join together to construct a better body, it is not possible to do so.

All sensible people agree that there is no fault of any kind in the construction of this body. Nothing is more than necessary in it. So much so that the extension of a tube or intestine, which was, formerly being looked upon as unnecessary, is now considered essential; that is, its existence is necessary to avoid appendicitis. It is not only in excess, but it is also useful.

Is not the God, Whose knowledge and intelligence like this, able to recreate!

Chapter 33

82-83

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful

His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it: Be, so it is. Therefore glory be to Him in Whose hand is the kingdom of all things, and to Him you shall be brought back. (36:82-83)

Man's limited ability is in the matter of discovery, not creation

In the foregoing verse, replying to the question of the deniers of Resurrection who used to say, "How a rotten and disintegrated body will be made alive again", God says, "Why God, Who created heavens and the earth will not be able to create you again?"

In this verse, He describes the reality of His power or might so that man may understand that God is above everything and everyone. Every person who lives in a certain limited place thinks that the outer world (to be faced after death) has also such limits. He is not able to understand the absolute Might and Power of Almighty God. For obtaining agricultural produce, man needs and requires a number of things like tools, insecticides, water and ploughing materials etc. and then he must work with these tools. Look and think of every industry and you will realize that what man does is only employ and arrange the existing things. He is not creating any of them. His abilities are limited. Even for making a wooden board he has to obtain a number of materials. Only then can he prepare a board. Thus, his ability is limited and he cannot create something from nothing. He only reconstructs the available things and that too under certain conditions.

God does not require any time to do or create something

The Might of God is such that He brings into existence, all that which did not exist.

His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it: Be, so it is. (36:82)

It is the absolute Might of God that, when He desires something He merely says, 'Be' and it is there at once, within no time. This is mentioned in the Holy Quran at several places. The command is to bring into existence. The Arabic "Fa" is a conjunction. When He says, "Be", it becomes. Of course, what is meant here is not the oral command because commanding is possible only to something, which already exists to obey the command.

Amirul Mo-mineen ('a) says, "The thing, which He desires, comes into existence instantly." So "say" means desires. In Hereafter also, it is thus. As soon as He desires, the man becomes alive again once, without requiring any time, without needing any means. Man cannot do like this.

In the world of creation stages are in the subject, not in the action

Here it needs to be reminded that the action of God in creation is of two types, in the material world and in the super natural world. What is in the world of nature, matter and property, has stages. The stages are in the subject, not in the action. God's action does not require stages. For the material world, it is necessary, as decided by God, that, for example, seed is planted. After some time it grows. Half of it remains under ground to become base and root and another half comes out of earth to turn into trunk. Again it takes time to bear fruits.

Likewise it requires four months for the embryo to develop into a human body. This is not due to any delay in God's desire. Rather, His desire is such. It is not that if God wants something it becomes or results after some time. It is His desire that material things must come into being in stages.

Surely We have created everything according to a measure. (54:49)

So the original creation of heavens and earth was completed in six ages or periods of time.

And certainly We created the heavens and the earth and what is between them in six periods and there touched Us not any fatigue. (50:38)

It was the wish of Allah that things should come out in stages and gradually. However, with regard to the world of commands it happens instantly. The palaces available to the Faithful in paradise get constructed instantly. Everything comes into being at once, merely at the will of

Allah. The souls are also like that. Thus the divine will, in the case of supernatural things is such.

And Our command is but one, as the twinkling of an eye. (54:50)

Qiyamat also is like that. As soon as He wishes, all get up on the their feet.

Sovereignty over everything is the specialty of God

Therefore glory be to Him in Whose hand is the kingdom of all things, and to Him you shall be brought back. (36:83)

Holy and defectless is God in Whose Hands is the control of all things. "In His Hands" means in His Power. Power is mentioned as Hand by way of proverbial use. To be in hand means to be able to use. Kingship or rule on every particle among all particles is for God. The kingdom and rule of Only One God is established over all the parts and particles of the universe.

...my Lord and your Lord; there is no living creature but He holds it by its forelock... (11:56)

That is the rein of every affair and everyone is in His power.

Some have also said that "kingdom" means inner control; meaning the reality and real life of every being is in the powerful hands of God. His "kingdom" is forever. Every open and secret thing is under His Power. The existence and standing of everything is with God. So long as God wished the "kingdom" remains or exists. When He would wish that it should not remain existent, all and everything would vanish.

The best news for the faithful is his return to God

...and to Him you shall be brought back. (36:83)

The return is to God.

And Allah's is the unseen in the heavens and the earth, and to Him is returned the whole of the affair; (11:123)

This is mentioned at several places in Quran. For a believer this is the best of good tidings just as it is the worst and most frightening warning for the unbeliever.

O Believer! Your return is to the Most Kind and the Most Rewarding Allah. O oppressor! Your return too is to the wrathful and revenging God.

So, O believers! Come with enthusiasm and do your deeds for God, as you are to return only to Him. O oppressors, tyrants, and despots! You also are warned. Repent over your misdeeds and compensate for the past because your return also is to Him. Do not be forgetful of God.

But, generally such admonitions do not move a proud person. Arrogance has destroyed him and he is not afraid of anything.

Chapter 34

Sura al Yasin

(1) Ya Seen. (2) I swear by the Quran full of wisdom. (3) Most surely you are one of the messengers. (4) On a right way. (5) A revelation of the Mighty, the Merciful. (6) That you may warn a people whose fathers were not warned, so they are heedless. (7) Certainly the word has proved true of most of them, so they do not believe. (8) Surely We have placed chains on their necks, and these reach up to their chins, so they have their heads raised aloft. (9) And We have made before them a barrier and a barrier behind them, then We have covered them over so that they do not see. (10) And it is alike to them whether you warn them or warn them not: they do not believe. (11) You can only warn him who follows the reminder and fears the Beneficent Allah in secret; so announce to him forgiveness and an honorable reward. (12) Surely We give life to the dead, and We write down what they have sent before and their footprints, and We have recorded everything in a clear writing. (13) And set out to them an example of the people of the town, when the messengers came to it. (14) When We sent to them two, they rejected both of them, then We strengthened (them) with a third, so they said: Surely we are messengers to you. (15) They said: You are naught but mortals like ourselves, nor has the Beneficent Allah revealed anything; you only lie. (16) They said: Our Lord knows that we are most surely messengers to you. (17) And nothing devolves on us but a clear deliverance (of the message). (18) They said: Surely we augur evil from you; if you do not desist, we will certainly stone you, and there shall certainly afflict you a painful chastisement from us. (19) They said: Your evil fortune is with you; what! if you are reminded! Nay, you are an extravagant people. (20) And from the remote part of the city there came a man running, he said: O my people! follow the messengers; (21) Follow him who does not ask you for reward, and they are the followers of the right course; (22) And what reason have I that I should not serve Him Who brought me into existence? And to Him you shall be brought back; (23) What! shall I take

besides Him gods whose intercession, If the Beneficent Allah should desire to afflict me with a harm, shall not avail me aught, nor shall they be able to deliver me? (24) In that case I shall most surely be in clear error: (25) Surely I believe in your Lord, therefore hear me. (26) It was said: Enter the garden. He said: O would that my people had known (27) Of that on account of which my Lord has forgiven me and made me of the honored ones!(28) And We did not send down upon his people after him any hosts from heaven, nor do We ever send down. (29) It was naught but a single cry, and lo! they were still. (30) Alas for the servants! there comes not to them an messenger but they mock at him. (31) Do they not consider how many of the generations have We destroyed before them, because they do not turn to them? (32) And all of them shall surely be brought before Us. (33) And a sign to them is the dead earth: We give life to it and bring forth from it grain SQ they eat of it. (34) And We make therein gardens of palms and grapevines and We make springs to flow forth in it, (35) That they may eat of the fruit thereof, and their hands did not make it; will they not then be grateful? (36) Glory be to Him Who created pairs of all things, of what the earth grows, and of their kind and of what they do not know. (37) And a sign to them is the night: We draw forth from it the day, then lo! they are in the dark; (38) And the sun runs on to a term appointed for it; that is the ordinance of the Mighty, the Knowing. (39) And (as for) the moon, We have ordained for it stages till it becomes again as an old dry palm branch. (40) Neither is it allowable to the sun that it should overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day; and all float on in a sphere. (41) And a sign to them is that We bear their offspring in the laden ship. (42) And We have created for them the like of it, what they will ride on. (43) And if We please, We can drown them, then there shall be no succorer for them, nor shall they be rescued (44) But (by) mercy from Us and for enjoyment till a time. (45) And when it is said to them: Guard against what is before you and what is behind you, that mercy may be had on you. (46) And there comes not to them a communication of the communications of their Lord but they turn aside from it. (47) And when it is said to them: Spend out of what Allah has given you, those who disbelieve say to those who believe: Shall we feed him whom, if Allah please, He could feed? You are in naught but clear error. (48) And they say: When will this threat come to pass, if you are truthful? (49) They wait not for aught but a single cry which will overtake them while they yet contend with one another. (50) So they shall not be able to make a bequest, nor shall they return to their families. (51) And the trumpet shall be blown, when lo! From their

graves they shall hasten on to their Lord. (52) They shall say: O woe to us! who has raised us up from our sleeping-place? This is what the Beneficent Allah promised and the messengers told the truth. (53) There would be naught but a single cry, when lo! they shall all be brought before Us; (54) So this day no soul shall be dealt with unjustly in the least; and you shall not be rewarded aught but that which you did. (55) Surely the dwellers of the garden shall on that day be in an occupation quite happy. (56) They and their wives shall be in shades, reclining on raised couches. (57) They shall have fruits therein, and they shall have whatever they desire. (58) Peace: a word from a Merciful Lord. (59) And get aside today, O guilty ones! (60) Did I not charge you, O children of Adam! that you should not serve the Shaitan? Surely he is your open enemy, (61) And that you should serve Me; this is the right way. (62) And certainly he led astray numerous people from among you. What! could you not then understand? (63) This is the hell with which you were threatened. (64) Enter into it this day because you disbelieved. (65) On that day We will set a seal upon their mouths, and their hands shall speak to Us, and their feet shall bear witness of what they earned. (66) And if We please We would certainly put out their eyes, then they would run about groping for the way, but how should they see? (67) And if We please We would surely transform them in their place, then they would not be able to go on, nor will they return. (68) And whomsoever We cause to live long, We reduce (him) to an abject state in constitution; do they not then understand? (69) And We have not taught him poetry, nor is it meet for him; it is nothing but a reminder and a plain Quran, (70) That it may warn him who would have life, and (that) the word may prove true against the unbelievers. (71) Do they not see that We have created cattle for them, out of what Our hands have wrought, so they are their masters? (72) And We have subjected them to them, so some of them they have to ride upon, and some of them they eat. (73) And therein they have advantages and drinks; will they not then be grateful? (74) And they have taken gods besides Allah that they may be helped. (75) (But) they shall not be able to assist them, and they shall be a host brought up before them. (76) Therefore let not their speech grieve you; surely We know what they do in secret and what they do openly. (77) Does not man see that We have created him from the small seed? Then lo! he is an open disputant. (78) And he strikes out a likeness for Us and forgets his own creation. Says he: Who will give life to the bones when they are rotten? (79) Say: He will give life to them Who brought them into existence at first, and He is cognizant of all creation (80) He Who has

made for you the fire (to burn) from the green tree, so that with it you kindle (fire). (81) Is not He Who created the heavens and the earth able to create the like of them? Yea! and He is the Creator (of all), the Knower. (82) His command, when He intends anything, is only to say to it: Be, so it is. (83) Therefore glory be to Him in Whose hand is the kingdom of all things, and to Him you shall be brought back.



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