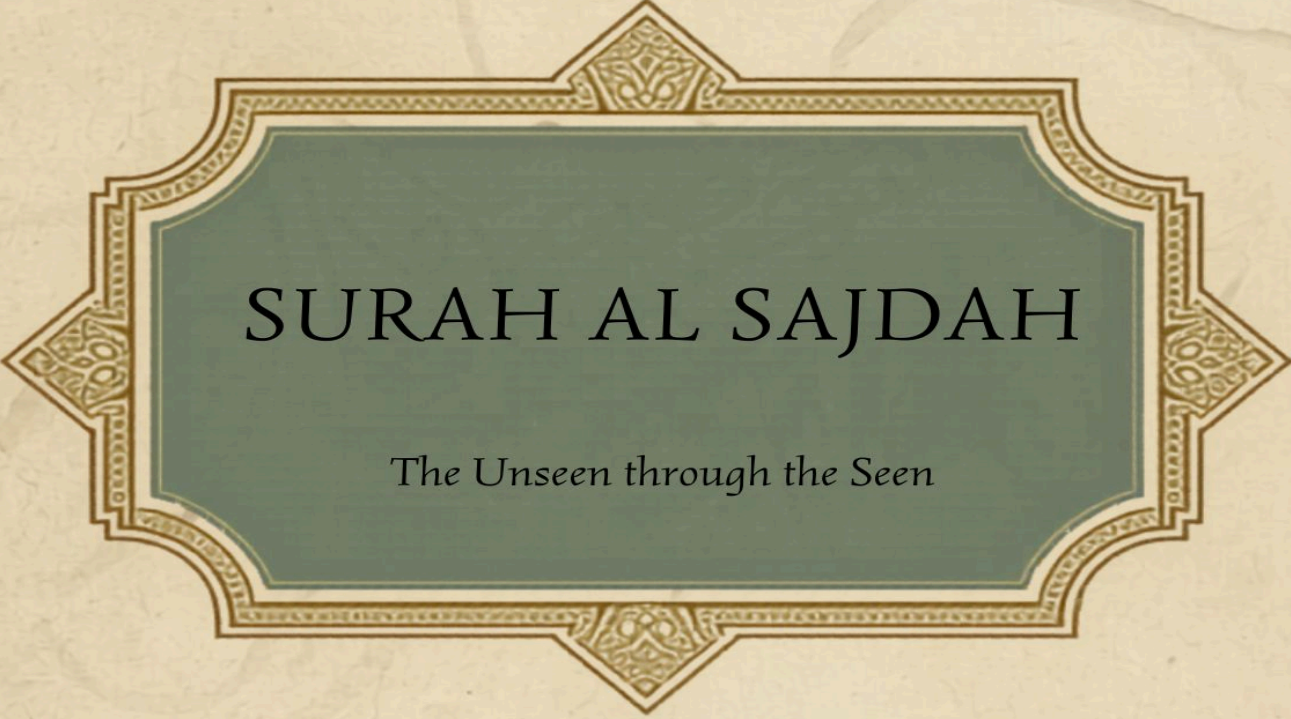


# LINGUISTIC MIRACLE

A Linguistic and Contextual Tafsir of the Quran



SURAH AL SAJDAH

*The Unseen through the Seen*

Muhammad Hamza Arshad

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*Surah As-Sajdah · The Unseen through the Seen*

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# Linguistic Miracle

## Uncovering the Quranic Miracle in its Language

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What if the true miracle of the Qur'an lies not only in its message—but in the precision, structure, and language through which that message is delivered?

*Linguistic Miracle* is an in-progress multi-volume tafsir series by Muhammad Hamza Arshad, who specializes in classical Arabic, dedicated to uncovering the Qur'an through the lens of classical Arabic linguistics. Covering the entire Qur'an, this project presents a detailed analysis of every surah—focusing on grammar (nahw), morphology (ṣarf), rhetoric (balāghah), and the subtle relationships between words, verses, and themes.

Rather than offering a conventional commentary, this series examines *how* the Qur'an speaks: why a particular word is used instead of another, how sentence structures shape meaning, and how seemingly separate verses are intricately connected.

Across the series, readers will explore:

- The precise linguistic choices that carry layered and often overlooked meanings
- The coherence between verses and surahs, revealing a unified and deliberate structure
- The role of rhetorical devices in producing unmatched eloquence
- The interaction between the seen and the unseen through language and imagery
- How classical lexicons and tafsir literature illuminate deeper dimensions of the text

Grounded in the works of early scholars such as Qurtubi, Tabari, Baghawi, Al-Razi, Al-Alusi and Ibn Ashur etc, as well as classical lexicons, this series bridges tradition with a focused linguistic methodology in English.

This is not a simplified tafsir nor a thematic summary. It is a systematic attempt to engage the Qur'an at the level of its language—where its precision, depth, and inimitability become most apparent.

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*Read the Qur'an—not just for what it says, but for how it says it.*

Author: Muhammad Hamza Arshad

Bachelors of Arts in Arabic

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the *Rahman*, the *Rahim*

سورة السجدة

Surah Al-Sajdah

The Prostration

*The Unseen through the Seen*

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## Verse 1 • ۱

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آلَم

*Alif Laam Meem*

This Surah will present signs and proofs for the truthfulness of the Quran, the Prophet, and the Quranic message of the final reckoning of deeds on Judgement Day. It will do so by appealing to real life phenomena such as the barren earth becoming fertile again by means of rain. These letters symbolize that. Just as these signs are present inside real-life phenomena that you yourself can see, so is this book composed of the same letters that you are familiar with. Just as life around you which you can visibly see is a sign for you, so is this book, made up of the same letters that you know, a sign for you.

Many Surahs of the Quran start with letters like these. One of the purposes of it is to challenge us. This book consists of the very same letters that you speak day to day in your life. Yet you are incapable of producing anything like it. This is a position held by many scholars.

I have mentioned elsewhere in Surah Taha that the letters that Allah uses at the beginning of a Surah sometimes carry the theme of the whole Surah. For example, every surah of the Quran that begins with the letter ط has the story of Moses inside it. Sometimes a Surah will begin with two letters **Tua** and **Seen**; and sometimes it will begin with three **Tua Seen Meem**. When it is three letters, the story of Moses will be mentioned in much more detail than the Surah that starts with two letters.

We also need to mention the Quranic challenge regarding producing a surah like it. It's not merely a matter of eloquence. The Qur'an itself issues a challenge: to produce even a single surah like it. What you will witness in this surah is indeed an unmatched and an inhuman level of eloquence—but the miracle of the Qur'an goes

beyond that. It lies not only in its expression, but in an achievement that no human effort has ever been able to rival.

The Quran turned desert barbarians into Saints who conquered the world. It changed an entire nation within two decades for the rest of history. The only way to describe the Arabs before the Quran is as barbarians. They'd wage war over petty small things for decades; bury their daughters alive; engage in lewd poetry as their pastime. The Quran came and turned these people into leaders and saints. Not just a handful of them, but the entire nation itself. They went on to become the very people who would fulfill God's promise to Abraham; a promise that the Jews and Christians failed for over 2,000 years. Our Prophet and his companions achieved inside two decades what the Jews and the Christians could not for 2,000 years. They conquered all the lands God promised to Abraham and raised the banner of absolute and perfect monotheism in these lands. These lands remain Muslim to this very day, and these are the very same lands the Jews hope to conquer under "Greater Israel."

They failed God and His promise. Muslims are the children of Abraham who carried his legacy, resurrected his religion from the dead, and spread it across the promised lands as well as the entire world. Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world and wherever it goes, Abraham is glorified. God's promise to Abraham has been fulfilled through the sons of Ishmael while the children of Isaac failed God, Abraham and His holy covenant.

So, produce a book that can achieve this. A book that can turn not a handful of men, but an entire nation of rabid barbarians into Godly saints who would conquer the world and spread God's truth across the horizon. Produce a book that would make a nation achieve in twenty years what others could not achieve thousands of years to this very day.

## Verse 2 • ٢

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تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ مِنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

*Descent of the Book while there is no doubt in it being from the Rabb of the Alamin.*

There are two opinions on the words **-no doubt in it**. One is that these words act as a **Haal** and the second that these words are an interjectory sentence. A **Haal** describes the state of something and the way I translated the verse above is considering it as a **Haal** because this reading seems to me to be consistent with what comes next.

An interjectory sentence is one that is interjected in the middle of an already complete sentence. In this reading, the actual sentence would be "**Descent of the Book from the Rabb of Alamin**" with the words **-no doubt in it-** interjected between and inside it.

The verse does not mention the name Allah, rather it mentions the word **Rabb**. **Rabb** is one of the names of Allah and means a caretaker and nurturer. The root of this word was used in the meaning of upbringing children and nurturing something. **Alamin** comes from the root **Ein Laam Meem** which at its root means knowledge and indication. As Zamakhshari pointed out, the Quran calls mankind and Jinn **Alamin** because they serve as a sign of Allah. They are proof of God's existence. They indicate that Allah exists.

The reason why Allah uses the word **Rabb** instead of mentioning his name **Allah** is to make a significant point. Since Allah is the Rabb, the caretaker, upbringer and the nurturer of mankind and Jinn, it necessitates that He sends down a book that serves to guide them, help them, rectify them, and lead them to the correct path. The revelation of the Quran is an act of kindness and love from Allah because He is our Rabb and He wants to nurture us and take care of us.

Lastly the word *Raib*- translated as doubt. *Raib* is somewhat different from a doubt. Arabic and Quran have another word for doubt - *shakk*. *Raib* (the word used in this ayah) is doubt mixed with uneasiness and tension. A doubt that constricts your chest and causes you discomfort. For example, if I told you that I did not drive to my school but walked to it, you can be doubtful about it but it is not something that will disturb you because it's a minor thing. But consider - God forbid - a spouse has doubts regarding the loyalty of her husband, then this is a doubt that disturbs and constricts the chest. This is *Raib*.

You cannot have doubts regarding the Quran from being God in a way that they disturb and constrict your chest. People can have passing thoughts that come and go like the wind; but if you study it deeply, no valid doubt- no *Raib*- will be left. This is something that you yourself will experience when you complete this Surah. The unmatched eloquence, structure and the manner of speech, leaves no doubt regarding its non-human authorship.

## Verse 3 • ۳

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أَمْ يَقُولُونَ افْتَرَاهُ ۚ بَلْ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لِتُنذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّا أَتَاهُمْ مِنْ  
نَذِيرٍ مِّن قَبْلِكَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُونَ

*Yet they say he invented it to cause corruption. Rather, it is the absolute truth from your Rabb; so you may warn a people of binding consequences to whom no warner came before you, so they may seek to become guided.*

Despite what came before in the last verse, these people accuse Muhammad of inventing the Quran to cause corruption. The word used here is *Iftiraa* which at its root was used for crafting or forming something with the specific intention of causing harm. Allah is the *Rabb* and this necessitates that He sends down a book to guide us and correct our lives. Despite this fact, they accuse Muhammad of wanting to cause corruption. How can the one who is your *Rabb*; who wants to take care of you, guide you and rectify your lives for good, want to cause corruption and harm? Is this not a necessary action on part of Allah that He sends down a book for your benefit? Yet you accuse Muhammad of inventing it?

The word *Haqq* is translated as *truth*. At its root, it means something that is solid, strong and upright. Truth is something that stands tall and remains firm regardless of what is said and transpires. It is not affected by the opinions of people or even by their rejection of it. Truth stands tall. It remains firm, solid and independent.

Allah uses the definite article with the word *Haqq* which creates two meanings.

1. It is the only and sole truth. There is nothing truthful or correct besides it.
2. It is the absolute truth. It is absolutely and perfectly strong, firm and solid. It is firmness of the kind that has no weakness or softness. It stands tall in a way nothing else can. It is firm and solid in a way that nothing else is. Given these

qualities, it also means that it will also stand any test, any accusation and challenge thrown at it since it is absolutely firm and solid.

Notice how the Surah transitions from *Rabb* of *Alamin* to Your *Rabb* in this verse. When Allah mentions the guidance of the entire nation, he says He is *Rabb* of the *Alamin* and when Allah is defending His prophet from accusations thrown at him, He says Your *Rabb* to the Prophet.

I translated *li tunzira* as 'so you may warn of binding consequences.' I kept true to the root meaning which was used for blood money or oaths that one binds himself to. The blood money becomes a binding consequence for committing a crime that necessitates it and when you make an oath, you are bound to it and if you break it, there will be consequences.

Simply put, *li tunzira* means that actions have consequences. You cannot just have your way in life. What you do will have consequences, good and bad. Allah describes this as the purpose of His prophet's mission. His mission is to convey to people that actions have consequences. If you do good, you will receive good and if you do evil, you shall pay the price. The prophet serves as a warner to people who do evil that your actions will bear bad consequences for you both here and in the next world.

*No warner came before you* -The word *nazeer* is translated as *warner*. The Quran uses two forms of this word; *nazeer* and *munzir*. *Nazeer* is more stronger than *munzir* and this is the word Allah uses in this ayah. The Arabs did not need a *munzir*, but rather a *nazeer*, who would strongly, firmly and patiently warn them of the consequences of their actions. The pattern of the word *nazeer* implies something that remains constant and stable. The prophet's role is to constantly and consistently warn people. He is to remain a constant source of guidance and warning. His mission is not to simply give a sermon and be done with it. Rather, his mission is to act as a warner; constantly and consistently, at all times and places. A heavy burden indeed.

*So they may seek to become guided*- So they may desire to do those actions that have good consequences for them; not bad and so they may desire to take the path to

their *Rabb* who wants to be kind and loving to them. Who wants to rectify and correct their lives and affairs.

## Verse 4 • ٤

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ  
أَسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ۗ مَا لَكُمْ مِّن دُونِهِ مِن وَلِيٍّ وَلَا شَفِيعٍ ۗ أَفَلَا  
تَتَذَكَّرُونَ

*Allah alone created the heavens, the earth and what is between them in six days then Istiwa over the throne. You have, besides him, no Wali nor a Shafi'. Will you not strongly consider?*

I have not translated *Istiwa* because of creedal implications. This will be explained later.

After mentioning that the purpose of the Quran is to guide people, Allah mentions the central pillar of guidance; monotheism; as if to say that this is what the center, core and heart of guidance is, that Allah alone created everything and He alone is the ruler.

*Six days-* There are three possibilities. One is that these are days like our days, second that these are Six days where each day equals a thousand years; and the third that these are six stages as opposed to days.

The Quran has stated that one day with God is as a thousand years with us. So six days here could mean six days as in how we experience them or it can refer to six thousand years where each day equals a thousand years. The third opinion is based on the fact that the word *Yum* in Arabic, can linguistically mean any period of time, not necessarily a day. This has attestations in the Quran as well such as in Surah 8:16. In this reading, it would mean that Allah created the universe in six stages, one after the other; stage after stage, realm after realm, level after level, creation after creation. I hold this third position. The Quran has not mentioned

how long each stage took and we do not indulge in it either. Each of the six stages could have taken billions of years. Only Allah knows.

Allah has set a pattern of cause and effect in this world. This was mentioned in the last verse as well when we covered the word *Nazeer*. The Prophet's role was to be a *Nazeer* i.e to warn people that actions are tied to consequences. Similarly, Allah created the universe with this chain of cause and effect, stage after stage. One stage completes, then another starts and so on. One stage leads to another, and serves as the root and cause of the next stage.

This is profound. The previous verse described the main role of the Prophet was to be a *Nazeer*. To warn people of this cycle of action and consequence. What we do, good or bad, has consequences. This is a chain of cause and effect. In the same manner, based on this same principle of cause and effect, was this universe created. Cause and effect. One stage was the cause of the next stage and so on until six stages were completed. Islam is merely warning you that the same principle with which the universe exists, must also exist inside the Earth and our lives since we are a part of this universe. You are here, you can see the universe, it came into existence under the principle of cause and effect, which applies to you and your actions as well. Since the earth is part of the universe, this principle necessarily extends to this earth and to you. You cannot escape it. Then why do you deny Islam? Islam's central message is the same principle. That your actions have consequences.

*Istiwa over the throne*- We affirm for Allah what He affirms for Himself without likening Allah to creation and without asking 'how' (how did Allah do *Istiwa*). Allah is above the throne. We affirm *Uluw* for Allah believing that Allah is exalted above all creation.

In the Quran, whenever Allah has mentioned the creation of the universe in six stages, He has mentioned *Istiwa* above the throne. Allah created the universe in six stages and He is above the throne. Distinct and separate from all creation. Nothing of creation can be applied to Him.

You have, besides Him, no *Wali* nor *Shafi'* - These two words, *Wali* and *Shafi'* are closely related to each other in their meanings. The root of the word *Wali* means closeness, adherence and taking charge while the root of the word *Shafi'* means pairing, mediating and intervening. *Wali* is direct, continuous, and binding allegiance while *Shafi'* is occasional and intermediary support. You do not have any true *Wali*- a continuous and unwavering source of support and help - nor any *Shafi'*: even an occasional supporter or helper. If you don't have a *Wali*, you could have a *Shafi'* because *Wali* implies constant unwavering allegiance and support. If such support does not exist, it is possible for an occasional, intermediary support to be available; but Allah negates even that. There is simply no way out. There is simply no option but Allah Himself. This will be referred back to in ayah 20 where the disbelievers will not find anyone to help them inside Hell-fire.

*Will you not strongly consider*- This is phrased as a question because what is being said is "After knowing all of this, will you STILL not deeply think and ponder over the truth of this book?" Will you not strongly consider this fact and hence, rectify your actions knowing that they will bear consequences for you?

We explained above that what this book is mainly conveying is the same thing rooted inside the universe and its creation itself. You all can see the universe and it is impossible for you to deny it. This book is merely telling you that the same principle applies to you and your daily lives since you are all a part of this universe. Actions are tied to consequences, effects to causes. We do not experience the consequences of all of our actions in this world do we? Many criminals live a life of luxury. Many people get away with it. It seems as if their actions did not bear any consequence for them. But since this principle is rooted inside the universe itself, it must hold true, even for these people. How? The day of resurrection. That is the day when every single action meets its reaction. Every single cause sees its effect. Every single action faces its consequences. Hence, the truth of this Book and the truth of Judgement day itself - a core Islamic belief - is rooted in the very fabric and creation of the universe itself. The same universe which you see each day and inside which you live. You cannot deny the existence

of this universe can you? Neither should you deny this book and the day of resurrection.

You will see that the conversation shifts to Judgement day itself. Perfectly consistent with the context.

Lastly, the word **تتذكرون** - translated as - '**strongly consider**' - has the emphatic form. There are two ways to say it, *tazakkarun* with one *Ta* and *tatazakkharun* with two *Ta*. Here it has two *Ta*, which implies repetition and consistency. The call is to consider and reflect on this strongly and consistently; not just a moment of reflection.

## Verse 5 • •

يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يَعْرُجُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ  
مِقْدَارُهُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مِّمَّا تَعُدُّونَ

He does *Tadbeer* of the *Amr* from heaven to the earth; *Thuma* it ascends to Him in a span one day of which is thousand years of what you count.

The argument continues. *Tadbeer* comes from the root *Daal Ba Ra* which means the back or extreme point of something.

*Tadbeer* means that Allah determines and ordains something from start to its extreme end; not leaving any loophole or anything left out in its planning, wisdom, its carrying out, and its result. For example, Allah sent down the Quran. He had determined and ordained the sending down of the Quran, from its start to its last verse completely, the stages in which it was revealed, how it was revealed, when each verse was revealed, down to its completion, leaving nothing unplanned or left out. Everything was preordained and set, from start to finish and everything happened according to his decree perfectly. Allah determines a matter by perfect planning, start to finish, by determining it's every single point in the best manner possible.

*Amr* comes from the root *Hamza Meem Ra* which at its root means an elevated structure whose top is thick and pointed while its bottom is spread out like a pyramid. In this context, *Amr* means something that comes from Allah directly, be it a command, decree or whatever. You can create the image in your head. At the top and above the pyramid is Allah and from him comes the *Amr* that spreads out below to creation. *Amr* is different from creation. Creation is created, while *Amr*, because it comes directly from Allah, is eternal. The Quran is an *Amr* of Allah because it comes directly from Him. It is revealed, not created. It is the speech and

word of God, uttered by Him, heard by the angel Gabriel and brought down to the Messenger.

The Quran clearly draws a distinction between the *Khalq* (creation) and the *Amr*:

أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ

*Listen! To Him belongs the creation (Khalq) and the Amr. Blessed be Allah,  
Master of Alamin.*

To better understand the difference between the *Khalq* and the *Amr*, consider the human body and the spirit inside it since that is what the surah will itself pivot to. The human body is a *creation (khalq)* of Allah while the spirit inside us, is an *Amr* of Allah. *Amr* is what gives life, purpose, utility and worth to creation. A body with no spirit becomes dead. This is the difference between *Khalq* and *Amr*. All creation is alive by the *Amr* of Allah.

Allah does *Tadbeer* of the *Amr*- Allah dictates and governs the *Amr* from start to its very extreme end. For example, the spirit inside of us, the *Ruh*, is an *Amr* of Allah as the Quran itself says:

وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا

*They ask you about the spirit (the Ruh), Say; The spirit is an Amr of my  
Master and you have been given but little knowledge.*

Allah first created man, then breathed into him the spirit. This spirit gives us life and our purpose with which we live. Allah has done *Tadbeer* of this. The spirit inside of us, the moment it was breathed into us, to the moment it will leave our bodies, to the moment it will come back to join our bodies again on Judgement day, all of this, has been perfectly calculated, set in stone, pre ordained, and pre determined by Allah with precise, perfect and infallible calculation and wisdom. This also includes whatever happens between these stages. Allah decrees a thing from start to finish, with perfect knowledge and wisdom of the beginning and the end. Then He sets the things to move according to His *tadbeer*. Allah has based this

entire universe, which includes our earth, on the principle of cause and effect. When He decrees something inside the universe or the Earth, He makes it follow this very cycle. This is what *Tadbeer* means in this context. When Allah decrees something, He sets off a cycle of cause and effect, that ultimately ends in fulfilling what Allah had decreed.

You will see that in the next verses when this surah will zero in on man's creation itself to explain the stages of creation. Just as Allah created this universe in stages, where each stage led to the other, so did He create us in the same, exact manner. As a case study of creation and the sending down of *Amr*, as Allah did with the entire universe, Allah will explain the creation of man in the coming verses.

We need to understand that elsewhere in the Quran Allah has said that whenever He decrees something, He only says Be and it is. This does not contradict what Allah has stated here. Allah has set this universe on this cycle of cause and effect. When He says Be, it sets off this cycle to bring into fruition what He wants. Secondly, Allah is all capable of everything and if He wants, He can break this cycle and make things come to pass immediately even inside this universe. This is how Prophets are given their miracles. For example, the Prophet Salih was given the miracle of a she-camel that came into being from a rock immediately. This was an example of Allah breaking this cycle of cause and effect and bringing things into existence immediately. The miracles that the prophets are given, break this cycle and that is why they are miracles to begin with. They break the rules of the universe, they break the norm. This is what makes a miracle, a miracle.

*Thuma* -I left it untranslated. It is normally understood to simply mean 'then' indicating an order in time but this is incorrect. This *thuma* can also be for التراخي *al-taraxi* which indicates the higher status of something. Allah does *Tadbeer* of all commands and decrees; and even greater is the fact that it ascends to it in a day, the span of a day in it is a thousand years of what you count.

*It ascends to Him in a span one day of which is thousand years of what you count.*

Regarding what Allah says of thousand years being equal to one day, I follow the position of Ibn Ashur:

وَمَعْنَى تَقْدِيرِهِ بِأَلْفِ سَنَةٍ أَنَّهُ تَحْصُلُ فِيهِ مِنْ تَصَرُّفَاتِ اللَّهِ فِي كَائِنَاتِ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ مَا لَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عَمَلِ النَّاسِ لَكَانَ حُصُولُ مِثْلِهِ فِي أَلْفِ سَنَةٍ، فَلَكَ أَنْ تُقَدِّرَ ذَلِكَ بِكَثْرَةِ التَّصَرُّفَاتِ، أَوْ بِقَطْعِ الْمَسَافَاتِ، وَقَدْ فُرِضَتْ فِي ذَلِكَ عِدَّةُ احْتِمَالَاتٍ. وَالْمَقْصُودُ: التَّنْبِيهُ عَلَى عِظَمِ الْقُدْرَةِ وَسَعَةِ مَلَكُوتِ اللَّهِ وَتَدْيِيرِهِ

*The meaning of its being measured as a thousand years is that within it occurs, from the acts of Allah's governance over the beings of the heavens and the earth, such matters that—if they were from human actions—the occurrence of their like would require a thousand years. Thus, you may estimate this either in terms of the abundance of divine acts, or the traversing of distances; and several possible interpretations have been proposed regarding this. The intended point is to draw attention to the immensity of divine power, the vastness of Allah's dominion, and His governance.*

The question then comes up regarding the word *ascend*. The ayah says that '*it ascends to Him (Allah)*'. What does this mean? What ascends? Many have said that it means that when Allah decrees something, He decrees it a thousand years before it happens. When it finally comes to pass, the angels ascend with its record and what happened towards Allah. I find this plausible but not convincing.

The next two verses will explain this themselves. One of the features of the Quran is that it explains itself. Many times, when things are not clear initially, the Quran will explain them itself. Allah will now immediately shift to mention the creation of the human being and in doing so, Allah will explain this verse itself.

## Verse 6 • ٦

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ذٰلِكَ عِلْمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْعَزِيزِ الرَّحِيْمِ

*Only He, who did all this, knows the unseen and the seen. The Azeez, the Raheem.*

The demonstrative noun in Arabic has the ability to contain qualities inside of it and hence how I translated it above. Most translations will normally translate it as "*That is the knower of the unseen and the seen....*" but this is incomplete.

Secondly, when two components of a sentence come together and both have the definite article, it creates exclusivity. Therefore, I added the word "*only*" in the translation.

*Azeez* comes from the root *Ein Dha Dha* which means something solid and unbreakable. *Azeez* is one of the names of Allah it means the entity who is utterly and completely strong and invincible; who overpowers and cannot be overpowered. Only His will dictates and rules. None can overwrite or stand against Him.

*Raheem* comes from the root *Ra Ha Meem* which literally means the womb of a mother. Motherly love is considered the strongest form of love a human being can feel towards another. Hence, this root denotes the strongest form of love and compassion despite what has been experienced. A mother loves the child despite the pain it gave her while she bore it in her stomach for nine months and despite the pain child birth brings. The mother almost dies during it yet she loves the child with no regards for it as if it never happened. The concept is of unconditional love regardless of what has been experienced. When it comes to Allah, we cannot harm Him but we disobey Him. Despite our disobedience, Allah still takes care of us and wants what is good for us. This is the concept of this root.

The ayah says that the one who did all this; created the heavens, the earth and whatever is between them in six stages, did *Istiwa* above the throne; sent down His *Amr* into the universe which He perfectly pre determined and pre ordained, with perfect planning, from the very start to its very end, only Him, only this entity, can know what can be seen by us and what cannot be seen. The all-knowing. Only such an entity can be all- knowing.

The fact that Allah is able to do *tadbeer* means that He possesses all knowledge since He is able to determine something from the very start down to its very last extreme point. One must possess all knowledge, from the beginning to the extreme end to do this. Next, one must be *Azeez* to do this. He must have the power to do it, set things in motion and then bring them to completion with no other entity able to step in and disrupt it. So these two meanings are already directly implied by what has come before. Then Allah describes Himself with another quality -*Raheem* which comes from the root that denotes the strongest form of love in Arabic language.

*Raheem* answers the question *why*. Allah created the universe in six stages, then does *tadbeer of the Amr*. Everything that Allah did and does, from the creation of the universe in six stages to the *tadbeer* of the *Amr*, is rooted in love. This is an act of love and kindness as Allah says in surah Hud:

إِلَّا مَنْ رَحِمَ رَبُّكَ ۚ وَلِذَلِكَ خَلَقَهُمْ

*Except the one to whom Allah showed Rahmah (the same root as Raheem);  
and for that did He create them.*

The creation of the universe, the *tadbeer of the Amr*, the cycle of cause and effect that Allah has set and ultimately, as we will see in the next verse, our creation itself, is rooted in love and kindness from God. *Tadbeer* is a continuous ongoing process. The previous verse used the word *Tadbeer* in the present tense. In Arabic, the present tense not only implies an action being done in the present, but also being done continuously, again and again. Why does Allah do all of this? Because He is kind and loving, more loving than a mother to her child. The word *Raheem*

has the definite article *al* with it which implies perfection and the highest and perfect form of this love.

This all is coming in response to the accusation of the disbelievers - that we still hear to this day - that the Prophet forged the Quran to cause corruption. After mentioning the cycle of cause and effect that created this universe to prove the existence of consequences for our actions and hence the truthfulness of Judgement day itself, Allah now mentions that He is *Raheem*. This book, the Quran, is not here to cause corruption. Rather it is sent down from the one who is the most loving of all. This book is an act of love and kindness, not corruption and evil intention. But there is also a warning to these disbelievers. Yes Allah is *Raheem*, but He is also *al Azeez*, the one who overpowers and cannot be overpowered. I am loving and kind and this book is an act of love from Me towards you all, but if you reject it, then I am the invincible, the all powerful who overpowers and cannot be overpowered. I have decided to send down this book (verse 2) and I have done a *tadbeer* of it. I have preordained its start and completion from its very start to its very last letter to be sent down and you cannot overpower Me in that nor do anything about it. Your plots against the prophet and the Quran will fail. If you stand against Me, you will lose because I am the *Azeez*.

## Verse 7 • ٧

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الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ<sup>ص</sup> وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنْسَانِ مِنْ طِينٍ

*The one who did Ihsan of everything He created. He began the creation of man from wet clay.*

*Ihsan* comes from the root *Ha Seen Nun* which means to purify something by removing anything impure from it. From this root comes the word *Husn* which means beauty. It is a beauty achieved because of intense purity, and it being free from anything impure.

Allah created the universe in six stages, then sent down His *Amr* with *tadbeer*- with purpose and direction, preordaining its start and end, setting a path that it takes to achieve that end and then making it follow that path with His wisdom. This is *Ihsan* in creation. When He created things, He sent down His *Amr* which gave these created beings life and purpose like how our spirit gives our bodies life. Creation is a hollow body and *Amr* is what gives life and purpose to these bodies. Then He did *tadbeer* of His *Amr*, i.e; He also set the purpose of the creation, decreed their end, and their path towards this end. Each creation has a purpose rooted in perfect Divine wisdom and Allah decrees this for each creation at the time of its creation. It is all planned, it is all accounted for, it is all pre ordained and pre-decreed. The beginning, the end and the path it will take towards that end, to achieve the purpose for which it was created. Every single thing, accounted for. This is the purity implied by the word *ihsan*. His creations are absolutely pure of all shortcomings such as leaving out details, not accounting for the end, creating without purpose, creating imperfectly, creating things not meant for their purpose, creating things that are inadequate to achieve their purpose, creating things without taking into account their end goal, creating things that are not protected from being altered by anyone other than Him (the *Azeez*), all of these are examples of impurities - of shortcomings.

Now the subject shifts to the creation of man. First, Allah described the creation of the universe, then His *tadbeer* that runs this universe, and now He zeros in on man himself; as if to say that man is the very center of it all. Everything that came before, leads to man, the very center and core of this universe. Allah did *Ihsan* of everything He created, and that includes man. The audience of all this is man himself, and hence it is only appropriate to zero in on his creation itself.

*He began man's creation from wet clay*- it does not say Allah created man from wet clay but rather He *began* man's creation from it. Just as Allah created the universe in stages, so did He create man, in stages. The first step is his creation from wet clay. Why wet clay? Because it can be fashioned and molded in any shape you desire without breaking the soil apart. Allah molded us into an entity of His desires. What He wanted us to do, what He set our purpose for, He molded and shaped us according to it.

ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِنْ سُلَالَةٍ مِّنْ مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ

*Then he made his progeny from an extract taken from disdained water*

The meaning is clear. Creation of man began with clay, then his progeny continued through the worthless water - semen. Notice the word *sulalah* which is translated as extract. It comes from the root *Seen Laam Laam* which means something that is extracted from something else. The pattern this word *sulalah* follows in this verse -*فعالة*- is also used to describe a small substance that is extracted or taken out from a large substance like how we extract the thickest and strongest part of date juice from its thinner version. Allah created the human progeny from a substance that was extracted from disdained water- from semen. The overall theme is to display the humble roots of man. Allah did not even make you from this worthless and disdained water, but from a small part of it. We know that it is the sperm inside semen that fertilizes the egg and only 2-5% of semen is composed of sperm and even among this small amount, a tiny fraction is capable of reaching and fertilizing the egg; but the theme of this verse is to display the humble roots of

man and the incredible divine power that can turn this small extract taken from worthless water, into human beings.

## Verse 8 • ۞

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Explained with the previous ayah.

## Verse 9 • ٩

ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوْحِهِ ۖ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ  
وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ ۗ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

*Thuma, He balanced him by breathing into him from His spirit. He made for you, hearing, perception and emotions. How little are you grateful!*

At the end of the Surah, Allah will connect this ayah with ayah 27 that mentions dead earth coming to life. You will see there how Allah connects not only these two verses, but also the whole Surah to present a holistic, uniform and complete picture.

We covered earlier that everything Allah creates has two parts. Creation (*khalq*) and *Amr*. When describing the creation of man, Allah described his creation from dirt and then from semen. This is *khalq*. Now, Allah will describe the *Amr*. The creation of man is presented as a case study of how Allah does *Ihsan* of everything He creates. The way He creates, *khalq* and *Amr*, makes it perfect as mentioned in his words *الذي أحسن كل شيء خلقه* (*The one who perfected everything that He created*)

First, you have the human body, created from dust, then Allah breathed into him His spirit - the *Ruh*.

*Thuma* here is *التراخي الرتبي* which is used to indicate something even more important. So, it is better translated as *-Even greater; He balanced him by breathing into him....*

What is meant by balancing? I have explained it in detail in Surah al Shams. To summarize, since our bodies are made up of dirt, its desires are directed towards this earth and whatever is in it. While the spirit of God inside us, desires Allah. One half of us desires this earth, while the other desires God. This is how we are

balanced. Islam has commanded us to fulfill the right of both the body and the spirit.

The two desires, of the Earth and of the Divine, are perfectly balanced inside man. Then Allah says He made FOR YOU, the hearing, the sights and the hearts. I highlighted FOR YOU since it is emphasized in the ayah itself. Allah made them for you. For your sake, for your benefit.

There is one thing to note here. Hearing is singular, while sights and hearts are plural. The Quran is primarily meant to be recited and hence heard by others, not read. Secondly, the word أَبْصَار is different from رَأَى. Both mean to see but بَصْر, the word used in this ayah, is much deeper. It is better translated as perception and understanding. You can look at something, but when you truly understand it and grasp its nature, this word is used. In other places, this word can simply be used in the meaning of understanding and perception. The Quran itself has used this root in those meanings.

Lastly, there are two words for hearts in the Quran, قَلْب and فؤاد.

قَلْب is the standard word for heart. Its root meaning is to flip or turn over. The heart is so called because of its nature to flip and change its state and feelings. So, the standard word for heart is قَلْب but when a heart is overcome with emotions, it is called فؤاد- the word used in this ayah.

So, the word 'hearing' is singular, but the words 'sights' and 'hearts' are plural. As mentioned above, 'hearing' here means the Quran. It is the primary subject as in ayah 2 you have the disbelievers accusing the Prophet of concocting the Quran to cause corruption, which was followed by a Divine response to their arguments. When people listen to the Quran, different people perceive it differently, which leads to different emotions in the hearts of different people which mainly drive how people act. This is why the hearing is singular and sights and hearts are plural.

A person may hear the Quran and be affected by it deeply and fall in love with it. Others may listen and be somewhat drawn yet skeptical. While others may hear it and outright deny it. While still others may hear it and not only deny it but speak out in hate against it. Different people will perceive it differently. Each of these perceptions will lead to different emotions inside the heart. The one who accepts it will feel peace, the skeptical one will feel doubtful, while the deniers will feel uneasy and some, even hate.

The question is why? Why will different people perceive it differently while the thing they are hearing is the same? Because they have broken the balance with which Allah created them. Allah created them and then balanced them with the *Ruh* to have equal desires of the Earth and the divine. Those who prefer the Earth and its desires, will deny the Quran, while those with a deeper meaning in life, will accept it.

Allah is answering the disbelievers who accused the Prophet of concocting the Quran with a straight rebuttal. It is not the Quran but you who are at fault. You have broken the balance with which I created you with. I ordained you to follow a balanced way of life where you take care of both your bodies and its desires and also of the spirit inside you. But you tend only to your bodies and have neglected the spirits I breathed into you. This negligence has led you to deny God's word. It is only natural. The *Ruh* is the divine inside of us. If you reject the divine inside of you, so will you deny the divine in the shape of God's word - the Quran.

And by doing this, *how little grateful have you become*. The spirit and the *Ruh* inside of you are a blessing of God yet look at you wasting this profound favor and blessing.

Lastly, Allah says that it is His spirit, His *Ruh*. As explained in Surah Shams, the word *Ruh* at its root, means comfort and bliss. When the Quran is recited, people perceive it differently. If you accept it, if your perception of it is acceptance of it, you will achieve comfort and bliss. Just as your body needs food to survive, so does your *Ruh* need the Quran. The food of the spirit inside you is the Quran. When you accept it and take care of your *Ruh* just as you take care of your bodies, you

will achieve comfort and bliss. Since you have broken this balance and tend to your bodies only, you reject the Quran.

This is why the ayah shifts from third to second person. It used the third in the last verse "*Then he made his progeny from an extract taken from disdained water*" as well as at the start of this verse "*He balanced him by breathing into him from His spirit*". But now it transitions to the second person "*He made for you, hearing, perception and emotions. How little are you grateful*" because it is now addressing those who accused the prophet of forging the Quran in the third ayah.

You will see verses 15 and 16 directly referencing back to this verse.

## Verse 10 • ١٠

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وَقَالُوا أَإِذَا ضَلَلْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَإِنَّا لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ۚ بَلْ هُمْ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ كَفِرُونَ

*They said, "When we have disappeared into the earth, are we to be in a new creation?" Rather, they are disbelievers in the meeting of their Master.*

Now it again shifts back to the third person. *They* said, not *You* said. When natural flow after the words "*How little grateful you are*" in the previous verse should have been to use the second person. This is *Itifaat*. Because they have been ungrateful to Allah, they are not worthy to be addressed directly by God and it is necessary to be at a distance from them.

To the believers and others, the disbelievers say "*When we have disappeared into the earth, are we to be in a new creation?*" but in actuality, they are just in denial of meeting Allah in the hereafter. The root problem is denial of meeting Allah, not these and other petty arguments they make. It is clear what they are trying to say. How can a person who has died, gets decomposed and vanishes be brought back to life again? This is a stupid argument because the all powerful God is indeed capable of doing it. If God is capable of creating from nothing, then how can He not do it again with the dead? This is a useless argument.

Their actual problem is that they simply deny meeting Allah in the hereafter. They just come up with simple, stupid and worthless arguments to cover it up. Now what does denying the meeting with Allah imply? We covered earlier in the surah that Allah establishes the rule of this universe that actions have consequences. Just as one stage of the universe leads to another, so do actions lead to their consequences. The Prophet's role was described as being a *Nazeer* which linguistically means warning of consequences that are inherently tied to actions.

When do people get repaid for their actions? Judgement day; the day they meet Allah; and this is what this ayah again mentions. They are disbelievers in the meeting of their Master. They are disbelievers in the fundamental fact that they will be repaid for what they do.

We can ourselves see in our daily lives that the people most averse to the notion of justice are the criminals themselves. Most criminals deny they deserve to be punished. You will mostly find them trying to justify their crimes. The people most averse to justice are the guilty, those against whom justice stands, who are on the other side of justice. Same is the case here. As mentioned in ayah 7, these people denied the Quran not because of a flaw inside it, but because of their crime of neglecting the *Ruh* inside of them. This crime leads them to stand on the opposite side of justice, where justice stands against them and as we normally see, when justice is against you, you either deny it or make stupid arguments to justify your actions, and this is exactly what they did above. They are coming up with stupid and useless arguments such as "*When we have disappeared into the earth, are we to be in a new creation?*" when in fact they are simply deniers of justice because of their crime of neglecting the *Ruh*. Hence the words "*they are disbelievers in the meeting of their Master.*"

The disbelievers only believe in the visible aspect (*khalq*) but deny the invisible *Amr*. You will see how this Surah will revolve around this subject that we so often hear to this day - if I cannot see it, then it is not true.

## Verse 11 • ۱۱

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قُلْ يَتَوَفَّاكُمْ مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ الَّذِي وُكِّلَ بِكُمْ ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ  
تُرْجَعُونَ

*Say, 'The angel of death, entrusted over you, will take you. Then to your Master, will you be returned.'*

Again, Allah does not address them directly. He orders His Prophet to respond to their useless claims.

He does not simply say *You will die and then be returned to your Master*; rather, He brings to attention the angel of death.

Allah defines what death is. Death is not simply the stoppage of existence. Death is the angel of death taking your spirits out of your bodies. Allah mentioned the *Ruh* in the previous verses and now He defines death as the removal of this *Ruh* from our bodies. Which means that it is the *Ruh* that gives us life. Take it out and our bodies stop functioning. After the angel of death removes the spirit from our bodies they go to Allah.

Allah is correcting the notion of death that the disbelievers have. It is not the cessation of existence and you being buried and forgotten forever. It is the removal of the spirits inside your bodies (the very spirits that you reject) to be returned to Allah. Upon death, the spirit goes to Allah to be judged as righteous or evil. Then it is returned back to the grave. Then on judgement day, the body is recreated, joined with the spirit and taken out of the grave. What this means is that we do not remain unconscious when dead. Even inside the grave, our spirit is inside the body. We just live in a different state of existence. This Hadith describes the whole process.

حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو بَكْرِ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ، حَدَّثَنَا شَبَابَةُ، عَنِ ابْنِ أَبِي ذَنْبٍ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ عَمْرٍو بْنِ عَطَاءٍ، عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ يَسَارٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. قَالَ: " الْمَيِّتُ تَحْضُرُهُ الْمَلَائِكَةُ فَإِذَا كَانَ الرَّجُلُ صَالِحًا قَالُوا: أَخْرَجِي أَيْتُهَا النَّفْسُ الطَّيِّبَةُ كَانَتْ فِي الْجَسَدِ الطَّيِّبِ أَخْرَجِي حَمِيدَةً وَأَبْشِرِي بِرُوحٍ وَرِيحَانٍ وَرَبِّ غَيْرِ غَضَبَانَ فَلَا يَزَالُ يُقَالُ لَهَا ذَلِكَ حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ ثُمَّ يُعْرَجُ بِهَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَيُفْتَحُ لَهَا فَيَقَالُ: مَنْ هَذَا فَيَقُولُونَ: فُلَانٌ. فَيَقَالُ: مَرَحَبًا بِالنَّفْسِ الطَّيِّبَةِ، كَانَتْ فِي الْجَسَدِ الطَّيِّبِ ادْخُلِي حَمِيدَةً، وَأَبْشِرِي بِرُوحٍ وَرِيحَانٍ وَرَبِّ غَيْرِ غَضَبَانَ. فَلَا يَزَالُ يُقَالُ لَهَا ذَلِكَ حَتَّى يُنْتَهَى بِهَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ الَّتِي فِيهَا اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ وَإِذَا كَانَ الرَّجُلُ السُّوءِ قَالَ أَخْرَجِي أَيْتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْخَبِيثَةُ كَانَتْ فِي الْجَسَدِ الْخَبِيثِ أَخْرَجِي ذَمِيمَةً وَأَبْشِرِي بِحَمِيمٍ وَعَسَاقٍ. وَآخَرَ مِنْ شَكْلِهِ أَرْوَاحٌ. فَلَا يَزَالُ يُقَالُ لَهَا ذَلِكَ حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ ثُمَّ يُعْرَجُ بِهَا إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَلَا يَفْتَحُ لَهَا فَيَقَالُ: مَنْ هَذَا فَيَقَالُ: فُلَانٌ. فَيَقَالُ: لَا مَرَحَبًا بِالنَّفْسِ الْخَبِيثَةِ كَانَتْ فِي الْجَسَدِ الْخَبِيثِ ارْجِعِي ذَمِيمَةً فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَفْتَحُ لَكَ أَبْوَابَ السَّمَاءِ

فَيُرْسَلُ بِهَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ ثُمَّ تَصِيرُ إِلَى الْقَبْرِ "

*“Angels come to the dying person, and if the man was righteous, they say: ‘Come out, O good soul that was in a good body, come out praiseworthy and receive glad tidings of mercy and fragrance and a Lord Who is not angry.’ And this is repeated until it comes out, then it is taken up to heaven, and it is opened for it, and it is asked: ‘Who is this?’ They say: ‘So-and-so.’ It is said: ‘Welcome to the good soul that was in a good body. Enter praiseworthy and receive the glad tidings of mercy and fragrance and a Lord Who is not angry.’ And this is repeated until it is brought to the heaven above which is Allah. But if the man was evil, they say: ‘Come out O evil soul that was in an evil body. Come out blameworthy, and receive the tidings of boiling water and the discharge of dirty wounds,’ and other torments of similar kind, all together. And this is repeated until it comes out, then it is taken up to heaven and it is not opened for it. And it is asked: ‘Who is this?’ It is said: ‘So-and-so.’ And it is said: ‘No welcome to the evil*

*soul that was in an evil body. Go back blameworthy, for the gates of heaven will not be opened to you.’ So it is sent back down from heaven, then it goes to the grave.” (Ibn Majah 4262, Graded as Sahih by Albani)*

Therefore, death is not being buried and to be forgotten. No, you will pay for what you did. The spirit is returned to your grave, where it experiences a new form of life. The body may decompose but the spirit does not. Then on judgement day, Allah will recreate the physical body and the spirit will be put inside the body again as in this world, and brought before Allah for the ultimate judgement, as Allah says:

وَإِذَا النُّفُوسُ زُوِّجَتْ

*When the Nufus are joined.*

This is the union of the spirit with the physical body once again. As it happened inside the womb of our mother, so shall it happen again inside the womb of the earth - the grave. Just as our mothers acted as our womb in this life, the earth will act as our second womb for the next life.

This also shows that it is the spirit that experiences life. Because when the spirit is removed from the body, it stops functioning and dies. Inside the grave the bodies will rot and decompose but the spirit inside the grave will experience a new life. The Prophet said, "...*There is nothing of the human body that does not decay except one bone; that is the little bone at the end of the coccyx from which the human body will be recreated on the Day of Resurrection.*" (Narrated by al-Bukhaari, 4651; Muslim, 2955).

Therefore, the body is not life. It is the *Ruh* that experiences it. The disbelievers need to understand this.

Now this is perfectly tied to what has come before. We mentioned that the main role of the Prophet was to be a constant source of warning to people that their actions have binding consequences attached to them. What you do so shall you receive. If death is the end and there is nothing after death, then this falls on its

head because people get away with what they do in this life many times. The Quran itself maintains that people will be repaid *in full* to what they did. Notice the words *in full*, they are critical to understand. You may get some parts of what you earned here in this world, not everything. On judgement day, you will receive in full due, the exact recompense of what you did as Allah says

يَوْمَ تَأْتِي كُلُّ نَفْسٍ تُجَادِلُ عَن نَّفْسِهَا وَتُوَفَّىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

*A day each soul comes disputing for itself. Every soul was given in full what it willingly committed. Hence, they shall not be wronged.*

The word *توفي* comes from the root *Waw Fa Alif* which means to receive in full; in exact proportions. Therefore, death cannot be the end. If actions have binding consequences attached to them, then death cannot be the end. There must be a final reckoning after death if this is true.

The disbelievers deny the *Amr* of Allah, which in this case refers to the spirit inside us, yet it is this very spirit that gives us life. Remove it and death occurs. There is simply no denying the *Amr* of Allah. If death is the end of it all, then *Amr* really has no bearing. This is not a small fact. The Jews have wrestled with it just as they continue to do so. Judaism does not have a concept of a final reckoning except for vague texts that are expounded on by the Rabbis. What even is the point of life if death is the end? If there is no hereafter, and this world is all there is, then why do the righteous suffer? If this world is all there is, then should the righteous not be rewarded for their righteousness and the wicked punished in this world? Yet does this happen? The righteous suffer more than anyone. The book of Job wrestles with this question. David wrestles with this question in the book of Psalms. Without the concept of hereafter, righteousness has no merit and evil, no condemnation.

## Verse 12 • ١٢

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وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ الْمُجْرِمُونَ نَاكِسُوا رُءُوسِهِمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ رَبَّنَا أَبْصَرْنَا  
وَسَمِعْنَا فَارْجِعْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَدَقَاتِنَا إِنَّنَا مُوقِنُونَ

*If you could but see when the criminals are hanging their heads before their Master. Our Master, we have seen and heard, so return us; we will work righteousness for we are certain.*

You will see the Surah coming together from here on out.

We discussed in ayah 10 that the disbelievers were criminals for rejecting the *Amr* of Allah, which in the case of man, is the *Ruh* inside us, and so this ayah calls them out plainly for it by calling them *criminals*.

The one being addressed is the Prophet himself since he was the one who faced these words regarding the Quran and was being called a liar. It is also for us, especially those involved in dawah work, who often have to deal with violent and insolent remarks from others regarding the Quran and the Prophet.

*Hanging their heads* -The word *نكس* is translated as *hanging*. It comes from the root *Nun Kaaf Seen* which was used for an arrow whose feathered ends broke so its top is turned downwards, for a newborn delivered feet first instead of head first, as well as for a sick person who recovers, then becomes sick again with the same disease.

*The central meaning is for something to reverse or turn back from its normal course.* In this ayah, it does not simply mean the criminals lowered their heads, it means a head that is forced downwards in humiliation, contrary to their former state of pride. It is a collapse of their former state of arrogance. In this world, they were argumentative, prideful, arrogant, but now, they are silent, humble and lowly.

Before they were deniers and disbelievers; now, they submit and have become believers.

Now pay attention to what they say. First, they call Allah their *Rabb*- their caretaker, nourisher, sustainer and the kind Master, the same word as in ayah 2. Now, they recognize that the Quran was not an act of corruption, but of love, kindness and goodwill from Allah, that Allah meant good for them, not bad.

*We saw and we heard* -In the 9th ayah, Allah had said, *He made for you, hearing, sight and emotions.*

This ayah uses the same words. Except that here sight is mentioned before hearing while the 9th ayah mentioned hearing before sight. On judgement day, the disbelievers will actually visibly see what they had only heard in this world regarding judgement day and its events. They will actually visibly see the consequences of their actions in front of them. Therefore, they put emphasis on seeing reality not hearing it. *We have seen what we used to hear.*

But this is their problem. They only believed after they had seen. Hearing about it and being reminded of it in the previous life did not make them believe in it. I will only believe when I see it - we hear it today as well. For something to be true, it does not have to be visible.

Now that we have seen with our own eyes what we used to hear in the worldly life *-return us; we will work righteousness for we are certain.* We have now verified what we used to hear. We see that actions do have consequences, we see that you actually meant good for us, that you wanted to guide us, that the Quran was an act of love from you, not of corruption.

Lastly, the answer to the condition presented is omitted. *If you could but see*, but what then? What would happen if we could see it? Its answer is omitted so that our imagination can consider all possibilities which itself is the rhetoric here. The actual answer to the condition is; if you could but see when the criminals are hanging their heads in front of their Master, *you would see something that is beyond*

*what your imagination can encompass.* When you understand something, your imagination does not need to wander left and right to consider all sorts of possibilities. It knows the answer, it does not even need to consider other options. But by omitting the answer in this verse, Allah deliberately lets our imagination wander to consider all sorts of possibilities to say that just as your imagination is running wild and not arriving at a definite answer right now, similarly will your imagination fail to grasp the gravity of what the disbelievers will find themselves in, upon seeing the criminals hanging their heads in front of Allah on judgement day.

## Verse 13 • ۱۳

وَلَوْ شِئْنَا لَآتَيْنَا كُلَّ نَفْسٍ هُدًىٰ وَلَكِنْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ مِنِّي لَأَمْلَأَنَّ  
جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ

*Had We willed, We would have given each soul its guidance. But the great word from Me came true, 'I will truly fill Hell with such disbelievers among the Jinn and mankind, in great numbers.'*

My translation is extremely different from how this verse is normally translated and even how many Tafasir explain it. I will explain in detail below.

Guidance here means visibly seeing the things the Quran promises regarding judgement day and its events. In the last verse, the disbelievers became certain that what they used to hear in this world of the Quran was the truth after seeing it with their own eyes. So when Allah says "*Had We willed, We would have given each soul its guidance*" He is saying that had Allah so willed, He would have made each and every single person see what the Quran promises with their own eyes and then, they would have surely believed in it like the disbelievers in the last verse.

*But the saying from Me became came to truth, 'I will truly fill Hell with the Jinn and mankind, all together-* Before explaining this, let us first look at a similar passage in Surah Sad:

قَالَ فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

*Iblees said, By Your might! I will tempt them all to harm!*

إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمْ الْمُخْلِصِينَ

*Except your honored servants from them. The chosen ones.*

قَالَ فَالْحَقُّ وَالْحَقَّ أَقُولُ

*Allah said, This is the truth - and the Truth I speak -*

لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكَ وَمِمَّن تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ

*I will fill hell with you and with such of them who follow you, together.*

*(Sad: 82-85)*

Had Allah wanted, He would have forced you to obey the correct path. But He wanted to give you free will for you to prove yourselves to Him, that you will indeed choose guidance even when faced with the choice to not do so. Because this free will exists, there will be a party that follows Iblees and chooses error over guidance, and hence, my word that I said to Iblees that *I will fill Hell with you and whoever follows you*, has come to pass.

Now notice the word Iblees uses when he says "*I will tempt them all to harm.*" - غوى.

This word at its very root means *attraction, desire and inclination towards something that causes you harm*. For example, it was used for a pit dug for a wolf as a trap with a goat inside it; for ambushing and killing someone; as well as for a land that misleads - travelers get lost in it, drawn by illusion of a path but unable to find their way through. *The core meaning is to be attracted and drawn to follow something that causes you harm.*

When the wolf sees the trap, it jumps into the pit and gets caught. Iblees says he will tempt and lure all of us like the wolf and then trap and devour us. He will tempt us with our desires be it money, wealth, the opposite gender etc. There is no point in trying to tempt us with something that we are not attracted and drawn to.

This is the path of Iblees, of blindly following our desires. The other is the path of Allah, of following the desires of our *Ruh*. Allah says in *Surah al Balad*:

وَهَدَيْنَاهُ النَّجْدَيْنِ

*Did we not guide him to the two perfectly visible, elevated roads?*

I have written in detail on this in Surah Maryam.

So when Allah says *-But the saying from Me became came to truth, 'I will truly fill Hell with the Jinn and mankind, all together* -He is saying that had returning them to the worldly life again so that they could perform righteous deeds was in accordance with Divine wisdom, then We would have created them naturally guided in their worldly life, so that they would perform righteous deeds by compulsion and force with no will or desire towards evil. But I did not want that. I wanted to create mankind with free will to choose between two paths of following Satan or following the *Ruh* so that they can be repaid in accordance with what they did; due to which, the party who was misled and trapped by Satan will end up filling Hell and becoming its fuel. I wanted to test mankind and Jinn. Will they believe in my promises and choose the path of righteousness by hearing my word rather than seeing it with their own eyes? Otherwise, I could have shown them with their own eyes what they were promised in the worldly life itself.

Allah is calling for reflection. When you follow your desires blindly, do you not feel guilty and remorseful? While when you lead a disciplined and Godly life, do you not feel peace and nourished inside? The *Ruh* inside of you bears witness to the truth of God and this Quran. Never in the history of mankind have our desires been so readily and easily accessible to us. Yet never in the history of mankind has depression rates been higher. Will you not reflect? Following Satan leads to grief and sorrow. Following the *Ruh* leads to happiness and bliss. Life is inside the *Ruh*. It is the *Ruh* that gives you life. Just as your body collapses and dies when the *Ruh* leaves it (recall verse 11), so does your happiness, comfort and bliss depart when you neglect it; to be replaced with grief, sorrow, guilt and remorse.

If you reflect on the world around you, do you see it lacking purpose or intention? As mentioned before, whatever Allah creates has two dimensions. *Khalq* (creation) and *Amr*. These people recognized the *Khalq* but ignored and denied the *Amr*. If people were to reflect deeply, they would come to the conclusion that *Amr* too exists. One of its proofs is the *Ruh* inside us. Before reflecting on what is around

you, reflect first on yourself. You are just a blueprint of the bigger cosmic realm and creation around you. When you recognize that there is a spirit inside you, drawn to the divine, whose pleasure and nourishment lies in God and His word (the Quran), you will recognize that in addition to *Khalq*, *Amr* also exists. You are created on the same principle as the universe. Just as you are a hybrid of *Khalq* and *Amr* both and not just *Khalq*, so is the entire universe around you. And it is this *Ruh* that gives you life itself as Allah mentions when he defines what death is. The *Ruh* inside of you bears witness to the truth of the Quran. You will feel nourishment, strength and peace in the Quran. Will you choose guidance upon seeing this? Or will you choose the path of Satan?

Now a few grammatical nuances. Notice how the pronoun shifts from *We* to *I* inside the ayah.

Allah does not say *But My great word came to truth*, rather He says *the great word from Me came to truth*. He said it this way to indicate the greatness and grandeur of this word. The preposition *من* here is for the purpose of magnification and hence why I added the word *great* in the translation.

Secondly, the definite article before the words Jinn and mankind is *ال* *العهد* which refers to something that is already known or mentioned previously. In this ayah, it refers to the disbelievers mentioned in the previous verses, who accused the Prophet of inventing the Quran by himself to cause corruption, who were unaware of the true nature of death, who denied the meeting with Allah in the hereafter. So it is better rendered as "*But a great word from Me came to truth, that I will fill Hell with such disbelievers of the Jinn and mankind, in great numbers.*"

Another possibility is that there is an omitted *مضاف* which would then mean *that I will fill Hell with the disbelievers of the Jinn and mankind, in great numbers*" but this, though true, is not contextually consistent.

Now the words Jinn and mankind. The Quran uses two words for Jinn - جنة and جن. The pattern of the word used in this ayah, contains meanings of generality and of lowliness. It means the great multitudes of Jinn that are lowly, disgraced and humiliated. Same is the case with the word Mankind. The Quran uses two words إنس and الناس. The word used in this ayah - الناس - is for the sake of generality and lowliness as well. A great number of people disgraced, lowly and humiliated. Allah is saying that a great majority of mankind will act in the same manner as these disbelievers opposing the prophet.

## Verse 14 • ١٤

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فَذُوقُوا بِمَا نَسِيتُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا إِنَّا نَسِينَاكُمْ وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ  
الْخُلْدِ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

*So taste because you forgot the meeting of this day of yours; We forgot you.  
Taste the punishment of eternity for what you used to do.*

This ayah is a direct continuation from ayah 12. Ayah 13 is actually *جملة معترضة* - an interjected sentence - between these two verses. The normal flow is as such

*If you could but see when the criminals are hanging their heads before their Master. Our Master, we have seen and heard, so return us; we will work righteousness for we are certain. (13)*

*So taste because you forgot the meeting of this day of yours; We forgot you. Taste the punishment of eternity for what you used to do. (14)*

When the disbelievers admitted their faults and disbelief, Allah replied - *Then taste.....* Because you used to deny this meeting, which now you admit by saying "We have seen and heard", taste the eternal punishment.

Verse 13 is interjected between this by Allah. Allah does not say those words to the disbelievers on Judgement day. They are interjected. A rather simple example from our daily lives would be:

I ate a burger - and it was delicious by the way - at this restaurant. The sentence is actually I ate a burger at this restaurant. You added "and it was delicious by the way" inside a sentence that would have been complete without these words.

In Arabic, this is done to state a fact that needs to be known. If you are telling something to people, but in the middle you realize there is something extremely

important that you need to say, even if it is not a part of the topic you're covering, then this is what an interjected sentence does in Arabic.

Verse 13 was an important fact that Allah needed to remind people of. It basically contains a central pillar of our pillar in God and His justice. It actually answers major philosophical questions people have long struggled with.

The word "*taste*" comes two times. In the first sentence, "*So taste, because you forgot the meeting of this day of yours, we forgot you*" it is a complete sentence by itself and is left open ended. Taste what? Taste the consequences of your actions. It is left open ended because it is implied by the context. Secondly, these people had hung their heads in shame and disgrace in verse 12 which represented a reversal of their prideful state to that of a humble, humiliated servant. So taste also this disgrace and humiliation.

*Because you forgot the meeting of this day of yours; We forgot you*-it is obvious that they rejected the hereafter, they did not forget it. These people accused the Prophet of inventing the Quran, denied resurrection, and had a faulty concept of death that centered on death being the final end. They rejected it, they did not forget it so to speak. As a matter of fact, verse 10 itself says "*Rather, they are disbelievers in the meeting of their Master.*"

The answer lies in digging deeper into language itself. The word *Kufr* is normally translated as "*disbelief*" in the Quran. At its root, *Kufr* means to cover something. For example, it was used for burying a seed inside the earth and then covering it with mud. A *Kafir*- a disbeliever - is someone who buries the seed of faith and good inside him. When something is covered up, it naturally gets forgotten.

This implies that the seed was in fact present inside them. The Surah mentioned the *Ruh* previously and said that since they neglected their *Ruh*, they deny the Quran and the meeting with God. The *Ruh* is already there, present inside them, they can feel it, they can testify to its existence yet they have buried it deep within them; and left it forgotten and neglected. This neglect led them to disbelieve in not only God, but also in the fact that actions have consequences; which is the very central point of this surah. The person who follows his desires and lust, he has

no concern for repercussions. Lust, by definition, is the state where desires overpower logic. A person may know that the action leads to bad consequences, yet he still does it under the sheer power and grip of his lust, unable to stop himself and resisting it, he does whatever his lust commands him to. Lust does not concern itself with what comes after, but only with what happens then and there; with only the pleasure that it wants to experience in that moment; and not with what it leads to in the future. Lust by definition, is rejection of the fact that actions bear consequences. Therefore, acting blindly on lust is a rejection of the meeting of God, where all actions are repaid in full with their consequences.

So because you neglected the spirit of God inside you and buried it under the mud of lust, leaving it forgotten and neglected, you rejected and disbelieved in meeting your God and in receiving the dues of what you earned. Therefore, *We forgot you*; and left you buried under the mud of shame, guilt, disgrace and humiliation and neglected your prayer of returning to the world when you said *Our Master, we have seen and heard, so return us; we will work righteousness for we are certain* and did not return you.

Therefore -*taste the punishment of eternity for what you used to do*- You shall not be returned to the world. Rather, you will taste God's punishment for eternity. Not only shall you be neglected, and buried under disgrace, humiliation and shame in this meeting, you shall be left buried under the fire and boiling water for eternity. You shall be forgotten - you shall be neglected.

*What you used to do*- Denying the meeting with Allah; and denying the fact that people will be repaid for their actions in the hereafter led them to commit such actions that led them to the fire. Their actions were a natural consequence of their lack of belief in the final meeting with Allah. If a criminal knows he will get away with his crime without paying any price, will he stop? He will commit it gleefully, God forbid. Similarly, they thought they could get away with their actions without being asked to put on trial for them; which led to them committing their crimes.

## Verse 15 • ١٥

إِنَّمَا يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهَا خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَسَبَّحُوا بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ۝

*The only ones who believe in our signs are those who, when reminded of them, fall down in prostration, and declare His perfection accompanied with His praise. They alone do not seek greatness.*

The people described earlier did not believe in Allah nor in His signs. So who believes in them? *The only ones who believe in our signs are those who, when reminded of them, fall down in prostration, and exalt with the praise of their Lord. They alone do not seek greatness.*

First, the word "*reminded*" has the *shaddah* on it which means being constantly reminded, not just a reminder. It means *-Whenever they are reminded.....*

Secondly, it is in the passive voice. Reminded by whom? That is not specified to create generality. *Whenever they are reminded by anyone.....*

But we need to understand the word *Zikr (reminded)* as well. At its root, it was used for something strong and sturdy. The male gender is called *Zakar* (from the same root) because men are physically stronger than women. *Dhikr* does not mean any reminder. It means a strong and effective reminder. You can teach the Quran to people, but when you do it in a way that has a strong impact on people, you have done *Zikr*. This is important because the manner of teaching matters and the Quran recognizes it. The Quran itself uses this word here to imply that whenever *Zikr* of the Quran is done *in front* of them i.e; *whenever they are reminded of the Quran in an appropriate and effective manner by anyone, it changes them*. It is not a random mention or reminder of the Quran.

Thirdly, the phrase *The only ones who believe*, is in the present tense because it conveys that their faith is renewed and that its strength keeps increasing moment after moment because they are already believers.

*Fall down in prostration*-The word *Kharra*, translated as *fall down* at its root means a complete reversal of the state of something. It is normally used in the Quran for falling over such as when Allah destroyed the habitations of some people causing their roofs, the highest part, to crash on them. Here, it does not simply mean falling down in prostration, it means a reversal, a change. When they are reminded of Allah's signs, it produces a change in them. What kind of change? Prostration does not simply mean prostrating on the earth as we do in our prayers. It also implies submitting, obeying and humility. Whenever they are reminded of Allah's signs, it affects them and changes them to become more submissive and humble before Allah. This ties in perfectly with the previous ayah. Remember the word **نكس** conveyed the reversal of the disbelievers pride and arrogance into disgrace and humility. The believer is he who turns his pride and arrogance into humility and submission to God INSIDE this world while the disbelievers are those who do it on judgement day. The disbeliever of today will be a believer on judgement day but by that it will be too late.

*Declare His Tasbeeh accompanied with His Hamd*- *Tasbeeh* comes from the root *Seen Ba Ha* which was used for a loose garment that hangs away from the body, for swimming above the surface of water, as well as for a horse that gracefully stretches its legs while running etc. *The central meaning is to remain in contact with something that could engulf while remaining above its surface and not getting engulfed.* (Mu'jam al Ishtiqaqi)

A swimmer for example swims above the surface of the water without getting engulfed by it, and the loose garment described above does not cling to the body. It hangs down.

From this concept comes the meaning of transcendence. For something to be above something else. *Tasbeeh of Allah means that Allah is far above everything else. He is transcendent and above anything unworthy of Him.* This goes back to ayah 4 where

Allah mentioned the Istiwa above the throne. Allah is transcendent and above all creation. Creation by definition is defective and flawed because being created implies a beginning in time, with no prior existence. Allah is transcendent and free of all defects and flaws. He is above the throne, distinct and separate from all creation. Everything besides Him is created.

*Hamd* comes from the root *Ha Meem Daal* which at its very root was used for healthy and nutritious food that gives you energy, strength and contentment. This root came to be used in the meanings of praise and gratitude because when someone helps or lends strength to another person, the natural reaction is praise and thank him. I have broken down this root in detail in the Fatihah.

*Tasbeeh* is declaring Allah to be free of all faults and shortcomings and above all things. The core points of this Surah so far have been refuting the disbelievers regarding resurrection and the fact that actions have binding consequences to them. In addition, it also answers their claim that the Prophet forged this Quran by himself to cause corruption. As explained before, if there is no final reckoning after death where people are repaid for their actions, then there is no justice. This would imply that Allah is unjust and He created a system which is inherently unjust and hence, imperfect and flawed. So these believers, they do *tasbeeh* of Allah - they declare and believe Allah to be free of injustice and declare Him to be perfectly just. How do they do that? By believing in the last day when people will face the consequences that come binding to their actions. Also, the disbelievers accused the Prophet of forging the Quran to cause corruption. The believers declare *tasbeeh* of Allah by declaring and believing Him free of this attribute. Since Allah is the *Rabb* (as explained in ayah 2) it necessitates that He sends down a book that serves to guide and rectify people, not to cause corruption. Believers believe that Allah does not cause corruption, rather He only does good, and hence, by believing this and by believing the Quran to be sent down by Allah, not forged by Muhammad, they do *Tasbeeh* of Allah.

*With the Hamd of their Master*- They do *tasbeeh* of Allah accompanied with His *hamd*. *Tasbeeh* is the negation of everything unworthy of Allah while *hamd* is the affirmation of everything worthy of Him. Together, they complete faith and belief

in God. Allah is free from every defect and He possesses every single perfection and blessing. Without *tasbeeh*, someone might praise Allah while imagining human-like flaws while without *hamd*, someone might deny flaws without recognizing His blessings.

*They alone, do not seek greatness*-Most translations render it as *They are not arrogant*. *مستكبر* means someone who *desires or seeks greatness*, similar to how we say

*أستغفر الله* (I seek Allah's forgiveness). Secondly, There is an extra pronoun here which is why I added the word "*alone*" in the translation. It creates a meaning of exclusivity. Only these people do not seek greatness. Which means that others do seek it. These people, as opposed to the disbelievers mentioned before who entered Hell, do not seek greatness. Rather, they do *tasbeeh* of Allah combined with His *hamd*. They recognize that Allah is not only free of all defects but also that all blessings and goodness only comes from Him. They fall down in prostration - they humble and submit themselves before God when reminded of His signs and when the Quran is recited on them. They obey Him, and become humble before Him; the exact opposite of being arrogant and seeking greatness. The Quran calls us to obey Allah and submit to Him. Therefore, when someone denies the Quran and disobeys this command, he is seeking greatness and displaying arrogance. He is rejecting the command to serve and be humble before God. Which necessarily equates to seeking greatness.

This ayah summarizes Islamic belief in God. To do *tasbeeh* of Him combined with His *hamd*. Without *tasbeeh*, someone might praise Allah while imagining human-like flaws while without *Hamd*, someone might deny flaws without recognizing His blessings. Obeying God necessarily implies becoming humble and lowly before Him and to deny any and all desire for greatness. When we say all *Hamd* belongs to Allah, it means just that. It belongs to Him, not us. When we do *tasbeeh* of Allah it means that He alone is free from all defects, we are not. Since we do not deserve *hamd* nor *tasbeeh*, we do not deserve to be great, lofty and elevated. The believer in Allah believes in these facts and hence, he is neither arrogant, nor does he desire to be great. He recognizes his reality and submits

humbly to Allah. Therefore, denying Allah and the Quran, necessarily implies the opposite; that you deny these facts. Hence, disbelief in Islam is defined as seeking greatness and being arrogant. This is attested to in the famous Hadith

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: " قَالَ اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ:

الْكِبْرِيَاءُ رِدَائِي، وَالْعَظَمَةُ إِزَارِي، فَمَنْ نَازَعَنِي وَاحِدًا مِنْهُمَا، قَذَفْتُهُ فِي النَّارِ".

*On the authority of Abu Hurayrah (may Allah be pleased with him), who said that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:*

*Allah (mighty and sublime be He) said: Pride is my cloak and greatness My robe, and he who competes with Me in respect of either of them I shall cast into Hell.*

*It was related by Abu Dawud (also by Ibn Majah and Ahmad) with sound chains of authority. This Hadith also appears in Muslim in another version.*

## Verse 16 • ١٦

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تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا  
رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

*"Their sides pull away from their beds, supplicating their Lord in fear and aspiration, and from what We have provided them, they spend."*

There is an interesting word play here. The word *تتجافى* is translated as "*pull away*" while the word *مضاجع* is translated as "*beds*". At their roots, *تتجافى* means for something to pull away from where it would normally be while *مضاجع* means for something to come down or collapse with weight as if being pulled down towards it. It is an image of something pulling away from something it is being drawn to, like a magnet trying to pull away from another magnet despite being attracted to it.

This is a symbol of letting go of desires. Desires are by nature things we are attracted to, which draw us, which pull us towards them yet despite this pressure, force and attraction, a person pulls away from them. This is what it represents in this verse and them forsaking their beds to pray to God in the hours of the night is an example of this. It not only represents them leaving their beds to pray to God during the night, but also them leaving and pulling away from all prohibited desires. Beds are places where we lie down and rest. Similarly, desires are something in whom we find pleasure. We are naturally pulled towards them due to the pleasure they offer.

Next, why does Allah say "*their sides pull away from their beds*" rather than simply saying "*they pull away from their beds?*" Because this creates imagery. Imagine a person is standing perfectly straight and looking straight ahead while one of his

sides is being pulled towards something. Yet he stands his ground without even flinching or even leaning to one of his sides. He remains perfectly straight. It is not that his body does not move towards it; his sides do not. He is facing straight ahead and remains still, perfectly straight despite the strong force of attraction trying to pull him away to one of his sides.

The question now arises, why present this example specifically forsaking their beds? If the intention was to simply convey their forsaking of desires, other examples could have been presented as well.

The answer is that this is perfectly consistent with the theme and context of this Surah. This Surah earlier placed emphasis on the *Ruh*- the spirit of God inside us - and described its neglecting as the main reason why the disbelievers reject the Quran and call it forged from the Prophet since they deny the *Amr*. Here, Allah describes the believers as forsaking their sleep to call on him. What is sleep? It is the sister of death. What is death? It is the removal of the spirit from the body as described earlier in this Surah. The Quran states in Surah al - Zumar that our spirits depart our body when we sleep, and Allah returns them to our bodies when we wake up. This is a representation of death itself. When we sleep, our spirits leave our bodies and when we wake up, they return to our body. Similarly, when a person dies, his spirit leaves his body and this spirit will return to his recreated body, when he wakes up on judgement day.

Unlike the disbelievers who neglected their *Ruh* and tended only to their body, these believers do the exact opposite. They prefer the state in which the *Ruh* remains inside their body (remaining awake), over the state in which it leaves them (sleep). They tend to it and take care of its needs. This is why the wording in this ayah makes perfect sense. *تتجافى* means for something to pull away while

*مضاجع* (beds) at its root means for something to be pulled towards something.

Despite being pulled towards their desires, and despite having the strong inclination to follow their bodily desires over those of the spirit, they remain standing firm and straight against these desires, and prefer the *Ruh* over them. Unlike the disbelievers mentioned earlier, they prefer the state in which the *Ruh*

remains inside the body over the state in which it leaves it. They prefer comfort that is attained by having the Ruh remain inside them, over the comfort that is attained while it is not inside their bodies, unlike the disbelievers who entered Hell.

*supplicating their Lord in fear and aspiration* - طمع is slightly different from رجو both of which mean hope or expectation. طمع is a feeling created when something you hope for is within grasp. For example, let's say someone really wants to get a job but he has been unsuccessful. Suppose this person gives an interview and it went really well and he sees many signs that the company will accept him. He now feels as if his desire is within his reach and now eagerly anticipates the company to get back to him. This is طمع. He sees his desire getting closer and closer to him in such a way that he starts preparing himself to receive it. This is why this word was classically used to mean preparation.

*Supplicating* stands for not only calling to Allah but all forms of worship such as Salah because ultimately all forms of worship are us calling on Allah.

Now the ayah does not specify what exactly they fear and desire. From the context, it is apparent that it is in fear of meeting the same fate as the disbelievers whose fate was described earlier and it is in hope of getting close to Allah. As described above طمع is the happy feeling when what you desire is getting closer and closer to you. They call on Allah - worship Him - in hopes of getting close to Allah. When you are accepted by Allah, you will naturally want to meet Him. Hence, this is how they prepare themselves to meet Allah. By coming close to Him.

*from what We have provided them, they spend.* -The word نفق is translated as *spend*. At its root, it was actually used for a desert lizard that would dig two holes in the ground far away from each other. When a predator would come after it, it would enter the ground from one hole and exit from the other to escape. The Quran calls a hypocrite a *Munafiq* which comes from the same root. They are so called because

when things favor the believers, they join and act as Muslims and when things favor the disbelievers, they join them just like the lizard which enters and comes out of two holes. Now why does the Quran use the same root for spending? To create an image. It is as if the one who spends for God, sends it forth via one hole, only to receive it back from the other. Or that he sends it down one hole - this life - and it comes back from the other - Hereafter. Whatever they spend in this life, is repaid back to them in one shape or the other as the Quran itself says:

وَمَا تُنْفِقُوا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ يُوَفَّ إِلَيْكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تُظْلَمُونَ

*Whatever you spend (same root) in Allah's path will be repaid to you in full.  
You will not be wronged (You will receive in full, you will not receive it less  
than what you spent)*

*(Al - Anfal: 60)*

This remains consistent with the theme of actions having binding consequences. The disbelievers faced the dreaded consequences of their evil actions, while the believers received the good and joyful rewards for their actions.

"*Spending*" here does not just relate to money. It relates to everything. Your money, time, energy, effort. Your youth, the rest that you sacrificed, the sleep you gave up.

This is why it uses ما (Whatever) instead of الذي which is more constrained and specific. From whatever Allah has given them, be it their money, time effort or anything; they use it to get close to Allah; and whatever they do for Allah, whatever they have to sacrifice for Allah, from the smallest of things such as even a few minutes of sleep or rest; to the biggest such as even losing their own lives, will be repaid back in full. The good consequence of their good actions. Actions have consequences. This fact proved to be a curse for the disbelievers, but for the believers, it became a blessing.

## Verse 17 • ١٧

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فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُم مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

*Therefore, no soul knows what was kept hidden for them, of what is the coolness of eyes; as a reward of what they consistently used to do*

They stayed up late at night and preferred standing in prayer over resting their eyes. Their eyes hurt because of lack of sleep, and to compensate, Allah will cool their eyes in the hereafter with things they have never seen. This also applies metaphorically to other aspects as we discussed in the last ayah. They left the comfort of their bodies - their desires, and therefore they shall be compensated by Allah with things and in a manner they have never seen or experienced before.

Some grammatical nuances:

*Therefore* -The letter *Fa* is translated as *therefore* but it can also be *fa al faseeha* which exposes or reveals a hidden sentence that is understood from the context. If we take this to be a *fa al faseeha*, then the ayah would be rendered as *-They were rewarded in a manner above their hopes and expectations and hence, no soul knows what was kept hidden for them, of what is the coolness of the eyes.*

They had hopes and expectations from Allah on how He will reward them. But the way Allah rewarded them on Judgement not only surpassed their hopes and expectations, it was something they had never even known. They did not even think that the things Allah rewarded them with could even exist. This is why it says "what was hidden from them." It means something whose existence was withheld from them such that they did not even know about it. This famous hadith perfectly describes this ayah

حَدَّثَنَا مُعَاذُ بْنُ أَاسِدٍ، أَخْبَرَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ، أَخْبَرَنَا مَعْمَرٌ، عَنْ هَمَّامِ بْنِ مُنَبِّهٍ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ - رَضِيَ  
اللَّهُ عَنْهُ - عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ " قَالَ اللَّهُ أَأَعَدَدْتُ لِعِبَادِي الصَّالِحِينَ مَا لَا عَيْنٌ  
رَأَتْ، وَلَا أُذُنٌ سَمِعَتْ، وَلَا خَطَرَ عَلَى قَلْبِ بَشَرٍ " .

*The Prophet (صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم) said, "Allah said, "I have prepared for My righteous slaves (such excellent things) as no eye has ever seen, nor an ear has ever heard nor a human heart can ever think of!"*

Sahih al-Bukhari 7498

*Soul-* The word *نفس*- translated as *soul*- is indefinite which creates meaning of generality. Any soul that was righteous, not just the prophets or the people especially chosen by Allah; but every single person. Anyone who does any good, will be rewarded for that with such excellent things that he has never seen, nor heard and which have never crossed his mind. This the good consequence of their good action. The disbelievers faced the consequences of their actions, while the believers faced the good and joyful consequences of their actions.

*of what is the coolness of eyes* -The normal expected way of speech would have been-*so no soul knows what is kept hidden for the coolness of their eyes*-instead of the way it is phrased in this ayah. This creates an *Idafah* which denotes the meaning of perfection and completeness. For example, if I say; *their project will be perfectly completed versus the perfect project will be completed*; there is a difference. In the first sentence, perfection is relative to their plans while the second sentence denotes completeness and perfection in totality. It is the perfect project. There is no other project that surpasses it. Same is the meaning in this ayah. The coolness and comforting of the eyes is not relative to each person; rather it is perfect and complete by itself. There is nothing that surpasses such comfort. This is the consequence of giving precedence to the comfort of the *Ruh* over that of the body.

*as a reward of what they consistently used to do* -The present tense here denotes repetition of action. These were consistent actions, almost habitual. Recall that in

verse 15, Allah described the believers as those who submitted and became humble inside this world as opposed to the disbelievers who only did so on judgement day. Just as the disbelief in judgement and justice led the disbelievers to commit grave crimes whose consequences they faced on judgment day, so did the humility and submission to Allah, while alive in this world, led the believers to do such excellent deeds that led them to obtain the perfect and everlasting comfort.

## Verse 18 • ١٨

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أَفَمَنْ كَانَ مُؤْمِنًا كَمَنْ كَانَ فَاسِقًا ۗ لَا يَسْتَوُونَ

*Then is one who was a believer like one who was a Fasiq? They are not equal.*

This ayah is a prime example of incredible Quranic eloquence. I'd recommend reading ayah 10 and 14 before continuing.

It is obvious that the believer and the disbeliever are not alike. So why ask this question to begin with?

To start off, we need to look at the word *Fasiq*.

The word *Fasiq* at its root was used for a date when it slipped out of its skin. The central meaning of this root is for something to emerge out of its boundaries or for it to exceed its limits. (*Mu'jam al Ishtiqaqi*)

Instead of calling them disbelievers as He does earlier in this Surah, Allah calls them *fasiq*. They are people who transgressed and exceeded the boundaries and limits set by Allah, just as a date breaks out of its skin. This is perfectly consistent with the theme of this Surah. Recall that in ayah 14, Allah stated that denial of the Hereafter and the meeting with Allah led the disbelievers to commit such actions that landed them in the Fire—just as a criminal who, if he knows he will not be caught, will only commit more crimes.

The word *Mu'min* -translated as *believer* -is beautiful when paired with the word *Fasiq*. *Mu'min* at its very root means *peace* and *security*. A *Mu'min* is a person who remains secured inside God's covenant and boundaries unlike the *Fasiq* who escapes and breaks out of them. This parallel will be alluded to in the next two verses so it is important to keep in mind.

To understand this ayah, we need to remember that this Surah is directed to the disbelievers. Allah is addressing the disbelievers who accused the Prophet of

forging the Quran, who denied the Hereafter and hence believed that death is the end of it all and they will not be repaid for their actions.

This ayah is actually condensing this whole surah and what has been stated thus far in it in one sentence.

The disbelievers believe that death is the end of everything and that people are not recompensed for their actions, as mentioned in verse 10. If this were true, would there really be any difference between a believer and a *fasiq*? Both would die, be buried, and disappear into the same earth forever. They would have the same outcome, go to the same place, and thus be equal. It would not matter what one did in this life—whether as a *mu'min* or a *fasiq*—since death would end it all. Actions would be irrelevant, as both would end up in the same place with the same fate. If there is no Judgment Day, then indeed there is no difference between a believer and a disbeliever.

When Allah asks whether a believer can be equal to a *fasiq*, He is simply stating the disbelievers' belief in the form of a question. They believe death is the ultimate end, so the believer and the disbeliever will have the same outcome and destination, making them equal. Thus Allah asks, "*Then is one who was a believer like one who was a fasiq?*"

The disbelievers believe they are equal. They hold that death is the end, with no Hereafter or meeting with Allah, and therefore the believer and disbeliever share the same outcome and destination.

What did Allah do in this surah? He refuted them. He showed that death is not the end, that there is indeed a meeting with Allah after death where every person will be repaid for their deeds. He demonstrated that disbelievers will enter Hell while believers will be comforted by Allah. Their outcomes will be exact opposite, and thus the believer and disbeliever are not equal.

لَا يَسْتَوُونَ

### *They are not equal-*

Consider you are in a debate with someone. They present their opening remarks and lay out their beliefs and arguments. Then it's your turn to speak and you refute and break his arguments apart. Then as a finishing statement says, Then is what he said true? No! It is not true! I just proved it!

Same is the case here. Allah first details what the disbelievers believe then breaks their beliefs apart. As a finishing statement, He says - Then is the believer and the disbeliever equal as you believe? They are not equal! I just showed it

## Verse 19 • ١٩

أَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْمَأْوَىٰ نُزُلًا بِمَا  
كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

*Because those who believed and did righteous deeds, will have Gardens, the perfect refuge; as an initial accommodation for what they used to do.*

This ayah continues from the words "*They are not equal*" in the last ayah.

*Because those who believed* -As mentioned in the last ayah, a believer was contrasted with a *Fasiq* because unlike the *Fasiq* who breaks out of God's limits, boundaries and commandments, a believer remains secured inside them. The same word is used here. *آمن*- translated as *believed*- and *مؤمن* (*believer*) come from the same root.

*Did righteous deeds* -The word *عمل* was used in classical Arabic to refer to hard labor. When referring to actions, it refers to actions done deliberately and willingly.

The word *Saalihat* is translated as "*righteous deeds*" but at its root, it means correction, restoration and rectification. *Saalihat* are actions that rectify and correct us by restoring and correcting what is broken inside our souls. This same root was also used in the meaning of *harmonizing* and *reconciliation*. *Saalihat* are actions that reconcile man with Allah, with his own nature (the fitrah) as well with other people.

One last thing to note about the word *Saalihat* is that it is *جمع قلة* - a plural that denotes a small amount. It is a plural used for things that are more than two, but just above it. They are not huge in number. Linguistically, *جمع قلة* is used for

things that number from three to ten. From a Balaghi perspective, جمع قلة conveys that Allah does not demand much from people, but few good deeds on which they remain consistent.

*will have Gardens; the perfect refuge*- The word *Ma'wa* is translated as *refuge*. It comes from the root أوى which means to join and cling to something for protection.

Here it means the gardens that grant eternal safety and protection from all harms, grief and anything undesirable.

Translations normally render it as "*Gardens of refuge*" and translate it literally but doing so misses the whole reason why it is phrased as such. The genitive construction, combined with the definite article with the word *Ma'wa* creates the meaning of perfection and completeness. We saw this in ayah 17 when instead of saying "*for the coolness of their eyes*", Allah used the genitive construction in "*what is the coolness of the eyes*" to denote the perfection and the highest degree of comfort obtained in paradise. Same is the case here and hence, it is better rendered as "*The gardens of perfect refuge and protection.*" This perfection is in all forms; whether related to time or quality because being temporal is a flaw while being eternal is perfection related to time.

The word *Ma'wa* can also be a separate sentence by itself though this does not change the meaning alot. In this case, it would mean "*For them will be gardens, the perfect refuge.*" Since *Ma'wa* has the definite article with it, I added the word "*perfect.*"

*Gardens; not garden*- Multiple gardens, not just one. This denotes freedom. As mentioned in the last ayah, A believer - a *Mu'min*- is someone who secures himself inside God's limits and boundaries unlike the *fasiq* who breaks out of them. The believers remained confined within God's boundaries in this world and restricted their freedom to act on their desires and as a result, they gained utmost freedom in the hereafter. They did not gain only one garden to which they are confined, rather multiple gardens and Allah does not even number them. They could be in

thousands. The consequence of remaining restricted inside Allah's limits in the world is absolute freedom in the hereafter.

*As a first hospitality - Nuzul* is the first hospitality shown to a guest. At its root, *Nuzul* means to *descend*. In Arabic culture and even in ours, when a guest arrives, he is given his first greetings and salutations when he descends his ride or gets out of his car. Hence, this word came to be used in the meanings of the very first and initial greetings and hospitality shown to a guest. Allah says that these gardens that offer them perfect and eternal protection from all harms, are just the beginning. They will only be their first greetings and even greater things await them beyond. Now what are these greater things that await them beyond these gardens? Allah keeps it hidden as He says in ayah 17

فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُم مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

*Therefore, no soul knows what was kept hidden for them, of what is the coolness of eyes; as a reward of what they consistently used to do*

Both of these verses end with the same words *بما كانوا يعملون*-*because of what they consistently used to do*.

## Verse 20 • ٢٠

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ فَسَقُوا فَمَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ ۖ كُلَّمَا أَرَادُوا أَنْ يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا  
أُعِيدُوا فِيهَا وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ النَّارِ الَّتِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تَكْذِبُونَ

*"While those who did Fisq, then their refuge is only the Fire. Every time they wanted to exit it, they were returned in it with these words said to them, "Taste the punishment of the Fire which you used to deny."*

*Fisq* is the verbal noun of the word *Fasiq*. The previous ayah said that because the *Mu'min* restricted himself in this world to stay within the bounds and limits ordained by Allah, they were recompensed with absolute freedom by being granted not one, but multiple gardens.

While *Fasiq* is the person who broke out of the limits and boundaries set by Allah. Since they roamed freely and acted with utmost freedom in this world and did whatever they wanted, not caring for the limits set by Allah; they were recompensed by having their freedom taken away by being contained inside the fire where they have no freedom to even move out of it; let alone do anything they want. Hence, *-Every time they wanted to exit it, they were returned in it.*

Notice how it says here *"their refuge is the fire"* while in the last ayah it said *"They will have Gardens, the perfect refuge."*

When Allah said *"They will have Gardens"* He used the *Lam al Milkiyyah* which is used for ownership. For example, If I say to someone *"Stay in this house"* this does not imply ownership, but if I say, *"This house is for you"*, it does. Allah is the owner of the Gardens which the believers enter but He uses the *لام الملكية* to show that the believers will be the owners and masters of these Gardens which implies security. These gardens will not be taken away from them. They will be their property.

With regards to the disbelievers, fire is neither a refuge nor a source of protection from anything. It itself is something from which protection is sought. The use of the genitive construction as in the previous verse would be inappropriate because it would denote the meanings of completion and perfection. Since the fire is mockingly called a refuge, it is not suitable to use the same language with it.

Now the question arises, why even mockingly call the fire a *refuge*? Look at the next words *Every time they wanted to exit it, they were returned in it*. A *Ma'wa* is a place where you take refuge from a danger you are fearful of but the fire by itself is a danger you want to seek protection from. The disbelievers will do exactly that. They will seek to get out of the fire, they will try to seek protection from it. They will try to find a *Ma'wa* from it. But they will be returned inside it again. They sought a *Ma'wa* and where did they land? Inside the fire itself. This is how the fire is their *Ma'wa*. Whenever they try to find a *Ma'wa*, they land in the fire. This is why the fire is called their *Ma'wa*.

*Whenever they wanted to exit it* -Notice the word "*wanted*" which ties in perfectly with their description of *Fasiq*. In this life, they broke out of Allah's limits and did whatever they *wanted*. In the hereafter, they get recompensed by not having anything they want, fulfilled.

*They were returned in it* -It does not say They will be returned *to* it, but rather *in* (في) it. This is because they never get out of it. They decide to go towards the exit, and the moment they move towards the exit, they are forced back *into* its center.

*with these words said to them, "Taste the punishment of the Fire which you used to deny."* -This paints a scene that we can picture in our mind. When they try to get out, they experience an overwhelming force that pushes them back into the very center. They look around dumbfounded asking, "What just happened?" Then they hear a voice say "*Taste the punishment of the Fire which you used to deny.*" This is why the sentence "*they were returned in it*" is in passive voice instead of specifying who or what returned them into the fire. They themselves will not know who did it, or what just happened. One moment they were approaching its exit, and the next moment, all of a sudden, they were in its midst again.

To make it even worse, "*with these words said to them*" is in passive voice as well instead of specifying the speaker. They won't even know who the speaker is, who is speaking to them. The only thing they hear is "*Taste the punishment of the greatest Fire which you used to deny*" and from a speaker they can't even see. Helplessly alone and deserted. No one to take pity on them nor anyone to help them. This goes back to ayah 4 *You have, besides him, no Wali nor a Shafi'*. You have no *Wali* or *Shafi'* to protect you from the decree and punishment of Allah. This also goes back to the words "*We forgot you*" in ayah 14. We disregarded you completely, such that we are not even near you, you cannot even see us, nor talk to us. The only words you hear from us are "*Tase the punishment of the greatest Fire which you used to deny.*"

*Which you used to deny*- You used to deny that actions have consequences. You used to deny that you will meet Allah who will repay you for your actions. This fire is the very consequence of your actions. The notion that you had that the worldly life is all there is, with no consequences for their actions, led you to become *Fasiq*. This fire is the very consequences of your actions that you committed; of the *Fisq* you committed, which you would not have done, had you believed your actions - your *Fisq* -will have consequences.

This is why the preposition **ب** is used with the word *tukazzibun (you used to deny)* in the present tense; because this entails **repetition**. You used to deny it again and again, not just once. Whenever a person commits a crime, or *Fisq*; he feels guilt inside of him. Where does that guilt come from? In Surah al- Qiyamah, Allah tells us that guilt is our soul berating and admonishing us for committing that crime because it knows it will have to pay the price for it on Judgement day. That guilt is our soul pleading with us to stop because it does not want to face the consequence of that crime on judgment day. But these disbelievers used to deny it again and again, crime after crime, *Fisq* after *Fisq*, even when their own souls testified to its truth. Guilt is not a feeling one can bury. It is a testament to our wrongdoing. Yet, they used to commit *Fisq* after *Fisq*, denying what their own souls were repeatedly testifying to them.

## Verse 21 • ٢١

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وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَدْنَىٰ دُونَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

*We will surely let such people taste the nearer punishment short of the greater punishment so they may return.*

Allah will go on to explain what this nearer punishment actually is. He will create a like by like description of what has come before in this Surah, of what happens with the disbelievers on Judgement Day, with the nearer and smaller punishment that they will experience in this world. He will describe it in exactly the same manner from ayah 23 onwards. What has been described thus far is the greatest punishment of Allah. Next, He will describe the lesser, the nearer punishment inside this earth by mirroring the exact sequence as before.

The sentence "*We will surely let them taste*" has threefold emphasis; first via the letter *Lam*, then by two *Nun*. In Arabic, this type of emphasis is placed when addressing someone who denies what you are saying. (*Al Tawkid al Inkariyy*)

This is addressed to the *Fasiq*. I explained earlier how blindly acting on lust is a rejection of the hereafter, by definition. The obvious incentive to break out of Allah's limits is to gain immediate pleasure and worldly gain. People steal to gain the pleasure of money, they lie to gain a certain benefit or avert a harm that may come to them, they fornicate because of bodily pleasure etc. When one is caught up in such pleasures, that is all they can think of as we see around us. They get lost in the world of their pleasures.

Hence, Allah emphasizes to them that He will take away this pleasure, and punish them as they sit intoxicated under their it. *Azaab*- translated as *punishment*- at its root means *sweetness*. This root was used in its exact opposite meaning of punishment as it denotes the *removal of this sweetness* and comfort.

The pleasures they are indulging in, the sweetness that they feel, the comfort they have received by disobeying Allah; Allah will take it away and replace it with regret and emptiness. We see this in our lives. One may be wealthy and well off, have access to everything he wants, but feel miserable and empty inside. This has led some to even commit suicide as we have seen. What appears to the eyes is different from what is hidden inside the chests. A person may display money and happiness, but deep inside he may feel terrible and worthless.

*So they may return* -So they may realize the folly of these pleasures and desires, and return to the path they were actually meant to follow to obtain the perfect comfort described in ayah 19, not this temporary fleeting pleasure that transforms into guilt.

Notice how Allah calls it the *Nearer punishment* with respects to the *Greatest punishment*. Naturally, when coupling these two, we would say "*the smaller punishment*" and the greater punishment. Allah did it for two reasons. One, when you say "*the smaller punishment*" it gives the impression that this punishment is small, less in intensity and hence, it is possible to overcome it. Secondly, it is a threat that it is near and not far.

This punishment will be severe in itself, but an even greater punishment awaits you if you do not return. When a person tastes this punishment, which is immense and severe in itself, he will naturally become afraid of the punishment that is even greater than the one he is experiencing, and hence this will open the door of repentance for him.

Also notice how Allah refers to these people in third person rather than directly addressing them. Third person pronouns are used for people far away, not present with you. Currently, lost in their desires, they are far away from Allah such that they have to be addressed in third person. Allah makes them taste the nearer punishment so that they may return and become close to Allah, such that Allah will directly address them just as we address the person present with us, in the second person.

## Verse 22 • ۲۲

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ ثُمَّ أَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا إِنَّا مِنَ  
الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُنْتَقِمُونَ

*Who is more in darkness than the one who, after the signs of his Master were strongly recounted to him, turned away from them? Indeed We, from the criminals, will take revenge.*

The signs here, refer to the verses of this Surah thus far. This ayah directly explains ayah 12 of this Surah where Allah said:

وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ الْمُجْرِمُونَ نَاكِسُوا رُءُوسِهِمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ رَبَّنَا أَبْصَرْنَا وَسَمِعْنَا فَارْجِعْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا إِنَّا مُوقِنُونَ

*If you could but see when the criminals are hanging their heads before their Master. Our Master, we have seen and heard, so return us; we will work righteousness for we are certain.*

I will explain the connection at the end in sha Allah.

*Recounted-* The word *Zukkira-* translated as *recounted-* means something **strong and effective** at its root as explained in ayah 15.

Allah is saying that what has been mentioned in this surah thus far, is strong, effective and has the potential to change people and their views. These are not just ordinary words, they pack a punch. They carry a strong impact. If someone believes that their actions do not have consequences, then this Surah is strong enough to make them change their beliefs.

Yet if despite these extraordinary words, someone turns away from them, who can be more lost in darkness than him? Darkness is a state in which we cannot see.

Darkness here implies a person blind of what is ahead, blind of the consequences of his actions, blind of where he is going, blind of what his actions will lead him to, blind of what is right and wrong.

The central theme of this Surah thus far has been to establish that actions do indeed have consequences. That people will either receive the good of what they did or pay for the evil of what they did on Judgement day. If someone denies this fact, as the disbelievers do who consider death to be the ultimate end of it all, then they will indeed be inconsiderate of the consequences of their actions. A criminal will not stop from his crimes if he knows he will get away with it. A person who denies Judgement day, will be heedless of the consequences of his actions and hence be in darkness and be blinded of what they will lead him to. Hence, the very first thing the criminals say to Allah on judgement day when they realize they were wrong in ayah 12 of this Surah is

ربنا أبصرنا

*Our Master, we have seen*

Allah says that there cannot be anyone more in darkness and more blinded than these people. There is no one more blind of heart than the one who denies that his actions will have consequences. Such a person will wander wildly and aimlessly. They will commit all sorts of wicked deeds, from here to there, from one crime to another, they will wander blindly in their aimless lives.

*We, from the criminals, will take revenge* -The normal way to say it is -*We will take revenge from the criminals*. The unusual sequence of words is to magnify the gravity of their crimes. Allah is highlighting that what has come in this Surah are no ordinary words and denying them is no ordinary crime. It is a grave and serious crime.

This ayah concludes the discussion on the first part of this surah, and it fittingly ends with these words. You deny actions have consequences and consider death to be the end. This Surah proves to you that actions do indeed have consequences and death is not the end. If you still disbelieve, then you will actually receive the

consequence of denying this surah. The next time, Allah will not prove to you that actions do bear consequences in the form of words, but by actually having you face these very consequences. Hence, the first thing you will say on judgement day when you face these consequences will be

رَبَّنَا أَبْصَرْنَا وَسَمِعْنَا فَارْجِعْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا إِنَّا مُوقِنُونَ

*Our Master, we have seen and heard, so return us; we will work  
righteousness for we are certain.*

We are now certain that actions do indeed have consequences. Now that we are certain of it , we will live our lives knowing this and hence be careful and mindful of our actions, not blinded by their consequences. This is why Allah uses the same word to describe these people both in this verse and in ayah 12. He calls them *Mujrim*- criminals committing grave crimes.

## Verse 23 • ٢٣

وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ فَلَا تَكُن فِي مِرْيَةٍ مِّن لِّقَائِهِ ۗ وَجَعَلْنَاهُ  
هُدًى لِّبَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ

*Yes, we certainly gave Musa the Book - so do not indulge in any dispute over His meeting - and We made it guidance for the Children of Israel.*

A complete change of subject at first glance but it is not. From here on, Allah will describe the nearer punishment He promised the disbelievers in ayah 21 and He will liken it to the greater punishment awaiting them on Judgement Day described earlier.

Notice the words *do not indulge in any doubt over His meeting*. Since this word can also mean to receive, scholars have interpreted it in many ways such as Musa receiving the book from Allah, the Prophet himself receiving the book from Allah, among others. I disagree with all of these because if you look at what has come in this surah itself, then the answer lies right there.

The central point of this surah thus far has been to establish that actions will have good or bad consequences that will be laid out on judgement day when we meet Allah. Let's look again at ayah 10 and 14.

وَقَالُوا ءَإِذَا ضَلَلْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَإِنَّا لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ۗ بَلْ هُمْ بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ كَافِرُونَ

*They said, "When we have disappeared into the earth, are we to be in a new creation?" Rather, they are disbelievers in the *meeting* of their Master.*

فَذُوقُوا بِمَا نَسِيتُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَٰذَا إِنَّا نَسِينُكُمْ ۗ وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْخُلْدِ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

*So taste; because you forgot the *meeting* of this day of yours; We forgot you. Taste the punishment of eternity for what you used to do*

It is clear to me that the words *-then do not be in any doubt concerning His meeting*, refer to meeting Allah on judgement day since this is textually and contextually consistent. As far as I have read, I am the only one to hold this position throughout the Tafsir literature.

Now how is Allah giving Musa the Torah connected to not having any doubts on meeting Allah on judgement day? If you read the Torah, there is almost zero mention of Judgement day. In fact, in the whole Hebrew Bible, even outside of the Torah, there are only a few verses that indirectly refer to final judgement. This is why the Jews have historically struggled regarding the final judgement. In Judaism, it is tied to the era of the Messiah who will transform this world and make it perfect. But the notion of a final judgement of deeds, is not mentioned in the five books of Moses - the Torah - at all. It is derived by Rabbis from other vague texts inside the Tanakh as an interpretation such as from the books of Daniel, Isaiah and Ezekiel. Later Rabbinical developments on these passages lead to the notion of judgement in the days of the Messiah who will fill the earth with peace and justice, but that is not the final judgement on Judgement day. The Torah is completely empty of this notion of final judgement. This is the reason why Jews have struggled with the problem of suffering. What is the point of suffering and why do the righteous suffer? Unless you believe in a final judgement you will continue to struggle with this question.

In Islam, we believe in almost the same thing regarding the Messiah. When he comes, he will fill this earth with justice and peace and transform it into a utopia. But the final judgement of deeds is with Allah on Judgement day. In this ayah, Allah says that just as He gave the Prophet the Quran, He gave Musa the Torah. The Torah of today lacks any mention of Judgement day but do not be in any doubt regarding judgement day still, because this is a result of corruption and changes at the hands of men, not because Allah did not mention judgement day in it.

Now the sentence, *so do not be in any doubt over His meeting* is actually an interjected sentence. The actual sentence is *-Yes, we certainly gave Musa the Book and made it a guidance for the children of Israel*. In Arabic, it is used to highlight

something important that the listener must know even if it is not directly tied to the subject. *We gave Musa the Book, which served as a guidance for the Jews, but do not let the current version of the Torah lead you to have any doubt over the meeting of Allah on Judgement day that has been established in this Surah because the same God who sent down the Torah, sent down this Surah and the Quran as a whole. The reason why you do not find any mention of Judgement day in the Torah is not because Allah did not mention it, but rather because men corrupted the text.*

The main subject of this ayah now, has changed now to mentioning Musa, the Torah and what Allah did with them and hence what He will do to the Muslims, but this was interjected in between this to highlight its importance.

The purpose of mentioning Musa and the Torah and not any other Prophet is to create a similarity between him and the Prophet. Just as Musa was a lawgiver, who formed a nation, so is the Prophet a lawgiver who will form a nation. The Quran has repeatedly likened our Prophet to Musa, calling him a second Musa, who will have his life and legacy shaped in the same manner as him. We find this is in Quran 75 : 13 explicitly as well as in other places of the Quran. This is the reason why the Quran will repeatedly comfort the Prophet in times of distress with stories of Musa such as Surah Taha to tell him that what happened with Musa will happen with him. He is the second Musa. This is also why Musa is the most mentioned prophet in the Quran.

This is why Allah uses the word *Book* rather than *Torah*. He uses it to create a similarity. Just as He gave Musa a Book so has He given the Prophet a Book. The definite article is to denote perfection. We gave Musa a perfect and flawless book just as We have given it to you.

*We made it a guidance for the children of Israel-* It was by the means of the Book of Allah that the children of Israel became a united and guided nation. The same will be the case with the Muslims. By having the Torah as their constitution, they became a great nation. So, will the Quran be completed, and serve as the constitution for the Muslims if they are to be successful. The next ayah will now

mention not only Allah's promises to the Muslims, but will also draw an explicit connection with what has come previously in this Surah.

## Verse 24 • ٢٤

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أُمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوا ۖ وَكَانُوا بِآيَاتِنَا يُوقِنُونَ

*When they displayed patience, we made leaders from them, guiding with Our Amr. They remained firm in being certain of our signs*

This Surah was revealed in Makkah when the Muslims were under severe persecution. Allah is telling the Muslims to endure and be patient. Just as He made leaders from the Children of Israel because of their patience, He will do the same with the Muslims if they do display patience as well.

The sentence "*They remained firm in being certain of our signs*" can be a *badal* of "*When they displayed patience.*" Even in tough times, they remained firm in being certain of our signs, of our promises, of what Allah revealed. How did they display patience? By firmly believing that Allah's promises will come true even in tough times., by firmly believing that what Allah has revealed is the truth, and that Allah will give them victory. Allah has promised the Muslims in Makkah victory and comfort. If they firmly believe in His promise, they will of course remain steadfast and patient in face of the persecution they are facing. They will endure knowing that one day, this will come to an end and God's help will come. This is what the Children of Israel did and Allah not only rescued them from Pharoah, but He made leaders out of them, who would guide and lead men to Allah.

Just as the believers in verses 15 and 16 endured temporary discomfort by sacrificing their sleep and desires to obtain a greater and perfect form of comfort, so will the Muslims achieve a greater form of comfort after enduring this temporary persecution and oppression at the hands of the disbelievers.

*They remained firm in being certain of our signs* - In ayah 12, when the criminals are hanging their head in shame in front of Allah, they said

رَبَّنَا أَبْصَرْنَا وَسَمِعْنَا فَارْجِعْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا إِنَّا مُوقِنُونَ

*Our Master, we have seen and heard, so return us; we will work  
righteousness for we are certain.*

They had to visibly see what they were promised by Allah to become certain. Allah is telling Muslims to be their opposite. Do not be like those who only believe in the promise of Allah when they see it. Rather be certain in His promise of victory and comfort right now, before His help and victory actually come to you. This is what sets the believer apart from the disbeliever.

Even the disbelievers of today will become believers in the hereafter when they see it with their eyes. The disbeliever submitted to Allah on judgement day after visibly seeing the promises fulfilled in ayah 12 , while the believer submitted to Allah while alive in this world in ayah 15, before he actually got to see God's promises on judgment day. This is what sets them apart. Believers, be like the children of Israel who believed in Allah's promises without even seeing them, by merely hearing them through His prophet Musa just as you are hearing right now through your prophet Muhammad. Do not be like the criminals who will believe only when they see the things they are promised with their eyes on Judgement day, by which time their faith and belief will not bring them any fruit. If you believe and become certain right now, during these tough times, and endure patiently and hold steadfast, you will not only be rescued, but Allah will make you leaders.

*With Our Amr* -This goes back to ayah 4.

يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يَعْرُجُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مِّمَّا تَعُدُّونَ

*He does Tadbeer of the Amr from heaven to the earth; Thuma, it ascends to Him in a span one day of which is thousand years of what you count.*

I have explained in detail what *Amr* means there. Amr is what gives life and purpose. The human body is the *Khalq* while the spirit inside it is an *Amr* of Allah. Allah deliberately said "*Guiding with Our Amr*" instead of "*Guiding with Our Book or Signs*" to draw connection to the fourth ayah.

They are guided by our *Amr*. They became leaders who led men to the correct way of life through Our *Amr*. The correct way of life, leadership, and guidance, can only come through *Amr*, the very thing the disbelievers deny. They only believed in the *Khalq*, but not the *Amr* since *Khalq* is visible to the eyes while *Amr* is not. Just as they only believed in the things Allah promised them by actually seeing them on Judgement day, so do they only believe in the *Khalq* which they can see, but deny the *Amr* which is invisible, yet just as Allah's promises are true, so is the *Amr* true. The Muslims will become leaders as well - which came true. The very fact that the Children of Israel became leaders and guided men to Allah, similar to how the Muslims will become leaders and guide the world to Islam, is proof that *Amr* exists beyond *Khalq* because if you only believe in the visible part and believe that death is the ultimate end, wouldn't your main goal be restricted to this life to avoid suffering while maximizing pleasure as much as you can? Your goals would remain confined within this world. Yet, these believers willingly chose suffering and bore persecution. Patience stands in opposition to pleasure. If this world is all there is, your goals would remain confined to maximizing pleasures inside this world. Hence, anything that goes against it, would be shunned immediately. Yet, by being patient, you endure the suffering, and choose to let go of these pleasures because you realize there exists a bigger reality than this world.

There is a beautiful correlation here. You believed in the promise of Allah only when you saw it. You also only believe in *Khalq* because it is visible. Anything that is invisible to your eyes, you deny. If you want to see a proof of the fact that something does not have to be visible for it to be true, if you want to see the proof that the *Amr* of Allah, and the meeting of Judgement day is true, look at the fact that the Children of Israel became leaders when they endured and remained steadfast against Pharaoh's oppression. Now naturally, the response to this is, what happened with the children of Israel and the Pharaoh is invisible as well! So the response Allah gave them is that you will see it happen again with your own eyes. The Muslims will endure your oppression and persecution, they will go against their desires and hence not only be victorious, but become leaders, all because of the *Amr* of Allah.

To the Muslims, Allah is simply saying to be patient. Allah has promised you relief, victory and leadership. Become certain that the promise of Allah is true and that victory, relief and leadership will come **BEFORE** they actually arrive. Believe in the unseen. Do not be like the disbelievers who only believe when they see it on judgement day because just as it will be too late for them to believe on that day, so it might be too late for you when the victory and help of Allah come.

## Verse 25 • ٢٥

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إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

*"Indeed, your Rabb, He alone will separate between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that over which they used to differ.*

*Your Rabb* - As explained earlier, the word *Rabb* - normally translated as Lord or Master - has the root meanings of love, caretaking, nurturing, removing deficiencies. The reason He uses the word Rabb instead of simply saying Allah will judge, is tied to the previous ayah where Allah promised the Muslims victory and leadership if they remain steadfast. He follows that promise by calling Himself the Rabb of the Prophet to say that He will indeed take care of you, give you victory, be your helper, and protect you from the disbelievers until His promise comes.

*He alone*- The extra pronoun **هو** creates the meaning of exclusivity. Allah alone, and no one else will judge between them. The God who has promised to help you and give you victory, He alone will judge between them. They will be at the mercy of the one who loves you. Therefore, anyone who opposes you, or tries to harm you, will meet his punishment with Him.

The disbelievers will become believers on judgement day, but Allah will separate them from those who believed while they were alive on the earth. Those who believe while in this world, will not be treated the same as those who believe only when they see it in reality on judgement day. Allah will divide them, He will treat them as two separate groups, not as one.

*Concerning that over which they used to differ.* -The differences among the believers and disbelievers. All the disputes and different beliefs among the believers and the disbelievers, Allah will judge and make the truth and falsehood known.

## Verse 26 • ٢٦

أَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لَهُمْ كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنَ الْقُرُونِ يَمْشُونَ فِي  
مَسْكِنِهِمْ<sup>ج</sup> إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ<sup>ط</sup> أَفَلَا يَسْمَعُونَ

*Does it not guide them that We destroyed many generations before them, while they walk among their dwellings? Surely in that are signs! Will they not then listen?"*

This refers to the ruins of the destroyed nations that lay on the trade routes of Makkans such as:

1. Thamud - located on the northern trade route of Makkah to Syria.
2. Sodom and Gomorrah - located near the dead sea, also along the trade routes towards the Levant
3. Possibly Aad as well but since they were located in the southern Peninsula near Eastern Yemen and Western Oman.

Now these ruins are seen with the eyes. The reason why Allah says "*Will they not then listen*" instead of *seeing*, is because these ruins were located near trade routes that only the members of caravans would see and they would tell their people back in Makkah about them. So the majority of people did not actually see them with their eyes, they only heard them from the select few merchants who would be a part of the caravans.

Notice how this goes back to ayah 12 where the disbelievers said to Allah:

رَبَّنَا أَبْصَرْنَا وَسَمِعْنَا فَارْجِعْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا إِنَّا مُوقِنُونَ

*Our Master, we have seen and heard, so return us; we will work righteousness for we are certain.*

We have seen with our eyes what we used to hear in this world.

Similarly, they have also seen the ruins of the people with their eyes regarding whom they hear in the Quran. You can see with your eyes what you hear in the Quran. We destroyed those nations - and you can see their destroyed ruins - when they did what you are doing right now.

The demonstrative pronoun *that*, is for the sake of **تعظيم** (magnification). *In that great fact, are things that serve as signs that can guide you.*

Secondly, there is a twofold emphasis placed inside the sentence "*Surely in that are signs*" which is a way of speech utilized in Arabic to address someone who denies what you are saying. There are great signs in those ruins, though you deny it.

But the demonstrative pronoun that can also be going back to the words "*while they walk among their dwellings*" and this is what I prefer. There are signs for you in the fact that you are walking in their dwellings, that can bring you to the truth, though you deny it. In ayah 15, Allah describes the believers as

وَهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ

*They do not seek greatness.*

These Makkans used to hear about these destroyed nations in the Quran as it describes them as being arrogant, oppressive, and *Fasiq* (the same word Allah uses for these disbelievers). They were the same as you in that they sought greatness and were arrogant. Yet here they are destroyed and desolate beneath your feet. Their homes empty, their memories wiped out, and their dwellings destroyed. Their pride led them to become lowly and worthless. They were arrogant and haughty yet they are now disgraced and cursed. You can see what became of their pride. This is a sign - a warning - to you. Pride begets disgrace. Arrogance leads to humiliation. Display arrogance and you will be humiliated. Submit humbly to Allah and you will be honored.

We see this now with the Makkans who persecuted our Prophet. Abu Jahl, Abu Lahab, Walid ibn al Mughira, Uqbah, Shaybah, Umayyah ibn Khalaf and all their

associates are now disgraced, and their graves at Badr have now become a desolate, worthless well. Not a day passes by since the past 1400 years, but they are disgraced and cursed at the tongues of the Muslims. While the Prophet and his companions, who submitted humbly to Allah, their mention and remembrance has been exalted for eternity.

## Verse 27 • ٢٧

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَسُوقُ الْمَاءَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الْجُرُزِ فَنُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعًا تَأْكُلُ  
مِنْهُ أَعْمَلُهُمْ وَأَنْفُسُهُمْ أَفَلَا يُبْصِرُونَ

*Have they not seen that We drive water to barren land and from it, bring forth crops from which their livestock eat just as they themselves? Then do they not see?*

This is the ayah that ties this whole surah together.

The previous ayah mentioned how Allah gave death to the alive. This ayah mentions how Allah gives life to the dead. This first part of this ayah goes back to ayah 9 while the second part goes back to ayaat 15 and 16.

You can see the dead nations, you pass by their ruins, you see their pride turned to disgrace beneath your own feet. Now the other side of Allah giving life to the dead, if you want to see that with your own eyes, then look at the barren, dry land which produces crops after rain gives it life.

Why earth though? Why not present any other example? Because it stands for the human being. This does not mean that it is not literally true. Allah does give life to the dead earth by means of the rain. This is a phenomenon that is real and is a sign and example of Allah bringing the dead to life. But notice the words "*from which their livestock eat just as they themselves?*"

As mentioned above, the first part of this Ayah,

*Have they not seen that We drive water to barren land*

goes back to ayah 9

ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِهِ ۗ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ ۗ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

*Thuma, He balanced him by breathing into him from His spirit. He made for you, hearing, perception and emotions. How little are you grateful!*

The earth stands for human beings because that is what we are created from. Allah created Adam from the earth. Just as Allah gave life to the physical body of the human being by means of His spirit, so does He give life to the dead earth by means of water. Just as this water comes down from the sky, so does the spirit come from the sky - from Allah.

The disbelievers want to visibly see what Allah tells them. We never saw Allah breathing His spirit into us but Allah gives a real-life example that works on the same phenomenon that we can visibly see with our eyes. Just as the earth comes to life and brings forth vegetation by means of rain sent down from the sky, so did the human being come to life by means of the Spirit breathed inside him from the sky - from Allah.

You can visibly see the dead earth coming to life and producing edible vegetation. You cannot deny this. Yet, you deny the *Amr* of Allah; you deny the spirit of Allah inside you. Denying it is as preposterous as denying life itself for without the spirit you would be dead like the barren land.

This covers the first of the ayah of the dead earth or the human being coming back to life. The next part

*and from it, bring forth crops from which their livestock eat just as they themselves.*

goes back to ayah 15 and 16

إِنَّمَا يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِّرُوا بِهَا خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَسَبَّحُوا بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ۝

*The only ones who believe in our signs are those who, when reminded of them, fall down in prostration, and declare His perfection accompanied with His praise. They alone do not seek greatness.*

تَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنْفِقُونَ

*"Their sides pull away from their beds, supplicating their Lord in fear and aspiration, and from what We have provided them, they spend."*

These Ayaat describe the fruit of the spirit. Just as the earth produces its fruit by means of rain, so does the human being produce his good fruit by means of the spirit. The fruit of the Earth is its vegetation, the plants, the food and crops it produces that is eaten and which sustains life. Without this, there would be no life. The food chain starts from the earth, takes it out and all life disappears. No life would exist if the earth does not produce any food. *Similarly, without the spirit, no life would exist for when the spirit leaves the body, death occurs.*

Now this life given to the earth by means of the water, brings out vegetations that give life and benefit to others. Similarly, these enlightened people, mentioned in ayah 15 and 16, give life and benefit to others. Firstly, they themselves are alive and enlightened because they take care of the spirit. They prefer the state in which their spirits remain inside their bodies over the state in which they leave them because they understand that without the spirit, they will become a barren dead earth. But they also preach to others to come to this truth, and to submit to God. They are actually calling people to life, to something that benefits them, that gives them eternal life of the Hereafter. *This is what the Prophet is doing, why he is called a nazeer, Yet they call him a liar and a fabricator in ayah 2.* This surah is all seamlessly tied in.

This also goes back to ayah 24 where Allah promised to make leaders from the Muslims. Their hearts, made alive by the Quran, will bring benefit to others as well just as the earth produces vegetations which benefit men and livestock. Since

these people will be a source of benefit to others, they deserve to be appointed to leadership roles. We ourselves only want those as leaders who will bring benefit to us. Guided hearts will govern correctly, bringing benefit to people.

*Just as they themselves* -You yourself eat from the produce of the earth. Your own lives are dependent on it. You would die without it. You cannot deny this, yet you deny the spirit inside you which does the same thing? You would not even be alive had the earth remained dead - you would not even be alive had the spirit not been inside you, yet you, of all people, deny this?

This is why the words *with it* in, “*with it, bring forth crops*” and the words “*from which*” in “*from which their livestock eat just as they themselves*” are brought before their normal place in the sentence to place emphasis. This all happens by means of the water - by means of the spirit.

*Do they then not see*- Same as what the disbelievers said in ayah 12. We have now seen. Can you not see this? Is this not a sign in front of your own eyes? Life itself is proof. You only believe when you see it with your own eyes, then here is a sign right in front of your eyes. Will you then not accept it?

It is interesting that the Quran uses two words for seeing. *رأى* and *بصر*. The word used here, *بصر*, also means deep understanding. This is a sign right in front of your own eyes. Will you not understand that this is in fact, a sign enough to guide you?

## Verse 28 • ٢٨

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وَيَقُولُونَ مَتَىٰ هَذَا الْفَتْحِ ۖ إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

*They mockingly say, 'When shall be this Victory, if you are truthful?'*

The victory promised in ayah 24 where Allah promised the believers the same as what He did with the Children of Israel, but it also goes back to ayah 22 where Allah said:

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّن ذُكِّرَ بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِ ثُمَّ أَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا ۗ إِنَّا مِنَ الْمُجْرِمِينَ مُنتَقِمُونَ

*Who is more in darkness than the one who, after the signs of his Master were strongly recounted to him, turned away from them? Indeed We, from the criminals, will take revenge.*

They have turned away from the signs Allah mentioned to them of the destroyed generations and the dead earth or hearts coming back to life. Hence, Allah will take revenge from them. This shows that Allah will take revenge from them at the hands of the Muslims. The use of the third person pronoun "*they*" for them also indicates that they have rejected these signs, because it denotes being far away and distant from Allah.

So now they mockingly say, when will this day of revenge and victory be? Based on what has already come in this Surah, specifically ayah 24, you can already figure out bringing faith on the day when Muslims are given victory, will not bring any benefit. It will be too late then, and this is exactly what Allah says up next.

## Verse 29 • ٢٩

قُلْ يَوْمَ الْفَتْحِ لَا يَنْفَعُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِيْمَانُهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنظَرُونَ

Say: 'On the Day of Victory their faith shall not profit the disbelievers, nor shall they be respited.

It was not a genuine question they brought up. Firstly, they did it mockingly. Secondly, they asked for it after rejecting clear signs presented to them. Hence, Allah gave them an answer that befits them. Mock now, reject My signs all you want, you will wish to go back in time on the day I give Muslims victory over you. *nor shall they be respited* -This goes back to ayah 10. Where they said

فَارْجِعْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا إِنَّا مُوقِنُونَ

So, return us to act righteously, for we have become certain

Just as you will wish to be returned back and given respite on Judgement Day when you meet Me, you will desire to be given respite on the Day of victory, on the day of Badr, but I have already told you what will happen. Just as I did not give you respite on Judgement Day, so will I not give you respite on the day of Badr.

You will meet your end then and there. It is interesting that the word **نظر**

(translated as **respite**) at its root actually means to look intently with anticipation. Sometimes, a person expresses his wishes by means of his eyes. Like when someone makes a wish that he deeply desires, his eyes express his anticipation and desire for his wish with him. You will look longingly with pitiful eyes to be returned back.

I mentioned earlier that ayah 23 is the beginning of the description of the nearer punishment Allah promised the disbelievers in ayah 21, in addition to the greatest punishment on Judgment Day. I also mentioned that it will be a like by like description.

In ayah 12, the disbelievers denied what the Quran promises regarding Judgment day and only became certain of Allah's promises after they actually saw them with their own eyes on Judgement day In ayah 28, the disbelievers denied the signs of the destroyed generations and the dead earth coming to life, hence, they will only become certain of Allah's promise when they actually see the victory promised by Allah. Just as they wished to be given respite and returned back in time on Judgment Day, they will wish to be returned back and given respite on the day of victory, but just as bringing faith on Judgment Day did not bring them benefit, so will it not benefit them on the day of Badr. Just as Allah did not give them respite on Judgment Day, He will not do it on the victory day either.

## Verse 30 • ٣٠

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فَأَعْرِضْ عَنْهُمْ وَانْتَظِرْ إِنَّهُمْ مُنْتَظِرُونَ

*"So turn away from them and wait. Indeed, they are waiting."*

They turned away from these signs, hence, turn away from them and wait - be patient and endure - going back to ayah 24, until help and victory comes.

*They are waiting* - They have refused to believe and will only believe when they see it. So they are waiting to see it, by which time, it will be too late.

It is important to note that the victory promised by Allah can refer to multiple things because the Surah does not specify it. It can refer to Badr as well as to the conquest of Makkah among other events..

This Surah was read in the Fajr prayer every Friday by our beloved Prophet and we can see why. It is a promise of victory, leadership and comfort, just as it dismantles the false, materialistic beliefs of the disbelievers and their false accusations.