

(أَمْ تَسْأَلُهُمْ خَرْجًا)

(Or is it that you ask them for some Kharj) Al-Hasan said, "A reward." Qatadah said, "Some payment."

(فَخَرَّاجُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ)

(But the recompense of your Lord is better,) means, you are not asking for any wages or payment or anything for calling them to right guidance, rather you are hoping for a great reward from Allah, as He says:

(قُلْ مَا سَأَلْتُكُمْ مِنْ أَجْرٍ فَهُوَ لَكُمْ إِنَّ أَجْرِيَ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ)

(Say: "Whatever wage I might have asked of you is yours. My wage is from Allah only."))34:47(

(قُلْ مَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِينَ)

(Say: "No wage do I ask of you for this, nor am I one of the pretenders."))38:86(

(قُلْ لَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ أَجْرًا إِلَّا الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبَى)

(Say: "No reward do I ask of you for this except to be kind to me for my kinship with you."))42:23(

(وَجَاءَ مِنْ أَقْصَى الْمَدِينَةِ رَجُلٌ يَسْعَى قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اتَّبِعُوا الْمُرْسَلِينَ اتَّبِعُوا مَنِ لَمْ يَسْأَلْكُمْ أَجْرًا)

(And there came a man running from the farthest part of the town. He said: "O my people! Obey the Messengers. Obey those who ask no wages of you, and who are rightly guided."))35:20-21(

(وَإِنَّكَ لَتَدْعُهُمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ مُسْتَقِيمٍ - وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ عَنِ الصِّرَاطِ لَنُكِبُونَ)

(And certainly, you call them to the straight path. And verily, those who believe not in the Hereafter are indeed deviating far astray from the path.)

The Situation of the Disbelievers

(وَإِنَّ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ عَنِ الصِّرَاطِ
لَنَكِبُونَ)

(And verily, those who believe not in the Hereafter are indeed deviating far astray from the path.) meaning, they have gone astray and deviated.

(ن)

(And though We had mercy on them and removed the distress which is on them, still they would obstinately persist in their transgression, wandering blindly.) Here Allah tells of their stubbornness in their disbelief, in that even if He had removed the calamity from them and made them understand the Qur'an, they still would not follow it; they would still persist in their disbelief and stubborn transgression. This is like the Ayat:

(وَلَوْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا لَأَسْمَعَهُمْ وَلَوْ أَسْمَعَهُمْ
لَتَوَلَّوْا وَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُونَ)

(Had Allah known of any good in them, He would indeed have made them listen; and even if He had made them listen, they would but have turned away with aversion.))8:23(

(وَلَوْ تَرَى إِذْ وَقَفُوا عَلَى النَّارِ فَقَالُوا يَلَيْتَنَا نُرَدُّ
وَلَا نُكَذِّبُ بآيَاتِ رَبِّنَا وَنَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ بَلْ
بَدَأَ لَهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يُخْفُونَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَوْ رُدُّوا لَعَدُّوا
لِمَا نُهُوا عَنْهُ)

(And if (Lauw) you could but see when they will be held over the (Hell) Fire! They will say: "Would that we were but sent back (to the world)! Then we would not deny the Ayat of our Lord, and we would be of the believers!" Nay, it has become manifest to them what they had been concealing before. But if they were returned (to the world), they would certainly revert to that which they were forbidden.))6:27-29(Until His statement:

(بِمَبْعُوثِينَ)

(be resurrected) This has to do with the knowledge of Allah. He knows about some- thing that will not happen, but if it were to happen, He knows how it would be. Ad-Dahhak reported from Ibn ` Abbas: "Every- thing that is implied in the word:

(لَوْ)

(If (Lauw)) is something that will never happen."

(وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ فَمَا اسْتَكَانُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَمَا يَتَضَرَّعُونَ - حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَابًا ذَا عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ إِذَا هُمْ فِيهِ مُبْلِسُونَ - وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنشَأَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَرَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ - وَهُوَ الَّذِي ذَرَأَكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ - وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ وَلَهُ اخْتَلَفُ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ - بَلْ قَالُوا مِثْلَ مَا قَالَ الْأَوَّلُونَ - قَالُوا أَءِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظْمًا أَءِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ - لَقَدْ وُعِدْنَا نَحْنُ وَعَآبَاؤُنَا هَذَا مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا أَسْطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ)

(76. And indeed We seized them with punishment, but they humbled not themselves to their Lord, nor did they invoke with submission to Him.) (77. Until, when We open for them the gate of severe punishment, then lo! they will be plunged in despair.) (78. It is He Who has created for you hearing, eyes, and hearts. Little thanks you give.) (79. And it is He Who has created you on the earth, and to Him you shall be gathered back.) (80. And it is He Who gives life and causes death, and His is the alternation of night and day. Will you not then understand) (81. Nay, but they say the like of what the men of old said.) (82. They said: "When we are dead and have become dust and bones, shall we be resurrected indeed") (83. "Verily, this we have been promised -- we and our fathers before! This is only (from) tales of the ancients!") Allah's saying:

(وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ)

(And indeed We seized them with punishment,) means, 'We tried and tested them with difficulties and calamities.' His saying:

(فَمَا اسْتَكَاثُوا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَمَا يَتَضَرَّعُونَ)

(but they humbled not themselves to their Lord, nor did they invoke with submission to Him.) means, that did not deter them from their disbelief and resistance, rather they persisted in their sin and misguidance,

(فَمَا اسْتَكَاثُوا)

(but they humbled not themselves)

(وَمَا يَتَضَرَّعُونَ)

(nor did they invoke (Allah) with submission to Him.) they did not call on Him. This is like the Ayah:

(فَلَوْلَا إِذْ جَاءَهُمْ بَأْسُنَا تَضَرَّعُوا وَلَكِنْ قَسَتْ
قُلُوبُهُمْ)

(When Our torment reached them, why then did they not humble themselves But their hearts became hardened,))6:43(Ibn Abi Hatim recorded that Ibn `Abbas said, "Abu Sufyan came to the Messenger of Allah and said, 'O Muhammad, I ask you by Allah and by the ties of kinship between us, we have been reduced to eating camel hair and blood.' Then Allah revealed,

(وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنَاهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ فَمَا اسْتَكَاثُوا)

(And indeed We seized them with punishment, but they humbled not themselves.) This was also recorded by An-Nasa'i. The basis of this Hadith is in the Two Sahih, where it says that the Messenger of Allah prayed against the Quraysh when he could not make any headway with them, and he said,

«اللَّهُمَّ أَعِنِّي عَلَيْهِمْ بِسَبْعِ كَسْبَعِ يُوسُفَ»

(O Allah, help me against them sending on them seven years (of famine) like the seven (years of drought) of Yusuf.)

(حَتَّىٰ إِذَا فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَابًا ذَا عَذَابٍ شَدِيدٍ إِذَا هُمْ فِيهِ مُبْلِسُونَ)

(Until, when We open for them the gate of severe punishment, then lo! they will be plunged in despair.) When the command of Allah reaches them and the Hour comes to them suddenly, and they are overtaken by the punishment of Allah which they were not expecting, then they will despair of any ease and goodness, and all their hopes will disappear.

A reminder of the Blessings of Allah and His immense Power

Then Allah mentions His blessings to His servants, in that He has given them hearing, sight and understanding through which they come to know things and draw lessons from them, the signs which attest to the Oneness of Allah and indicate that He is the One Who does what He wills and chooses what He wants.

(قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ)

(Little thanks you give.) means, how little you thank Allah for the blessings He has given you. This is like the Ayah:

(وَمَا أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ وَلَوْ حَرَصْتَ بِمُؤْمِنِينَ)

(And most of mankind will not believe even if you desire it eagerly.))12:103(Then Allah tells us about His great power and overwhelming authority, for He is the One Who originated creation and put people in all parts of the earth, with their different nations, languages and characteristics, then on the Day of Resurrection He will gather them all together, the first of them and the last, at a fixed time on a day appointed, and none will be left out, young or old, male or female, noble or insignificant, but all will be brought back as they were originally created. Allah said:

(وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُحْيِي وَيُمِيتُ)

(And it is He Who gives life and causes death,) meaning, He will bring the scattered bones back to life and cause the death of the nations,

(وَلَهُ اخْتِلَافُ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ)

(and His is the alternation of night and day.) meaning, by His command night and day are subjugated, each of them following the other and never departing from that pattern, as Allah says:

(لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا اللَّيْلُ
سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ)

(It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor does the night outstrip the day))36:40(.

(أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُونَ)

(Will you not then understand) means, do you not have minds that tell you of the Almighty, All-Knowing to Whom all things are subjugated, Who has power over all things and to Whom all things submit

The Idolators thought that Resurrection after Death was very unlikely

Then Allah tells us about those who denied the resurrection, who were like the disbelievers who came before them:

(بَلْ قَالُوا مِثْلَ مَا قَالَ الْأَوَّلُونَ - قَالُوا أَءِذَا مِتْنَا
وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَعِظْمًا أَءِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ)

(Nay, but they say the like of what the men of old said. They said: "When we are dead and have become dust and bones, shall we be resurrected indeed") They thought it very unlikely that this would happen after they had disintegrated into nothing.

(لَقَدْ وَعَدْنَا نَحْنُ وَءَابَاؤُنَا هَذَا مِنْ قَبْلُ إِنْ هَذَا
إِلَّا أَسْطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ)

("Verily, this we have been promised -- we and our fathers before (us)! This is only the tales of the ancients!") This means, "It is impossible that we could be brought back. This was said by those who learned it from the books and disputes of the ancients." This denial and rejection on their part is like the Ayah where Allah tells us about them:

(أَءِذَا كُنَّا عِظْمًا تَّخِرَةً - قَالُوا تِلْكَ إِذًا كَرَّةٌ
خَسِرَةٌ - فَايَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ - فَإِذَا هُمْ
بِالسَّاهِرَةِ)

("Even after we are crumbled bones" They say: "It would in that case, be a return with loss!"
But it will be only a single Zajrah, When behold, they find themselves on the surface of the
earth alive after their death.) 79:11-14(

(أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ
خَصِيمٌ مُّبِينٌ - وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ قَالَ
مَنْ يُحْيِي الْعِظْمَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ - قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي
أَنْشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ)

(Does not man see that We have created him from Nutfah. Yet behold he (stands forth) as an
open opponent. And he puts forth for Us a parable, and forgets his own creation. He says: "Who
will give life to these bones after they are rotten and have become dust" Say: "He will give life
to them Who created them for the first time! And He is the All-Knower of every creation!")
36:77-79(

(قُلْ لِمَنْ الْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ -
سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ - قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ
السَّمَوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ)
سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ-

قُلْ مَنْ بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلَا
يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ- سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ

فَأَيُّ مُسْحَرُونَ- بَلْ أَتَيْنَهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّهُمْ
لَكَاذِبُونَ-

(84. Say: "Whose is the earth and whosoever is therein If you know!") (85. They will say: "It is Allah's!" Say: "Will you not then remember") (86. Say: "Who is (the) Lord of the seven heavens, and (the) Lord of the Great Throne") (87. They will say: "Allah." Say: "Will you not then have Taqwa") (88. Say: "In Whose Hand is the sovereignty of everything And He protects, while against Whom there is no protector, if you know") (89. They will say: "(All that belongs) to Allah." Say: "How then are you deceived and turn away from the truth") (90. Nay, but We have brought them the truth, and verily, they are liars.)

The Idolators believe in Tawhid Ar-Rububiyah, which requires them to believe in Tawhid Al-Uluhiyyah

Allah states that the fact that He is One and that He is independent in His creation, control, dominion and guides one to realize that there is no God except Him and that none should be worshipped except Him Alone, with no partner or associate. He tells His Messenger Muhammad to say to the idolators who worship others besides Him, even though they admit His Lordship, that He has no partner in Lordship. But despite this they still attributed partners in divinity to Him, and worshipped others besides Him even though they recognized the fact that those whom they worshipped could not create anything, did not own anything, nor do they have any control over anything. However, they still believed that these creatures could bring them closer to Allah,

(مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَى)

(We worship them only that they may bring us near to Allah))39:3(. So Allah says:

(قُلْ لِمَنْ الْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهَا)

(Say: "Whose is the earth and whosoever is therein") meaning, "Who is the Owner Who has created it and whatever is in it of animals, plants, fruits and all other kinds of creation"

(إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ)

("If you know!" They will say: "It is Allah's!") means, they will admit that this belongs to Allah Alone with no partner or associate. If that is the case,

(قُلْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ)

(Say: "Will you not then remember") that none should be worshipped except the Creator and Provider.

(قُلْ مَنْ رَبُّ السَّمَوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ)

(Say: "Who is Lord of the seven heavens, and Lord of the Great Throne") means, "Who is the Creator of the higher realm with its planets, lights and angels who submit to Him in all regions and in all directions Who is the Lord of the Great Throne, which is the highest of all created things" Allah says here:

(وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ)

(and Lord of the Great Throne), meaning the Mighty Throne. At the end of the Surah, Allah says:

(رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْكَرِيمِ)

(the Lord of the Supreme Throne!))23:116(, meaning splendid and magnificent. The Throne combines the features of height and vastness with splendor and magnificence. This is why it was said that it is made of red rubies. Ibn Mas'ud said, "There is no night or day with your Lord, and the light of the Throne is from the Light of His Face."

(سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ قُلْ أَقْلًا تَتَّقُونَ)

(They will say: "Allah." Say: "Will you not then have Taqwa") meaning, since you admit that He is the Lord of the heavens and the Lord of the Mighty Throne, will you not fear His punishment for worshipping others besides Him and associating others with Him

(قُلْ مَنْ مِنْ يَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ)

(Say: "In Whose Hand is the sovereignty of everything") i.e., sovereignty is in His Hands.

(مَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ آخِذٌ بِنَاصِيَتِهَا)

(There is not a moving creature but He has grasp of its forelock))11:56(. meaning, He has control over it. The Messenger of Allah used to say,

«لَا وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ»

(By the One in Whose hand is my soul.) When he swore an oath, he would say,

«لَا وَمَقَلَّبِ الْقُلُوبِ»

(By the One Who turns over (controls) the hearts.) He, may He be glorified, is the Creator, the Sovereign, the Controller,

(وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ)

(And He protects (all), while against Whom there is no protector, if you know) Among the Arabs, if a leader announced his protection to a person, no one could go against him in that, yet no one could offer protection against that leader. Allah says:

(وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ)

(And He protects (all), while against Whom there is no protector,) meaning, He is the greatest Master, and there is none greater than Him. His is the power to create and to command, and none can overturn or oppose His ruling. What He wills happens, and what He does not, will not happen. Allah says:

(لَا يُسْأَلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْأَلُونَ)

(He cannot be questioned about what He does, while they will be questioned.))21:23(He cannot be asked about what He does because of His greatness, Pride, overwhelming power, wisdom and justice, but all of His creation will be asked about what they did, as Allah says:

(فَوَرَبِّكَ لَنَسْأَلَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ - عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ)

(So, by your Lord, We shall certainly call all of them to account. For all that they used to do.))15:92-93(

(سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّهِ)

(They will say: "(All that belongs) to Allah.") means, they will admit that the Almighty Master Who protects all while against Him there is no protector is Allah Alone, with no partner or associate.

(قُلْ فَأَنَّى تُسْحَرُونَ)

(Say: "How then are you deceived and turn away from the truth") means, how can your minds accept the idea of worshipping others besides Him when you recognize and acknowledge that Then Allah says:

(بَلْ أَتَيْنَهُم بِالْحَقِّ)

(Nay, but We have brought them the truth,) which is the declaration that there is no god worthy of worship besides Allah, and the establishment of clear, definitive and sound proof to that effect,

(وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ)

(and verily, they are liars.) means, in their worship of others alongside Allah when they have no evidence for doing so, as Allah says at the end of this Surah:

(وَمَنْ يَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ لَا بُرْهَانَ لَهُ بِهِ فَإِنَّمَا حِسَابُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْكَافِرُونَ)

(And whoever invokes, besides Allah, any other god, of whom he has no proof; then his reckoning is only with his Lord. Surely, the disbelievers will not be successful.))23:117(The idolators have no evidence for what they are doing, which has led them into lies and misguidance. Rather they are following their forefathers and predecessors who were confused and ignorant, as Allah describes them:

(إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلَىٰ أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ آثَرِهِمْ مُّقْتَدُونَ)

("We found our fathers following a certain way and religion, and we will indeed follow their footsteps."))43:23(

(مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذَا لَذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلَّ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا يُصِفُونَ عَلِيمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَتَعَلَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ)

(91. No son (or offspring) did Allah beget, nor is there any god along with Him. (If there had been many gods), then each god would have taken away what he had created, and some would have tried to overcome others! Glorified be Allah above all that they attribute to Him!) (92. All-Knower of the unseen and the seen! Exalted be He over all that they associate as partners to Him!)

Allah has no Partner or Associate

Allah declares Himself to be above having any child or partner in dominion, control and worship. He says:

(مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّهُ مِنْ وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَهٍ إِذَا
لَذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ وَلَعَلَّ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى
بَعْضٍ)

(No son did Allah beget, nor is there any god along with Him. (If there had been many gods), then each god would have taken away what he had created, and some would have tried to overcome others.) meaning, if it were decreed that there should be a plurality of deities, each of them would have exclusive control over whatever he had created, so there would never be any order in the universe. But what we see is that the universe is ordered and cohesive, with the upper and lower realms connected to one another in the most perfect fashion.

(مَا تَرَى فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِنْ تَفَوُّتٍ)

(you can see no fault in the creation of the Most Gracious) 65:3. (Moreover, if there were a number of gods, each of them would try to subdue the other with enmity, and one would prevail over the other. This has been mentioned by the scholars of `Ilm-ul-Kalam, who discussed it using the evidence of mutual resistance or counteraction. This idea states that if there were two or more creators, one would want to make a body move while the other would want to keep it immobile, and if neither of them could achieve what they wanted, then both would be incapable, but the One Whose existence is essential (i.e., Allah) cannot be incapable. It is impossible for the will of both to be fulfilled because of the conflict. This dilemma only arises when a plurality of gods is suggested, so it is impossible for there to be such a plurality, because if the will of one is fulfilled and not the other, the one who prevails will be the one whose existence is essential (i.e., God) and the one who is prevailed over will be merely possible (i.e., he is not divine), because it is not befitting for the one to be defeated whose existence is essential. Allah says:

(وَلَعَلَّ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ عَمَّا
يَصِفُونَ)

(and some would have tried to overcome others! Glorified be Allah above all that they attribute to Him!) meaning, high above all that the stubborn wrongdoers say when they claim that He has a son or partner.

(عَلِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ)

(All-Knower of the unseen and the seen!) means, He knows what is hidden from His creatures and what they see.

(فَتَعَلَىٰ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ)

(Exalted be He over all that they associate as partners to Him!) means, sanctified and glorified and exalted be He above all that the wrongdoers and liars say.

(قُلْ رَبِّ إِمَّا تُرِيئِي مَا يُوعَدُونَ - رَبِّ فَلَا
تَجْعَلَنِي فِي الْقَوْمِ الظَّالِمِينَ - وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُرِيكَ
مَا نَعِدُهُمْ لقَدِيرُونَ - ادْفَعْ بِآتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ
السَّيِّئَةِ نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُونَ - وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَعُوذُ
بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ - وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَنْ
يَحْضُرُونِ)

(93. Say: "My Lord! If You would show me that with which they are threatened, ") (94. "My Lord! Then, put me not amongst the people who are the wrongdoers.") (95. And indeed We are able to show you that with which We have threatened them.) (96. Repel evil with that which is better. We are best-acquainted with the things they utter.) (97. And say: "My Lord! I seek refuge with You from the whisperings of the Shayatin.") (98. "And I seek refuge with You, My Lord! lest they should come near me.")

The Command to call on Allah when Calamity strikes, to repel Evil with that which is better, and to seek refuge with Allah

Allah commands His Prophet Muhammad to call on Him with this supplication when calamity strikes:

(رَبِّ إِمَّا تُرِيئِي مَا يُوعَدُونَ)

(My Lord! If You would show me that with which they are threatened.) meaning, 'if You punish them while I am witnessing that, then do not cause me to be one of them.' As was said in the Hadith recorded by Imam Ahmad and At-Tirmidhi, who graded it Sahih:

«وَإِذَا أَرَدْتَ بِقَوْمٍ فِتْنَةً فَتَوَقَّئِي إِلَيْكَ غَيْرَ
مَقْتُونٍ»

(If You want to test people, then take me to You)cause me to die(without having to undergo the test.)

(وَإِنَّا عَلَىٰ أَنْ نُثْرِكَ مَا نَعِدُهُمْ لَقَدِيرُونَ)

(And indeed We are able to show you that with which We have threatened them.) means, 'if We willed, We could show you the punishment and test that We will send upon them.' Then Allah shows him the best way to behave when mixing with people, which is to treat kindly the one who treats him badly, so as to soften his heart and turn his enmity to friendship, and to turn his hatred to love. Allah says:

(ادْفَعْ بِأَلْتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةِ)

(Repel evil with that which is better.) This is like the Ayah:

(ادْفَعْ بِأَلْتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ فَإِذَا الَّذِي بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهُ
عَدَاوَةٌ كَأَنَّهُ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيمٌ مَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا الَّذِينَ
صَبَرُوا)

(Repel (the evil) with one which is better, then verily he, between whom and you there was enmity, (will become) as though he was a close friend. But none is granted it except those who are patient))41:34-35(. meaning, nobody will be helped or inspired to follow this advice or attain this quality,

(إِلَّا الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا)

(except those who are patient) meaning, those who patiently bear people's insults and bad treatment and deal with them in a good manner when they are on the receiving end of bad treatment from them.

(وَمَا يُلْقَاهَا إِلَّا دُوْحَظٌ عَظِيمٌ)

(and none is granted it except the owner of the great portion) means, in this world and the Hereafter. And Allah says:

(وَقُلْ رَبِّ أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ هَمَزَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ)

(And say: "My Lord! I seek refuge with You from the whisperings of the Shayatin.") Allah commanded him to seek refuge with Him from the Shayatin, because no trick could help you against them and you cannot protect yourself by being kind to them. We have already stated, when discussing Isti`adhah (seeking refuge), that the Messenger of Allah used to say,

«أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ السَّمِيعِ الْعَلِيمِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ
مِنْ هَمَزِهِ وَنَقْخِهِ وَنَقْتِهِ»

(I seek refuge with Allah, the All-Hearing, All-Seeing, from the accursed Shayatin, from his whisperings, evil suggestions and insinuations.) His saying:

(وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ رَبِّ أَنْ يَحْضُرُونِ)

("And I seek refuge with You, My Lord! lest they should come near me.") means, in any issue of my life. So we are commanded to mention Allah at the beginning of any undertaking, in order to ward off the Shayatin at the time of eating, intercourse, slaughtering animals for food, etc. Abu Dawud recorded that the Messenger of Allah used to say:

«اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ الْهَرَمِ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنَ
الْهَدْمِ وَمِنَ الْغَرَقِ، وَأَعُوذُ بِكَ مِنْ أَنْ يَتَخَبَّطَنِي
الشَّيْطَانُ عِنْدَ الْمَوْتِ»

(O Allah, I seek refuge with You from old age, I seek refuge with You from being crushed or drowned, and I seek refuge with you from being assaulted by the Shayatin at the time of death.)

(حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ
- لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ
هُوَ قَائِلُهَا وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ)

(99. Until, when death comes to one of them, he says: "My Lord! Send me back,") (100. "So that I may do good in that which I have left behind!" No! (Kalla) It is but a word that he speaks; and in front of them is Barzakh until the Day when they will be resurrected.)

The Disbelievers' Hope when death approaches Allah tells us about what happens when death approaches one of the disbelievers or one of those who have been negligent with the commands of Allah. He tells us what he says and how he asks to come back to this world so that he can rectify whatever wrongs he committed during his lifetime. Allah says:

رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِي لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ
(كَلًّا)

("My Lord! Send me back, so that I may do good in that which I have left behind!" No!) This is like the Ayat:

وَأَنْفِقُوا مِنْ مَّا رَزَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ أَحَدَكُمُ
الْمَوْتَ) (الموت)

(And spend of that with which We have provided you before death comes to one of you,) until His saying:

وَاللَّهُ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ)

(And Allah is All-Aware of what you do))63:10-11(

وَأَنْذِرِ النَّاسَ يَوْمَ يَأْتِيهِمُ الْعَذَابُ)

(And warn mankind of the Day when the torment will come unto them)

(مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ زَوَالٍ)

upto His saying; (that you would not leave (the world for the Hereafter).))14:44(And His saying:

يَوْمَ يَأْتِي تَأْوِيلُهُ يَقُولُ الَّذِينَ نَسُوهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ قَدْ
جَاءَتْ رُسُلُ رَبِّنَا بِالْحَقِّ فَهَلْ لَنَا مِنْ شُفَعَاءَ
فَيَشْفَعُوا لَنَا أَوْ نُرَدُّ فَنَعْمَلْ غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ)

(On the Day the event is finally fulfilled, those who neglected it before will say: "Verily, the Messengers of our Lord did come with the truth, now are there any intercessors for us that they might intercede on our behalf Or could we be sent back so that we might do deeds other than those deeds which we used to do"))7:53(And:

(وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ الْمُجْرِمُونَ نَاكِسُوا رُءُوسِهِمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ رَبَّنَا أَبْصَرْنَا وَسَمِعْنَا فَارْجِعْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا إِنَّا مُوقِنُونَ)

(And if you only could see when the criminals shall hang their heads before their Lord (saying): "Our Lord! We have now seen and heard, so send us back, that we will do righteous good deeds. Verily, we now believe with certainty.") 32:12(And;

(وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذْ وَقِفُوا عَلَى النَّارِ فَقَالُوا يَايْتَنَا نُرَدُّ وَلَا نُكَذِّبُ بآيَاتِ رَبِّنَا)

(If you could but see when they will be held over the (Hell) Fire! They will say: "Would that we were but sent back! Then we would not deny the Ayat of our Lord. ...") until His saying;

(وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ)

(And indeed they are liars.) 6:27-28(

(وَتَرَى الظَّالِمِينَ لَمَّا رَأُوا الْعَذَابَ يَقُولُونَ هَلْ إِلَىٰ مَرَدٍّ مِّن سَبِيلٍ)

(And you will see the wrongdoers, when they behold the torment, they will say: "Is there any way of return") 42:44(

(قَالُوا رَبَّنَا أَمَنَّآ اٰنْتَيْنِ وَاٰحْيَيْتَنَا اٰنْتَيْنِ فَاَعْتَرَفْنَا بِذُنُوبِنَا فَهَلْ إِلَىٰ خُرُوجٍ مِّن سَبِيلٍ)

(They will say: "Our Lord! You have made us to die twice, and You have given us life twice! Now we confess our sins, then is there any way to get out") 40:11(and the Ayah after it:

(وَهُمْ يَصْطَرِحُونَ فِيهَا رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا غَيْرَ الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ أَوَلَمْ نُعَمِّرْكُم مَّا

يَتَذَكَّرُ فِيهِ مَنْ تَذَكَّرَ وَجَاءَكُمْ النَّذِيرُ فَذُوقُوا فَمَا
لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ نَصِيرٍ)

(Therein they will cry: "Our Lord! Bring us out, we shall do righteous good deeds, not what we used to do." (Allah will reply:) "Did We not give you lives long enough, so that whosoever would receive admonition could receive it And the warner came to you. So taste you (the evil of your deeds). For the wrongdoers there is no helper."))35:37(Allah says that they will ask to go back, when death approaches, on the Day of Resurrection, when they are gathered for judgment before the Compeller (Allah) and when they are in the agonies of the punishment of Hell, but their prayer will not be answered. Here Allah says:

(كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا)

(No! It is but a word that he speaks;) The word Kalla (No!) is a word that is used to rebuke, and the meaning is: "No, We will not respond to what he asks for and We will not accept it from him."

(إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَائِلُهَا)

(It is but a word that he speaks) refers to his asking to go back so that he can do righteous deeds; this is just talk on his part, it would not be accompanied by any action. If he were to go back, he would not do any righteous good deeds, he is merely lying, as Allah says:

(وَلَوْ رُدُّوْا لَعَدُوْا لِمَا نُهُوْا عَنْهُ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُوْنَ)

(But if they were returned, they would certainly revert to that which they were forbidden. And indeed they are liars))6:28(. Qatadah said: "By Allah, he will not wish to go back to his family and tribe, or to accumulate more of the things of this world or satisfy his desires, but he will wish that he could go back to do acts of obedience to Allah. May Allah have mercy on a man who does that which the disbeliever will wish he had done when he sees the punishment of Hell."

Barzakh and Punishment therein

(وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ إِلَى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ)

(and in front of them is Barzakh until the Day when they will be resurrected.) Abu Salih and others said that:

(وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ)

(and in front of them) means before them. Mujahid said, Al-Barzakh is a barrier between this world and the Hereafter. Muhammad bin Ka' b said, "Al-Barzakh is what is between this world

and the Hereafter, neither they are the people of this world, eating and drinking, nor are they with the people of the Hereafter, being rewarded or punished for their deeds." Abu Sakhr said, "Al-Barzakh refers to the graves. They are neither in this world nor the Hereafter, and they will stay there until the Day of Resurrection."

(وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ)

(and in front of them is Barzakh). In these words is a threat to those wrongdoers at the time of death, of the punishment of Barzakh. This is similar to the Ayat:

(مَنْ وَرَائِهِمْ جَهَنَّمُ)

(In front of them there is Hell))45:10(.

(وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِ عَذَابٌ غَلِيظٌ)

(and in front of him will be a great torment))14: 17(.

(إِلَى يَوْمٍ يُبْعَثُونَ)

(until the Day when they will be resurrected). means, he will be punished continually until the Day of Resurrection, as it says in the Hadith:

«قَلَّا يَزَالُ مُعَذَّبًا فِيهَا»

(He will continue to be punished in it.) meaning, in the earth.

(فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَلَا أَنْسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلَا يَتَسَاءَلُونَ - فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُقْلِحُونَ - وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ فِي جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ - تَلْفَحُ وَجُوهُهُمْ النَّارُ وَهُمْ فِيهَا كَالِحُونَ)

(101. Then, when the Trumpet is blown, there will be no kinship among them that Day, nor will they ask of one another.) (102. Then, those whose Scales (of good deeds) are heavy, these! they are the successful.) (103. And those whose Scales (of good deeds) are light, they are those

who lose themselves, in Hell will they abide.) (104. The Fire will burn their faces, and therein they will grin, with displaced lips (disfigured).)

The sounding of the Trumpet and the weighing of Deeds in the Scales.

Allah says that when the Trumpet is blown for the Resurrection, and the people rise from their graves,

(فَلَا أُنْسَبَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلَا يَتَسَاءَلُونَ)

(there will be no kinship among them that Day, nor will they ask of one another.) meaning that lineage will be of no avail on that Day, and a father will not ask about his son or care about him. Allah says:

(وَلَا يَسْأَلُ حَمِيمٌ حَمِيمًا يُبْصِرُونَهُمْ)

(And no friend will ask a friend (about his condition), though they shall be made to see one another))70:10-11(. meaning, no relative will ask about another relative, even if he can see him and even if he is carrying a heavy burden. Even if he was the dearest of people to him in this world, he will not care about him or take even the slightest part of his burden from him. Allah says:

(يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ - وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ -
وَصَحْبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ)

(That Day shall a man flee from his brother. And from his mother and his father. And from his wife and his children.))80:34-36(Ibn Mas`ud said, "On the Day of Resurrection, Allah will gather the first and the last, then a voice will call out, 'Whoever is owed something by another, let him come forth and take it.' And a man will rejoice if he is owed something or had been mistreated by his father or child or wife, even if it is little. " This is confirmed in the Book of Allah, where Allah says:

(فَإِذَا نُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَلَا أُنْسَبَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَلَا
يَتَسَاءَلُونَ)

(Then, when the Trumpet is blown, there will be no kinship among them that Day, nor will they ask of one another.) This was recorded by Ibn Abi Hatim.

(فَمَنْ تَقَلَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ)

(Then, those whose Scales are heavy, these! they are the successful.) means, the one whose good deeds outweigh his bad deeds, even by one. This was the view of Ibn ` Abbas.

(فَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ)

(they are the successful.) means, those who have attained victory and been saved from Hell and admitted to Paradise. Ibn ` Abbas said, "These are the ones who have attained what they wanted and been saved from an evil from which there is no escape."

(وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِينُهُ)

(And those whose Scales are light,) means, their evil deeds outweigh their good deeds.

(فَأُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ)

(they are those who lose themselves,) means, they are doomed and have ended up with the worst deal. Allah says:

(فِي جَهَنَّمَ خَالِدُونَ)

(in Hell will they abide.) meaning, they will stay there forever and will never leave.

(تَلْفَحُ وُجُوهَهُمُ النَّارُ)

(The Fire will burn their faces,) This is like the Ayah:

(وَتَعَشَى وُجُوهَهُمُ النَّارُ)

(and fire will cover their faces))14:50(. and:

(لَوْ يَعْلَمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا حِينَ لَا يَكْفُونُ عَنْ وُجُوهِهِمُ النَّارَ وَلَا عَنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ)

(If only those who disbelieved knew (the time) when they will not be able to ward off the Fire from their faces, nor from their backs))21:39(.

(وَهُمْ فِيهَا كَالْحُوتِ)

(and therein they will grin, with displaced lips.) ` Ali bin Abi Talhah narrated from Ibn ` Abbas, "Frowning."

(أَلَمْ تَكُنْ ءَايَاتِي تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فَكُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ -
قَالُوا رَبَّنَا غَلَبَتْ عَلَيْنَا شِقْوَتُنَا وَكُنَّا قَوْمًا ضَالِّينَ
- رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْهَا فَإِنْ عُدْنَا فَإِنَّا ظَالِمُونَ)

(105. "Were not My Ayat recited to you, and then you used to deny them") (106. They will say: "Our Lord! Our wretchedness overcame us, and we were (an) erring people.") (107. "Our Lord! Bring us out of this. If ever we return (to evil), then indeed we shall be wrongdoers.")

Rebuking the People of Hell, their admission of Their Wretchedness and their Request to be brought out of Hell

This is a rebuke from Allah to the people of Hell for the disbelief, sins, unlawful deeds and evil actions that they committed, because of which they were doomed. Allah says:

(أَلَمْ تَكُنْ ءَايَاتِي تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فَكُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُونَ)

("Were not My Ayat recited to you, and then you used to deny them") meaning, 'I sent Messengers to you, and revealed Books, and cleared the confusion for you, so you have no excuse.' This is like the Ayat:

(لِنَلَّا يَكُونَ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى اللَّهِ حُجَّةٌ بَعْدَ الرُّسُلِ)

(in order that mankind should have no plea against Allah after the Messengers) 4:165(

(وَمَا كُنَّا مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا)

(And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger) 17:15(

(كُلَّمَا أَلْقَىٰ فِيهَا فَوْجٌ سَأَلَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا أَلَمْ يَأْتِكُمْ
نَذِيرٌ)

(Every time a group is cast therein, its keeper will ask: "Did no warner come to you") Until His saying;

(فَسُحْقًا لِأَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ)

(So, away with the dwellers of the blazing Fire!) They will say:

(رَبَّنَا غَلَبَتْ عَلَيْنَا شِقْوَتُنَا وَكُنَّا قَوْمًا ضَالِّينَ)

(Our Lord! Our wretchedness overcame us, and we were (an) erring people.) meaning, evidence has been established against us, but we were so doomed that we could not follow it, so we went astray and were not guided. Then they will say:

(رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا مِنْهَا فَإِنْ عُدْنَا فَإِنَّا ظَالِمُونَ)

(Our Lord! Bring us out of this. If ever we return (to evil), then indeed we shall be wrongdoers.) meaning, send us back to the world, and if we go back to what we used to do before, then we will indeed be wrongdoers who deserve punishment. This is like the Ayat:

(فَاعْتَرَفْنَا بِذُنُوبِنَا فَهَلْ إِلَى خُرُوجٍ مِّن سَبِيلٍ)

(Now we confess our sins, then is there any way to get out) Until His statement:

(فَالْحُكْمُ لِلَّهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْكَبِيرِ)

(So the judgment is only with Allah, the Most High, the Most Great!) 40:11-12 (meaning, there will be no way out, because you used to associate partners in worship with Allah whereas the believers worshipped Him Alone.

(قَالَ اخْسَئُوا فِيهَا وَلَا تُكَلِّمُونَ - إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ
مِّنْ عِبَادِي يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا ءَامِنَّا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا
وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّحِيمِينَ - فَاتَّخَذْتُمُوهُمْ
سِخْرِيًّا حَتَّى أَنْسَوْكُمْ ذِكْرِي وَكُنْتُمْ مِّنْهُمْ
تَضْحَكُونَ - إِيَّيْ جَزَيْتُهُمُ الْيَوْمَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا إِنَّهُمْ
هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ)

(108. He (Allah) will say: "Remain you in it with ignominy! And speak you not to Me!") (109. Verily, there was a party of My servants who used to say: "Our Lord! We believe, so forgive us and have mercy on us, for You are the Best of all who show mercy!") (110. But you took them for a laughing stock, so much so that they made you forget My remembrance while you used to laugh at them!) (111. Verily, I have rewarded them this Day for their patience; they are indeed the ones that are successful.)

Allah's Response and Rejection of the Disbelievers

This is the response of Allah to the disbelievers when they ask Him to bring them out of the Fire and send them back to this world. He will say:

(اٰخَسُوْا فِيْهَا)

(Remain you in it with ignominy!) meaning, abide therein, humiliated, despised and scorned.

(وَلَا تُكَلِّمُوْنَ)

(And speak you not to Me!) means, `do not ask for this again, for I will not respond to you. Al-`Awfi reported from Ibn `Abbas concerning this Ayah,

(اٰخَسُوْا فِيْهَا وَلَا تُكَلِّمُوْنَ)

(Remain you in it with ignominy! And speak you not to Me!) "These are the words of Ar-Rahman when silencing them." Ibn Abi Hatim recorded that `Abdullah bin `Amr said, "The people of Hell will call on Malik for forty years, and he will not answer them. Then he will respond and tell them that they are to abide therein. By Allah, their cries will mean nothing to Malik or to the Lord of Malik. Then they will call on their Lord and will say,

(قَالُوْا رَبَّنَا غَلَبَتْ عَلَيْنَا شِقْوَتُنَا وَكُنَّا قَوْمًا ضَالِّينَ
- رَبَّنَا اٰخْرَجْنَا مِنْهَا فَاِنَّ عُدْنَا فَاِنَّا ظٰلِمُوْنَ)

(Our Lord! Our wretchedness overcame us, and we were (an) erring people. Our Lord! Bring us out of this. If ever we return (to evil), then indeed we shall be wrongdoers.))23:106-107(Allah will not answer them for a time span equivalent to twice the duration of this world. Then He will reply:

(اٰخَسُوْا فِيْهَا وَلَا تُكَلِّمُوْنَ)

(Remain you in it with ignominy! And speak you not to Me!) By Allah, the people will not utter a single word after that, and they will merely be in the Fire of Hell, sighing in a high and low tone. Their voices are likened to those of donkeys, which start in a high tone and end in a low tone." Then Allah will remind them of their sins in this world and how they used to make fun of His believing servants and close friends:

(إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَرِيقٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِي يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا ءَامَنَّا
فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّحِمِينَ
فَاتَّخَذْتُمُوهُمْ سِخْرِيًّا)

(Verily, there was a party of My servants who used to say: "Our Lord! We believe, so forgive us and have mercy on us, for You are the Best of all who show mercy!" But you took them for a laughing stock,) meaning, `you made fun of them for calling on Me and praying to Me,'

(حَتَّىٰ أَنْسَوَكُمُ ذِكْرِي)

(so much so that they made you forget My remembrance) means, your hatred for them made you forget what I would do to you.

(وَكُنْتُمْ مِّنْهُمْ تَضْحَكُونَ)

(while you used to laugh at them!) means, at their deeds and worship. This is like the Ayah:

(إِنَّ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا كَانُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
يَضْحَكُونَ - وَإِذَا مَرُّوا بِهِمْ يَتَغَامَزُونَ)

(Verily, those who committed crimes used to laugh at those who believed. And, whenever they passed by them, used to wink one to another.) 83:29-30(meaning, they used to slander them in mockery. Then Allah tells us how He will reward His friends and righteous servants, and says:

(إِنِّي جَزَيْتُهُمُ الْيَوْمَ بِمَا صَبَرُوا)

(Verily, I have rewarded them this Day for their patience;) meaning, `for the harm and mockery that you inflicted on them,

(أَنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ)

(they are indeed the ones that are successful.) I have caused them to attain the victory of joy, safety, Paradise and salvation from the Fire.'

(قَالَ كَمْ لَبِئْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ عَدَدَ سِنِينَ - قَالُوا لَبِئْنَا
يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ فَاسْأَلِ الْعَادِّينَ - قَالَ إِنْ لَبِئْتُمْ
إِلَّا قَلِيلًا لَوْ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ - أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا
خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ - فَتَعَلَى
اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ
الْكَرِيمِ)

(112. He will say: "What number of years did you stay on earth") (113. They will say: "We stayed a day or part of a day. Ask of those who keep account.") (114. He will say: "You stayed not but a little, if you had only known!") (115. "Did you think that We had created you in play, and that you would not be brought back to Us") (116. So Exalted be Allah, the True King: None has the right to be worshipped but He, the Lord of Al-`Arsh Al-Karim!)

Allah tells them how much they wasted in their short lives in this world by failing to obey Allah and worship Him Alone.

If they had been patient during their short stay in this world, they would have attained victory just like His pious close friends.

(قَالَ كَمْ لَبِئْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ عَدَدَ سِنِينَ)

(He will say: "What number of years did you stay on earth") means, how long did you stay in this world

(قَالُوا لَبِئْنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ فَاسْأَلِ الْعَادِّينَ)

(They will say: "We stayed a day or part of a day. Ask of those who keep account.") meaning, those who keep the records.

(قَالَ إِنْ لَبِئْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا)

(He will say: "You stayed not but a little...") meaning, it was only a short time, no matter how you look at it.

(لَوْ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ)

(if you had only known!) means, you would not have preferred the transient to the eternal, and treated yourself in this bad way, and earned the wrath of Allah in this short period. If you had patiently obeyed Allah and worshipped Him as the believers did, you would have attained victory just as they did.

Allah did not create His Servants in vain

(أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ عَبَثًا)

(Did you think that We had created you in play,) means, `did you think that you were created in vain, with no purpose, with nothing required of you and no wisdom on Our part' Or it was said that "in play" meant to play and amuse yourselves, like the animals were created, who have no reward or punishment. But you were created to worship Allah and carry out His commands.

(وَأَنَّكُمْ إِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُونَ)

(and that you would not be brought back to Us) means, that you would not be brought back to the Hereafter. This is like the Ayah:

(أَيَحْسَبُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنْ يُتْرَكَ سُدًى)

(Does man think that he will be left neglected))75:36(

(فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ)

(So Exalted be Allah, the True King.) means, sanctified be He above the idea that he should create anything in vain, for He is the True King Who is far above doing such a thing.

(لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْكَرِيمِ)

(None has the right to be worshipped but He, the Lord of Al-`Arsh Al-Karim!) The Throne is mentioned because it is the highest point of all creation, and it is described as Karim, meaning beautiful in appearance and splendid in form, as Allah says elsewhere:

(أُنَبِّئْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ كَرِيمٍ)

(every good kind We cause to grow therein))26:7(.

(وَمَنْ يَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ لَا بُرْهَانَ لَهُ بِهِ
فَإِنَّمَا حِسَابُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ إِنَّهُ لَا يُقْلِحُ الْكَافِرُونَ -
وَقُلْ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ وَارْحَمْ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّحِمِينَ)

(117. And whoever invokes besides Allah, any other god, of whom he has no proof; then his reckoning is only with his Lord. Surely, disbelievers will not be successful.) (118. And say : "My Lord! Forgive and have mercy, for You are the Best of those who show mercy!")

Shirk is the Worst form of Wrong, its Practitioner shall never succeed. Allah threatens those who associate anything else with Him and worship anything with Him. He informs that those who associate others with Allah:

(لَا بُرْهَانَ لَهُ)

(of whom he has no proof), meaning no evidence for what he says. Then Allah says:

(وَمَنْ يَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ لَا بُرْهَانَ لَهُ بِهِ)

(And whoever invokes, besides Allah, any other god, of whom he has no proof;) this is a conditional sentence, whose fulfilling clause is:

(فَإِنَّمَا حِسَابُهُ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ)

(then his reckoning is only with his Lord.) meaning, Allah will call him to account for that. Then Allah tells us:

(إِنَّهُ لَا يُقْلِحُ الْكَافِرُونَ)

(Surely, disbelievers will not be successful.) meaning, they will not be successful with Him on the Day of Resurrection; they will not prosper or be saved.

(وَقُلْ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ وَارْحَمْ وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرَّحِمِينَ)

(And say: "My Lord! Forgive and have mercy, for You are the best of those who show mercy!") Here Allah is teaching us to recite this supplication, for forgiveness, in a general sense, means wiping away sins and concealing them from people, and mercy means guiding a person and helping him to say and do good things.

The Tafsir of Surat An-Nur

(Chapter - 24)

Which was Revealed in Al-Madinah

(بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ)

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

(سُورَةٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهَا وَفَرَضْنَاهَا وَأَنْزَلْنَا فِيهَا آيَاتٍ
بَيِّنَاتٍ لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ - الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا
كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ
فِي دِينِ اللّٰهِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ
وَلَيْشَهِدَ عَذَابُهُمَا طَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ)

(1. A Surah which We have sent down and which We have enjoined (Faradnaha), and in it We have revealed manifest Ayat, that you may remember.) (2. The Zaniyah and the Zani, flog each of them with a hundred stripes. Let not pity withhold you in their case, in a punishment prescribed by Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. And let a party of the believers witness their punishment.)

The Importance of Surat An-Nur

(سُورَةٌ أَنْزَلْنَاهَا)

(A Surah which We have sent down) Here Allah is pointing out the high esteem in which He holds this Surah, which is not to say that other Surahs are not important.

(وَفَرَضْنَاهَا)

(and which We have enjoined,) Mujahid and Qatadah said, "This means: We have explained what is lawful and unlawful, commands and prohibitions, and the prescribed punishments." Al-Bukhari said, "Those who read it: Faradnaha, say that it means: "We have enjoined them upon you and those who come after you."

(وَأَنْزَلْنَا فِيهَا آيَاتٍ بَيِّنَاتٍ)

(and in it We have revealed manifest Ayat,) means, clearly explained,

(لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ)

(that you may remember.)

The Explanation of the Prescribed Punishment for Zina (Illicit Sex)

Then Allah says:

(الزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِي فَاجْلِدُوا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ)

(The Zaniyah and the Zani, flog each of them with a hundred stripes.) This honorable Ayah contains the ruling on the law of retaliation for the person who commits illegal sex, and details of the punishment. Such a person will either be unmarried, meaning that he has never been married, or he will be married, meaning that he has had intercourse within the bounds of a lawful marriage, and he is free, adult and of sound mind. As for the virgin who is unwedded, the prescribed punishment is one hundred stripes, as stated in this Ayah. In addition to this he is to be banished from his homeland for one year, as was recorded in the Two Sahihs from Abu Hurayrah and Zayd bin Khalid Al-Juhani in the Hadith about the two bedouins who came to the Messenger of Allah . One of them said, "O Messenger of Allah, this son of mine was employed by this man, and committed Zina with his wife. I paid a ransom with him on behalf of my son one hundred sheep and a slave-girl, but when I asked the people of knowledge, they said that my son should be given one hundred stripes and banished for a year, and that this man's wife should be stoned to death." The Messenger of Allah said:

«وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَأَقْضِيَنَّ بَيْنَكُمَا بِكِتَابِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى، الْوَالِيدَةُ وَالْغَنَمُ رَدٌّ عَلَيْكَ، وَعَلَى ابْنِكَ جَدُّ مِائَةٍ وَتَعْرِيبُ عَامٍ، وَأَعْدُ يَا أُنَيْسُ لِرَجُلٍ مِّنْ أَسْلَمَ إِلَى امْرَأَةٍ هَذَا، فَإِنْ اعْتَرَفَتْ فَأَرْجُمُهَا»

(By the One in Whose Hand is my soul, I will judge between you both according to the Book of Allah. Take back the slave-girl and sheep, and your son is to be given one hundred stripes and banished for one year. O Unays -- he said to a man from the tribe of Aslam -- go to this man's wife, and if she confesses, then stone her to death.) Unays went to her and she confessed, so he stoned her to death. This indicates that if the person who is guilty of illegal sex is a virgin and unmarried, he should be banished in addition to being given one hundred stripes. But if

married, meaning he has had intercourse within the bounds of lawful marriage, and he is free, adult and of sound mind, then he should be stoned to death. Imam Malik recorded that `Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, stood up and praised and glorified Allah, then he said; "O people! Allah sent Muhammad with the truth, and revealed to him the Book. One of the things that was revealed to him was the Ayah of stoning to death, which we have recited and understood. The Messenger of Allah carried out the punishment of stoning and after him we did so, but I am afraid that as time goes by, some will say that they did not find the Ayah of stoning in the Book of Allah, and they will go astray because they abandoned one of the obligations revealed by Allah. Stoning is something that is prescribed in the Book of Allah for the person -- man or woman -- who commits illegal sex, if he or she is married, if decisive evidence is produced, or if pregnancy results from that, or if they confess to it." It was also recorded in the Two Sahihs in the lengthy Hadith of Malik, from which we have quoted briefly only the portion that is relevant to the current discussion.

Do not feel pity for Them when carrying out the Prescribed Punishment

(وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ)

(Let not pity withhold you in their case, in a punishment prescribed by Allah,) Meaning, with a ruling prescribed by Allah. So the meaning of the Ayah is: "Do not feel too sorry for them where the laws of Allah are established." This does not mean that we should not naturally feel pity when carrying out the punishment. What is prohibited here is the kind of pity that may make the judge ignore the punishment altogether. This is what is not permitted for the judge. Mujahid said,

(وَلَا تَأْخُذْكُمْ بِهِمَا رَأْفَةٌ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ)

(Let not pity withhold you in their case, in a punishment prescribed by Allah,) "If the matter is taken to the ruling authority, the punishment has to be carried out and cannot be stopped." This was also narrated from Sa`id bin Jubayr and `Ata' bin Abi Rabah. It was recorded in a Hadith:

«تَعَاقُوا الْحُدُودَ فِيمَا بَيْنَكُمْ، فَمَا بَلَغَنِي مِنْ حَدٍّ فَقَدْ وَجَبَ»

(Compromise with the matter of prescribed punishment mutually sorting it out among yourselves, for once a matter where the prescribed punishment is required reaches me, I am obliged to carry it out.) Allah's saying:

(إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ)

(if you believe in Allah and the Last Day.) means, then do that, carry out the punishments on those who commit illegal sex, and strike them hard without causing any wound, so that he and

others like him will be deterred by the terror of that. In Al-Musnad, it was recorded that one of the Companions said, "O Messenger of Allah, when I slaughter a sheep I feel pity for it." He said,

«وَلَا فِي ذَلِكَ أَجْرٌ»

(You be rewarded for that.)

Carry out the Prescribed Punishment in Public

وَلْيَشْهَدْ عَذَابَهُمَا طَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

(And let a party of the believers witness their punishment.) This is more humiliating for the people who are guilty of illegal sex, if they are flogged in front of the people. This is because it is more effective as a deterrent and it conveys the sense of scandal and rebuke. Al-Hasan Al-Basri said,

وَلْيَشْهَدْ عَذَابَهُمَا طَائِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

(And let a party of the believers witness their punishment.) "Publicly."

الزَّانِي لَا يَنْكِحُ إِلَّا زَانِيَةً أَوْ مُشْرِكَةً وَالزَّانِيَةُ لَا يَنْكِحُهَا إِلَّا زَانٍ أَوْ مُشْرِكٌ وَحُرْمٌ ذَلِكَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ

(3. The Zani marries not but a Zaniyah or a Mushrikah; and the Zaniyah, none marries her except a Zani or a Mushrik. Such a thing is forbidden to the believers.) Here Allah tells us that the Zani (male who is guilty of illegal sex) does not have intercourse except with a Zaniyah (female who is guilty of illegal sex) or a Mushrikah (female idolator), meaning that no one would go along with him in this action except a sinful woman who is also guilty of Zina, or a Mushrikah who does not think it is unlawful. By the same token,

وَالزَّانِيَةُ لَا يَنْكِحُهَا إِلَّا زَانٍ

(and the Zaniyah, none marries her except a Zani) a sinful man who is guilty of fornication,

(أَوْ مُشْرِكَةً)

(or a Mushrik) (a man) who does not think it is unlawful.

(وَحُرِّمَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ)

(Such a thing is forbidden to the believers.) meaning, indulging in this, or marrying prostitutes, or marrying chaste women to immoral men. Qatadah and Muqatil bin Hayyan said: "Allah forbade the believers from marrying prostitutes." This Ayah is like the Ayah (about marrying slave-girls):

(مُحْصَنَاتٍ غَيْرَ مُسَفِّحَاتٍ وَلَا مُتَّخِذَاتِ أَخْدَانٍ)

(they should be chaste, not committing illegal sex, nor taking boyfriends.) 4:25(And His saying:

(مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ مُسَافِحِينَ وَلَا مُتَّخِذِي أَخْدَانٍ)

(desiring chastity not committing illegal sexual intercourse, nor taking them as girlfriends) 5:5(Imam Ahmad recorded that `Abdullah bin `Amr, may Allah be pleased with him, said that a man among the believers asked the Messenger of Allah for permission (to marry) a woman known as Umm Mahzul, who used to commit adultery, and who had stated the condition that she should spend on him. So he asked the Messenger of Allah for permission, or he mentioned the matter to him. The Messenger of Allah recited to him:

(الزَّانِي لَا يَنْكِحُ إِلَّا زَانِيَةً أَوْ مُشْرِكَةً وَالزَّانِيَةُ لَا يَنْكِحُهَا إِلَّا زَانٍ أَوْ مُشْرِكٌ وَحُرِّمَ ذَلِكَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ)

(The Zani marries not but a Zaniyah or a Mushrikah; and the Zaniyah, none marries her except Zani or a Mushrik. Such a thing is forbidden to the believers.) 24:3(Ibn Abi Hatim recorded that Abu Hurayrah said,

«لَا يَنْكِحُ الزَّانِي الْمَجْلُودُ إِلَّا مِثْلَهُ»

(A Zani who has been flogged should not marry anyone except someone who is like him.) A similar report was recorded by Abu Dawud in his Sunan.

(وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً وَلَا تَقْبَلُوا لَهُمْ

شَهَادَةٌ أَبَدًا وَأَوْلِيكَ هُمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا
مِن بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ)

(4. And those who accuse chaste women, and produce not four witnesses, flog them with eighty stripes, and reject their testimony forever. They indeed are the rebellious.) (5. Except those who repent thereafter and do righteous deeds; (for such) verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.)

The Prescribed Punishment for slandering Chaste Women

This Ayah states the prescribed punishment for making false accusations against chaste women, i.e., those who are free, adult and chaste. If the person who is falsely accused is a man, the same punishment of flogging also applies. If the accuser produces evidence that what he is saying is true, then the punishment does not apply. Allah said:

(ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَانِينَ
جَلْدَةً وَلَا تَقْبَلُوا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً أَبَدًا وَأَوْلِيكَ هُمُ
الْفَاسِقُونَ)

(and produce not four witnesses, flog them with eighty stripes, and reject their testimony forever. They indeed are the rebellious.) If the accuser cannot prove that what he is saying is true, then three rulings apply to him: (firstly) that he should be flogged with eighty stripes, (secondly) that his testimony should be rejected forever, and (thirdly) that he should be labelled as a rebellious who is not of good character, whether in the sight of Allah or of mankind.

Explaining the Repentance of the One Who makes a False Accusation

Then Allah says:

(إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ وَأَصْلَحُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ)

(Except those who repent thereafter and do righteous deeds; (for such) verily, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.) This exception refers to the second and third rulings mentioned above. The flogging has been carried out regardless of whether he repents or persists, and after that there is no further punishment, as is agreed among the scholars. If he repents, then

his testimony may be accepted, and he is no longer to be regarded as a rebellious. This was the view of Sa`id bin Al-Musayyib -- the leader of the Tabi`in -- and also a group among the Salaf. Ash-Sha`bi and Ad-Dahhak said, "His testimony cannot be accepted even if he does repent, unless he himself admits that he said something false, in which case his testimony may be accepted." And Allah knows best.

(وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ أَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ شُهَدَاءُ إِلَّا
أَنْفُسُهُمْ فَشَهَدُوا أَحَدِهِمْ أَرْبَعُ شَهَادَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ
لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ - وَالْخَامِسَةَ أَنَّ لَعْنَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ
كَانَ مِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ - وَيَذَرُوهَا عَنْهَا الْعَذَابَ أَنْ
تَشْهَدَ أَرْبَعَ شَهَادَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الْكَاذِبِينَ -
وَالْخَامِسَةَ أَنَّ غَضَبَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ
الصَّادِقِينَ - وَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ
وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ حَكِيمٌ)

(6. And for those who accuse their wives, but have no witnesses except themselves, let the testimony of one of them be four testimonies by Allah that he is one of those who speak the truth.) (7. And the fifth (testimony); invoking of the curse of Allah on him if he be of those who tell a lie.) (8. But she shall avert the punishment from her, if she bears witness four times by Allah, that he is telling a lie.) (9. And the fifth; should be that the wrath of Allah be upon her if he speaks the truth.) (10. And had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy on you! And that Allah is the One Who forgives and accepts repentance, the All-Wise.)

Details of Al-Li`an

This Ayah offers a way out for husbands. If a husband has accused his wife but cannot come up with proof, he can swear the Li`an (the oath of condemnation) as Allah commanded. This means that he brings her before the Imam and states what he is accusing her of. The ruler then asks him to swear four times by Allah in front of four witnesses

(إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ)

(that he is one of those who speak the truth) in his accusation of her adultery.

وَالْخَامِسَةَ أَنَّ لَعْنَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ
الْكَذِبِينَ)

(And the fifth; the invoking of the curse of Allah on him if he be of those who tell a lie.) If he says that, then she is divorced from him by the very act of this Li`an; she is forever forbidden for him and he must give her Mahr to her. The punishment for Zina should be carried out on her, and nothing can prevent the punishment except if she also swears the oath of condemnation (Li`an) and swears by Allah four times that he is one of those who lied, i.e., in what he is accusing her of;

وَالْخَامِسَةَ أَنَّ غَضَبَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ
الصَّادِقِينَ)

(And the fifth; should be that the crath of Allah be upon her if he speaks the truth.) Allah says:

(وَيَذَرُوهَا عَنهَا الْعَذَابَ)

(But she shall avert the punishment) meaning, the prescribed punishment.

(وَيَذَرُوهَا عَنهَا الْعَذَابَ أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَرْبَعَ شَهَادَاتٍ
بِاللَّهِ إِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الْكَذِبِينَ - وَالْخَامِسَةَ أَنَّ غَضَبَ
اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ)

(if she bears witness four times by Allah, that he is telling a lie. And the fifth; should be that the wrath of Allah be upon her if he speaks the truth.) The wrath of Allah is mentioned specially in the case of the woman, because usually a man would not go to the extent of exposing his wife and accusing her of Zina unless he is telling the truth and has good reason to do this, and she knows that what he is accusing her of is true. So in her case the fifth testimony calls for the wrath of Allah to be upon her, for the one upon whom is the wrath of Allah, is the one who knows the truth yet deviates from it. Then Allah mentions His grace and kindness to His creation in that He has prescribed for them a way out of their difficulties. Allah says:

(وَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ)

(And had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy on you!) meaning, many of your affairs would have been too difficult for you,

(وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ)

(And that Allah is the One Who forgives and accepts repentance,) means, from His servants, even if that comes after they have sworn a confirmed oath.

(حَكِيمٌ)

(the All-Wise.) in what He prescribes and commands and forbids. There are Hadiths which explain how we are to put this Ayah into effect, why it was revealed and concerning whom among the Companions it was revealed.

The Reason why the Ayah of Li` an was revealed

Imam Ahmad recorded that Ibn ` Abbas said: "When the Ayah

(وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِأَرْبَعَةِ
شُهَدَاءَ فَاجْلِدُوهُمْ ثَمَانِينَ جَلْدَةً وَلَا تَقْبَلُوا لَهُمْ
شَهَادَةً أَبَدًا)

(And those who accuse chaste women, and produce not four witnesses, flog them with eighty stripes, and reject their testimony forever))24:4(was revealed, Sa` d bin ` Ubadah, may Allah be pleased with him, -- the leader of the Ansar -- said, `Is this how it was revealed, O Messenger of Allah' The Messenger of Allah said:

«يَا مَعْشَرَ الْأَنْصَارِ أَلَا تَسْمَعُونَ مَا يَقُولُ
سَيِّدُكُمْ؟»

(O Ansar, did you hear what your leader said) They said, `O Messenger of Allah, do not blame him, for he is a jealous man. By Allah, he never married a woman who was not a virgin, and he never divorced a woman but none of us would dare to marry her because he is so jealous.' Sa` d said, `By Allah, O Messenger of Allah, I know that it (the Ayah) is true and is from Allah, but I am surprised. If I found some wicked man lying down with my wife, should I not disturb him until I have brought four witnesses By Allah, he would have finished what he was doing before I could bring them!' A little while later, Hilal bin Umayyah -- one of the three whose repentance had been accepted -- came back from his lands at night and found a man with his wife. He saw with his own eyes and heard with his own ears, but he did not disturb him until the morning. In the morning he went to the Messenger of Allah and said, `O Messenger of Allah, I came to my wife at night and found a man with her, and I saw with my own eyes and heard with my own ears.' The Messenger of Allah did not like what he had said and got very upset. The Ansar gathered around him and said, `We were being tested by what Sa` d bin Ubadah said, and now the Messenger of Allah will punish Hilal bin Umayyah and declare his testimony before people

to be unacceptable.' Hilal said: `By Allah, I hope that Allah will make for me a way out from this problem.' Hilal said, `O Messenger of Allah, I see how upset you are by what I have said, but Allah knows that I am telling the truth.' By Allah, the Messenger of Allah wanted to have him flogged, but then Allah sent revelation to His Messenger . When the revelation came upon him, they knew about it from the change in his face, so they would leave him alone until the revelation was finished. Allah revealed the Ayah:

(وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ أَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ شُهَدَاءُ إِلَّا
أَنْفُسُهُمْ فَشَهَدَتْهُ أَحَدِهِمْ أَرْبَعُ شَهَادَاتٍ بِاللَّهِ)

(And for those who accuse their wives, but have no witnesses except themselves, let the testimony of one of them be four testimonies by Allah....) Then the revelation was finished and the Messenger of Allah said,

«أَبْتِئِرْ يَا هِلَالُ فَقَدْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ لَكَ فَرَجًا وَمَخْرَجًا»

(Rejoice, O Hilal, for Allah has made a way out for you.) Hilal said, `I had been hoping for this from my Lord, may He be glorified.' The Messenger of Allah said:

«أَرْسِلُوا إِلَيْهَا»

(Send for her.) So they sent for her and she came. The Messenger of Allah recited this Ayah to them both, and reminded them that the punishment of the Hereafter is more severe than the punishment in this world. Hilal said, `By Allah, O Messenger of Allah, I have spoken the truth about her.' She said, `He is lying.' The Messenger of Allah said,

«لَاعِنُوا بَيْنَهُمَا»

(Make them both swear the Li`an.) So Hilal was told, `Testify.' So he testified four times by Allah that he was one of those who speak the truth. When he came to the fifth testimony, he was told, `O Hilal, have Taqwa of Allah, for the punishment of this world is easier than the punishment of the Hereafter, and this will mean that the punishment will be inevitable for you.' He said, `By Allah, Allah will not punish me for it, just as He has not caused me to be flogged for it.' So he testified for the fifth time that the curse of Allah would be upon him if he was telling a lie. Then it was said to his wife, `Testify four times by Allah that he is telling a lie.' And when his wife reached the fifth testimony, she was told, `Have Taqwa of Allah, for the punishment of this world is easier than the punishment of the Hereafter, and this will mean that the punishment will be inevitable for you.' She hesitated for a while, and was about to admit her guilt, then she said: `By Allah, I will not expose my people to shame, and she swore the fifth oath that the wrath of Allah would be upon her if he was telling the truth.' Then the Messenger of Allah separated them, and decreed that her child should not be attributed to any father, nor should the child be accused, and whoever accused her or her child, they would be subject to punishment. He also decreed that Hilal(was not obliged to house her or feed her, because they had not been separated by divorce, nor had he died and left her a widow. He said,

«إِنْ جَاءَتْ بِهِ أَصَيْهَبَ (أُرَيْسِحَ) حَمَشَ
السَّاقَيْنِ، فَهُوَ لِهِلَالٍ، وَإِنْ جَاءَتْ بِهِ أَوْرَقَ جَعْدًا
جُمَالِيًّا خَدَلَجَ السَّاقَيْنِ سَايَغَ الْأَلَيْتَيْنِ، فَهُوَ لِلَّذِي
رُمِيَتْ بِهِ»

(If she gives birth to a red-haired child (with skinny thighs) and thin legs, then he is Hilal's child, but if she gives birth to a curly-haired child with thick legs and plump buttocks, then this is what she is accused of.) She subsequently gave birth to a child who was curly-haired with thick legs and plump buttocks, and the Messenger of Allah said,

«لَوْ لَا الْأَيْمَانُ لَكَانَ لِي وَلَهَا شَأْنٌ»

(Were it not for the oath that she swore, I would deal with her.)" `Ikrimah said, "The child grew up to become the governor of Egypt, and he was given his mother's name and was not attributed to any father." Abu Dawud recorded a similar but briefer report. This Hadith has corroborating reports in the books of Sahih and elsewhere, with many chains of narration, including the report narrated by Al-Bukhari from Ibn `Abbas, that Hilal bin Umayyah accused his wife before the Prophet with Sharik bin Sahma'. The Prophet said,

«الْبَيِّنَةُ أَوْحَدٌ فِي ظَهْرِكَ»

(Evidence or the punishment on your back.) He said, "O Messenger of Allah, if any one of us saw a man with his wife, how could he go and get evidence" The Prophet again said,

«الْبَيِّنَةُ وَالْأَحَدُ فِي ظَهْرِكَ»

(Evidence otherwise the punishment on your back.) Hilal said, "By the One Who sent you with the truth! I am telling the truth and Allah will reveal something that will protect my back from the punishment. " Then Jibril came down and brought the revelation,

(وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ أَزْوَاجَهُمْ)

(And for those who accuse their wives,) Then he recited until he reached:

(إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ)

(that he is one of those who speak the truth))24:6(. When the revelation had finished, the Prophet sent for them both. Hilal came and gave his testimony, and the Prophet said,

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ أَنَّ أَحَدَكُمَا كَاذِبٌ، فَهَلْ مِنْكُمَا تَائِبٌ؟»

(Allah knows that one of you is lying. Will one of you repent) Then she stood up and gave her testimony, and when she reached the fifth oath, they stopped her and said, "If you swear the fifth oath and you are lying, the curse of Allah will be inevitable." Ibn `Abbas said, "She hesitated and kept quiet until we thought that she had changed her mind, then she said, 'I will not dishonor my people today', and she went ahead. Then the Messenger of Allah said,

«أُبْصِرُوهَا، فَإِنْ جَاءَتْ بِهِ أَكْحَلُ الْعَيْنَيْنِ سَابِغِ الْأَلْبَتَيْنِ خَدَّجَ السَّاقَيْنِ، فَهُوَ لِشَرِيكِ ابْنِ سَحْمَاءَ»

(Wait until she gives birth, and if she gives birth to a child whose eyes look as if they are ringed with kohl and who has plump buttocks and thick legs, then he is the child of Sharik bin Sahma'.) She gave birth to a child who matched this description, and the Prophet said,

«لَوْ لَأ مَا مَضَى مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ لَكَانَ لِي وَ لَهَا شَأْنٌ»

(Were it not for the Book of Allah, I would deal with her.) This version was recorded only by Al-Bukhari, but the event has been narrated with additional chains of narration from Ibn `Abbas and others. Imam Ahmad recorded that Sa`id bin Jubayr said: During the governorship of Ibn Az-Zubayr I was asked about the couple who engage in Li`an, and whether they should be separated, and I did not know the answer. I got up and went to the house of Ibn `Umar, and said, "O Abu `Abdur-Rahman, should the couple who engage in Li`an be separated" He said, "Subhan Allah, the first one to ask about this was so-and-so the son of so-and-so. He said, 'O Messenger of Allah, what do you think of a man who sees his wife committing an immoral sin if he speaks he will be speaking about something very serious, and if he keeps quiet he will be keeping quiet about something very serious.')The Prophet (kept quiet and did not answer him. Later on, he came to him and said, 'What I asked you about is something with which I myself being tested with.' Then Allah revealed the Ayat,

«وَالَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ أَزْوَاجَهُمْ»

(And for those who accuse their wives,) until he reached:

«أَنَّ غَضَبَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ»

(That the wrath of Allah be upon her if he speaks the truth.) He started to advise the man and remind him about Allah, and told him that the punishment of this world is easier than the punishment of the Hereafter. The man said: `By the One Who sent you with the truth, I was not telling you a lie.' Then the Prophet turned to the woman and advised the woman and reminded her about Allah, and told her that the punishment of this world is easier than the punishment of the Hereafter. The woman said, `By the One Who sent you with the truth, he is lying.' So the Prophet (started with the man, who swore four times by Allah that he was one of those who speak the truth, and swore the fifth oath that the curse of Allah would be upon him if he were lying. Then he turned to the woman, who swore four times by Allah that he was lying, and swore the fifth oath that the wrath of Allah would be upon her if he was telling the truth. Then he separated them." It was also recorded by An-Nasa'i in his Tafsir, and by Al-Bukhari and Muslim in the Two Sahihs.

(إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ لَا تَحْسَبُوهُ
شَرًّا لَّكُمْ بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَا
اَكْتَسَبَ مِنَ الْإِثْمِ وَالَّذِي تَوَلَّى كِبْرَهُ مِنْهُمْ لَهُ
عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ)

(11. Verily, those who brought forth the slander are a group among you. Consider it not a bad thing for you. Nay, it is good for you. Unto every man among them will be paid that which he had earned of the sin, and as for him among them who had the greater share therein, his will be a great torment.)

Al-lfk (the Slander)

The next ten Ayat were all revealed concerning `Aishah, the mother of the believers, may Allah be pleased with her, when the people of slander and falsehood among the hypocrites made their accusations against her and spread lies about her. Allah became jealous on her behalf and on behalf of His Prophet , and revealed her innocence to protect the honor of the Messenger of Allah . He said:

(إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ)

(Verily, those who brought forth the slander are a group among you.) meaning they were not one or two, but a group. Foremost among this group was `Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul, the leader of the hypocrites, who fabricated the lie and whispered it to others, until some of the Muslims started to believe it, and others thought it might be possible and began to talk about it. This is how matters remained for almost a month, until Qur'an was revealed. This is reported in Sahih Hadiths. Imam Ahmad recorded that Az-Zuhri said: Sa`id bin Al-Musayyib, `Urwah bin Az-Zubayr, `Alqamah bin Waqqas and `Ubaydullah bin `Abdullah bin `Utbah bin Mas`ud told me about the story of `Aishah, the wife of the Prophet , when the people of the slander said what they said about her, and Allah declared her innocence. Each of them told something about the story, and some of them knew more details than others or had memorized more than others. I learned the story from each of them, who had heard it from `Aishah

herself, and what one told me confirmed what the others said. They mentioned that `A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, the wife of the Prophet, said: "When the Messenger of Allah wanted to go on a journey, he would cast lots among his wives, and the one whose lot was drawn would go with him." `A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, said, "So he drew lots among us with regard to a campaign he was going out on, and mine was drawn, so I went out with the Messenger of Allah. This was after the commandment of Hijab had been revealed, so I traveled in my howdah and stayed in it when we camped. We traveled until the Messenger of Allah completed his campaign, then we returned. As we were approaching Al-Madinah, we paused for a while, then they announced that the journey was to be resumed. When I heard this, I walked quickly away from the army to answer the call of nature, then I came back to my howdah. Then I put my hand to my chest and noticed that a necklace of mine that was made of onyx and cornelian had broken, so I went back and looked for it, and was delayed because of that. In the meantime, the people who used to lift my howdah onto my camel came along and put it on the camel, thinking that I was inside. In those times women were more slender and not so heavy, they only ate mouthfuls of food. So the people did not think anything of the howdah being so light when they lifted it up, as I was a young woman. They set off, and I found my necklace after the army had moved on. Then I came back to the place where we had stopped, and I saw no one to call or answer. So I went to the place where I had been, thinking that the people would miss me and come back for me. While I was sitting there, I fell asleep. tSafwan bin Al-Mu` attal As-Sulami Adh-Dhakwani had rested during the night behind the army. Then he set out just before daybreak and reached the place where I was in the morning, where he saw the outline of a person sleeping. He came to me and recognized me when he saw me, as he had seen me before Hijab was made obligatory for me. When he saw me and said `Truly, to Allah we belong, and truly, to Him we shall return,' I woke up, and covered my face with my Jilbab (outer garment). By Allah, he did not speak a word to me and I did not hear him say anything except `Truly, to Allah we belong, and truly, to Him we shall return,' until he brought his camel and made it kneel so that I could ride upon it, then he set out leading the camel until we caught up with the army at Zuhr time.

There are people who are doomed because of what happened to me, and the one who had the greater share therein was `Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul. When we came back to Al-Madinah, I was ill for a month, and the people were talking about what the people of the slander were saying, and I knew nothing about it. What upset me when I was ill was that I did not see the kindness I used to see on the part of the Messenger of Allah. When I was ill; he would just come in and say,

«كَيْفَ تَيْغَمُ؟»

(How is that (lady)) That is what upset me. I did not feel that there was anything wrong until I went out after I felt better, and Umm Mistah went out with me, walking towards Al-Manasi`, which is where we used to go to relieve ourselves, and we would not go out for that purpose except at night. This was before we had lavatories close to our houses; our habit was similar to that of the early Arabs in that we went out into the deserts to relieve ourselves, because we considered it troublesome and harmful to have lavatories in our houses. So I went out with Umm Mistah, who was the daughter of Abu Ruhm bin Al-Muttalib bin `Abd Manaf, and her mother was the daughter of Sakhr bin `Amir, the paternal aunt of Abu Bakr As-Siddiq. Her son was Mistah bin Uthathah bin `Abbad bin Al-Muttalib. When we finished what we had to do, the daughter of Abu Ruhm Umm Mistah and I came back towards my house. Umm Mistah stumbled over her apron and said, `May Mistah be ruined!' I said to her, `What a bad thing you have said! Are you abusing a man who was present at Badr' She said, `Good grief, have you not heard what he said' I said, `What did he say' So she told me what the people of the slander were saying, which made me even more ill. When I returned home, the Messenger of Allah came in to me and greeted me, then he said,

«كَيْفَ تَيْكُم؟»

(How is that (lady)) I said to him, `Will you give me permission to go to my parents' At that time I wanted to confirm the news by hearing it from them. The Messenger of Allah gave me permission, so I went to my parents and asked my mother, `O my mother, what are the people talking about' My mother said, `Calm down, for by Allah, there is no beautiful woman who is loved by her husband and has co-wives but those co-wives would find fault with her.' I said, `Subhan Allah! Are the people really talking about that' I wept throughout the whole night until morning. My tears never ceased and I did not sleep at all, and morning came while I was still weeping. Because the revelation had ceased, the Messenger of Allah called `Ali bin Abi Talib and Usamah bin Zayd, and consulted with them about divorcing his wife. As for Usamah bin Zayd, he told the Messenger of Allah about what he knew of his wife's innocence and his fondness for her. He said, `O Messenger of Allah, she is your wife, and we do not know anything about her but good.' But `Ali bin Abi Talib said, `O Messenger of Allah, Allah has not imposed restrictions on you, and there are plenty of other women besides her. If you ask her servant girl, she will tell you the truth.' So the Messenger of Allah called Barirah and said,

«أَيُّ بَرِيرَةَ هَلْ رَأَيْتِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ يَرِيْبِكِ مِنْ عَائِشَةَ؟»

(O Barirah, have you ever seen anything that might make you suspicious about `A'ishah) Barirah said to him, `By the One Who sent you with the truth, I have never seen anything for which I could blame her, apart from the fact that she is a young girl who sometimes falls asleep and leaves her family's dough unprotected so that the domestic goats come and eat it.' So then the Messenger of Allah got up and (addressed the people) and asked who could sort out `Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul for him. While he was standing on the Minbar, the Messenger of Allah said,

«يَا مَعْشَرَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ مَنْ يَعْذِرُنِي مِنْ رَجُلٍ قَدْ بَلَّغَنِي آدَاهُ فِي أَهْلِ بَيْتِي، فَوَاللَّهِ مَا عَلِمْتُ عَلَى أَهْلِي إِلَّا خَيْرًا، وَلَقَدْ ذَكَرُوا رَجُلًا مَا عَلِمْتُ عَلَيْهِ إِلَّا خَيْرًا، وَمَا كَانَ يَدْخُلُ عَلَى أَهْلِي إِلَّا مَعِي»

(O Muslims, who will help me against a man who has hurt me by slandering my family By Allah, I know nothing about my family but good, and the people are blaming a man of whom I know nothing except good, and he has never entered upon my family except with me.) Sa`d bin Mu`adh Al-Ansari stood up and said, `O Messenger of Allah, by Allah I will deal with him for you. If he is from (the tribe of) Al-Aws, then I will cut off his head, and if he is from our brothers of (the tribe of) Al-Khazraj, tell us what to do and we will do it.' Then Sa`d bin `Ubadah stood up. He was the leader of Al-Khazraj, and he was a righteous man, but he was overwhelmed with tribal chauvinism. He said to Sa`d bin Mu`adh, `By Allah, you will not kill him and you will never be able to kill him.' Then Usayd bin Hudayr, who was the cousin of Sa`d bin Mu`adh, stood up and said to Sa`d bin `Ubadah, `You are lying! By Allah, we will kill him,

and you are a hypocrite arguing on behalf of the hypocrites!' Then the two groups, Al-Aws and Al-Khazraj, started to get angry and were about to come to blows, with the Messenger of Allah standing there on the Minbar, trying to calm them down until they became quiet, then the Messenger of Allah also fell silent. On that day I kept on weeping so much, my tears never ceased and I did not sleep at all. My parents thought that my liver would burst from all that weeping. While they were sitting with me and I was weeping, a woman of the Ansar asked for permission to see me. I let her in, and she sat and wept with me. While we were in that state, the Messenger of Allah came in, greeted us and sat down. He had never sat with me since the rumors began, and a month had passed by without any revelation coming to him concerning my case. The Messenger of Allah recited the Tashahhud when he sat down, then he said,

«أَمَّا بَعْدُ، يَا عَائِشَةُ فَإِنَّهُ قَدْ بَلَغَنِي عَنْكَ كَذَا
وَكَذَا، فَإِنْ كُنْتِ بَرِيئَةً فَسَيَبْرُئُكَ اللَّهُ، وَإِنْ كُنْتِ
أَلَمَّتْ بِذَنْبٍ فَاسْتَغْفِرِي اللَّهَ ثُمَّ تُؤَيِّبِي إِلَيْهِ، فَإِنَّ
الْعَبْدَ إِذَا اعْتَرَفَ بِذَنْبِهِ ثُمَّ تَابَ، تَابَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ»

(Thereafter, O `A'ishah, I have been told such and such a thing about you, and if you are innocent, then Allah will reveal your innocence, but if you have committed a sin, then seek Allah's forgiveness and turn in repentance to Him, for when a servant confesses his sin and repents to Allah, He accepts his repentance.) When the Messenger of Allah finished what he had to say, my tears stopped completely and I no longer felt even one drop. Then I said to my father, 'Answer the Messenger of Allah on my behalf.' He said, 'I do not know what I should say to the Messenger of Allah.' So I said to my mother, 'Answer the Messenger of Allah on my behalf.' She said, 'I do not know what I should say to the Messenger of Allah.' So even though I was just a young girl who had not memorized much of the Qur'an, I said: 'By Allah, I know that you have heard so much of this story that it has become planted in your minds and you believe it. So now if I tell you that I am innocent -- and Allah knows that I am innocent -- you will not believe me; but if I admit something to you -- and Allah knows that I am innocent -- you will believe me. By Allah, I cannot find any example to give you except for that which the Prophet Yusuf's father said,

(فَصَبْرٌ جَمِيلٌ وَاللَّهُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلَى مَا تَصِفُونَ)

(So (for me) patience is most fitting. And it is Allah Whose help can be sought against that (lie) which you describe) 12:18. Then I turned my face away and lay down on my bed. By Allah, at that point I knew I was innocent and that Allah would prove my innocence because I was innocent, but by Allah, I did not think that Allah would reveal Qur'an that would be forever recited concerning my situation, because I thought of myself as too insignificant for Allah to reveal anything concerning me. But I hoped that the Messenger of Allah would see a dream in which Allah would prove my innocence. By Allah, the Messenger of Allah did not move from where he was sitting and no one left the house before Allah sent down revelation to His Prophet, and he was overtaken by the state that always overtook him when the revelation came upon him, until drops of sweat like pearls would run down him, even on a winter's day; this was because of the heaviness of the words which were being revealed to him. When that state passed -- and the Messenger of Allah was smiling -- the first thing he said was,

«أَبْشِرِي يَا عَائِشَةُ، أَمَّا اللَّهُ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ فَقَدْ بَرَّأَكَ»

(Be glad O `Aishah, Allah has declared your innocence.) My mother said to me, `Get up and go to him.' I said, `By Allah, I will not go to him and I will not give praise to anyone except Allah, may He be glorified, for He is the One Who has proven my innocence.' So Allah revealed:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ

(Verily, those who brought forth the slander are a group among you.), until the ten Ayat. Allah revealed these Ayat concerning my innocence. Abu Bakr, may Allah be pleased with him, who used to spend on Mistah bin Uthathah because he was a close relative and because he was poor, said, `By Allah, I will never spend anything on him again after what he has said about `Aishah. ' Then Allah revealed,

وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُولُو الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا
أُولَى الْقُرْبَى

(And let not those among you who are blessed with graces and wealth swear not to give to their kinsmen.) until His saying:

أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

(Do you not love that Allah should forgive you And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful) 24:22. So Abu Bakr said, `By Allah, certainly I love that Allah should forgive me.' So he resumed spending on Mistah as he had spent on him before, and he said, `By Allah, I shall never stop spending on him.' The Messenger of Allah asked Zaynab bint Jahsh about my situation, and said,

«يَا زَيْنَبُ مَاذَا عَلِمْتَ أَوْ رَأَيْتِ؟»

(O Zaynab, what do you know and what have you seen) She said, `O Messenger of Allah, may Allah protect my hearing and my sight. By Allah, I know nothing but good.' She is the one who used to compete with me among the wives of the Prophet , but Allah protected her (from telling lies) because of her piety. But her sister Hamnah bint Jahsh kept on fighting on her behalf, so she was doomed along with those who were doomed." Ibn Shihab said, "This is as much as we know about this group of people." It was also by Al-Bukhari and Muslim in their Sahih from the Hadith of Az-Zuhri, and by Ibn Ishaq also from Az-Zuhri. He also said: "Yahya bin `Abbad bin `Abdullah bin Az-Zubayr told me from his father, from `Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, and `Abdullah bin Abi Bakr bin Muhammad bin `Amr bin Hazm Al-Ansari told me from `Amrah, from `Aishah, (a report) similar to that quoted above. And Allah knows best. Allah's saying:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالْإِفْكِ

(Verily, those who brought forth the slander) means, the lies, falsehood and fabrications.

(عُصْبَةٌ)

(are a group) means, a gang among you.

(لَا تَحْسِبُوهُ شَرًّا لَّكُمْ)

(Consider it not a bad thing for you.) O family of Abu Bakr,

(بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ)

(Nay, it is good for you.) means, in this world and the Hereafter, honorable mention in this world and raised status in the Hereafter. Allah demonstrated the esteem with which He regarded the family of Abu Bakr when He defended `A'ishah the Mother of the believers, may Allah be pleased with her, by revealing her innocence in the Qur'an,

(لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَطْلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ)

(Falsehood cannot come to it from before it or behind it. ...) 41:42(Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, entered upon her when she was dying, he said to her, "Rejoice, for you are the wife of the Messenger of Allah and he used to love you; he did not marry any virgin other than you, and your innocence was revealed from heaven."

(لِكُلِّ امْرِيٍّ مِنْهُمْ مَّا كَتَسَبَ مِنَ الْإِثْمِ)

(Unto every man among them will be paid that which he had earned of the sin,) means, each of those who spoke about this matter and accused the Mother of the believers `A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, of any immoral action, will have a great share of punishment.

(وَالَّذِي تَوَلَّى كِبْرَهُ مِنْهُمْ)

(and as for him among them who had the greater share therein,) It was said that this referred to the one who initiated the rumors, or that it was the one who collected rumors and spread them among the people.

(لَهُ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ)

(his will be a great torment.) means, for that. He was `Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul, may Allah disfigure him and curse him.

(لَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ
بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا وَقَالُوا هَذَا إِفْكٌ مُّبِينٌ - لَوْلَا جَاءُوا
عَلَيْهِ بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ فَإِذْ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِالشُّهَدَاءِ
فَأُولَئِكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُمُ الْكَاذِبُونَ)

e(12. Why then, did not the believers, men and women, when you heard it, think good of their own people and say: "This is an obvious lie") (13. Why did they not produce four witnesses against him Since they have not produced witnesses! Then with Allah, they are the liars.)

Disciplining the Believers for spreading the Slander

Here Allah disciplines the believers with regard to the matter of `A'ishah, because some of them spread this evil talk and the slander that had been mentioned. So Allah says:

(لَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ)

(Why then, when you heard it,) meaning, the talk which accused the Mother of the believers, may Allah be pleased with her,

(ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا)

(the believers, men and women, think good of their own people) means, why did they not compare what was said to themselves -- if it was not befitting for them then it was even less appropriate for the Mother of the believers, and she was more likely to be innocent. Or it was said that this was revealed about Abu Ayyub Khalid bin Zayd Al-Ansari and his wife, may Allah be pleased with them. Imam Muhammad bin Ishaq bin Yasar narrated, "The wife of Abu Ayyub Khalid bin Zayd Al-Ansari, Umm Ayyub, said to him, `O Abu Ayyub, have you heard what the people are saying about `A'ishah' He said, `Yes, and it is all lies. Would you do that, O Umm Ayyub' She said, `No, by Allah, I would not do that.' He said, `And by Allah, `A'ishah is better than you.' When the Qur'an was revealed, Allah mentioned those who spoke about the evil deed among the people of the slander,

(إِنَّ الَّذِينَ جَاءُوا بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ)

(Verily, those who brought forth the slander are a group among you.))24:1(This refers to Hassan and his companions who said what they said. Then Allah said,

(لَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ)

(Why then, did not the believers, men, when you heard it, think...) means, as Abu Ayyub and his wife did." Allah's saying:

(ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ)

(the believers, men think...) meaning, `why did they not think good, because the Mother of the believers is his wife and is closer to him.' This is concerned with innermost feelings;

(وَقَالُوا)

(and say:) means, with their tongues, verbally,

(هَذَا إِفْكٌ مُّبِينٌ)

("This (charge) is an obvious lie") means, a clear untruth told about the Mother of the believers, may Allah be pleased with her. What happened should not have been the cause of suspicion. The fact that the Mother of the believers came openly, riding on the camel of Safwan bin Al-Mu`attal at midday, with the entire army watching and the Messenger of Allah among them, should have made it clear that there was no cause for suspicion. If there had been anything suspicious about the matter, they would not have come openly in this manner in front of so many witnesses; they would have come secretly. On this basis, what the people of the slander said accusing the Mother of the believers was an utter lie, false speech and evil foolish talk, by which people who indulged in it lost out. Allah said:

(لَوْلَا جَاءُوا عَلَيْهِ بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَاءَ)

(Why did they not produce four witnesses against him) meaning, to prove that what they were saying was true.

(فَإِذْ لَمْ يَأْتُوا بِالشُّهَدَاءِ فَأُولَئِكَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ هُمُ
الْكَذِبُونَ)

(Since they have not produced witnesses! Then with Allah they are the liars.)Allah has ruled that they are indeed wicked liars.

(وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَالْآخِرَةِ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِي مَا أَفَضْتُمْ فِيهِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ
- إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَتَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ مَا لَيْسَ

لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ وَتَحْسَبُونَهُ هَيِّنًا وَهُوَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ
(

(14. Had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy unto you in this world and in the Hereafter, a great torment would have touched you for that whereof you had spoken.) (15. When you were propagating it with your tongues, and uttering with your mouths that whereof you had no knowledge, you counted it a little thing, while with Allah it was very great.)

The Grace of Allah towards the People of the Slander by giving Them the Opportunity to repent

Allah says,

(وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا
وَالْآخِرَةِ)

(Had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy unto you in this world and in the Hereafter,) This is addressed to those who were indulging in discussing the matter of `Aishah, informing them that Allah has accepted their repentance in this world, and forgiven them because of their faith in the Hereafter.

(لِمَسَّكُمْ فِي مَا أَفَضْتُمْ فِيهِ)

(would have touched you for that whereof you had spoken.) with regard to the slander.

(عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ)

(a great torment) This refers to those who had faith in Allah because of their repentance, such as Mistah, Hassan and Hamnah bint Jahsh the sister of Zaynab bint Jahsh. As for the hypocrites who indulged in the slander, such as `Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul and his like, they are not the ones who are referred to in this Ayah, because they did not have sufficient faith and righteous deeds to balance or cancel out what they had done. By the same token, the threats that were narrated for a specific deed are bound to be carried out, if there is no repentance or sufficient righteous deeds to balance or outweigh it. Then Allah says:

(إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهُ بِالسِّنِّتِكُمْ)

(When you were propagating it with your tongues,) Mujahid and Sa`id bin Jubayr said, "Some of you were relating it to others," where one says, 'I heard this from so-and-so, and so-and-so said such and such, and some of them mentioned such and such.' Others recited the Ayah: (إِذْ

(بِالسِّنِّتِكُمْ تَلْفُونَهُ) ("When you were inventing a lie with your tongues...") In Sahih Al-Bukhari, it is recorded that `A'ishah recited it like that. According to her, the meaning refers to lies which a person persists in telling. The first recitation is preferred and more popular, and the majority recite it that way, but the second is reported from `A'ishah, the Mother of the believers.

(وَتَقُولُونَ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ مَا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ)

(and uttering with your mouths that whereof you had no knowledge,) means, you were speaking about something which you knew nothing about. Then Allah says:

(وَتَحْسَبُونَهُ هَيِّنًا وَهُوَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ)

(you counted it a little thing, while with Allah it was very great.) means, `you said what you said about the Mother of the believers and you thought that it was a trifling and insignificant matter, but even if she was not the wife of the Prophet , it still would not be an insignificant matter -- so how about when she is the wife of the Unlettered Prophet, the Seal of the Prophets and Leader of the Messengers ' It is a very serious matter with Allah that such a thing should be said about the wife of His Messenger! For Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, feels great fury and anger over such matters, and He would never decree such a thing for the wife of any of His Prophets. If that is the case, then how about the best of the wives of any Prophet, the wife of the best of the sons of Adam in this world and the next Allah says:

(وَتَحْسَبُونَهُ هَيِّنًا وَهُوَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ عَظِيمٌ)

(you counted it a little thing, while with Allah it was very great.) In the Two Sahihis it is reported that:

«إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَتَكَلَّمُ بِالْكَلِمَةِ مِنْ سَخَطِ اللَّهِ، لَا يَذْرِي مَا تَبْلُغُ، يَهْوِي بِهَا فِي النَّارِ أَبْعَدَ مَا بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ»

(A man may say a word that angers Allah without realizing how far it will go, and because of that he will be thrown into Hell a distance greater than that between heaven and earth.) According to another report:

«لَا يُلْقِي لَهَا بَالًا»

(And he may not pay any attention to it.)

(وَلَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُمْ مَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَتَكَلَّمَ
بِهَذَا سُبْحَانَكَ هَذَا بُهْتَنٌ عَظِيمٌ - يَعِظُكُمُ اللَّهُ أَنْ
تَعُودُوا لِمِثْلِهِ أَبَدًا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ - وَيُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ
لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ)

(16. And why did you not, when you heard it, say: "It is not right for us to speak of this. Glory be to You (O Allah)! This is a great lie." (17. Allah forbids you from it and warns you not to repeat the like of it forever, if you are believers.) (18. And Allah makes the Ayat plain to you, and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.)

Further Discipline

This is further discipline, in addition to the command to think well of people, i.e., if something unbecoming is mentioned about good people, then one should think well of them, and not feel towards them anything but good. Then if a person has any unsuitable thoughts about them, insinuated into his mind and imagination by Shaytan, he should not speak about that, for the Prophet said:

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى تَجَاوَزَ لِأُمَّتِي عَمَّا حَدَّثْتُ بِهِ
أَنْفُسَهَا مَا لَمْ تَقُلْ أَوْ تَعْمَلْ»

(Allah will excuse my Ummah for anything that occurs to their minds, so long as they do not speak about it or act upon it.) This was reported in the Two Sahihs. Allah's saying:

(وَلَوْلَا إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوهُ قُلْتُمْ مَا يَكُونُ لَنَا أَنْ نَتَكَلَّمَ
بِهَذَا)

(And why did you not, when you heard it, say: "It is not right for us to speak of this".) meaning, we should not talk about it or mention it to anyone.

(سُبْحَانَكَ هَذَا بُهْتَنٌ عَظِيمٌ)

(Glory be to You (O Allah)! This is a great lie.) means, glory be to Allah that such a thing should be said about the wife of His Prophet and close Friend . Then Allah says,

(يَعْظِمُ اللَّهُ أَنْ تَعُودُوا لِمِثْلِهِ أَبَدًا)

(Allah forbids you from it and warns you not to repeat the like of it forever,) meaning, Allah is forbidding you and warning you from doing anything like this again in the future. Allah says,

(إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ)

(if you are believers.) meaning, if you believe in Allah and His Laws, and you respect His Messenger . As for those who are described as disbelievers, a different ruling applies in their case. Then Allah says,

(وَيُبَيِّنُ اللَّهُ لَكُمُ الْآيَاتِ)

(And Allah makes the Ayat plain to you,) meaning, He makes clear to you the rulings of Shari` ah and His divine decrees.

(وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ)

(and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.) means, He knows what is right for His servants and He is Wise in His Laws and decrees.

(إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَاللَّهُ
يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ)

(19. Verily, those who like that Fahishah should be circulated among those who believe, they will have a painful torment in this world and in the Hereafter. And Allah knows and you know not.)

Disciplining Those Who like that Illegal Sexual Intercourse should be circulated among the Believers

This is a third instance of discipline directed at those who hear evil talk, believe it to some extent, and start to spread it; they should not spread such talk or pass it on to others. Allah says:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُحِبُّونَ أَنْ تَشِيعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ فِي الَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

(Verily, those who like that Fahshah should be circulated among those who believe, they will have a painful torment) meaning, those who like to see evil talk about them (the believers) appear,

(لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا)

(they will have a painful torment in this world) means, because of the prescribed punishment, and in the Hereafter because of the torment in Hell.

(وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ)

(And Allah knows and you know not.) means, return the matter to Him and you will be guided. Imam Ahmad recorded from Thawban that the Prophet said:

«لَا تُؤَدُّوا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ وَلَا تُعَيِّرُوهُمْ، وَلَا تَطْلُبُوا
عَوْرَاتِهِمْ، فَإِنَّهُ مَنْ طَلَبَ عَوْرَةَ أَخِيهِ الْمُسْلِمِ
طَلَبَ اللَّهُ عَوْرَتَهُ، حَتَّى يَقْضَحَهُ فِي بَيْتِهِ»

(Do not annoy the servants of Allah, nor abuse them, nor seek their hidden shortcomings. Whoever seeks out the faults of his Muslim brother, Allah will expose his faults and degrade him, even if he is hiding in his house.)

(وَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ
رَعُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ - يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّبِعُوا
خُطُوتِ الشَّيْطَانِ وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ خُطُوتِ الشَّيْطَانِ
فَأِنَّهُ يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَوْ لَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ
عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَّى مِنْكُمْ مَنْ أَحَدٌ أَبَدًا وَلَكِنَّ
اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ)

(20. And had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy on you, and that Allah is full of kindness, Most Merciful.) (21. O you who believe! Follow not the Khutuwat of Shaytan. And whosoever follows the footsteps of Shaytan, then, verily, he commands Al-Fahsha' and the evil deeds. And had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy on you, not one of you would ever have been pure from sins. But Allah purifies whom He wills, and Allah is All-Hearer, All-Knower.)

A Reminder of the Grace of Allah and a Warning against following the Footsteps of Shaytan

Allah says:

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ رَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ

(And had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy on you, and that Allah is full of kindness, Most Merciful.) meaning, if it were not for this, it would have been another matter altogether, but He, may He be exalted, is full of kindness towards His servants and Merciful towards them. He accepts the repentance of those who repent to Him from this sin, and purifies those among them who are purified by the prescribed punishment carried out on them. Then Allah says:

يَأْيَهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَتَّبِعُوا خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ

(O you who believe! Follow not the Khutuwat of Shaytan.) hmeaning, his ways and paths and what he commands,

وَمَنْ يَتَّبِعْ خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ فَإِنَّهُ يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَاءِ
وَالْمُنْكَرِ

(And whosoever follows the footsteps of Shaytan, then, verily, he commands immorality and the evil deeds.) This is a warning given in the most concise and eloquent manner. `Ali bin Abi Talhah recorded from Ibn `Abbas that

خُطُوَاتِ الشَّيْطَانِ

(the Khutuwat of Shaytan) means his deeds. `Ikrimah said that it means his evil whispers. Qatadah said: "Every sin is one of the footsteps of Shaytan." Abu Mijlaz said: "Vowing to commit sin is one of the footsteps of Shaytan." Then Allah says:

وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهُ مَا زَكَا مِنْكُمْ
مَنْ أَحَدٌ أَبَدًا)

(And had it not been for the grace of Allah and His mercy on you, not one of you would ever have been pure from sins.) meaning, if He did not help whomever He wills to repent and come back to Him and be purified from Shirk, evil and sin, and whatever bad characteristics each person has according to his nature, no one would ever attain purity and goodness.

(وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُزَكِّي مَنْ يَشَاءُ)

(But Allah purifies whom He wills) means, among His creation, and He sends astray whomever He wills, leaving him to be doomed in his misguidance and sin.

(وَاللَّهُ سَمِيعٌ)

(and Allah is All-Hearer,) means, He hears what His servants say,

(عَلِيمٌ)

(All-Knower.) of who deserves to be guided and who deserves to be misguided.

وَلَا يَأْتَلِ أُولُوا الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا
أُولَى الْقُرْبَى وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ
اللَّهِ وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ
لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ)

(22. And let not those among you who are blessed with graces and wealth swear not to give to their kinsmen, the poor, and those who left their homes for Allah's cause. Let them pardon and forgive. Do you not love that Allah should forgive you And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.)

Urging Those Who have been blessed with Wealth to give and to be tolerant

Allah says,

(وَلَا يَأْتَلُ)

(And let not swear) meaning, make an oath,

(أُولُوا الْفَضْلَ مِنْكُمْ)

(those among you who are blessed with graces) means, those who have the means to give charity and do good,

(وَالسَّعَةِ)

(and wealth) means, good fortune,

(أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أَوْلِيَ الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ
فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ)

(to give to their kinsmen, the poor, and those who left their homes for Allah's cause.) means, do not swear that you will not uphold the ties of kinship with your relatives who are needy or who migrated for the sake of Allah, which is the ultimate act of kindness in the area of upholding kinship ties. Allah says,

(وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا)

(Let them pardon and forgive.) past insults and bad treatment. This is part of the patience, generosity and kindness of Allah towards His creation, despite the fact that they wrong themselves. This Ayah was revealed concerning As-Sddiq, may Allah be pleased with him, when he swore that he would not help Mistah bin Uthathah after he said what he said about `Aishah, as we have already seen in the Hadith. When Allah revealed the innocence of the Mother of the believers, `Aishah, and the believers were happy and content with the outcome of this incident, and those believers who had talked about the matter repented, and the prescribed punishment had been carried out upon those on whom it was carried out, then Allah started to soften the heart of As-Sddiq towards his relative Mistah bin Uthathah. Mistah was the cousin of As-Sddiq, the son of his maternal aunt, and he was a poor man with no wealth except whatever Abu Bakr spent on him. He was one of those who had migrated for the sake of Allah. He had invented the lies and the slander, but then Allah accepted his repentance from that and the prescribed punishment was carried out on him. As-Sddiq was known for his generosity and he did favors to his relatives and strangers alike. When this Ayah was revealed:

(أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ اللَّهُ لَكُمْ)

(Do you not love that Allah should forgive you), which shows that the reward fits the action, and that `if you forgive others, you will be forgiven,' then As-Sddiq said, "Of course, by Allah, we love -- O our Lord -- that You should forgive us." Then he resumed his spending on Mistah

and said, "By Allah I will never stop spending on him." This was to counteract what he had said previously, "By Allah I will never spend on him." This proves that he deserved to be called As-Sddiq, may Allah be pleased with him and his daughter.

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْغَافِلَاتِ
الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ لَعُنُوا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
عَظِيمٌ - يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ
وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ - يَوْمَئِذٍ يُوقِفُهُمُ اللَّهُ
دِينَهُمُ الْحَقَّ وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ الْمُبِينُ)

(23. Verily, those who accuse chaste believing women, who never even think of anything touching their chastity and are good believers -- are cursed in this life and in the Hereafter, and for them will be a great torment.) (24. On the Day when their tongues, their hands, and their legs will bear witness against them as to what they used to do.) (25. On that Day Allah will pay them the recompense of their deeds in full, and they will know that Allah, He is the Manifest Truth.)

A Threat to Those who accuse Chaste Women, Who never even think of anything touching their Chastity and are Good Believers

This is a warning and threat from Allah to those who accuse chaste women, who never even think of anything effecting their chastity since they are good believers. The Mothers of the believers are more entitled to be included in this category than any other chaste woman, especially the one who was the reason for this Ayah being revealed: `Aishah bint As-Sddiq, may Allah be pleased with them both. All of the scholars agree that whoever slanders her or makes accusations against after what has been said in this Ayah, is a disbeliever, because of his being obstinate with the Qur'an. The same ruling applies to all of the Mothers of the believers.

(لَعُنُوا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ)

(are cursed in this life and in the Hereafter,) This is like the Ayah:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُؤْذُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ

(Verily, those who annoy Allah and His Messenger,))33:57(`Abdur-Rahman bin Zayd bin Aslam said, "This is about `Aishah, and whoever does anything similar nowadays to Muslim women, the same applies to him, but `Aishah is the one who is primarily referred to here." Ibn Abi Hatim recorded that Abu Hurayrah said that the Messenger of Allah said:

«اجْتَنِبُوا السَّبْعَ الْمُوبِقَاتِ»

(Shun the seven destructive sins.) He was asked, "What are they, O Messenger of Allah" He said:

«الشِّرْكَ بِاللَّهِ، وَالسَّحْرُ، وَقَتْلُ النَّفْسِ الَّتِي حَرَّمَ اللَّهُ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ، وَأَكْلُ الرِّبَا، وَأَكْلُ مَالِ الْيَتِيمِ، وَالتَّوَلَّى يَوْمَ الزَّحْفِ، وَقَدْفُ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْغَافِلَاتِ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ»

(Associating partners with Allah; magic; killing a soul whom Allah has forbidden to be killed, except with just cause; consuming Riba; consuming the property of orphans; desertion at the time of war; and accusing chaste women, who never even think of anything touching their chastity and are good believers.) This was recorded by Al-Bukhari and Muslim in the Two Sahihs.

(يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ)

(On the Day when their tongues, their hands, and their legs will bear witness against them as to what they used to do.) Ibn Abi Hatim recorded that Ibn `Abbas said, "This refers to the idolators when they realize that no one will enter Paradise except the people who used to perform Salah. They will say, `Come, let us deny (everything).' So they will deny (everything), then their mouths will be sealed and their hands and feet will testify against them, and they will not be able to hide anything from Allah." Ibn Abi Hatim also recorded that Anas bin Malik said, "We were with the Prophet and he smiled so broadly that his back teeth could be seen, then he said:

«أَتَدْرُونَ مِمَّ أَضْحَكُ؟»

(Do you know why I am smiling) We said, `Allah and His Messenger know best.' He said,

«مِنْ مُجَادَلَةِ الْعَبْدِ لِرَبِّهِ يَقُولُ: يَا رَبِّ أَلَمْ تُجِرْنِي مِنَ الظُّلْمِ؟ فَيَقُولُ: بَلَى، فَيَقُولُ: لَأُحْيِيَنَّ عَلَى شَاهِدًا إِلَّا مِنْ نَفْسِي، فَيَقُولُ: كَفَى بِنَفْسِكَ»

الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ شَهِيدًا وَبِالْكَرَامِ عَلَيْكَ شُهُودًا، فَيُخْتَمُ
عَلَى فِيهِ وَيُقَالُ لِأَرْكَانِهِ: انْطِقِي فَتَنْطِقَ بِعَمَلِهِ، ثُمَّ
يُخَلَّى بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ الْكَلَامِ فَيَقُولُ: بُعْدًا لَكُنَّ وَسُحْقًا
فَعَنْكُنَّ كُنْتُ أَنَاضِلُّ»

(Because of the way a person will dispute with his Lord. He will say, "O Lord, did you not protect me from doing wrong" Allah will say, "Of course," The person will say, "I will not accept for anyone to give testimony concerning me except myself." Allah will say, "You are sufficient as a witness against yourself." Then a seal will be put upon his mouth and it will be said to his faculties, "Speak." So they will speak about his deeds. Then he will be permitted to speak, and he will say, "Away with you! I was only speaking in your defence!") This was recorded by Muslim and An-Nasa'i.

(يَوْمَئِذٍ يُوقِفُهُمُ اللَّهُ دِينَهُمُ الْحَقَّ)

(On that Day Allah will pay Dinahum,) Ibn ` Abbas said,

(دِينَهُمْ)

(Dinahum) "Meaning `their account.' Every time Dinahum appears in the Qur'an it means `their account.'" This was also the view of other scholars.

(وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ الْمُبِينُ)

(and they will know that Allah, He is the Manifest Truth.) means, His promise, His threat and His reckoning are all just and there is no unfairness in them.

(الْخَبِيثَاتُ لِلْخَبِيثِينَ وَالْخَبِيثُونَ لِلْخَبِيثَاتِ
وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلطَّيِّبِينَ وَالطَّيِّبُونَ لِلطَّيِّبَاتِ أُولَئِكَ
مُبْرَأُونَ مِمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ)

(26. Bad statements are for bad people and bad people for bad statements. Good statements are for good people and good people for good statements: such are innocent of (every) bad statement which they say; for them is forgiveness, and honored provision.)

The Goodness of `A'ishah because She is married to the best of Mankind

Ibn `Abbas said, "Evil words are for evil men, and evil men are for evil words; good words are for good men and good men are for good words. This was revealed concerning `A'ishah and the people of the slander." This was also narrated from Mujahid, `Ata', Sa`id bin Jubayr, Ash-Sha`bi, Al-Hasan bin Abu Al-Hasan Al-Basri, Habib bin Abi Thabit and Ad-Dahhak, and it was also the view favored by Ibn Jarir. He interpreted it to mean that evil speech is more suited to evil people, and good speech is more suited to good people. What the hypocrites attributed to `A'ishah was more suited to them, and she was most suited to innocence and having nothing to do with them. Allah said:

(أُولَئِكَ مُبَرَّءُونَ مِمَّا يَقُولُونَ)

(such (good people) are innocent of (every) bad statement which they say;) `Abdur-Rahman bin Zayd bin Aslam said, "Evil women are for evil men and evil men are for evil women, and good women are for good men and good men are for good women." This also necessarily refers back to what they said, i.e., Allah would not have made `A'ishah the wife of His Messenger unless she had been good, because he is the best of the best of mankind. If she had been evil, she would not have been a suitable partner either according to His Laws or His decree. Allah said:

(أُولَئِكَ مُبَرَّءُونَ مِمَّا يَقُولُونَ)

(such are innocent of (every) bad statement which they say;) meaning, they are remote from what the people of slander and enmity say.

(لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ)

(for them is forgiveness,) means, because of the lies that were told about them,

(وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ)

(and honored provision.) meaning, with Allah in the Gardens of Delight. This implies a promise that she will be the wife of the Messenger of Allah in Paradise.

(يَأْيُهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ
حَتَّى تَسْتَأْنِسُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ
لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ - فَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدُوا فِيهَا أَحَدًا فَلَا
تَدْخُلُوهَا حَتَّى يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ وَإِنْ قِيلَ لَكُمْ ارْجِعُوا

فَارْجِعُوا هُوَ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ -
 لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ مَسْكُونَةٍ
 فِيهَا مَتَاعٌ لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا تَكْتُمُونَ)

(27. O you who believe! Enter not houses other than your own, until you have asked permission and greeted those in them; that is better for you, in order that you may remember.) (28. And if you find no one therein, still enter not until permission has been given. And if you are asked to go back, go back, for it is purer for you. And Allah is All-Knower of what you do.) (29. There is no sin on you that you enter houses uninhabited, you have any interest in them. And Allah has knowledge of what you reveal and what you conceal.)

Seeking Permission and the Etiquette of entering Houses

This is the Islamic etiquette. Allah taught these manners (of seeking permission) to His believing servants and commanded them not to enter houses other than their own until they had asked permission, i.e., to ask for permission before entering and to give the greeting of Salam after asking. One should seek permission three times, and if permission is given, (he may enter), otherwise he should go away. It was reported in the Sahih that when Abu Musa asked `Umar three times for permission to enter and he did not give him permission, he went away. Then `Umar said, "Did I not hear the voice of `Abdullah bin Qays asking for permission to enter Let him come in." So they looked for him, but found that he had gone. When he came later on, `Umar said, "Why did you go away" He said, "I asked for permission to enter three times, but permission was not given to me, and I heard the Prophet say,

«إِذَا اسْتَأْذَنَ أَحَدُكُمْ ثَلَاثًا فَلَمْ يُؤْذَنَ لَهُ
 فَلْيَصْرَفْ»

(If any one of you asks for permission three times and it is not given, then let him go away.)" `Umar said, "You should certainly bring me evidence for this or I shall beat you!" So he went to a group of the Ansar and told them what `Umar said. They said, "No one will give testimony for you but the youngest of us." So Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri went with him and told `Umar about that. `Umar said, "What kept me from learning that was my being busy in the marketplace." Imam Ahmad recorded a narration stating that Anas or someone else said that the Messenger of Allah asked for permission to enter upon Sa`d bin `Ubadah. He said:

«السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ»

(As-Salamu `Alayka wa Rahmatullah) Sa`d said, "Wa `Alaykas-Salam Wa Rahmatullah," but the Prophet did not hear the returned greeting until he had given the greeting three times and Sa`d had returned the greeting three times, but he did not let him hear him (i.e., Sa`d responded in a low voice). So the Prophet went back, and Sa`d followed him and said, "O Messenger of Allah, may my father and mother be ransomed for you! You did not give any greeting but I responded to you, but I did not let you hear me. I wanted to get more of your

Salams and blessings." Then he admitted him to his house and offered him some raisins. The Prophet ate, and when he finished, he said,

«أَكَلَ طَعَامَكُمْ الْأَبْرَارُ، وَصَلَّتْ عَلَيْكُمْ الْمَلَائِكَةُ،
وَأَفْطَرَ عِنْدَكُمْ الصَّائِمُونَ»

(May the righteous eat your food, may the angels send blessings upon you and may those who are fasting break their fast with you.) It should also be known that the one who is seeking permission to enter should not stand directly in front of the door; he should have the door on his right or left, because of the Hadith recorded by Abu Dawud from `Abdullah bin Busr, who said, "When the Messenger of Allah came to someone's door, he would never stand directly in front of it, but to the right or left, and he would say,

«السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ، السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ»

(As-Salamu `Alaykum, As-Salamu `Alaykum.) That was because at that time the houses had no covers or curtains over their doorways." This report was recorded by Abu Dawud only. In the Two Sahihs, it is recorded that the Messenger of Allah said:

«لَوْ أَنَّ امْرَأًا اطَّلَعَ عَلَيْكَ بِغَيْرِ إِذْنٍ فَخَذَفْتَهُ
بِحَصَاةٍ فَفَقَاتَ عَيْنَهُ، مَا كَانَ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ جُنَاحٍ»

(If a person looks into your house without your permission, and you throw a stone at him and it puts his eye out, there will be no blame on you.) The Group recorded that Jabir said, "I came to the Prophet with something that was owed by my father and knocked at the door. He said,

«مَنْ ذَا؟»

(Who is that) I said, "I am!" He said,

«أَنَا أَنَا»

(I I) as if he disliked it." He did not like it because this word tells you nothing about who is saying it, unless he clearly states his name or the name by which he is known, (nickname) otherwise everyone could call himself "Me", and it does not fulfill the purpose of asking permission to enter, which is to put people at their ease, as commanded in the Ayah. Al-`Awfi narrated from Ibn `Abbas, "Putting people at ease means seeking permission to enter." This was also the view of others. Imam Ahmad recorded from Kaladah bin Al-Hanbal that at the time of the Conquest (of Makkah), Safwan bin Umayyah sent him with milk, a small gazelle, and small cucumbers when the Prophet was at the top of the valley. He said, "I entered upon the Prophet and I did not give the greeting of Salam nor ask for permission to enter. The Prophet said,

«ارْجِعْ فَقُلْ: السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ أَدْخُلُ؟»

(Go back and say: "As-Salamu `Alaykum, may I enter") This was after Safwan had become Muslim." This was also recorded by Abu Dawud, At-Tirmidhi and An-Nasa'i. At-Tirmidhi said, "Hasan Gharib." Ibn Jurayj said that he heard `Ata' bin Abi Pabah narrating that Ibn `Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "There are three Ayat whose rulings people neglect. Allah says,

(إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَى)

(Verily, the most honorable of you with Allah is the one who has the most Taqwa))49:13(, But (now) they say that the most honorable of them with Allah is the one who has the biggest house. As for seeking permission, the people have forgotten all about it." I said, "Should I seek permission to enter upon my orphan sisters who are living with me in one house" He said, "Yes." I asked him to make allowances for me but he refused and said, "Do you want to see them naked" I said, "No." He said, "Then ask for permission to enter." I asked him again and he said, "Do you want to obey Allah" I said, "Yes." He said, "Then ask for permission." Ibn Jurayj said, "Ibn Tawus told me that his father said, `There are no women whom I hate to see naked more than those who are my Mahrams.' He was very strict on this point." Ibn Jurayj narrated that Az-Zuhri said, "I heard Huzayl bin Shurahbil Al-Awdi Al-A`ma (say that) he heard Ibn Mas`ud say, `You have to seek permission to enter upon your mothers.'" Ibn Jurayj said, "I said to `Ata': `Does a man have to seek permission to enter upon his wife' He said, `No, it can be understood that this is not obligatory, but it is better for him to let her know that he is coming in so as not to startle her, because she may be in a state where she does not want him to see her. "' Abu Ja`far bin Jarir narrated from the nephew of Zaynab -- the wife of `Abdullah bin Mas`ud -- that Zaynab, may Allah be pleased with her, said, "When `Abdullah came back from some errand and reached the door, he would clear his throat and spit, because he did not want to come suddenly and find us in a state he disliked." Its chain of narration is Sahih.

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ
حَتَّى تَسْتَأْنِسُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا)

(O you who believe! Enter not houses other than your own, until you have asked permission and greeted those in them;) Muqatil bin Hayyan said: "During the Jahiliyyah, when a man met his friend, he would not greet him with Salam; rather he would say "Huyyita Sabahan" or "Huyyita Masa'an" (equivalent to "Good morning" or "Good evening"). This was the greeting among the people at that time. They did not seek permission to enter one another's houses; a man might walk straight in and say, "I have come in," and so on. This was difficult for a man to bear, as he might be with his wife. So Allah changed all that by enjoining covering and chastity, making it pure and free of any sin or impropriety. So Allah said:

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ
حَتَّى تَسْتَأْنِسُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا عَلَى أَهْلِهَا)

(O you who believe! Enter not houses other than your own, until you have asked permission and greeted those in them...) What Muqatil said is good. Allah said:

(ذَلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ)

(that is better for you,) meaning, seeking permission to enter in is better for you because it is better for both parties, the one who is seeking permission to enter and the people inside the house.

(لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ)

(in order that you may remember.)

(فَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدُوا فِيهَا أَحَدًا فَلَا تَدْخُلُوهَا حَتَّى يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ)

(And if you find no one therein, still enter not until permission has been given.) This has to do with the way in which one deals with other people's property without their permission. If he wants to, he can give permission, and if he wants to he can refrain from giving permission.

(وَإِنْ قِيلَ لَكُمْ ارْجِعُوا فَارْجِعُوا هُوَ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ)

(And if you are asked to go back, go back, for it is purer for you.) means, if you are turned away at the door, before or after permission has been given,

(فَارْجِعُوا هُوَ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ)

(go back, for it is purer for you.) means, going back is purer and better for you.

(وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ)

(And Allah is All-Knower of what you do.) Qatadah said that one of the emigrants said: "All my life I tried to follow this Ayah, but if I asked for permission to enter upon one of my brothers and he asked me to go back, I could not do so happily, although Allah says,

(وَإِنْ قِيلَ لَكُمْ ارْجِعُوا فَارْجِعُوا هُوَ أَزْكَى لَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ)

(And if you are asked to go back, go back, for it is purer for you. And Allah is All-Knower of what you do.)"

(وَإِنْ قِيلَ لَكُمْ ارْجِعُوا فَارْجِعُوا)

(And if you are asked to go back, go back....) Sa`id bin Jubayr said, "This means, do not stand at people's doors."

(لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ
مَسْكُونَةٍ)

(There is no sin on you that you enter houses uninhabited,) This Ayah is more specific than the one that comes before it, because it states that it is permissible to enter houses where there is nobody, if one has a reason for doing so, such as houses that are prepared for guests -- if he has been given permission once, then this is sufficient. Ibn Jurayj said, "Ibn `Abbas said:

(لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ)

(Enter not houses other than your own,) then this was abrogated and an exception was made, and Allah said:

(لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ مَسْكُونَةٍ
فِيهَا مَتَاعٌ لَكُمْ)

(There is no sin on you that you enter houses uninhabited, (when) you have any interest in them.) This was also narrated from `Ikrimah and Al-Hasan Al-Basri.

(قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا
فُرُوجَهُمْ ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَيْرٌ بِمَا
يَصْنَعُونَ)

(30. Tell the believing men to lower their gaze, and protect their private parts. That is purer for them. Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what they do.) The Command to lower the Gaze This is a command from Allah to His believing servants, to lower their gaze from looking at things that have been prohibited for them. They should look only at what is permissible for them to look at, and lower their gaze from forbidden things. If it so happens that a person's gaze unintentionally falls upon something forbidden, he should quickly look away. Muslim recorded in his Sahih that Jarir bin `Abdullah Al-Bajali, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "I asked the Prophet about the sudden glance, and he commanded me to turn my gaze away. In the Sahih it is narrated that Abu Sa`id said that the Messenger of Allah said:

«إِيَّاكُمْ وَالْجُلُوسَ عَلَى الطَّرِيقَاتِ»

(Beware of sitting in the streets.) They said, "O Messenger of Allah, we have no alternative but to sit in the streets to converse with one another." The Messenger of Allah said:

«إِنْ أَبِيئْتُمْ فَأَعْطُوا الطَّرِيقَ حَقَّهُ»

(If you insist, then give the street its rights.) They asked, "What are the rights of the street, O Messenger of Allah" He said,

«غَضُّ الْبَصَرِ، وَكَفُّ الْأَذَى، وَرَدُّ السَّلَامِ،
وَالْأَمْرُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ، وَالنَّهْيُ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ»

(Lower your gaze, return the greeting of Salam, enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil.) Abu Al-Qasim Al-Baghawi recorded that Abu Umamah said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah say:

«اَكْفُلُوا لِي سِتًّا أَكْفُلُ لَكُمْ بِالْجَنَّةِ: إِذَا حَدَّثَ
أَحَدُكُمْ فَلَا يَكْذِبُ، وَإِذَا انْتُمِنَ فَلَا يَخُنْ، وَإِذَا وَعَدَ
فَلَا يُخْلِفْ، وَغُضُّوا أَبْصَارَكُمْ، وَكَفُّوا أَيْدِيَكُمْ،
وَاحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَكُمْ»

(Guarantee me six things and I will guarantee you Paradise: when any one of you speaks, he should not lie; if he is entrusted with something, he should not betray that trust; if he makes a promise, he should not break it; lower your gaze; restrain your hands; and protect your private parts.) Since looking provokes the heart to evil, Allah commanded (the believers) to protect their private parts just as he commanded them to protect their gaze which can lead to that. So he said:

(قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا
فُرُوجَهُمْ)

(Tell the believing men to lower their gaze, and protect their private parts.) Sometimes protecting the private parts may involve keeping them from committing Zina, as Allah says:

(وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَفْوَاجِهِمْ حَافِظُونَ)

(And those who guard their chastity))23:5(Sometimes it may involve not looking at certain things, as in the Hadith in Musnad Ahmad and the Sunan:

«أَحْفَظْ عَوْرَتَكَ إِلَّا مِنْ زَوْجَتِكَ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ
يَمِينُكَ»

(Guard your private parts except from your wife and those whom your right hands possess.)

(ذَلِكَ أَزْكَى لَهُمْ)

(That is purer for them.) means, it is purer for their hearts and better for their commitment to religion, as it was said: Whoever protects his gaze, Allah will illuminate his understanding, or his heart.

(إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَيْرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ)

(Verily, Allah is All-Aware of what they do.) This is like the Ayah :

(يَعْلَمُ خَائِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُورُ)

(Allah knows the fraud of the eyes and all that the breasts conceal.))40:19(In the Sahih it is recorded that Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, said that the Messenger of Allah said:

«كُتِبَ عَلَى ابْنِ آدَمَ حَظُّهُ مِنَ الزَّيْنَاءِ أَدْرَكَ ذَلِكَ لَنَا
مَحَالَةً، فَرْنَا الْعَيْنَيْنِ النَّظْرُ، وَرْنَا اللِّسَانَ النُّطْقُ،
وَرْنَا الْأُذُنَيْنِ السَّمَاعُ، وَرْنَا الْيَدَيْنِ الْبَطْشُ،
وَرْنَا الرَّجْلَيْنِ الْخُطَى، وَالنَّفْسُ تَمْنَى وَتَشْتَهِي،
وَالْفَرْجُ يُصَدِّقُ ذَلِكَ أَوْ يُكَذِّبُهُ»

(The son of Adam has his share of Zina decreed for him, and he will commit that which has been decreed. The Zina of the eyes is looking; the Zina of the tongue is speaking; the Zina of the ears is listening; the Zina of the hands is striking; and the Zina of the feet is walking. The soul wishes and desires, and the private parts confirm or deny that.) It was recorded by Al-Bukhari without a complete chain. Muslim recorded a similar report with a different chain of narration. Many of the Salaf said, "They used to forbid men from staring at beardless handsome boys. "

(وَقُلْ لِّلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَرِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ التَّبِيعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولَى الإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ أَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَى عَوْرَتِ النِّسَاءِ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِينَ مِنْ زِينَتِهِنَّ وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ)

(31. And tell the believing women to lower their gaze, and protect their private parts and not to show off their adornment except that which is apparent, and to draw their veils all over their Juyub and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husband's fathers, or their sons, or their husband's sons, or their brothers or their brother's sons, or their sister's sons, or their women, or their right hand possessions, or the Tabi` in among men who do not have desire, or children who are not aware of the nakedness of women. And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And all of you beg Allah to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful.)

The Rulings of Hijab

This is a command from Allah to the believing women, and jealousy on His part over the wives of His believing servants. It is also to distinguish the believing women from the women of the Jahiliyyah and the deeds of the pagan women. The reason for the revelation of this Ayah was mentioned by Muqatil bin Hayyan, when he said: "We heard -- and Allah knows best -- that Jabir bin `Abdullah Al-Ansari narrated that Asma' bint Murshidah was in a house of hers in Bani Harithah, and the women started coming in to her without lower garments so that the anklets on their feet could be seen, along with their chests and forelocks. Asma' said: `How ugly this is!' Then Allah revealed:

(وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَرِهِنَّ)

(And tell the believing women to lower their gaze...) And Allah says:

(وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ مِنْ أَبْصَرِهِنَّ)

(And tell the believing women to lower their gaze) meaning, from that which Allah has forbidden them to look at, apart from their husbands.)Some(scholars said that it is permissible for women to look at non-Mahram men without desire, as it was recorded in the Sahih that the Messenger of Allah was watching the Ethiopians playing with spears in the Masjid on the day of `Id, and `Aishah the Mother of the believers was watching them from behind him and he was concealing her from them, until she got bored and went away.

(وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ)

(and protect their private parts). Sa`id bin Jubayr said: "From immoral actions." Abu Al-`Aliyah said: "Every Ayah of the Qur'an in which protecting the private parts is mentioned means protecting them from Zina, except for this Ayah --

(وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ)

(and protect their private parts), which means protecting them from being seen by anybody."

(وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ مِنْهَا)

(and not to show off their adornment except that which is apparent,) means, they should not show anything of their adornment to non-Mahram men except for whatever it is impossible to hide. Ibn Mas`ud said: "Such as clothes and outer garments," Meaning what the Arab women used to wear of the veil which covered their clothes and whatever showed from underneath the outer garment. There is no blame on her for this, because this is something that she cannot conceal. Similar to that is what appears of her lower garment and what she cannot conceal. Al-Hasan, Ibn Srin, Abu Al-Jawza', Ibrahim An-Nakha`i and others also had the same view as Ibn Mas`ud.

(وَلِيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَى جُيُوبِهِنَّ)

(and to draw their veils all over their Juyub) means that they should wear the outer garment in such a way as to cover their chests and ribs, so that they will be different from the women of the Jahiliyyah, who did not do that but would pass in front of men with their chests completely uncovered, and with their necks, forelocks, hair and earrings uncovered. So Allah commanded the believing women to cover themselves, as He says:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لَأَزُوجِكَ وَبَنَاتِكَ وَنِسَاءِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ يُدْنِينَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلِيبِهِنَّ ذَلِكَ أَدْنَى
أَنْ يُعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ

(O Prophet! Tell your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks all over their bodies. That will be better, that they should be known, so as not to be annoyed))33:59(And in this noble Ayah He said:

(وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ)

(and to draw their (Khumur) veils all over their Juyub) Khumur (veils) is the plural of Khimar, which means something that covers, and is what is used to cover the head. This is what is known among the people as a veil. Sa`id bin Jubayr said:

(وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ)

(and to draw) means to pull it around and tie it securely.

(بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ)

(their veils all over their Juyub) means, over their necks and chests so that nothing can be seen of them. Al-Bukhari recorded that `Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, said: "May Allah have mercy on the women of the early emigrants. When Allah revealed the Ayah:

(وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ)

(and to draw their veils all over their Juyub), they tore their aprons and Akhtamar themselves with them." He also narrated from Safiyyah bint Shaybah that `Aishah, may Allah be pleased with her, used to say: "When this Ayah:

(وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ)

(and to draw their veils all over their Juyub) was revealed, they took their Izars (waistsheets) and tore them at the edges, and Akhtamar themselves with them."

وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ ءَابَائِهِنَّ أَوْ
ءَابَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ
إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ

(and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husband's fathers, or their sons, or their husband's sons, or their brothers or their brother's sons, or their sister's sons,) All of these are a woman's close relatives whom she can never marry (Mahram) and it is permissible for her to show her adornments to them, but without making a wanton display of herself. Ibn Al-Mundhir recorded that `Ikrimah commented on this Ayah,

وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ ءَابَائِهِنَّ أَوْ
ءَابَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ

(and not to reveal their adornment except to their husbands, or their fathers, or their husband's fathers...), "The paternal uncle and maternal uncle are not mentioned here, because they may describe a woman to their sons, so a woman should not remove her Khimar in front of her paternal or maternal uncle."With regard to the husband, all of this is for his sake, so she should try her best when adorning herself for him, unlike the way she should appear in front of others.

(أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ)

(or their women,) this means that she may also wear her adornment in front of other Muslim women, but not in front of the women of Ahl Adh-Dhimmah (Jewish and Christian women), lest they describe her to their husbands. This is prohibited for all women, but more so in the case of the women of Ahl Adh-Dhimmah, because there is nothing to prevent them from doing that, but Muslim women know that it is unlawful and so, would be deterred from doing it. The Messenger of Allah said:

«لَا تُبَاشِرِ الْمَرْأَةُ الْمَرْأَةَ فَتَنْعَتَهَا لِزَوْجِهَا كَأَنَّهُ
يَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهَا»

(No woman should describe another woman to her husband so that it is as if he is looking at her.) It was recorded in the Two Sahihs from Ibn Mas`ud.

(أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ)

(or their right hand possessions.) Ibn Jarir said, "This means from among the women of the idolators. It is permissible for a Muslim woman to reveal her adornment before such a woman, even if she is an idolatress, because she is her slave-girl." This was also the view of Sa`id bin Al-Musayyib. Allah says;

(أَوِ التَّابِعِينَ غَيْرِ أُولَى الْإِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ)

(Tabi`in among men who do not have desire,) such as hired servants and followers who are not at the same level as the woman and are feeble-minded and have no interest in or desire for women. Ibn `Abbas said, "This is the kind of person who has no desire." `Ikrimah said, "This is the hermaphrodite, who does not experience erections." This was also the view of others among the Salaf. It was narrated in the Sahih from `Aishah that a hermaphrodite, used to enter upon the family of the Messenger of Allah and they used to consider him as one of those who do not have desire, but then the Messenger of Allah came in when he was describing a woman with four rolls of fat in front and eight behind. The Messenger of Allah said,

«أَلَا أَرَى هَذَا يَعْلَمُ مَا هَهُنَا لَا يَدْخُلَنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ»

(Lo! I think this person knows what is they are; he should never enter upon you.) He expelled him, and he stayed in Al-Bayda' and only came on Fridays to get food.

(أَوِ الطُّفْلِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوا عَلَى عَوْرَتِ
النِّسَاءِ)

(or children who are not aware of the nakedness of women.) Because they are so young they do not understand anything about women or their `Awrah or their soft speech or their enticing ways of walking and moving. If a child is small and does not understand that, there is nothing wrong with him entering upon women, but if he is an adolescent or approaching adolescence, so that he knows and understands these things, and can make a distinction between who is beautiful and who is not, then he should not enter upon women. It was recorded in the Two Sahihis that the Messenger of Allah said:

«إِيَّاكُمْ وَالِدُخُولَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ»

(Avoid entering upon women.) It was said, "O Messenger of Allah, what do you think about the male in-laws" He said:

«الْحَمَوُ: الْمَوْتُ»

(The male in-law is death.)

The Etiquette of Women walking in the Street

Allah's saying:

(وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ)

(And let them not stamp their feet...) During Jahiliyyah, when women walked in the street wearing anklets and no one could hear them, they would stamp their feet so that men could hear their anklets ringing. Allah forbade the believing women to do this. By the same token, if there is any other kind of adornment that is hidden, women are forbidden to make any movements that would reveal what is hidden, because Allah says:

(وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِأَرْجُلِهِنَّ)

(And let them not stamp their feet...) to the end of it. From that, women are also prohibited from wearing scent and perfume when they are going outside the home, lest men should smell their perfume. Abu `Isa At-Tirmidhi recorded that Abu Musa, may Allah be pleased with him, said that the Prophet said:

«كُلُّ عَيْنٍ زَانِيَةٌ، وَالْمَرْأَةُ إِذَا اسْتَعْطَرَتْ فَمَرَّتْ
بِالْمَجْلِسِ فَهِيَ كَذَا وَكَذَا»

(Every eye commits fornication and adultery, and when a woman puts on perfume and passes through a gathering, she is such and such) -- meaning an adulteress. He said, "And there is a similar report from Abu Hurayrah, and this is Hasan Sahih." It was also recorded by Abu Dawud and An-Nasa'i. By the same token, women are also forbidden to walk in the middle of the street, because of what this involves of wanton display. Abu Dawud recorded that Abu Usayd Al-Ansari said that he heard the Messenger of Allah , as he was coming out of the Masjid and men and women were mixing in the street, telling the women:

«اسْتَأْخِرْنَ فَإِنَّهُ لَيْسَ لَكُنَّ أَنْ تَحْفُقْنَ الطَّرِيقَ،
عَلَيْكُنَّ بِحَاقَاتِ الطَّرِيقِ»

(Keep back, for you have no right to walk in the middle of the street. You should keep to the sides of the road.) The women used to cling to the walls so much that their clothes would catch on the walls.

(وَتُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ جَمِيعًا أَيُّهُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُفْلِحُونَ)

(And all of you beg Allah to forgive you all, O believers, that you may be successful.) means, practice what you are commanded in these beautiful manners and praiseworthy characteristics, and give up the evil ways of the people of Jahiliyyah, for the greatest success is to be found in

doing what Allah and His Messenger command and avoiding what He forbids. And Allah is the source of strength.

(وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيْمَىٰ مِنَكُمُ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ
وَإِمَائِكُمْ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُعْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ
وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ - وَلَيْسَتَعْغِفِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ
نِكَاحًا حَتَّىٰ يُعْنِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَالَّذِينَ يَبْتِغُونَ
الْكِتَابَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ فَكْتَبُوهُمْ إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ
فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا وَعَآتُوهُمْ مِّنْ مَّالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي آتَاكُمْ
وَلَا تُكْرَهُوا فَتْيَتِكُمْ عَلَى الْبِغَاءِ إِنْ أَرَدْنَ تَحَصُّنًا
لَّتَبْتَغُوا عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَمَنْ يُكْرِهِنَّ فَإِنَّ
اللَّهَ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِكْرَاهِهِنَّ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ - وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا
إِلَيْكُمْ آيَاتٍ مُّبَيِّنَاتٍ وَمَثَلًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِن
قَبْلِكُمْ وَمَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ)

(32. And marry those among you who are single (Al-Ayama) and the pious of your servants and maidservants. If they be poor, Allah will enrich them out of His bounty. And Allah is All-Sufficient, All-Knowing.) / (33. And let those who find not the financial means for marriage keep themselves chaste, until Allah enriches them of His bounty. And such of your servants as seek a writing (of emancipation), give them such writing, if you find that there is good and honesty in them. And give them something (yourselves) out of the wealth of Allah which He has bestowed upon you. And force not your slave-girls to prostitution, if they desire chastity, in order that you may make a gain in the goods of this worldly life. But if anyone compels them, then after such compulsion, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.) (34. And indeed We have sent down for you Ayat that make things plain, and the example of those who passed away before you, and an admonition for those who have Taqwa.)

The Command to marry

These clear Ayat include a group of unambiguous rulings and firm commands.

(وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيْمَىٰ مِنَكُمُ)

(And marry those among you who are single (Al-Ayama)....) This is a command to marry. The Prophet said:

«يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ، مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ مِنْكُمْ الْبَاءَةَ
فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ، فَإِنَّهُ أَغْضُّ لِلْبَصْرِ وَأَحْصَنُ لِلْفَرْجِ،
وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّوْمِ فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ وَجَاءٌ»

(O young men, whoever among you can afford to get married, let him marry, for it is more effective in lowering the gaze and protecting the private parts. Whoever cannot do that, then let him fast, for it is a protection for him.) This was recorded in the Two Sahihs from the Hadith of Ibn Mas`ud. In the Sunan, it was recorded from more than one person that the Messenger of Allah said:

«تَزَوَّجُوا تَوَالِدُوا تَنَاسَلُوا فَإِنِّي مَبَاهٍ بِكُمْ الْأُمَّمَ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ»

(Marry and have children, for I will be proud of you before the nations on the Day of Resurrection.) The word Al-Ayama, the plural form of Ayyim, is used to describe a woman who has no husband and a man who has no wife, regardless of whether they have been married and then separated, or have never been married at all. Al-Jawhari reported this from the scholars of the (Arabic) language, and the word is applied to men and women alike.

(إِنْ يَكُونُوا فَقْرَاءَ يُغْنِيهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ)

(If they be poor, Allah will enrich them out of His bounty.) `Ali bin Abi Talhah reported from Ibn `Abbas: "Allah encouraged them to get married, commanded both free men and servants to get married, and He promised to enrich them."

(إِنْ يَكُونُوا فَقْرَاءَ يُغْنِيهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ)

(If they be poor, Allah will enrich them out of His bounty.) It was recorded that Ibn Mas`ud said: "Seek the richness through marriage, for Allah says:

(إِنْ يَكُونُوا فَقْرَاءَ يُغْنِيهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ)

(If they be poor, Allah will enrich them out of His bounty.)" This was recorded by Ibn Jarir. Al-Baghawi also recorded something similar from `Umar. It was reported from Al-Layth from Muhammad bin `Ajlan from Sa`id Al-Maqburi from Abu Hurayrah that the Messenger of Allah said:

«ثَلَاثَةٌ حَقٌّ عَلَى اللَّهِ عَوْنُهُمْ: النَّكَاحُ يُرِيدُ
الْعَفَافَ، وَالْمُكَاتَبُ يُرِيدُ الْأَدَاءَ، وَالغَازِي فِي
سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ»

(There are three whom it is a right upon Allah to help: one who gets married seeking chastity; a slave who makes a contract with his master with the aim of buying his freedom; and one who fights for the sake of Allah.) This was recorded by Imam Ahmad, At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasa'i and Ibn Majah. The Prophet performed the marriage of a man who owned nothing but his waist wrap, and could not even buy a ring made of iron, but he still married him to that woman, making the Mahr his promise to teach her whatever he knew of the Qur'an. And it is known from the generosity and kindness of Allah that He provided him with whatever was sufficient for her and for him.

The Command to keep Oneself Chaste if One is not able to get married

Allah's saying:

(وَلَيْسَتَّعْفِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ نِكَاحًا حَتَّى يُعْنِيَهُمُ
اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ)

(And let those who find not the financial means for marriage keep themselves chaste, until Allah enriches them of His bounty.) This is a command from Allah to those who do not have the means to get married: they are to keep themselves chaste and avoid unlawful things, as the Prophet said:

«يَا مَعْشَرَ الشَّبَابِ مَنْ اسْتَطَاعَ مِنْكُمْ الْبَاءَةَ
فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ فَإِنَّهُ أَغْضُ لِلْبَصَرِ وَأَحْصَنُ لِلْفَرْجِ،
وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِالصَّوْمِ فَإِنَّهُ لَهُ وَجَاءٌ»

(O young men, whoever among you can afford to get married, let him marry, for it is more effective in lowering the gaze and protecting the private parts. Whoever cannot do that, then let him fast, for it is a protection for him.) This Ayah is general in meaning, and the Ayah in Surat An-Nisa' is more specific, where Allah says:

وَمَنْ لَمْ يَسْتَطِعْ مِنْكُمْ طَوْلاً أَنْ يَنْكِحَ
الْمُحْصَنَاتِ

(And whoever of you have not the means wherewith to wed free believing women)until His statement;

(وَأَنْ تَصْبِرُوا خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ)

(but it is better for you that you practise self-restraint) 4:25(meaning, it is better for you to be patient and refrain from marrying slave-girl, because any child that is born will also be a slave.

(وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ)

(and Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful) 4:25(.

(وَلَيْسَتَعَفِيفِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَجِدُونَ نِكَاحًا)

(And let those who find not the financial means for marriage keep themselves chaste,) `Ikrimah said, "This refers to a man who sees a woman and it is as if he feels desire; if he has a wife then let him go to her and fulfill his desire with her, and if he does not have a wife, then let him ponder the kingdom of heaven and earth until Allah grants him means of livelihood."

The Command to grant Slaves a Contract of Emancipation

(وَالَّذِينَ يَبْتَغُونَ الْكِتَابَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ
فَكَتَبُوا لَهُمْ إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا)

(And such of your servants as seek a writing (of emancipation), give them such writing, if you find that there is good and honesty in them.) This is a command from Allah to slave-owners: if their servants ask them for a contract of emancipation, they should write it for them, provided that the servant has some skill and means of earning so that he can pay his master the money that is stipulated in the contract. Al-Bukhari said: "Rawh narrated from Ibn Jurayj: `I said to `Ata', "If I know that my servant has money, is it obligatory for me to write him a contract of emancipation" He said, "I do not think it can be anything but obligatory." `Amr bin Dinar said: "I said to `Ata', `Are you narrating this from anybody' He said, `No,' then he told me that Musa bin Anas told him that Srin, who had a lot of money, asked Anas for a contract of emancipation and he refused. So he went to `Umar (bin Al-Khattab), may Allah be pleased with him, and he said, `Write it for him.' He refused, so `Umar hit him with his whip and recited,

(فَكَتَبُوا لَهُمْ إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا)

(give them such writing, if you find that there is good and honesty in them.) Then he wrote the contract." This was mentioned by Al-Bukhari with a disconnected chain of narration. It was also narrated by `Abdur-Razzaq who said Ibn Jurayj told them: I said to `Ata', "If I know that my servant has some money, is it obligatory for me to write him a contract of emancipation" He said, "I do not think it can be anything but obligatory.")It was also said by `Amr bin Dinar who said, "I said to `Ata', `Are you narrating this from anybody' He said, `No.'"(Ibn Jarir recorded that Srin wanted Anas bin Malik to write a contract of emancipation and he delayed, then `Umar said to him, "You should certainly write him a contract of emancipation." Its chain of narrators is Sahih. Allah's saying:

(إِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيهِمْ خَيْرًا)

(if you find that there is good and honesty in them.) Some of them said (this means) trustworthiness. Some said: "Honesty," and others said: "A skill and ability to earn."

(وَأَتَوْهُمْ مِنْ مَالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي آتَاكُمْ)

(And give them something out of the wealth of Allah which He has bestowed upon you.) This is the share of the wealth of Zakah that Allah stated to be their right. This is the opinion of Al-Hasan, `Abdur-Rahman bin Zayd bin Aslam and his father and Muqatil bin Hayyan. It was also the opinion favored by Ibn Jarir.

(وَأَتَوْهُمْ مِنْ مَالِ اللَّهِ الَّذِي آتَاكُمْ)

(And give them something out of the wealth of Allah which He has bestowed upon you.) Ibrahim An-Nakha'i said, "This is urging the people, their masters and others." This was also the view of Buraydah bin Al-Husayb Al-Aslami and Qatadah. Ibn `Abbas said: "Allah commanded the believers to help in freeing slaves."

The Prohibition of forcing One's Slave-Girls to commit Zin @257

ﷻ Allah's saying:

(وَلَا تُكْرَهُوا فَتَيَاتِكُمْ عَلَى الْبِغَاءِ)

(And force not your slave-girls to prostitution...) Among the people of the Jahiliyyah, there were some who, if he had a slave-girl, he would send her out to commit Zina and would charge money for that, which he would take from her every time. When Islam came, Allah forbade the believers to do that. The reason why this Ayah was revealed, according to the reports of a number of earlier and later scholars of Tafsir, had to do with `Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul. He had slave-girls whom he used to force into prostitution so that he could take their earnings and because he wanted them to have children which would enhance his status, or so he claimed.

Reports narrated on this Topic

In his Musnad, Al-Hafiz Abu Bakr Ahmad bin `Amr bin `Abd Al-Khaliq Al-Bazzar, may Allah have mercy on him, recorded that Az-Zuhri said, " Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul had a slave-girl whose name was Mu`adhah, whom he forced into prostitution. When Islam came, the Ayah

(وَلَا تُكْرَهُوا فَتَيَاتِكُمْ عَلَى الْبِغَاءِ)

(And force not your slave-girls to prostitution...) was revealed." Al-A`mash narrated from Abu Sufyan that Jabir said concerning this Ayah, "This was revealed about a slave-girl belonging to `Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul whose name was Musaykah. He used to force her to commit immoral actions, but there was nothing wrong with her and she refused. Then Allah revealed this Ayah:

(وَلَا تُكْرَهُوا فَتَيَاتِكُمْ عَلَى الْبِغَاءِ)

(And force not your slave-girls to prostitution,) until His saying;

(وَمَنْ يُكْرِهَنَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِكْرَاهِهِنَّ غَفُورٌ
رَحِيمٌ)

(But if anyone compels them, then after such compulsion, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.)" An-Nasa'i also recorded something similar. Muqatil bin Hayyan said, "I heard -- and Allah knows best -- that this Ayah was revealed about two men who used to force two slave-girls of theirs (into prostitution). One of them was called Musaykah who belonged to the Ansari, and Umaymah the mother of Musaykah belonged to `Abdullah bin Ubayy. Mu`adhah and Arwa were in the same situation. Then Musaykah and her mother came to the Prophet and told him about that. Then Allah revealed:

(وَلَا تُكْرَهُوا فَتَيَاتِكُمْ عَلَى الْبِغَاءِ)

(And force not your slave-girls to prostitution), meaning Zina.

(إِنْ أُرِدْنَ تَحَصُّنًا)

(if they desire chastity,) means, if they want to be chaste, which is the case with the majority of slave-girls.

(لَتَبْتَغُوا عَرَضَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا)

(in order that you may make a gain in the goods of this worldly life.) meaning, from the money they earn and their children. The Messenger of Allah forbade the money earned by the cupper, the prostitute and the fortune-teller. According to another report:

«مَهْرُ الْبَغِيِّ خَبِيثٌ وَكَسْبُ الْحَجَّامِ خَبِيثٌ،
وَتَمَنُّ الْكَلْبِ خَبِيثٌ»

(The earnings of a prostitute are evil, the earnings of a cupper are evil, and the price of a dog is evil.)

وَمَنْ يُكْرِهُهُنَّ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ مِنْ بَعْدِ إِكْرَاهِهِنَّ غَفُورٌ
رَحِيمٌ

(But if anyone compels them, then after such compulsion, Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.) meaning, towards them, as has already been stated in the Hadith narrated from Jabir. Ibn Abi Talhah narrated that Ibn `Abbas said, "If you do that, then Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful, and their sin will be on the one who forced them to do that." This was also the view of Mujahid, `Ata' Al-Khurasani, Al-A`mash and Qatadah. After explaining these rulings in detail, Allah says:

(وَلَقَدْ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكُمْ آيَاتٍ مُبَيِّنَاتٍ)

(And indeed We have sent down for you Ayat that make things plain,) meaning, in the Qur'an there are Ayat which are clear and explain matters in detail.

(وَمَثَلًا مِّنَ الَّذِينَ خَلَوْا مِن قَبْلِكُمْ)

(and the example of those who passed away before you,) means, reports about the nations of the past and what happened to them when they went against the commandments of Allah, as Allah says:

(فَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ سَلَفًا وَمَثَلًا لِّلْآخِرِينَ)

(And We made them a precedent, and an example to later generations.) 43:56(; We made them a lesson, i. e., a rebuke for committing sin and forbidden deeds.

(لِّلْمُتَّقِينَ)

(for those who have Taqwa.) meaning, for those who remember and fear Allah.

(اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ مَثَلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبْرَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ)

(35. Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is as a niche and within it a lamp: the lamp is in a glass, the glass as it were a star Durriyyun, lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow forth, though no fire touched it. Light upon Light! Allah guides to His Light whom He wills. And Allah sets forth parables for mankind, and Allah is All-Knower of everything.) /

The Parable of the Light of Allah

Ali bin Abi Talhah reported that Ibn ` Abbas said:

(اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ)

(Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth.) means, the Guide of the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth. Ibn Jurayj said: "Mujahid and Ibn ` Abbas said concerning the Ayah:

(اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ)

(Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth.) He is controlling their affairs and their stars and sun and moon." As-Suddi said concerning the Ayah:

(اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ)

(Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth.) by His Light the heavens and earth are illuminated. In the Two Sahihs, it is recorded that Ibn ` Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him, said: "When the Messenger of Allah got up to pray at night, he would say:

«اللَّهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ، أَنْتَ قَيِّمُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ، وَلَكَ الْحَمْدُ أَنْتَ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ»

(O Allah, to You be praise, You are the Sustainer of heaven and earth and whoever is in them. To You be praise, You are the Light of the heavens and the earth and whoever is in them.) It was narrated that Ibn Mas'ud said, "There is no night or day with your Lord; the Light of the Throne comes from the Light of His Face."

(مَثَلُ نُورِهِ)

(The parable of His Light) There are two views concerning the meaning of the pronoun (His). The first is that it refers to Allah, may He be glorified and exalted, meaning that the parable of His guidance in the heart of the believer is

(كَمِشْكَاةٍ)

(as a niche) This was the view of Ibn `Abbas. The second view is that the pronoun refers to the believer, which is indicated by the context of the words and implies that the parable of the light in the heart of the believer is as a niche. So the heart of the believer and what he is naturally inclined to of guidance and what he learns of the Qur'an which is in accordance with his natural inclinations are, as Allah says:

(أَفَمَنْ كَانَ عَلَىٰ بَيِّنَةٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِ وَيَتْلُوهُ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْهُ)

(Can they who rely on a clear proof from their Lord, and whom a witness from Him recites it (can they be equal with the disbelievers)) 11:17. The heart of the believer in its purity and clarity is likened to a lamp in transparent and jewel-like glass, and the Qur'an and Shari`ah by which it is guided are likened to good, pure, shining oil in which there is no impurity or deviation.

(كَمِشْكَاةٍ)

(as (if there were) a niche) Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Muhammad bin Ka`b and others said, "This refers to the position of the wick in the lamp." This is well-known, and hence Allah then says:

(فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ)

(and within it a lamp.) This is the flame that burns brightly. Or it was said that the niche is a niche in the house. This is the parable given by Allah of obedience towards Him. Allah calls obedience to Him as light, then He calls it by other numerous names as well. Ubayy bin Ka`b

said, "The lamp is the light, and this refers to the Qur'an and the faith that is in his heart." As-Suddi said, "It is the lamp."

(المِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ)

(the lamp is in a glass,) means, this light is shining in a clear glass. Ubayy bin Ka`b and others said, "This is the likeness of the heart of the believer."

(الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ)

(the glass as it were a star Durriyyun,) Some authorities recite the word Durriyyun with a Dammah on the Dal and without a Hamzah, which means pearls, i.e., as if it were a star made of pearls (Durr). Others recite it as Dirri'un or Durri'un, with a Kasrah on the Dal, or Dammah on the Dal, and with a Hamzah at the end, which means reflection (Dir'), because if something is shone on the star it becomes brighter than at any other time. The Arabs call the stars they do not know Darari. Ubayy bin Ka`b said: a shining star. Qatadah said: "Huge, bright and clear."

(يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبْرَكَةٍ)

(lit from a blessed tree,) means, it is derived from olive oil, from a blessed tree.

(زَيْتُونَةٍ)

(an olive,) This refers to the blessed tree mentioned previously.

(لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ)

(neither of the east nor of the west,) means, it is not in the eastern part of the land so that it does not get any sun in the first part of the day, nor is it in the western part of the land so that it is shaded from the sun before sunset, but it is in a central position where it gets sun from the beginning of the day until the end, so its oil is good and pure and shining. Ibn Abi Hatim recorded that Ibn `Abbas commented on:

(زَيْتُونَةٍ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ)

(an olive, neither of the east nor of the west,) "This is a tree in the desert which is not shaded by any other tree or mountain or cave, nothing covers it, and this is best for its oil." Mujahid commented on:

(لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ)

(neither of the east nor of the west,) saying; "It is not in the east where it will get no sun when the sun sets, nor is it in the west where it will get no sun when the sun rises, but it is in a position where it will get sun both at sunrise and sunset." Sa`id bin Jubayr commented:

زَيْتُونَةٌ لَا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا
يُضِيءُ

(an olive, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself))
"This is the best kind of oil. When the sun rises it reaches the tree from the east and when it sets it reaches it from the west, so the sun reaches it morning and evening, so it is not counted as being in the east or in the west."

يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ

(whose oil would almost glow forth (of itself), though no fire touched it.) `Abdur-Rahman bin Zayd bin Aslam said (this means) because the oil itself is shining.

(نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ)

(Light upon Light!) Al-`Awfi narrated from Ibn `Abbas that this meant the faith and deeds of a person. As-Suddi said:

(نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ)

(Light upon Light!) "Light of the fire and the light of the oil: when they are combined they give light, and neither of them can give light without the other. Similarly the light of the Qur'an and the light of faith give light when they are combined, and neither can do so without the other."

يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ

(Allah guides to His Light whom He wills.) means, Allah shows the way to the ones whom He chooses, as it says in the Hadith recorded by Imam Ahmad from `Abdullah bin `Amr, who said, "I heard the Messenger of Allah say:

«إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَعَالَى خَلَقَ خَلْقَهُ فِي ظِلْمَةٍ ثُمَّ أَلْقَى
عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ نُورِهِ يَوْمَئِذٍ، فَمَنْ أَصَابَ مِنْ نُورِهِ

يَوْمَئِذٍ اهْتَدَى وَمَنْ أَخْطَأَ ضَلَّ فَلِذَلِكَ أَقُولُ: جَفَّ
الْقَلَمُ عَلَى عِلْمِ اللَّهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ»

(Allah created His creation in darkness, then on the same day He sent His Light upon them. Whoever was touched by His Light on that day will be guided and whoever was missed will be led astray. Hence I say: the pens have dried in accordance with the knowledge of Allah, may He be glorified.)"

(وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
عَلِيمٌ)

(And Allah sets forth parables for mankind, and Allah is All-Knower of everything.) Having mentioned this parable of the Light of His guidance in the heart of the believer, Allah ends this Ayah with the words:

(وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
عَلِيمٌ)

(And Allah sets forth parables for mankind, and Allah is All-Knower of everything.) meaning, He knows best who deserves to be guided and who deserves to be led astray. Imam Ahmad recorded that Abu Sa`id Al-Khudri said, "The Messenger of Allah said:

«الْقُلُوبُ أَرْبَعَةٌ: قَلْبٌ أَجْرَدٌ فِيهِ مِثْلُ السَّرَّاجِ
يُزْهِرُ، وَقَلْبٌ أَغْلَفٌ مَرْبُوطٌ عَلَى غِلَافِهِ، وَقَلْبٌ
مَنْكُوسٌ، وَقَلْبٌ مُصْفَحٌ. فَأَمَّا الْقَلْبُ الْأَجْرَدُ:
فَقَلْبُ الْمُؤْمِنِ سِرَاجُهُ فِيهِ نُورُهُ، وَأَمَّا الْقَلْبُ
الْأَغْلَفُ فَقَلْبُ الْكَافِرِ، وَأَمَّا الْقَلْبُ الْمَنْكُوسُ فَقَلْبُ
الْمُنَافِقِ، عَرَفَ ثُمَّ أَنْكَرَ، وَأَمَّا الْقَلْبُ الْمُصْفَحُ
فَقَلْبٌ فِيهِ إِيْمَانٌ وَنِفَاقٌ، وَمِثْلُ الْإِيْمَانِ فِيهِ كَمَثَلِ

الْبَقْلَةُ يُمِدُّهَا الْمَاءُ الطَّيِّبُ، وَمَثَلُ النِّفَاقِ فِيهِ كَمَثَلِ
الْقَرْحَةِ يُمِدُّهَا الدَّمُ وَالْقَيْحُ، فَأَيُّ الْمَدَّتَيْنِ غَلَبَتْ
عَلَى الْأُخْرَى غَلَبَتْ عَلَيْهِ»

(Hearts are of four kinds: the heart that is clear like a shining lamp; the heart that is covered and tied up; the heart that is upside-down; and the heart that is clad in armor. As for the clear heart, it is the heart of the believer in which is a lamp filled with light; as for the covered heart, this is the heart of the disbeliever; as for the upside-down heart, this is the heart of the hypocrite, who recognizes then denies; as for the armor-clad heart, this is the heart in which there is both faith and hypocrisy. The parable of the faith in it is that of legume, a sprout that is irrigated with good water, and the likeness of the hypocrisy in it is that of sores that are fed by blood and pus. Whichever of the two prevails is the characteristic that will dominate.) Its chain of narrators is good (Jayyid) although they (Al-Bukhari and Muslim) did not record it.

(فِي بُيُوتِ أَدْنِ اللَّهِ أَنْ تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ
يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْآصَالِ - رَجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِهِمْ
تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ
الزَّكَاةِ يَخَفُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ
وَالْأَبْصَارُ - لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا
وَيَزِيدَهُم مِّن فَضْلِهِ وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَن يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ
حِسَابٍ)

(36. In houses which Allah has ordered to be raised, in them His Name is remembered. Therein glorify Him in the mornings and in the evenings,) (37. Men whom neither trade nor business diverts from the remembrance of Allah nor from performing the Salah nor from giving the Zakah. They fear a Day when hearts and eyes will be overturned.) (38. That Allah may reward them according to the best of their deeds, and add even more for them out of His grace. And Allah provides without measure to whom He wills.)

The Virtues of the Masjids, the Correct Etiquette, and the Virtues of Those who take care of them

Having likened the heart of the believer and what it contains of guidance and knowledge to a lamp lit with good oil shining in a clear glass, Allah then states where it belongs, which is in the

Masjids, the places on earth that are most beloved to Allah. The Masjids are His houses where He Alone is worshipped. So Allah says:

(فِي بُيُوتٍ أُذِنَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ تَرْفَعَ)

(In houses which Allah has ordered to be raised,) meaning, Allah has commanded that they be established and that they be kept clean of any filth, idle talk or words or deeds that are inappropriate. `Ali bin Abi Talhah reported from Ibn `Abbas concerning this Ayah:

(فِي بُيُوتٍ أُذِنَ لِلَّهِ أَنْ تَرْفَعَ)

(In houses which Allah has ordered to be raised,) he said; "Allah forbade idle talk in them." This was also the view of `Ikrimah, Abu Salih, Ad-Dahhak, Nafi` bin Jubayr, Abu Bakr bin Sulayman bin Abi Hathamah, Sufyan bin Husayn and others among the scholars of Tafsir. Many Hadiths have been narrated concerning the construction of Masjids, honoring them, respecting them, and perfuming them with incense etc. This has been discussed in more detail elsewhere, and I have written a book dealing with this topic on its own, praise and blessings be to Allah. With Allah's help we will mention here a few of these Hadiths, if Allah wills. In Allah we put our trust and reliance. `Uthman bin `Affan, the Commander of the faithful, may Allah be pleased with him, said; "I heard the Messenger of Allah say:

«مَنْ بَنَى مَسْجِدًا يَبْتَغِي بِهِ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ بَنَى اللَّهُ لَهُ
مِثْلَهُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ»

(Whoever builds a Masjid seeking the Face of Allah, Allah will build for him something similar to it in Paradise.) It was narrated in the Two Sahihs. Ibn Majah narrated that `Umar bin Al-Khattab, may Allah be pleased with him, said; "The Messenger of Allah said:

«مَنْ بَنَى مَسْجِدًا يُذَكِّرُ فِيهِ اسْمُ اللَّهِ بَنَى اللَّهُ لَهُ
بَيْتًا فِي الْجَنَّةِ»

(Whoever builds a Masjid in which the Name of Allah is remembered, Allah will build for him a house in Paradise.) An-Nasa'i mentioned something similar. There are very many Hadiths which say this. `A'ishah, may Allah be pleased with her, said: "The Messenger of Allah commanded us to build Masjids among the houses, and to clean them and perfume them." This was recorded by Ahmad and the Sunan compilers with the exception of An-Nasa'i. Ahmad and Abu Dawud recorded a similar report from Samurah bin Jundub. Al-Bukhari said: "Umar said: `Build for the people a place to worship Allah, and beware of using red or yellow for adornment and decoration and distracting the people thereby." Abu Dawud narrated that Ibn `Abbas said, "The Messenger of Allah said:

«مَا أَمَرْتُ بِتَشْيِيدِ الْمَسَاجِدِ»

(I was not commanded to Tashyid the Masjids.) Ibn ` Abbas said, "Decorating them as the Jews and Christians did." Anas, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "The Messenger of Allah said:

«لَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى يَتَبَاهَى النَّاسُ فِي
الْمَسَاجِدِ»

(The Hour will not come until people show off in building Masjids.) It was recorded by Ahmad and the compilers of the Sunan, with the exception of At-Tirmidhi. Buraydah narrated that a man called out in the Masjid and said, "Has any body said anything about a red camel" The Prophet said:

«لَا، وَجَدْتِ، إِيمًا بُنِيَتِ الْمَسَاجِدُ لِمَا بُنِيَتْ لَهُ»

(May you never find it! The Masjids were built only for what they were built for.) This was narrated by Muslim. Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, narrated that the Messenger of Allah said:

«إِذَا رَأَيْتُمْ مَنْ يَبِيعُ أَوْ يَبْتَاعُ فِي الْمَسْجِدِ،
فَقُولُوا: لَا أَرْبِحَ اللهُ تِجَارَتَكَ، وَإِذَا رَأَيْتُمْ مَنْ
يَنْشُدُ ضَالَّةً فِي الْمَسْجِدِ فَقُولُوا: لَا رَدَّهَا اللهُ
عَلَيْكَ»

(If you see someone buying or selling in the Masjid, say to him, "May Allah never make your business profitable!" And if you see someone calling out about lost property, say, "May Allah never return it to you!") This was recorded by At-Tirmidhi, who said: "Hasan Gharib." Al-Bukhari recorded that As-Sa'ib bin Yazid Al-Kindi said, "I was standing in the Masjid and a man threw pebbles at me, so I looked and saw ` Umar bin Al-Khattab who said, ` Go and bring me these two men.' I went and brought them to him, and he said, ` Who are you' Or, ` Where do you come from' They said, ` We are from At-Ta'if.' ` Umar said, ` If you had been from this town I would have hit you, for you are raising your voices in the Masjid of the Messenger of Allah ." An-Nasa'i recorded that Ibrahim bin ` Abdur-Rahman bin ` Awf said: " Umar heard the voice of a man in the Masjid and said: ` Do you know where you are" This is also Sahih. Al-Hafiz Abu Ya` la Al-Musili recorded from Ibn ` Umar that ` Umar used to burn incense in the Masjid of the Messenger of Allah every Friday. Its chain of narration is Hasan and there is nothing wrong with it, Allah knows best. It is confirmed in the Two Sahihs that the Messenger of Allah said:

«صَلَاةُ الرَّجُلِ فِي الْجَمَاعَةِ تُضَعَّفُ عَلَى
صَلَاتِهِ فِي بَيْتِهِ وَفِي سُوقِهِ خَمْسًا وَعِشْرِينَ

ضِعْفًاوَدَلِكَ أَنَّهُ إِذَا تَوَضَّأَ فَأَحْسَنَ وَضُوءَهُ ثُمَّ
 خَرَجَ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ لَمْ يُخْرِجْهُ إِلَّا الصَّلَاةَ لَمْ يَخْطُ
 خَطْوَةً إِلَّا رُفِعَ لَهُ بِهَا دَرَجَةٌ وَحُطَّ عَنْهُ بِهَا
 خَطِيئَةٌ. فَإِذَا صَلَّى لَمْ تَزَلِ الْمَلَائِكَةُ تُصَلِّي عَلَيْهِ
 مَا دَامَ فِي مُصَلَّاهُ: اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَيْهِ، اللَّهُمَّ
 اِرْحَمَهُ. وَلَا يَزَالُ فِي صَلَاةٍ مَا انْتَهَرَ الصَّلَاةَ»

(A man's prayer in congregation is twenty-five times better than his prayer in his house or the marketplace. That is because if he performs Wudu' and does it well, then he goes out to go to the Masjid, and for no other purpose than to pray, he does not take one step but he increases in one level in status and one sin is removed. When he prays, the angels continue sending blessings on him as long as he is in the place where he prays,)they say(, "O Allah, send blessings on him, O Allah, have mercy on him." And he will remain in a state of prayer as long as he is waiting for the prayer.) The following is recorded in the Sunan:

«بَشِّرِ الْمَشَّائِينَ إِلَى الْمَسَاجِدِ فِي الظُّلْمِ بِالنُّورِ
 النَّامِ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ»

(Those who walk to the Masjids when it is dark, give them the glad tidings of complete Light on the Day of Resurrection.) When entering the Masjid, it is recommended to enter with one's right foot, and to say the supplication recorded in Sahih Al-Bukhari, where it is narrated from `Abdullah bin `Amr that the Messenger of Allah used to say, when he entered the Masjid:

«أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ الْعَظِيمِ وَيَوْجْهِهِ الْكَرِيمِ، وَسُلْطَانِهِ
 الْقَدِيمِ، مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ»

(I seek refuge with Allah Almighty and with His Noble Face, and with His Eternal Domain, from the accursed Shaytan.))He (one of the narrators) asked, `Is that all' He answered, `Yes'(, If he says this, the Shaytan says: "He will be protected from me all day long." Muslim recorded that Abu Humayd or Abu Usayd said: The Messenger of Allah said:

«إِذَا دَخَلَ أَحَدُكُمْ الْمَسْجِدَ فَلْيَقُلْ: اللَّهُمَّ افْتَحْ لِي
أَبْوَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ. وَإِذَا خَرَجَ فَلْيَقُلْ: اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي
أَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ»

(When anyone of you enters the Masjid, let him say: "O Allah, open the gates of Your mercy for me. And when he comes out, let him say: "O Allah, I ask You of Your bounty.") An-Nasa'i also recorded this from them from the Prophet . Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with him, said: The Messenger of Allah said:

«إِذَا دَخَلَ أَحَدُكُمْ الْمَسْجِدَ فَلْيُسَلِّمْ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ.
وَلْيَقُلْ: اللَّهُمَّ افْتَحْ لِي أَبْوَابَ رَحْمَتِكَ، وَإِذَا خَرَجَ
فَلْيُسَلِّمْ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ وَلْيَقُلْ: اللَّهُمَّ اعْصِمْنِي مِنَ
الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ»

(When anyone of you enters the Masjid, let him invoke blessings on the Prophet then let him say: "O Allah, open the gates of Your mercy for me." When he comes out, let him invoke blessings on the Prophet and say, "O Allah, protect me from the accursed Shaytan.") This was also recorded by Ibn Majah, as well as Ibn Khuzaymah and Ibn Hibban in their Sahih.

(وَيَذَكَّرَ فِيهَا اسْمَهُ)

(in them His Name is remembered.) meaning, the Name of Allah. This is like the Ayat:

(يَبْنِي ءَادَمَ خُدُوعًا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ)

(O Children of Adam! Take your adornment to every Masjid...))7:31(

(وَأَقِيمُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَادْعُوهُ
مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ)

(and you should face (Him only) in each and every Masjid, and invoke Him only making your religion sincere to Him))7:29(.

(وَأَنَّ الْمَسَاجِدَ لِلَّهِ)

(And the Masjids are for Allah))72:18(.

(وَيُذَكَّرَ فِيهَا اسْمُهُ)

(in them His Name is remembered.) Ibn `Abbas said, "This means that His Book is recited therein."

(يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ فِيهَا بِالْعُدُوءِ وَالْأَصَالِ)

(Therein glorify Him in the mornings and in the evenings.)

(رَجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِيمُهُمْ تِجْرَةً وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ)

(Men whom neither trade nor business diverts from the remembrance of Allah) This is like the Ayat:

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُلْهِكُمْ أَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَا أَوْلَادُكُمْ
عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ)

(O you who believe! Let not your properties or your children divert you from the remembrance of Allah.))63:9(

(يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ
الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَى ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ)

(O you who believe! When the call is proclaimed for the Salah on Friday, hasten earnestly to the remembrance of Allah and leave off business.))62:9(Allah says that this world and its adornments, attractions and marketplaces should not distract them from remembering their Lord Who created them and sustains them, those who know that what is with Him is better for them than what they themselves possess, because what they have is transient but that which is with Allah is eternal. Allah says:

(لَا تُلْهِيمُهُمْ تِجْرَةً وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَإِقَامِ
الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءِ الزَّكَاةِ)

(Men whom neither trade nor business diverts from the remembrance of Allah nor from performing the Salah nor from giving the Zakah). meaning, they give priority to obeying Allah and doing what He wants and what pleases Him over doing what they want and what pleases them. It was reported from Salim from `Abdullah bin `Umar that he was in the marketplace when the Iqamah for prayer was called, so they closed their stores and entered the Masjid. Ibn `Umar said: "Concerning them the Ayah was revealed:

(رَجَالٌ لَا تُلْهِهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ)

(Men whom neither trade nor business diverts from the remembrance of Allah)." This was recorded by Ibn Abi Hatim and Ibn Jarir.

(لَا تُلْهِهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَلَا بَيْعٌ عَن ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ)

(Men whom neither trade nor business diverts from the remembrance of Allah). `Ali bin Abi Talhah reported that Ibn `Abbas said, "This meant from the prescribed prayers." This was also the view of Muqatil bin Hayyan and Ar-Rabi` bin Anas. As-Suddi said: "From prayer in congregation." Muqatil bin Hayyan said, "That does not distract them from attending the prayer and establishing it as Allah commanded them, and from doing the prayers at the prescribed times and doing all that Allah has enjoined upon them in the prayer."

(يَخْفُونَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيهِ الْقُلُوبُ وَالْأَبْصَارُ)

(They fear a Day when hearts and eyes will be overturned.) means, the Day of Resurrection when people's hearts and eyes will be overturned, because of the intensity of the fear and terror of that Day. This is like the Ayah:

(وَأَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْأُزْفَةِ)

(And warn them of the Day that is drawing near...) 40:18(

(إِنَّمَا يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ لِيَوْمٍ تَشْخَصُ فِيهِ الْأَبْصَارُ)

(but He gives them respite up to a Day when the eyes will stare in horror) 14:42(

(وَيُطْعَمُونَ الطَّعَامَ عَلَى حُبِّهِ مِسْكِينًا وَيَتِيمًا
وَأَسِيرًا - إِنَّمَا نُطْعِمُكُمْ لِوَجْهِ اللَّهِ لَا نُرِيدُ مِنْكُمْ
جَزَاءً وَلَا شُكُورًا - إِنَّا نَخَافُ مِنْ رَبِّنَا يَوْمًا
عَبُوسًا قَمَطِيرًا - فَوْقَهُمُ اللَّهُ شَرًّا ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمُ

وَلَقَّهْمُ نَصْرَةً وَسُرُورًا - وَجَزَاهُمْ بِمَا صَبَرُوا
جَنَّةً وَحَرِيرًا)

(And they give food, inspite of their love for it, to the poor, the orphan, and the captive, (saying:) "We feed you seeking Allah's Face only. We wish for no reward, nor thanks from you. Verily, We fear from our Lord a Day, hard and distressful, that will make the faces look horrible." So Allah saved them from the evil of that Day, and gave them a light of beauty and joy. And their recompense shall be Paradise, and silken garments, because they were patient))76:8-12(And Allah says here:

(لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوا)

(That Allah may reward them according to the best of their deeds,) meaning, "They are those from whom We shall accept the best of their deeds and overlook their evil deeds."

(وَيَزِيدُهُمْ مِّن فَضْلِهِ)

(and add even more for them out of His grace.) means, He will accept their good deeds and multiply them for them, as Allah says:

(إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يَظْلِمُ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ)

(Surely, Allah wrongs not even of the weight of a speck of dust.))4:40(

(مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ عَشْرُ أَمْثَالِهَا)

(Whoever brings a good deed shall have ten times the like thereof to his credit.))6:160(

(مَنْ ذَا الَّذِي يُقرضُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا)

(Who is he that will lend to Allah a goodly loan.))2:245(

(وَاللَّهُ يُضَعِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ)

(Allah gives manifold increase to whom He wills.))2:261(And Allah says here:

(وَاللَّهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ)

(And Allah provides without measure to whom He wills.)

(وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَلُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍ بِقِيعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ
الظَّمَانُ مَاءً حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئًا وَوَجَدَ
اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ فُوقَهُ حِسَابَهُ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ - أَوْ
كَظُلْمَتٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لُّجِّيٍّ يَعْشَشُهُ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فُوقِهِ
مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فُوقِهِ سَحَابٌ ظَلَمَتْ بَعْضُهَا فُوقَ
بَعْضٍ إِذَا أُخْرِجَ يَدُهُ لَمْ يَكِدْ يَرَاهَا وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجْعَلِ
اللَّهُ لَهُ نُورًا فَمَا لَهُ مِن نُّورٍ)

(39. As for those who disbelieved, their deeds are like a mirage in a Qi` ah. The thirsty one thinks it to be water until he comes up to it, he finds it to be nothing; but he finds Allah with him, Who will pay him his due. And Allah is swift in taking account.) (40. Or like the darkness in a vast deep sea, overwhelmed with waves topped by waves, topped by dark clouds, (layers of) darkness upon darkness: if a man stretches out his hand, he can hardly see it! And he for whom Allah has not appointed light, for him there is no light.)

Two Examples of two kinds of Disbelievers

These are two examples which Allah sets forth of two kinds of disbelievers. Similarly He sets forth two parables of the hypocrites at the beginning of Surat Al-Baqarah: one involving fire and the other involving water. Similarly, in Surat Ar-Ra`d He gives two parables of the guidance and knowledge that are instilled in the heart, again involving fire and water; we have discussed each of them in the appropriate place and there is no need to repeat it here, praise be to Allah. The first of these two examples is that of the disbelievers who call others to their disbelief, thinking that they have good actions and beliefs, when this is not in fact the case. Their likeness is that of a mirage which is seen in a desert plain, looking from a distance as if it is a deep sea. The word Qi` ah refers to a vast, flat, level area of land in which the mirage may appear. There are different kinds of mirage, one which appears after midday, and another which appears in the morning and looks like water between heaven and earth. If a person who is in need of water sees the mirage, he thinks that it is water so he heads towards it in order to drink from it, but when he reaches it,

(لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئًا)

(he finds it to be nothing.); Similarly the disbeliever thinks that he is doing something good and that he has achieved something, but when Allah judges him on the Day of Resurrection, and brings him to account and examines his deeds, he will find that nothing has been accepted at all, either because of a lack of sincere belief or because he did not follow the proper ways of the Shari` ah. As Allah says:

وَقَدِمْنَا إِلَىٰ مَا عَمِلُوا مِنَّ عَمَلٍ فَجَعَلْنَاهُ هَبَاءً
مَّنثُورًا)

(And We shall turn to whatever deeds they did, and We shall make such deeds as scattered floating particles of dust.) 25:23. And He says here:

(وَوَجَدَ اللَّهُ عِنْدَهُ فَوْقَهُ حِسَابَهُ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ
الْحِسَابِ)

(but he finds Allah with him, who will pay him his due. And Allah is swift in taking account.) A similar view was also narrated from Ubayy bin Ka`b, Ibn `Abbas, Mujahid, Qatadah and others. In the Two Sahihs, it is reported that on the Day of Resurrection it will be said to the Jews, "What did you used to worship" They will say, "We used to worship `Uzayr the son of Allah." It will be said to them, "You have lied. Allah has not begotten a son. What do you want" They will say, "O Lord, we are thirsty, give us something to drink." It will be said to them, "Do you not see" Then Hell will be shown to them as if it is a mirage, parts of it consuming other parts, and they will go and fall into it. This is the parable of one whose ignorance is deep and advanced. As for those whose ignorance is simple, those who are uneducated and foolish and blindly follow the leaders of disbelief, knowing and understanding nothing, their parable is as Allah says: d

(أَوْ كَظُلُمَاتٍ فِي بَحْرٍ لُّجِّيٍّ يَعْشُهُ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ
مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهِ سَحَابٌ ظَلَمَتْ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ
بَعْضٍ إِذَا أَخْرَجَ يَدَهُ لَمْ يَكِدْ يَرَاهَا)

(Or like the darkness in a vast deep sea, overwhelmed with waves topped by waves, topped by dark clouds, darkness upon darkness: if a man stretches out his hand, he can hardly see it!) meaning, he can hardly see it because it is so intensely dark. This is the parable of the heart of the disbeliever whose ignorance is simple, who merely follows and does not know the true nature of the one whom he follows or where he is going. He is like the ignorant man in the parable who was asked, "Where are you going" He said, "With them." He was asked, "Where are they going" He said, "I do not know."

(ظَلَمَتْ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ)

(darkness upon darkness) Ubayy bin Ka`b said: "He is enveloped in five types of darkness: his speech is darkness, his deeds are darkness, his coming in is darkness, his going out is darkness and his destiny on the Day of Resurrection will be darkness in the fire of Hell." As-Suddi and Ar-Rabi` bin Anas also said something similar.

(وَمَنْ لَمْ يَجْعَلِ اللَّهُ لَهُ نُورًا فَمَا لَهُ مِنْ نُورٍ)

(And he for whom Allah has not appointed light, for him there is no light.) One whom Allah does not guide is ignorant and doomed, an utter loser and disbeliever. This is like the Ayah:

(مَنْ يُضِلِّ اللَّهُ فَلَا هَادِيَ لَهُ)

(Whomsoever Allah sends astray, none can guide him) 7:186(This is in contrast to what Allah says about the believers:

(يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ)

(Allah guides to His Light whom He wills.) 24:35(We ask Allah the Almighty to put light in our hearts and give us light on our right and on our left, and to increase us in light.

(أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُسَبِّحُ لَهُ مَنْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
وَالْأَرْضِ وَالطَّيْرُ صَاقَتِ كُلُّ قَدِّ عِلْمِ صَلَاتِهِ
وَتَسْبِيحَهُ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ - وَاللَّهُ مُلْكُ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ)

(41. See you not that Allah, He it is Whom glorify whosoever is in the heavens and the earth, and the birds with wings outspread Of each one He knows indeed his Salah and his glorification; and Allah is All-Aware of what they do.) (42. And to Allah belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth, and to Allah is the return.)

Everything glorifies Allah, may He be exalted, and to Him belongs the Sovereignty

Allah tells us that whosoever is in the heavens and on the earth, i.e., the angels, mankind, Jinn, animals and even inanimate objects, all glorify Him. This is like the Ayah:

(سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ السَّمَوَاتُ السَّبْعُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيهِنَّ)

(The seven heavens and the earth and all that is therein, glorify Him) 17:44(,

(وَالطَّيْرُ صَاقَتِ)

(and the birds with wings outspread) means, while they are flying they glorify their Lord and worship Him with the glorification with which they are inspired and to which they are guided. Allah knows what they are doing, and so He says:

(كُلُّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهُ وَتَسْبِيحَهُ)

(Of each one He knows indeed his Salah and his glorification;) meaning, He has guided every creature to its own way of worshipping Allah, may He be glorified. Then Allah tells us that He knows all of that and nothing at all is hidden from Him. He says:

(وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ بِمَا يَفْعَلُونَ)

(and Allah is All-Aware of what they do.) Then Allah tells us that to Him belongs the sovereignty of heaven and earth, and that He is the Ruler and Controller, the God Who is worshipped and besides Whom none other is to be worshipped, and there is none to put back His judgement.

(وَالِى اللَّهِ الْمَصِيرُ)

(and to Allah is the return) means, on the Day of Resurrection, when He will judge as He wills,

(لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسَاءُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا)

(that He may requite those who do evil with that which they have done...))53:31(He is the Creator and Sovereign, and His is indeed the Authority in this world and the next. To Him be praise at the beginning and in the end.

(أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُزْجِي سَحَابًا ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُ ثُمَّ
يَجْعَلُهُ رُكَّامًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلالِهِ
وَيُنزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ جِبَالٍ فِيهَا مِنْ بَرَدٍ
فَيُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَصْرِفُهُ عَنِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
يَكَادُ سَنَا بَرْقِهِ يَذْهَبُ بِالْأَبْصَرِ - يُقَلِّبُ اللَّهُ اللَّيْلَ
وَالنَّهَارَ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لَأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ)

(43. See you not that Allah drives the clouds gently, then joins them together, then makes them into a heap of layers, and you see the rain come forth from between them; and He sends down from the sky, from mountains in it of ice, and strikes therewith whom He wills, and

averts it from whom He wills. The vivid flash of its (clouds) lightning nearly blinds the sight.)
(44. Allah causes the night and the day to succeed each other. Truly, in this is indeed a lesson for those who have insight.)

The Power of Allah to create the Clouds and that which comes from Them

Allah tells us that He drives the clouds from the beginning, when they are formed and are still weak. This is the "Gentle driving."

(ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُمْ)

(then joins them together,) means, He brings them together after they have been scattered.

(ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ رُكَّامًا)

(then makes them into a heap of layers,) means, He piles them up on top of one another.

(فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ)

(and you see the Wadq) meaning the rain,

(يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ)

(come forth from between them;) means, from the gaps between them. This is how it was understood by Ibn `Abbas and Ad-Dahhak. `Ubayd bin `Umayr Al-Laythi said: "Allah sends the scatterer)wind(, which stirs up that which is on the surface of the earth. Then he sends the generator)wind(, which forms the clouds. Then He sends the joiner)wind(which brings them together. Then He sends the fertilizer)wind(which fertilizes or `seeds' the clouds." This was recorded by Ibn Abi Hatim and Ibn Jarir.

(وَيُنزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ جِبَالٍ فِيهَا مِنْ بَرَدٍ)

(and He sends down from)Min(the sky, from)Min(mountains in it of)Min(ice,) Some of the grammarians said that the first Min describes the place from which it is coming, the second specifies from which part of the sky it comes, and the third means some kind of mountains. This is based on the view of those scholars of Tafsir who say that,

(مِنْ جِبَالٍ فِيهَا مِنْ بَرَدٍ)

(from)Min(mountains in it of)Min(ice) means that there are mountains of hail in the sky from which Allah sends down ice. As for those who say that "mountains" here is used as a metaphor

for clouds, they think that the second Min is also used to describe the place from which the ice is coming, and is thus interchangeable with the first. And Allah knows best.

(فُيَصِّبُ بِهِ مِنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَصْرِفُهُ عَنْ مَنْ يَشَاءُ)

(and strikes therewith whom He wills, and averts it from whom He wills.) It may be that the phrase

(فُيَصِّبُ بِهِ)

(and strikes therewith) means, with what He sends down from the sky of different kinds of rain and hail. So then the phrase

(فُيَصِّبُ بِهِ مِنْ يَشَاءُ)

(and strikes therewith whom He wills) means, by His mercy towards them, and

(وَيَصْرِفُهُ عَنْ مَنْ يَشَاءُ)

(and averts it from whom He wills.) means, He withholds rain from them. Or it may be that

(فُيَصِّبُ بِهِ)

(and strikes therewith) means, with hail, as a punishment towards whomever He wills, striking their fruits and destroying their crops and trees. And He averts it from whomever He wills as a mercy towards them.

(يَكَادُ سَنَا بَرْقِهِ يَذْهَبُ بِالْأَبْصَارِ)

(The vivid flash of its lightning nearly blinds the sight.) the brightness of its lightning almost takes away their sight if the eyes follow it and try to look at it.

(يُقَلِّبُ اللَّهُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ)

(Allah causes the night and the day to succeed each other.) He is controlling them, so that He takes something from the length of one and adds it to the other, which is short, until they become equal, then He does the opposite so that the one which was short becomes long and vice versa. Allah is the One Who is controlling that by His command, power, might and knowledge.

(إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لَأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ)

(Truly, in this is indeed a lesson for those who have insight.) means, this is an indication of His greatness, may He be exalted. This is like the Ayah:

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لآيَاتٍ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ)

(Verily, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, there are indeed signs for men of understanding.) 3:190(and thereafter.

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَابَّةٍ مِّن مَّاءٍ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَمْشِي عَلَى بَطْنِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَمْشِي عَلَى رِجْلَيْنِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَمْشِي عَلَى أَرْبَعٍ يَخْلُقُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ)

(45. Allah has created every moving creature from water. Of them there are some that creep on their bellies, and some that walk on two legs, and some that walk on four. Allah creates what He wills. Verily, Allah is able to do all things.)

Allah's Power in His creation of the Animals

Allah mentions His complete and almighty power to create all the different kinds of animals with their various forms, colors and ways of moving and stopping, from one kind of water.

فَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَمْشِي عَلَى بَطْنِهِ)

(Of them there are some that creep on their bellies,) like snakes and so on;

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَمْشِي عَلَى رِجْلَيْنِ)

(and some that walk on two legs,) like humans and birds;

وَمِنْهُمْ مَّن يَمْشِي عَلَى أَرْبَعٍ)

(and some that walk on four,) like cattle and all kinds of animals. Allah says: