

Surah Fussilat, Verses 41 – 54

Surah Fussilat – Verse 41 – 43

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَاءَهُمْ وَإِنَّهُ لَكِتَابٌ عَزِيزٌ

لَا يَأْتِيهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهِ تَنْزِيلٌ مِنْ حَكِيمٍ حَمِيدٍ

مَا يُقَالُ لَكَ إِلَّا مَا قَدْ قِيلَ لِلرُّسُلِ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُو مَغْفِرَةٍ وَذُو عِقَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

41. Indeed, those who disbelieved in the Reminder [the Holy Qur'an] when it came unto them [shall be chastised]. And indeed, it is an honorable [well-fortified respected] Book.

42. Falsehood cannot come to it from before it or behind it; [it is] sent down by the All-Wise, Worthy of all praise.

43. Nothing is said unto you [O Muhammad!] except what was said unto the Messengers before you. Verily, your Lord is the Possessor of Forgiveness and the Possessor of excruciating chastisement.

The Holy Qur'an reminds man of his neglect and negligence.

The title:

'Aziz ("honorable")

is exclusively employed to refer to the Holy Qur'an from amongst Scriptures.

The blessed Verses are addressed to all polytheists and disbelievers who regard the Holy Qur'an as encompassing magic and falsehood and also those who do not believe in some of Qur'anic Injunctions, e.g. usury, murder, adultery, and calumnious accusation and slander as well as Divine Commands as to one-fifth tax and pilgrimage to Mecca, and act against them.

It also addresses those who subjectively interpret Qur'anic Verses like those regarding the Guardianship, Infallibility, and Purity of Ahl al-Bayt (Prophet's family).

Verse 42 is saying that Falsehood cannot find its way into it from any side, that is, there are no contradictions in its form, i.e., words, nor are there any falsity in it. No alteration may find its way into it.

There is neither decrease nor increase in it. It is well fortified and serves as the Argument for all responsible for their religious duties to the Day of Resurrection. Another Qur'anic Verse¹ makes a reference to the same:

“Indeed, it is We Who have sent down the Reminder and truly We will guard it [from distortion and corruption attempted by disbelievers and the envious].”

According to traditions narrated from Imam Baqir (as) and Imam Sadiq (as), there are no falsity in Qur'anic Verses concerning the past events and the prognostications about future.

It is said in a tradition narrated from Imam Baqir (as) that there is no point in Scriptures like the Bible to abrogate the Qur'an nor will there be any book in the future to do the same;

(“Falsehood cannot come to it from before it or behind it”).²

Thus the Holy Qur'an stays unaltered in the face of passage of the time and falsehood may not penetrate into it, since it is descended from the Origin of Wisdom which is Firm as a consequence of which it stands unchanged at all times.

Verse 43 is a consolation to the Noble Prophet (S) as to disbelievers' accusations who called him by terms like magician, liar, poet, augur, soothsayer, and lunatic.

It is said unto the Prophet (S) that his predecessors were also the subject of false accusations and indeed his Lord is Oft-Forgiving and Merciful toward the repentant and He is also the Possessor of excruciating torment and chastisement against disbelievers and enemies of religion.

Surah Fussilat – Verse 44

وَلَوْ جَعَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا أَعْجَمِيًّا لَقَالُوا لَوْلَا فُصِّلَتْ آيَاتُهُ أَلَّا تَكُونَ لَنَا آيَاتٌ وَعَرَبِيًّا قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا هُدًى وَشِفَاءً وَالَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ فِي آذَانِهِمْ وَقْرٌ وَهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَمًى أُولَئِكَ

يُنَادُونَ مِنْ مَكَانٍ بَعِيدٍ

44. And if We had sent this as a Qur'an in a foreign language, they would have said: "Why are not its Verses explained in detail? What! [A Book] not in Arabic and [the Messenger] an Arab?" Say: "It is for those who believe, a guide and a healing. And as for those who disbelieve, there is deafness in their ears and it [the Qur'an] is blindness for them. [As if] they are those who are called from a place far away [but they fail to hear the call]."

The Arabic word a'jami is cognate with 'ujma designating intelligible, since other languages were intelligible to Arabs hence the designation for non-Arabic languages. Enemies never desist from finding faults.

When the Holy Qur'an is in the Arabic tongue, they say that they are hard of hearing and when it is in any languages other than Arabic, they say it is not intelligible to them. In other words, the blessed Verse in question treats of the state of disbelievers, saying that had God Almighty revealed the Holy Qur'an in any language other than Arabic, they would have asked why it was not intelligible to them since the audience were Arabs.

The blessed Verse is saying that had the Holy Qur'an been sent to them in any tongue other than Arabic, they could ask why it had not been revealed in Arabic. Qur'anic exegetes maintain that "non-Arabic" indicates any tongue other than Arabic, e.g. Persian and Turkish; however, the Holy Qur'an was revealed in the Arabic tongue since the Noble Prophet (S) was an Arab by descent.

The blessed Verse apparently makes a reference to the Arabs who, despite the revelation of the Holy Qur'an in eloquent Arabic, noticed that it is so eloquent in terms of form and meaning that it was hard for them to fully comprehend it hence they asked why Qur'anic Verses were not quite intelligible to them.

Thus, God Almighty addresses His Messenger (S) and says unto him:

"O Muhammad! Say unto them that the Qur'an is a healing and guidance to those who believe."

It apparently indicates that the Holy Qur'an is the Path of guidance, happiness, and righteousness and its propagation may heal disbelievers' hearts and absolve them of their impurities. In fact, the Holy Qur'an is addressed to them through which they may find the path toward happiness and may thereby attain to their main goal.

It is worthy of note that any sound mind may comprehend the inimitability of the Holy Qur'an and anyone who fails to believe in Qur'anic Verses suffer from defects in their perceptive faculties such that they fail to perceive its message through their ears and hearts.

Upon the recitation of the Holy Qur'an, they are as if they hear sounds and voices from afar but fail to

comprehend the messages, since their ears and hearts fail to perceive the inimitability of the Qur'an, hence their disbelief.

Surah Fussilat – Verse 45

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا مُوسَى الْكِتَابَ فَاخْتَلَفَ فِيهِ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ
وَإِنَّهُمْ لَفِي شَكٍّ مِنْهُ مُرِيبٍ

45. And indeed We gave Moses the Scripture [the Torah], but dispute arose therein. And had it not been for a Word that went forth before from your Lord [regarding granting respite], the matter would have [definitely] been settled between them [and all disputants would have been chastised]. But truly, they are in grave doubt [and suspicion] thereto [the Qur'an].

Familiarity with the history of Prophets is a source of consolation to the Noble Prophet (S) and Muslims. Divine Lordship grants respites to sinners so that they may repent and attain to spiritual growth. God Almighty grants respites to sinners to repent otherwise they had no way to turn to repentance.

The blessed Verse is a consolation to the Noble Prophet (S) saying that the disputes concerning the Qur'an amongst Muslims and subjective interpretations thereof is not unprecedented since the people of Moses (as) did the same – some of them acknowledged the Torah as a Divinely Revealed Scripture and some denied his Prophetic Call.

The blessed Verse is saying that had it not been for a Word, i.e. God's Promise, that went forth before from Him regarding granting them respite, He would have definitely chastised them; however, the fact is that these disbelievers turn away from the Qur'anic Message and they will remain in doubt and suspicion, hence their disbelief.

Surah Fussilat – Verse 46

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِلْعَبِيدِ

46. Whosoever does righteous good deeds, it is for his own self; and whosoever does evil, it is against his own self. And your Lord is not at all unjust to [His] servants.

Favorable and unfavorable consequences follow man's conducts and he is not supposed to put the blame on others. There is no doubt concerning the fact that whoever does righteous good deeds will reap the benefits. Righteous good deeds are to be based on Qur'anic Injunctions and Islamic teachings.

Such person will enjoy Divine Favors.

Au contraire, one who commits evil deeds, i.e. turns away from Divine Injunctions and follows concupiscent and satanic desires will pay for the evil consequences thereof. The torments in store for disbelievers are the consequences of their vicious deeds. God Almighty never wrongs His servants and it is worthy of note that any good or evil deed will lead to consequences.

Surah Fussilat – Verse 47

إِلَيْهِ يُرَدُّ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَمَا تَخْرُجُ مِنْ ثَمَرَاتٍ مِنْ أَكْمَامِهَا وَمَا تَحْمِلُ مِنْ أَنْثَى وَلَا تَضَعُ إِلَّا بِعِلْمِهِ وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيهِمْ أَيْنَ شُرَكَائِي قَالُوا آذْنَاكَ مَا مِنَّا مِنْ شَهِيدٍ

47. To Him is referred the knowledge of the Hour. No fruit comes out of its sheath, nor does a female conceive nor brings forth [young], except by His Omniscience. And on the Day when He will call unto them [polytheists saying]: “Where are My partners?” They will say: “We inform You that none of us bears witness to it [that they are Your partners]!”

The Arabic word **akmam** is the plural form of kimm (“sheath, calyx, perianth”) and kumm (“sleeve”). Kumma is applied to head gear, like skullcap. The verbal form adannaka (“we inform you”) derives from a-d-n (“inform, proclaim”).

It is reported concerning the occasion of the Revelation of the blessed Verse in question that the Noble Prophet (S) was inquired about the Hour of Resurrection. The blessed Verse was revealed as a reply to the question, saying that only God Almighty is Aware of the same.

The word:

al-sa'a (“*the Hour*”)

indicates Resurrection and the designation may refer to its spontaneity. Disbelievers inquired the Noble Prophet (S) regarding the time of Resurrection and he replied that it will be spontaneous and dependent upon Divine Will and it is solely God Almighty Who is All-Aware of it.

No fruit comes out of its sheath unless God Almighty God Almighty is All-Aware of its quantity, quality, color, and its other characteristics. No female conceives unless God Almighty is All-Aware of the contents of the womb in terms of its sex, form, complexion, and so on. No female brings forth young unless God Almighty is All-Aware of the time of delivery.

On the Day of Resurrection, polytheists and disbelievers will be reproached thus:

“Where are those who were associated as partners with me by you? Today is the day of your misfortune. Seek them so that they may deliver you from torments.”

They will reply:

“We have already informed You that there is no witness to bear testimony to Your partners.”

It will be at that time that disbelievers confess to Divine Unity since they will attain to certainty concerning the same. What requires arguments to prove in this world will become evident on the Day of Resurrection.

Those who worshipped idols and imagined that they were of exalted stations realize that there are no partners for Allah and they dissociate themselves from idolatry and idolaters.

The closing clauses of the blessed Verse,

“We inform You that none of us bears witness to it [that they are Your partners]”

may refer to those whom polytheists and disbelievers set up as partners of God Almighty, hence they say that there is not anyone from amongst them to bear witness to the veracity of their false claim as to associating partners with Him.

Surah Fussilat – Verses 48 – 49

وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَظَنُوا مَا لَهُمْ مِنْ مَحِيصٍ

لَا يَسْأَلُ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ دُعَاءِ الْخَيْرِ وَإِنْ مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَيَئُوسٌ قَنُوطٌ

48. And those whom they used to invoke before [in this world] shall disappear from them, and they will perceive that they have no place of refuge.

49. Man does not become tired of invoking Allah to grant him good things, but when an evil touches him, then he gives up all hope and is lost in despair.

The Arabic word mahis indicates refuge or place of refuge. On the Day of Resurrection, polytheists and disbelievers find out that they have lost their past opportunities and a dire fate is in store for them. It will be at that time that the idols invoked by them have disappeared.

They will find out that they have no way out and they may not set their hopes on idols any longer and

they have definitely no refuge.

Verse 49 is saying that man always seeks material gains and happiness and invokes God Almighty to grant them to him and is never tired of invocation, but when he is touched with some affliction, he will lose his hope and turns away from God Almighty. The Arabic words ya's and qunut indicate hopelessness and despair respectively.

Surah Fussilat – Verse 50

وَلَئِنْ أَذَقْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَرَاءٍ مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُولَنَّ هَذَا لِي وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ
قَائِمَةً وَلَئِنْ رُجِعْتُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّ لِي عِنْدَهُ لَلْحُسْنَىٰ فَلَنُنَبِّئَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِمَا عَمِلُوا
وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ

50. And indeed, if We give him a taste of Mercy from Us, after some adversity has touched him, he is sure to say: “This is due to my [merit]; [he becomes so arrogant that he says:] I think not that the Hour will be established. But if I am brought back to my Lord, surely, there will be for me the best [exalted state] with Him. Then, We verily, will show to the disbelievers what they have done and We shall make them taste a severe torment.

Seeking Mammon leads to neglect and at times denial of Resurrection. Man is intolerant and arrogant and upon his access to bounties becomes arrogant. Likewise, upon tasting afflictions, man loses his heart and cries out for assistance.

The blessed Verse makes a reference to one of the undesirable states of men who lack knowledge and faith, namely, arrogance and vanity, saying:

“Whenever we give him a taste of Mercy from Us, after some adversity has touched him, he is sure to say: ‘This is due to my merit.’”

Such miserable and arrogant person forgets that had it not been for Divine Favor, he would have been afflicted with adversity. It was in the same vein that arrogant Korah who was granted many a material gain for his trial refrained from doing good.

When he was asked to do good in return for Divine Favors, he claimed that he possessed his material possessions because of his knowledge and merits,

“He said: ‘This has been given to me only because of the knowledge I possess’”³.

The blessed Verse further adds that such arrogance will lead him to denial of Resurrection and he will

say:

“I do not think that the Hour will be established, but whenever I return to my Lord, surely, there will be for me the best [rewards and bounties].”

He says that his Lord has cherished him in this world and will surely grant him better rewards!

Surah Fussilat – Verse 51

وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَأَىٰ بِجَانِبِهِ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَذُو دُعَاءٍ عَرِيضٍ

51. And when We show favor unto man, he withdraws and turns away, but when evil touches him he has recourse to long supplications.

Welfare and hardship are the best means of assaying man’s characters and his spiritual blights. The blessed Verse expresses the states of such people at the time of fortune and misfortune in this mundane world and makes mention of their forgetfulness at the time of enjoying bounties and his restlessness at the time of afflictions.

The blessed Verse is saying that when God Almighty provides man with bounties, he turns away arrogantly from God, but when he is touched by the slightest adversity, he invokes God Almighty many a time to remove it.

The Arabic word **na’** is taken from na’y which literally indicates going away and when it is collocated with:

janib (“side”),

it connotes arrogance and vanity, since the arrogant turn away their faces and go away with indifference.

The word:

arid (“wide”)

is the opposite of tawil (“long”). Both are employed in the Arabic tongue to connote multiplicity.

Such faithless and godless person suffers from such miserable states of mind at all times. When he is granted bounties, he becomes avaricious, arrogant, and forgetful and when such bounties turn away from him, he loses his heart and beseeches God Almighty to bestow them upon him once more.

Au contraire, men of truth and the true followers of Prophetic teachings are so tolerant and rich inwardly

that neither bounties nor afflictions may make them lose their heart. The most profitable transactions and the greatest of remunerations may not keep them from remembrance of God.

They are well acquainted with vicissitudes of life and are aware that unfavorable circumstances serve as reawakening and favorable states of affairs are Divine trials. Adversities are at times the consequences of man's neglect and bounties at times urge God's servants to express their gratitude.

The most significant signs of belief in God Almighty include magnanimity, i.e. greatness of spirit, broadmindedness, tolerance, and preparedness to confront hardships, vicissitudes, and struggling against the unfavorable states of mind resulting from availability of bounties.

The Commander of the Faithful, Imam 'Ali (as) in teaching his companions certain invocations says:

*"We invoke God Almighty to help us be so tolerant that no bounty may make us arrogant and vain and no aim may impede us from obeying Divine Commands, and may not regret nor grieve upon the hour of death."*⁴

Surah Fussilat – Verse 52

قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللَّهِ ثُمَّ كَفَرْتُمْ بِهِ مَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ هُوَ فِي شِقَاقٍ بَعِيدٍ

52. Say: "Tell me, if it [the Qur'an] is from Allah, you disbelieve in it. Who is more astray than one who is in opposition far away [from Allah's Straight Path through his utter denial of the Qur'an]?"

The wise keep away from contingent losses. If the Qur'an is Revealed by God Almighty, what will happen to those who disbelieved?

The blessed Verse in question is addressed to the Noble Prophet (S) saying:

"Say unto these disbelievers if you know that the Qur'an is Revealed by God Almighty but you still do not acknowledge that it is Divine Revelation, who is more astray than one who knows the Truth but still denies it and opposes it with such forcefulness? Such person is quite far away from Truth."

In other words, such person has gone to extreme in his opposition and enmity against God Almighty.

Surah Fussilat – Verse 53 – 54

سُنُرِيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتَّىٰ يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ أَنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيدٌ

أَلَا إِنَّهُمْ فِي مَرِيَّةٍ مِنْ لِقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ أَلَّا إِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُحِيطٌ

53. We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this [the Qur'an] is the Truth. Is it not sufficient in regard to your Lord that He is a Witness over all things?

54. Know that they are in doubt concerning the Meeting with their Lord on the Day of Resurrection. Verily! He it is Who is surrounding all things!

Divine Manifestations of His Omnipotence and Omniscience are innumerable.

“We will show them Our Signs in the universe”

indicates that besides the Signs perceptible to man, he will be shown further Signs in future. These two blessed Verses closing the Chapter in question make mention of two important points which in fact include a summation of the points raised herein. The first Verse treats of Divine Unity and the Holy Qur'an and the second one makes mention of Resurrection.

Verse 53 says:

“We will show them Our Signs in the universe, and in their own selves, until it becomes manifest to them that this [the Qur'an] is the Truth.”

Signs of the horizon (ayat afaqi) include creation of the sun, the moon, and the stars with the order governing them, creation of all kinds of animals, plants, mountains, and seas with their innumerable wonders and mysterious creatures whose novel mysteries are unraveled in time and each of which demonstrates the Truth of His Pure Essence.

Signs of the soul (ayat anfusi) include creation of different systems of human body, the order governing the wondrous mechanisms of brain and the systematic movements of heart, blood vessels, textures, and bones, and coagulation of semen and growth of embryo in the womb, and above all, the mysteries and wonders of human soul each aspect of which reveals the Omniscience of God Almighty, the Creator of the world.

It is true that these Signs have already been sufficiently manifested by God Almighty, but taking into account the verbal form:

sanurihim (“we show unto them”),

one notices that this present verb is in the progressive mode indicating that such manifestation is an ongoing process and even if man lives for hundreds of thousand years, he will discover many a novel mystery and will notice Divine Signs in time, since the mysteries of this world is endless.

All books on natural sciences and anthropology in all their dimensions including anatomy, physiology, psychology, and psychiatry, and also the sciences of botany, zoology, mineralogy, astronomy and so on all serve as expositions of Divine Unity and knowing God, since they generally unravel wondrous mysteries which demonstrate the Omniscience and Omnipotence of the Creator of this world.

At times, a scientist devotes all his life to one of these sciences, or one branch from amongst tens of branches of one of these sciences, but at the end of his life, he regrets that he knows nothing about that branch and his limited knowledge has made him perceive the depth of his ignorance.

The blessed Verse 53 is complemented with a beautiful and meaningful sentence:

“Is it not sufficient in regard to your Lord that He is a Witness over all things?”

What Signs are more evident than the Manifestation of His Omnipotence through Creation of all creatures, leaves of trees, petals of flowers, mysterious layers of brain, delicate multilayer membranes of eyes, the face of the sky, the heart of the earth, and in short all creatures demonstrate the Signs of Divine Unity and bear witness to Divine Creation of the world.

The above constitutes one of the well-known interpretations of the blessed Verse in question according to which the blessed Verse solely treats of Divine Unity and the manifestation of the Signs of Truth in horizons and souls.

The other interpretation treats of the inimitability of the Holy Qur’an which may be summed up thus:

“We show Our Diverse Signs and Miracles in different regions of the Arabian Peninsula as well as other regions of the world and We show Our Signs regarding these polytheists and disbelievers so that they may know that the Holy Qur’an is Divine Revelation.”

Signs of horizon also include the triumph of Islam in different battlegrounds, in the arena of logical arguments produced in debates and also in different regions conquered by the Islamic faith prevailing thoughts.

The Muslim community formed a minority at the time of the Revelation of these Verses in Mecca. They enjoyed no opportunities to engage in propagation activities.

Consequently, upon Divine Command, they emigrated and in a short while were able to conquer many a land and their religion was embraced by a large number of people throughout the world. Signs of souls also include the triumph of Muslims over Meccan polytheists and disbelievers in the battle of Badr and the conquest of Mecca and penetration of the light of Islam into the hearts of many of the conquered.

These Signs of the horizon and the soul demonstrated that the Holy Qur’an is Divine Revelation. Thus God Almighty Who is the Witness of all things bore witness to the Truth of the Holy Qur’an as Divine Revelation.

The last Verse treats of the origin of the adversities of this polytheist, corrupt, and tyrannous group of people, saying:

“Be aware that they are in doubt and suspicion regarding their meeting with their Lord on the Day of Resurrection.”

They commit all crimes and disgracing deeds since they do not believe in Divine Reckoning and Recompense. Their hearts are wrapped up in veils of neglect and arrogance and forgetting the fact that they shall meet their Lord on the Day of Resurrection has denigrated them from the zenith of humanity to nadir of humility.

However, they should know that

“God surrounds all things.”

He is All-Aware of their intentions, words, and deeds all which are being recorded for that great Tribunal. The Arabic word mirya designates entertaining doubt in making decisions and some Qur’anic exegets maintain that it indicates great doubt and suspicion.

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1. 15:9
 2. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn; ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim’s Tafsir.
 3. 28:78
 4. Nahj al-Balagha, Sermon 64.

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