

Surah al-Jathiya, Chapter 45, Verses 1 – 22

(The Kneeling)

Section (juz' 25)

Number of Verses: 37

General Overview of the Chapter

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

The Chapter was revealed in Mecca. The designation of the Chapter is taken from Verse 28 in which the word jathiya denotes kneeling. God Almighty is described as the Omnipotent (al-'Aziz) and the Wise (al-Hakim) in the opening and closing Verses of the Chapter.

The subject matter of the Chapter includes the Greatness of the Qur'an, arguments substantiating Divine Unity, refutation of materialistic views, history of some ancient peoples, warning to the astray, encouragement to forgiveness, and allusions to the depictions of resurrection.

The Merit of Reciting the Chapter

According to a Prophetic tradition,

“God Almighty will conceal the defects of whoever recites Surah al-Jathiya and will turn his fear into serenity1.”

Surah al-Jathiya - Verses 1-3

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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

ح

تَنْزِيلُ الْكِتَابِ مِنَ اللَّهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ

إِنَّ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ

1. Ha Mim.

2. The revelation of the Book is from Allah, the Omnipotent, the All-Wise.

3. Verily, there are signs for the believers in the heavens and the earth.

Allah is All-Wise.

His Book is full of Wisdom².

His Messenger is the instructor of Wisdom³.

His Book and Creation are manifest, though the God fearing solely benefit from His Book.

“It is Guidance for the God fearing”⁴.

The creation may merely remind believers of their God.

The Holy Qur’an constitutes the commonly used letters of alphabet and it was revealed in time.

Revelation of the Book and the Law are among the greatest Divine Bounties. As a consequence, it precedes the creation of the heavens and the earth (tanzil al-kitab

“Revelation of the Book”).

In the first place, specification of the position of the Holy Qur'an should precede its instructions in the manner of promulgation.

The textual content of the Qur'an is impervious to alterations, since it is revealed by God.

Ha Mim is the Name of the Chapter. It is narrated from Ibn 'Abbas that Ha Mim is the greatest of Divine Names. The Name alludes to the Divine Names beginning with Ha or Mim, e.g. the Praiseworthy (Hamid), the Clement (Halim), the Living (Hayy), the Truth (Haqq), the Wise (Hakim), the Arbitrator (Hakim), the Protector (Hafid), the Guardian (Hafid), the Ruler (Malik), the Glorious (Majid), the Honorable (Majid), the Beginner (Mubdi'), the Returner (Mu'id), the Exalted (Mu'izz), the Vigilant (Muhaymin).

It is also said that Ha Mim is an oath by Divine Clemency and Sovereignty, viz. I swear by My Clemency and Sovereignty that I shall not chastise those sincerely uttering 'There is no god save Allah.'

Some say that Ha and Mim are the two middle letters al-Rahman ("the Merciful") and the name of Muhammad (S) alluding to the secret known by God Almighty and his Friend, Muhammad.

There are other justifications for these two letters; however, since the letters of alphabet in the openings of a number of Qur'anic Chapters are, as it is well known in Islamic sources, among ambiguous Verses (mutashabihat) whose knowledge is with God Almighty and

"those firmly rooted in knowledge" (rasikhun fi al-'ilm).

The word tanzil is an infinitive used ad hoc as a past participle denoting an oath regarding the revelation of the Qur'an by God, the Omnipotent, the Dominant, the Wise, and the Beneficent through Whose Everlasting Will has established everything in order out of Wisdom such that the system of creation is flawless.

According to exegetes, the following Verse is substantiated by the fact that when theoretical sciences may not be proved through the five senses, i.e., any matter beyond the domain of the senses should be proven through either a priori demonstration, viz. from cause to effect, or a posteriori demonstration, viz. from effect to cause.

Since Divine Existence is Supernatural, i.e., beyond perception, unintelligible, and without cause, it is the cause of causes not necessitating a priori demonstration. As a consequence, His Existence maybe proved merely through a posteriori demonstration, viz. the perceiver should become aware of and attain certitude from effect to cause and believe in His Attributes of Glory and Beauty.

Therefore, many a Qur'anic Verse prove the Existence of the Creator and attainment of certitude through the existence of the heavens and the earth.

The blessed Verse denotes that whoever, if not a materialist, has a holistic view of this vast world and

the system of cosmos like the levels of heavens and the earth and the revolving confirms the truth of the former view and believes in the Omniscient and Omnipotent God, the Creator, the fountainhead of creation and the Governor and Instructor of the world.

The existence of the world serves as the indubitable argument for the Existence and the Attributes of God Almighty. It is common sense to know that any building requires a builder, any created entity requires a creator, any moved entity requires a mover, and any composite entity requires a composer. All superior and inferior creatures serve as signs for believers.

Therefore, it is sufficient for the attainment of faith and belief in the Existence of the One God to have an open and enlightened mind and know His Omniscience, Omnipotence, and Wisdom through meditation on the heavens and the earth. There would be no need for philosophical arguments, even if we happen to be unaware of the manner of composition, the chain of causality, and the perfect harmony among heavenly bodies and other creatures.

“Signs for believers”

particularly denotes believers since the eyes of their hearts are open, but concupiscence has blinded those of non-believers, depriving them of perceiving the rays of light emanating from Divine Existence illuminating the worlds and rendering their eyes of the heart incapable of perceiving such light.

Surah al-Jathiya – Verse 4

وَفِي خَلْقِكُمْ وَمَا يَبُتُّ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ آيَاتٌ لِقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ

4. And in your creation, and what He scattered [in the world of existence] of moving [living] creatures are signs [of Divine Omnipotence] for people who have faith with certainty.

All existence is the book of knowing God. In this vein, the heaven, mankind, and the animal world may render us assistance towards achieving one single goal. The creation of heavens, the earth, and living creatures lies on one scale and that of man on the other. Making mention of man independently and prior to other living creatures is worthy of note.

The existence of heavens and the earth are referred to in the preceding Verse, but the Verse in question regards the creation of mankind and all living creatures of the world as signs for believers who have attained to certitude, since the level of the latter stands above that of faith; knowledge of certitude (‘ilm al-yaqin) is inferior to essence of certitude (‘ayn al-yaqin) and the latter is in turn inferior to realization of certitude (haqq al-yaqin).

Besides signs upon the horizons, the Verse in question treats of signs upon the soul saying:

“And in your creation and what He scattered [in the world of existence] of moving [living] creatures are signs [of Divine Omnipotence] for people who have faith with certainty.”

According to a well known narration attributed to the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Ali (as), man is the microcosm embracing the macrocosm. His qualities constitute an admixture of the qualities shared by all living creatures and the diversity of his creation is an extract of all the accidents of the world.

The structure of a human cell is as enigmatic as that of an industrial metropolitan city and the creation of one single hair whose various characteristics have been discovered by science may serve as a great Divine Sign.

Thousands of kilometers of veins and vessels some of which are extraordinarily delicate and thousands of kilometers of commissural fibers of the nervous system and the manner of their interrelation with the highly complicated, enigmatic, and powerful brain system and the functions of each and every internal bodily organ and their strange harmony at the time of emergencies and the strong immune system against external bodies demonstrate the greatness of Divine Signs.

Besides mankind, hundreds of thousands of living creatures from microscopic living beings to huge animals with totally diverse characteristics and structures, one of which may be the subject of lifelong research for many a scientist, bear testimony to Divine Signs.

In spite of the fact that thousands of books have been authored on the mysteries surrounding their creation, human knowledge is still quite limited. Each of these creatures serves as a sign of the Creator’s Infinite Knowledge, Wisdom, and Omnipotence.

What is the reason lying behind the fact that many individuals witness such signs for decades but they are totally unaware of them? The Holy Qur’an provides an answer to the question: these signs are for seekers of faith and certitude and those who think.

They are for those who have opened their hearts and are thirsty for certitude and knowledge. Such people do not fail to notice the slightest movement and the tiniest being, rather ponder about them for long hours, thus transcend towards God and the Book of knowing the Creator, spending their time in devotions and supplication, brimming the goblets of their hearts with the wine of love for God.

Surah al-Jathiya – Verse 5

وَإِخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ رِزْقٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ
مَوْتِهَا وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيَّاحِ آيَاتٌ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

5. And in the alternation of night and day and the provision [viz. rain] that Allah sends down from the sky and revives therewith the earth after its death and in the turning about of the winds are signs for a people who understand.

The book of existence abounds in diverse signs the understanding of which requires intellection. Following an enumeration of three Bounties, viz. light, water, and air, each of which play a significant role in the life of mankind and other living beings and serve as a Divine Sign, the Verse goes on to say that

“in the alternation of night and day and the provision [viz. rain] that Allah sends down from the sky and revives therewith the earth after its death and in the turning about of the winds are signs for a people who understand.”

The question of the order of ‘light and darkness’ and the alternation of night and day each of which substitutes the other with a precise pattern are well calculated and astonishing. If day time were permanent or too long, the temperature would increase to the extent that all living beings would burn. If the night were everlasting or too long, all living beings would freeze to death!

The word ikhtilaf may not denote alternation but the same difference in the length of nights and days in different seasons of the year through which man may benefit from the produce, rain, snow, and other bounties.

Interestingly scientists say that despite the differences in the length of night and day in different altitudes and longitudes, a calculation of the days of the year demonstrates that the sun shines equally on each and every point!⁵

Secondly, mention is made of rain, the heavenly life bestowing element regarding the delicacy of its nature and its reviving force is indubitable. It is a sign of life, freshness, and beauty. The fact is that water constitutes the main constituent element of man, many animals, and plants.

Thirdly, mention is made of winds turning around and moving the air which is full of oxygen, making it available to living beings. Winds move the dioxide polluted air to be purified on plains, forests, and deserts. After being purified, the wind moves the fresh air to cities and habitats.

It is a source of wonder that animals and plants precisely function in opposition to each other, i.e., the former takes oxygen and emits carbon dioxide and the latter functions vice versa so that equilibrium may be maintained in vital system and the air supply of the earth may not come to an end through the passage of time.

Furthermore, winds pollinate plants and scatter seeds in different lands, help pastures and forests grow, make waves in oceans, waves that invigorate the seas and purify water from putrefaction and decay, and make ships sail in oceans.⁶

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 6

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ اللَّهِ نَتْلُوهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَبِأَيِّ حَدِيثٍ بَعْدَ اللَّهِ وَآيَاتِهِ يُؤْمِنُونَ

5. These are the Ayat ('Verses; signs; proofs, evidence') of Allah which We recite to you with truth. Then in which speech after Allah and His Ayat will they believe?

Those listening to Divine Ayat but do not heed Guidance, suffer from complications, but Divine Ayat are true and evident.

In this Verse, God Almighty addresses His Messenger, Muhammad (S), saying that when disbelievers do not believe in these evident Ayat revealed to you in truth from the springhead of Divine Glory in conformity with logical principles, common sense, and human nature, they will not believe in the words of prophets and their scriptures nor in the sayings of ancient sages.

It demonstrates that the Qur'anic Verses are so unchangeable and consistent with pure nature; they have made evident the path of guidance for people that there is no room for denial or objection for anyone. One unaffected by such evident proofs may not be influenced by any true word; rather such an individual has lost his pure human nature.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verses 7-8

وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ أَفَّاكٍ أَثِيمٍ

يَسْمَعُ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ يُصِرُّ مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَأَن لَّمْ يَسْمَعْهَا فَبَشِّرْهُ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

7. Woe to every sinful liar.

8. Who hears the Verses of Allah being recited to him, yet persists arrogantly as if he heard them not. So announce to him a painful torment!

The present participle **affak** derived from ifk denotes "one who tells many lies." **Athim** derived from ithm signifies "one who is very sinful."

Wayla, recurring in the Qur'an 27 times is used in the sense of "woe to," this word too refers to intellectual traitors who author false claims and attribute them to God;

“Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands and then say, ‘This is from Allah,’”⁷.

It also denotes those who do wrong in their business transactions, like

“Those who give less in measure and weight”⁸.

The word Wayla refers to ideological deviants, such as disbelievers⁹ and polytheists¹⁰ and also to slanderers and backbiters¹¹.

Divine Chastisement is consistent with the offenses committed. One who hears the words of the Prophet (S) but ignores them and as such offends him will be chastised by a severe torment and that of one who slanders others mockingly will be punished by a humiliating torment.

According to some exegetes wayla used in the sense of ‘woe’ connotes warning to very sinful liars. Some have also said that it is the name of a well in the lowest level of the hell and the dwelling place of disbelievers and the damned in the sight of Allah.

It is also said that the antecedent of the pronoun of yasma’u “hears” is Nadhr ibn Harith;

“Who hears the Verses of Allah recited to him, yet persists with arrogance as if he heard them not. So announce to him a painful torment!”¹²

Whoever might be the antecedent of the pronoun, the Verse refers to anyone ignoring the Qur’anic Verses as Divine Revelation for whom severe punishment is in store.

It is worthy of note that the word bishara is used in the sense of good tiding; however, it had hoc signifies Divine Retribution that is in store for disbelievers, as if the good tiding for contesters is the warning of torment.

Surah al-Jathiya – Verse 9

وَإِذَا عَلِمَ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا شَيْئًا اتَّخَذَهَا هُزُوًا أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ

9. And when he learns something of Our Verses, he makes them a jest. For such there will be a humiliating torment.

Since humiliation lies in offense, the mockers’ chastisement is a humiliating torment. The blessed verse makes mention of another blameworthy quality of the arrogant and begrudging disbelievers. They not only ignore Divine Verses but also react against them through slander and mockery. A humiliating torment is in store for such people.

As mentioned above, chastisement should be consistent with the wrong deed. Humiliation is the recompense for humiliation. Disbelievers such as Abu Jahl and Nadhr ibn Harith upon hearing Qur'anic Verses, not only ignored them but also engaged in mockery and slander and attributed untrue qualities which were worthy of themselves to the Prophet (S); hence the severe and humiliating torment in store for them.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 10

مِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ جَهَنَّمُ وَلَا يُغْنِي عَنْهُمْ مَا كَسَبُوا شَيْئاً وَلَا مَا اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ
أَوْلِيَاءَ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ

10. Before them there is Hell. And that which they have earned will be of no profit to them, nor [will be of any profit to them] those whom they have taken as protectors) besides Allah. And theirs will be a severe torment.

Mundane property will be of no avail on the Last Day. It is merely attending to Hellfire that may serve as the best means of abstaining from arrogance and persistence in committing sins.

This blessed Verse explicates

“humiliating torment”

(‘adhabun muhin) as

“Before them there is Hell.”

The phrase **Min wara’ihim jahanamu** literally means “there is Hell behind them,” though the hell is before them and it is in store for them. It may connote that they turn to mundane affairs ignoring Divine Retribution. According to a common expression, man ignores certain things.

The Holy Qur’an says:

“They love the transient life and disregard the severe Doomsday.”

The Verse further says that if they suppose that their abundant wealth, idols, and false deities may solve their problems, they are in sheer error since:

“whatever they gain nor protectors from whom they sought succor may never rescue them from Divine Retribution”

and as there is no way out, they will have to taste Divine Wrath

“and there is a severe torment in store for them.”

They paid no heed to Divine Verses and Signs and God increased their torment. They were arrogant and Divine Retribution fell into their share. The torment is quite severe, everlasting, and humiliating and deeply affects the sinful. Undoubtedly, committing mortal sins before God will lead to severe Divine Retribution.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 11

هَذَا هُدًى وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مِّن رَّجْزٍ أَلِيمٍ

11. This [Qur'an] is guidance and those who disbelieve in the Ayat (signs, proofs, Verses) of their Lord, for them there is a painful and awe inspiring torment.

The word rijz denotes anxiety and may connote rijis (“filth”). The Verse may connote that disbelievers are being chastised by polluted and disgusting material.

The demonstrative pronoun hadha

(“this”)

refers to the Quranic Verses revealed to the Prophet (S) for the guidance of mankind. Those who were not guided by the Qur'an, but persisted in their disbelief and underrated the Divinely Revealed Verses for their guidance and attainment of felicity shall taste torment and chastisement.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 12

اللَّهُ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْبَحْرَ لِتَجْرِيَ الْفُلُكُ فِيهِ بِأَمْرِهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ

12. It is Allah Who has subjected to you the sea, that ships may sail through it by His Command, and that you may seek of His Bounty, and that you may be thankful.

Divine Acts are Purposeful, Wise, and Fruitful for mankind. The seas and other natural phenomena are under Divine Sway.

Even though

“By His Command”

is Divine Bounty and Mercy, but man has to make attempts to attain to them;

(“that you make seek of His Bounty”).

Divine Essence reminds man with Its Infinite Grace to behold! Know thy God, and know that your Lord is He Who has subjected to you boundless seas abounding in waves such that by Divine Command ships may easily sail in them and thus benefit from Divine Bounty and Mercy. He is also reminded that he may express his gratitude if he remember Divine Bounties.

Surah al-Jathiya – Verse 13

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُم مَّا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعاً مِنْهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ
يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

13. And He has subjected to you all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth. It is all a favor and kindness from Him. Indeed there are signs in it for a people who think deeply.

All creation is available for man’s use and the harmony of the constituents of existence solely indicates Divine Oneness. The Blessed Verse in question reminds mankind that whatever exists in the seas, heavens, earth, and heavenly bodies have been subjected to them for their creation, sustenance, and welfare. Each and every element of this organic whole has its own specific function.

Upon perceiving the great and remarkable system of the world, the wise study the system and immediately submit to Divine Will and accept that the immense wheels of creation are incessantly revolving, the sun and the moon shine, the stars ascend and descend in their specific manner, the earth, resembling a cradle, gently rocks, constituent elements despite inconsistency and contrariness stay in harmony for a specific span of time specified in the system of creation subject to Divine Command regarding genesis and function to sustain human life.

The wise do not regard such enormous creation to no avail, but maintain that it leads to a great purpose and benefit. Upon scrutiny it seems that its greatest benefit is the enigmatic creation of mankind who becomes existent ex nihilo, becomes perfect from imperfection, prepares himself for everlasting life.

To demonstrate man’s superiority over all creatures, it would suffice to know that all archangels were commanded to prostrate before him and many an angel were subjected to manage the affairs of man such that he may avail himself of them.

“Cloud and wind, moon and sun move in the sky

That thou mayest gain bread, and not eat it unconcerned.

For thee all are revolving and obedient.

It is against the requirements of justice if though obeyest not.”

As mentioned above, man’s perfection and dignity depend on his intellection and knowledge.

According to a Prophetic tradition,

“one hour spent on thinking is better than sixty years of devotions.”

As per another tradition,

*“one hour spent on thinking is better than one year of devotions.”*¹³

It is evident that the difference between the traditions concerning thinking lies in the types and hierarchies of thinking, i.e., the thought concerning devotions is meritorious and praiseworthy in its own right, but it may not be compared with that regarding Divine Attributes and Acts. The latter is superior to the former. True submission to Divine Will depends on the accurate understanding the subject of worship.

As a consequence, the dependent clause li-ya’budun attested in 51:56:

(“And I created not the jinn and mankind except that they should worship Me [alone]”)

is interpreted by scholars as li-ya’rifun denoting “getting to know.”

Surah al-Jathiya – Verse 14

قُلْ لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يَغْفِرُوا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يَرْجُونَ أَيَّامَ اللَّهِ لِيَجْزِيَ قَوْمًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

14. [O Prophet] say to the believers to forgive those [i.e., leave them to God] who hope not for the Days of Allah [viz. the Last Day], that He may recompense people, according to what they have earned.

The Noble Prophet (S) is Divinely appointed to enlighten the believers as to their manner of conduct toward disbelievers. Undoubtedly, faith requires forgiving and magnanimity. Consequently, one ethical Command is provided in the blessed Verse in question concerning their encounter with disbelievers so that the foregoing logical discussions be perfected by this ethical Command.

Addressing the Prophet (S), God Almighty says:

“Say unto the believers to forgive those who hope not for the Days of Allah”

rather than be strict with them. Owing to their distance from the fundamentals of faith and religious ethical principles, they may suffer from undesirable and inhumane conducts and attitudes; however, you are supposed to treat them magnanimously and generously lest they may wax their animosity and further distance from Truth.

Such magnanimity and generosity will improve their conduct and may also make them embrace the pure faith.

Such instructions are recurrently attested in the Holy Qur’an, e.g.

“So turn away from them and say peace! But they will come to know”¹⁴.

Basically, strictness and persistence in retaliation are of no avail in dealing with the ignorant, but showing indifference and magnanimity may serve as a means of awakening and guidance. It is to be noted that it is not a general rule, since in a number of cases there remains no other alternative save retaliation and punishment.

Another point is that all days are days of Allah; nonetheless, Days of Allah are applied to specific days as the designation indicates their significance. The expression is attested twice in the Holy Qur’an, once in the Verse in question and another instance is to be found with a broader application in Chapter 14¹⁵.

The Days of Allah have been interpreted as different days within the body of Islamic traditions. For instance, according to ‘Ali ibn Ibrahim’s , the Days of Allah are enumerated as the Day of Mahdi’s (as) Rise, the day of death, and the Day of Resurrection.

According to another Prophetic tradition:

“The Days of Allah are the days of His Bounties and those of His Trials by afflictions.”¹⁶

This expression indicates the significance of the Last Day, the day of Divine Manifest Rule over anyone and anything, and the day of total administration of justice.

To prevent these individuals from misusing such magnanimity and forgiving, the Verse ends in

“that He may recompense people, according to what they have earned.”

Some exegetes have regarded the clause as a warning against disbelievers and sinners; nonetheless, some have considered it as a good tiding for believers because of their forgiveness and magnanimity. The clause may equally indicate good tidings for the latter and warning for the former.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 15

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ أَسَاءَ فَعَلَيْهَا ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ

15. Whosoever does a good deed, it is for himself, and whosoever does evil, it is against [himself]. Then you will be made to return to your Lord.

Divine Retribution and Reward is just and according to man's good and evil deeds.

The blessed Verse says:

“Whoever does a good deed, he will gain the benefits thereof and whoever commits evil acts, he will reap the evil consequences thereof.”

The same expression is recurrently attested in the Qur'an with different wordings as a reply to those who inquire what gain or loss may be made by God owing to their obedience or rebellion and is the reason behind insistence on obedience to or rebellion against Him.

These Verses express that the rewards and the evil consequences will fall into their share. It is you who tread the path of perfection through your good deeds and soar toward God and it is again you who fall into depravity, Divine Wrath, deprivation from His Mercy, and ending up with everlasting damnation out of your sins and evil deeds.

All Divinely appointed obligations, prophetic missions, and the revelation of Books are for the same purpose.

The Qur'an says:

“And whoever gives thanks, he gives thanks for [the good of] himself. And whoever is unthankful, then indeed, Allah is Self-Sufficient and Praiseworthy”¹⁷.

It also says:

“So whosoever accepts the guidance, it is only for himself and whosoever goes astray, he goes astray merely for his loss”¹⁸.

In another instance, the Holy Qur'an says:

“And he who purifies himself, then he purifies solely for his own benefit. And to Allah is the Return [of all]”¹⁹.

Such expressions indicate that the call of the ‘callers to Allah’ is a great service in all its dimensions rendered to the mankind rather than a one rendered to Allah, the Self-Sufficient or to His Messengers whose Reward will be bestowed to them by Him. Attending to this fact may significantly lead to proceeding toward obedience to God and abstaining from sins.

Surah al-Jathiya – Verse 16

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ وَرَزَقْنَاهُمْ مِنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ
وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَى الْعَالَمِينَ

16. And verily We gave the Children of Israel the Scripture, and the understanding of the scripture and its laws, and the Prophethood, and provided them with pleasant [provisions], and preferred them above the people of the time.

The Children of Israel failed to benefit from the Divine Favors mentioned in the Verse in question; as a result of their disobedience and wrong doing, their exalted station turned into humility and damnation. This blessed Verse enumerates certain Divine Bounties some of which were bestowed on the Children of Israel and the offspring of Jacob (Ya'qub).

Firstly, the Torah, embracing theoretical and practical wisdom, was sent down for them.

Secondly, prophets like David (Da'ud), Solomon (Sulayman), Moses (Musa), and Jesus ('Īsa) were appointed from amongst them. It is reported that one thousand prophets were appointed for their guidance between Moses and Jesus.

Thirdly, they were provided with pleasant provisions like manna and salwa. Fourthly, they were granted superiority and privileges above all peoples of the time and such superiority and privileges are among the best Bounties bestowed on them.

Surah al-Jathiya – Verse 17

وَأْتَيْنَاهُمْ بَيِّنَاتٍ مِنَ الْأَمْرِ فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوا إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغِيًّا بَيْنَهُمْ إِنَّ
رَبَّكَ يَقْضِي بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ

17. And We gave them clear proofs in matters [of religion]. And they differed not until after the knowledge came to them, [and the difference was] through envy among themselves. Indeed, your

Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection about that wherein they used to differ.

God Almighty has given an ultimatum to people to the effect that the worst disbelief is to differ in matters of Truth. Even though God granted them superiority over enemies, instead of being thankful, they differed. The blessed Verse says that from among the privileges bestowed upon the Children of Israel by God Almighty was that He made the affairs of this world and the world to come manifest to them.

We bestowed them the knowledge to be aware of the proper management of this worldly and otherworldly affairs. Some exegetes have said that by evident proofs, certain indications in the Torah as to the Prophet of Islam are being meant.

However, despite enjoying many a Bounty, they advertently disobeyed the injunctions of the Torah and knowingly ignored the tidings of the Divine Appointment of the Noble Prophet (S). God will indubitably judge between you and them as well as the objections raised by them.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 18

ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَاكَ عَلَىٰ شَرِيعَةٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ أَهْوَاءَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

18. Then We have put you on a way of Commandment. So follow you that and follow not the desires of the ignorant.

God specifies the path of piety and whoever is responsible for guiding the people is supposed to be fully aware of the path. The Noble Prophet (S) was fully aware of the path. The word shari'a is applied to a waterway leading to a river, but in common usage it denotes the path of the prophets. Addressing his Prophet (S) in this blessed Verse, God Almighty says that He has placed him, rather than others, on the Divine Path.

Therefore, he is asked to turn away from the desires of the ignorant. The word amr may ad hoc be employed in the sense of Divine world rather than the world of creation and nature, meaning that your path is from the Divine world descended onto this world of nature.

All the prophets' Divine Laws and Scriptures are descended from the supernatural world and they all embrace Divine Proofs, Wisdom, Teachings, and Laws; however, they differ largely in certain respects, one difference being the circumstances of the time. It is evident that the ancients did not differ much with animals; as a consequence of which the Commandments and Paths suited their understanding.

It may for be owing to this point that a number of prophets were superior to other prophets in rank. God Almighty says in the Holy Qur'an²⁰ that the prophets at any time were superior to others.

Since there are solely five Arch–prophets and the book of prophethood has been sealed by the Prophet of the Islamic faith (S) as the last one, it becomes evident that whatever attains to its final purpose comes to its end.

Therefore, owing to the highest station of the Prophet (S) and his sublime perfectness, and as a consequence of the perfectness and unchangeability of Divine Commands, the Divine Law suits any period of time.

Consequently, the Verse in question reminds us that the Prophet’s (S) Divine Law is mentioned following that of prophet Moses (as) and Allah addresses Prophet Muhammad reminding him that your revealed religion is from the Divine World and above any other religion and the Prophet (S) is supposed to follow the same religion and ignore the desires of the ignorant, since he is vested with revealed truths, traditions, and religion so firm in basis that it will remain to the Last Day.

The Islamic faith is such that had Moses and Jesus (as) been Prophet Muhammad’s (S) contemporaries, they would have obeyed the same Divine Law.

Surah al–Jathiya – Verse 19

إِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يَغْنُوا عَنْكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئاً وَإِنَّ الظَّالِمِينَ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ وَاللَّهُ وَلِيُّ
الْمُتَّقِينَ

19. They shall never defend you against God and verily the wrong doers are helpers of one another but Allah is the protector of the pious.

Piety leads to the attainment of Divine Protection and Succor. One of characteristics of the pious is their turning away from the passions of people.

“And Allah is the protector of the pious.”

The pious abstain from wrong doing and being subject to it. Since disbelievers, irrespective of polytheists and Jews, as mentioned in the Qur’anic Verses, out of their evil intentions, left no stone unturned to make the Prophet of the Islamic faith to follow their distorted religion, the Verse in question as well as other Verses emphatically warn the Prophet (S) against following them.

Such Verses inform the Prophet that they are unable to make the Prophet needless of God Almighty. They also indicate that wrong doers, viz. the disbelievers, help one another, but God is the Friend of the pious.

The Verse refers to the fact that the disbelievers’ friendship with one another is of no avail. They may

neither stop the occurrence of disasters and afflictions in this world nor may they save their friends from torment in the Last Day. However, as God is the Friend of the pious and He is Omnipotent, He protects and helps His friends at all times.

*“Verily the pious are in place of security”*²¹.

Surah al-Jathiya – Verse 20

هَذَا بَصَائِرُ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُوقِنُونَ

20. This [Qur’an] is a clear insight and evidence for mankind and guidance and mercy for people who have faith with certainty.

Piety is supposed to serve as the basis of insight. Qur’an is the basis of insight in all intellectual, ethical, political, social, economic, and family domains. The demonstrative pronoun hadha apparently refers to the Qur’an and enumerates three Qur’anic merits in the blessed Verse in question.

Firstly, the Holy Qur’an is vision. In the same manner as the eye of the head makes seeing objects and colors possible, the Holy Qur’an is the eye of the heart through which knowledge finds its way to the heart.

One who ponders a while on Qur’anic Verses, the light meant by the Infallible Imam (as):

“Knowledge is the light shed by Allah on the heart of whoever He wills from among His servants”

illuminates his heart and shows him the path of deliverance from the shadows of ignorance to the light of knowledge and wisdom. Secondly, the Qur’an is Guidance toward the path of felicity and the Guide to the path of deliverance.

It is by following the Qur’anic teachings that one may leave the way of err and tread on the straight path.

Thirdly, the Holy Qur’an is Divine Mercy bestowed on the faithful through following Its Injunctions and Instructions Divine Mercy, Forgiveness, and Bounty will be granted to them. Such merits and virtues belong to those who act upon Qur’anic Verses through certainty and meditation.

Surah al-Jathiya – Verse 21

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ نَجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
سَوَاءً مَحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ

21. Do those who commit evil deeds think that We shall hold them equal with those who believe and do righteous good deeds and their life and death shall be equal? How incorrect is the judgment that they make.

The verbal noun *ijtirah* deriving from the root *j-r-h* denotes any harm afflicted on the body. Since committing sins hurts the sinner's soul, the verbal form *ijtarahu* "they harm" is used in this Verse.

It is worthy of note that a comparison between a believer and a disbeliever indicates that the former finds peace of mind by remembering God, is satisfied with whatever God has given to him, is hopeful about future, his path is illuminated, and regards death as migrating to a more spacious dwelling, whereas the latter always circumambulates false deities and illegitimate authorities, entangled with the vain desires of his or others, regards the future to be dark, and considers death as perdition.

Therefore, the Qur'an makes use of comparison and contrast for further illumination so that people with different backgrounds be able to understand the point in question. Thus it is inquired in this Verse regarding the disbelievers thinking that those who have committed sins and opposed the believers who have found guidance and insight through the Qur'an, are worthy of being granted Divine Mercy, and have done good deeds are equal.

It is never like that. How would it be possible to pass such inaccurate judgment? The believers' and disbelievers' life and death are not equal.

Believers have grasped:

"the most trustworthy handhold that will never break"²²,

i.e., through grasping the firmest and unbreakable handhold, believers in their mundane life rely on Divine Mercy and seeking succor from Him and their hearts are illuminated by the light of knowledge. They know that they are always protected by Him and thanks to their hope in Divine Grace they are happy at all times irrespective of being healthy or sick, poor or rich, and experiencing ups and downs.

They are always patient, satisfied, and submitted to the Divine Will, since they know that everything happens by Divine Will and whatever happens to them is in accordance with Divine Omniscience and Wisdom and the believers' and disbelievers' deaths are not on an equal basis.

After death, the latter descend to the lowest level of nature befitting their mundane life, as God Almighty says in the Qur'an²³ that upon their demise, angels beat them on their faces and their backs and harshly make their souls leave their bodies. Au contraire, upon their demise, believers ascend from the vicissitudes of the mundane world and enter the Divine world as per their way of life in this world.

The angels of mercy bear them the good tidings of transporting them to Paradise and the Abode of Dignity:

*(“an exact recompense [according to their deeds]”)*²⁴.

Divine Reward and Retribution are consistent with man’s acts. One whose heart is illumined by Divine Light is not on a par with one whose heart is tarnished by the shadows of disbelief.

Surah al-Jathiya – Verse 22

وَخَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَلِتُجْزَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُونَ

22. And Allah has created the heavens and the earth with truth, in order that each person may be recompensed what he has earned and they will not be wronged.

The Verse in question substantiates the preceding one. The preceding Verse reads that the sinful think that we regard them on a par with believers. It is wishful thinking. Do they not know that the heavens and the earth are created with truth and in a true system, the good and the evil are not on an equal basis. Creation in truth requires justice in retribution.

According to the blessed Verse, God created the heavens and the earth with truth in order to make manifest his Omnipotence and purposelessness is far from the sacred threshold of the Creator of the world.

The prepositions li- in li-tujza and bi- in bi-ma kasabat indicate that the final purpose of the creation of the heavens and the earth is the existence of man so that he may tread the path of improvement and attain to perfection and on the Last Day that is the destination of his becoming perfect may encounter the recompense of his acts, as it is mentioned in Verse 13 of this Chapter;

“And He has subjected to you all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth,”

so that they may meet the needs of man’s life and pave his way toward perfection.

“And they will not be wronged”

refers to the fact that the All-Merciful God who has subjected such great creation and this innovative system of the world for the sake of man will not be wronged, but he will be rewarded for his good deeds and chastised for his evil ones.

1. Majma’ al-Bayan [Exegesis], the opening of Chapter 45

2. 36: 1-2

3. 2:129
4. 2:2
5. The Holy Qur'an, 2:164; 3:190; 10:6; 28:71.
6. For details regarding the effects of wind and rain, see the Qur'an 30:46–50.
7. 2:79
8. 83:1
9. 14:2
10. 41:6
11. 104:1
12. 45:8
13. al-Mizan, vol. 4, p. 95; Bihar al-Anwar, vol. 68, p. 326.
14. 43:89
15. Abraham, Ibrahim
16. Nur al-Thiqalayn [Exegesis], vol. 2, p. 526
17. 31:12
18. 39:41
19. 35:18
20. 2:254
21. 44:51
22. 2:256
23. 8:52
24. 78:26

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