

Surah al-Jathiya, Verses 23 – 37

Surah al-Jathiya – Verse 23

أَفَرَأَيْتَ مَنْ اتَّخَذَ إِلَهَهُ هَوَاهُ وَأَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ وَخَتَمَ عَلَىٰ سَمْعِهِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَجَعَلَ
عَلَىٰ بَصَرِهِ غِشَاوَةً فَمَنْ يَهْدِيهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ اللَّهِ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ

23. Have you seen him who takes his own vain desires as his god? And Allah knowing [him as such] left him astray and sealed his hearing and his heart and put a cover on his sight. Who then will guide him after Allah? Will you not then remember?

When one follows his vain desires and regards his concupiscence as object of worship, they will turn into a cover covering his vision, hearing, and heart. As a consequence, the Words of Truth may not affect him. In this way, he is not worthy of being guided and thereby he is led astray.

God has made available to man the means of deliverance from error, but when he does wrong to himself and follows the path of error, he will be deprived of Divine Guidance. It is not Divine Will to lead him astray, but his deprivation from Guidance is mere error. It is for the same reason that the Verse closes with the question;

“Will you not then remember?”

Surah al-Jathiya – Verse 24

وَقَالُوا مَا هِيَ إِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ وَمَا لَهُمْ بِذَلِكَ مِنْ
عِلْمٍ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ

24. And they say: “There is nothing but our life of this world, we die and we live [viz. a group departs and another group enters] nothing destroys us except Nature and Time.” And they have no knowledge of it: they are only wishful thinkers.

The word dahr denotes the passage of time. Materialists maintain that the passage of life time leads to human perdition.¹ Following vain desires blinds the eye of the heart such that he denies resurrection and regards life restricted to transience.

According to this blessed Verse, those who take their vain desires as their deities and obey Satan and concupiscence and thereby weaken their intellect think that life is restricted to this mundane and transient life and deny the life in the world to come, saying that life is nothing save this mundane life in which we see the light and then we die and nothing may destroy man except the passage of time.

Their words are not substantiated by knowledge since they have lost their innate sound nature owing to following their vain desires. They regard Divine Omnipotence as limited and falsely conjecture that the world is limited to this mundane world.

By saying:

“And nothing destroys us except Time”

disbelievers mean the passage of time.

Surah al-Jathiya – Verse 25

وَإِذَا تُلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ مَّا كَانَ حُجَّتَهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا اتُّوا بِآبَائِنَا إِن كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

25. And when Our Clear Verses [concerning Resurrection] are recited to them, their argument is no other than that they say: “Bring back our [deceased] fathers, if you are truthful.”

Qur’anic Verses are clear and enlightening. Instead of thinking about Divine Ayat (“Verses, signs, evidence”) disbelievers ask for reviving their ancestors.

“And when”

(wa idh) refers to the preceding Verse concerning the disbelievers’ false claims that when the Verses concerning proving Resurrection are recited to them, they fail to provide an acceptable reply saying if the prophets were truthful in proving Resurrection, bring our fathers back to life so that they inform us of the other world and if they accepted your words, we would accept them to be true.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 26

قُلِ اللَّهُ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يَجْمَعُكُمْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ
النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ

26. Say: 'Allah gives you life, then causes you to die, then He will assemble you on the Day of Resurrection about which there is no doubt.

The system of creation follows an order dominating the world of existence through the Will of the Wise God denying which stems from ignorance. The evidence of Divine Omnipotence, Wisdom, and Justice is so clear that there leaves no room for any doubt regarding Resurrection.

In the blessed Verse in question God Almighty says:

“O Muhammad, say unto these disbelievers denying Resurrection that God makes you see the light out of human seed and will cause you to die after the completion of this mundane life. Then, He will assemble you on the Day of Resurrection and there is no room for entertaining doubts regarding being assembled on the Last Day; though the majority of people do not know.”

The Verse refers to the fact that if they knew, they would recognize the order, harmony, and purpose of their own creation and would be capable of perceiving the qualities of their life and death.

In this case, they could be certain that there is a significant purpose behind man's life and death – this worldly death is a preamble to everlasting life, since the final purpose of this worldly death is that what the Creator has placed in human faculty may be actualized and attain to its final purpose through death and when something is actualized it may find immortality; as the final purpose of man's creation is attainment to everlasting life, he will not be subject to annihilation.

Therefore, following the end of the mundane world, all human beings who have seen the light and have passed away successively shall be assembled for everlasting life and shall meet their recompense; otherwise, human existence, even the creation of the world were in vain and acting in vain is far from Divine Threshold.

There is no doubt in it2 since the point is clear to the knowledgeable, but the ignorant who neither know themselves nor are aware of creation or resurrection and their intellects are entangled with vain desires, nor are they capable of perceiving anything may solely refer to the life after death only if their fathers were brought back to life.

Surah al-Jathiya – Verse 27

وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُخْسِرُ الْمُبْطِلُونَ

27. And to Allah belongs the kingdom of the heaven and the earth. And on the Day that Resurrection will be established – on that Day those talking nonsense shall be losers.

Bringing to life and causing to die is facile for God Almighty, since existence is in His Hands. Worldly losses are trivial, but the losses to be incurred on the Resurrection Day shall be significant. Those who deny Resurrection shall be losers on that day.

The Verse in question is related to the preceding one. God Almighty is the Lord of the heavens and the earth and everything is within the Sway of that Omnipotent King. All the worlds of creation have come into existence from non-existence through His Will. As the All-Praiseworthy God is the Cause of the existence of possible beings, He is the cause of their survival as well. Any alterations may be made in any being through His Omnipotence.

On the Day of Resurrection, this world will turn into the other one and the Day of Resurrection shall be established on which evil doers shall be losers since they spend their life in vanity and ignorance. This world resembles a commercial center and life is the merchant's capital from which he is supposed to accrue otherworldly gains, pure everlasting life, and spiritual stations.

Failure to accrue gains despite the availability of the capital of life to him may be likened to a bankrupt merchant having lost his capital without accruing any gain from his worldly life. There will be nothing in store for him save rue and regret for having lost his capital.

Surah al-Jathiya – Verse 28

وَتَرَى كُلَّ أُمَّةٍ جَائِيَةً كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ تُدْعَى إِلَى كِتَابِهَا الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

28. And you will see [on the Day of Resurrection] each nation humbled to their knees; each nation shall be called to its Record [of deeds]. This Day you shall be recompensed for what you used to do.

On that Day everyone shall kneel down in terror. The system of creation is kept in order and harmony and the records of human deeds are based on evidence.

The blessed Verse is thus addressed to the Prophet (S):

“O Muhammad! You shall see that on that Day each and every nation shall kneel out of fear and each nation shall be called to its Record of deeds.”

The clause:

“[Each nation] shall be called to its Records”

apparently signifies that when on that Day all mankind shall stay motionless on their knees out of severe fear and anxiety, the Records of their deeds shall be opened and everyone will be called by his own Record of deeds, since on that Day everyone shall be known by his deeds rather than by his name and lineage. Everyone shall be recompensed according to his deeds.

Some have said that everyone shall be called by the Divine Book revealed to the prophet of his time and he will be asked whether he acted upon Its Instructions. A number of points are worthy of note. Jathiya denotes kneeling down at the time of fear, awe, humility, and submission.

According to the Holy Qur’an, three types of Books and Records are mentioned for mankind on the Day of Resurrection:3

There is a Record kept for everyone in which his deeds are recorded:

“And We have fastened every man’s deeds to his neck and on the Day of Resurrection We shall bring out for him a book which he will find wide open. [It shall be said to him]: Read your book”4.

There is a Book for each nation in which social affairs are recorded in it, as the blessed Verse in question reads:

“Each nation shall be called to Its Book.”

All nations have one single Book in which everything and the deeds of everyone are recorded in it:

“And the Book [of one’s records] shall be placed and you shall see the sinners fearful of that which is [recorded] in it”5.

Surah al-Jathiya – Verse 29

هَذَا كِتَابُنَا يَنْطِقُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّا كُنَّا نَسْتَنْسِخُ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

29. This is Our Book that speaks about you with truth. Indeed, We were recording what you used

to do.

There shall be nothing concealed on the Day of Resurrection. Everything shall be put forward. The word kitab connotes that everything shall be written down on that Day.

Again It is God who addresses them emphatically:

“This is Our Book [viz. Record] that speaks about you with truth”

and reveals your deeds. You could never believe then that your deeds were being recorded somewhere; however, We had commanded [the angels] to record all your deeds.

The word nastansikhu and its verbal noun istinsakh are originally derived from n-s-kh denoting “to erase, take away,” e.g. erasing something by something else; for instance, “The sun took away the shade or shadow” (nasakhta al-shams al-dill). The word was later employed to signify “to transcribe” a book from another book without the latter being destroyed.

Some exegets say that

‘the Book’

in the Verse may indicate ‘Divine Book’ revealed to that nation, but

‘the Book’

ad hoc is apparently employed in the sense of ‘record of deeds’ and the majority of exegets accept this view.

According to a tradition narrated from ‘Ali (as), the Commander of the Faithful,

“God sends down angels every day to record the deeds of men.”

Following the narration of the mentioned tradition in Tibyan⁶ under the Verse in question, Shaykh Tusi says:

“By Nastansikhu it is meant that God Almighty commands the angels responsible for recording the deeds to take from this group the deeds worthy of recompense and deed them, but delete the rest, since the first group record all the deeds.”

Surah al-Jathiya – Verse 30

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَيُدْخِلُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ ذَلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ
الْمُبِينُ

30. Then as for those who believed [in God] and did righteous good deeds, their lord shall admit them to His Mercy. That shall be the evident deliverance.

The word *fawz* used in this Verse denotes triumph and attainment of good together with security and fulfillment of wish. In the Holy Qur'an, the word collocates with evident (*mubin*) and great (*'adim, kabir*).

Instead of "They enter Paradise" (*yadkhuluna fial-janna*), it is said:

"Their lord shall admit them to His Mercy" (yudkhiluhum rabbuhum fi rahmatih)

denoting that the believers and the beneficent enjoy Divine Grace and Mercy.

Following an expression of the fact that everyone shall be recompensed according to the record of his deeds, the Verse in question says that the deeds of the believers and the beneficent shall be assayed following which their lord shall admit them to His Infinite Mercy.

Indubitably, this is felicity, merit, deliverance, and the final purpose of mankind rather than that of all creatures created for the sake of mankind. It is through the creation of such perfect man that the Divine attribute of Mercy is manifested without which the existence of the world became non-existent.

The Divine Tradition:

"Had it been not for your sake, I would have not created celestial spheres"

is addressed to Prophet Muhammad (S), since the perfect man is the final purpose of the existence of the world.

Surah al-Jathiya - Verse 31

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَفَلَمْ تَكُنْ آيَاتِي تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ وَكُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُّجْرِمِينَ

31. But as for those who disbelieved [it shall be said to them: Were not our Verses recited to you? But you were arrogant and you were a people who were sinners.

Sins stem from disbelief and arrogance. Following an expression of the believers' and good doers' sublime station, the blessed Verse, addressing the disbelievers, reproaches them saying that they are entangled with torment and chastisement on the Day of Recompense. Were not Divine Verses recited to them by Divinely appointed Messengers?

Instead of accepting them and finding deliverance from the torment recompensed owing to your own deeds, you ignored the words of the prophets and declined to submit to Divine Command. They were

arrogant. Now they are sinners. Whenever the prophets said unto them that Divine promises would be true and there would be no doubt regarding the Resurrection Day, they replied that they had not found it to be true and they disbelieved in such Hour.

Surah al-Jathiya – Verses 32–34

وَإِذَا قِيلَ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَالسَّاعَةُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا قُلْتُمْ مَا نَدْرِي مَا السَّاعَةُ إِنَّ نَظْنَ
إِلَّا ظَنًّا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُستَيْقِنِينَ

وَبَدَأَ لَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا عَمِلُوا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ

وَقِيلَ الْيَوْمَ نَنْسَاكُمْ كَمَا نَسِيتُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَذَا وَمَأْوَاكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ
نَاصِرِينَ

32. And when it was said: “Indeed, Allah’s Promise is the truth and there is no doubt about the coming of the Hour,” you said: “We know not what is the Hour: we do not think it but as a conjecture, and we have no firm convincing [in it].”

33. And the evil of what they did shall appear to them, and that which they used to mock at will completely encircle them.

34. And it will be said: “This Day We shall forget you as you forgot the Meeting of this Day of yours. And your abode is the Fire and there is none to help you.”

The characteristics of the disbeliever include suspicion and those of the believer include inquiry, follow up, and attainment to certitude. On the Day of Resurrection, in addition to the evil deeds committed, disbelievers shall be encircled by the evil consequences of their evil deeds.

Thus, according to Verse 32, whenever the prophets said unto you that Divine Promises were true and there was no doubt for the establishment of Resurrection, you replied that you did not think it but as a conjecture and you were not firmly convinced in it.

It is mentioned in Verse 33 that their evil deeds committed in their worldly life shall be manifest on the Day of Resurrection. In other words disbelievers failed to perceive their arrogance against and denial of Divine Verses nor did they understand their evil deeds stemming from concupiscence and vain desires.

Thus the muddy water of this world covered their eyes and left them deprived of truth such that they regarded their deeds as desirable unaware of what would be in store for them owing to their derision of Divine Verses.

Verse 34 demonstrates that afflicted by torment disbelievers shall be told by the angels Divinely appointed for their tormenting that Messengers of God reminded you of such a Day but you greeted them with derision. Now that you are desperate, you shall be recompensed by abandoning you to experience everlasting torment in the Hell. There shall be no savior to save you from such torment.

Surah al-Jathiya – Verse 35

ذَلِكُمْ بِأَنَّكُمْ اتَّخَذْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ هُزُوعًا وَغَرَّتْكُمْ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُخْرَجُونَ مِنْهَا
وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ

35. This is because you derided the Divine Verses and the life of the world deceived you. So this Day they shall not be taken out from there [Hell], nor shall they be returned to the worldly life [to seek Divine Satisfaction].

Being deceived and satisfied with mundane life leads man to deride truths. Those who deride Divine Verses shall not find the path of deliverance, nor shall their excuses be justified. The blessed Verse warns disbelievers that this is the recompense for your deriding Divine Verses springing from the fountainhead of Truth and ignoring the words of the prophets.

Allured by mundane life, you forgot your origin and Resurrection. Like as you failed to leave aside your disbelief, you shall not leave the Hell. You may not embark on any desirable act as it is too late and today is the Day of Recompense.

Surah al-Jathiya – Verses 36–37

فَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ رَبِّ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَرَبِّ الْأَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

وَلَهُ الْكِبْرِيَاءُ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

36. All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the heavens and the Lord of the earth, and

the Lord of all that exists.

37. The Majesty in the heavens is His, and He is the Omnipotent, the All-Wise.

The One God is the Creator of the heavens, the earth, and all that exists. Verses 36 and 37 indicate that all the praises belong to the Creator of the heavens, the earth, and whatever exists in them including soul and bodies as well as what exists on the earth from among inanimate beings, plants, and animals. He is the protector of all the worlds.

Generalization following specification indicates generality, i.e., the Creator of the heavens and the earth is the same as the Creator of all the worlds including the mundane world as well as the supernatural worlds of intellects and souls and the infinite worlds existing between them whose number is known by their Creator whose Majesty and Sovereignty are manifest in the heavens and on the earth; He is the Omnipotent Sovereign Who has arranged everything out of Wisdom in harmony with the order of the world.

Thus, Majesty and Magnanimity solely belongs to Him.

It is attested in Divine Traditions that:

“Sovereignty and Majesty solely belongs to My Essence. Whoever vies with Me for these two Attributes, I shall cast him into the Hell.”

The words rida’ (“cloak”) and izar (“shawl”) connote Divine Encompassment and Self-Existence; like as cloaks and shawls encompass the body, Divine Essence also encompasses all the worlds and anyone attempting to vie with God for any or both of the twain Attributes shall be cast into the abyss of the Hell.

1. See Raghīb’s Mufradat.

2. 2:2

3. Tafsir al-Mizan, vol. 13, p. 348.

4. 17:13–14

5. 18:49

6. vol. 9, p. 260

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