

Surah al-Rahman, Verses 33 – 55

Surah al-Rahman – Verses 33–34

يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ إِنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
فَإَنْفُذُوا لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَانٍ

فَبِأَيِّ آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

33. O assembly of jinn and men! If you have power to pass beyond¹ the zones of the heavens and the earth, then pass beyond [them]. But you shall never be able to pass them, except with extraordinary power.

34. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

The Arabic word ma'shar is cognate with 'ashr ("ten") and 'ashira ("relatives"). The word is attested thrice in the Holy Qur'an in all the instances of which jinn precedes men.

The reason lying behind such precedence may be the points that jinn exceed men in terms of quantity, jinn were created before men;

("And We created jinn before [men]"),

and jinn are more prepared to soar in the heavens. Nevertheless, men precede jinn in some other instances. The Arabic word sultan denotes material strength and might leading some to conquer others. It is also applied to academic authority and solid arguments leading to academic and intellectual authority.

It is worthy of note that the blessed Verse in question may also allude to the world, astronautics, transcending the atmosphere of the earth, and penetration into the heavens, since the depth of the earth, the farthest points in space, and celestial bodies may be conquered by jinn. The clause in *astata'tum* in lieu of *law astata'tum* connotes contingency.

The clause *illa bi-sulttan-in* alludes to the fact that it is possible to penetrate into the heavens and the earth, particularly to the effect that in the Glorious Qur'an, the Arabic word *sultan* connotes academic authority.

Taking into account, the contextual meanings of the preceding and the following blessed Verses, it may also make a reference to Resurrection and the impossibility of evading Divine Tribunal.

Thus, the blessed Verse in question is saying:

"O jinn and men! If you truly intend to evade Divine Recompense and Chastisement, make an attempt to transcend the boundaries of the heavens and the earth and thereby leave the bounds of His Omnipotence. However, you may never embark upon the same, unless through Divine Might and such Might is not at your disposal. You may never evade the Tribunal of Divine Justice. Wherever you go, you shall be Divine Realm. Wherever you stand, it shall be His Sovereignty."

Such weak creatures may never transcend the boundaries of Divine Sovereignty.

Likewise, Imam 'Ali (as) in the exhilarating invocation of Kumayl says:

"No one may evade Your Omnipotence and Sovereignty."

The blessed Verse 34 is again asking the rhetorical question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 35-36

يُرْسَلُ عَلَيْكُمَا شُوَاظٌ مِّن نَّارٍ وَنُحَاسٌ فَلَا تَنْتَصِرَانِ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

35. There shall be sent against you both, smokeless flames of fire and molten brass, and you shall not be able to defend yourselves.

36. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

To further emphasize the inability of jinn and men to evade Divine Justice, the blessed Verse 35 is saying:

"There shall be sent against you both, smokeless flames of fire and molten brass, and you shall not be able to defend yourselves."

Then, they may not seek succor from anyone, since angels shall surround you on the one hand and burning flames of fire and dark and suffocating smoke surrounds the Plain of Judgment on the other. There shall remain no way out. The Arabic word shuwad designates great and awe-inspiring flames of fire.

The Arabic word nuhas denotes the smoky and red flames of fire that turn copper in color. It is a source of surprise that Divine Tribunal is surrounded by Divine agents, suffocating smoke, and blazing fire and there shall remain no way but to attend the Tribunal and submit to the Verdict.

The blessed Verse 36 further asks:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verse 37-38

فَإِذَا انشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ وَرْدَةً كَالدِّهَانِ

فَبِأَيِّ آيَاتِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

37. Then when the heaven is rent asunder, and it becomes red like molten oil [you shall not bear the horrible incidents].

38. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Resuming the account of the preceding blessed Verses regarding some of the incidents that shall occur on the Day of Resurrection, the blessed Verse 37 treat of further depictions of the scenes of Resurrection and the manner of attending to records and Divine Recompense.

Thus the blessed Verse 37 is saying that when the heaven is rent asunder and turns rosy like molten oil, horrible incidents shall occur such that no one may bear them. All the blessed Qur'anic Verses concerning Resurrection clearly reflect that the present order of the world shall be disturbed on that Day

and very horrible incidents shall occur throughout the world.

Stars, planets, the earth shall undergo alterations and incidents shall occur which may not be imagined by us. Instances of such incidents include tearing asunder of celestial bodies turning rosy like molten oil. The word warda designates flower and most of flowers are red in color. The word dihan is employed in the sense of molten oil which is often different in color.

The blessed Verse 38 reiterates the rhetorical question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman – Verses 39–40

فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ ذَنْبِهِ إِنْسٌ وَلَا جَانٌّ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

39. Therefore, on that Day no question shall be asked of men or jinn as to their sins.

40. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Following an account of the formative occurrences of Resurrection, the blessed Verse 39 treats of the state of sinners on that Day saying that jinn and men shall not be questioned concerning their sins, since everything shall be evident on the Day of Emergence (yawm al-buruz) and faces reflect everything.

It may be falsely imagined that the blessed Verse in question is inconsistent with those emphasizing the questioning of servants on the Day of Resurrection, e.g.

"But Stop them, indeed they are to be questioned,"²

and

"Therefore, by your Lord, We shall certainly question all of them for all they used to do,"³

however, the point is that the Day of Resurrection shall be a very long Day and man has to pass different paths and stations and spend some time at each place. According to a number of traditions, such stopping places shall be fifty in number. Questions shall not be asked at some of these places, since faces reveal inward secrets.

At some of these places, mouths shall be sealed and bodily organs bear witness to deeds and words;

("This Day We shall seal up their mouths and their hands shall speak unto Us and their legs shall bear witness to what they used to earn,"4).

There are still other places where questions shall be precisely asked⁵.

Further, men shall come up pleading:

("The Day when everyone shall come up pleading for himself and everyone shall be paid in full for what he did and they shall not be dealt with unfairly,"6).

In short, each and every scene has its own conditions and each scene shall be more horrible than another.

The blessed Verse 40 asks the rhetorical question once more:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 41-42

يُعْرَفُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ بِسِيمَاهُمْ فَيُؤْخَذُ بِالنَّوَاصِي وَالْأُقْدَامِ

فَبِأَيِّ آيَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

41. The sinners shall be known by their marks and they will be seized by their forelocks and their feet [and shall be cast into Hell].

42. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Those who committed all kinds of sins and disobeyed Divine Command by all their beings from their hair to their feet shall be seized on the Day of Resurrection by their hair and feet to be cast into Hellfire.

The Arabic word sima is employed in the sense of:

"mark."

The Arabic word nawasi is the plural form of nasiya designating:

"forelock."

On that Day, questions shall not be asked since sinners shall be recognized by their marks and faces.

Some shall have smiling and brilliant faces which reflect their faith and righteous good deeds and some other shall have dark, ugly, and sullen faces, reflecting their faithlessness and evil deeds.

The blessed Verse further adds that then they shall be seized by their forelocks and their feet and they shall be cast into Hell. The scene is quite agonizing and awe-inspiring.

The blessed Verse 42 is a warning against Resurrection and a Favor bestowed upon everyone:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 43-45

هَذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي يُكَذِّبُ بِهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ

يَطُوفُونَ بَيْنَهَا وَبَيْنَ حَمِيمٍ آنٍ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

43. This is the Hell which the sinners denied.

44. They shall move between Hellfire and the fierce boiling water.

45. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Denial of Paradise, Hell, and Resurrection lead man to join the people of Hell.

The antecedent of the Arabic demonstrative pronoun hadhihi:

("this")

in the blessed Verse 43 is the preceding blessed Verse. It is as if angels or guards of Hell say unto sinners that this is Hell against which Prophets warned you but you denied and belied it out of arrogance, vanity, enmity, and ignorance. The blessed Verse 44 further depicts Hell and its excruciating torments saying that sinners move between Hell and boiling water.

The Arabic word hamim denotes:

"boiling water"

and the Arabic word an employed herein designates the utmost degree of heat. Thus, they burn and thirst and ask for water on the one hand and boiling water will given unto them or boiling water will be splashed upon them on the other and it will be an excruciating chastisement. The blessed Verse 45 is a serious and awakening warning and a Divine Favor:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 46-47

وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّاتٍ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

46. But for him who fears the standing before his Lord, there shall be two Gardens.

47. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Fearing standing before God Almighty prevents man from committing sins and will lead to Paradise, as it is reflected elsewhere in the Glorious Qur'an⁷:

"But as for him who feared standing before his Lord and restrained himself from concupiscent desires, indeed, Paradise shall be his abode."⁸

The blessed Verse 46 is also saying that for he who fears standing before his Lord, there shall be two Gardens in Paradise. Fearing standing before Lord means that one who knows God Almighty through His Greatness, Glory, and Lordship, such knowledge causes fear in him and there shall be two Gardens in Paradise for him.

It may also mean the fear of Resurrection and its stations and standing before His Threshold for records of deeds and Divine Supervision and Constant Care for all mankind. It is worthy of note that fear is supposed to spring from knowing Divine Lordship.

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

*"He who believes that God sees him and hears whatever he says, such belief restrains him from committing evil deeds. Such person fears standing before God Almighty and restrains himself from concupiscent desires."*⁹

It is narrated that the Noble Prophet (S) said unto Imam 'Ali (as):

*"Several things lead to deliverance one of which is fear of God inwardly and outwardly."*¹⁰

Fear of standing before God Almighty in this world shall lead to security from all fears in the Hereafter, as it is reflected in other Qur'anic Verses, e.g.

"There is no doubt that indeed believers who love Allah no fear shall come upon them nor shall they grieve,"¹¹.

In short, fear of God Almighty leads to submission to the Truth and doing righteous good deeds. Thus, there is no other condition besides fear of God Almighty. For one who fears standing before his Lord, there shall be two Gardens in Paradise.

The blessed Verse 47 repeats the rhetorical question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 48-51

ذَوَاتَا أَفْنَانٍ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

فِيهِمَا عَيْنَانِ تَجْرِيَانِ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

48. [Gardens with trees] with spreading and fresh branches [with diverse Blessings].

49. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

50. In those two Gardens shall two springs be flowing.

51. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

These blessed Verses depict the two Gardens in Paradise saying that they have different Blessings and trees with fresh branches. The Arabic word dhawata is dual and designates "having, owing."

The Arabic word afnan is the plural of fanan denoting:

"fresh branch"

and also "kind, type." The word may connote both senses in the blessed Verse 48, namely it may refer to fresh branches of trees in Paradise which are unlike trees in this world which may have old, dead, or fresh branches and it may also make a reference to the diversity of Blessings in Paradise.

Both applications are accurate, though the trees in Paradise might be different in that one single tree might have different branches with different kinds of fruit.

The blessed Verse 49 reiterates the rhetorical question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Since a verdant garden is supposed to have trees and flowing springs, the blessed Verse 50 is saying that:

"In those two Gardens two springs shall be flowing."

Addressing jinn and men, the blessed Verse 51 repeats the question:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verses 52-53

فِيهِمَا مِنْ كُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ زَوْجَانِ

فَبَأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

52. In those two Gardens shall be two kinds of each and every fruit.

53. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

There shall be abundance, diversity, and availability in Paradise. Regarding the fruits of the twain Gardens in Paradise, the blessed Verse 52 is saying that two kinds shall be found there of each and every fruit, a kind available in this world and another which was not seen in the mundane world.

The rhetorical question is reiterated in the blessed Verse 53:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

Surah al-Rahman - Verse 54-55

مُتَكِّينَ عَلَى فُرُشٍ بَطَائِنُهَا مِنْ إِسْتَبْرَقٍ وَجَنَى الْجَنَّتَيْنِ دَانٍ

فَبِأَيِّ آلَاءِ رَبِّكُمَا تُكَذِّبَانِ

54. Reclining upon the couches lined with silk, brocade, and the fruits of the two Gardens will be near at hand.

55. Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?

Three characteristics of the twain Gardens in Paradise were enumerated in the preceding blessed Verses. The blessed Verse 54 treats of the fourth characteristic, saying that people of Paradise recline upon couches lined with brocade. One usually reclines upon something when he happens to be in peace and utmost security.

The depiction reflects perfect serenity of the souls of the people of Paradise. The Arabic plural noun furush denotes carpets and couches. Bata'in designates lining and istabraq is applied to thick brocade.

It would be interest to see that the most precious fabric in this world will be used as the lining of couches in Paradise, connoting that the covers shall be indescribable in terms of delicacy, beauty, and appeal, since lining is not visible and the lowliest kinds of fabric are used for lining in this world.

However, the most precious item in this world shall be the most insignificant in Paradise. Thus, what shall the precious items be in Paradise? Divine Blessings in the Hereafter shall be describable neither in our terms and nor by our imagination.

We may solely have a vague idea about such otherworldly Blessings. The fifth characteristic of the Blessings of these Gardens in Paradise is that the ripe fruits shall be near at hand there. It shall be unlike the ripe fruits for whose picking one has to take troubles.

The Arabic word jana designates "ripe fruit" and the word dan denotes:

"near."

The blessed Verse 55 is again addressed to all jinn and men:

"Then which of the Blessings of your Lord will you both [jinn and men] deny?"

1. The Arabic verbal form tanfudhu derives from n-f-dh, literally denoting "tearing asunder and pass through something."
 2. 37:24
 3. 15:92-93
 4. 36:65
 5. 37:24; 15:92-93
 6. 16:111
 7. 80:40-41
 8. 80:40-41
 9. Tafsir Nur al-Thiqalayn, under the blessed Verse in question.
 10. Tafsir Kanz al-Daqa'iq, under the blessed Verse in question.
 11. 10:62
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