

Title: Explaining Sūrah al-Inshiqāq

Original Title: تفسير جزء عمّ

Original Author: Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn

E X P L A I N I N G S Ū R A H
al-Inshiqāq

BY:

Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn

WITH APPENDIX:

P R A Y E R F O R A N
Obedient Heart
(Memorization Chart)

Title: Explaining Sūrah al-Inshiqāq

Original Title: تفسير جزء عمّ

Original Author: Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SŪRAH AL-INSHIQĀQ: Verses 1-6	3
The Explanation of Verses 1-6	4
SŪRAH AL- INSHIQĀQ: Verses 7-15	14
The Explanation of Verses 7-15	15
SŪRAH AL- INSHIQĀQ: Verses 16-19.....	21
The Explanation of Verses 16-19	22
SŪRAH AL- INSHIQĀQ: Verses 20-25.....	31
The Explanation of Verses 20-25	32
APPENDIX: A Prayer for an Obedient Heart (Memorization Chart)	40

S Ū R A H A L - I N S H I Q Ā Q
V e r s e s 1 - 6

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of all mercy.

1	When the sky is split open	﴿ إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انشَقَّتْ ﴾
2	And it responds to its Lord as it must do so	﴿ وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ ﴾
3	And when the earth is spread out	﴿ وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ مُدَّتْ ﴾
4	And casts out all within it and becomes empty	﴿ وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ ﴾
5	And it responds to its Lord as it must do so	﴿ وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ ﴾
6	Oh mankind, you are certainly laboring toward your Lord and you will meet him. ¹	﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَى رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمَلَأْتَهُ ﴾

¹ The Quran, Sūrah al-Inshiqāq, 84:1-6

EXPLAINING SŪRAH AL-INSHIQĀQ

Verses 1 - 6

Verse 1: ﴿إِذَا السَّمَاءُ انشَقَّتْ﴾

﴿When the sky is split open﴾ The Arabic verb used here انْشَقَّ (*inshaqqa*) means to open and split apart, and this is similar to the description Allah uses in the verse:

﴿وَإِذَا السَّمَاءُ فُرِجَتْ﴾

And when the sky is opened.²

He also says:

﴿فَإِذَا انشَقَّتِ السَّمَاءُ فَكَانَتْ وَرْدَةً كَالدِّهَانِ﴾

And when the heaven is split open and becomes rose-colored like oil.³

The splitting open of the heavens will occur on the Day of Resurrection.

Verse 2: ﴿وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ﴾

﴿And it responds to its Lord﴾ The sky will listen to and obey the command of its Lord (عزّ وجلّ) when told to split apart. Before that happens, it will remain as Allah describes it:

² Sūrah al-Mursalāt, 77:9

³ Sūrah al-Raḥmān, 55:37

﴿ سَبْعًا شَدِيدًا ﴾

Seven strong (heavens).⁴

They are now solid and sturdy as Allah (تعالی) says:

﴿ وَالسَّمَاءَ بَنَيْنَاهَا بِأَيْدٍ ﴾

And the heaven we constructed with strength.⁵

So these fixed, solid and enormous heavens will actually split open on the Day of Resurrection, becoming separated and split apart by the command of Allah (سبحانه وتعالى).

﴿as it must do so﴾ It rightly does so as the sky will unquestionably hear and obey because the one who orders it to split will be Allah, its Lord and creator (عزّ وجلّ). The sky will listen and obey just as it did when it was first created. About its initial creation, Allah

(تبارك وتعالى) says:

﴿ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا
قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ ﴾

⁴ Sūrah al-Naba, 78:12

⁵ Sūrah al-Dhāriyāt, 51:47

Then he rose over the heaven when it was smoke, and said to it and the earth, “Come (into being or together) both of you, willingly or unwillingly.” They both said, “We come willingly.”⁶

We humans who are so weak should think carefully about how these enormous creations listened to and obeyed Allah. These are some of the greatest acts of obedience by the heavens and earth in both their initial creation and at the end of their creations. In the beginning, the heavens (and earth) were told: ﴿**Come both of you, willingly or unwillingly**﴾, yet when the creation of the heavens has come to an end, it will be ﴿**When the sky is split open and it responds to its Lord as it must do so**﴾. It justly listens and obeys its Lord.

Verse 3: ﴿وَإِذَا الْأَرْضُ مُدَّتْ﴾

﴿**And when the earth is spread out**﴾ This earth we are now upon is not spread flat; it is of a completely different form. For one thing, it is now a sphere, although its northern and southern poles are slightly flattened along this axis so it is slightly oblong. Still, it is now circular. In addition to being round, its surface is of varying levels, some places extremely high and others very low. The surface is also made up of dissimilar features: valleys, areas of flowing water, sand, and other differences. Yet on the Day of Resurrection, ﴿**the earth is spread out**﴾.

It will be spread out as a single surface similar to how a skin is stretched flat during tanning. So like the spreading out of a skin or tablecloth, the earth will be flattened out, spread out so that those upon it – all creations – will be able to hear and see a single

⁶ Sūrah Fuṣṣilat, 41:11

caller and they will all be seen and see each other. Today, all the inhabitants of the earth cannot be seen together. Though people are now spread all over the earth, those far away from you cannot be seen or heard. Yet on the Day of Resurrection when the earth is spread out, those far away will be similar to those who are close as has come in a ḥadīth:

« يَجْمَعُ اللَّهُ النَّاسَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَالْآخِرِينَ فِي صَعِيدٍ وَاحِدٍ ، يُسْمِعُهُمُ الدَّاعِيَ ، وَيَنْفُذُهُمُ الْبَصْرُ ، وَتَدْنُو الشَّمْسُ ، فَيَبْلُغُ النَّاسَ مِنَ الْغَمِّ وَالْكَرْبِ مَا لَا يُطِيقُونَ وَلَا يَحْتَمِلُونَ »

Allah will gather all people, the first and last of them, in a single area. They will all be able to hear a caller and they will all be seen. The sun will come so close and people will suffer such distress and hardship that they will be unable to bear it.⁷

Verse 4: ﴿ وَأَلْقَتْ مَا فِيهَا وَتَخَلَّتْ ﴾

﴿And casts out all within it and becomes empty﴾ Mankind will rise from the earth being cast out on the Day of Resurrection. The earth will cast them out so that they rise from their graves to stand before Allah, the Mighty and Great.

⁷ Collected by al-Bukhārī and Muslim. In a similar ḥadīth, also collected by al-Bukhārī and Muslim, the prophet (صَلَّى) said:

« يُحْشَرُ النَّاسُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ عَلَى أَرْضٍ بَيْضَاءَ عَفْرَاءَ كَقُرْصَةِ النَّقِيِّ ، لَيْسَ فِيهَا مَعْلَمٌ لِأَحَدٍ »

The people will be assembled on the Day of Resurrection on a white plain with a reddish tinge like a loaf of pure white bread. There will be no signs or markings on it for anyone.

People will be resurrected similar to their initial creation. Like they came out from the wombs of their mothers, similarly will they come out from the surface of the earth.⁸ And just as you came from your mothers' wombs barefooted, naked, and uncircumcised, you will also rise from the earth in the same state on the Day of Resurrection. We will have neither shoes, nor clothing and we will all be uncircumcised. When the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) mentioned that in a ḥadīth, 'Āishah asked, "Messenger of Allah, women and men together (like that) looking at each other?" He replied:

« يَا عَائِشَةُ الْأَمْرُ أَشَدُّ مِنْ أَنْ يَنْظُرَ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْضٍ »

'Āishah, the circumstances will be more serious than for people to be looking at one another.⁹

At that time, the circumstances will be so distressing, so terrible that each individual will be completely unconcerned with others; he will care only for himself:

﴿ يَوْمَ يَفِرُّ الْمَرْءُ مِنْ أَخِيهِ * وَأُمِّهِ وَأَبِيهِ * وَصَاحِبَتِهِ وَبَنِيهِ * لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِنْهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ شَأْنٌ يُغْنِيهِ ﴾

⁸ Explaining this point in his explanation of Sūrah al-Takwīr, Ibn al-'Uthaymīn mentioned a ḥadīth Collected by Muslim in which the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

« ثُمَّ يُرْسِلُ اللَّهُ أَوْ قَالَ : يُنْزِلُ اللَّهُ مَطْرًا كَأَنَّهُ الطَّلُّ أَوْ الظِّلُّ ، فَتَنْبَتُ مِنْهُ أَجْسَادُ النَّاسِ ، ﴿ ثُمَّ تُفِخَ فِيهِ أُخْرَى فَيَذَا هُمْ قِيَامًا يَنْظُرُونَ ﴾ ثُمَّ يُقَالُ : يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ هَلُمَّ إِلَى رَبِّكُمْ »

Then Allah will send (or he said: will cause to descend) rain like dew from which people's bodies will grow. **﴿Then it will be blown again, and at once they will be standing, looking on.﴾** It will then be said, "Oh mankind, come to your Lord!"

⁹ Collected by Muslim.

On the day a man will flee from his brother, and his mother and his father, and his wife and children. Everyone that day will have enough to make him careless of others.¹⁰

When someone imagines all of mankind in that state at that time, he would become terrified, fearful of that day. And if such a person were a believer with intellect, he would work in preparation for that day.

Verse 5: ﴿ وَأَذِنَتْ لِرَبِّهَا وَحُقَّتْ ﴾

﴿And it responds to its Lord as it must do so﴾ Like the heavens, the earth will listen to and obey its Lord as it must. After it was circular with higher and lower varying levels, the earth will then become as a single surface spread out flat. Allah then says:

Verse 6: ﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا الْإِنْسَانُ إِنَّكَ كَادِحٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ كَدْحًا فَمُلَاقِيهِ ﴾

﴿Oh mankind, you are certainly laboring toward your Lord and you will meet him﴾ The Arabic word كَادِحٌ (*kādiḥ*), “laboring,” here includes seriously working hard, undergoing different types of hardships.

﴿toward your Lord﴾ You are laboring hard and such work will eventually lead you to your Lord, working toward reaching Allah. In other words, whatever work you do, wherever you are, the final destination and the end of such work is Allah. This is because we will all certainly die and when we do, we return to Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ). Whatever you do, the end is Allah:

¹⁰ Sūrah 'Abasa, 80:34-37.

﴿وَأَنَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ الْمُنْتَهَىٰ﴾

And to your Lord is the end.¹¹

This is why he says, ﴿**laboring toward your Lord**﴾. Whatever a sinner does, his finality is with Allah.

﴿إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا إِيَابَهُمْ ﴿۱﴾ ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ﴾

Certainly to us is their return, then certainly upon us their judgment.¹²

But the difference between the obedient and the sinners is that the obedient worshippers do work that is pleasing to Allah so it consequently leads them to the pleasure of Allah on the Day of Judgment. A sinner, however, does work displeasing to Allah. Still, his end is also with Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ). ﴿**Oh mankind**﴾ here includes everyone, believers and disbelievers.

﴿**you are certainly laboring toward your Lord and you will meet him**﴾ The scholars of Arabic grammar say that the ف prefixing the word used here فَمُلَاقِيهِ (*famulāqīh*) in ﴿**you will meet him**﴾ indicates a subsequent event that closely follows the last. In other words, not only will you meet Allah, this meeting will be relatively soon.

﴿إِنَّ مَا تُوعَدُونَ لَآتٍ﴾

¹¹ Sūrah al-Najm, 53:42

¹² Sūrah al-Ghāshiyah, 88:25-26

Indeed, what you are promised is coming.¹³

Each of these coming events is near.

﴿ وَمَا يُدْرِيكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ قَرِيبٌ ﴾

And what will make you realize that perhaps the hour is near?¹⁴

If you want some practical clarity that the meeting with the Lord is near, look now back at what has already passed of your life. Even if you lived for a hundred years, it will be as if all those years were only a single hour. All that has passed of our lives is like a single hour. So the meeting is near. And when each of us dies, the life in the grave that stands between the life of this world and the hereafter is certainly very near; it could occur in the blink of an eye.

Another practical example that may help clarify one's past may seem shorter than it actually was, is sleep. When a person sleeps peacefully, even if he slept twenty-four hours, when he wakes up, it often seems like his time asleep was only minutes. If this is how it feels—how past times seem to have gone by much faster—when the soul is taken from the body during this life,¹⁵ then imagine how it will be when the soul is taken

¹³ Sūrah al-An'ām, 6:134

¹⁴ Sūrah al-Shūrā, 42:17

¹⁵ The fact that our souls are taken during sleep is mentioned in Sūrah al-Zumar, 39:42:

﴿ اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا ۖ فِيمَسِكُ الَّتِي قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَىٰ ۚ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴾

Allah takes the souls at the time of their death, and those that do not die (he takes) during their sleep. Then He keeps those for which he has decreed death and releases the others for a specific term. Indeed in that are signs for people who give thought.

from the body (at death) while it is occupied with either bliss or torment (in the grave). Years will pass the deceased person as if they were nothing.

So the passing of time while one is awake seems completely different than when asleep. Someone awake from sunrise until midday may feel as though time has moved slowly, that the span was long. Yet if he had slept from sunrise to midday, the same time span would seem like no time at all. Similar to this is the man who remained dead for one hundred years. Allah then brought him back to life and:

﴿ قَالَ كَمْ لَيْتَ ۖ قَالَ لَيْتُ يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ ﴾

He said, “How long have you remained?” The man answered, “I have remained only a day or part of a day.”¹⁶

Likewise, the people of the cave remained therein, sleeping for three hundred nine years. When they finally awoke:

﴿ قَالَ قَائِلٌ مِنْهُمْ كَمْ لَيْتُمْ ۖ قَالُوا لَيْتَنَا يَوْمًا أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ ﴾

A speaker among them asked, “How long have you remained (here)?” They said, “We have remained a day or part of a day.”¹⁷

This shows that people will be amazed at how time passed them while they were dead. All the years will seem like a single instant. This is because the state of a person when his soul is removed from his body, whether partially (during sleep) or completely (at the

¹⁶ Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2:259

¹⁷ Sūrah al-Kahf, 18:19

time of death), is different than when the soul is within the body. When the soul and body are joined, he may be preoccupied with hardships, problems, ideas and thoughts that make time seem longer. Yet during sleep, many hours of time seem much shorter, and during death, time will seem even much shorter.

So people who have passed away ages ago, it will be (when they are given life again) as if they had only been dead for a day. If they are resurrected and asked how long they have been dead, they too would reply similar to, "Only for a day or part of a day." This issue of time passed by seeming shorter may be confusing for some. Yet there will be no confusion when the time spent in the grave will seem very short. For this reason, Allah says, ﴿**you will meet him**﴾ with the فَ prefix in the Arabic word, meaning this event will soon follow. How soon you will meet Allah (عزّ وجلّ).

After these six verses, Allah (عزّ وجلّ) divides people into two categories regarding this meeting with him (تعالى): those who receive their records of deeds in their right hands, and those who receive them behind their backs...



S Ū R A H A L - I N S H I Q Ā Q
V e r s e s 7 - 1 5

7	Then as for he who is given his record in his right hand	﴿ فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ يَمِينِهِ ﴾
8	He will be judged with an easy judgment	﴿ فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا ﴾
9	And he will return to his people in happiness	﴿ وَيَنْقَلِبُ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا ﴾
10	But as for he who is given his record behind his back	﴿ وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ وَرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ ﴾
11	He will cry out for destruction	﴿ فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُو ثُبُورًا ﴾
12	And will enter a blazing fire	﴿ وَيَصْلَىٰ سَعِيرًا ﴾
13	Indeed, he had (once) been among his people in happiness	﴿ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فِي أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا ﴾
14	He surely thought he would never return	﴿ إِنَّهُ ظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ يَحُورَ ﴾
15	But yes, surely his Lord was ever seeing of him. ¹⁸	﴿ بَلَىٰ إِنَّ رَبَّهُ كَانَ بِهِ بَصِيرًا ﴾

¹⁸ Sūrah al-Inshiqāq, 84:7-15

EXPLAINING SŪRAH AL-INSHIQĀQ

Verses 7 - 15

Verse 7: ﴿فَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ يَمِينِهِ﴾

﴿Then as for he who is given his record in his right hand﴾ After Allah informs mankind that they are laboring toward their Lord and that the work of them all ends with Allah as he says:

﴿وَلِلَّهِ غَيْبُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَإِلَيْهِ يُرْجَعُ الْأَمْرُ كُلُّهُ﴾

And to Allah belongs the unseen of the heavens and the earth and to him will be returned all matters.¹⁹

After mentioning that, Allah then says, ﴿Then as for he who is given his record in his right hand﴾, and this indicates that among those workers who are laboring toward their Lord, some of them will receive their books of deeds in their right hands, others from behind their backs.

Since the verb in ﴿he who is given﴾ is in the passive voice then who is doing the action – who is giving? It is assumed that the angels are the ones distributing the books but we do not know for sure. The important point is that such a person will be given his record of deeds, receiving it in his right hand.

¹⁹ Sūrah Hūd, 11:123

Verse 8: ﴿ فَسَوْفَ يُحَاسَبُ حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا ﴾

﴿He will be judged with an easy judgment﴾ Allah will take him to account for his deeds (e.g. beliefs, statements, actions) but it will be an easy judgment. There will be no difficulty upon such individual as has come in the *Sunnah*. The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

« إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْنِي الْمُؤْمِنَ فَيَضَعُ عَلَيْهِ كَنَفَهُ وَيَسْتُرُهُ ، فَيَقُولُ : أَتَعْرِفُ ذَنْبَ كَذَا أَتَعْرِفُ ذَنْبَ كَذَا ؟ فَيَقُولُ : نَعَمْ أَيُّ رَبِّ ، حَتَّى إِذَا قَرَّرَهُ يَذُنُوهُ وَرَأَى فِي نَفْسِهِ أَنَّهُ هَلَكَ قَالَ : سَتَرْتُهَا عَلَيْكَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَأَنَا أَعْفِرُهَا لَكَ الْيَوْمَ »

Allah will draw a believer close, placing him under his care and screening him. Allah will ask him, “Do you remember this sin and that sin?” The person will answer, “Yes, my Lord.” After he is made to confess all of his sins and he sincerely believes he is ruined, Allah will say, “I concealed them for you in life and I forgive you for them today.”²⁰

²⁰ Collected by al-Bukhārī and Muslim. About this easy reckoning, the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to say in some of his prayers (as was explained by Ibn al-'Uthaymīn in his explanation of Sūrah al-Takwīr):

« اللَّهُمَّ حَاسِبِنِي حِسَابًا يَسِيرًا »

Oh Allah, call me to account with an easy reckoning.

Upon hearing this, 'Aishah (رضي الله عنها) asked the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم), “What is an easy reckoning?” He answered:

« أَنْ يَنْظُرَ فِي كِتَابِهِ فَيَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْهُ »

That he looks into his book but pardons him (or finds in his book that he has been pardoned).

[Collected by Aḥmad (6/48) and Ibn Abī 'Āṣim in *Kitāb al-Sunnah* (no. 885). al-Albānī said it is authentic in his checking of *Kitāb al-Sunnah* (2/429).]

No doubt, this is an easy judgment, and it shows the favor of Allah to his believing worshipper in what will please the person – a welcoming happiness for him.

As for the one who judges, although it is not explicitly mentioned in the verse, it is Allah (عزّ وجلّ) as he says in other verses:

﴿ إِنَّ إِلَيْنَا إِيَابَهُمْ * ثُمَّ إِنَّ عَلَيْنَا حِسَابَهُمْ ﴾

Certainly to us is their return, then certainly upon us their judgment.²¹

Verse 9: ﴿ وَيَنْقَلِبُ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا ﴾

﴿**And he will return to his people in happiness**﴾ He will leave his judgment overjoyed and go to his family in Paradise. And this is the happiness in his heart. The prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

« أَوْلُ زُمْرَةٍ تَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مِنْ أُمَّتِي عَلَىٰ صُورَةِ الْقَمَرِ لَيْلَةَ الْبَدْرِ »

The first group of my nation to enter Paradise will appear as the full moon.²²

After that, they will be of varying levels. This brightness they will display when entering Paradise indicates the extreme happiness in their hearts. When the heart will become so overjoyed, this will be noticed from the brightness of the face.

Verse 10: ﴿ وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ وَرَاءَ ظَهْرِهِ ﴾

²¹ Sūrah al-Ghāshiyah, 88:25-26

²² Collected by al-Bukhārī and Muslim

﴿ **But as for he who is given his record behind his back** ﴾ These are the wretched people, those destined to remain miserable. Such a person will be give his record of deeds behind his back, not in his right hand. In another verse, in Sūrah al-Ḥāqqah:

﴿ وَأَمَّا مَنْ أُوتِيَ كِتَابَهُ بِشِمَالِهِ فَيَقُولُ يَا لَيْتَنِي لَمْ أُوتَ كِتَابِيهِ ﴾

But as for he who is given his record in his left hand, he will say, “Oh, I wish I had never been given my record.”²³

It has been said that those who do not receive their books in the right hand are of two types: those who receive them in their left hands, and those who receive them behind their backs. However, what is more closely correct—and Allah knows best—is that anyone who does not receive his book of deeds in his right hand, he will receive it in his left but from behind his back. This is similar to how he disregarded the book of Allah during his life, seemingly throwing it behind his back. He neither gave it any thought or concern, nor did he have any problem with opposing it.

Verse 11: ﴿ فَسَوْفَ يَدْعُو ثُبُورًا ﴾

﴿ **He will cry out for destruction** ﴾ He will pray for his own destruction. He will cry out with words of extreme grief and regret. But at that time, nothing will benefit him. The time for action has ended because such time is only during one's life. As for the hereafter, it is the time of reckoning and no action.

Verse 12: ﴿ وَيَصْلِي سَعِيرًا ﴾

²³ Sūrah al-Ḥāqqah, 69:25

﴿**And will enter a blazing fire**﴾ He will enter a fire that has been burning for him to remain therein forever if he was a disbeliever in Allah.

Verse 13: ﴿إِنَّهُ كَانَ فِي أَهْلِهِ مَسْرُورًا﴾

﴿**Indeed, he had (once) been among his people in happiness**﴾ He used to be among his family and people happy during his life. Yet this happiness will be followed by regret and perpetual sadness.

Compare between Allah's statement regarding those who receive their records with their right hands: ﴿**And (he will) return to his people in happiness**﴾ and those who receive them behind their backs: ﴿**Indeed, he had (once) been among his people in happiness**﴾. We find a key difference in these two types of happiness. The first type of happiness which the believers will have is perpetual; it will never end. As for the happiness of the disbelievers, it is temporary and will certainly soon end. While ﴿**he had (once) been among his people in happiness**﴾, from now on however (on the Day of Resurrection), he will never again experience happiness.

Verse 14: ﴿إِنَّهُ ظَنَّ أَنْ لَنْ يَحُورَ﴾

﴿**He surely thought he would never return**﴾ He was certain he would never return back to life after death. He used to say there is no such thing as resurrection; nothing will be brought back to life. He used to wonder:

﴿مَنْ يُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ﴾

“Who can give life to bones after they have decayed?”²⁴

﴿He surely thought he would never return﴾²⁵ Allah (تعالی) then refutes such thoughts, saying...

Verse 15: ﴿بَلَىٰ إِنَّ رَبَّهُ كَانَ بِهِ بَصِيرًا﴾

﴿But yes, surely his Lord was ever seeing of him﴾ Allah says, ﴿But yes﴾ meaning, on the contrary, yes he will return and be brought back to Allah. ﴿surely his Lord was ever seeing of him﴾ He will certainly return to Allah (عزّ وجلّ), the one who has been watching him all along, observing his actions, and he will be judged for them according to Allah’s wisdom and fairness.²⁶



²⁴ Sūrah Yā-Sīn, 36:78

²⁵ Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated a ḥadīth collected by Muslim in which the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

« فَيَلْقَى الْعَبْدَ فَيَقُولُ : أَيُّ فُلٍ أَلَمْتُ أكرمَكَ وَأُسَوَّدَكَ وَأَزَوَّجَكَ وَأَسَخَّرْتُ لَكَ الْخَيْلَ وَالْإِبِلَ وَأَدْرَكَتَ رَأْسُكَ وَتَرَبَّعْتُ ؟
فَيَقُولُ : بَلَى ، قَالَ : فَيَقُولُ : أَفَظَنَنْتَ أَنَّكَ مُلَاقِيٌّ ؟ فَيَقُولُ : لَا ، فَيَقُولُ : فَإِنِّي أَنَسَاكَ كَمَا نَسَيْتَنِي »

Allah will meet with a servant, asking, “Oh so-and-so, did I not honor you, give you authority, give you a spouse, give you control over horses and camels, and made you a leader (or allow you to live a comfortable life)?” The person will reply, “You did.” Allah will ask him, “Did you think you would ever meet me?” and he will answer, “No.” So Allah will say, “Then I will forget you as you forgot me.”

²⁶ Describing a disbeliever’s judgment, the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said in a ḥadīth collected by al-Bukhari and Muslim, describing Allah’s private questioning:

« وَأَمَّا الْكُفَّارُ وَالْمُنَافِقُونَ فَيُنَادَى بِهِمْ عَلَى رُءُوسِ الْخَلَائِقِ : هَؤُلَاءِ الَّذِينَ كَذَبُوا عَلَى اللَّهِ »

But as for the disbelievers and hypocrites, they will be publicly called out in front of all creation and it will be announced, “These are the ones who lied against Allah.”

SŪRAH AL-INSHIQĀQ
Verses 16-19

16	So I swear by the twilight glow	﴿ فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالشَّفَقِ ﴾
17	And by the night and what it gathers (in its darkness)	﴿ وَاللَّيْلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ ﴾
18	And by the moon when it becomes full	﴿ وَالْقَمَرِ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ ﴾
19	(That) you will surely experience phase after phase. ²⁷	﴿ لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَن طَبَقٍ ﴾

²⁷ Sūrah al-Inshiqāq, 84:16-19

EXPLAINING SŪRAH AL-INSHIQĀQ

V e r s e s 1 6 - 1 9

Verse 16: ﴿فَلَا أُقْسِمُ بِالشَّفَقِ﴾

﴿**So I swear by the twilight glow**﴾ This verse, and the two following it, contains an oath, the point being attested to in the oaths coming in the nineteenth verse. The لا (lā) at the beginning of the verse is not to be understood as a negation (which the same Arabic word could mean). Rather, when connected with oaths, scholars say the لا article emphasizes the oath, alerting the reader and confirming the promise to which is being attested. So Allah is the one making the oath, and in this particular verse, he swears by the ﴿**twilight glow**﴾.

Question: Why does Allah swear, making oaths upon certain things when anything he informs of is already the truth; why must he swear to it to confirm it? Likewise, the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) also sometimes makes oaths in his ḥadīth, yet why the need for him to swear when anything he says is already the truth?

Answer: Taking an oath is a way of placing emphasis on what is being reported. Also, the Quran was revealed in the Arabic language, and it was one of the linguistic customs of the language to make an oath as a manner of stressing the importance of certain information. So the Quran is simply in accordance with the style and expression of the same Arabic language in which it was revealed.

As for ﴿**the twilight glow**﴾, it is the reddish illumination that occurs at twilight, immediately after sunset. When this light of dusk disappears, the time of the sunset prayer is also finished and the time of the night prayer begins. This is the opinion of most scholars, although some said the time of the sunset prayer extends until the brightness of twilight is completely gone. But the majority of scholars—Abū Ḥanīfah (رَحِمَ اللهُ) also settled on this opinion—say that this ﴿**twilight glow**﴾ is the reddish light at dusk and when it disappears, the time for the night prayer has come and the sunset prayer is over.

Verse 17: ﴿وَاللَّيْلِ وَمَا وَسَقَ﴾

﴿**And by the night and what it gathers (in its darkness)**﴾ This is another oath in conjunction with ﴿**the twilight glow**﴾ in the preceding verse. In other words, Allah also swears by ﴿**the night and what it gathers (in its darkness)**﴾.

﴿**the night**﴾ is obvious; it is the nighttime. As for ﴿**and what it gathers (in its darkness)**﴾, the night gathers together everything in its darkness – animals, insects, and everything else. Some come out all together at night from their homes, their burrows. It may also include how people often gather with others at night (returning home with others, etc.).

Verse 18: ﴿وَالْقَمَرَ إِذَا اتَّسَقَ﴾

﴿**And by the moon when it becomes full**﴾ The ﴿**moon**﴾ is obvious, and it becomes full when its light is the brightest and its circular shape is complete; this is on full-moon nights.

So Allah swears by ﴿the night and what it gathers (in its darkness)﴾ and then by ﴿the moon﴾ which is the main sign of the night. He then says, making the point of his oaths...

Verse 19: ﴿لَتَرْكَبُنَّ طَبَقًا عَن طَبَقٍ﴾

﴿(That) you will surely experience phase after phase﴾ This oath is addressed to all mankind in that we will all pass through varying states. The phases of life constantly change and they include phases of time, place, the states of our bodies, and the states our hearts pass through.

The phases of time are constantly transitioning:

﴿وَتِلْكَ الْأَيَّامُ نُدَاوِلُهَا بَيْنَ النَّاسِ﴾

And these days (of varying conditions) we alternate among the people.²⁸

Some days are times of happiness, peace and comfort, and enjoyment, others are the opposite. Sometimes people experience these types of days even when there is no apparent reason why they would be having good or bad days. This is something everyone knows – a person may wake up in good spirits and then tomorrow, the opposite for no real reason. This is because all people go through ﴿phase after phase﴾.

²⁸ Sūrah Āli 'Imrān, 3:140

As for the phases of places, a person may live today in a certain place, tomorrow somewhere else and so on until they finally reach the hereafter. Yet before the hereafter, there is the grave which is only a temporary residence. It is not the final resting place, rather only a transient phase. It has been reported that a Bedouin heard someone reciting:

﴿ أَلْهَاكُمْ التَّكَاثُرُ * حَتَّىٰ زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ ﴾

Competition in (worldly) increase diverts you until you visit the graves.²⁹

Upon hearing this verse, the Bedouin said, “By Allah, a visitor is not a resident.” The Bedouin, from his basic nature, knew that after the life of the grave there is some other place toward which a person is heading. Obviously, a visitor is someone who simply visits one place then leaves for another. From this, we know that what we often read in newspapers of obituaries, “So-and-so has passed away and laid to rest in his final resting place,” we know such words are completely wrong, and what they indicate is even worse – disbelief in Allah (عَزَّ وَجَلَّ) because it would be a type of disbelief in the last day. Were someone to actually believe the grave is the final destination and that nothing else lies beyond the grave, he would be a disbeliever because the real final destination is either Paradise or the fire and not the grave.

Like time and place, people also pass through different phases with respect to their own bodies, ﴿**phase after phase**﴾. Read the statement of Allah (تعالى):

²⁹ Sūrah al-Takāthur, 102:1-2

﴿اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ ضَعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَعْفٍ قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضَعْفًا وَشَيْبَةً ۖ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْقَدِيرُ﴾

Allah is he who created you in (a state of) weakness, then gave you strength after weakness, then after strength gave (you) weakness and grey hair. He creates what he wills, and he is the All-Knowing, the Ever-Capable.³⁰

The creation of every person begins with an infant, weak and feeble, which you could hold with a single hand, the baby's hands and feet together. You have to hold him delicately because he is so weak. He then continues to grow stronger and stronger over time until he becomes a strong, hearty youth. Yet after he has reached his full strength potential in life, he begins to return back to his prior state of weakness.

Some scholars draw an analogy with these physical phases and the moon phases. Like a person, the moon begins as a crescent, weak and small. It then grows little by little until it reaches its full size and brightness. It then returns to weakness, decreasing in size little by little. We ask Allah to give us a good end to our lives.

Finally, the phases of the heart. What are these states of the heart? The heart goes through phases of blessing and delight and some of sickness and misery. About the hearts of mankind, the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

³⁰ Sūrah al-Rūm, 30:54

« إِنَّ قُلُوبَ بَنِي آدَمَ كُلَّهَا بَيْنَ إِصْبَعَيْنِ مِنْ أَصَابِعِ الرَّحْمَنِ كَقَلْبٍ وَاحِدٍ يُصْرِفُهُ
حَيْثُ يَشَاءُ »

The hearts of the sons of Adam, all of them, are between two fingers of the Most Merciful as if they were all a single heart. He turns them as he likes.³¹

If he wishes, Allah may leave a heart to stray or he may guide it. For this reason, the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to often say:

« يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ »

Oh turner of hearts, make my heart firm on your religion.³²

See the memorization chart in the appendix of this article for help learning this prayer.

³¹ Collected by Muslim. After mentioning that, the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) then said:

« اللَّهُمَّ مُصْرِفَ الْقُلُوبِ صَرِّفْ قُلُوبَنَا عَلَى طَاعَتِكَ »

Oh Allah, turner of hearts, turn our hearts toward your obedience.

³² Collected by al-Tirmidhī and al-Albānī says it is authentic in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī* (no. 2792). In the full ḥadīth, Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) was asked, “Oh mother of believers, what was the prayer (*du'ā*) the messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to most often say when he was with you?” She replied:

« يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ »

Oh turner of hearts, make my heart firm on your religion.

Umm Salamah said that when she once asked the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) why he made that particular supplication so often, he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

« يَا أُمَّ سَلَمَةَ ، إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ آدَمِيٌّ إِلَّا وَقَلْبُهُ بَيْنَ إِصْبَعَيْنِ مِنْ أَصَابِعِ اللَّهِ ، فَمَنْ شَاءَ أَقَامَ ، وَمَنْ شَاءَ أَزَاعَ »

Umm Salamah, there is no human being except that his heart is between two fingers of Allah. For whomever he wants he sets it straight, and for whomever he wants he turns it away.

See the memorization chart in the appendix for help learning this prayer.

The hearts go through amazing phases. Sometimes it is connected with this worldly life, becoming engrossed in some specific worldly thing like money. You find wealth to be the heart's main concern. Other times, the heart becomes captivated by women, they being the heart's main concern and desire. Sometimes, the heart becomes fixated on palaces and having a luxurious home.

At other times, the heart is with Allah (عزّ وجلّ) as it should constantly be. At such times, the heart sees the worldly life as nothing more than the means with which to worship Allah and obey him. The person then uses this life, allowing it to serve him because this life was created for him, and he was not created to serve it.

The people connected to this life are those who serve it, those who strive and exhaust themselves chasing it, trying to gather as much of it as they can. Some people may spend their nights, exhausting themselves, carefully going over their checkbooks, their bank statements, their bills – they work so hard taking from this life, carefully calculating what they give back to it. In reality, this life merely uses such people, making them serve the worldly life.

As for those connected with the hereafter, they simply use the worldly life as a service. They take from it only in what pleases Allah, and they give from it only when it pleases Allah. The content person for whom Allah has made his sustenance even barely sufficient for him, he is dignified, having no need of what others have. Such a person does not allow what he has been given to make him unhappy or deter him from the obedience of Allah. This is the service of this life.

These are the phases the heart may go through, and these phases are the most significant of the four types (i.e. the phases of time, place, the body, and the heart). For this reason, we should continuously check our hearts, constantly considering: What are you now most preoccupied with? Where have you gone now? Why have you become unconcerned with Allah?

But Satan runs through the veins of people and overcomes many people, often taking his attention away from his prayer which is the greatest act of worship after the testimony of faith. When he begins to pray, his heart immediately begins thinking about this or that so much that he finishes his prayer not having understood anything of it, not having focused on his prayer at all. Some people wonder why prayer does not stop them from immoral and bad deeds. Where is Allah's promise regarding prayer?³³ My brother, is it the case that as soon as you begin your prayer, all sorts of ideas come to your mind; are you then actually praying to Allah? You prayed with your body but not your heart. There has come a ḥadīth in which the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

« إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ لَيَنْصَرِفُ ، وَمَا كُتِبَ لَهُ إِلَّا عَشْرُ صَلَاتِهِ ، تَسْعَهَا ، ثَمَنُهَا ، سَبْعَهَا ،
سُدْسُهَا ، خُمُسُهَا ، رُبْعُهَا ، ثُلُثُهَا ، نِصْفُهَا »

A man may leave (after finishing his prayer) and only a tenth of his prayer is written for him, or a ninth, an eighth, a seventh, a sixth, a fifth, a fourth, a third of it, or half of his prayer.³⁴

³³ This promise is in Sūrah al-'Ankabūt, 29:45:

﴿ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ﴾

Certainly, prayer keeps (one) away from indecency and evil deeds.

³⁴ Collected by Abū Dāwūd. al-Albānī said it is Ḥasan in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abī Dāwūd* (no. 714).

Title: Explaining Sūrah al-Inshiqāq

Original Title: تفسير جزء عمّ

Original Author: Muḥammad Ibn Ṣāliḥ al-'Uthaymīn

The prayer will be written for you in accordance with how much of it you understand and on how much of it you concentrate.

To conclude, the heart passes through **﴿phase after phase﴾**.



S Ū R A H A L - I N S H I Q Ā Q
V e r s e s 2 0 - 2 5

20	So what is the matter with them that they do not believe	﴿ فَمَا لَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴾
21	And when the Quran is recited to them, they do not humble themselves?	﴿ وَإِذَا قُرِئَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقُرْآنُ لَا يَسْجُدُونَ ﴾
22	But those who disbelieve deny	﴿ بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُكْذِبُونَ ﴾
23	And Allah is most knowing of what they keep within themselves	﴿ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُوعُونَ ﴾
24	So give them tidings of a painful punishment	﴿ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴾
25	Except for those who believe and do righteous deeds. For them is a reward that will never end.³⁵	﴿ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ ﴾

³⁵ Sūrah al-Inshiqāq, 84:20-25

EXPLAINING SŪRAH AL-INSHIQĀQ

Verses 20-25

Verse 20: ﴿فَمَا لَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ﴾

﴿So what is (the matter) with them that they do not believe﴾ What is it that prevents them from believing? Why would they not believe in Allah, in the last day, and spend from what Allah has provided them? What stops them from accepting faith? What harm would it do them just to believe? A believer among the family of the Pharaoh said:

﴿أَتَقْتُلُونَ رَجُلًا أَنْ يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ وَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ ۗ وَإِنْ يَكُ كَاذِبًا فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُ ۗ وَإِنْ يَكُ صَادِقًا يُصِيبْكُمْ بَعْضُ الَّذِي يَعِدُكُمْ﴾

“Do you kill a man (Moses) just because he says, ‘My Lord is Allah’ while he has brought you clear proofs from your Lord? And if he should be lying, then upon him is (the consequence of) his lie; but if he should be truthful, there will strike you some of what he promises you.”³⁶

So why would someone not believe in his Lord? Allah says, reprimanding them: ﴿So what is (the matter) with them that they do not believe?﴾

Verse 21: ﴿وَإِذَا قُرِئَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقُرْآنُ لَا يَسْجُدُونَ﴾

﴿And when the Quran is recited to them, they do not humble themselves?﴾

Meaning: Why do you not humble yourself before Allah? The Arabic word, the verb of

³⁶ Sūrah Ghāfir, 40:28

which is used here, سُجُودٌ (*Sujūd*) means to humble oneself in this particular verse. Even if you do not bow down and prostrate on the ground, the heart must still become humble and soften. If your heart does that, you are a believer.

﴿ إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَإِذَا تُلِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُهُ زَادَتْهُمْ إِيمَانًا ﴾

The believers are only those who, when Allah is mentioned, their hearts become fearful, and when his verses are recited to them, they increase them in faith.³⁷

If your heart is not in such a condition—if it does not become fearful and increase in faith when Allah's verses are recited—you have within you one of the characteristics of the polytheists, those who ﴿ **when the Quran is recited to them, they do not humble themselves** ﴾.

One of the signs of humbleness before Allah (عزّ وجلّ) when reading the Quran is that when an individual reads a verse of bowing (in which the verse encourages bowing and is marked with ﴿ in modern copies of the Quran), he bows down, prostrating to Allah out of humility and submission to Allah. Some scholars even use this particular verse to prove that it is mandatory to bow down when reading such verses. They say if a person comes to a verse of bowing and does not prostrate, he is sinful.

³⁷ Sūrah al-Anfāl, 8:2

The correct opinion, however, is that it is not an obligation even though it is the opinion of Abū Ḥanīfah and also of Ibn Taymiyyah. It is more likely not required because it is confirmed in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī that 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) was giving a Friday sermon once and read Sūrah al-Naḥl and when he came to the verse of bowing,³⁸ he came down from the pulpit and bowed his head to the ground. The following Friday, he read the same verse but did not bow down. He then said, "Allah did not make it an obligation to bow down unless we choose to do so."³⁹ 'Umar said that in a gathering of many other companions (رضي الله عنهم) and none of them disputed what he said. And the guidance of 'Umar is part of the guidance we are instructed to follow.⁴⁰

Because of this, the most correct position is that bowing down when passing verses of prostration is not compulsory. Yet it is still a confirmed practice from the *Sunnah*. So if you come to a verse of bowing, then bow down any time you read one, night or day.

³⁸ Sūrah al-Naḥl, 16:49-50:

﴿ وَلِلَّهِ يَسْجُدُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ دَابَّةٍ وَالْمَلَائِكَةِ وَهُمْ لَا يُسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ يَخَافُونَ رَبَّهُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ
وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ ﴾

And to Allah prostrates whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth of creatures, and the angels, and they are not arrogant. They fear their Lord above them, and they do what they are commanded.

³⁹ Collected by al-Bukhārī

⁴⁰ The ḥadīth proving this is collected by al-Timirdhī and considered authentic by al-Albānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Timirdhī* (no. 2157). al-'Irbāḍ Ibn Sāriyah said: The messenger of Allah (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) gave us a very affective sermon one day after the morning prayer from which the eyes cried and the hearts were frightened. A man said, "Messenger of Allah, this is a farewell sermon so what do you advise us with?" He (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

« أَوْصِيكُمْ بِتَقْوَى اللَّهِ وَالسَّمْعِ وَالطَّاعَةِ وَإِنْ عَبْدٌ حَبَشِيٌّ فَإِنَّهُ ، مَنْ يَعِشْ مِنْكُمْ يَرَى اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا ، وَإِيَّاكُمْ
وَمُحَدَّثَاتِ الْأُمُورِ فَإِنَّهَا ضَلَالَةٌ ، فَمَنْ أَدْرَكَ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ فَعَلَيْهِ بِسُنَّتِي وَسُنَّةِ الْخُلَفَاءِ الرَّاشِدِينَ الْمَهْدِيِّينَ ، عَضُوا
عَلَيْهَا بِالنَّوَاجِذِ »

I advise you with the fear of Allah and to listen to and obey (your leaders) even if an Abyssinian slave (rules over you). For whomever among you lives (long enough) will see many differences so beware of the newly invented matters for they are misguidance. So whoever among you reaches that then upon you is to follow my *Sunnah* and the *Sunnah* of the rightly-guided caliphs. Bite onto it with the molar teeth.

You pronounce, “*Allāh Akbar*,” and then bow your head to the ground. When you rise up, there is no need to repeat “*Allāh Akbar*,” or say the final greetings as you would during prayer – this, of course, is if you are not in formal prayer. If you prostrate (due to reading a verse of bowing) during prayer however, then you must pronounce “*Allāh Akbar*,” when you bow down to the ground and when you rise; saying this is required for any prostration in prayer.

Verse 22: ﴿بَلِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا يُكَذِّبُونَ﴾

﴿**But those who disbelieve deny**﴾ After Allah (سبحانه وتعالى) mentions that they refuse to humble themselves when his verses are read to them, he then explains the reason for their refusal. It is their denial of what the messengers (عليهم الصلاة والسلام) have brought. Any individual with correct faith and belief would rightfully do what he is commanded (by Allah) and leave what he is forbidden. Correct faith encourages one to do that.

Anyone you find committing sins Allah has forbidden or not fulfilling what he commanded, such behavior only comes from weakness of faith. This is why faith, according to mainstream Muslims who follow the Sunnah, is truthful acceptance requiring submission. So if you see anyone leaving off the obligations of Islam or some of them, or committing sins, know that his faith is weak. Otherwise he would carry out what Allah instructs him to do and not fall into sinning.

﴿**But those who disbelieve deny**﴾ The reason they refuse to humble themselves is because they disbelieve and deny what the messengers of Allah brought.

Verse 23: ﴿ وَاللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا يُوعُونَ ﴾

﴿ **And Allah is most knowing of what they keep within themselves** ﴾ Allah knows better than anyone what they gather in their hearts (of beliefs, ideas), what they gather of wealth, and what they collectively cooperate in regarding their opposition and disobedience to Allah's messengers. In fact, they even went further by waging war and physically fighting against the messengers. The disbelievers showed enmity toward the messengers (عليهم الصّلاة والسّلم) every time they were sent to people. Such people have always collectively gathered in their plots against the prophets. Therefore, Allah threatens them in this verse with ﴿ **And Allah is most knowing of what they keep within themselves** ﴾ – everything they gather and use of statements, actions, hatred, hostility, and wealth in opposition to the messengers (عليهم الصّلاة والسّلم).

Verse 24: ﴿ فَبَشِّرْهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴾

﴿ **So give them tidings of a painful punishment** ﴾ Tell them about the coming painful punishments which will certainly happen. The one addressed by ﴿ **So give them tidings** ﴾ is generally the messenger, Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلّم). However, it could also include anyone related to the verse. So we ourselves should tell every disbeliever in Allah about such punishments that are waiting for them as Allah says:

﴿ وَانْتَظِرُوا إِنَّهُمْ مُنْتَظِرُونَ ﴾

So wait. Indeed, they are also waiting.⁴¹

⁴¹ Sūrah al-Sajdah, 32:30

Verse 25: ﴿إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُونٍ﴾

﴿**Except for those who believe and do righteous deeds. For them is a reward that will never end**﴾ The Arabic word إِلَّا (*illā*), “except” here takes the meaning of “but” because there is no actual exception connected with the previous verses, ﴿**But those who disbelieve deny...So give them tidings of a painful punishment**﴾. This meaning is understood because ﴿**those who believe and do righteous deeds**﴾ are not included among those who disbelieve and deny. They do not deny anything of the message. Rather, they believe and accept it as truth. In Arabic grammar, this إِلَّا (*illā*) concept is called a “disconnected exception” which takes the meaning of “but.” Therefore, the meaning of this verse is ﴿**But those who believe and do righteous deeds...**﴾

As for ﴿**those who believe and do righteous deeds**﴾, they are the believers who believe with their hearts, and their belief necessitates their bodies to do righteous work. Such people will have no portion of the aforementioned punishment; they are not with those who wait for it. Instead, they will have ﴿**a reward that will never end**﴾.

What are righteous deeds? They include any action that is done with two conditions: sincerity and following of the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم).

Sincerity is to be sincere to Allah (تعالى) in that the reason the action is performed is solely to please Allah (عزّ وجلّ), seeking only his pleasure, only his rewards, and seeking salvation from the fire only from Allah. Such a sincere person seeks nothing of this worldly life as a result of his actions.

As for following the prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), after being sincere, the action must be done in accordance with the way the messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) did it, whether it is actively doing something or the action of avoiding doing something. The person follows the messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) in doing the actions he did and avoiding the actions he avoided. If the prophet (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) did something and there was a reason to do it in his time, then the *Sunnah* is to do such an action if the same reason exists in our time. Similarly, if a reason for an action existed in his time yet he did not do the action, then the *Sunnah* is to leave such actions.

﴿ **For them is a reward that will never end** ﴾, a reward that will never cease and which they will never stop enjoying. It will last forever. The verses and texts of the perpetuation of Paradise are numerous and well known in both the Quran and *Sunnah*. The rewards of the hereafter will never end. It will not be like this life wherein a tree may produce fruit at a certain time but not at other times, or the ground may grow vegetation during specific times but not others. In contrast, the enjoyments and rewards in Paradise are perpetual; they will continuously last forever.

﴿ وَلَهُمْ رِزْقُهُمْ فِيهَا بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا ﴾

And they will have their provision therein, morning and evening (i.e. always).⁴²

⁴² Sūrah Maryam, 19:62. And in the ḥadīth collected in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Abū Sa'īd and Abū Hurayrah (رضي الله عنهما) both said that Allah's messenger (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ) said:

We ask Allah (تعالی) to make us among the believers who do righteous work and those who avoid sins. Allah is certainly kind and generous. My peace and prayers be upon our prophet, Muhammad (صَلَّى اللهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ), and upon his family and companions.



« إِذَا دَخَلَ أَهْلُ الْجَنَّةِ الْجَنَّةَ يُنَادِي مُنَادٍ: إِنَّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَحْيَوْا ، فَلَا تَمُوتُوا أَبَدًا ، إِنَّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَصِحُّوا ، فَلَا تَسْقَمُوا أَبَدًا ،
وَأَنَّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَشَبَّهُوا فَلَا تَهْرَمُوا أَبَدًا ، وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ أَنْ تَنْعَمُوا ، فَلَا تَبْأَسُوا أَبَدًا »

When the people of Paradise have entered Paradise, a caller will call out, “You will live forever and never die again. You will be healthy forever and never be sick again. You will be young forever and never grow old again. And you will be happy forever and never be sad again.”

A P P E N D I X

A P R A Y E R F O R A N
O b e d i e n t H e a r t

In a ḥadīth collected by al-Tirmidhī, Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) was asked, “Oh mother of believers, what was the prayer (*du'ā*) the messenger of Allah (صلى الله عليه وسلم) used to most often say when he was with you?” She replied:

« يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي عَلَى دِينِكَ »

Oh turner of hearts, make my heart firm on your religion.

Umm Salamah also said that when she asked the prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) why he made that particular supplication so often, he (صلى الله عليه وسلم) said:

« يَا أُمَّ سَلَمَةَ ، إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ آدَمِيٌّ إِلَّا وَقَلْبُهُ بَيْنَ أُصْبَعَيْنِ مِنْ أَصَابِعِ اللَّهِ ، فَمَنْ شَاءَ أَقَامَ ، وَمَنْ شَاءَ أَرَاغَ »

Umm Salamah, there is no human being except that his heart is between two fingers of Allah. For whomever he wants he sets it straight, and for whomever he wants he turns it away.⁴³

To facilitate this prayer, a memorization chart is included on the following page.

⁴³ Collected by al-Tirmidhī and al-Albānī says it is authentic in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan al-Tirmidhī* (no. 2792).

A PRAYER FOR AN
Obedient Heart
(Memorization Chart)

1	يَا مُقَلِّبَ الْقُلُوبِ
	Yā muqallibal-qulūb
	Oh turner of hearts,
2	ثَبِّتْ قَلْبِي
	thabbit qalbī
	make my heart firm
3	عَلَى دِينِكَ
	'alá dīnik
	on your religion.