

Divine Blessings, Belief, and Piety: A Comprehensive Analysis of Surah Al-A'raf, Ayah 96 and Related Islamic Teachings

Introduction

Surah Al-A'raf, Ayah 96, conveys a fundamental principle regarding divine blessings and consequences for human actions. The verse outlines a divine promise and a consequence, illustrating the relationship between belief, piety, and the flow of blessings or divine punishment.

The verse under discussion is from Surah Al-A'raf, Ayah 96:

لو أن أهل القرى آمنوا واتقوا لفتحنا عليهم بركات من السماء والأرض ولكن كذبوا فأخذناهم بما كانوا يكسبون

"And if the people of the towns had believed and guarded (against evil) We would certainly have opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth, but they rejected, so We overtook them for what they had earned."

The Promise of Blessings for Belief and Piety

The verse begins with a conditional statement: **"And if the people of the towns had believed and kept from evil..."**

Belief and Piety (Iman and Taqwa): This refers to the people of the towns, particularly those who were later destroyed due to their denial and disobedience. Had they believed in the Divine prophets and avoided polytheism and sinning, their condition would have been different.

"Blessings from the Heaven and the Earth": The Arabic term /barakat/ is the plural of /barakah/, signifying "fix and continual favours." It encompasses a plurality of good and its multiplication. These blessings include both material and spiritual bounties, such as blessings in lifetimes, knowledge, and books.

Manifestation of Blessings: If the people had fulfilled the conditions of belief and piety, Allah would have "**opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth.**" This implies an increase in blessings through means such as abundant rain from the heaven and a profusion of plants and fruits from the earth.

Interpretations of Blessings: Some commentators suggest that "blessings of the heaven" refer to supplications that are answered, while "blessings of the earth" signify the fulfillment of requests. The example of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) is cited, who promised his people the blessings of heaven if they believed.

The Islamic concept of the promise of blessings for belief (Iman) and piety (Taqwa) emphasizes that divine favors are bestowed upon individuals and communities who adhere to faith and righteousness. According to the Holy Quran, faith (Iman) and piety (Taqwa) are the two primary sources and causes for the provision of blessings.

- **Iman (Faith and Belief):** This is described as an action of the heart, signifying love towards truth and belief in the resurrection. It is essential for mental health, welfare, and prosperity. It involves testifying to the Divine prophets and having faith and conviction.
- **Taqwa (Piety and God-Consciousness):** This is the outward manifestation of spiritual awareness of God (swt). It implies using God's blessings correctly, avoiding excessiveness, and being mindful of how one uses blessings so as not to be disobedient to God. It involves keeping from evil, avoiding polytheism, and refraining from sinning. Taqwa, or piety (wara'*), when combined with asceticism in this world, leads to the hope of Paradise.

The way to divine blessing goes through the combination of faith and righteous deeds. A person lacking either faith or righteous actions will not earn these blessings. An individual who acts without faith will find their actions devoid of blessings, and similarly, blessings do not descend upon a believer who does not act based on their faith.

Definition of 'Barakat'

The Arabic term /barakat/ is the plural of /barakah/, which is defined as "fix and continual favours." It encompasses the plurality of good and its multiplication, signifying growth, increase, abundance, and prosperity. These blessings include both material and spiritual bounties. Examples include blessings in lifetimes, knowledge, and books.

In Islam, blessings (Arabic: barakah, plural barakat) are profound divine favors that signify growth, increase, and benefit. They are inextricably linked with Allah's mercy and are considered a manifestation or an example of His boundless compassion and benevolence towards His creation.

The Holy Quran defines a blessing as anything that is to the benefit of man, family and society and ultimately leads to the right reward in the hereafter. It signifies a state of being achieved through faith and piety, leading to mental health, welfare, prosperity, and eternal reward.

Blessing, in the context of the Quran, means a turning towards someone or something with mercy:

- When attributed to Allah, it signifies that He turns towards His servant with mercy.
- When attributed to angels, it means they become a medium to convey Allah's mercy to the servant.
- When ascribed to humans, it means turning to the Lord with humility and calling upon Him.

The term Barakat denotes fixed and continual favors, abundance, multiplication, growth, and increase of good. It includes both material and spiritual blessings, such as an increase in lifespan, knowledge, and beneficial books. A blessing from Allah is not merely a temporary benefit; it signifies goodness that is abundant, lasting, beneficial, and brings prosperity and protection.

In the Quranic context, blessings from heaven and earth are associated with faith and abstention from evil. These divine favors include rain, the abundance of plants and fruits, and other increasing benefits granted by Allah. The expression al-mubarakah is

explained as the bestowal of abundant good, which may encompass benefits in both this world and the Hereafter, including worldly sustenance and guidance towards benefit and prosperity.

Barakat is understood as a manifestation of Allah's abundant goodness and mercy. Divine mercy is described as all-embracing, and additional mercy and blessings are connected with faith, gratitude, good actions, prayer, charity, and obedience to Allah and His Messenger.

The phrase "RAHMATUL LAAHE WA BARAKAATOH" ("the mercy of Allah and His blessings") is a supplication invoking the mercy and blessings of Allah upon the household of prophethood, the prophets, and the righteous, seeking protection and guidance. Spreading mercy to others also elicits the descent of Allah's mercy.

Conditions for Receiving Blessings

The prerequisite for receiving these divine blessings is a combination of:

- **Belief (Iman):** This entails faith in the Divine prophets and testifying to them. This involves testifying to the Divine prophets and having faith and conviction. It is the action of the heart and belief, interpreted as love towards truth and conviction in the resurrection. It is essential for mental health, welfare, and prosperity.
- **Piety (Taqwa):** This involves keeping from evil, avoiding polytheism, and refraining from sinning. Piety is described as the outward manifestation of spiritual awareness of God, demonstrating righteous deeds that stem from faith. Piety is described as the outward manifestation of spiritual awareness of God, while faith is the action of the heart and belief.

The way to divine blessing therefore goes through the combination of faith (an action of the heart) and righteous deeds (outward manifestations). If a person lacks either of these, they will not earn the blessings. For instance, actions performed without faith will lose their blessings, and blessings do not descend upon a believer who does not act based on their faith. A person lacking either of these will not earn

the blessings, and any actions without faith, or a believer who does not act on their faith, will lose blessings in their endeavors.

However, it is important to note that possessing wealth or health does not necessarily indicate special divine blessings, especially if they stem from forbidden sources, as such comforts would be devoid of blessings. Mere possession of wealth, health, or material comforts does not automatically signify a divine blessing, especially if derived from forbidden sources. Such increases "will be devoid of blessings."

Beyond these core conditions, other actions and characteristics contribute to receiving blessings:

- **Gratitude:** Being thankful for blessings increases one's knowledge and understanding, and Allah promises to enhance blessings for the grateful.
- **Fulfilling the Needs of Others:** Fulfilling the desires of others is considered a blessing from God, and if one acts upon it, it draws increased blessings.
- **Virtuous Character:** Being truthful, sincere, knowledgeable, maintaining prayers, and participating in charity bring blessings.
- **Remembrance of Allah:** Those preoccupied with Allah's remembrance receive more than those who merely ask.

A Hadith further emphasizes this conditional aspect, stating that Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, revealed to one of the prophets:

عن سليمان الجعفري، عن الرضا (عليه السلام) اقل: أوجع هلا عذ وجل إلى نبي من الأنبياء إذا أطعت رضيت، وإذا رضيت. ابركت، وليس لبركتي نهاية، وإذا عصيت غضبت، وإذا غضبت لعنت، ولعنتي تبلغ السابع من الوري

From Sulaiman Al-Ja'fari, from Al-Rida (peace be upon him) who said: **Allah, the Mighty and Majestic, revealed to one of the prophets: When you obey Me, I am pleased, and when I am pleased, I bless, and My blessing has no end. And when you disobey Me, I become angry, and when I become angry, I curse, and My curse reaches the seventh generation of offspring.**

— Wasail al-Shia Vol. 15, Section 2, Chapter 41, Hadith 20591

Several specific qualities and actions contribute to receiving and maintaining divine blessings:

- **Truthfulness, Sincerity, and Knowledge:** These characteristics are mentioned as bringing blessings from Allah.
- **Maintaining Prayers and Participating in Charity:** Regular prayer and giving charity are significant factors.
- **Gratitude and Thankfulness:** Being grateful for the blessings received is a direct condition for Allah to increase His blessings upon a servant. Being thankful is also crucial as it increases one's knowledge and understanding, leading to growth.

عن عبدهللا بن إسحاق الجعفري، عن أبي عبدهللا (عليه السلام) اقل: مكتوب في التوراة: اشكر من أنعم عليك، وأنعم عل .من شكرك، فإنه ال زوال للنعماء إذا شكرت، وال بقاء لها إذا كفرت، الشكر زائدة في النعم، وأمان من الغير

From Abdullah bin Ishaq Al-Ja'fari, from Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) who said: **It is written in the Torah: Be grateful to the one who bestows blessings upon you, and bestow blessings upon the one who is grateful to you. For blessings do not diminish when gratitude is shown, and they do not remain when ingratitude is shown. Gratitude increases blessings and provides security from change.**

— Wasail al-Shia Vol. 15, Section 2, Chapter 44, Hadith 20618

- **Fulfilling Obligations when Blessings Increase:** When Allah's blessings increase upon an individual, the needs of people upon that person also become greater. Fulfilling these needs and obligations regarding the blessings ensures their continuation. If these obligations are neglected, the blessings are exposed to removal.
- **Putting into Practice the Sunnah of Allah's Messenger:** Adhering to the traditions and practices of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him and his progeny).

- **Refraining from What Allah has Made Unlawful:** Avoiding forbidden actions and adhering to divine prohibitions.
- **Renouncing This World and Wishing for That Which is with Allah:** Cultivating detachment from worldly desires and focusing on the Hereafter.
- **Earning Good and Lawful Provision:** Ensuring that one's sustenance is acquired through permissible and righteous means.
- **Paying Obligatory Financial Rights:** This includes paying alms (Zakat) and the one-fifth (Khums).
- **Remembrance of Allah:** The one who is too preoccupied with Allah's remembrance to ask for anything is given more than those who do ask.
- **Trading:** Blessing (felicity) is composed of ten parts, with nine-tenths of it consisting in trading and one-tenth consisting in the skins (of sheep).

عن عبد المؤمن النصارى، عن أبي جعفر (عليه السلام) (قل: اقل رسول هلا) صل هلا :
عليه وآله: البركة عشرة أجزاء. تسعة أعشارها في التجارة، والعشر الباقي في الجلود. اقل
الصدوق: يعني ابلجلود الغنم، واستدل بما أيتي

From Abdul Mumin Al-Ansari, from Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him) who said:
The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) said: Blessing is divided into ten parts: nine tenths of it is in trade, and the remaining tenth is in skins. Al-Sadooq said: By skins he means sheep, and he inferred this from what follows.

— Wasail al-Shia Vol. 17, Section 1, Chapter 1, Hadith 21846

For receiving Allah's eternal blessings, the conditions include:

- Being unattached to this world.
- Refraining from following carnal desires.

It is crucial not to be deceived by appearances; possessing wealth, health, or other desirable provisions does not automatically signify special divine blessings. Blessings must be used according to divine guidance, directed toward worship, obedience, generosity, service, and moral improvement to be spiritually beneficial. Additionally, when Allah continuously sends blessings despite sins, it may be a means of gradually

driving one towards greater punishment. One should be cautious and receive blessings with gratitude when they arrive.

Source and Types of Blessings

All blessings originate solely from Allah (swt). He is the ultimate giver of all bounties, and humans receive everything they possess from Him.

The two primary types of blessings that Allah bestows:

1. **Enabling Blessings:** These create within individuals the capacity for growth and self-perfection, fostering a natural inclination towards purity and divine manners.
2. **Mercy-Based Blessings:** These are granted to people in return for their good deeds and worship.

Additionally, blessings can be categorized by their manifestation:

- **Practical Blessings:** These are Allah's favors towards human beings in the form of guidance, prophethood (like Prophet Muhammad), and imamate.
- **Verbal Blessings:** These refer to the expressions of gratitude and praise that humans are expected to offer in response to Allah's favors.

Blessings can be both apparent and hidden, encompassing spiritual and material aspects. Well-being, for instance, is considered the second greatest blessing after faith (Iman), available in both this world and the Hereafter.

In Islamic teachings, the source of all blessings is Allah (swt). The Holy Quran explicitly states that blessings emanate from Him. Furthermore, Islamic teachings convey that Allah has subjected all that is in the heavens and the earth to humanity and has bestowed upon them His bounties, both apparent and hidden. This affirms Allah as the singular origin of all favors and mercies.

Blessings can be categorized in several ways, highlighting their diverse nature and impact:

1. **Practical Blessings:** These refer to Allah's direct favor towards human beings in the form of divine guidance, prophethood, and imamate. The Quran cites these as examples of practical blessings, which are instrumental in enabling individuals to grow, perfect themselves, and cultivate tendencies towards purity and divine manners.
2. **Verbal Blessings:** These are the expressions of gratitude and praise that human beings are expected to offer in acknowledgment of Allah's numerous favors.
3. **Enabling Blessings:** This type of blessing involves the creation within individuals of the capacity and ability to grow and achieve self-perfection. It instills an innate inclination towards purity and divine manners, thereby equipping individuals with the potential for spiritual and moral development.
4. **Mercy-Based Blessings:** These are blessings bestowed upon people as a return for their good deeds and worship, signifying Allah's abundant mercy. This category underscores the principle of divine recompense for human effort and obedience.
5. **Apparent and Hidden Blessings:** Allah has endowed humanity with bounties that are both discernible and concealed.
 - **Apparent blessings** are tangible and observable. Examples include intellect, hearing, sight, endurance, and the entire creation of the earth and its contents. This encompasses natural elements like the sun, moon, stars, land, sea, heat, cold, humidity, and air, as well as provisions like food, water, animals, and plants. Specific examples such as water, fire, and sheep are also mentioned.
 - **Hidden blessings** are often intangible but profoundly beneficial, primarily spiritual in nature. These include the divine guidance brought by the Prophet, the Holy Quran, and the leadership of the Prophet's household.
6. **Blessings Leading to Eternal Reward:** The Holy Quran considers faith (iman) and piety (taqwa) as fundamental sources of blessing. These spiritual attributes manifest as an eternal reward in the hereafter for those who remain faithful to Allah. Ultimately, anything that benefits an individual, their family,

and society, and leads to a righteous reward in the hereafter, is considered a blessing.

7. **Composition of Felicity (Blessing):** A specific aspect of blessing, referred to as felicity, is described as consisting of ten parts. Of these, nine-tenths are attributed to trading, and one-tenth to the skins (of sheep), indicating particular avenues through which certain forms of worldly blessing or prosperity can be realized.

The varied categorizations of blessings—including practical, verbal, enabling, mercy-based, apparent, and hidden—illustrate the comprehensive scope of divine favor, encompassing spiritual guidance, physical provisions, and the inherent capabilities bestowed upon humanity. All these blessings stem from Allah's infinite mercy and are ultimately intended for human benefit and their ultimate reward in the hereafter.

Manifestations of Blessings from the Heaven and the Earth

The "blessings from the heaven and the earth" are diverse and can be understood in several ways:

Material and Environmental Blessings

- **From the Heaven:** This primarily refers to abundant rain, which is crucial for life. Some commentators also suggest it refers to supplications that are answered.
- **From the Earth:** This includes a profusion of plants and fruits, leading to abundance in sustenance. It also encompasses the fulfillment of requests.
- **General Worldly Good:** These blessings also manifest as favorable living conditions and abundance in sustenance, as described in relation to the prayer for "good in this world."

Spiritual and Personal Blessings

- **Growth and Perfection:** Blessings enable individuals to grow, perfect themselves, and cultivate a tendency towards purity and divine manners.
- **Knowledge and Wisdom:** Blessings can be found in knowledge, particularly when associated with reverence and respect for scholars.
- **Longevity and Good Character:** Blessings can extend to one's lifetime and foster good character.
- **Divine Favor:** The mercy given to people in return for their good deeds and worship.
- **Internal Well-being:** Faith and piety, as sources of blessing, are necessary for mental health, welfare, and prosperity.
- **Guidance:** Boons or blessings can also include the guidance of the Prophet, the Quran, and the leadership of the Prophet's household.

The promise that Allah would "open up" blessings indicates an increase and continual flow of good.

The example of Prophet Noah (peace be upon him) is mentioned, who promised his people the blessings of heaven if they believed, underscoring the consistent divine principle that belief and piety lead to the opening of blessings.

Allah has bestowed countless blessings upon humanity, subjugating whatever is in the skies and whatever is in the earth, and providing His bounties, apparent and hidden. These include:

- **Natural Elements:** Intellect, hearing, seeing, endurance, the earth and its contents (sun, moon, stars, land, sea, heat, cold, humidity, air, food, water, animals, and plants).
- **Spiritual and Worldly Welfare:** Mental health, welfare, prosperity, and ultimately, eternal reward in the hereafter.
- **Divine Approval:** Allah loves to see His blessings manifested upon His servant. When a blessing appears upon a servant, that person is called "the beloved of Allah, one who proclaims Allah's blessing."

عن أبي عبد هلالا)عليه السالم(اقل: إذا أنعم هلالا عدل عبد بنعمة أحب أن يراها عليه أنه جميل يحب الجمال.

From Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) who said: **When Allah bestows a blessing upon a servant, He loves to see it manifested upon him, for He is Beautiful and loves beauty.**

— Wasail al-Shia Vol. 1, Section 1, Chapter 1, Hadith 5740

ويحب أن يرى أثر نعمه، عن أبي بصير اقل: اقل أمير المؤمنين (عليه السالم): إن هلالاً جميل يحب الجمال. عل عبده

From Abu Basir who said: Amir al-Mu'minin (peace be upon him) said: **Indeed Allah is Beautiful and loves beauty, and He loves to see the effects of His blessings upon His servant.**

— Wasail al-Shia Vol. 1, Section 1, Chapter 1, Hadith 5739

عدة من أصحابنا عن سهل بن زياد عن علي بن أسباط عن رواه عن أبي عبد الله (عليه السلام) قال إذا أنعم الله على عبده بنعمة أحب أن يراها عليه لأنه جميل يحب الجمال .

A number of our people have narrated from Sahl ibn Ziyad from Ali ibn Asbat from the one who narrated to him who has said the following: "Abu 'Abd Allah (peace be upon him), has said, '**When Allah grants a bounty to His servant He loves to see it on him; He is beautiful and loves beauty.**'"

— Al-Kafi (Vol. 6) by Shaykh Muhammad b. Yaqub al-Kulayni, Book 7, Chapter 1, Hadith #4

عن ابن أبي عمير، اقل: اقل أبو عبد هلالا (عليه السالم) إنني أكره للرجل أن يكون عليه من هلالا نعمة فال يظهرها

From Ibn Abi Umayr, he said: Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) said: "**Indeed, I dislike for a man to have a blessing from Allah upon him and not display it.**"

— Wasail al-Shia Vol. 5, Section 1, Chapter 2, Hadith 5750

وعن عيل بن محمد عن أبي عبد هلالا (عليه السالم) اقل: إذا أنعم هلالا عل عبده بنعمة فظهرت عليه سمي حبيب هلالا محدث بنعمة هلالا، وإذا أنعم هلالا عل عبد بنعمة فلم تظهر عليه سمي بغيط (بغيط) هلالا. مكذب بنعمة هلالا

From Ali ibn Muhammad, from Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) who said: "**When Allah bestows a blessing upon His servant and it appears upon him, he is called the beloved of Allah, one who proclaims Allah's blessing. And when Allah bestows a blessing upon a servant and it does not appear upon him, he is called the hateful one to Allah, one who denies Allah's blessing.**"

— Wasail al-Shia Vol. 5, Section 1, Chapter 2, Hadith 5749

عن عيل بن محمد الهادي (عليه السلام) عن آبيه عن الصادق (عليهم السلام) اقل: إن هلا يحب الجمال: ويبغض البؤس والتبؤس، إفن هلا إذا أنعم عل عبده نعمة أحب أن يرى عليه أثرها، قيل: قليل، والتجمل ويكنس أفنيته حتى أن السراج قبل مغيب، ويجصص داره، ويطيب ريحه، كيف ذلك؟ اقل: ينظف ثوبه. ويزيد في الرزق الشمس ينفي الفقر،

From Ali bin Muhammad Al-Hadi (peace be upon him) from his forefathers from Al-Sadiq (peace be upon them) who said: **Allah loves beauty and beautification, and He dislikes misery and showing misery, for when Allah bestows a blessing upon His servant, He loves to see its effect upon him.** It was asked: How is that? He said: **By cleaning his clothes, perfuming himself, whitewashing his house, sweeping his courtyards, and even lighting a lamp before sunset - it dispels poverty and increases sustenance.**

— Wasail al-Shia Vol. 5, Section 1, Chapter 1, Hadith 5746

اقل: واقل (عليه السلام) لجابر: اي جابر من كثرت نعم هلا عليه، كثرت حوائج الناس إليه، إفن اقم بما يجب هلا منها عرض. (نعمته لدوامها، وإن ضيع ما يجب هلا فيها عرض نعمته لزوالها

He said: He (peace be upon him) said to Jabir: **O Jabir, when Allah's blessings increase upon someone, people's needs from him increase. If he fulfills what is obligatory upon him regarding these blessings, they will continue, but if he neglects what is obligatory regarding them, they will vanish.** Recommendation Of Maintaining Blessings By Bearing Burdens/Demands

— Wasail al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 3, Chapter 14, Hadith 21668

عن مسعدة بن صدقة، عن أبي عبد الله (عليه السلام) اقل: من عظمت عليه النعمة اشتدت مؤونة الناس عليه، إفن هو اقم. بمؤونتهم، اجتلب زائدة النعم عليه من هلا، وإن لم يفعل فقد عرض النعمة لزوالها

From Mas'ada ibn Sadaqa, from Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) who said:

Whoever receives great blessings, the needs of people upon him become greater. If he fulfills their needs, he draws increased blessings from Allah upon himself. And if he does not do so, he has exposed the blessings to removal.

— Wasail al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 3, Chapter 14, Hadith 21663

عن حديد بن حكيم، عن أبي عبد الله (عليه السلام) اقل: من عظمت نعمة هلا عليه اشتدت مؤونة الناس إليه، افستديموا. النعمة ابحتمال المؤونة وال تعرضوها للزوال، فقل من زالت عنه النعمة فكادت أن تعود إليه

From Hadid bin Hakim, from Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) who said: **When Allah's blessings become great upon someone, people's needs from him increase. So maintain the blessings by bearing the burdens/demands and do not expose them to decline, for rarely does a blessing return to someone after it has declined from them.**

— Wasail al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 3, Chapter 14, Hadith 21660

Material and Environmental Blessings

These are the tangible provisions and the natural order that sustain life and provide comfort.

- **From Earth:**
 - **The Earth Itself:** Allah made the earth a resting place, suitable for human nature and bodies. It is neither severely hot nor cold, nor terribly foul-smelling. It is made with firmness for walking and building, and soft soil for construction and graves.
 - **Natural Elements and Provisions:** Water, air, earth, fire, wind, rain, sun, mountains, plants, food, and drinks are considered general

blessings. The earth is laid down with provisions of fruits, grains, and flowers.

- **Specific Features:** Rivers and pearls, shade from the sun, retreats in the mountains, and garments that protect from heat and violence are also examples.
- **Fundamental Laws:** Basal blessings include the earth's force of gravity, the precise distance between the earth and the moon, and the atmosphere that envelopes the globe.
- **From Heaven (Sky/Cosmos):**
 - **Celestial Bodies:** The heaven serves as a canopy, a protecting roof, where its sun, moon, and stars rotate for human benefit. The movement of the sun and moon with a predetermined pace is a blessing.
 - **Rainfall:** Allah sends down water from heaven (rain) from a height so it can reach all parts of the land. He separates the rain into drizzle, showers, heavy downpours, and sprinkles, allowing the earth to absorb it effectively without destruction to lands, trees, fields, and fruits.

" [He] who made for you the earth a bed [spread out] and the sky a ceiling and sent down from the sky, rain and brought forth thereby fruits as provision for you. So do not attribute to Allah equals while you know [that there is nothing similar to Him]."

(Quran 2:22)

Imam Ali ibn al-Husayn's Explanation of Quran 2:22

حدثنا محمد بن القاسم الأسترآبادي، قال: حدثنا يوسف بن محمد بن زياد وعلي بن محمد بن سيار عن أبويهما، عن الحسن بن علي، عن أبيه، علي بن محمد، عن أبيه محمد بن علي، عن أبيه علي بن موسى الرضا، عن أبيه موسى بن جعفر عن أبيه جعفر بن محمد، عن أبيه محمد بن علي، عن أبيه علي بن الحسين عليهم السلام في قول الله عز وجل: (الذي جعل لكم الأرض فراشا) قال: جعلها ملائمة لطبائعكم موافقة لأجسادكم، لم يجعلها شديدة الحمى والحرارة فتحرقكم، ولا شديدة البرد فتجمدكم، ولا شديدة طيب الريح فتصدع هاماتكم، ولا شديدة النتن فتعطبكم، ولا شديدة اللين كالماء فتغرقكم، ولا شديدة الصلابة فتمتنع عليكم في دوركم و أبنيتكم وقبور

موتاكم، ولكنه عز وجل جعل فيها من المتانة ما تنتفعون به و تتماسكون وتتماسك عليها أبدانكم وبنيانكم، وجعل فيها ما تنقاد به لدوركم و قبوركم وكثير من منافعكم فلذلك جعل الأرض فراشا لكم، ثم قال عز وجل (والسمااء بناء) أي سقفا من فوقكم محفوظا، يدير فيها شمسها وقمرها ونجومها لمنافعكم، ثم قال عز وجل: (وأنزل من السماء ماء) يعني المطر نزله من العلي ليبلغ قلل جبالكم وتلالكم وهضابكم وأوهادكم، ثم فرقة رذاذا ووابلا وهطلا وطلا لتنشفه أرضوكم، ولم يجعل ذلك المطر نازلا عليكم قطعة واحدة فيفسد أرضيكم وأشجاركم وزروعكم وثماركم، ثم قال عز وجل: (فأخرج به من الثمرات رزقا لكم فلا تجعلوا لله أندادا) أي أشباها وأمثالا من الأصنام التي لا تعقل ولا تسمع ولا تبصر ولا تقدر على شئ (وأنتم تعلمون) أنها لا تقدر على شئ من هذه النعم الجليلة التي أنعمها عليكم ربكم تبارك وتعالى.

Muhammad ibn al-Qasim al-Astarabadi said: Yusuf ibn Muhammad ibn Ziyad and Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Sayyar both said, on the authority of their father, on the authority of al-Hasan ibn Ali, on the authority of his father Ali ibn Muhammad, on the authority of his father Muhammad ibn Ali, on the authority of his father, Ali ibn Musa al-Rida, on the authority of his father Musa ibn Jafar, on the authority of his father Jafar ibn Muhammad, on the authority of his father Muhammad ibn Alithat His father, Ali ibn al-Husayn, was asked to interpret the Word of Allah, the Mighty and High: **Who made the Earth a resting place for you.** He said **He made it suitable for your nature and in harmony with your bodies. He did not make it severely hot and warm so it may burn you, nor severely cold so it may freeze you. Neither did He make it severely perfumed to give you headaches, nor did He make it terribly foul-smelling so it may sicken you. He neither made it severely soft like water so it may drown you, nor did He make it severely hard so it may obstruct you from making houses, buildings, and graves for your deceased. However, Allah, the Mighty and High, made it with firmness so that you could benefit form it, enabling your bodies to walk upon it and your houses to hold together. He placed in it soft soil so that you could build your homes upon it, dig graves, and so that you could find other benefits. This is why He made the earth a resting place for you. Then the Mighty and high said: Heaven a canopy, i.e. a protecting roof over you, where its sun, moon and stars rotate for your benefit. The Mighty and High then said: And (Who sends down water from heaven, i.e. the rain which He sends down form a height so that I may reach the highest points of the mountains, the hills, the elevations, and the low-lying**

land. Then He separated the rain into drizzle, shower, heavy downpour, and sprinkles so that the earth could better absorb it. He did not send the rain down in one shot, as that would have destroyed our lands, trees, field and fruits. Then the Mighty and High said: Then brings forth with it subsistence for you of the fruits; therefore, do not set up rivals to Allah, i.e. Images or idols, which cannot think, hear, see, and do not have power over anything. While you know, that they do not have power over the magnificent bounties which your Lord, the Blessed and Exalted, has blessed you with.

— Al-Tawhid by Shaykh Muhammad b. Ali al-Saduq, Book 2, Chapter 62, Hadith #11

Concerning "And (Who sends down water from heaven," he detailed that rain is sent down from a height to reach all terrains and is separated into different intensities to prevent destruction and ensure absorption.

The Messenger of Allah (s) once noted the presence of blessings in 'Umm Salamah's house, specifically mentioning "water, fire and sheep."

علي بن إبراهيم عن أبيه عن حماد عن حريز عن أبي الجارود عن أبي جعفر (عليه السلام) قال دخل رسول الله (صلى الله عليه وآله) على أم سلمة فقال لها ما لي لا أرى في بيتك البركة قالت بلى و الحمد لله إن البركة لفي بيتي فقال إن الله عز و جل أنزل ثلاث بركات الماء و النار و الشاة .

Ali ibn Ibrahim has narrated from his father from Hammad from Hariz from abu al-Jarud who has said the following: "Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him), has said that once the Messenger of Allah, O Allah, grant compensation to Muhammad and his family worthy of their services to Your cause, went to the house of 'Umm Salamah and said to her, 'Why is it that I do not see blessing in your house?' She said, 'Yes, all praise belongs to Allah, there are blessings in my house.' He (the Messenger of Allah) said, **'Allah, most Majestic, most Glorious, has sent three kinds of blessings which are water, fire and sheep.'**"

— Al-Kafi (Vol. 6) by Shaykh Muhammad b. Yaqub al-Kulayni, Book 8, Chapter 5, Hadith #8

Spiritual Blessings

These pertain to faith, guidance, and the means for moral and spiritual elevation.

- **Divine Guidance:** The teaching of the Quran, prophethood (especially that of Prophet Muhammad), and Imamate are considered practical blessings.
- **Faith and Purity:** Blessings that create in humans the ability to grow and perfect themselves, installing a tendency towards purity and divine manners.
- **Opportunities for Worship:** The mercy given to people in return for their good deeds and worship.
- **Inner States:** Richness in one's conscience, conviction in one's heart, sincerity in one's deeds, light in one's sight, and insight in one's religion are spiritual blessings one can ask for.

Personal Blessings

These are aspects related to the individual human being, their faculties, relationships, and well-being.

- **Human Faculties:** The creation of mankind, teaching humans to speak, intellect, hearing, seeing, endurance, faculty of mind, knowledge and science, tongue, eyes, ears, and other parts of our body.
- **Relationships:** Our partners and offspring are considered general blessings.
- **Well-being:** Health, freedom, and the power to choose.
- **Moral Inclination:** Our attraction towards good and perfection.

According to Islamic beliefs, the blessings of Allah do not reach His creatures unless through His Messenger, Prophet Muhammad. Furthermore, if a person acts according to God-pleasing principles, God will bestow the blessings of the heavens and the earth upon them.

Quran 38:27: Purposeful Creation and the Rejection of Guidance

"And We did not create the heaven and the earth and that between them aimlessly. That is the assumption of those who disbelieve, so woe to those who disbelieve from the Fire." (Quran, 38:27)

It provides the fundamental premise for understanding the gravity of rejecting divine prophets and engaging in disobedience.

1. **Creation's Purpose:** The verse explicitly negates the idea of aimless creation. It asserts that "The heavens, earth, and all between were not created in vain or without purpose." This purposeless view is attributed to "the assumption of disbelievers." God did not send prophets just for fun. He did not send down the Book for the people without purpose. He did not create the skies, the earth and all that is in between them in vain.
2. **Purpose of Creation and Obedience:** The purpose of Allah's creation is "to establish His wisdom, bring attention to His obedience, manifest His might, and lead His creatures to humbly venerate Him." If creation has a purpose, then humanity's existence within it must also have a purpose, which is intrinsically linked to obedience to the divine law brought by prophets.
3. **Disbelief as Rejection of Purpose:** Disbelief, often stems from "arrogance, heedlessness, attachment to worldly desires, and following misguided traditions over divine guidance." These attitudes lead individuals to reject the purposeful nature of creation and, consequently, the messengers sent to guide them towards that purpose. The disbelievers are depicted as having "yokes" of arrogance and "barriers" of heedlessness, preventing them from perceiving the truth.
4. **Consequence of Rejecting Purpose:** When individuals reject the guidance of prophets, they deny the very purpose of their creation and Allah's wisdom. This denial leads directly to the "woe to those who disbelieve from the Fire," as stated in the verse. This signifies that rejecting the divine purpose and its messengers results in severe punishment in the Hereafter because it is a fundamental betrayal of Allah's entire scheme of creation, guidance, and

accountability. Accountability for actions and the reality of resurrection and judgment are certain outcomes of this purposeful creation.

The Consequence of Disbelief and Denial

The verse continues, "... **but they rejected, so We overtook them for what they had earned.**"

- **Rejection of Prophets: "they rejected"** signifies their rejection of the divine prophets sent to them.
- **Divine Punishment:**

جعل (الله) الثواب على طاعته ووضع العقاب على معصيته، زيادة لعباده عن نعمته، وحياسة لهم إلى جنته. (أعيان الشيعة- الطبع الجديد-ج1 ص 316)

Hazrath Fatima (peace be upon her): **Allah fixed the reward for His obedience and torment for His Insubordination and disobedience, so that He may restrain His servants from His wrath and fury and lead them to His paradise**

— Ayan ush-Shia Ataba Al Jadeed, Taha Al Jadeed. Vol. -1. P.'516

عن إسحاق بن عمار، عن أبي عبد الله (عليه السلام) وتال هذه الآية: (ذلك أنهم كانوا يكفرون آبايت هلا ويقتلون النبيين بغير الحق ذلك بما عصوا وكانوا يعتدون) اقل: وهلا ما قتلوهم أبيديهم، وال ضربوهم أسيافهم، ولكنهم سمعوا أحاديثهم. أفذاعوها، افخذوا عليها، فقتلوا فصار قتال واعتداء ومعصية

From Ishaq bin Ammar, from Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) who recited this verse: "**That was because they disbelieved in the verses of Allah and killed the prophets without right. That was because they disobeyed and were transgressing**" [Quran 2:61]. He said: **By Allah, they did not kill them with their hands, nor did they strike them with their swords, but they heard their narrations and divulged/disclosed them, so they were seized because of them and were killed, thus it became killing, transgression and disobedience.**

— Wasail al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 2, Chapter 34, Hadith 21491

ويحك لعلك ظننت قضاء لازما وقدر حاتما لو كان ذلك كذلك لبطل الثواب والعقاب وسقط الوعد والوعيد. إن الله سبحانه أمر عباده تخييرا ونهاهم تحذيرا وكلف يسيرا ولم يكلف عسيرا وأعطى على القليل كثيرا ولم يعص مغلوبا ولم يطع مكرها ولم يرسل الأنبياء لعبا ولم ينزل الكتب للعباد عبثا ولا خلق السماوات والأرض وما بينهما باطلا (ذلك ظن الذين كفروا فويل للذين كفروا من النار).

Woe to you! You take it as a final and unavoidable destiny [1] (according to which we are bound to act). If it were so, there would have been no question of reward or chastisement and there would have been no sense in Allah's promises or warnings. (On the other hand) Allah, the Glorified, has ordered His people to act by free will and has cautioned them and refrained them (from evil). He has placed easy obligations on them and has not put heavy obligations. He gives them much (reward) in return for little (action). He is disobeyed, not because He is overpowered. He is obeyed but not under force. He did not send prophets just for fun. He did not send down the Book for the people without purpose. He did not create the skies, the earth and all that is in between them in vain. That is the imagination of those who disbelieve; then woe to those who disbelieve - because of the fire. (Quran, 38:27)

— Nahj al-Balagha by al-Sharif al-Radi, Book 3, Chapter 78, Hadith #95

Consequently, Allah punished them for the recompense of their disobediences, oppositions, and belying the prophets. This punishment manifested as the ceasing of rain, which in turn restrained the blessings of the earth from them. The phrase "**We seized them**" indicates a severe divine reckoning for their accumulated transgressions and earnings.

In Islam, disbelief (kufr) and denial, particularly the rejection of prophets and divine guidance, lead to severe consequences, both in this worldly life and the Hereafter. These consequences are a manifestation of divine punishment, where Allah holds

individuals accountable for their accumulated transgressions and refusal to accept the truth.

The Nature of Disbelief and Denial

Disbelief and denial encompass various forms of opposition to divine truth:

- **General Disobedience and Rejection:** Disbelief is defined as "every disobedience to Allah through *juhud* (denial), *inkaar* (rejection), *istikhaf* (belittling), and *tahavan* (negligence) in everything minor and major."
- **Denial of Lordship or with Knowledge:** This occurs when a person denies a truth, such as the Lordship of Allah, even while their inner selves are convinced of it, as mentioned in the Quran: "**And they rejected them, while their souls were convinced thereof**" (Quran, 27:14).
- **Abandoning Divine Commands:** This involves believing in part of the Scripture and disbelieving in part, as stated in the Quran: "**So do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part?**" (Quran, 2:85). Such an act is considered disbelief, and while faith may be attributed, it is not accepted or beneficial in Allah's sight.
- **Rejecting Prophets and Representatives:** Denying or rejecting the truth about Allah and His representatives (prophets and messengers) is equivalent to turning away from Allah, hating His Name, and denying His signs. Rejecting a Prophet's truth is also a rejection of the God who sent that Prophet.
- **Seeking Other than Islam:** If the message of Islam has reached an individual, and they seek a religion other than Islam, it will never be accepted from them, and they will be among the losers in the Hereafter. "**And whoever desires other than Islam as religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.**" (Quran 3:85).
- **Increasing in Disbelief After Belief:** Those who initially believed but then reject faith and further increase in disbelief reach a point where their repentance will not be accepted; they are considered astray (Quran 3:90). This refers to a final stage where repentance is no longer possible, perhaps at the moment of death or on the Day of Judgment.

أبي عبد هللا (عليه السالم) اقل: الكفر في كتاب هللا عز وجل عل خمسة أوجه: فمنها كفر الجحود عل وجهين، والكفر بترك، ما أمر هللا عز وجل به، وكفر البراءة، وكفر النعم، أفما كفر الجحود فهو الجحود ابلىوبية، والجحود عل معرفة، وهو أن يجحد الجاحد وهو يعلم أنه حق قد استقر عنده والوجه الرابع من الكفر ترك ما أمر هللا عز وجل به، وهو قول: وقد اقل هللا تعالى وجدوا بها واستيقنتها أنفسهم إلى أن اقل هللا عز وجل: أفتؤمنون ببعض الكتاب وتكفرون ببعض؟ فكفرهم بترك ما أمرهم هللا عز وجل به، ونسبهم إلى اليمان ولم يقبله منهم، ولم ينفعهم عنده، فقال: فما جزاء من يفعل ذلك منكم إلل خزي في الحياة الدنيا ويوم القيامة يردون إلى أشد العذاب

Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him) said: **Disbelief in the Book of Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, is of five types: Among them is the disbelief of denial, which is of two kinds; disbelief by abandoning what Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, has commanded; disbelief by disassociation; and disbelief in blessings. As for the disbelief of denial, it is the denial of Lordship, and denial with knowledge. It is when the denier denies while knowing that it is the truth that has been established with him. And Allah the Most High said: "And they rejected them, while their souls were convinced thereof." [Quran, 27:14] And up to where He said: - And the fourth type of disbelief is abandoning what Allah the Mighty and Majestic commanded, and it is the saying of Allah the Mighty and Majestic: "So do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part?" [Quran, 2:85] He declared them disbelievers for abandoning what Allah the Mighty and Majestic commanded them with, and He attributed faith to them but did not accept it from them, and it did not benefit them with Him, so He said: "And what is the recompense of those who do so among you except disgrace in worldly life, and on the Day of Resurrection they will be consigned to the severest punishment." [Quran, 2:85]**

— Wasail al-Shia Vol. 1, Section 2, Chapter 2, Hadith 48

According to Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him), disbelief in the Book of Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, is upon five aspects:

1. **Kufr of Denial:** This form of denial has two primary aspects:

- **Neglecting what is Commanded:** This refers to ignoring or not following the commands of Allah. It is exemplified by the Quranic verse, "**So do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part?**" (Quran, 2:85), where people are declared disbelievers for abandoning Allah's commands, despite having some form of faith, which is not accepted or beneficial to them in His sight.
 - **Disownment (Tabarra):** This means rejecting or disavowing something that is true.
 - **Denial of Lordship and Denial with Knowledge:** This occurs when a denier rejects the truth despite knowing it has been established with them. Allah the Most High states, "**And they rejected them, while their souls were convinced thereof**" (Quran, 27:14). This also refers to the rejection of God's authority, heaven, hell, and the hereafter, or acknowledging the truth in one's heart but rejecting it with one's tongue.
2. **Kufr of Disobedience:** This occurs when someone acts against their commitments to God. From Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him), disbelief (Kufr) is defined as "every disobedience to Allah through juhud (denial), inkaar (rejection), istikhfaf (belittling), and tahavan (negligence) in everything minor and major, and its doer is a disbeliever." If a person inclines with their desires towards a form of disobedience through denial, belittlement, and negligence, they have disbelieved.
 3. **Kufr of the Bounties:** This is also mentioned as one of the five types of Kufr, involving ingratitude for Allah's favors.

عن الصادق عليه السلام (أقل: ويخرج من الإيمان بخمس جهات من الفعل، كلها متشابهات معروفت: الكفر، والشرك والضلال، والفسق، وركوب الكبائر، فمعنى الكفر: كل معصية عصي هلا بها بجهة الجحد والنكار والاستخفاف والتهاون في كل ما دق وجل، وافعله كافر، ومعناه معنى كفر من أي ملة كان ومن أي فرقة كان بعد أن يكون بهذه الصفات فهو كافر إلى - أن أقل إفن كان هو الذي مال بهواه إلى وجه من وجوه المعصية بجهة الجحد والاستخفاف والتهاون فقد كفر، وإن هو مال بهواه إلى التدين بجهة التأويل والتقليد والتسليم والرضا بقول آلاء وألسالف فقد أشرك

From Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) who said: **One leaves faith through five aspects of action, all of which are similar and well-known: disbelief, polytheism, misguidance, transgression, and committing major sins. The meaning of disbelief is every disobedience to Allah through juhud (denial), inkaar (rejection), istikhfaf (belittling), and tahavan (negligence) in everything minor and major, and its doer is a disbeliever. Its meaning is the meaning of disbelief from any religion or sect, as long as he has these attributes, he is a disbeliever. - Until he said - If he is the one who inclined with his desires towards a form of disobedience through juhud (denial), istikhfaf (belittlement), and tahavan (negligence, disregard), then he has disbelieved. And if he inclined with his desires towards religious practice through ta'wil (interpretation), taqlid (imitation), tasleem (submission), and ridha (satisfaction) with the sayings of forefathers and Establishing Disbelief And Apostasy Through Denial Of Some Necessit... ancestors, then he has committed shirk.**

— Wasail al-Shia Vol. 1, Section 2, Chapter 2, Hadith 54

Consequences of Disbelief and Denial

The consequences of disbelief and denial are comprehensive, affecting an individual's spiritual standing, worldly outcomes, and ultimate destination:

1. Erasing of Good Deeds

Disobeying Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) can nullify one's good deeds, rendering them void.

2. Divine Wrath and Curse

- Allah removes those who disbelieve from His mercy.
- The recompense for those who disbelieve after belief and witnessed the Messenger's truth is the curse (la'nat) of Allah, the angels, and all people (Quran 3:87).

- Allah has cursed the disbelievers and prepared a flaming Fire for them.
"Indeed, Allah has cursed the disbelievers and prepared for them a Blaze. Abiding therein forever, they will not find a protector or a helper."

(Quran 33:64-65).

3. Painful Punishment and Destruction

- Those who reject Allah's signs and favors will be companions of the Fire and abide in it forever.
- The punishment for deniers and disbelievers is strict and comes at a time deemed appropriate by Allah, as a consequence of their refusal to believe and their proactive pursuit of evil deeds.
- Allah takes revenge from those who disbelieve, leading to destruction. Many generations before were destroyed by Allah due to their disbelief.
- The Quran states: **"So We Destroyed the ones stronger than them in prowess, and they perished like the formers ones."** (Quran 43:8)
- **"Indeed, those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers - never would the [whole] capacity of the earth in gold be accepted from one of them if he would [seek to] ransom himself with it. For those there will be a painful punishment, and they will have no helpers."** (Quran 3:91).

4. Disgrace in Worldly Life and Hereafter

Abandoning what Allah commanded (believing in part and disbelieving in part) leads to disgrace in worldly life and the severest punishment on the Day of Resurrection.

"So do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part? Then what is the recompense for those who do that among you except disgrace in worldly life; and on the Day of Resurrection they will be sent back to the severest of punishment. And Allah is not unaware of what you do." (Quran 2:85).

5. Lack of Guidance

Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people, especially those who disbelieved after their belief and had witnessed the Messenger's truth. **"How shall Allah guide a people who disbelieved after their belief and had witnessed that the Messenger**

is true and clear signs had come to them? And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people." (Quran 3:86).

6. Specific Punishments for Grave Sins

Certain grave sins are identified as leading to severe divine punishment, often indicating a state of disbelief:

- **Intentional Murder of a Believer:** The recompense is Hell to abide therein, with the wrath and curse of Allah. **"But whoever kills a believer intentionally - his recompense is Hell, wherein he will abide eternally, and Allah has become angry with him and has cursed him and has prepared for him a great punishment."** (Quran 4:93).
- **Devouring Orphan's Property Unjustly:** This is described as consuming fire into their bellies, leading to being burned in a Blaze. **"Indeed, those who devour the property of orphans unjustly are only consuming into their bellies fire. And they will be burned in a Blaze."** (Quran 4:10).
- **Cheating in Measurement:** Such acts draw "woe," a term not directed towards anyone until they are called disbelievers. **"Woe to those who give less [than due]"** (Quran 83:1).
- **Breach of Covenant:** Those who exchange Allah's covenant for a small price will have no share in the Hereafter. **"Indeed, those who exchange the covenant of Allah and their [own] oaths for a small price will have no share in the Hereafter, and Allah will not speak to them or look at them on the Day of Resurrection, nor will He purify them; and they will have a painful punishment."** (Quran 3:77).
- **Adultery:**

عن ابن بكير اقل: قلت البي جعفر) عليه السالم) في قول رسول هلا: إذا زنى الرجل افرقه روح اليمان، اقل: هو قوله:)وأيدهم .بروح منه) ذاك الذي يفارقه

From Ibn Bukayr who said: I asked Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him) about the saying of the Messenger of Allah: **"When a man commits adultery, the spirit of faith leaves him."** He said: **"It is His saying: 'and supported them with a spirit from Him' [Quran 58:22]. This is what leaves him."**

— Wasail al-Shia Vol. 15, Section 2, Chapter 46, Hadith 20641

عن ابن بكير اقل: قلت البي جعفر) عليه السالم) في قول رسول هلا) صل هلا عليه وآله: إذا زنى الرجل افرقه روح اليمان. اقل: قوله تعالى: وأيدهم بروج منه) ذاك الذي يفارقه

From Ibn Bukayr who said: I asked Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him) about the saying of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family): When a man commits adultery, the spirit of faith departs from him. He said: **Allah's saying "and He supported them with a spirit from Him"** [Quran, 58:22] - **that is what departs from him.**

— Wasail al-Shia Vol. 20, Section 3, Chapter 1, Hadith 25703

- **False Accusation of Chaste Women (Qadhf):** Those who do so without four witnesses are to be lashed and their testimony never accepted. They are considered defiantly disobedient, hypocrites, and cursed in this world and the Hereafter. **"And those who accuse chaste women and then do not produce four witnesses - lash them with eighty lashes and do not accept from them testimony ever after. And those are the defiantly disobedient."** (Quran 24:4).

"Indeed, those who [falsely] accuse chaste, unaware and believing women are cursed in this world and the Hereafter; and they will have a great punishment." (Quran 24:23).

The Sin with the Fastest Punishment

عن عبد السالم بن صالح الهروي، عن الرضا، عن آبيه) عليهم السالم) اقل: اقل النبي) صل هلا عليه وآله: أسرع الذنوب. عقوبة كفران النعمة

From Abdul Salam ibn Salih Al-Harawi, from Al-Ridha, from his forefathers (peace be upon them) who said: The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said: **"The sin with the fastest punishment is denying blessings."**

— Wasail al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 3, Chapter 8, Hadith 21634

عن ابن القداح، عن أبي عبد الله (عليه السلام) إن أعجل الشر عقوبة البغي.

الإمام علي (عليه السلام) - لما سئل: أي ذنب أعجل عقوبة لصاحبه؟ - من ظلم من لا ناصر له إلا الله، وجاور النعمة بالتقصير، واستطال بالبغي على الفقير

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) was once asked, 'Which sin hastens punishment down on its perpetrator the fastest?' to which he replied, '**He who wrongs somebody that has no helper save Allah, he who repays bounties with negligence and laxity, and he who displays arrogant and intimidating behaviour towards the poor.**'

— Bihar al-Anwar, v. 75, p. 320, no. 43

From Ibn Al-Qaddah, from Abu Abdullah (peace be upon him): **Indeed, the sin quickest to be punished is oppression.**

— Wasail al-Shia Vol. 16, Section 1, Chapter 74, Hadith 20915

Allah Seizing Individuals for Their Transgressions

The concept of Allah "seizing" individuals for what they used to earn signifies divine retribution for accumulated transgressions and persistent denial. The Quran states: "**but they rejected, so We overtook them for what they had earned.**" This indicates that divine punishment, including the withholding of blessings and ultimate destruction, is a direct consequence of disbelief and disobedience. Allah's punishment is seen as a just response to their refusal to believe and their proactive pursuit of evil deeds.

It is noteworthy that embracing Islam before death, with a genuine heart, is considered highly valuable and can wipe away all previous sins, leading to a pure resurrection. This indicates Allah's mercy and the possibility of redemption for those who ultimately turn to Him.

Withholding and Loss of Blessings

Disbelief and denial directly impact the receipt and retention of divine blessings:

- **Removal from Mercy:** Allah removes those who disbelieve from His mercy.
- **Denial of Blessings:** "The sin with the fastest punishment is denying blessings."
- **Disbelief in Blessings:** Disbelief can manifest as "disbelief in blessings," leading to severe consequences.
- **Changing Blessings into Disbelief:** Changing Allah's blessing into disbelief is considered a serious mistake, leading to woe.
- **Consequence of Disobeying:** Disobeying Allah and His Prophet can also lead to the nullification of good deeds, which are themselves a form of blessing.

The Divine Law Established by Ayah 96

Ayah 96 of Surah al-A'raf establishes a fundamental divine law concerning the direct relationship between humanity's moral and spiritual conduct and the condition of their society, specifically regarding the flow of divine blessings or the imposition of consequences.

The core divine law established by Ayah 96 is that if the people of towns had believed and guarded themselves against evil, Allah would have certainly opened up for them blessings from the heaven and the earth. Conversely, because they rejected the divine message, Allah seized them for what they had earned, leading to punishment and the restriction of those blessings. This demonstrates a profound connection between sincere faith and piety, which pave the way for continuous blessings, and denial and persistent disobedience, which result in divine punishment and the withholding of favors.

This law can be understood through its interconnected components:

Genuine Belief, Piety, and Obedience

Genuine belief and piety are not mere verbal claims or outward affiliations; their reality must extend into a person's conduct and all areas of life. The verse presents sincere faith, joined with God-consciousness and obedience, as the prerequisite for receiving promised blessings.

- **True Faith and Conduct:** Genuine belief requires testifying to the divine prophets and actively avoiding polytheism (shirk) and sinning. It is a belief that translates into one's actions and all aspects of life.
- **God-Consciousness:** Piety, or guarding oneself against evil (taqwa), is an essential condition for receiving divine favor. Maintaining steadfastness in respecting Divine Authority is directly linked to receiving abundant blessings and guidance.
- **Obedience to Divine Laws:** Following divine laws leads to the growth and perfection of individuals. When a servant obeys Allah's commands, Allah provides benefits even before they are asked for and answers supplications before they are made.

Abundant Material and Spiritual Blessings

When people embody genuine belief, piety, and obedience, Allah promises to open up various forms of blessings (barakat) from both heaven and earth. Barakat refers to fixed and continual favors, encompassing both material and spiritual bounties.

- **Heavenly Blessings:** These may include natural provisions like rain and other forms of sustenance from above, as well as spiritual gifts such as answered supplications and the fulfillment of requests. As mentioned in Surah al-Jinn, 72:16, those who tread the right path will be given water in abundance.
- **Earthly Blessings:** These encompass abundant plants, fruits, and other material resources that spring forth from the earth.
- **Holistic Prosperity:** These blessings are not limited to material wealth but also include spiritual and intellectual gifts, such as knowledge, blessings in lifetimes, and in books. The Quran indicates that when a nation pursues the right path, Allah makes its life prosperous.

Rejection of Guidance, Denying Prophets, and Persistent Disobedience

The divine law explicitly states that if people reject Allah's guidance, they will be punished for what they have earned. This punishment is a direct recompense for their disobedience, opposition, and belying of the prophets.

- **Denial and Opposition:** The people of the towns rejected the divine message, denying the prophets and opposing divine guidance, which led to their seizure by Allah. This includes denial of Lordship or denial with knowledge, even when truth has been established, as Allah stated concerning those who rejected signs "**And they rejected them, while their [inner] selves were convinced thereof, out of injustice and haughtiness. So see how was the end of the corrupters.**" (Quran, 27:14).
- **Persistent Disobedience:** Persisting in disobedience and abandoning Allah's commands are forms of disbelief. For example, believing in part of the Scripture and disbelieving in part (Quran, 2:85) is considered disbelief because it entails abandoning Allah's commands.
- **Consequences:** As a result of their misdeeds, Allah seizes them. This punishment can manifest as the withholding of rain, which consequently restrains the blessings of the earth. Allah has fixed torment for disobedience to restrain servants from His wrath and fury. Shirk and hypocrisy are identified as causes of downfall and destruction.

Impact on Societal Conditions

Ayah 96 establishes a clear connection between the moral and spiritual conduct of individuals within a society and the overall condition of that society.

- **Prosperity through Virtue:** If a society is characterized by justice, virtue, and piety, the factors that unify it become strong. Its homogeneity, essential for collective endeavors like industry and agriculture, is galvanized. Such a society can overcome difficulties and avoid disruption.
- **Calamity through Corruption:** Conversely, when a society denies prophets, opposes divine guidance, and persists in disobedience, it faces divine punishment, leading to the restriction of blessings and societal challenges.

The Nature of Divine Punishment

In Islam, disbelief (Kufr) and denial carry severe consequences, encompassing spiritual, worldly, and eternal repercussions. These consequences stem from a fundamental rejection of divine truth, Allah's signs, His prophets, and His established laws.

Disbelief (Kufr) is defined as the denial and rejection of something considered true by human nature and healthy reason. This includes fundamental beliefs such as the existence of Allah, the truth of the Prophets, and the reality of the Day of Recompense. Denial can manifest as:

- **Outright denial:** Rejecting truth even when convinced in the heart, as mentioned in the Quran regarding those who "**rejected them, while their souls were convinced thereof**" (27:14).
- **Denial of Lordship:** Rejecting the ultimate authority of Allah.
- **Abandoning divine commands:** Believing in parts of the scripture while rejecting others, leading to being declared a disbeliever (Quran, 2:85).
- **Specific acts of apostasy:** Committing acts explicitly deemed disbelief by Sharia, such as prostrating to an idol, slaying a prophet or Imam, disgracing the Quran, or insulting the Kaaba.
- **Denial of guardianship:** Rejecting the Wilayat (guardianship) of Ahlul Bayt (Imams) is considered a denial of Allah.

Worldly Consequences

- **Disgrace and Destitution:** Those who disbelieve after belief and have witnessed clear proofs will face disgrace in worldly life (Quran, 2:85). They may be struck with disgrace and destitution.
- **Spiritual Blindness and Debasement:** Disbelief causes the heart to become absolutely blind, unable to discern truth from falsehood, good from evil. This leads to a fall from the height of humanity, becoming debased like beasts, with a continuous increase in spiritual ailments.

- **Loss of Blessings and Wrath:** Denying divine bounties makes one eligible for Allah's chastisement and demands fear of divine wrath. Disobeying Allah and His commands incurs His anger and strikes one with destitution.
- **Erase of Good Deeds:** Disobeying Allah and His Prophet can erase one's good deeds, rendering them null and void.
- **Historical Examples:** Historical examples of nations like Aad, Samood, Firaun, and the people of Prophet Lut (peace be upon him), who faced destruction by natural disasters or other punishments for denying truth and rejecting prophets, serving as a reminder of past divine retribution.
- **Curse:** "How shall Allah guide a people who disbelieved after their belief and had witnessed that the Messenger is true and clear signs had come to them? And Allah does not guide the wrongdoing people. Those - their recompense will be that upon them is the curse of Allah and the angels and the people, all together" (Quran, 3:86-87).

Hereafter Consequences

- **Eternal Hellfire:** A pervasive consequence is eternal abode in Hell. Those who reject Allah's signs, disbelieve and deny His verses, or reject faith in Allah will be companions of the Fire and will abide in it forever. This is described as a painful, grievous, and humiliating punishment that will not be lightened, nor will there be respite (Quran, 3:86-89).
- **Painful Chastisement:** They will be given a drink of boiling water and suffer painful chastisement for their earnings.
- **Blindness on Judgment Day:** Nonbelievers who reject Allah's signs will be raised up blind on the Day of Judgment, having "forgotten Allah's Signs" and therefore being "forgotten."

Loss of Ransom and Helpers: Those who die as disbelievers will find that even the "**Indeed, those who reject the message after their belief and then increase in disbelief - never will their [claimed] repentance be accepted, and they are the ones astray. Indeed, those who disbelieve and die while they are disbelievers - never would the [whole] capacity of the earth in**

gold be accepted from one of them if he would [seek to] ransom himself with it. For those there will be a painful punishment, and they will have no helpers." (Quran, 3:90-91).

- **Loss of World and Hereafter:** The ultimate consequence of disbelief and turning away from what is right is the loss of both the Hereafter and the world, depriving one of blessings and leaving only regrets.
- **Inability to Repent:** For those who reject faith after belief and then increase in disbelief, "**never will their repentance be accepted**," especially at the point of death or on the Day of Judgment when punishment is imminent (Quran, 3:90).

The eternal nature of punishment for disbelief is explained through divine justice:

- **Correspondence of Punishment:** The punishment corresponds to the quality and spiritual reality of the deed, rather than merely its limited duration.
- **Continued Consequence:** The torment is presented as the continued consequence of a person's acquired spiritual condition and persistent rejection of truth.
- **Distinction from Sin:** A sinner who retains faith in divine unity may ultimately receive forgiveness or intercession, but an unbeliever who dies in absolute disbelief remains in the Fire permanently.

Conclusion

In summary, Ayah 96 establishes a clear divine law: genuine belief and piety are pathways to abundant and continuous blessings from all sources, while rejection of divine guidance and persistent disobedience lead to severe consequences and the withholding of those very blessings.

The overarching divine law is: If people obey Allah and guard against evil, He will open up blessings from the heaven and the earth for them. Conversely, if they reject His guidance, they will be punished for what they have earned.

In essence, Surah al-A'raf, Verse 96, serves as a stark warning and a promise, delineating the clear path to divine blessings through faith and piety, and the severe, unavoidable consequences of disbelief and denial, both in this life and the eternal Hereafter.

Divine blessings are acts of mercy from Allah, designed to benefit humanity in this world and the hereafter. They are contingent upon sincere faith, diligent piety, and profound gratitude. Acknowledging, manifesting, and being grateful for these blessings is paramount, as their rejection or misuse leads to severe consequences and the cessation of divine favor.

The teachings derived from this verse establish a clear principle of divine justice and reciprocity:

- There is a direct link between human actions (belief, piety, gratitude) and divine responses (blessings, increased favors).
- Conversely, negative actions (disbelief, disobedience, ingratitude, belying) inevitably lead to divine retribution and the withdrawal of blessings.
- The phrase "for what they used to earn" signifies that the punishment is a just consequence corresponding to their accumulated deeds and choices.

In essence, Surah al-A'raf, Verse 96 serves as a powerful reminder of the direct correlation between human conduct and divine providence, urging humanity towards faith and piety to unlock the vast blessings of Allah and warning against the severe repercussions of rejection and disobedience.

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