

العنكبوت

Surah Al-Ankabut (The Spider) - 29
Tafsir notes by Naimah Karim | March 2025

Themes: Perseverance in faith (Iman), tests & trials (Fitnah), Tawakkul (Trust in Allah), Sabr (Patience and endurance), the importance of good deeds, the reality of this world (Dunya), contemplating and reflection on Allah's signs (Tafakkur), striving in the path of Allah (Jihad)

Surah Ankabut is the 29th surah of the Holy Qur'an, consisting of 69 verses. It was revealed in the final years of the Makkan period, before the migration to Medinah (Hijrah). The Makkan period was a time of severe persecution of Muslims by the Quraysh, who faced physical and social hardships for which this surah serves as a reminder and response to these challenges.

Structure of the Surah:

Section 1 - Tests & Trials of faith

Section 2 - Stories of past nations and their fate

Section 3 - The Spider parable & Allah's signs in creation

Section 4 - Importance of good deeds, the Qur'an and Messengers

Section 5 - Striving for Islam

Surah Al-Ankabut reminds us that faith is not just a declaration, but a journey filled with tests and trials that are a normal part of belief. These tests serve to distinguish those who are sincere in their faith from those who falter in the face of hardship - how do we respond to hardship? How do we respond to ease?

Through historical examples of prophets - Nuh, Ibrahim, Lut, Shu'ayb and Musa - this surah reassures believers that struggles and calamities are temporary, and victory belongs to those who remain steadfast in their devotion to Allah.

The parable of the spider's web is used as a metaphor to represent the fragility of false beliefs, to illustrate how reliance on anything other than Allah is weak and fleeting. Just as the spiderweb offers no real protection, neither do false gods, wealth, materialism or other worldly attachments. This serves as a profound reminder to place trust in Allah alone, as He is the ultimate source of strength and guidance.

A key theme in Surah Al-Ankabut is the importance of good deeds, particularly prayer (Salah), which serves as a shield against evil and wrongdoing. Other good deeds mentioned include recitation of the Qur'an, contemplation of Allah's creations, being kind to parents, and the remembrance of Allah (Dhikr). It also emphasises the fleeting nature of this world, reminding believers that our true home is the Hereafter (Akhirah), where eternal peace and reward await those who strive for righteousness.

Through the discussion of perseverance, divine support, and the consequences of rejecting the truth, Surah Al-Ankabut provides a roadmap for navigating trials with patience and trust in Allah. It teaches us that the difficulties and hardships we face in this life are not punishments, but an opportunity to grow spiritually and draw closer to Allah, strengthening our faith and encouraging us to continue doing good deeds. Ultimately, the surah concludes with a profound promise to the believers:

Those who strive for Allah's sake will be guided and supported by Him, for He is always near to those who seek Him.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الم ١

(29:01) Alif, Lam, Meem.

These are disjointed letters that only Allah knows the true meaning behind. In Arabic, this is referred to as 'huroof al muqatta'at (حُرُوفٌ مُّقَطَّعَاتٌ).

Section 1: Tests & Trials of faith (ayahs 02-13)

أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا ءَامَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ

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(29:02) Do people think once they say, 'We believe', that they will be left without being put to the test?

Allah tests his servants to distinguish true faith from mere words. Declaring belief is not enough - being a Muslim is more than a statement; it is a commitment and dedication that must be upheld in both ease and hardship. Every believer is assigned trials and tests, for our faith is proven through endurance, sincerity, and trust in Allah's wisdom. Are we truly Muslim in our hearts, in our actions, and in our core, regardless of circumstance? Trials, no matter how painful, are a means of drawing closer to Allah.

'O Messenger of Allah! Which of the people is tried most severely?' He said: 'The Prophets, then the most nearest to them, then those nearest to them. **A man is tried according to his religion: if he is**

firm in his religion, then his trials are more severe, and if he is frail in his religion, then he is tried according to the strength of his religion. The servant shall continue to be tried until he is left walking upon earth without any sins'[Jami at-Tirmidhi 2398]

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا
وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٣﴾

(29:03) We certainly tested those before them. And in this way, Allah will clearly distinguish between those who are truthful and those who are liars.

Allah distinguishes the sincere believers from the hypocrites and liars, who falsely claim faith, through tests and trials. This is part of divine justice, for Islam is a religion based on fairness, and Allah is the Most Just. Jannah is not granted so easily - it is earned by those who prove their sincerity through steadfastness and devotion. Every nation before us was tested, as were the Prophets who faced hardship. These serve as a reminder and a lesson for us to reflect upon and apply to our own lives when we also face hardship. Hardships are not without purpose. They are a means through which Allah reveals whose faith is genuine and those who only profess belief without true commitment.

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ يَسْبِقُونَا سَاءَ مَا
يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٤﴾

(29:04) Or do the evildoers simply think that they will escape Us? How wrong is their judgement!

مَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ أَجَلَ اللَّهِ لَآتٍ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ
الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٥﴾

(29:05) Whoever hopes for the meeting with Allah, let them know that Allah's appointed time is sure to come. He is the All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

Allah is the All-Hearing and All-Knowing, fully aware of the actions and intentions of His creations. Those who commit injustice may believe they can escape accountability in this world, but they will ultimately stand before Allah, where no deed - good, or evil - will be overlooked. The promise of meeting Allah is certain, and for the believers this should be a source of hope. True faith should be proven through action and steadfastness. These trials we endure are not meaningless, rather they are opportunities to grow spiritually and refine our sincerity. We should all prepare for this ultimate meeting with Allah.

وَمَنْ جَاهَدَ فَإِنَّمَا يُجَاهِدُ لِنَفْسِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَغَنِيٌّ عَنِ الْعَالَمِينَ



(29:06) And whoever strives in Allah's cause only does so for their own good. Surely Allah is not in need of any of His creation.

Allah is not in need of His creation, it is us who are entirely dependent on Him. This verse serves as a humbling reminder of how we rely on Allah and the path He guides us on to navigate our way through this life. We are in constant need of Allah's guidance and mercy. It is through our connection to Allah and Islam that we find purpose, purify our hearts, and strengthen our faith.

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ

وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَحْسَنَ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧﴾

(29:07) As for those who believe and do good, We will certainly absolve them of their sins, and reward them according to the best of what they used to do.

Good deeds can absolve sin, for those who do good deeds - they will be rewarded as if they conducted this deed to the highest standard.

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حُسْنًا وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِي مَا

لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا إِلَىٰ مَرْجِعِكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا

كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨﴾

(29:08) We have commanded people to honour their parents. But if they urge you to associate with Me what you have no knowledge of, then do not obey them. To Me you will all return, and then I will inform you of what you used to do.

An example of a good deed is being kind to our parents, for they sacrificed a lot for us. We should listen to our parents and treat them with respect, however, there is a clear boundary when it comes to obedience. We should not obey actions that contradict Islamic teachings and Allah's commands, such as associating partners with Him. Whilst family bonds are significant, our bond with Allah takes precedence, and we will all be held accountable for the choices we make.

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ فِي الصَّالِحِينَ



(29:09) Those who believe and do good will surely be admitted by Us into the company of the righteous.

Those who believe and do good deeds will earn Jannah, where they will be in the company of the righteous.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَقُولُ ءَامَنَّا بِاللَّهِ فَإِذَا أُوذِيَ فِي اللَّهِ جَعَلَ
فِتْنَةَ النَّاسِ كَعَذَابِ اللَّهِ وَلَئِن جَاءَ نَصْرٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ
لَيَقُولُنَّ إِنَّا كُنَّا مَعَكُمْ أَوَلَيْسَ اللَّهُ بِأَعْلَمَ بِمَا فِي صُدُورِ

الْعَالَمِينَ

(29:10) There are some who say, ‘We believe in Allah’, but when they suffer in the cause of Allah, they mistake this persecution at the hands of the people for the punishment of Allah. But when victory comes from your Lord, they surely say to the believers, ‘We have always been with you’. Does Allah not know best what it is in the hearts of all beings?

This verse addresses the hypocrisy of those who claim to believe in Allah, but their faith falters when faced with difficulty. They may declare belief in Allah when things are easy, but at the first sign of hardship or persecution in His cause, they lose faith and begin to question or abandon their commitment. They mistake these trials as a sign of punishment. True faith is not shown in words alone, but in the resilience of a believer through both hardship and ease. A true believer stays firm in their faith, trusting Allah’s wisdom and mercy, regardless of the challenges they face.

وَلْيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلْيَعْلَمَنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ ﴿١١﴾

(29:11) Allah will certainly distinguish between those who believe and the hypocrites.

Allah is the All-Knowing and is fully aware of what lies in the hearts of His creation. He knows who truly believes and those who merely claim belief for personal gain or convenience.

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اتَّبِعُوا سَبِيلَنَا
وَلْنَحْمِلْ خَطِيئَتَكُمْ وَمَا هُمْ بِحَامِلِينَ مِنْ خَطِيئَتِهِمْ مِنْ
شَيْءٍ إِنَّهُمْ لَكَذِبُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

(29:12) The disbelievers say to the believers, ‘Just follow our way, and we will bear the burden of your sins’. But they would never want to bear any of the believers’ sins. They are simply lying.

The disbelievers offer a false promise that they will bear the burden of the sins of others, however, this is a lie as nobody will carry the weight of another person’s sin. Everyone is accountable for their own actions. This is a clear reminder and confirmation that each and every one of us will carry our own burdens.

وَلْيَحْمِلُوا أَثْقَالَهُمْ وَأَثْقَالًا مَعَ أَثْقَالِهِمْ وَلَيُسْأَلُنَّ يَوْمَ
الْقِيَامَةِ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

(29:13) Yet, they will certainly be made to carry their own burdens, as well as the other burdens along with their own. And they will surely be questioned on the Day of Judgement about what they used to fabricate.

Those who mislead others, act unjust or preach false teachings will bear the weight of their own sin as well as the sins of those who followed them, without diminishing the burden of those misled. This further emphasises that everyone is responsible for their own actions, but the misleaders will carry additional accountability for their role in causing harm to others.

For clarification: No one will bear sins of another person in the sense that they cannot carry someone else’s actions or misdeed for them. That person will still be accountable for that sin.

Section 2: Stories of past nations and their fate (ayahs 14-40)

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَلَبِثَ فِيهِمْ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ إِلَّا
خَمْسِينَ عَامًا فَأَخَذَهُمُ الطُّوفَانُ وَهُمْ ظَالِمُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

(29:14) We sent Noah out to his people. He lived among them for fifty years short of a thousand but when the Flood overwhelmed them they were still doing evil.

The life of Nuh reflects a life of patience for he preached the religion for 950 years whilst only a small number of people believed his words. Despite his long efforts, the majority of people persisted in sin until Allah's decree came upon them in the form of the Flood.

فَأَنْجَيْنَاهُ وَأَصْحَابَ السَّفِينَةِ وَجَعَلْنَاهَا آيَةً
لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٥﴾

(29:15) We saved him and those with him on the Ark. We made this a sign for all people.

The Ark serves as a symbol of salvation for the believers who trusted in Allah and followed Prophet Nuh's guidance. The Flood was an inevitable punishment for the disbelievers, but also as a means of preserving the righteous. The story of Nuh is a reminder that obedience to Allah brings us salvation, and denial of the truth leads to destruction.

وَإِبْرَاهِيمَ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَاتَّقُوهُ ذَلِكُمْ
خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

(29:16) We also sent Abraham. He said to his people, 'Serve God and be mindful of Him: that is better for you, if only you knew.

This ayah reminds us that true happiness and success lie in submitting to Allah's will, calling out to Him alone and keeping Him in our remembrance.

إِنَّمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْثَانًا وَتَخْلُقُونَ إِفْكًا
إِنَّ الَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ لَكُمْ
رِزْقًا فَابْتَغُوا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ الرِّزْقَ وَاعْبُدُوهُ وَاشْكُرُوا لَهُ
إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

(29:17) What you worship instead of God are mere idols; what you invent is nothing but falsehood. Those you serve instead of God have no power to give you provisions, so seek provisions from God, serve Him, and give Him thanks: you will all be returned to Him.

Provision can only be provided from Allah, not from anyone or from anything else. Fear Allah alone, seek provision and help from Him alone, give thanks to Him alone. Keeping Allah in our minds and hearts keeps us at ease to reduce any worry.

وَإِنْ تُكَذِّبُوا فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ أُمَمٌ مِّن قَبْلِكُمْ وَمَا عَلَى
الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٨﴾

(29:18) If you say this is a lie, [be warned that] other communities before you said the same. The messenger's only duty is to give clear warning.

The rejection of Islam is not new, previous nations also rejected their prophets but it is the duty of the prophet to deliver this message. Rejection of the message does not diminish the truth. This also reminds us that prophets are as human as we are.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَيْفَ يُبْدِئُ اللَّهُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ إِنَّ
ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿١٩﴾

(29:19) Do they not see that God brings life into being and reproduces it? Truly this is easy for God.

If life originates from Allah, surely He can bring life back after death. The resurrection and return of life is an easy task for Allah for He is capable of everything and all is under His control. This ayah serves as a reminder for us to ponder on the cycle of life and creation.

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ بَدَأَ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ
اللَّهُ يُنشِئُ النَّشْأَةَ الْآخِرَةَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ



(29:20) Say, 'Travel throughout the earth and see how He brings life into being: and He will bring the next life into being. God has power over all things.

We should all contemplate on Allah's creation - observe the natural world e.g. the stars, the planets, the earth, its mountains and rivers, its wilderness and nature, its fruits and oceans etc. There are signs in all of these, if we are willing to observe.

يُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَرْحَمُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُقْلَبُونَ

(29:21) He punishes whoever He will and shows mercy to whoever He will. You will all be returned to Him.

Allah has the ultimate authority to decide who receives mercy and who faces punishment based on their actions in this world. This is a reminder of the Day of Judgement, a day when everyone will face the consequences of their deeds.

وَمَا أَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَمَا
لَكُمْ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ

(29:22) You cannot escape Him on earth or in the heavens; you will have no one to protect or help you besides God.

You cannot escape Him on earth or the heavens, as everyone will account for what they have done. Nobody can protect you besides Allah, teaching us that only Allah is the ultimate protector and helper.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِآيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَلِقَائِهِ أُولَٰئِكَ يَكُونُ
مِنْ رَحْمَتِي وَأُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

(29:23) Those who deny God's Revelation and their meeting with Him have no hope of receiving My grace: they will have a grievous torment.

Allah warns those who reject His signs and refuse to believe that they will meet Him. Such people will face severe punishment for their denial.

فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا اقْتُلُوهُ أَوْ
حَرِّقُوهُ فَأَنْجَاهُ اللَّهُ مِنَ النَّارِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
لِقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

(29:24) The only answer Abraham's people gave was, 'Kill him or burn him!' but God saved him from the Fire: there truly are signs in this for people who believe.

Prophet Ibrahim's people responded to his preachings with violence, going as far as intending to kill him. Allah saved him from this Fire, by commanding it to be cool, so as not to harm him. There is a vital lesson in this for the believers - Allah will save us in our despair, He will protect his servants in miraculous ways. Trust in Allah, remain steadfast and worship Him alone.

وَقَالَ إِنَّمَا اتَّخَذْتُمْ مِّنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْثَانًا مَّوَدَّةَ بَيْنِكُمْ
فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ يَكْفُرُ
بَعْضُكُم بِبَعْضٍ وَيَلْعَنُ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا
وَمَا أُولَئِكَ إِلَّا لَكُم مِّنْ نَّصِيرِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾

(29:25) Abraham said to them, 'You have chosen idols instead of God but your love for them will only last you for the present life: on the Day of Resurrection, you will disown and reject one another. Hell will be your home and no one will help you'

A disbeliever's devotion to false gods and idols will only last the length of this world. They will eventually turn against each other on the Day of Judgement.

﴿ فَآمَنَ لَهُ لُوطٌ وَقَالَ إِنِّي مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّي إِنَّهُ هُوَ
الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴾ ﴿٢٦﴾

(29:26) Lot believed him, and said, 'I will flee to my Lord: He is the Almighty, the All Wise'.

Prophet Lut believed in Prophet Ibrahim's message. When faced with rejection from his people, Lut chose to emigrate for the sake of Allah, demonstrating his loyalty and trust in Allah's plan.

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِي ذُرِّيَّتِهِ النُّبُوَّةَ
وَالْكِتَابَ وَءَاتَيْنَاهُ أَجْرَهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَإِنَّهُ فِي الْآخِرَةِ
لَمِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾

(29:27) We gave Isaac and Jacob to Abraham, and placed prophethood and Scripture among his offspring. We have him his rewards in this world, and in the life to come he will be among the righteous.

Prophet Ibrahim suffered a lot in this relationship with his father, who was a disbeliever. Ibrahim was blessed with Isaac (Ishaq) and Jacob (Ya'qub) who continued the legacy of prophethood and scripture. His name is praised amongst all Abrahamic faiths. Allah rewards those who follow His path both in this world and the Hereafter.

وَلُوطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ إِنَّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ
مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾

(29:28) And Lot: when He said to his people, ‘You practice outrageous acts that no people before you have ever committed.

No people before the time of Lut committed the act of homosexuality.

أَيُّكُمْ لَتَأْتُونَ الرِّجَالَ وَتَقَاطِعُونَ السَّكِيلَ وَتَأْتُونَ
فِي نَادِيكُمْ الْمُنْكَرَ فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِ
إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا أَتَيْنَا بِعَذَابِ اللَّهِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنْ
الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

(29:29) How can you lust after men, waylay travellers, and commit evil in your gatherings? The only answer his people gave was ‘Bring God’s punishment down on us, if what you say is true.’

These people committed highway robberies by obstructing the roads of travellers to loot their goods. Instead of repenting, they challenge Allah to punish them, reflecting their own moral corruption.

قَالَ رَبِّ انصُرْنِي عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾

(29:30) So he prayed, ‘My Lord, help me against these people who spread corruption.’

Instead of responding with anger, Prophet Lut turns to Allah for support, asking Him to help and protect him from the people who are corrupt - referring to their immorality and rejection of the truth.

وَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا إِبْرَاهِيمَ بِالْبُشْرَى قَالُوا إِنَّا مُهْلِكُوا أَهْلَ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ إِنَّ أَهْلَهَا كَانَوْا ظَالِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾

(29:31) When Our messengers brought the good news [of the birth of a son] to Abraham, they told him, ‘We are about to destroy the people of that town. They are wrongdoers.’

The angels visited Ibrahim to let him know the people of Lut were to be destroyed by Allah.

قَالَ إِنِّي فِيهَا لَأُوطَأُ قَالُوا نَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ فِيهَا لَنُنَجِّيَنَّهُ وَأَهْلَهُ إِلَّا أَمْرَأَتَهُ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

(29:32) Abraham said, ‘But Lot lives there.’ They answered, ‘We know who lives better than you do. We shall save him and his household, except for his wife: she will be one of those who stayed behind.’

Lut’s wife sided with the corrupt people so she stayed behind.

وَلَمَّا أَن جَاءَتْ رُسُلُنَا لُوطًا سِئَاءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا وَقَالُوا لَا تَخَفْ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ إِنَّا مُنْجُوكَ وَأَهْلَكَ إِلَّا أَمْرَأَتَكَ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغَابِرِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾

(29:33) When our messengers came to Lot, he was troubled and distressed on their account. They said, ‘Have no fear or grief: we shall certainly save you and your household, except for your wife - she will be one of those who stay behind.’

إِنَّا مُنْزِلُونَ عَلَى أَهْلِ هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ رِجْزًا مِّنَ
السَّمَاءِ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

(29:34) and we shall send a punishment from heaven down on the people of this town because they violate [God's order].

Allah's mercy saved Prophet Lut, his household and the believers from the punishment that befell his people. The disbelievers were destroyed by a rain of stones that burned them.

وَلَقَدْ تَرَكْنَا مِنْهَا آيَةً بَيِّنَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

(29:35) We left some [of the town] there as a clear sign for those who use their reason.

The ruins of the city of Sodom is now the Dead Sea, a sign for us all who are conscious of the Hereafter.

وَإِلَى مَدْيَنَ أَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا فَقَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا
اللَّهَ وَارْجُوا الْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَلَا تَعْتَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ
مُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾

(29:36) To the people of Midian we sent their brother Shu'ayb. He said, My people, serve God and think ahead to the Last Day. Do not commit evil and spread corruption in the land.'

The people of Midian (Midianites) were corrupt traders who cheated in business and engaged in fraud. Prophet Shu'ayb called them to honesty, encouraging them not to deprive each other to avoid corruption as well as warning them of the Hereafter. Business ethics are also a part of our faith. Honesty and integrity are essential in all aspects of life, especially in business and commerce.

فَكَذَّبُوهُ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَأَصْبَحُوا فِي
دَارِهِمْ جِثْمِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾

(29:37) They rejected him and so the earthquake overtook them. When morning came, they were lying dead in their homes.

The Midianites were destroyed with a mighty earthquake that convulsed the land. The same people who had denied the truth became lifeless in their homes. This verse illustrates the devastating consequences of rejecting the truth. Rejection of divine guidance can lead to destruction.

وَعَادًا وَثَمُودًا وَقَدْ تَبَيَّنَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ
مَّسْكِنِهِمُ زَيْتُ لِهَمِّ الشَّيْطَانِ أَعْمَلَهُمْ
فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيلِ وَكَانُوا مُسْتَبْصِرِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾

(29:38) [Remember] the tribes of ‘Ad and Thamud: their history is made clear to you by [what is left of] their dwelling places. Satan made their foul deeds seem alluring to them and barred them from the right way, though they were capable of seeing.

These people had the intelligence and ability to be able to be on the Straight Path as they were educated people with intellect, but they did not. They would see the ruins of the previous nations yet still did not believe.

وَقَارُونَ وَفِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَهُمْ
مُوسَىٰ بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَمَا كَانُوا
سَاقِيْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾

(29:39) [Remember] Qarun and Pharoah and Haman: Moses brought them clear signs, but they behaved arrogantly on earth. They could not escape us.

Qarun was a wealthy man who had keys to immense treasures, and also arrogant. Pharoah was the king of Egypt at the time of Musa, whilst Haman was his minister - a symbol of political corruption. Despite Prophet Musa showing them clear proof of Islam, they remained arrogant and denied his message, thinking they were immune to Allah’s power. Arrogance and denial of the truth can lead to destruction.

فَكُلًّا أَخَذْنَا بِذُنُوبِهِ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِ حَاصِبًا
وَمِنْهُمْ مَنَّا أَخَذَتْهُ الصَّيْحَةُ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنَّا خَسَفْنَا
بِهِ الْأَرْضَ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنَّا أَغْرَقْنَا وَمَا كَانَ اللَّهُ
لِيُظْلِمَهُمْ وَلَكِنْ كَانُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

(29:40) and We punished each one of them for their sins: some We struck with a violent storm; some were overcome by a sudden blast; some We made the earth swallow; and some We drowned. It is not God who wronged them; they wronged themselves.

‘Violent storm’ refers to the rain of burning stones sent to the people of Lut.

‘A sudden blast’ refers to the Shout which was sent to the people of Thamud and Midianites.

Qarun was swallowed up by the earth as his punishment, whilst the Pharaoh drowned.

Allah’s punishment is never unjust, people bring it upon themselves due to their own immoral actions and mindsets.

Section 3: The Spider parable & Allah’s signs in creation (ayahs 41-44)

مَثَلُ الَّذِينَ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ أَوْلِيَاءَ
كَمَثَلِ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ اتَّخَذَتْ بَيْتًا وَإِنَّ أَوْهَنَ
الْبُيُوتِ لَبَيْتُ الْعَنْكَبُوتِ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

(29:41) Those who take protectors other than God can be compared to spiders building themselves houses - the spider’s is the frailest of all houses - if only they could understand.

This verse provides a powerful metaphor to describe the weakness of those who take other than Allah as their protectors, comparing them to a spider that builds its web as a home. The spiderweb is weak and frail, offering no real protection just like false gods and idols offer no real protection. The spider continues to create spiderwebs thinking they are creating strong homes, but is always easily destroyed.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٤٢﴾

(29:42) God knows what things they call upon beside Him: He is the Mighty, the Wise.

Allah's knowledge and power surpasses all.

وَتِلْكَ الْأَمْثَلُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَا إِلَّا
الْعَالِمُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

(29:43) Such are the comparisons We draw for people, though only the wise can grasp them.

This verse emphasises the comparison to the spider is meant for deep reflection and contemplation. Only those who seek knowledge and have wisdom will grasp the deeper meaning behind these comparisons. Give up your time to learn and study the Qur'an, to develop a stronger connection with Allah's words.

خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ
لَآيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾

(29:44) God has created the heavens and the earth for a true purpose. There truly is a sign in this for those who believe.

There is purpose, wisdom, and truth behind the creation of the heavens and the earth - it is not a random occurrence. This verse invites believers to reflect on nature as a sign of Allah's might.

Section 4: Importance of good deeds, the Qur'an and Messengers (ayahs 45-52)

أَتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ
إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ
وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾

(29:45) [Prophet], recite what has been revealed to you of the Scripture, keep up the prayer: prayers restrains outrageous and unacceptable behavior. Remembering God is greater: God knows everything you are doing.

Continue reciting the Qur'an as it is the ultimate source of guidance. Good deeds keep us grounded - through recitation and through salah. The power of prayer is that it protects us from immorality and wrongdoing, as it purifies the heart and reminds us of Allah. The remembrance of Allah through dhikr is greater due to its powerful effect on one's soul, mind, and body. If one finds themselves falling into haram, they should look at how they are performing their salah.

﴿وَلَا تُجَادِلُوا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ إِلَّا بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ
 إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ وَقُولُوا ءَامَنَّا بِالَّذِي أُنْزِلَ إِلَيْنَا
 وَأُنْزِلَ إِلَيْكُمْ وَإِلَهُنَا وَإِلَهُكُمْ وَاحِدٌ وَنَحْنُ لَهُ
 مُسْلِمُونَ﴾

(29:46) [Believers], argue only in the best way with the People of the Book, except with those of them who act unjustly. Say, ‘We believe in what was revealed to us and in what was revealed to you: out God and your God are one [and the same]; we are devoted to Him.

Referring to those of the Abrahamic faith (Jews and Christians), we should not argue with them in a manner that is disrespectful, but rather in a peaceful way. As Muslims, we believe in one God, and we have respect for the previous revelations.

وَكَذَلِكَ أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ فَالَّذِينَ ءَاتَيْنَاهُمْ
 الْكِتَابَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ ۖ وَمِنْ هَؤُلَاءِ مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِهِ ۚ وَمَا
 يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا الْكَافِرُونَ

(29:47) This is the way We sent the Scripture to you [Muhammad]. Those to whom We had already given Scripture believe in [the Quran] and so do some of these people. No one refuses to acknowledge Our revelations but the defiant.

Belief in the messengers is a part of our faith, from Adam (a.s) to Muhammad (pbuh). We should recognise the importance and validity of each of their message. The Qur’an confirms previous Scriptures - the Torah and Gospel. Some Jews, Christians and pagans of Makkah also believed but the stubborn disbelievers rejected it out of arrogance.

وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُو مِنْ قَبْلِهِ مِنْ كِتَابٍ وَلَا تَخُطُّهُ
 بِيَمِينِكَ إِذًا لَأَرْتَابَ الْمُبِطِلُونَ

(29:48) You never recited an Scripture before We revealed this one to you: you never wrote one down with your hand. If you had done so, those who follow falsehood might have had cause to doubt.

Prophet Muhammad was illiterate, and that is exactly why he was selected for the Qur’an to be revealed to. It was not possible for him to modify or copy from previous books, or write it himself - proving the authenticity of the Qur’an.

بَلْ هُوَ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ فِي صُدُورِ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ
وَمَا يُجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا الظَّالِمُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

(29:49) But no, [this Quran] is a revelation that is clear to the hearts of those endowed with knowledge. No one refuses to acknowledge Our revelations but the evildoers.

Those who memorise the Quran preserve its words in their heart. Faith is deeply internalised for the believer. Only wrongdoers reject it, despite its truth.

وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا أُنزِلَ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتٌ مِّن رَّبِّهِ قُلْ إِنَّمَا
الْآيَاتُ عِندَ اللَّهِ وَإِنَّمَا أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٥٠﴾

(29:50) They say, ‘Why have no miracles been sent to him by his Lord?’ Say, ‘Miracles lie in God’s hands; I am simply here to warn you plainly.’


Miracles are Allah’s doing, they are not initiated by the Prophets themselves for they are human just as we are. The disbelievers demanded the Prophet to produce miracles to prove his prophethood, but Allah guides him to tell others that his role is only to warn and convey the message of Islam.

أَوَلَمْ يَكْفِهِمْ أَنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ يُتْلَى
عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُ فِي ذَلِكَ لَرَحْمَةٍ وَذِكْرَى لِقَوْمٍ
يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

(29:51) Do they not think that it is enough that We have sent down to you the Scripture that is recited to them? There is a mercy in this and a lesson for believing people.

The revelation of the Quran itself is already an ultimate miracle, yet people choose to engage in self-deception. Its language, wisdom and prophecies prove its divine origin. For the believers, the Quran is a source of mercy and guidance.

قُلْ كَفَىٰ بِاللَّهِ بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَكُمْ شَهِيدًا ۖ يَعْلَمُ مَا
فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا
بِالْبَاطِلِ وَكَفَرُوا بِاللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْخَاسِرُونَ




(29:52) Say, ‘God is sufficient witness between me and you: He knows what is in the heavens and earth. Those who believe in false deities and deny God will be the losers.’

The believer must find solace in the fact that trust in Allah is sufficient, and to not seek this validation elsewhere.

Section 5 - Striving for Islam (ayahs 53-69)


وَيَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَلَوْلَا أَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى لَّجَاءَهُمُ
الْعَذَابُ وَلَيَأْتِيَنَّهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ



(29:53) They challenge you to hasten the punishment: they would already have received a punishment if God had not set a time for it, and indeed it will come to them suddenly and catch them unaware.


The disbelievers made a mockery by asking for immediate punishment as a proof. Allah warns that His punishment is already set for an appointed time, giving people time and a chance to repent.

يَسْتَعْجِلُونَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيطَةٌ بِالْكَافِرِينَ



(29:54) They challenge you to hasten their punishment: Hell will encompass all those who deny the truth.

يَوْمَ يَغْشَاهُمْ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَمِنْ تَحْتِ أَرْجُلِهِمْ
وَيَقُولُ ذُوقُوا مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ



(29:55) On the Day when punishment overwhelms them from above and from below their very feet, and they will be told, ‘Now taste the punishment for what you used to do.’

Just because punishment does not come immediately, does not mean it will not come at all. As promised by Allah, there is an appointed time for every event in this life. The disbelievers will be surrounded by punishment, with no escape.

يَعْبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِنَّ أَرْضِي وَسِعَةٌ فَإِنِّي فَأَعْبُدُونَ



(29:56) My believing servants! My earth is vast, so worship Me and Me alone. If one cannot worship Allah peacefully, they are free to relocate elsewhere as this earth is vast and wide (if you are able to). This ayah also serves as a message of hope and encouragement for the believers who faced persecution in Makkah.

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَآئِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ثُمَّ إِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُونَ



(29:57) Every soul shall taste death, then it is to Us that you will be returned.

Death is certain and guaranteed - a universal reality. All of us, whether good or evil will experience death. Life is temporary, but the Hereafter is eternal - remember to use this life as a preparation for the real home. We should also not become attached to worldly matters, as our real home is the Afterlife.

وَالَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُم مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ
غُرَفًا تَجْرَى مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا نِعَمَ أَجْرُ
الْعَمَلِينَ



(29:58) We shall lodge those who believed and did good deeds in lofty dwellings, in the Garden graced with flowing streams, there to remain. How excellent is the reward of those who labour.

Descriptions of Jannah, the reward for the believers who work hard. The most righteous believers will settle in elevated swellings. Jannah is a place of eternal peace and blessing.

الَّذِينَ صَبَرُوا وَعَلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُونَ



(29:59) those who are steadfast, those who put their trust in their Lord!

Two key qualities of those who attain Paradise include patience - enduring difficulties while remaining firm in faith, and Tawakkul (trust in Allah) - relying on Allah in all matters.

وَكَأَيِّن مِّن دَابَّةٍ لَّا تَحْمِلُ رِزْقَهَا اللَّهُ يَرْزُقُهَا
وَإِيَّاكُمْ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٦٠﴾

(29:60) How many are the creatures who do not store their sustenance! God sustains them and you: He alone is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.

Another comparison that we should reflect on. Take the bird as an example: it does not store any food and leaves its home daily, knowing they will be looked after as Allah is the one who provides for them. Allah promises to provide for us and to look after you.

وَلِئِن سَأَلْتَهُم مَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَسَخَّرَ
الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ فَأَنَّى يُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٦١﴾

(29:61) If you ask the disbelievers who created the heavens and earth and who harnessed the sun and moon, they are sure to say, ‘God’. Then why do they turn away from Him?

The intricacy and complexity of this world is undeniable proof that God exists. Even the disbelievers of Makkah acknowledged that Allah created the heavens and the earth, yet still disbelieved.

اللَّهُ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ لَهُ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٦٢﴾

(29:62) It is God who gives abundantly to whichever of His servants He will, and sparingly to whichever He will: He has full knowledge of everything.

وَلِئِن سَأَلْتَهُم مَّنْ نَّزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ
الْأَرْضَ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَوْتِهَا لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ
بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾

(29:63) If you ask them, ‘Who sends water down from the sky and gives life with it to the earth after it has died?’ they are sure to say, ‘God’. Say, ‘Praise belongs to God!’ Truly, most of them do not use their reason.

The rain and water that rejuvenates life is a sign Allah has blessed us with.

وَمَا هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِلَّا لَهُوٌّ وَلَعِبٌ وَإِنَّ الدَّارَ
الْآخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾

(29:64) The life of this world is merely an amusement and a diversion; the true life is in the Hereafter, if only they knew.

This life is a distraction, an illusion, an amusement. The real home is in the Hereafter, where there is no death or suffering. Do not become attached and learn to let things go, for Allah will give you much better.

فَإِذَا رَكِبُوا فِي الْفُلِّ دَعَوْا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ
فَلَمَّا نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ إِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾

(29:65) Whenever they go on board a ship they call on God, and dedicate their faith to Him alone, but once He has delivered them safely back on land, see how they ascribe partners to Him!

A person feels more stable on land than on water, so when they enter unstable situations they call out to Allah. When Allah solves their issue they resort back to associating partners with Him, showing how inconsistent their faith was. People only remember Allah in hardship, but forget Him in ease - do not be one of those people. We should constantly be grateful, even when we are not in hardship this is no reason to neglect your relationship with Allah.

لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَا ءَاتَيْنَاهُمْ وَلِيَتَمَنَّعُوا فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

(29:66) Let them show their ingratitude for what We have given them; let them take their enjoyment - soon they will know.

These people are ungrateful for all Allah has done for them. We should let them be as they will soon come to find out what will happen. This is a warning that their temporary pleasure will turn into eternal regret.

أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا جَعَلْنَا حَرَمًا ءَامِنًا وَيُخَاطَفُ النَّاسُ مِنْ
حَوْلِهِمْ أَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُونَ وَبِنِعْمَةِ اللَّهِ يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾

(29:67) Can they not see that We have made [them] a secure sanctuary through all around them people are snatched away? Then how can they believe in what is false and deny God's blessing?

Makkah was a place of peace, even while wars and attacks surrounded it. This was Allah's favour, yet the Quraysh disbelieved and rejected Islam.

وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَى عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِالْحَقِّ
لَمَّا جَاءَهُ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾

(29:68) Who could be more wicked than the person who invents lies about God, or denies the truth when it comes to Him? Is Hell not the home for the disbelievers?

It is a sin to lie about Allah and reject the truth, as such Hell is the punishment for those who engage in this behaviour.

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

(29:69) But we shall be sure to guide Our ways those who strive hard for Our cause: God is with those who do good.

Those who make good effort, who strive against themselves and Shaytan will be guided by Allah. Strive for Allah through worship (salah, fasting, recitation of the Quran, dhikr), through knowledge (learning and studying the truth) and spreading Islam by helping others and doing good.

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