

Al-Hajj [The Pilgrimage] **Madinan Period**

In the name of Allah the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

[1] O mankind, fear the (wrath of) your Lord! Indeed, the earthquake of the Hour (of Judgement) will be an awesome thing.

[2] On the Day when you witness it, the suckling woman shall utterly neglect the infant she suckles, and every pregnant woman shall cast her burden, and you will see people as though they are drunk, when they are not drunk; but dreadful shall be Allah's chastisement.

[3] Among people there are some who wrangle about Allah without knowledge and follow every rebellious devil,

[4] although it is decreed about him that he shall lead into error whosoever takes him for a friend, and will direct him to the torment of the Fire.

[5] O mankind! If you have any doubt concerning Resurrection, then know that it is surely We Who created you from dust, then from a drop of sperm, then from a clot of blood, then from a little lump of flesh, some of it shapely and other shapeless. (We are rehearsing this) that We may make the reality clear to you. We cause (the drop of sperm) that We please to remain in the wombs till an appointed time. We bring you forth as infants (and nurture you) that you may come of age. Among you is he that dies (at a young age) and he who is kept back to the most abject age so that after once having known, he reaches a stage when he knows nothing. You see the earth dry and barren and then no sooner than We send down water upon it, it begins to quiver and swell and brings forth every kind of beautiful vegetation.

[6] All this is because Allah, He is the Truth, and because He resurrects the dead, and because He has power over everything,

[7] (all of which shows that) the Hour shall surely come to pass -in this there is no doubt – and Allah shall surely resurrect those that are in graves.

[8] And among people are those that wrangle about Allah without knowledge, without any true guidance, and without any scripture to enlighten them.

[9] They wrangle arrogantly, intent on leading people astray from the Way of Allah. Such shall suffer disgrace in this world and We shall cause them to taste the chastisement of burning (in the Next).

[10] That is the outcome of what your own hands have wrought, for Allah never wrongs His creatures.

[11] And among people is he who worships Allah on the borderline;¹ if any good befalls him, he is satisfied; but if a trial afflicts him, he utterly turns away. He will incur the loss of this world and the Hereafter. That indeed is a clear loss.

1. *This alludes to those whose allegiance to the true faith is peripheral; to those who, rather than be at the centre, prefer to sit on the fence. These are like reluctant soldiers who, being on the periphery, are ready to throw in their own with the winning party, be it their own or the enemy's.*

[12] He invokes, instead of Allah, those who can neither harm nor benefit him. That indeed is straying far away.

[13] He invokes those that are more likely to cause him harm than benefit. Such is surely an evil patron, and an evil associate.

[14] (In contrast) Allah will assuredly cause those who believe and act righteously to enter Gardens beneath which rivers flow. For, most certainly, Allah does whatever He pleases.

[15] Anyone who fancies that Allah will not support him in this world and in the Hereafter, let him reach out to heaven through a rope, and then make a hole in the sky and see whether his device can avert that which enrages him.

[16] Even so We have revealed the Qur'an with Clear Signs. Verily Allah guides whomsoever He wills.

[17] On the Day of Resurrection Allah will most certainly judge among those who believe, and those who became Jews, and Sabaeans, and Christians, and Magians, and those who associate other-with Allah in His Divinity. Surely Allah watches over everything.

[18] Have you not seen that all those who are in the heavens and all those who are in the earth prostrate themselves before Allah; and so do the sun and the moon, and the stars and the mountains, and the trees, and the beasts, and so do many human beings, and even many of those who are condemned to chastisement? And he whom Allah humiliates, none can give him honour. Allah does whatever He wills.

[19] These two groups (the believers and unbelievers) are in dispute about their Lord.² As for those that disbelieve, garments of fire have been cut out for them; boiling water shall be poured down over their heads,

[20] causing (not only) their skins but all that is in their bellies as well to melt away

[21] There shall be maces of iron to lash them.

[22] Whenever they try, in their anguish, to escape from Hell, they will be driven back into it, (and shall be told): "Now taste the torment of burning."

[23] (On the other hand), Allah will cause those who believed and acted righteously to enter the Gardens beneath which rivers flow. They shall be decked in them with bracelets of gold and pearls and their raiment shall be of silk.

[24] They were guided (to accept) the pure word; they were guided to the Way of the Praiseworthy (Lord).

[25] Indeed those who disbelieve and who (now) hinder people from the Way of Allah and hinder them from the Holy Mosque which We have set up (as a place of worship) for all people,³ equally for those who dwell therein and for those who come from outside, (they surely deserve punishment). Whosoever deviates therein from the Right Way and acts with iniquity, We shall cause him to taste a painful chastisement.

2. *The groups that contend about God are very many. Nevertheless, the present verse divides them into two broad categories. One consists of those who accept the teachings of the Prophets and adopt the right attitude in serving God. The other consists of those who do not accept the teachings of the Prophets, reject the Truth, and embrace unbelief. The essence of this latter attitude remains one and the same regardless of how numerous the disagreements among the exponents of such an attitude are, or the extent to which the different versions of unbelief vary from one to another.*

3. That is, they prevent the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) and his Companions from performing *Hajj* and *'Umrah*.

[26] Call to mind when We assigned to Abraham the site of the House (Ka 'bah), directing him: "Do not associate aught with Me" and "Keep My House pure for those who walk around it, and for those who stand and who bow down and who prostrate themselves (in worship),

[27] and publicly proclaim Pilgrimage for all mankind so that they come to you on foot and mounted on lean camels from every distant point

[28] to witness the benefits in store for them, and pronounce the name of Allah during the appointed days over the cattle that He has provided them. So eat of it and feed the distressed and the needy.

[29] Thereafter, let them tidy up and fulfil their vows and circumambulate the Ancient House."

[30] Such (was the purpose of building the Ka 'bah). Whosoever, then, venerates Allah's sanctities will find it to be good for him in the sight of his Lord. Cattle have been made lawful for you⁴ except those mentioned to you (as unlawful). So shun the abomination of idols and shun all words of falsehood.

4. *The statement that "Cattle have been made lawful to you except those mentioned to you (as unlawful)" is made for two purposes. First, that the Quraysh and the polytheists of Arabia considered bahirah, sa'ibah, wasilah and ham among the animals that were inviolable. (For further explanation of this see al-Ma'idah 5:103, n. 51 - Ed.) It was, therefore, made clear that no sanctity was attached to them; that it was lawful to slaughter all cattle, including these. Second, since the hunting of animals is forbidden in the state of ihram, it was necessary to clarify that slaughtering cattle and eating them is not forbidden. The main purpose of this above verse, then, is to make these clarifications.*

[31] Become exclusively devoted to Allah, ascribing Divinity to none other than Him. Whoso ascribes Divinity to aught beside Allah, it is as though he fell down from the sky whereafter either the birds will snatch him away, or the wind will sweep him to a distant place (causing him to be shattered to pieces).⁵

[32] Such is the fact. And whoso venerates the sanctity of all that have been ordained as symbols of Allah surely does so because it is part of the true piety of the hearts.⁶

5. The word "sky" in this parable stands for the natural state of man wherein he is the servant of none except God and his nature recognizes no other doctrine than this, i.e. the doctrine of pure monotheism. When a man embraces the guidance brought by the Prophets, it helps him adhere to monotheism on the grounds of knowledge and sound insight and this carries him to even greater heights, On the other hand, when someone embraces polytheism or atheism, he falls away from this natural state and is then confronted with either of the following two situations. First, that Satan and those who are out to misguide others, those who are metaphorically called "birds" in the above account; pounce upon him, each trying to snatch him away. Second, that he is carried to and fro by his lusts, emotions and fancies, all of which are likened in the above verse to the wind, with the result that he is ultimately hurled into some abysmal ditch.

6. That someone "venerates" the symbols of God is indicative of his inner piety. It shows that he is possessed of some degree of God-consciousness which prompts him to revere God's symbols.

[33] You may derive benefit (from sacrificial animals) until an appointed time.⁷ Thereafter their place (of sacrifice) is near the Ancient House.

[34] For every people We have laid down a ritual of sacrifice (- although the purpose of the ritual is the same -) that they pronounce the name of Allah over the cattle He has provided them.⁸ Your Lord is One God; so submit yourselves to Him alone. And give, (O Prophet), glad tidings to those that humble themselves (before Allah),

[35] whose hearts shiver whenever Allah is mentioned, who patiently bear whatever affliction comes to them, who establish Prayer, and who spend (for good purposes) out of what We have provided them.

7. The preceding verse sets out a general directive: that the symbols of God should be revered, characterizing such reverence as a manifestation of inner piety. The present statement, which follows the previous one, seeks to rectify a common misunderstanding. Sacrificial animals are, as we know, one of God's symbols. The Arabs of the time considered it sacrilegious to use them for riding or employ them to transport goods or consume their milk en route to the House of God. The present verse removes this misconception and affirms that one may benefit from them according to one's need.

8. This verse brings out two fundamental truths. First, that sacrificial offering has always been an integral part of the system of worship in all versions of Divine Law. The other point emphasized in this verse is that what really matters is that sacrifice be truly made for the sake

of God rather than with an obsessive concern with the legal minutiae of the act. Whilst details of sacrificial offering have varied in different times, lands, and communities, the common denominator, however, has always been the spirit and purpose of sacrifice.

[36] We have appointed sacrificial camels among the symbols of (devotion to) Allah. There is much good in them for you. So make them stand (at the time of sacrifice) and pronounce the name of Allah over them,⁹ and when they fall down on their sides¹⁰ (after they are slaughtered), eat and also feed them who do not ask and those who ask. Thus have We subjected these animals that you may give thanks.

[37] Neither their flesh reaches Allah nor their blood; it is your piety that reaches Him. He has subjected these animals (to you) that you may magnify Allah¹¹ for the guidance He has bestowed upon you. Give glad tidings, (O Prophet), to those who do good.

[38] Surely Allah defends those who believe. Certainly Allah has no love for the perfidious, the thankless.

9. That is, pronounce the name of God while slaughtering them. The camel is made to stand and is slaughtered by piercing a spear into its throat. This is termed "nahr".

10. "Falling down on their sides" does not simply mean that the sacrificial animal's body touches the ground when it falls down after slaughter. It also means that this body becomes still when it ceases to breathe with pain and dies.

11. That is, one should sincerely acknowledge God's greatness and paramountcy, and this should be reflected in one's deeds. Here, once again, we find reference to the objective of the rite of sacrifice. Sacrifice has been made obligatory not only to express man's gratitude to God for making the cattle subservient to him; it has also been instituted in order that man may fully remember, both in thought and deed, the Lordship of God Who subjected the cattle, whom He created, to man's control. This should enable man to avoid falling prey to the illusion that he is the true master of whatever he happens to possess.

[39] Permission (to fight) has been granted to those for they have been wronged.¹² Verily Allah has the power to help them:

[40] those who were unjustly expelled from their homes for no other reason than their saying: "Allah is Our Lord." If Allah were not to repel some through others, monasteries and churches and synagogues and mosques wherein the name of Allah is much mentioned, would certainly have been pulled down. Allah will most certainly help those who will help Him.¹³ Verily Allah is Immensely Strong, Overwhelmingly Mighty.

[41] (Allah will certainly help) those who, were We to bestow authority on them in the land, will establish Prayers, render *Zakah*, enjoin good, and forbid evil. The end of all matters rests with Allah.

[42] (O Prophet), if they give the lie to you, then before them the people of 'Ad and Thamud, also gave the lie (to the Prophets),

[43] and so too did the people of Abraham and the people of Lot;

12. This surah contains the very first verse in which Muslims were allowed to engage in fighting (qital) in the way of God. The present verse, however, simply grants Muslims the permission to fight. It was only later that they were commanded to fight. The verses embodying this command are 2:190-193, 216 and 224. There was only a short lapse of time between the granting of permission to fight and the command to do so. To the best of our knowledge, such permission was granted in Dhu al-Hijjah 1 A.H., while the command was given a little before the Battle of Badr, either in Rajab or Sha'ban 2 AH.

13. That those who summon mankind to monotheism, strive to establish the true faith, and seek to promote righteousness in place of evil are helpers of God is a recurrent theme in the Qur'an. This is so because the above-mentioned tasks are God's, and those who exert themselves in the performance of these tasks, thereby become His helpers.

[44] and so did the dwellers of Midian, and Moses too was branded a liar. Initially I granted respite to the unbelievers for a while and then seized them. How dreadful was My punishment!

[45] How many towns have We destroyed because their people were steeped in iniquity: so they lie fallen down upon their turrets! How many wells lie deserted; and how many towering palaces lie in ruins!

[46] Have they not journeyed in the land that their hearts might understand and their ears might listen? For indeed it is not the eyes that are blinded; it is rather the hearts in the breasts that are rendered blind.

[47] They ask you to hasten the punishment. Allah shall most certainly not fail His promise; but a Day with your Lord is as a thousand years of your reckoning.¹⁴

[48] How many towns did I respite at first though they were steeped in iniquity, and then I seized them! To Me are all destined to return.

[49] Say (O Muhammad): "O people! I have been sent to you only as a plain warner (before the Doom strikes you)."

[50] So those who believe and act righteously shall be granted forgiveness and an honourable sustenance,

[51] whereas those who strive against Our Signs, seeking to profane them, they are the friends of the Fire!

14. It is preposterous to think that the consequences of obeying or disobeying God's injunctions can be observed instantly. If a nation is warned that a certain pattern of behaviour it follows will prove catastrophic, it is absurd for them to retort that they have persisted with that line of conduct for the last ten, twenty, or fifty years, and still no calamity

has befallen them. For it often takes not days, months or years, but centuries for the consequences of a people's behaviour to become fully evident.

[52] Never did We send a Messenger or a Prophet before you (O Muhammad), but that whenever he had a desire, Satan interfered with that desire. Allah eradicates the interference of Satan and strengthens His Signs. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

[53] (He does this) in order that He may make the evil caused by Satan a trial for those in whose hearts there is sickness (of hypocrisy), whose hearts are hard (and vitiated). Surely these wrong-doers have gone too far in their dissension.

[54] (He also does this) in order that those endowed with knowledge may know that it is the Truth from your Lord and that they may have faith in it and their hearts may humble themselves before Him. Verily Allah always directs those that believe to the Right Way.¹⁵

15. That is, God made Satan's evil designs a means of testing people so that those who are righteous may be distinguished from those who are evil. In the nature of things, those whose minds have been corrupted derive wrong conclusions from such things and this in turn becomes a means of misleading them, As for those whose minds are straight, these very things lead them to confirm the truthfulness of God's Prophets and His Books, The result is that these people are led to believe that all these are no more than Satan's mischief's. They know that the Prophets' call is essentially to nothing other than truth and righteousness. Had this not been so, Satan would not have carried on so desperately.

The specific stage through which the mission of the Prophet (peace be on him) was then passing misled many of those who were concerned only with appearances. Such people, therefore, behaved as though the Prophet had failed in his mission. For what people could observe was simply that the person who wished his people to believe in him, virtually found no other way after thirteen years of striving than to bid farewell to his homeland with only a handful of followers, When people considered the Prophet's claim that he was God's Messenger and that he enjoyed God's support in this regard, or when they considered the proclamation of the Qur'an that the unbelievers who reject a true Prophet are seized with God's scourge, they were inclined to doubt the veracity of both the Prophet and the Qur'an. In this way the detractors of the Prophet (peace be on him) were encouraged to let their tongues loose, so much so that they started mocking him, saying in effect: "Where is God's support that you so much talk about? What has happened to God's scourge against which you have been warning us?" The preceding verses contain a response to these questions, as indeed do the present ones.

[55] The unbelievers will not cease to be in doubt about it until the Hour suddenly comes upon them, or the chastisement of an ominous day overtakes them.

[56] On that Day all sovereignty shall be Allah's and He will judge among them. Then those who believed and acted righteously shall be in Gardens of Bliss.

[57] A humiliating chastisement awaits those who disbelieved and denied Our Signs.

[58] As for those who migrated in the way of Allah, whereafter they were slain, or died, Allah will certainly grant them a goodly provision. Indeed, Allah is the Best of all those who provide.

[59] He will surely admit them to a resort which will please them. Most certainly Allah is All-Knowing, Most Forbearing.

[60] That indeed is so, as for him who retaliates in proportion to the excess committed against him, and is thereafter again subjected to transgression, Allah will surely aid him. Verily Allah is All-Pardoning, All-Forgiving,

[61] So shall it be because it is Allah Who causes the night to emerge out of the day and causes the day to emerge out of the night and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

[62] So shall it be because Allah, He is the Truth, and all whom they invoke instead of Him are false. Allah is Most High, All-Great.

[63] Do you not see that Allah sends down water from the sky whereby the earth turns green? Verily Allah is Subtle, All-Aware.¹⁶

[64] To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. Surely Allah - He alone is Self- Sufficient, Praiseworthy.

[65] Have you not seen how Allah has subjected to you all that is in the earth, and the vessels that sail in the sea by His command, and it is He Who holds back the sky that it may not fall on earth except by His leave? Surely Allah is Most Gentle, Ever Compassionate to people.

[66] And it is He Who has endowed you with life and it is He who causes you to die, and it is He Who will then resurrect you. Man is indeed extremely prone to denying the Truth.¹⁷

[67] For every people We have prescribed a way of worship which they follow. So, (O Muhammad) let them not dispute with you concerning this,¹⁸ and call them to Your Lord. You are certainly on the Straight Way.

16. God is All-Hearing and All-Seeing; He is neither blind nor deaf to what happens in the world. He, therefore, visits with His scourge the unbelieving and the tyrannous; He rewards with His favours those who believe and do righteous deeds; He metes out justice to those who are wronged; and He helps with His succour the followers of the Truth who fight against tyranny with all their might.

17. This refers to deliberate denial of the Truth expounded by the Prophets.

18. The earlier Prophets prescribed a particular way (mansak) for their communities. In like manner, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him) also prescribed a particular way for his community No one is entitled to dispute this because this is the only way that is suitable for the present age.

[68] And if they dispute with you, say: "Allah knows well what you do.

[69] Allah will judge among you on the Day of Resurrection concerning matters about which you disagreed."

[70] Are you not aware that Allah knows all that is in the heaven and the earth? Surely it is all preserved in a Book. Indeed that is easy with Allah.

[71] Instead of Allah they worship those concerning whom He has revealed no sanction and concerning whom they have no true knowledge. None shall be able to help such evil-doers.

[72] When Our Signs are plainly recited to them, you will perceive utter repugnance on their faces and it all but seems as if they will soon pounce upon those who recite Our Signs to them. Say: "Shall I tell you what is worse than that? The Fire with which Allah has threatened those who disbelieve. That is truly an evil end."

[73] O people, a parable is set forth: pay heed to it. Those who call upon aught other than Allah shall never be able to create even a fly, even if all of them were to come together to do that. And if the fly were to snatch away anything from them, they would not be able to recover that from it. Powerless is the supplicant; and powerless is he to whom he supplicates.

[74] They have not formed a true estimate of Allah. Indeed, Allah is All-Powerful, All-Mighty.

[75] Allah chooses Messengers from among angels and from among human beings (to convey His command). Allah is All-Hearing, All-Seeing.

[76] He knows all that is before them and that which is hidden from them. And it is to Allah that all affairs are returned.

[77] Believers, bow down and prostrate yourselves before Your Lord and serve Your Lord and do good that you may prosper.

[78] Strive in the cause of Allah in a manner worthy of that striving. He has chosen you (for His task), and He has not laid upon you any hardship in religion. Keep to the faith of your father Abraham. Allah named you Muslims earlier and even in this (Book), that the Messenger may be a witness over you, and that you may be witnesses over all mankind. So establish Prayer, and pay *Zakah*, and hold fast to Allah. He is your Protector. What an excellent Protector; what an excellent Helper!