

Sura 64: Al-Taghabun (Loss and Gain)

In the name of God, the Lord of Mercy, the Giver of Mercy

Verses 1 to 18:

1. *All that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth glorify God; all sovereignty belongs to Him and all praise belongs to Him, and He has power over all things.*
2. *It is He who has created you; and of you are some who are disbelievers, and some who are believers. And God is All-Seeing of what you do.*
3. *He created the heavens and the earth with truth, and He shaped you and perfected your shapes, and to Him is the final destination.*
4. *He knows what is in the heavens and earth; and He knows what you conceal and what you reveal. God knows well the secrets of the hearts.*
5. *Has not the story of those who disbelieved before, reached you? So they tasted the bad consequences of their conduct, and they will have a painful torment.*
6. *That was because their messengers came to them with clear signs, but they said, "Shall we take guidance from mere mortals?" So they disbelieved and turned away. But God had no need for them. God is Self-Sufficient and Praised.*
7. *The disbelievers claimed that they will not be resurrected. Say, "By my Lord, you shall surely be resurrected, then you shall be told of all that you did. And that is easy for God."*
8. *You should therefore, believe in God and His Messenger, and in the light which we have sent down. And God is Totally-Aware of what you do.*
9. *The day when He shall gather you to the Day of Gathering; that will be a day of loss and gain. And whoso believes in God and does good, He will absolve him of his evil deeds and admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide therein forever; that is the supreme achievement.*
10. *But those who disbelieved and denied Our verses, they will be companions of the fire, to dwell therein forever; what a wretched destination.*
11. *No calamity befalls save by God's leave. And whosoever believes in God, He guides his heart. And God is Omniscient.*
12. *So obey God, and obey His Messenger: but if you turn back, the duty of Our Messenger is only to convey (the Message) plainly.*
13. *God, there is no god but He. Let the believers put their trust in God.*
14. *Believers, truly, among your wives and your children are (some that are) enemies to you; so beware of them. But if you pardon, forbear, and forgive, verily God is All-Forgiving, Giver of Mercy.*
15. *Your wealth and your children are only a temptation, whereas God has with Him an immense reward.*
16. *So remain conscious of God as much as you can; listen and obey and spend in charity for the benefit of your own souls; and those who are saved from the covetousness of their own souls they are the successful.*
17. *If you lend God a goodly loan, He will double it for you and will forgive you, for God is Grateful, Forbearing.*
18. *The Knower of the unseen and the seen, the Eminent, the Wise. (64: 1 -18)*

This Sura, with the exception of the last few verses, sounds like a Meccan Sura. The first few verses aim at establishing the fundamentals of the doctrine and creating an Islamic understanding in the hearts of people using the same style used in the Meccan Suras. However, the last few verses exhort the believers to spend out of their wealth in charity in a style similar to that used in the Suras revealed in Medina. There are conflicting opinions about the time of revelation of this Sura. Some say it was revealed in Mecca and others say it was revealed in Medina. The most probable opinion of the scholars indicates that it was revealed in Medina. In addition, the Suras that were revealed in Medina sometimes addressed issues related to the doctrine as well.

“All that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth glorify God; all sovereignty belongs to Him and all praise belongs to Him, and He has power over all things.” Everything in the heavens and on the earth glorify their Lord. The heart and soul of the universe believe in God. God owns everything in existence. All God’s creatures celebrate His praise. God has absolute power over everything. The image that this verse paints is an image that reflects the essence of the belief in God. In the middle of this believing universe which glorifies and praises God, we find humankind standing alone in a unique situation: some are believers and others are disbelievers. God chose to give humankind the propensity of being a believer or a disbeliever. God gave humankind the responsibility to choose and the tools that enable him to make the right choice. God sees everything. He observes people’s behavior, He sees what they do, and He knows their intentions and inclinations, *“It is He who has created you; and of you are some who are disbelievers, and some who are believers. And God is All-Seeing of what you do.”*

The following verse states the original truth that God has instilled in this universe, *“He created the heavens and the earth with truth, and He shaped you and perfected your shapes, and to Him is the final destination.”* The truth is an integral part of the universe; it is the foundation upon which the universe was created. God created humankind in the best form. Humankind should show gratitude for the bounty of God who honored humankind and blessed him with a good form. Not only humankind was blessed with a good figure but also with a sound psyche. A study of the human body would reveal this immediately. The final destination of everything is to God.

Then a statement about the comprehensive nature of the divine knowledge is made, *“He knows what is in the heavens and earth; and He knows what you conceal and what you reveal. God knows well the secrets of the hearts.”* Such a reality evokes in the humankind the feelings that connect him to his Lord. These three verses inform humankind of the truth about his own existence, the truth about the existence of the whole universe, his connection to his Creator, the proper etiquette in dealing with God; and command him to remain always conscious of God.

The following verse addressed the idolaters, *“Has not the story of those who disbelieved before, reached you? So they tasted the bad consequences of their conduct, and they will have a painful punishment. That was because their messengers came to them with clear signs, but they said, ‘Shall we take guidance from mere mortals?’ So they disbelieved and turned away. But God had no need for them. God is Self-Sufficient and Praised,”* reminding them of the evil consequences that awaits those who disbelieve in God. They deserved this punishment because they refused to believe that a mortal like them can be a messenger of God. It was a ridiculous objection. Since the messenger’s duty is to provide a living example of the message. Their arrogance and

ignorance barred them from accepting guidance and they chose to disbelief in the message and to reject the messenger. They did not understand that God does not need their belief. This should have been a lesson to the idolaters of Mecca who were following in the footsteps of those who rejected faith before them.

“The disbelievers claimed that they will not be resurrected. Say, ‘By my Lord, you shall surely be resurrected, then you shall be told of all that you did. And that is easy for God.’ You should therefore, believe in God and His Messenger, and in the light which we have sent down. And God is Totally-Aware of what you do.” The idolaters made the false claim that they will not be resurrected. The verse commands the Prophet (PBUH) to refute this claim by making an oath, *“By my Lord, you shall surely be resurrected, then you shall be told of all that you did.”* This is easy for God. He knows everything. And He has the power to do anything. They were then called to believe in God, His Messenger, and the light that was sent with His Messenger. This faith that God revealed in the Quran is a light that guides people. It is light because it came from God and God is the light of the heavens and earth. It is also light because it illuminates the heart and leads it to the truth.

God will gather you to the Day of Gathering, when all people will be gathered together. On that Day the believers will gain while the disbelievers will lose. That is why it is called the Day of loss and gain, *“The day when He shall gather you to the Day of gathering; that will be a day of loss and gain.”* The gain and loss are detailed, *“And whoso believes in God and does good, He will absolve him of his evil deeds and admit him to gardens beneath which rivers flow, to abide therein forever; that is the supreme achievement. But those who disbelieved and belied Our verses, they will be companions of the fire, to dwell therein forever; what a wretched destination.”*

A fundamental principle is then stated, *“No calamity befalls save by God's leave. And whosoever believes in God, He guides his heart. And God is Omniscient.”* It is appropriate to state this principle here as a part of the truth of faith. Faith would not be complete without believing in this principle. Faith would not be complete without the belief that everything is in the hand of God. The believers should be content with what happens to them. This has been corroborated by the tradition, *“I am amazed at the condition of the believer. God always gives him what is good. When he faces a hardship he perseveres – this is good for him- and when he is blessed by a bounty from God he is grateful –this is also good for him. No one else gets this except a believer.”* In addition, God's guides the heart of the believer to accepting what God has decreed for him.

The call to faith is followed by a call to be obedient, *“So obey God, and obey His Messenger: but if you turn back, the duty of Our Messenger is only to convey (the Message) plainly. God, there is no god but He. Let the believers put their trust in God.”* The verse outlines the task of the messenger; his responsibility is to convey the message in a clear way. The believers should put their trust in God.

The following verse admonishes the believers not to be distracted away from the remembrance of God, *“Believers, truly, among your wives and your children are (some that are) enemies to you; so beware of them. But if you pardon, forbear, and forgive, verily God is All-Forgiving,*

Giver of Mercy.” This verse reflects one of the realities of life when taking care of the family may hamper the efforts of people to strive in the cause of God. Striving in the cause of God may expose the person and his family to hardships. Some families may not accept such hardships so they try to prevent the person from striving in God’s cause. The same meaning is emphasized in a different way by alerting the believers that wealth and children are sources of temptation, “*Your wealth and your children are only a temptation, whereas God has with Him an immense reward.*” One should focus on the immense reward that God has.

The believers are then called upon to be conscious of God as much as they can, “*So remain conscious of God as much as you can; listen and obey.*” God’s mercy is reflected in asking the believers to do only things which are within their power, “*as much as you can.*” The verses continue to urge the believers to spend in the cause of God, “*and spend in charity for the benefit of your own souls; and those who are saved from the covetousness of their own souls they are the successful.*” Whatever they are spending is for their own benefit. Success can only be achieved when one is saved of the covetousness of one’s own soul.

Spending in the cause of God is like giving God a good loan. This is a very profitable bargain, God will double it, in addition, He will grant the believer His forgiveness, “*If you lend God a goodly loan, He will double it for you and will forgive you, for God is Grateful, Forbearing. The Knower of the unseen and the seen, the Eminent, the Wise.*”

God teaches us how to overcome our weaknesses and how to look up to God to try to emulate Him within our limited capacity. He calls Himself, “*Grateful, Forbearing.*” These are traits that we should endeavor to emulate.