

16. Rending limb from limb, flesh from head;

انزاعة للشوى

- ***Nazza 'a***

- root meaning *naz* ' denotes pulling something forcibly and violently out of its place (*jadhb al-shayi' bi quwwatin min mahallihi*)
- *Fa ' 'al* (فعال) pattern is a hyperbole of duration and perseverance
- the accusative case is a *hal*, or a circumstantial adverbial, modifying *ladha*, describing what it continually does; it is as if it is Hellfire's inveterate trade or job description; always rending forcefully

- ***Lil shawa***

- bears a few interpretive possibilities: most agree that it means extremities of one's body, like hands or legs, which if taken away alone won't result in death
- *shawa* also denotes contempt or *tahqir*, for it is used for the very worst, superfluous, and marginal
- the second possibility is that *shawa* denotes an integument or skin and scalp of the head

16. Rending limb from limb, flesh from head;

انزاعة للشوى ﴿١٦﴾

- **Why does Allah talk about the Hellfire?**

- to imbue in us *taqwa*. If you don't have *taqwa*, then you don't understand the point
 - because He created us to try us as to which of us is finest in works. Allah is not interested in the worst people. They are unimportant and contemptible. That is part of the humiliation of the Fire
 - those of them who land themselves in the Hellfire, despite all of Allah's encouragement to do good and avoid wrong, deserve to be marginal because of their stubborn refusal to obey Allah, which makes them besides the point of existence
-
- The Prophet ﷺ said, “Whoever is afraid [of Allah] will get away by night (i.e., *tahjjud*) and whoever gets away by night will reach home. Verily, what Allah is offering for sale is expensive. Verily, what Allah is offering for sale is paradise itself.”

17. Summoning whoever turned his back on Truth, and went for other things;

تَدْعُوا مَنْ أَدْبَرَ وَتَوَلَّى

- ***Tad‘u man***

- root meaning is *da‘a*
- literal not metaphorical: the fire will have a voice and call people
- it is a *hal lazima*, or adverbial of circumstance that is ever-present with the Hellfire
- summoning whoever turned their back on the truth
- this rhetorical flourish refers to those whom the Prophet ﷺ summoned to Allah in their lifetime, or those who came after by the words, but who turned their backs. Now the Hellfire is summoning them and they have to answer. Allah will create speech in the fire, and it will say, “come here to me, O *Kafir*.”
- the fire calls to its children in a clear voice then snaps them up like sparrows pick up pieces of grain. This is for refusing to answer the truth in this world

- ***Adbar***

- means to leave something behind one that one has turned his back to. the focus is turning one’s back to the truth and *iman*

- ***Tawalla***

- the essence of the word is as though the person left something and distanced himself from it for something else that he busied himself with
- in other words, he had better things to do; as though he turned away from worship to other things

18. And amassed, and stored away.

وَجَمَعَ فَأَوْعَى

- Here, Allah is explaining why one left the deed, namely because He was avid and greedy for the *dunya*
- **Jama‘a**
 - amassed property and assets, busying himself with piling up more from being busy with religion
 - this world and the next world are like two competing co-wives, and spending time and paying attention to one entails not doing so to the other; such a person’s amassing can only be ascribed to the pathetic things of this world
- **Aw‘a**
 - stored away
 - put it in containers that could hold it and hoarded it out of avarice for money, in expectation of plenty of time yet to live (*tul al-amad*), and not giving the due of Allah to the poor and needy
- The focus in surat al-Ma‘arij is traits of the *nafs*, for they are the basis of our choices. So the verses mean that the person in the Hellfire amassed wealth, hoarded it in containers, didn’t spend it on what Allah asked us, and was too busy with these things to have anything to do with the *din* nor did he worship the one who created him

19. Verily has Man been created pitiably anxious for himself:

﴿ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا ﴾

- This verse explains that one of the strangest things about Man is that he pursues this world rather than the next and the reason he does this is because he is created *Halu 'an*
- ***Insan***
 - refers to the genus of Man
- ***Halu 'an***
 - the essence of this world signifies speed and vehemence (*hidda*) in a person
 - it means precipitous haste and imbalance resulting in despair when faced with misfortune, distress, hardship, and haste in keeping the good for himself and away from people
 - overhasty and jumps to conclusions
 - verses 20 and 21 explain the consequences of having this characteristic
- What is Allah telling us? That the basis of mankind is that they have this blameworthy nature and they have to change themselves
- *Hala 'an* is the nature of someone who never tires to refine his human nature but is satisfied with being created *halu 'an*: the selfish jerk, piteously benefiting himself, unless he disciplines himself and adopts the deeds and attributes in the verses to come

20. When the slightest evil touches him, wordless with despair;

إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا ۖ

- These verses (20-21) mean, of the visible effects of being *halu'an*, or piteously anxious for himself, is that when the slightest evil touches him he despairs, like the camel racing headlong from fear, fragile, avid, and grasping for any and all *dunya* it can grasp, feckless and weak, devoid of all patience in the face of adversity
- Allah is telling us that people wrapped up in themselves make small packages. He is telling us to make *mujahada* or battle against our lower selves. The cure for this pitiable state of anxiety of the self, with its victimhood and entitlement, is to expand our horizons to infinity by realising that everything one does is for the pure countenance of Allah
- This includes giving when others are in need, praying for others at the time of their catastrophes, being part of the solution and not part of the problem, having noble silence or remarks that lighten the atmosphere around us. In a word, taking the ephemeral as the cue to lift our gaze to the eternal by the knowledge that Allah turns to us when we turn to Him and Allah remembers us when we remember Him
- A heart full of the earth and the things upon it is as dark as night, while a heart full of Allah is full of infinite and endless light

20. When the slightest evil touches him, wordless with despair;

إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا ﴿٢٠﴾

- **Massahu**

- used in the Quran in two senses

- 1) a light inconsiderable touch, as in these two verses, or

- 2) a heavy, dreadful, dire touch; a *kinaya* for a pounding from Allah

- here it means any touch, no matter how light

- Whether he is afflicted with evil or with good, the unworked-on personality who is pitifully anxious for himself, the *halu* ‘, does just what is inappropriate and just what he shouldn’t, returning to himself and not to Allah, falling below the mark and not rising above

- These two verses are not a *tafsir* of *halu* ‘ but rather the results of being *halu* ‘

- **Sharr**

- the genus of any kind of evil and its affliction, such as illness, injury, grief, or poverty

20. When the slightest evil touches him, wordless with despair;

إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا ﴿٢٠﴾

- ***Jazu ‘an***

- *fa ‘ul* pattern is a hyperbole and emphatic to the utmost
- *jaz ‘* is like cutting: it is a deep sorrow, to the extent that it disables a person and cuts him off from what he would otherwise do; he says to himself, “it’s all over, the good has left, there is no point in going on.”
- it is like a cutting off because he’s cut off from his trajectory, as though a door were closed in his face. So it is the despair that stops a person from doing anything more of what he was doing before
- depicts someone wholly stopped and immobilised by the degree of his despair
- this is not the way of someone with huge *iman*. Allah’s is what He gives and Allah’s is what He takes back

- Both *jazu ‘an* and *manu ‘an* in the accusative case of adverbial of circumstance (*mansub ‘ala al-hal*)

21. And when the slightest good touches him, unspending out of greed;

وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا ﴿٢١﴾

- **Khayr**
 - The genus of good
- **Manu'an**
 - hyperbole (*mubalagha*) both intensive and extensive in refusing to spend anything else on others, defying Allah who alone provided it for him. Allah is testing us with what He gives and what He takes
 - he is oblivious of the fact that it could one day be he who is in need of help or of the fact that the good he has is a trial from Allah to see what he may do with it. All of this is because he is immersed in *dunya* and too short-sighted to see anything else
- **Idha** at the beginning of both of these verses denotes *tahqiq al-wuqu'*: it does really happen to such people; “when”, not “if”
- This is the way Man is in his nature, that he is instinctively disposed to embody and follows, unless he adopts, by the *tawfiq* of Allah, the attributes in the following verses that are explained
- The *Akhira* and the illimitable presence of Allah in the hearts of those who remember Him and submit to Him in Islam make the prayer a huge reservoir of human strength against the setbacks that Man meets within life, and this is what Allah wants of the Muslim

22. Save for those who pray;

إِلَّا الْمُصَلِّينَ

- ***Illa***

- an exception from those described previously and whose base and sordid actions lead them to Hell
- it is a disjunctive exception (*isti'naf*) that is connected with the class previously mentioned (*muttasil*)
- The unregenerate man piteously anxious for himself and love of the *dunya* leads him to amass and store it away and deny Allah and Allah's servants their due rights so that he ends up in Hell
- If they pray with all their heart to Allah, they find that their *salats* free them when performed with perfect focus, slavehood and presence from their bad attributes
- The *salat* at the masjid is a living exposure to what Allah wants and expects of us when His message is recited aloud to those praying behind the imam at the mosque

22. Save for those who pray;

إِلَّا الْمُصَلِّينَ

- ***al-Musallin***

- the use of the active participle (*ism al-fa'il*) denotes *thabat*: Adherence, retention, persistence, sureness, steadiness, and firmness in always performing the prayer because they are positive that it is the best thing they can do at prayer times
- people whose prayer has become their nature; it is the way that they are, that they pray. Their inner life, happiness, and ultimate destiny. They have compassion for their fellow man, and prefer the infinities of the other world to the ephemerality of this world
- Allah describing the genus first then adding this single exception indicates that the majority of mankind is of the former: *the good is with the few*

- What Allah has described before about *halu'* is the general rule of mankind. Say *al-hamdu lil-Lah* if Allah is making an exception of you in your life