

Sura 45: Al-Jathiya (Kneeling Down)

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

This Meccan Sura portrays the response of the idolaters of Mecca to the Islamic call. It shows how their arguments were subjective, irrational, and based on their whims and desires. The Sura refutes their arguments and tries to open their eyes to the truth.

Verses 1 to 23:

1. *Ha. Mim.*
2. *The revelation of the Book is from God the Eminent, the Wise.*
3. *Verily in the heavens and the earth, are signs for those who believe.*
4. *And in your creation, and in the creatures which He scattered on earth, are signs for people who have certitude.*
5. *And in the alternation of night and day, and the fact that God sends down sustenance from the sky, and revives therewith the earth after its death, and in the management of the winds, are signs for those who use their reason.*
6. *These are the verses of God, which We recite to you in truth; then in what message will they believe after (rejecting) God and His revelations?*
7. *Woe to every sinful liar.*
8. *He hears the verses of God recited to him, yet is obstinate and arrogant, as if he had not heard them. Give him tidings of a painful torment.*
9. *And when he learns something of Our verses, he takes them in jest. For such there will be a humiliating torment.*
10. *Before them is Hell; and that which they have earned will not benefit them, nor will those whom they have chosen for protecting guardians beside God. Theirs will be horrendous torment.*
11. *This is guidance. And those who disbelieve the revelations of their Lord, for them there is an agonizing painful torment.*
12. *It is God who has subjected the sea to you, that ships may sail through it by His command, that you may seek of his grace, and that you may be grateful.*
13. *And He has subjected to you, all that is in the heavens and on earth. In that are signs indeed for those who reflect.*
14. *Tell those who believe, to forgive those who do not look forward to the Days of God. It is for Him to recompense (for good or ill) each people according to what they have earned.*
15. *Whoso does good, it is for his soul, and whoso does wrong, it is against it. And afterward to your Lord you will be brought back.*
16. *And verily We gave the Children of Israel the Scripture, the Command, and the Prophethood; and provided them with good things and favored them above (all) peoples;*
17. *And gave them plain commandments. And they did not differ until after the knowledge came to them, out of mutual rivalry. Your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that wherein they differed.*
18. *Then We set you upon a pathway of faith, so follow it, and do not follow the whims of those who do not know.*

19. *They cannot help you against God, in any way. Indeed, the wrongdoers some of them are protecting guardians of others; and God is the Protecting Guardian of those who are conscious of Him.*
20. *These are clear evidences to people and a guidance and mercy to those who have certitude.*
21. *Or do those who commit ill-deeds think that We shall make them as those who believe and do good deeds, the same in life and death? Bad is their judgment.*
22. *God created the heavens and the earth with truth, so that every soul may be recompensed for what it has earned. And they will not be wronged.*
23. *Have you not seen him who takes his whims as his god? God has, knowing (him as such), left him to go astray, and sealed his hearing and his heart, and put a cover on his sight. Who, then, will guide him after God (has withdrawn Guidance)? Will you not become mindful? (45: 1 – 23)*

The Sura starts with the discursive letters of the Alphabet, “*Ha. Mim.*” The use of these familiar letters of the Alphabet in composing the Book is a sign that it has been revealed by God, the Eminent, the Wise, “*The revelation of the Book is from God the Eminent, the Wise.*” The verses direct their attention to the signs of God all around them, “*Verily in the heavens and the earth, are signs for those who believe.*” The signs of God are all around us, but only those who believe can perceive these signs. Faith opens the hearts to be sensitive to the magnificence of the creation of God. The signs are not only limited to one aspect of life, but they can be seen in all aspects of life. All God’s creatures portray His signs, “*And in your creation, and in the creatures which He scattered on earth, are signs for people who have certitude.*” The signs are also portrayed in the cosmic phenomena all around us, “*And in the alternation of night and day, and the fact that God sends down sustenance from the sky, and revives therewith the earth after its death, and in the management of the winds, are signs for those who use their reason.*”

“*These are the verses of God, which We recite to you in truth; then in what message will they believe after (rejecting) God and His revelations?*” No one can produce words that would be more convincing than God’s words.

A threat is posed to those who fabricate lies and commit sins, “*Woe to every sinful liar;*” those who are arrogant and obstinate in rejecting guidance, “*He hears the verses of God recited to him, yet is obstinate and arrogant, as if he had not heard them. Give him tidings of a painful torment.*” These people deserve only to be ridiculed and punished, so give them the glad tidings of a painful torment. They distort God’s verses and use it in jest, “*And when he learns something of Our verses, he takes them in jest. For such there will be a humiliating torment. Before them is Hell; and that which they have earned will not benefit them, nor will those whom they have chosen for protecting guardians beside God. Theirs will be horrendous torment.*” They will not escape Hell fire and nothing will benefit them. The truth about the Quran is then emphasized, “*This is guidance. And those who disbelieve the revelations of their Lord, for them there is an agonizing painful torment.*”

The narrative then moves to remind them of the cosmic signs around them, *“It is God who has subjected the sea to you, that ships may sail through it by His command, that you may seek of his grace, and that you may be grateful. And He has subjected to you, all that is in the heavens and on earth. In that are signs indeed for those who reflect.”* The human being, this tiny creature, receives all this bounty from God. God subjects all that in the heavens and on earth to help him establish his life on earth. God guided humankind to be able to benefit from all these resources and discover the laws that govern them. Without God’s help humankind would not have been able to make these discoveries.

Having reminded the believers of God’s blessings which connects their hearts with the rest of the universe, the verses address them to evoke in their hearts emotions of forgiveness and magnanimity, *“Tell those who believe, to forgive those who do not look forward to the Days of God. It is for Him to recompense (for good or ill) each people according to what they have earned. Whoso does good, it is for his soul, and whoso does wrong, it is against it. And afterward to your Lord you will be brought back,”* a noble command to forgive from a position of strength not a position of weakness and to teach them to relegate everything to God. God will recompense everyone according to his deeds.

The narrative turns to the Children of Israel, how they were chosen to lead humanity and how they relinquished this responsibility by fighting together because of the mutual rivalry that divided them, *“And verily We gave the Children of Israel the Scripture, the Command, and the Prophet-hood; and provided them with good things and favored them above (all) peoples; and gave them plain commandments. And they did not differ until after the knowledge came to them, out of mutual rivalry. Your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning that wherein they differed.”* They were given the Torah which embodied God’s law; they were given the leadership to establish God’s law. And they were given the prophet-hood. God bestowed on them great blessings. They were given clear criteria which differentiate between the right and wrong. However, because of their subjectivity, mutual envy, and wrongdoing they differed among themselves. God deprived them of the leadership He bestowed upon them before and gave it to a new Messenger and a new Message, *“Then We set you upon a pathway of faith, so follow it, and do not follow the whims of those who do not know. They cannot help you against God, in any way. Indeed, the wrongdoers some of them are protecting guardians of others; and God is the Protecting Guardian of those who are conscious of Him.”* The criterion is clear. On one side there is God’s law and on the other side, there are the whims of those who do not know. The Messenger (PBUH) is warned not to follow the whims of those who do not know. He should follow the message that embodied God’s law because therein is the guidance, *“These are clear evidences to people and a guidance and mercy for people who have certitude.”*

God will not treat the evil doers and the believers equally, *“Or do those who commit ill-deeds think that We shall make them as those who believe and do good deeds, the same in life and death? Bad is their judgment.”* Those who believe and do good deeds will receive their rewards from God, while the evil doers will be punished, but no one will be wronged, *“God created the heavens and the earth with truth, so that every soul may be recompensed for what it has earned. And they will not be wronged.”*

The verses then describe a human model, the model of those who follow their desires, whims, and urges. The people in this model submit to their whims instead of submitting to their Creator, *“Have you not seen him who takes his whims as his god? God has, knowing (him as such), left him to go astray, and sealed his hearing and his heart, and put a cover on his sight. Who, then, will guide him after God (has withdrawn Guidance)? Will you not become mindful?”* These are those who followed their whims and refused to allow the light of guidance to shine on their hearts, so God sealed their senses and prevented the light of guidance to go through their ears, their eyes, and their hearts. How can they hope for guidance after that?

Verses 24 to 37:

24. *And they say, “What is there but our life in this world? We shall die and we live, and nothing but time will destroy us;” when they have no knowledge whatsoever of that; they are only guessing.*
25. *And when Our clear revelations are recited to them their only argument is that they say, “Bring (back) our fathers then, if you are truthful.”*
26. *Say, “It is God who gives you life, then causes you to die; then He will gather you together for the Day of Judgment about which there is no doubt.” But most people do not know.*
27. *To God belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and on the Day on which the Hour occurs, on that Day those who follow falsehood will lose everything.*
28. *And you will see every nation kneeling down. Every nation will be called to its Record, “This Day you shall be recompensed for all what you used to do.*
29. *This is Our Record speaks about you with truth. Surely, We have been recording everything you did.”*
30. *Then, as for those who believed and did good deeds, their Lord will admit them to His mercy. That is the evident achievement.*
31. *But as to those who disbelieved, (to them it will be said), “Were not Our verses recited to you, but you were arrogant, and you were guilty people?”*
32. *And when it was said that the promise of God was true, and that there is no doubt about the inevitability of the Hour, you used to say, ‘We do not know what is the Hour; we think it is only a conjecture, and we are not certain about it.’”*
33. *Then will appear to them the evil of what they did, and they will be beset by that which they used to ridicule.*
34. *It will also be said, “This day We forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours. And your refuge is the Fire, and you have no helpers.*
35. *This is because you used to take the revelations of God in jest, and the life of the world deceived you.” This Day, therefore, they shall not be taken out from there, nor can they make amends.*
36. *Then praise be to God, Lord of the heavens and Lord of the earth, Lord of all the worlds.*
37. *And to Him belongs the supreme pride through the heavens and the earth; and He is the Eminent, the Wise. (45: 24 – 37)*

The idolaters had a very superficial understanding of life. They never wondered about the beginning of life nor did they reflect on its purpose, *“And they say, ‘What is there but our life in this world? We shall die and we live, and nothing but time will destroy us;’ when they have no knowledge whatsoever of that; they are only guessing.”* But even the logic they used was flawed. If people simply died because, *“nothing but time will destroy us,”* how can they explain the death of the children and healthy people? Time is not the only cause of death. In addition, they had no solid proof for this, they were only guessing. They were baffled by the revelation, so the only excuse for their rejection was to pose a challenge to the Messenger (PBUH), *“And when Our clear revelations are recited to them their only argument is that they say, ‘Bring (back) our fathers then, if you are truthful.’”* But God has His own plan. If they want a proof, then they should reflect on the question of life and death, *“Say, ‘It is God who gives you life, then causes you to die; then He will gather you together for the Day of Judgment about which there is no doubt.’ But most people do not know. To God belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and on the day on which the Hour occurs, on that day those who follow falsehood will lose everything.”*

On the Day of Judgment, all nations will be gathered together and they will be seen kneeling down, *“And you will see every nation kneeling down. Every nation will be called to its Record, ‘This Day you shall be recompensed for all what you used to do. This is Our Record speaks about you with truth. Surely, We have been recording everything you did.’”* They will be given their records. All deeds have been recorded. People will be divided into two groups. The first group is the group of those who believed and did good deeds, *“Then, as for those who believed and did good deeds, their Lord will admit them to His mercy. That is the evident achievement.”* The second group is the group of those who disbelieved, *“But as to those who disbelieved, (to them it will be said), ‘Were not Our verses recited to you, but you were arrogant, and you were guilty people? And when it was said that the promise of God was true, and that there is no doubt about the inevitability of the Hour, you used to say, We do not know what is the Hour; we think it is only a conjecture, and we are not certain about it.’”* On that Day, there will be no doubts. The truth will be obvious. Then they will see the consequences of what they did before, *“Then will appear to them the evil of what they did, and they will be beset by that which they used to ridicule.”* They will be forgotten, just like they forgot this Day, *“It will also be said, ‘This Day We forget you as you forgot the meeting of this Day of yours. And your refuge is the Fire, and you have no helpers. This is because you used to take the revelations of God in jest, and the life of the world deceived you.’ This Day, therefore, they shall not be taken out from there, nor can they make amends.”*

The voices of the praise of God will then be heard, *“Then praise be to God, Lord of the heavens and Lord of the earth, Lord of all the worlds. And to Him belongs the supreme pride through the heavens and the earth; and He is the Eminent, the Wise.”*