

The Prophet & The Qur'an #19:

WEALTH, GREED & HEEDLESSNESS OF GOD:

The Story of the People of the Garden

Surah al-Qalam (The Pen, 68:17-33)

Surah al-Qalam (The Pen, 68)

|8| فَلَا تُطِعِ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ

|9| وَدَوَا لَوْ تُدْهِنْ فَيُدْهِنُونَ

|10| وَلَا تُطِعِ كُلَّ حَلَّافٍ مَّهِينٍ

|11| هَمَّازٌ مَّشَاءِ بِنَمِيمٍ

|12| مَنَّاعٌ لِّلخَيْرِ مُعَنِّدٌ أَثِيمٍ

|13| عُنْلٌ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ زَنِيمٍ

|14| أَنْ كَانَ ذَا مَالٍ وَبَنِينَ

|15| إِذَا تُتْلَى عَلَيْهِ عَابِرُتْنَا قَالَ أَسْطِيرُ الْأَوَّلِينَ

|16| سَنَسِمُهُ عَلَى الْخُرْطُومِ

Surah al-Qalam (The Pen, 68)

8. So, Do Not Obey The Beliers (Deniers).
9. They would love that you soften, so they soften.
10. And Do Not Obey Everyone Given to Swearing (Oaths), **Contemptible & Weak**,
11. A Frequent Backbiter & Carrier of Tales,
12. Always Preventing Goodness,
A Transgressor, Very Sinful,
13. Severe & Violent, moreover: Vulgar.
14. **Because he has wealth and sons?!**
15. **When Our Signs are recited to him, he says,
“Fables of the Ancients!”**
16. **We shall brand him upon the snout.**

Zamakhshari's Tafsir on these verses

- *Hallaaf*: swearing oaths a lot, truly & falsely
- *Maheen*: contemptible, of weak opinion & judgment; a great liar (contemptible trait)
- *Preventing Goodness*: Goodness is wealth, or Islam.
- Revealed about al-Waleed bin Mugheerah, Abu Jahl, al-Aswad bin 'Abd Yaghuth or al-Akhnas bin Shurayq
- Hassan bin Thabit called al-Waleed *zaneem* (illegitimate) in his poetry

زنیم

Uncouth, Vulgar, Illegitimate (?)

- *Zaneem*: uncouth, vulgar, adopted by his tribe, child of *Zina* (adultery / fornication)
- ***Hadith?*** “*The son of Zina will not enter the Garden, nor his son, until the seventh generation.*” ? (weak/fabricated: Ibn al-Jawzi)
- ***Hadith?*** “*The son of Zina is the worst of the three ...*” (Albani: *saheeh*, authentic)
- “*... if he follows the actions of his parents.*”

(weak)

Hadiths about “The Son of Zina”

- ‘Aishah RAA’s explanation of the hadith, “He is the worst of the three”, correcting Abu Hurayrah
 - It was said about a particular hypocrite, a child of *zina*, who would insult the Prophet (pbuh)
 - It is not a general teaching
- Tahawi & Albani’s explanation of the hadith, “The Son of *Zina* will not enter the Garden.”
 - This refers to someone addicted to *zina*, just like the phrases “sons of this world” (*banu l-dunya*) or “son of the path” (*ibn al-sabeel*): a traveller

سَيِّدُ الْخُرُوطِمْ عَلَى الْخُرُوطِمْ | 16 | Zamakhshari:

- **We shall brand him on the snout.**
- “Snout (*khurtoom*)” is mockery of this enemy
- **Possible meanings:**
 - We shall mark him out especially on the Day of Judgment, amongst all disbelievers, just as he was prominent in his enmity to the Prophet pbuh
 - Scarred for life on the nose by a sword at Badr
 - Al-Nadr bin Shumayl: We will flog him for drinking wine, because *khurtoom* also means wine.
(Zamakhshari: *Khurtoom* does also mean wine, but this is a contrived view!)

Surah al-Qalam (The Pen, 68)

|17| إِنَّا بَلَوْنَاهُمْ كَمَا بَلَوْنَا أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ إِذْ أَقْسَمُوا لِيَصْرِمُنَّهَا
مُصْبِحِينَ|18| وَلَا يَسْتَثْنُونَ

|19| فَطَافَ عَلَيْهَا طَائِفٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ وَهُمْ نَائِمُونَ

|20| فَأَصْبَحَتْ كَالصَّرِيمِ|21| فَتَنَادَوَا مُصْبِحِينَ

|22| أَنِ اغْدُوا عَلَىٰ حَرَثِكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَرِمِينَ

|23| فَانْطَلَقُوا وَهُمْ يَتَخَافَّتُونَ

|24| أَنَّ لَا يَدْخُلُنَّهَا الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِسْكِينٌ

|25| وَغَدُوا عَلَىٰ حَرَدٍ قَدِيرِينَ

Surah al-Qalam (The Pen, 68)

|26| فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهَا قَالُوا إِنَّا لَضَالِّونَ
|27| أَبَلْ نَحْنُ مَحْرُومُونَ
|28| قَالَ أَوْسَطُهُمْ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ لَوْلَا تُسَبِّحُونَ
|29| قَالُوا سُبِّحْنَ رَبِّنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَالِمِينَ
|30| فَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ يَتَلَوَّمُونَ
|31| قَالُوا يَوْيَلَنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا طَاغِينَ
|32| عَسَى رَبُّنَا أَنْ يُبَدِّلَنَا خَيْرًا مِنْهَا إِنَّا إِلَى رَبِّنَا رَاغِبُونَ
|33| كَذَلِكَ الْعَذَابُ وَلَعَذَابُ النَّاَخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ

Surah al-Qalam (The Pen, 68)

17. Truly, We have tested them as We tested the People of the Garden: when they swore that they would scythe it down in the morning.
18. But they do not make the exception! *[i.e. to say: if God wills]*

19. So a Night-Visitor (storm) visited it from your Lord, whilst they were asleep.
20. So in the morning, it was like a dark black night (or a very white day)!

Surah al-Qalam (The Pen, 68)

21. Then they called to each other in the morning:
22. *To go early to your tilth, if you were to be scythers.*
23. So they proceeded, whispering to each other:
24. *That today, no needy person should enter upon you.*
25. So they went early, in poverty and need, serious and determined to deprive the needy, angry but powerful.
26. So when they saw it, they said:
“Truly, we are surely strayers!”
27. *“Nay, we are the deprived ones!”*

Surah al-Qalam (The Pen, 68)

28. The most just (or best) of them said:

Did I not say to you: If only you had glorified [God] !

29. They said: *Glory be to our Lord:*

Truly, we, even we, were the unjust ones.

30. So they turned to one another, blaming each other.

31. They said: *O woe to us!*

Truly, we, even we, were the transgressors.

32. *Perhaps our Lord will compensate us with something better than it: truly, we are to our Lord, turning with hope.*

Surah al-Qalam (The Pen, 68)

أَكَذِّلُكُمْ الْعَذَابُ ۖ وَلَعَذَابُ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرُ ۗ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ | 33

33. Thus is the Punishment: and surely,

The Punishment of the Hereafter is Greater:

If only they were to know!

Who Were the People of the Garden?

- Ibn ‘Abbas: *They were People of a Book.*
- ‘Ikrimah: *They were Abyssinian. Their father had a garden from which he would feed the needy. When he died, his sons said, “By God! Our father was surely a fool when he fed the needy.” They swore to cut it down in the morning, making no exception, nor feeding the needy.*
- Qatadah: *The garden belonged to an old man, who used to give alms, but his sons forbade him from giving alms. He would keep enough food for a year, and spend the rest in charity. When he died, his sons decided to deprive the needy.*
- Tabari: *They repented to God when punished.*

What does *Sareem* mean?

■ **فَأَصْبَحَتْ كَالصَّرِيمِ**

- **“So in the morning, it was like the *Sareem*.”** (literally, “Scythed or Cut Down”)
 1. Ibn ‘Abbas: *Sareem* means, ‘the night.’
 2. Tabari: one authority: ‘the dark night.’
 3. Tabari: another: *The garden burnt & became as black as a deep, dark, black night.*
 4. Baydawi: *The day: white (because very dry)*
 5. Sa’eed bin Jubayr: *Sareem* is a place in Yemen, aka ՚Darawaan صروان, six miles from San’aa

What does *Hardin* mean?

■ ٢٥|وَغَدُوا عَلَىٰ حَرَدِينَ

- “So they went early, upon *hardin*, powerful.”
- 1. Power and Capability (Ibn ‘Abbas)
- 2. Seriousness (Mujahid, Qatadah, Ibn Zayd)
- 3. Effort, or Seriousness (al-Hasan)
- 4. Detached from others (Qatadah)
- 5. A Secret Consensus Amongst Them (Mujahid, ‘Ikrimah)
- 6. Poverty (al-Hasan) & Need (Tabari)
- 7. Anger (Sufyan)
- 8. Depriving the needy (Arabic expert of Basra)

Lost the Way & Deprived (Qatadah)

فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهَا قَالُوا إِنَّا لَضَالُونَ | 26 |

إِنَّا لَضَالُونَ | 27 |

26. So when they saw it, they said:

“Truly, we are surely strayers!”

27. *“Nay, we are the deprived ones!”*

- “Strayers”: some thought they’d lost the way and arrived at the wrong place
- Others said: *We’ve got what we deserved, so we’ve been deprived of our garden.*

Awsat: The Most Just, or The Best?

أو سط

|قالَ أَوْسَطُهُمْ أَلَمْ أَقْلَ لَكُمْ لَوْلَا تُسَبِّحُونَ|28|

28. The most just (or best) of them said:

Did I not say to you: If only you had glorified [God] !

- *Wasat* means ‘middle’ or ‘best’
- Cf. *ummatan wasatan* (*The Heifer* 2:143):
‘The Middle Nation’ or ‘The Best Nation’
- Cf. *al-salaat al-wustaa* (*The Heifer* 2:238):
‘The Middle Prayer’ or ‘The Best Prayer’
- (*Wustaa* is the feminine form of *Awsat*)

Tasbeeh (Glorification) in this context

|28| قَالَ أَوْسَطُهُمْ أَلَمْ أَقْلُ لَكُمْ لَوْلَا تُسْبِحُونَ

|29| قَالُوا سُبْحَانَ رَبِّنَا إِنَّا كُنَّا ظَلَمِينَ

28. The most just (or best) of them said:

Did I not say to you: If only you had glorified [God] !

29. They said: *Glory be to our Lord:*

Truly, we, even we, were the unjust ones.

Tabari: We didn't glorify & vowed to deprive

- The “exception” that they failed to make was when they did not say *Insha’Allah* = if God wills. This was regarded as *tasbeeh* = glorification.
(Mujahid)



The Jewish Midrash Story: The Orchard That Withered

1. The Midrash describes a group of people who owned a lush, productive orchard. Every year, the poor would come hoping to receive fruit or charity. But the owners were selfish and refused to give anything. They even set guards around the orchard to keep the needy away.



The Jewish Midrash Story: The Orchard That Withered

2. God declared that the orchard existed only because of His blessing.
3. Since the owners refused to use it for kindness, the blessing was withdrawn.
4. The orchard stopped producing fruit, the trees dried up, and the land became barren.
5. Eventually, the land was taken from them and given to others who would use it generously.



The Jewish Midrash Story: The Orchard That Withered

6. This story is often connected to the verse:
7. *“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field... you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger.”* — Leviticus 19:9–10
8. The Midrash explains that **failure to give charity is not just a moral failing—it undermines the very purpose for which wealth is granted.**



The Qur'anic Morals of the Story

- 1. Charity & Gratitude:** If God blesses us with wealth, we must share it with the needy
- 2. Remembrance of God:** We must also remember God at all times, even in saying “if God wills” (*in sha' Allah*) for every planned future action
- 3. Wealth hoarded without charitable giving will be destroyed by God**
- 4. The door of Repentance is always open, including for those who've learnt their lesson**