

## Chapter 52, Al-Toor (Mountain of Toor)

(part 1 of 3)



This chapter of the sacred scripture takes its name from the opening verse in which God takes an oath by Mount Toor. It is a mountain near the place that God spoke to Prophet Moses, peace be upon him.

What an honour it is for a person if God speaks to him directly! Sometimes one thinks, “Why does God not speak to us also?” The truth is that God speaks to *all* human beings through the Quran, yet most people ignore it! They do not take the time to find what the Quran says to them!

The purpose of God’s communication is to give us conviction in the truth of Islam and to guide us to the path of right conduct. When we listen to God’s words we are convinced that this world has not been created without a purpose. We understand that it is a test and there is a reward for the righteous and a painful end for those who deny the message. To ensure that we don’t take this warning lightly, God takes some powerful oaths:

**“By the oath of Mount Toor (the mountain where God spoke to Moses) and the written book (that has the record of every person’s actions in this life) which is in an open manuscript (it will be available for reading on the Day when the dead will come back to life) and by the oath of the ‘The Frequently Visited House’ (refers to a place directly above the sacred Ka’ba around which angles go in circles) and by the oath of the “raised roof” (the sky) and by the oath of the swelling ocean.” (Quran 52:1-6)**

Even a simple statement from the Lord of the Worlds would have been enough. If He has taken five oaths, then it must be so we pay close attention to His warning. The purpose of that warning is to tell us of the terrible punishment:

**“Indeed, the punishment of your Lord shall take place (*on the Day when all will be judged*). There shall be none to prevent it.” (Quran 52:7-8)**

What will happen on that terrifying day?

**“(*It will be*) The day when the sky shall tremble uncontrollably...and the mountains will fly through the air (*as dust particles after being reduced to dust*).” (Quran 52:9-10)**

If we are deluding ourselves by saying things like: “Well, I am not convinced” or “It doesn’t make sense to me,” then listen to what God says to all those who question the true warnings:

**“Destruction be to the rejecters (*who deny the coming judgment*) on that day (the Day of Judgment).” (Quran 52:11)**

Have you ever thought why do some people believe and some do not? After all they are all made of bones and flesh, so what’s the big difference? Why do people who are otherwise intelligent and capable, not believe in God’s words? The Quran states:

**“(*The rejecters are*) those who are in (empty) discourse amusing themselves.” (Quran 52:12)**

Those who reject faith are busy enjoying themselves. They do as they please with little concern for the day when they will be judged for everything they did.

In this world people continue to enjoy their lives and are honored by the society even if they disobey God and anger Him all the time, but in the Hereafter they will be treated according to their deeds and their faith:

**“(*Do not forget*) The Day when they will be forcibly shoved into the Fire of Hell. (Quran 52:13)**

And all their denial and their logics will be of no use:

**“(*It will be said to them:*) ‘This is the Fire you used to deny!’” (Quran 52:14)**

They amuse themselves by making fun of those who follow the true religion by accusing them of being brainwashed. But on that day when they will be thrown into the fire, they will be asked:

**“Is this magic (as you used to say about the miracles of the prophets and the books God gave them) or are you unable to see?” (Today you are unable to deny its existence!).” (Quran 52:15)**

God is not unjust. In this world, the path of righteousness might not be pleasant at times, but keep in mind that the bumps on the road are a mere test from God. When people around you start blaming the religion and saying, “If your religion was so good then why are you being treated like this?”, “Where is the success you say God has promised?”, then remember that this world is not the place where we can see all the outcomes of our deeds. The results will be shown in the life that comes after death, when those who led a frivolous life spend in vanities will be told:

**“Enter into it! Whether you bear it with patience or you do not, it will make no difference to you! (*In any event, your suffering will be the same.*) You are being punished only for what (*sins*) you used to do.” (Quran 52:16)**

Those punished won't be punished without reason! When those who led a righteous life will be presented with the amazingly beautiful Paradise:

**“Truly the righteous shall be (*enjoying themselves*) in Paradise and its bounties, enjoying what (*blessings*) their Lord gives them. (*One of the greatest blessings is that*) their Lord saved them from the punishment of the Blaze (*Hellfire*).” (Quran 52:17-18)**

While people all around them were only concerned with the physical pleasures of the world - money, sex, and alcohol to name a few - these God conscious people remembered that life is not made just for enjoyment but is a test of obedience. Thus, their reward will be the eternal enjoyment of Paradise, the unending pleasure:

**“(They will be told:) “Eat and drink to your heart’s content, this is the reward for your good deeds.” They will be reclining on couches arranged in rows and We shall marry them to fair maidens with large, wide eyes.” (Quran 52:19-20)**

The reality of our lives is that our pleasure is incomplete without our families. That is why we celebrate holidays and personal achievements with our family members. God will join all the family members who followed the righteous path even if they are on different levels according to their deeds.

Those on the lower ranks will be raised in level to be united with their parents, children, and spouses.

**“We shall unite the true believers with those of their descendants who follow them in their faith, and shall not deny them the reward of their good deeds - everyone is responsible for his deeds.” (Quran 52:21)**

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It is a thoughtful reminder that we should not only be concerned with getting into Paradise for ourselves, but should think about helping our families and friends join us. The following verses speak of joy and playful activities that are enjoyed to their fullest with our loved ones:

**“(Continuing with the bounties of the faithful in Paradise, God says) In addition (to all the other bounties mentioned), We shall grant them (an abundance of) fruit and meat (which they shall have) as (and when) they desire (without delay or interruption). There (in Paradise) they will pass around (to enjoy) a cup (of pure drink) in which there is no (fear of) absurd talk and sin (the wine of Paradise will not intoxicate people). Their young (servants in Paradise) shall wait on them (serving them whatever they wish), appearing to be (like) concealed (preserved) pearls (because of their refined manners).” (Quran 22- 24)**

Another pleasurable activity is to sit with family and friends and reminisce about the good old times. Paradise will provide an opportunity to do that as well:

**“They (*the people of Paradise*) will face each other asking questions.” (Quran 52:25)**

They will remember the good deeds they did in this life to gain God’s pleasure. The finest among them was that they feared God even when they were around their families:

**They will say, “Before this (*in the world*) we used to be fearful (*of Hell as we sat*) among our families.” (Quran 52:26)**

Someone might question what is so special about being around one’s family? When you think about it, it is easy to act properly when you are with like-minded people or those whom you respect, or even those who look up to you. In contrast, it is more challenging to act properly when you are alone with your family members, who know you intimately. You need not fake piety and being aware of God in a situation like that really shows your true faith. The main characteristic of these God conscious people is that they do not take credit for themselves. They believe it all to be a favor of God. So in Paradise too they will express the same sentiments:

**“However, Allah favored us and saved us from the punishment of the scorching wind (*of Hell*).” (Quran 52:27)**

It’s important that we keep praying to God alone and have faith that He will enable us to follow the right path if we remain true to our commitment. This is what the people of Paradise will remember:

**“Indeed, before this (*in the world*) we always used to pray to Him (*to save us from Hell*). (*God answered our prayers because*) He is certainly the One who treats with kindness, the Most Merciful.” (Quran 52:28)**

Although the verse above is so clear, and faith in one God is such a simple matter, but those who stubbornly deny the truth can make a thousand excuses, simply because they don’t want to lose pride in their own “principles” and petty philosophies of life much like the disbelievers of the city of Mecca. The Meccan pagans would use *any* tactic to prove that this Quran is nothing but poetry that the Prophet was just making it up or maybe was under some sort of spell.

**“So (*O Muhammad*) continue reminding (*and advising people about God*) for, by the grace of your Lord, you are neither a fortune-teller (*who receives news from the jinn*) nor a madman (*as the unbelievers claim*). Or (*besides saying this*) do they say, ‘He (*Prophet Muhammad*) is a poet whose calamity of time (*death*) we are eagerly awaiting?’ Say, ‘Wait (*to see my success*), for I am also waiting with you (*to see your disastrous end*).’” (Quran 52:29-31)**

Therefore, in the following verses God asks them a series of questions in a powerful interrogative style, to make them ponder over the foolishness of their allegations against the person whom they had known all their life to be a man of integrity:

**“Or is their intelligence (of which they are proud) commanding them to do this (to reject faith despite being shown proofs) or are they (not accepting faith because they are) a rebellious nation?” (Quran 52:32)**

Is it really possible that the Quran could be fabricated? Don’t they have any sense?

**“Or are (*they rejecting faith and the Quran because*) they (*are*) saying, ‘He (*Prophet Muhammad*) has forged it? The fact of the matter is that they refuse to accept faith (*and will not accept despite every proof shown to them*).’” (Quran 52:33)**

If it is so simple, then why don’t they bring a scripture like this?

**“Let them produce a speech like it (*the Quran*) if they are truthful (*in their claim that this Quran is forged by a mortal*).” (Quran 52:34)**

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If they deny God, then how did they create themselves?

**“Or (if they refuse to believe in God Who created them, then) were they created without a Creator or are they (under the misconception that they are) creators themselves?” (Quran 22:35)**

The magnificent universe gives them a moment to think:

**“Or (if as they say, God did not create everything, then) did they (themselves) create the heavens and the earth? The fact is that they have no conviction (no faith in the fact that God is the only Creator and the only One deserving worship).” (Quran 22:36)**

They think they control the world. They must distribute God’s favors then!

**“Or are the treasures (bounties) of your Lord with them (in their control) or (if they do not have complete control) do they possess authority (to distribute God’s bounties as they please)?” (Quran 22:37)**

Since the unbelievers have no say in the distribution of God’s favors, they have no say in who God chooses to be His prophet and deliver His message. Thus, there is no reason to reject a prophet simply because he was born in a place and time far from us.

Do they have access to the heaven from where they get proof of their theories?

**“Or do they (the unbelievers) have a ladder (stretching into the heavens) by which they are able to eavesdrop (divine revelation that permits them to disbelieve?) So (if they have heard some revelation to substantiate their claims,) let their eavesdropper produce a clear proof (from the revelations to prove the legitimacy of their disbelief). Or (are you polytheists saying that) daughters are for Him (by your claim that the angels are the daughters of God) and sons (are reserved exclusively) for you (because you like to have sons)?” (Quran 22:38-39)**

Some people avoid these reminders as if they will be asked to pay for listening to the truth. But the true caller to faith, like a prophet, will never ask for anything in return:

**“Or do (the polytheists reject faith because) you (O Prophet Muhammad) ask them a fee so (and because of this fee they feel as if) they are burdened by a penalty (making it difficult for them to accept your message)? Or do they (reject faith because they) have knowledge of the unseen (proving their claims) which they are writing (down to ensure that it continues)? (The fact is clear that the**

**unbelievers and the polytheists have nothing concrete to substantiate their beliefs and actions). Or are they plotting something (against Prophet Muhammad which they are waiting to carry out)? Indeed those who commit disbelief will themselves be ensnared (trapped) in a plot (when God punishes them).” (Quran 22:40-42)**

The truth is that all the deniers of God and His Prophet have something else in their hearts which they depend on to provide their needs. It could be Jesus, an idol, a grave, wealth, power, or anything which they believe will sustain them and save them:

**“Or do (*they reject faith because*) they have a god besides Allah? God is Pure (*free*) from the partners they ascribe to Him (*none can be worshipped except God.*)” (Quran 22:43)**

Their mistaken belief and stubbornness to accept the truth makes them see everything from a distorted vision. Therefore, God says that even if they see a sign of punishment coming over them they will dismiss it as a product of the physical laws of the universe, not giving any thought to the One who made these laws as well as the universe:

**(*The unbelievers are so obstinate that*) If they see a part of the sky falling down (*towards them as punishment*) they (*will deny it and*) say, “This is (*only*) a cloud in stacked (*thick*) layers.” (Quran 22:44)**

After all the efforts to remove the misunderstanding from the minds of these people and sincerely calling them to the way of God, the last thing to do is to ignore them:

**“So (*it is best that you*) leave them (*without insisntly preaching to them*) until they meet their day (*the Day of Judgement*) when they will fall unconscious (*after hearing the blast of the trumpet*).” (Quran 22:45)**

We should try our utmost with all sincerity to call people to the right path. But after a certain time when we are convinced that we have done all that we could, it is time to ignore them. At times, such people not only deny the message but also try to bring about weak misconceptions that consume one’s time, we should avoid such people. God says:

**“The (*Day of Judgement will be the*) day when their schemes will be of no benefit to them (*but rather be to their detriment*) and they will not be assisted (*against God’s punishment*). There shall surely be another punishment (*in this world*) besides this (*punishment of the life to come*) for the oppressors (*the unbelievers*) but they have no idea.” (Quran 22:46-47)**

The thing to do in all such trying situations is to be patient as God comforted Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him:

**“(Therefore, O Prophet Muhammad) Bear patiently with the decision of your Lord (to allow the unbelievers respite until the appointed time of their punishment) for you are under Our protection (and have nothing to fear from them). Glorify the praises of your Lord when you rise (sleep and stand in prayer). And glorify Him during a portion of the night (in the night prayer of Tahajjud) and even after the stars have vanished (at early dawn).” (Quran 22:48-49)**

God is incredibly kind to us! He wants us to avoid the most dangerous thing which might creep into our heart and destroy our sincere intentions: self admiration. Naturally, when we mingle too much with people who are not on the right track, we feel sorry for them but at times we also feel superior to them. That is why God reminds us that to avoid this feeling we only have one tool: to glorify God at all times. Thus, we will always be alert and conscious that it is God alone, who is most Supreme and free from flaws. Whereas, we human beings can never declare ourselves free from punishment until God saves us out of His mercy on the Day of Judgment.