

## Surah 2. Al-Baqara

Asad: Would any of you like to have a garden of date-palms and vines, through which running waters flow, and have all manner of fruit therein - and then be overtaken by old age, with only weak children to [look after] him - and then [see] it smitten by a fiery whirlwind and utterly scorched? In this way God makes clear His messages unto you, so that you might take thought.

Malik: Would anyone of you like that his garden, which is full of palm trees, grape vines, and all kinds of fruits and watered by running streams, be blasted and consumed by a fiery whirlwind at the time when he has become too old and his children are too feeble to earn anything? Thus Allah makes His revelations clear to you so that you may think over them.

Pickthall: Would any of you like to have a garden of palm trees and vines, with rivers flowing underneath it, with all kinds of fruit for him therein; and old age hath stricken him and he hath feeble off spring; and a fiery whirlwind striketh it and it is (all) consumed by fire. Thus Allah maketh plain His revelations unto you, in order that ye may give thought.

Yusuf Ali: Does any of you wish that he should have a garden with date-palms and vines and streams flowing underneath and all kinds of fruit while he is stricken with old age and his children are not strong (enough to look after themselves) that it should be caught in a whirlwind with fire therein and be burnt up? Thus doth Allah make clear to you (His) signs; that ye may consider. <sup>312 313</sup>

Transliteration: Ayawaddu aḥadukum an takoona lahu jannatun min nakheelin waaAAanabin tajree min taḥtiha alanharu lahu feeha min kulli alththamarati waasabahu alkibaru walahu thurriyyatun duAAafao faasabaha iAAsarun feehi narun faihtaraqat kathalika yubayyinu Allahu lakumu alayati laAAallakum tatafakkaroona

Khatab:

Would any of you wish to have a garden with palm trees, grapevines, and all kinds of fruits with rivers flowing underneath and as they grow very old with dependent children, a fiery whirlwind hits the garden, burning it all up? This is how Allah makes His revelations clear to you, so perhaps you will reflect.

### Author Comments

312 - The truly spiritual nature of charity having been explained in three parables (ii. 261, 264, 265) a fourth parable is now added, explaining its bearing on the whole of our life. Suppose we had a beautiful garden well-watered and fertile, with delightful views of streams, and a haven of rest for mind and body; suppose old age were creeping in on us, and our children were either too young to look after themselves or too feeble in health; how should we feel if a sudden whirlwind came with lightning or fire in its train, and burnt it up; thus blasting the whole of our hopes for the present and for the future, and destroying the result of all our labor and savings in the past? Well, this life of ours is a probation. We may work hard, we may save, we may have good luck. We may make ourselves a goodly pleasure, and have ample means of support for ourselves and our children. A great whirlwind charged with lightning and fire comes and burns up the whole show. We are too old to begin again: our children are too young or feeble to help us to repair the mischief. Our chance is lost, because we did not provide against such a contingency. The whirlwind is the "wrath to come"; the provision against it is a life of true charity and righteousness, which is the only source of true and lasting happiness in this world and the next. Without it we are subject to all the

vicissitudes of this uncertain life. We may even spoil our so-called "charity" by insisting on the obligation which others owe to us or by doing some harm, because our motives are not pure.

313 - Not strong (enough): dhu'afa-u: literally weak, decrepit, infirm, possibly referring to both health and will or character.

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