

## Surah 42. Ash-Shura

Asad: BUT IF they turn away [from thee, O Prophet, know that] We have not sent thee to be their keeper: thou art not bound to do more than deliver the message [entrusted to thee]. And, behold, [such as turn away from Our messages are but impelled by the weakness and inconstancy of human nature:<sup>48</sup> thus,] when We give man a taste of Our grace, he is prone to exult in it;<sup>49</sup> but if misfortune befalls [any of] them in result of what their own hands have sent forth, then, behold, man shows how bereft he is of all gratitude!<sup>50</sup>

Malik: Now if they give no heed, they should know that We have not sent you, O Muhammad, to be their keeper. Your only duty is to convey My message. Man is such that when We give him a taste of Our Mercy, he is very happy about it; but when, through his own fault, an evil afflicts him, he becomes utterly ungrateful."

Pickthall: But if they are averse, We have not sent thee as a warder over them. Thine is only to convey (the message). And lo! when We cause man to taste of mercy from Us he exulteth therefor. And if some evil striketh them because of that which their own hands have sent before, then lo! man is an ingrate.

Yusuf Ali: If then they turn away We have not sent thee as a guard over them. Thy duty is but to convey (the Message). And truly when We give man a taste of Mercy from Ourselves He doth exult thereat but when some ill happens to him on account of the deeds which His hands have sent forth truly then is man ungrateful! <sup>4593 4594</sup>

Transliteration: Fain aAAaradoo fama arsalnaka AAalayhim hafeethan in AAalayka illa albalaghu wainna itha athaqa alinsana minna rahmatan fariha biha wain tusibhum sayyatun bima qaddamat aydeehim fainna alinsana kafoorun

Khattab:

But if they turn away, We have not sent you ?O Prophet? as a keeper over them. Your duty is only to deliver ?the message?. And indeed, when We let someone taste a mercy from Us, they become prideful ?because? of it. But when afflicted with evil because of what their hands have done, then one becomes totally ungrateful.1

### Author Comments

48 - This interpolation - necessary for a proper understanding of the context - is based on Razi's convincing explanation of how this passage connects with the preceding one. Man is, as a rule, absorbed in a pursuit of material goods and comforts, the achievement of which he identifies with "happiness"; hence, he pays but scant attention to spiritual aims and values, and the more so if he is called upon to abandon his selfish pursuits in favour of the - to him as yet hypothetical - life in the hereafter.

49 - I.e., when God bestows on him a measure of material benefits, man tends to exult in this "success" as such, attributing it exclusively to his own ability and cleverness (cf. the first sentence of [41:50](#))

50 - I.e., instead of remembering his past happiness with gratitude, he calls the very existence of God in question, arguing that if God did really exist, He "could not possibly have permitted" so much misfortune and unhappiness to prevail in the world: a fallacious argument inasmuch as it does not take the reality of the hereafter into account and is, moreover, based on a concept of God in terms of purely human feelings and expectations.

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4593 - The warning is now given, that men may repent and do good, and pray for Allah's Mercy and Grace. If the warning is not heeded or is rejected, the prophet of Allah is not responsible for bringing about the Penalty or for forcing people to come to the right Path. He is not a guard set over them to free them from the need of exercising their limited free-will.

4594 - Cf. xxx. 36. It is a sad reflection that men, when they receive some gift out of Allah's Mercy, exult in their good fortune and attribute it to some merit in themselves, instead of to the Grace and Mercy of Allah, thus missing the real lesson of Life. On the other hand, when they are in trouble, due to their own errors and shortcomings, they fall into despair and blame Allah, instead of blaming themselves. This is rank ingratitude. So they miss the true lesson of Life in that case also.

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