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Surah al-Hujurat: Thematic Tafsir

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49. Surah *Al-Hujurât* – The Private Quarters

This Medinian sûrah, which takes its name from the reference to the Prophet's private quarters in verse 4, instructs the believers on the proper conduct towards the Prophet (verses 1-5) and the social etiquette of dealing with other believers (verses 6-12) and the rest of humanity (verse 13). At the end of the sûrah, the nomadic Arabs are taught that true faith is proven by action not only words.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah—the Most Compassionate, Most Merciful

Manners with the Prophet

1) *Respect Authority*

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تَقْدِمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

- 1. O believers! Do not proceed ‘in any matter’ before ‘a decree from’ Allah and His Messenger. And fear Allah. Surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.**

[illegible]

2) Watch Your Tongue

كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَن تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ

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إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَغُضُّونَ أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ امْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۚ

لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

3. Indeed, those who lower their voices in the presence of Allah's Messenger are the ones whose hearts Allah has refined for righteousness. They will have forgiveness and a great reward.

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3) *Respect Privacy*

4. Indeed, most of those who call out to you ‘O Prophet’ from outside ‘your’ private quarters have no understanding ‘of manners’.

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5. Had they been patient until you could come out to them, it would have certainly been better for them. And Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

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1) Verifying News

عَلَى مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ

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وَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُمْ وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ حَبَبٌ

إِلَيْكُمْ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيْنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ وَالْعِصْيَانَ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ

الرَّاشِدُونَ

7. And keep in mind that Allah's Messenger is 'still' in your midst. If he were to yield to you in many matters, you would surely suffer 'the consequences.' But Allah has endeared faith to you, making it appealing in your hearts. And He has made disbelief, rebelliousness, and disobedience detestable to you. Those are the ones rightly guided.

[illegible]



8. 'This is' a bounty and a blessing from Allah. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

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2) Sense of Brotherhood

فَقَاتِلُوا آلَئِي تَبَغَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّ فَاءَ فَاصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ

وَأَقْسِطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

9. And if two groups of believers fight each other, then make peace between them. But if one of them transgresses against the other, then fight against the transgressing group until they 'are willing to' submit to the rule of Allah. If they do so, then make peace between both 'groups' in all fairness and act justly. Surely Allah loves those who uphold justice.

[illegible]



إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

10. The believers are but one brotherhood, so make peace between your brothers. And be mindful of Allah so you may be shown mercy.

[illegible]

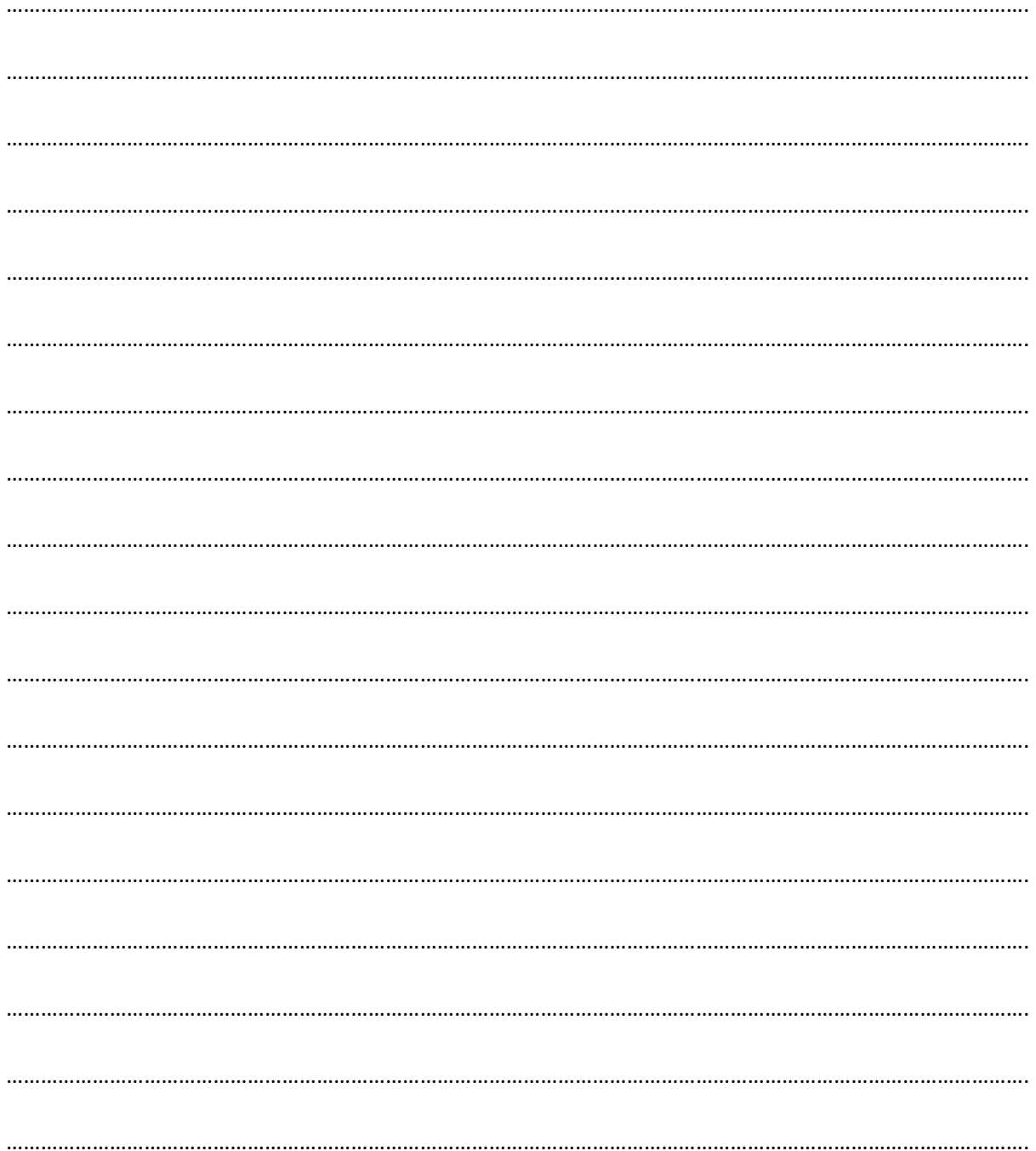
Social Etiquette

3) Respect for All

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرُونَ مِنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّنْ نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا بِالْأَلْقَابِ بِئْسَ الْأَسْمُ
الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ ۚ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

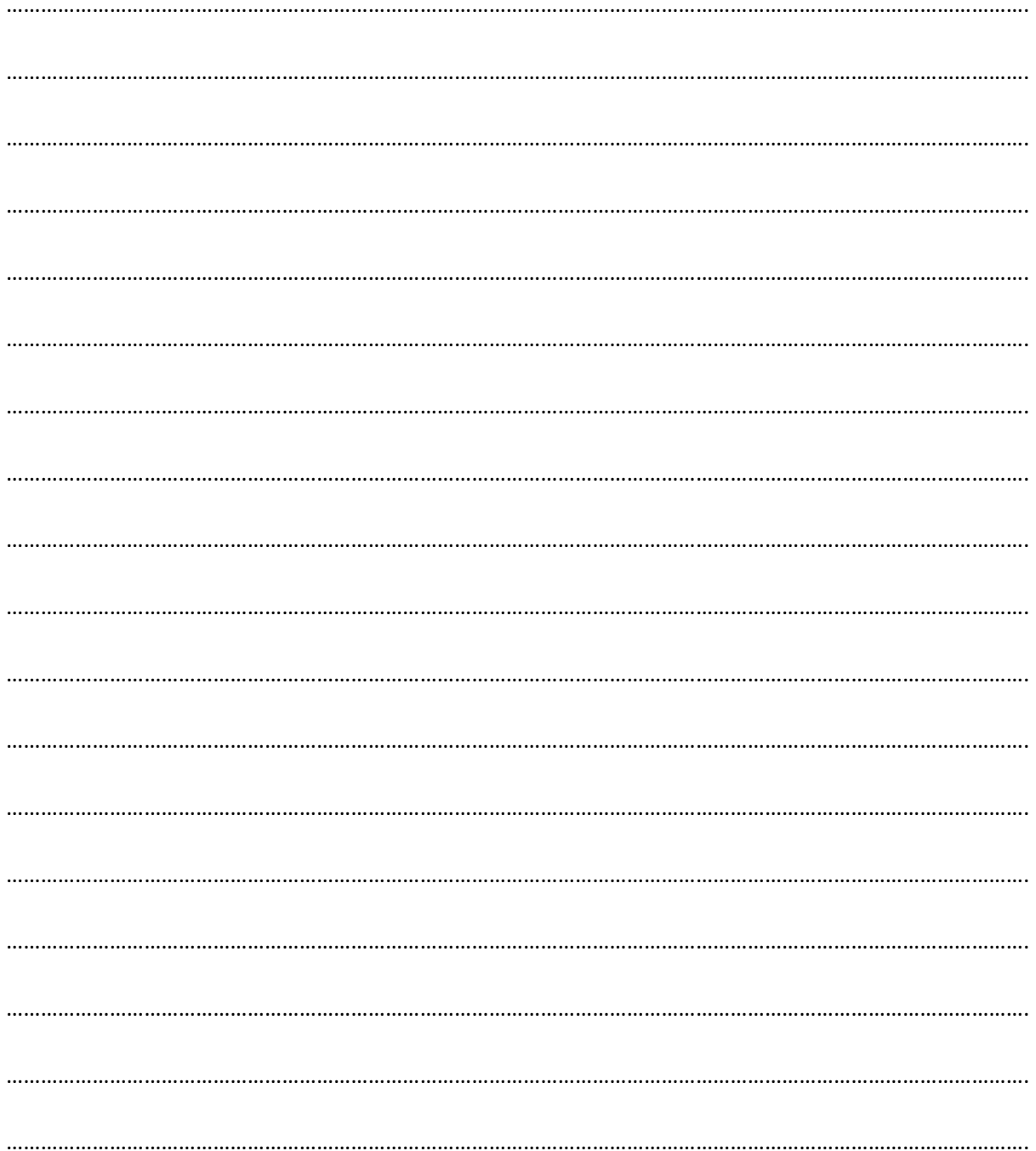
11. O believers! Do not let some ‘men’ ridicule others, they may be better than them, nor let ‘some’ women ridicule other women, they may be better than them. Do not defame one another, nor call each other by offensive nicknames. How evil it is to act rebelliously after having faith! And whoever does not repent, it is they who are the ‘true’ wrongdoers.

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12. O believers! Avoid many suspicions, ‘for’ indeed, some suspicions are sinful. And do not spy, nor backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of their dead brother? You would despise that! And fear Allah. Surely Allah is ‘the’ Acceptor of Repentance, Most Merciful.

[illegible]



4) Equality

أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَاتُكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

13. O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may ‘get to’ know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware.

[illegible]

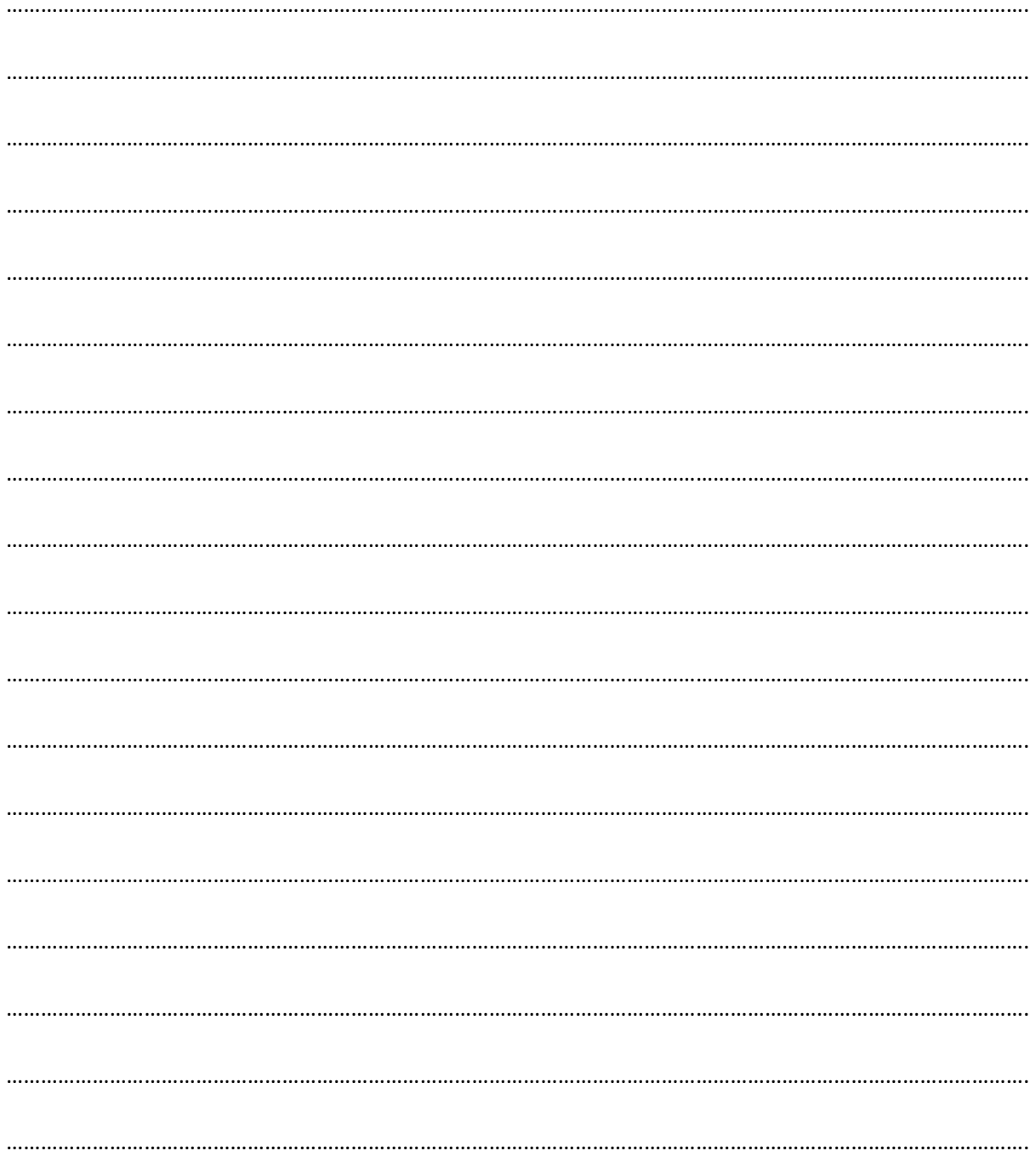


Actions Speak Louder than Words

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ ءَامَنَّا قُلْ لَمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِنْ قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا ۖ وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ ۖ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

14. ‘Some of’ the nomadic Arabs say, “We believe.” Say, ‘O Prophet,’ “You have not believed. But say, ‘We have submitted,’ for faith has not yet entered your hearts. But if you obey Allah and His Messenger wholeheartedly¹, He will not discount anything from ‘the reward of’ your deeds. Allah is truly All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

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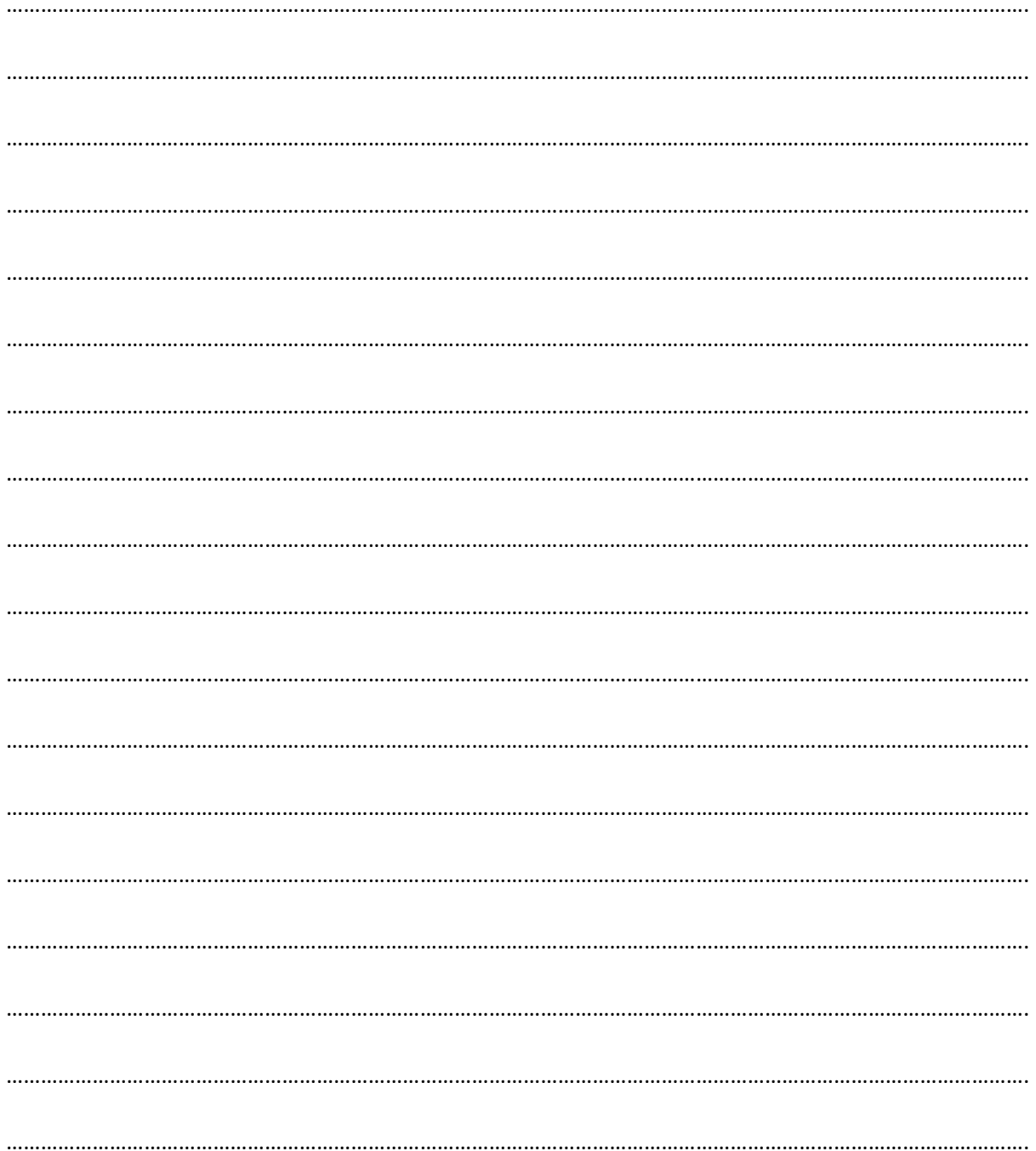


إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ

فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ

15. The ‘true’ believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger—never doubting—and strive with their wealth and their lives in the cause of Allah. They are the ones true in faith.

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قُلْ أَتَعْلَمُونَ اللَّهَ بِدِينِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ

عَلَيْهِمُ

16. Say, “Do you inform Allah of your faith, when Allah ‘already’ knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth? And Allah has ‘perfect’ knowledge of all things.”

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يَمُنُّونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا^ط قُلْ لَا تَمُنُّوا عَلَيَّ إِسْلَامَكُم^ط بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ هَدَاكُمْ

لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

17. They regard their acceptance of Islam as a favour to you. Tell ‘them, O Prophet’, “Do not regard your Islam as a favour to me. Rather, it is Allah Who has done you a favour by guiding you to the faith, if ‘indeed’ you are faithful.

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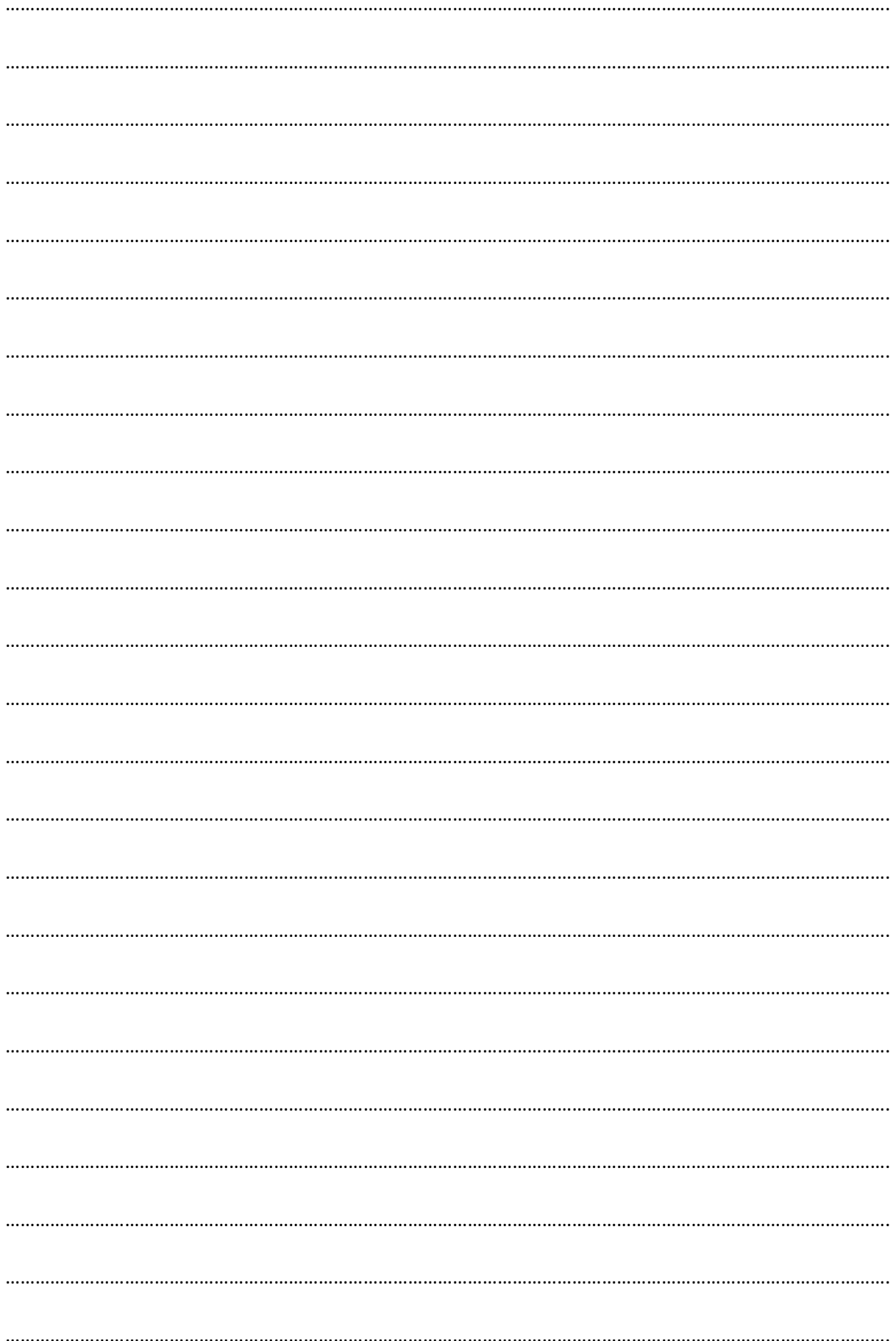


إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

18. Surely Allah knows the unseen of the heavens and earth. And Allah is All-Seeing of what you do.”

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ - الحجرات

(1)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقْدِمُوا بَيْنَ يَدَيِ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ^ط وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ^ج إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ

(2)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَرْفَعُوا أَصْوَاتَكُمْ فَوْقَ صَوْتِ النَّبِيِّ وَلَا تَجْهَرُوا لَهُ بِالْقَوْلِ كَجَهْرِ بَعْضِكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ أَنْ تَحْبَطَ أَعْمَالُكُمْ وَأَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُونَ

(3)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَغُضُّونَ أَصْوَاتَهُمْ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُولَئِكَ الَّذِينَ امْتَحَنَ اللَّهُ قُلُوبَهُمْ لِلتَّقْوَى^ج لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

(4)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يُنَادُونَكَ مِنْ وَرَاءِ الْحُجُرَاتِ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُونَ

(5)

وَلَوْ أَنَّهُمْ صَبَرُوا حَتَّى تَخْرُجَ إِلَيْهِمْ لَكَانَ خَيْرًا لَهُمْ^ج وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ

(6)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنْ جَاءَكُمْ فَاسِقٌ بِنَبَأٍ فَتَبَيَّنُوا أَنْ تُصِيبُوا قَوْمًا بِجَهَالَةٍ

فَتُصِيبُوا عَلَى مَا فَعَلْتُمْ نَادِمِينَ

(7)

وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ فِيكُمْ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ۚ لَوْ يُطِيعُكُمْ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِّنَ الْأَمْرِ لَعَنِتُّمْ وَلَكِنَّ
اللَّهَ حَبَّبَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْإِيمَانَ وَزَيَّنَهُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ وَكَرَّهَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكُفْرَ وَالْفُسُوقَ
وَالْعِصْيَانَ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الرَّاشِدُونَ

(8)

فَضْلًا مِّنَ اللَّهِ وَنِعْمَةً ۚ وَاللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ حَكِيمٌ

(9)

وَإِن طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا ۖ فَإِنْ بَغَتْ إِحْدَاهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَىٰ
فَقَاتِلُوا آلَتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّىٰ تَفِيءَ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ ۚ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ
وَأَقْسِطُوا ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ

(10)

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

(11)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا يَسْخَرْ قَوْمٌ مِّنْ قَوْمٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُونُوا خَيْرًا مِنْهُمْ .
وَلَا نِسَاءٌ مِّنْ نِّسَاءٍ عَسَىٰ أَن يَكُنَّ خَيْرًا مِنْهُنَّ ۖ وَلَا تَلْمِزُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَلَا تَنَابَزُوا
بِالْأَلْقَابِ ۖ بِئْسَ الْإِسْمُ الْفُسُوقُ بَعْدَ الْإِيمَانِ ۚ وَمَن لَّمْ يَتُبْ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ

(12)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوا كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ إِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ إِثْمٌ وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا وَلَا يَغْتَبِ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا ۚ أَيُحِبُّ أَحَدُكُمْ أَن يَأْكُلَ لَحْمَ أَخِيهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْنَاهُ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ تَوَّابٌ رَّحِيمٌ

(13)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّن ذَكَرٍ وَأُنثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِندَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَىٰكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

(14)

قَالَتِ الْأَعْرَابُ آمَنَّا ۖ قُلْ لَّمْ تُؤْمِنُوا وَلَكِن قُولُوا أَسْلَمْنَا وَلَمَّا يَدْخُلِ الْإِيمَانُ فِي قُلُوبِكُمْ ۖ وَإِنْ تُطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ لَا يَلِتْكُمْ مِّنْ أَعْمَالِكُمْ شَيْئًا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ

(15)

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا بِاللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوا وَجَاهَدُوا بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنفُسِهِمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الصَّادِقُونَ

(16)

قُلْ أَتَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِدِينِكُمْ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

(17)

يَمُنُونَ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَسْلَمُوا قُلْ لَا تَمُنُوا عَلَيَّ إِلَّا مَعَكُمْ بَلِ اللَّهُ يَمُنُّ عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْ
هَذَاكُمْ لِلْإِيمَانِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

(18)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ غَيْبَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاللَّهُ بَصِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ

English Translation

1.

O believers! Do not proceed 'in any matter' before 'a decree from' Allah and His Messenger. And fear Allah. Surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.

2.

O believers! Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet, nor speak loudly to him as you do to one another, or your deeds will become void while you are unaware.

3.

Indeed, those who lower their voices in the presence of Allah's Messenger are the ones whose hearts Allah has refined for righteousness. They will have forgiveness and a great reward.

4.

Indeed, most of those who call out to you 'O Prophet' from outside 'your' private quarters have no understanding 'of manners'.

5.

Had they been patient until you could come out to them, it would have certainly been better for them. And Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.

6.

O believers, if an evildoer brings you any news, verify 'it' so you do not harm people unknowingly, becoming regretful for what you have done.

7.

And keep in mind that Allah's Messenger is 'still' in your midst. If he were to yield to you in many matters, you would surely suffer 'the consequences.' But Allah has endeared faith to you, making it appealing in your hearts. And He has made disbelief, rebelliousness, and disobedience detestable to you. Those are the ones rightly guided.

8.

'This is' a bounty and a blessing from Allah. And Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

9.

And if two groups of believers fight each other, then make peace between them. But if one of them transgresses against the other, then fight against the transgressing group until they 'are willing to' submit to the rule of Allah. If they do so, then make peace between both 'groups' in all fairness and act justly. Surely Allah loves those who uphold justice.

10.

The believers are but one brotherhood, so make peace between your brothers. And be mindful of Allah so you may be shown mercy.

11.

O believers! Do not let some 'men' ridicule others, they may be better than them, nor let 'some' women ridicule other women, they may be better than them. Do not defame one another, nor call each other by offensive nicknames. How evil it is to act rebelliously after having faith! And whoever does not repent, it is they who are the 'true' wrongdoers.

12.

O believers! Avoid many suspicions, 'for' indeed, some suspicions are sinful. And do not spy, nor backbite one another. Would any of you like to eat the flesh of their dead brother? You would despise that! And fear Allah. Surely Allah is 'the' Acceptor of Repentance, Most Merciful.

13.

O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may 'get to' know one another. Surely the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous among you. Allah is truly All-Knowing, All-Aware.

14.

‘Some of’ the nomadic Arabs say, “We believe.” Say, ‘O Prophet,’ “You have not believed. But say, ‘We have submitted,’ for faith has not yet entered your hearts. But if you obey Allah and His Messenger wholeheartedly¹, He will not discount anything from ‘the reward of’ your deeds. Allah is truly All-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”

15.

The ‘true’ believers are only those who believe in Allah and His Messenger—never doubting—and strive with their wealth and their lives in the cause of Allah. They are the ones true in faith.

16.

Say, “Do you inform Allah of your faith, when Allah ‘already’ knows whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth? And Allah has ‘perfect’ knowledge of all things.”

17.

They regard their acceptance of Islam as a favour to you. Tell ‘them, O Prophet’, “Do not regard your Islam as a favour to me. Rather, it is Allah Who has done you a favour by guiding you to the faith, if ‘indeed’ you are faithful.

18.

Surely Allah knows the unseen of the heavens and earth. And Allah is All-Seeing of what you do.”