

Sura 29, Al 'Ankabut [the Spider], Mecca 85

The Quran's Text & Yusuf Ali's Translation:

الم ﴿١﴾

29: 1. Alif Lam Mim.

[**Ali's comment:** 3422. For these Abbreviated Letters see n. 25 to 2:1. We are asked to contrast, in our present life the real inner life against the outer life, and learn from the past about the struggles of the soul which upholds God's Truth, against the environment of evil, which resists it, and to turn our thoughts to the Ma'ad, or man's future destiny in the Hereafter.]

أَحْسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُتْرَكُوا أَنْ يَقُولُوا آمَنَّا... ^{up}

2. Do men think that they will be left alone on saying, "We believe,"

...وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُونَ ﴿٢﴾

and that they will not be tested?

[3424. The word "**know**" is used here more in the sense of testing than of acquiring knowledge. God is All-Knowing: He needs no test to increase His own knowledge, but the test is to burn out the dross within ourselves, as explained in the last note.]

وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ...^{up}

29: 3. We did test those before them,

...فَلْيَعْلَمَنَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ صَدَقُوا وَلْيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِينَ ﴿٣﴾

and God will certainly know those who are true from those who are false.

[3425. If the enemies of Truth imagine that they will "be first" by destroying Truth before it takes root, they are sadly at fault, for their own persecution may help to plant God's Truth more firmly in men's hearts.]

[3426. The men of Faith look forward to God. Their quest is God, and the object of their hopes is the meeting with God. They should strive with might and main to serve Him in this life, for this life is short, and the Term appointed for their probation will soon be over.]

أَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ السَّيِّئَاتِ أَنْ يَسْبِقُونَا...^{up}

29: 4. Do those who practice evil think that they will get the better of us?

...سَاءَ مَا يَحْكُمُونَ ﴿٤﴾

Evil is their judgment!

مَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُو لِقَاءَ اللَّهِ ...

29: 5. For those whose hopes are in the meeting with God (in the Hereafter, let them strive);

... فَإِنَّ أَجَلَ اللَّهِ لَآتٍ ...

for the Term (appointed) by God is surely coming:

[3427. The Term (ajal) may signify:

- the time appointed for death, which ends the probation of this life;
- the time appointed for this life, so that we can prepare for the Hereafter; the limit will soon expire.

In either case the ultimate meaning is the same.

We must strive now and not postpone anything for the future. And we must realize and remember that every prayer we make to God is heard by Him, and that every unspoken wish or motive of our heart, good or bad, is known to Him, and goes to swell our spiritual account.]

... وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٥﴾

and He hears and knows (all things).

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ... ^{up}

29: 7. Those who believe and work righteous deeds, from them shall We blot out all evil (that may be) in them,

[3429. In striving to purify our Faith and our Life, we are enabled to avoid the consequences of our misdeeds for God will forgive any evil in our past, and help to the attainment of a Future based on the best of what we have done rather than on the poor average of our own merits.

The atonement or expiation is by God's Mercy, not by our merits or the merits or sacrifice of anyone else. (R).]

...وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَحْسَنَ الَّذِي كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٧٠﴾

and We shall reward them according to the best of their deeds.

Muhammad Asad's Translation:

29:1

Alif Lam. Mim. 1

DO MEN THINK that on their [mere] saying, "We have attained to faith", they will be left to themselves, and will not be put to a test?

(29:3) Yea, indeed, We did test those who lived before them; and so, [too, shall be tested the people now living: and] most certainly will God mark out those who prove themselves true, and most certainly will He mark out those who are lying. 2

29:4 Or do they think - they who do evil deeds [while claiming to have attained to faith] - that they can escape Us? Bad, indeed, is their judgment!

(29:5) Whoever looks forward [with hope and awe] to meeting God [on Resurrection Day, let him be ready for it] : for, behold, the end set by

God [for everyone's life] is bound to come - and He alone is all-hearing, all-knowing!

(29:7) **And as for those who attain to faith and do righteous deeds, We shall most certainly efface their [previous] bad deeds, and shall most certainly reward them in accordance with the best that they ever did.**

[**Asad's comments:**

1 See Appendix II.

2 I.e., to others and-or to themselves (see note 7).]