

(Note: Wherever the word “you” or “your” is singular and refers to one human being, it is printed with an italic y, as in: you. Wherever such a word refers to God, the letter y is printed in capital, as in: You.)

For Fast 16 – September 6

Chapter 20

129 And if a word had not gone forth from your Lord, and a term been fixed, it [the punishment of the Prophet’s persecutors] would surely have come upon them.¹

130 So bear patiently what they say, and celebrate the praise of your Lord before the rising of the sun and before its setting, and glorify (Him) during the hours of the night and parts of the day, that you may be well pleased.²

131 And do not strain your eyes (with desire) at what We have provided different classes of them — the splendour of this world’s life — that We may try them by means of it. And the sustenance of your Lord is better and more lasting.³

132 And enjoin prayer on your people, and steadily adhere to it.⁴ We do not ask from you a sustenance. We provide for you.⁵ And the (good) end is for guarding against evil.

133 And they say: Why does he not bring us a sign from his Lord? Has not a clear evidence come to them of what is in the previous Books?⁶

134 And if We had destroyed them with punishment before it, they would have said: Our Lord, why did You not send to us a messenger, so that we might have followed Your messages before we met disgrace and shame?⁷

135 Say: Everyone (of us) is waiting, so wait. Soon you will come to know who is the follower of the even path and who goes aright.

Notes:

(In verses 129 to 132, “you” and “your” are in the singular, addressing the Holy Prophet, but the reader of the Quran may also be meant.)

1 (v. 129) The *word* or law of God is that the punishment that comes from God upon those who take up opposition to prophets, and persecute them, is not immediate but delayed till a certain time. The same would happen in case of those who opposed the Holy Prophet Muhammad and tried to destroy him and his followers.

2 (v. 130) The Holy Prophet is told to bear persecutions patiently. He is also told to seek comfort in prayer. And he did find comfort in prayer under the severest persecutions. “The coolness of my eyes is in prayer,” he is reported to have said. This verse speaks of the daily prayers. Before the rising of the sun is the dawn prayer

(*fajr*) and before its setting the '*asr* prayer. The *maghrib* and '*isha* prayers occur during the hours of the night, as does the optional *tahajjud* prayer. *Zuhr* occurs during the day.

“That you may be well pleased” — Usually it is said that a person must please Allah. The Quran also refers to the concept of a person *being pleased* with Allah, which goes together with pleasing Allah: “Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him” (98:8).

- 3 (v. 131) This teaches us not to look with envy at the material wealth of others. It is only a means of trial for the possessors. The “sustenance” of the Lord is what sustains and feeds the soul, improves the character, and brings out the higher qualities.
- 4 (v. 132) The Holy Prophet, or the reader of the Quran, is told not only to “enjoin prayer on your people” but also to adhere to it steadfastly himself. In other words, a person must set a good example himself of practising what he tells others to do.
- 5 (v. 132) In some religions and mythologies, gods are offered food and drink by their worshippers. According to the Quran, God has no such needs nor does He depend on His worshippers. On the contrary, God provides for the needs of His worshippers.
- 6 (v. 133) The Quran is here called a clear evidence of what is contained in the previous Books, because it fulfils their prophecies and corroborates their truth.
- 7 (v. 134) God gives people full opportunity to understand and accept the guidance. He punishes them only after they persist in active opposition to it and persecution of its followers.