

On Divine Punishment 1

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In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

May Allah bless our master Muhammad and grant him peace.

Dear Muslims, I received an inspiration for a poem Monday night through Tuesday.

This revelation is about the acts of punishment in the afterlife.

It was in the second month of our lunar calendar.¹

That night, I was frightened by the revelations about punishment in the afterlife.

It was on February 25 in the Gregorian calendar.

These verses are written so that people are saved from punishment in the afterlife.

This date [February 25] corresponds to the zodiac sign of Pisces.²

Punishments of the afterlife are destined to those who neglect the acts of worship.

That night of [February 25], the shining star of Pollux³ appeared in the sky.

Know that it is a white star.⁴

Since the exile of the Prophet one thousand years ago,

there have been three hundred revelations regarding the acts of punishment in the afterlife.

And eighty revelations were added to these

in three years. Even if these revelations are difficult, try to understand them.

And know that there are seven plus ten revelations remaining to come.

This is the reason why all generations are worried about punishment in the afterlife.

¹ It is the month of *shamwal*, the second month in the Muslim calendar.

² The zodiac sign of pisces corresponds to the period of February 19 to March 20.

³ *Pollux* is the one of the brightest stars, and in Arabic is named *Al-r'as al-taw'am al-mu'akbar* (*The head of the second twin*).

⁴ The author uses the white color to show how bright and visible the star is to the naked eye and that it was visible to the Fula people of *Fuuta Jalon* (*Fouta Djallon*). However, the color of Pollux is indeed yellow-orange.

The promise of punishment in the afterlife was made [by Allah] before the universe was created.

Adam is saved, whereas Satan (Iblis) will be punished in the afterlife.⁵

Allah whose will is irreversible promised [Satan] punishments in the afterlife.

This is the reason why there are people who will go to hell [with Satan].

A famous poet had already sung it a long time ago

so that the current generation stays away from forbidden practices.

“O you who facilitates worthy and virtuous actions [Allah], make my poems an inspiration to guide generations in the straight path and keep them away from the punishments in the afterlife.”⁶

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The protector of a farm does not wish to see that which he is protecting ruined!

Thus, he secures the surroundings and the middle of the farm against the enemies of crops!

There are farms so big that a day of walk is needed [to cover their distance],

but the protectors watch over them at all times to chase away anything that could ruin them!

They keep doing so for forty days [to have a good harvest],

from sunrise to sunset. It is real punishment!⁷

Sing these poetic verses in the moonlight!⁸ Sing these poetic verses in all the mosques

of Fuuta so that people can stay away from punishment in the afterlife!

This is the mission of all protectors!⁹

This poem advises this generation to stay away from punishment in the afterlife.

⁵ The author refers here to the Islamic version of *Adam's* sin caused by *Iblis* (*Satan*). After being deceived by *Iblis* to eat the fruit of the tree forbidden by Allah, Adam repented. But *Iblis* did not repent. Therefore, Allah has promised him hell.

⁶ The poet is referring to the book *Maqāmāt* of Abū Muḥammad al-Qāsim al-Ḥarīrī (1054-1122).

⁷ The author uses this expression in this context to stress the fact that a lot of effort and sacrifice are required to have a good harvest.

⁸ In Fula villages of *Fuuta Jalon*, evening gatherings are organized in moonlight

⁹ The protectors include parents, teachers, preachers, and religious leaders in charge of educating the masses.

By the sanctity of the moonlight and the mosques of Fuuta, may Allah save us from punishments!

People of Dalaba Hoore Jooli¹⁰ and its surroundings,

know that these verses contain advice that keeps you from punishment in the afterlife.

To those who live further away, from Kaala to the residents of Fougoumba,¹¹

I send you this message with advice that keeps you from punishment in the afterlife.

I send my greetings to all the imams, all the preachers,

and to all the religious authorities. May they be saved from the punishments in the afterlife!

Men and women are equal in religious practice.

Let all free people and servants stay away from punishment in the afterlife!¹²

In this poem, I alternate between three rhymes in these words:

“hell,” “punishment in the afterlife,” and another rhyme [in the second part of the poem].¹³

It is with the mosque that I will start

to enumerate numerous things that I will explain fully and without ambiguity!

Dear Muslims, these verses are not sung for my own pleasure.

They are sung to inform sinners so that they stay away from punishment in the afterlife.¹⁴

If you observe carefully, you will realize that from weeding to cultivating a farm, a lot of physical effort is required. It is like a real punishment!

It is like protecting a big field, as I mentioned at the start.

Some lazy people will not do the work because it is like a real punishment.

Here at the mosque, if the criteria are enumerated,

¹⁰ *Dalaba* is a city and subdivision in the region of *Mamou* in the Republic of Guinea.

¹¹ Kaala is a village of *Dalaba*, *Fougoumba*, *Fogoumba*, or *Fugumba* is a small town in the region of *Mamou*.

¹² The author means that everyone will be judged on their actions, and not according to their social rank.

¹³ The rhymes used in this poem consist of repeating identical vowels at the end of the following Pular words: *jiite* (*hell*), *lette* (*punishments in the afterlife*), and *dadde* (*eternal salvation*). The third one is found in the second part of the poem.

¹⁴ By repenting before it is too late (before dying).

we will realize that certain people who are coming and going risk punishment in the afterlife!¹⁵

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[The faithful who must go to the mosque] must have sincere intentions Thursday night

through Friday so that they can be saved from punishment in the afterlife.

They must have sincere intention to purify their bodies with the great bath,¹⁶ and they must respect

all mandatory and traditional rules so that they are saved from punishment in the afterlife!

Those who go to the mosque must assume that they are performing the pilgrimage to Mecca,

because they do not know if they will have a chance to perform it to be saved in the afterlife.

The faithful must inform their mothers, if they have one, and their families. They must not go [to

the mosque] by causing them harm that will cost them punishment in the afterlife!

They must be very polite and show exemplary humility,

and must greet the faithful on their way to stay away from punishment in the afterlife.

They must control their legs, hands, tongues, and desires

by avoiding any act punishable in the afterlife.

They must wear shoes so as not to follow in the footsteps of married women,

and they must control their desires so as not to commit punishable acts in the afterlife!

They must stay away from any gossip.

Anyone who talks about debts¹⁷ is not yet saved from punishment in the afterlife!

On the way to the mosque, they must focus on the invocations and recitations of Quranic verses,

leaving behind mundane words in order to avoid punishments in the afterlife.

¹⁵ What the author means here is that there are many people who attend mosques without respecting the conditions of access and the required ethical code. These people are exposing themselves to punishments in the afterlife, in the author's view.

¹⁶ It is the *Ghusl al-Janaba*, the mandatory bath for male and female Muslims who have reached puberty. This bath washes off many impurities.

¹⁷ On the way to the mosque.

Anytime they meet a Muslim, they must humble themselves.

Anyone who behaves this way can hope to be saved from punishment in the afterlife!

Let them use their own means and give pious gifts to the Muslims they meet,

with the sincere intention that their goal is to be saved from punishment in the afterlife!

Do not gossip with anyone, please! Do not upset anyone!

Do not be arrogant towards anyone! All of these acts are punished in the afterlife!

By behaving this way until you arrive at the mosque, you will be purified from everything, and so

will your body and clothes, and you will be saved from punishment in the afterlife!

If your clothes are purified and your body is tainted, this is useless!

If the body is purified and the heart is tainted, this entails punishment in the afterlife!

Anyone who arrives at the mosque must assume that the Prophet is there...

and that the Prophet and his companions fear for him punishment in the afterlife.¹⁸

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He must consider [the prophet and his companions] are telling him: "Increase your politeness so

that we may pray for you to be saved from punishment in the afterlife!"

He must know that the angels are spreading their wings and opening the doors

to protect people who will be saved from punishment in the afterlife!

Dear Muslims, Fatiha should be recited for the first rak'at¹⁹

and then Ayatul Kursi,²⁰ which together protect against punishment in the afterlife!

¹⁸ For fear of committing grave transgressions that will cost him punishments in the afterlife.

¹⁹ *Fatiha* or *Al-Fātiḥa* is (the first chapter of the Quran). *Rak'at* is the succession, from the standing position, of one inclination of the body followed by one upright position, then by a prostration followed by an upright position (by staying seated), then by another prostration identical to the first and by an upright position. Each one of these positions is accompanied by ritual formulas.

²⁰ *Ayatul Kursi* or *Āyat al-Kursī* (*The verse of Throne*) is the 255th verse of the Quranic chapter *Al-Baqra* (*The Cow*).

It is recommended, for the second rak'at (following recitation of the Fatiha),²¹

to recite the chapter Ikhlas²² that saves people from punishment in the afterlife!

Inside the mosque, it is prohibited to walk while dragging one's feet, raising one's head, or

doing both at the same time. Anyone who does so must know he may go to hell!²³

It is also formally prohibited to wear clothes or make invocations that scare people

inside the mosque. Anyone who does so is not saved from punishment in the afterlife!

Anyone who steps over someone inside the mosque to pass to the front,

if he does not apologize, his act could lead him to hell in the future!

Let the firstcomers who possess Islamic knowledge occupy the front rows.

This is recommended so that they may pray for salvation from punishment in the afterlife!

The other worshippers and those outside the mosque

must invoke Allah's names in order to be saved from punishment in the afterlife!

Stay where you are sitting, dear disciples,²⁴ because those who are inside and outside

the mosque will all be saved from the punishments in the afterlife!

When the muezzin is calling to prayer, all loud talking is

prohibited inside the mosque. Anyone who does that could be punished in the afterlife!

At the mosque, the rich and the poor are on equal footing. They sit side by side

because both come to pray in order to be saved from punishment in the afterlife!

At the mosque, the native and the foreigner are treated as equal.

This means that everyone must answer the muezzin's call to prayer.

At the mosque, free people and their servants are treated as equal.

²¹ They are the two rak'as of the salutation of the mosque (*tahiyat al-masjid*).

²² *Ikhlas* or *Al-Ikhlās* (*The Sincerity or the Declaration of the Oneness of God*) is the 112th chapter of the Quran.

²³ This is because such behavior may disturb other worshippers who are there.

²⁴ Do not push anybody inside the mosque or to move in the front.

If servants pray to be saved from punishment, it goes without saying for their masters.

It is established that anyone who claims a debt

or does business in the mosque risks punishment in the afterlife.²⁵

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Anyone who is proud because he is Peul (Fulani) of noble birth²⁶ and looks for a slave in the mosque, it is obvious that this person is not saved from punishment in the afterlife!

Anyone who is proud because he is a native and who stigmatizes foreigners at the mosque, it is obvious that this person is not saved from punishment in the afterlife!

Anyone who is proud because he has power and who treats unfairly those who have none, there is no doubt that he is not saved from punishment in the afterlife!

Anyone who is proud of his wealth and boasts before the poor, it is proven that his acts are not spared from punishment in the afterlife!

Anyone who leads a prayer with arrogance and wants to get noticed, it is proven that he will lead the prayer for a generation in hell!

Anyone who boasts while reading the Quran because he masters it should know that he does not master it better than Satan, and that [this mastery] did not save him [Satan] from punishment in the afterlife!

Anyone who boasts when preaching so that people say he is a good preacher should know that he will lead that generation towards punishment in the afterlife!

Anyone who boasts about his pilgrimage to Mecca because he has returned, that is useless to him since it will not save him from the punishments in the afterlife!

Elderly people should fear the One who rendered them old [Allah]!

²⁵ Because the mosque is exclusively designed for praying and worshipping God, according to the author.

²⁶ It means the Peul (Fulani) masters who owned servants (slaves)

They should remember their acts in the past that could bring them to hell.

Let them ponder over it! What if the repenting of elderly people is not accepted?

For sure, if their repenting is not accepted, they will become the elders of hell!

Leaders must ponder over all that happened while they were in power,

whether they will be forgiven or will go to hell!

Peul (Fulani) masters must ponder over the way they treated their servants.

They must wonder whether their servants will go to paradise whereas they will go to hell!

Anyone who once led a prayer must ponder over too

whether he met all requirements to be imam or whether he will be punished in the afterlife!

The imam must ponder whether he did not forget any prostration before and after!

Those who think about this will be prudent to stay away from punishment in the afterlife!

The teacher must also ponder over.

If what he teaches is occult science,²⁷ this will cost him punishment in the afterlife!

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There are people called here [in the mosque] to ease their entrance to paradise,

but if they are not careful, they will face punishments in the afterlife!²⁸

In a large gathering, no one knows who will be saved.²⁹

When the lights are out in an already dark area, the darkness increases.³⁰

To you preachers, listen carefully what I am saying: "Be afraid that your entrusted

mission as messengers³¹ does not become the source of your punishments in the afterlife!"

²⁷ It is about witchcraft.

²⁸ Because they respect the requirements in the mosque.

²⁹ In a crowd one cannot know who is going to hell or to paradise.

³⁰ A scholar (preacher or teacher) who dies from a generation that needs guidance in the good religious practices is like a light that is turned off in an already dark place, which increases ignorance of that generation.

³¹ To convey to the worshippers the message of Allah and of the Prophet Muhammad.

Anyone who says that he was sent when he was not

will lead a whole generation to the punishments in the afterlife.³²

Let us be afraid of being among those who will be unhappy for receiving their book [on their

left hand] because it is obvious that they are destined to hell!³³

The souls of saints will rise to heaven

following the angels, turning away from punishment in the afterlife!

Allah, protect all those who read the Quran,

did their prayers and fasted the month of Ramadan against the punishments of the afterlife.

This is eighty plus three

which is the number of verses [of this poem] dealing with punishments in the afterlife!

Next

I hereby come to pray for the people of your generation

by changing the rhyme from "punishment in the afterlife" to "eternal salvation."

Listen about the things I will pray for [for my generation].

Saying "amen" is the first thing to do to have access to eternal salvation!

To all those who have prayed, learned the Quran, fasted during the month of Ramadan,

and performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, may my Creator grant them eternal salvation!

May Muslims acquire humility, honesty

and be submitted [to Allah] to have access to eternal salvation!

Oh Allah, increase your blessings and mercy

on our children and parents by granting them eternal salvation.

³² Here the author means that anyone who pretends to be a preacher when he has no qualifications to preach risks to mislead an entire generation.

³³ The Quran (69:19-31) teaches that after death everyone will receive their book where their deeds are recorded. If they receive it in their right hand, this means they will go to paradise, but if they receive it in their left hand, it means they will go to hell.

O Allah, bestow your mercy to all

our men and women by granting them eternal salvation!

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Increase piety in the mosques and in all

religious assemblies by granting the people in attendance eternal salvation!

Guide our parents and guide our children even more on the straight path!

May the servants be humble to benefit from the blessing of their spiritual Fula Master!

May Allah bless all Quranic masters and their disciples!

Be they alive or dead, may He grant them eternal salvation.

Strengthen the faith in the heart of all Muslims,

and remove from them any hypocrisy by granting them eternal salvation!

Grant to all commentators of the Quran

and to all Quranic masters eternal salvation!

Grant every preacher and his listeners,

those who listened and those who did not, eternal salvation!

Grant blessings to all who performed the pilgrimage to Mecca! Assure us

to perform the hajj and return to our family safe and sound. O Possessor of salvation,

bless our labors in farms and in our harvests,

and let all the animals be blessed by your worship.

May Allah make our offspring live in the [Muslim] religion

and ease their living conditions!

Bless all the people who met me or have heard my name,

and all my in-laws. Grant them all eternal salvation!

Bless all of our spouses and our servants.

My Creator, make us live in a religion that will result in salvation!

Grant Your blessing to Cerno Ahmadu Jawo Balde³⁴

and to his spiritual master and guarantee them eternal salvation!

Bless all the disciples, alive or dead,

and grant salvation to all the mosques!³⁵

On the sanctity of the moonlight and on the sanctity

of all the mosques of Fuuta, grant everyone eternal salvation!

On the sanctity of the holy places of Fuuta, Fes [in Morocco], Koula,³⁶

Medina and Mecca, grant everyone eternal salvation.

Trees and plants are the same in the eyes of a saint.

He prays for everything on earth to be blessed!³⁷

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I pray so that people may have peace and prosperity.

May all the trees blossom and may they be useful for the education of humankind!

The forests and house yards are the same for the protectors,

because they must protect people and animals alike!³⁸

This is the reason why I stated we must pray for everyone's salvation.

If dried grass is more numerous, fresh grass cannot be saved.³⁹

³⁴ Or Thierno Ahmadou Diao Baldé.

³⁵ This is for people who attend mosques regularly.

³⁶ *Koula* or *Koula Mawde* is a village located between *Popodara* and *Diari* in the Labe region of Guinea Conakry. It was founded in the early 19th century by *Alfa Umaru*, a religious scholar famous for his scholarship.

³⁷ What the author means here is that saints make no distinction between who is worshipping or not. They pray for everything to be blessed indiscriminately.

³⁸ These are the saints and men of God who teach and guide people with their writings, their words, and their actions. The author means that they protect all beings so that each one of them may live in peace and the blessing of the Creator.

³⁹ The author means that if people who do not practice the religion well are more numerous in one generation, in case of divine sanction, they will not be impacted alone. Even those who practice the faith well will not be spared. Therefore,

I have given you some advice! Anyone who refuses to follow it,

will fall in misery and will have little chance to have eternal salvation!

When fornication is committed in a country,

the blessing and the light of religion are weakened in every corner of that country!

Follow my advice and stop sinning in your generation.

This piece of advice does not please those who only follow their personal desires.

I implore my Creator to bless all those who are present [in my generation],

and all those who will receive this poem in the future. Grant them all eternal salvation!

I implore my Creator to accept their acts of worship, even if they are not clean.

If they do not stink that much, grant them eternal salvation!⁴⁰

To my family, my kin and to all my [spiritual] masters,

grant them eternal salvation. O my Creator, Possessor of eternal salvation!

To our wives, our children, and to all our disciples,

grant them eternal salvation. O my Creator, Possessor of eternal salvation!

Bless the Prophet and all his companions,

all his community too, and grant them eternal salvation!

Bless and grant peace to Your prophet,

and bless his wives and his children and grant them eternal salvation!

May blessing and peace be upon our master Muhammad.

we must pray for the salvation of all. See Quran (8:25): "And guard yourself against a chastisement which cannot fall exclusively on those of you who are wrongdoers. And know that Allah is severe in punishment."

⁴⁰ In these two verses, the author asks God to accept the acts of worship of his generation and of future generations even though they are imperfect if the intent of the worshippers is sincere.