
XVIII
AL-KAHF
الكهف

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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INTRODUCTION

Name.

This Sūrah takes its name from v. 9 in which the word الكهف (*al-Kahf*) occurs.

Period of Revelation.

This is the first of those Sūrahs which were sent down in the third stage of Prophethood at Makkah. We have already divided the life of the Holy Prophet at Makkah into four stages in the Introduction to Chapter VI. According to that division the third stage lasted from the fifth to the tenth year of Prophethood. This is what distinguishes this stage from the second and the fourth stages. During the second stage the Quraish mainly resorted to ridiculing, scoffing, threatening, tempting, raising objections and making false propaganda against the Holy Prophet and his followers in order to suppress the Islamic Movement. But during the third stage they employed the weapons of persecution, man-handling and economic pressure for the same purpose. So much so that a large number of the Muslims had to emigrate from Arabia to Ḥabash, and those who remained behind were besieged in Shi'ib Abī Ṭālib along with the Holy Prophet and his family. To add to their misery, a complete

social and economic boycott was applied against them. The only redeeming feature was that there were two personalities, Abū Ṭālib and Ḥaḍrat Khadījah, whose personal influence had been conducive to the support of two great families of the Quraish. However, when in the tenth year of Prophethood these two persons died, the fourth stage began with such severe persecutions as forced the Holy Prophet and all his Companions to emigrate from Makkah.

It appears from the theme of the Sūrah that it was revealed at the beginning of the third stage when inspite of persecutions and opposition, migration to Ḥabash had not yet taken place. That is why the story of *"Aṣḥāb-i-Kahf"* (the Sleepers of the Cave) has been related to comfort and encourage the persecuted Muslims and to show them how the righteous people have been saving their Faith in the past.

Subject and Topics.

This Sūrah was sent down in answer to the three questions which the *mushriks* of Makkah, in consultation with the people of the Book, had put to the Holy Prophet in order to test him. These were: (1) Who were "the Sleepers of the Cave"? (2) What is the real story of Khiḍr[1] ? and (3) What do you know about Ẕul-Qarnain? As these three questions and the stories involved concerned the history of the Christians and the Jews, and were unknown in Ḥijāz, a choice of these was made to test whether the Holy Prophet possessed any source of the knowledge of the hidden and unseen things. Allah, however, not only gave a complete answer to their questions but also employed the three stories to the disadvantage of the opponents of Islam in the conflict that was going on at that time at Makkah between Islam and un-belief:

1. The questioners were told that "the Sleepers of the Cave" believed in the same doctrine of *Tauḥīd* which was being put forward in

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1. According to some traditions, the second question was in regard to the Soul which (according to those traditions) has been answered in verse 85 of Chapter XVII (Banī Isrā'īl), but we do not agree with this because (1) there is an interval of several years between the revelation of this Sūrah and of Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl, and (2) in this Sūrah three stories have been related instead of two. Therefore, we are of the opinion that the second question was in regard to the story of Khiḍr and not concerning the Soul. (Please refer also to E.N. 61 of this Sūrah.)

the Qur'ān and that their condition was similar to the condition of the persecuted Muslims of Makkah. On the other hand, the persecutors of the Sleepers of the Cave had behaved in the same way towards them as the disbelievers of the Quraish were behaving towards the Muslims. Besides this, the Muslims have been taught that even if a Believer is persecuted by a cruel society, he should not bow down before falsehood but emigrate from the place all alone, if need be, with trust in God. Incidentally the disbelievers of Makkah were told that the story of the Sleepers of the Cave was a clear proof of the creed of the Hereafter, for this showed that Allah has the power to resurrect anyone He wills even after a long sleep of death as He did in case of the Sleepers of the Cave.

2. The story of the Sleepers of the Cave has also been used to warn the chiefs of Makkah who were persecuting the small newly formed Muslim Community. At the same time, the Holy Prophet has been instructed that he should in no case make a compromise with their persecutors, nor should he consider them to be more important than his poor followers. On the other hand, those chiefs have been admonished that they should not be puffed up with the transitory life of pleasure they were then enjoying but should seek after those excellences which are permanent and eternal.

3. The story of Khiḍr and Moses has been related in such a way as to supply the answer to the question of the disbelievers and to give comfort to the Believers as well. The lesson contained in this story is this: "You should have full faith in the wisdom of what is happening in the Divine Factory in accordance with the will of Allah. As the reality is hidden from you, you are at a loss to understand the wisdom of what is happening, and sometimes if it appears that things are going against you, you cry out, 'How and why has this happened?' The fact is that if the curtain be removed from the "unseen", you would yourselves come to know that what is happening here is for the best. Even if sometimes it appears that something is going against you, you will see that in the end it also produces some good results for you".

4. The same is true of the story of Ẓul Qarnain for it also admonishes the questioners, as if to say, "O you vain chiefs of Makkah ! you should learn a lesson from Ẓul-Qarnain. Though he was a great ruler, a great conqueror and the owner of great resources, yet he always surrendered to his Creator, whereas you are rebelling against Him, even

though you are insignificant chieftains in comparison with him. Besides this, though Ẓul-Qarnain built one of the strongest walls for protection, yet his real trust was in Allah and not in the "wall". He believed that the wall could protect him against his enemies as long as it was the will of Allah and that there would be cracks and holes in it, when it would be His will: whereas you who possess only insignificant fortified abodes and dwellings in comparison with him, consider yourselves to be permanently safe and secure against all sorts of calamities."

While the Qur'ān turned the tables on the questioners who had tried to "expose" the Holy Prophet, in the end of the Sūrah the same things have been reiterated that were stated at its beginning: *"Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter are absolutely true and real and for your own good; you should accept these doctrines, mend your ways in accordance with them and live in this world with this conviction that you are accountable to Allah: otherwise you shall ruin your life and all your doings shall be set at naught."



اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْٓ اَنْزَلَ عَلٰى عَبْدِهِ الْكِتٰبَ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ لَّهٗ عِوَجَاۜ قَيِّمًا
لِّيُنْذِرَ بَاْسًا شَدِيْدًا مِّنْ لَّدُنْهُ وَيُبَشِّرَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ
اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا حَسَنًا ۙ مَّاكِثِيْنَ فِيْهِ اَبَدًا ۙ وَّيُنْذِرَ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ

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Verses: 110 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

All praise is for Allah, Who has sent down this Book to His Servant, and assigned nothing crooked to it.[1] This Book says everything directly so that he may warn the people of the severe chastisement of Allah and give good news to the Believers, who do righteous deeds, that they will have an excellent recompense, which they will always enjoy and that he should warn those people who say, "Allah has begotten a son".[2] 1-4

1. That is, "There is nothing intricate or complicated in it that may be beyond anyone's understanding nor is there anything that deviates from the straight path of the Truth and thus cause hesitation in the mind of a truth-loving person."

2. "Those people" includes the Christians, the Jews and the *mushrik* Arabs who assigned offspring to Allah.

[Contd. on p. 10

اللّٰهُ وَلَدًا ۝٤ مَا لَهُمْ بِهٖ مِنْ عِلْمٍ وَّلَا لِاٰبَآئِهِمْ ؕ كَبُرَتْ كَلِمَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ
اَفْوَاهِهِمْ ؕ اِنْ يَّقُوْلُوْنَ اِلَّا كَذِبًا ۝٥ فَلَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَّفْسَكَ عَلٰٓى اٰثَارِهِمْ اِنْ لَّمْ
يُؤْمِنُوْا بِهٰذَا الْحَدِيْثِ اَسَفًا ۝٦ اِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْاَرْضِ زِيْنَةً لَّهَا لِنَبْلُوَهُمْ
اَيُّهُمْ اَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۝٧ وَاِنَّا لَجٰعِلُوْنَ مَا عَلَيْهَا صَعِيْدًا جُرُزًا ۝٨ اَمْ حَسِبْتَ اَنَّ
اَصْحٰبَ الْكَهْفِ وَالرَّقِيْمِ كَانُوْا مِنْ اٰيٰتِنَا عَجَبًا ۝٩ اِذْ اَوَى الْفِتْيَةُ اِلَى الْكَهْفِ
فَقَالُوْا رَبَّنَآ اٰتِنَا مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً وَّهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ اَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا ۝١٠ فَضَرَبْنَا عَلٰٓى
اٰذَانِهِمْ فِي الْكَهْفِ سِنِيْنَ عَدَدًا ۝١١ ثُمَّ بَعَثْنٰهُمْ لِنَعْلَمَ اَيُّ الْحِزْبَيْنِ اَحْصٰى
لِمَا لَبِثُوْٓا اَمَدًا ۝١٢ نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ نَبَاَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ ؕ اِنَّهُمْ فِتْيَةٌ اٰمَنُوْا
بِرَبِّهِمْ وَزِدْنٰهُمْ هُدًى ۝١٣ وَّرَبَطْنَا عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ اِذْ قَامُوْا فَقَالُوْا رَبُّنَا رَبُّ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ لَنْ نَّدْعُوَا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اِلٰهًا لَّقَدْ قُلْنَآ اِذًا شَطَطًا ۝١٤
هٰٓؤُلَآءِ قَوْمُنَا اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اٰلِهَةً ؕ لَوْلَا يَاْتُوْنَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِسُلْطٰنٍۢ بَيِّنٍ ؕ
فَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا ۝١٥ وَاِذِ اعْتَزَلْتُمُوْهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُوْنَ
اِلَّا اللّٰهَ فَاْوٗٓا اِلَى الْكَهْفِ يَنْشُرْ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِّنْ رَّحْمَتِهٖ وَيُهَيِّئْ لَكُمْ مِّنْ
اَمْرِكُمْ مِّرْفَقًا ۝١٦ وَتَرَى الشَّمْسَ اِذَا طَلَعَتْ تَّزٰوَرُ عَنْ كَهْفِهِمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِيْنِ
وَاِذَا غَرَبَتْ تَّقْرِضُهُمْ ذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ وَهُمْ فِيْ فَجْوَةٍ مِّنْهُ ؕ ذٰلِكَ مِنْ اٰيٰتِ
اللّٰهِ ؕ مَنْ يَّهْدِ اللّٰهُ فَهُوَ الْمُهْتَدِ ۚ وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلْ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لَهٗ وَلِيًّا مُّرْشِدًا ۝١٧
وَتَحْسَبُهُمْ اَيْقَاظًا وَّهُمْ رُقُوْدٌ ۚ وَّنُقَلِّبُهُمْ ذَاتَ الْيَمِيْنِ وَذَاتَ الشِّمَالِ ۚ
وَكَلْبُهُمْ بَاسِطٌ ذِرَاعَيْهِ بِالْوَصِيْدِ ؕ لَوِ اطَّلَعْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ لَوَلَّيْتَ مِنْهُمْ فِرَارًا
وَّلَمُلِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ رُعْبًا ۝١٨ وَكَذٰلِكَ بَعَثْنٰهُمْ لِيَتَسَآءَلُوْا بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ قَالَ قَآئِلٌ

Neither had they any knowledge of this[3] nor their forefathers; it is a monstrous word that comes out of their mouths: they utter a sheer lie. 5

Well, O Muḥammad, it may be that you will consume your life for their sake out of sorrow, if they do not believe in this message.[4] The fact is that whatsoever is on the earth, We have made it as its adornment so that we may test the people as to which of them does best deeds. In the end, We will turn all that is in it into a bare plain.[5] 6-8

Do you consider "the Sleepers of the Cave",[6] and the bearers of the "Inscription"[7] to be among Our strange Signs?[8] When those few young men took refuge in the Cave, they said, "Our Lord! have a special mercy on us from Thyself and guide us out of our ordeal aright." Accordingly We lulled them to a deep sleep in the Cave for a number of years. Then We raised them up in order to test which of them were able to calculate correctly the period of their stay there. 9-12

Now We tell you their real story.[9] They were a few young men who believed in their Lord, and We increased them in their guidance.[10] We strengthened their hearts, when they rose up, and they declared, "Our Lord is the One Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth. We will not invoke any other deity than Him. It will be the most improper thing if we do so". (Then they held mutual consultations, saying,) "These people of ours have given up the Lord of the universe and adopted other deities. Why do they not bring forward any clear argument in support of their creed? Well, who can be more wicked than the one who forges a lie against Allah? Now that you have forsaken them and discarded the deities they worship besides Allah, let us go to such and such a cave for refuge.[11] Your Lord will extend to you His mercy, and order your affairs for you for the best." 13-16

If you had looked at them in the Cave,[12] it would have appeared to you that when the sun rose, it left the Cave to one side and inclined towards the right, and when it set, it turned away from them and went to the left while they lay in the spacious place inside the Cave.[13] This was one of the Signs of Allah. Whomsoever Allah guides aright, he is guided aright, and whomsoever Allah lets go astray, you will find no guardian to direct him. If you had seen them, it would have appeared to you as if they were awake, whereas in fact 17-18

they were asleep. We turned them about to the right and the left sides.[14] And their dog was sitting at the entrance of the Cave with outstretched forelegs. If you had looked at them, you would have turned on your heels and their sight would have struck you with terror.[15]

Contd. from p. 7]

3. "Monstrous word": "That one is the son of God, or Allah has adopted that one as His son." This has been declared to be monstrous because it was not based on any knowledge that Allah had a son or had adopted someone as a son. They had merely exaggerated their love for someone and invented such a relationship, and they do not realize that it is a monstrous blasphemy, impudence and fabrication that they are uttering in regard to Allah, the Lord of the worlds.

4. This refers to the real cause of the anxiety of the Holy Prophet at the time of the revelation of this Sūrah . It clearly shows that the Holy Prophet did not grieve at the persecution from which he and his Companions were suffering but at the deviation and moral degeneration of his people. What was consuming him was that, though he was trying to bring them out from their disgraceful state, they persisted in it. He was grieved because he was convinced that their deviation would inevitably lead them to destruction and scourge of Allah. Therefore he was working day and night to save them but it appeared that they were bent upon incurring the chastisement of Allah. The Holy Prophet himself has described this state of his mind in a Tradition to this effect: "I may describe this thing in a parable. A person kindled a fire to spread light but the moths persist in falling over it to burn themselves alive. He tries to save them from the fire but the moths reduce his efforts to failure. The same is true of me and you. I hold you by your skirts to keep you away from the fire, but you are bent upon falling into it." (Bukhārī, Muslim).

Though apparently it is merely stated "..... it may be that you will consume your life for their sake out of sorrow...." it also contains a sort of consolation for the Holy Prophet, as if to say, "As you are not responsible for forcing them to believe, why should you consume yourself for their sake? Your only duty is to give good news and warning and not to turn people into Believers. Therefore you may go on carrying out your mission of giving good news to the Believers and warning of the bad consequences to the disbelievers."

5. V. 6 was addressed to the Holy Prophet, but vv. 7-8 have been directed to the disbelievers indirectly, as if to say, "You must understand it clearly that all the things that you see in the world and which allure you, are a transitory adornment which has been arranged merely to test you, but it is a pity that you have been involved in the misunderstanding that all these things have been created

to cater for your pleasure and enjoyment. That is why the only aim and object of life you have set before you is: "Eat, drink and be merry." As a result of this you do not pay any attention to your true and real well-wisher. You must understand it well that these things have not been provided for pleasure but are actually a means of testing you. You have been placed among them to see which of you is allured by these from the real aim of life and which of you keeps steadfast in the worship of Allah, for which you have been sent to the world. All these things and means of pleasure shall come to an end on the Day your examination is over and nothing will remain on the earth because it will be turned into a bare plain."

6. The Arabic word كهف (*kahf*) literally means a vast cave.

7. There is a difference of opinion about the meaning of *ar-raqīm*. Some Companions and their followers opined that it was the name of that habitation where this event took place and that it was situated somewhere between Aylah and Palestine. There are other commentators who take it to mean the "Inscription" that had been set up at the Cave as a memorial to "the Sleepers of the Cave". Maulānā Abul Kalām Āzād, in his commentary, *Tarjumānul-Qur'ān*, has preferred the first meaning and opined that it is the same place which has been called Rekem in the Bible (Joshua, 18: 27). Then he identifies it with the ancient historical city of Petra. But he has not considered the fact that Rekem, as mentioned in the Bible, belonged to the children of Benjamin and according to the Book of Joshua, the territory of this clan was situated to the west of river Jordan and the Dead Sea and that the ruins of Petra are situated to the south of Jordan. That is why the modern archaeologists do not believe that Petra and Rekem are one and the same place. (Please refer to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1946, Vol XVII, page 658). We are also of the opinion that by *"Ar-raqīm"* is meant "the inscription".

8. This question has been posed to expose the sceptical attitude of the disbelievers towards the "Sleepers of the Cave", as if to say, "Do you think that Allah, Who has created the heavens and the earth, does not have the power to keep a few persons in a state of sleep for a couple of hundred years and then to raise them up as hale and hearty as they were at the time of going to sleep? If you ever had pondered over the wonderful creation of the sun and the moon and the earth, you would never have expressed any doubt that such a thing was anything difficult for Allah."

9. The oldest evidence of this story is found in a homily written in Syriac by Jacob of Sarug, a Christian priest of Syria, who was born in A.D. 452, a few years after the death of "the Companions of the Cave." The homily which describes the legend in great detail was composed by him in or about A.D. 474. On the one hand, this same Syriac version came into the hands of our early commentators, and Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī cited it in his commentary with various

authorities, and on the other, it reached Europe where its translations and abridged versions were published in Greek and Latin. The abridged story as told by Gibbon in Chapter 33 of his *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* under the heading, "The Seven Sleepers", so closely resembles the story told by our commentators that both the versions seem to have been drawn from the same source. For instance, the name of the king, whose persecutions made the Seven Christian youths of Ephesus take refuge in the cave, was Emperor Decius according to Gibbon. He ruled the Roman Empire from A.D. 249 to 251 and whose reign is very notorious because of his persecution of the followers of Prophet Jesus Christ, while our commentators call him 'Decanus', 'Decaus', etc. The city, where this event happened, was 'Aphesus', or 'Aphesos' according to our commentators, while according to Gibbon it was Ephesus, which was the biggest Roman city and sea-port on the west coast of Asia Minor. The ruins of this city can still be seen 20 to 25 miles south of the modern Turkish city of Izmir. (Please see Map No. 1 for reference). Again the name of the king, during whose reign "the Companions of the Cave" awoke was 'Tezusius' according to the Muslim commentators and Theodosius II according to Gibbon. He ruled over Rome from A.D. 408 to 450, after the Roman Empire had accepted Christianity.

The resemblance between the two versions is so close that even the name of the companion whom the Sleepers sent to the city to buy food after waking up has been mentioned as 'Jamblicha' by the Muslim scholars and Jamblichus by Gibbon. The details of the story in both the versions are also similar which are briefly as follows:

When during the reign of the Emperor Decius the followers of Prophet Jesus Christ were being mercilessly persecuted, the Seven Christian youths hid themselves in a cave and fell into a sleep. Then in the 38th year of the reign of the Emperor Theodosius II (approximately in A.D. 445 or 446) they awoke when the whole of the Roman Empire had become Christian. Thus, they slept in the cave for nearly 196 years.

On this ground some orientalists have rejected that the above-mentioned story is the same as that given in the Qur'ān because the period of their stay in the cave according to the Qur'ān (v. 25) was 309 years. We have, however, answered this objection in E.N. 25.

There are a few minor differences between the Quranic and Syriac versions, on the basis of which Gibbon has charged the Holy Prophet with "ignorance". However, the Syriac version, on the basis of whose authenticity he has committed this gross insolence, was even according to him written thirty to forty years after the event by a Syrian. He has not taken the trouble to consider the fact that verbal versions of events do change a bit during such a long time while

they are communicated from one country to the other. Therefore it is wrong to take such a version of the story for granted and literally true and to charge the Qur'ān with discrepancy for any main difference with it. Such an attitude is worthy only of those people who are so blinded by religious prejudices that they discard even the most ordinary demands of reason.

The city of Ephesus where the event of the Sleepers of the Cave took place, was built about 11th century B.C. and became a great centre of idol-worship, its chief deity being the moon goddess, Diana, whose temple was regarded as a wonder of the ancient world. Most of her devotees belonged to Asia Minor and the Roman Empire also had accepted her as one of its deities.

After Prophet Jesus when his message started reaching different parts of the Roman Empire, a few youths of Ephesus also gave up idolworship and accepted God as their only Lord. Gregory of Tours has collected details about these Christian youths in his *Meraculorum Liber,* which are briefly as follows:

"They were seven youths. When the Emperor Decius heard of their change of faith, he summoned them and questioned them about their new religion. In spite of knowing that the Emperor was deadly against the followers of Christ, they frankly admitted before him that their Lord is the Lord of the earth and heavens, and that they recognised none else as Deity for if they did so, they would be committing a grave sin. The Emperor became furious to hear this, and warned that he would have them killed, but then considering their tender age, he granted them three days in which they were counselled to revert to their old faith, otherwise they would be put to death.

"The seven youths took advantage of the situation and fled the city to conceal themselves in a cave in the mountains. On the way a dog also followed them: they did their best to scare it away, but it would not leave them. At last they found a spacious cave as a suitable refuge and hid in it, and the dog sat at the entrance. Being tired they soon fell into a deep slumber. This happened in about 250 A.D. After about 197 years, in 447 A.D., during the reign of Emperor Theodosius II, they awoke suddenly when the whole Roman Empire had embraced Christianity and the Ephesians had given up idolatry.

"At this time a fierce controversy was going on among the Romans regarding the reality of the life-after-death and Resurrection, and the Emperor himself was anxious to eradicate somehow the disbelief in the life-after-death from the minds of his people. So much so that one day he prayed that God in His mercy may show a sign which may help restore and correct the people's belief. In precisely the same days the Seven Sleepers awoke in the cave.

"After waking up the youths started asking one another about how long they might have slept. Some said it might have been a day; others said it was a part of a day. When they reached no conclusion, they stopped arguing, leaving the knowledge of the exact period to God.

Then they sent Jean, a companion, to the city with a few silver coins to buy food, and warned him to be on his guard lest the people should recognise him, for they feared that if they were discovered the Ephesians would force them to bow before Diana. But when Jean came to the city he was astonished to see that the world had changed: the whole population had embraced Christianity, and there was nobody in the city to worship Diana. He came to a shop and wanted to buy a few loaves of bread. When he paid in a coin bearing the image of Emperor Decius, the shopkeeper could not believe his eyes and asked the stranger wherefrom he had obtained that coin. When the young man said that it was his own, a dispute began between them and soon a crowd gathered around them, and the matter reached the chief officer of the city. The officer himself was puzzled and wanted to know the whereabouts of the treasure-house from where the young man had taken the coin, but the latter insisted that it belonged to him. The officer did not believe him because he thought that a young man like him could not possibly possess a centuries-old coin which had not even been seen by the elders in the city. When Jean came to know that the Emperor Decius had died, he was pleasantly surprised. He told the crowd that he and his six companions had fled the city only the other day and taken refuge in a cave to escape Decius' persecution. The officer was greatly surprised and followed the young man to see the cave where his companions lay in hiding. And a great crowd followed behind them. When they came to the cave, it was fully established that the youths really belonged to the Emperor Decius' period. Consequently, Emperor Theodosius was informed and he also visited the cave to receive grace. Then the seven youths went back into the cave and lay down and breathed their last. Seeing this clear sign the people's belief in the life-after-death was restored, and a monument was ordered to be built over the cave by the Emperor."

The story of the Sleepers of the Cave as narrated above, corresponds so closely with that mentioned in the Qur'ān that the seven youths can easily be regarded as *"Aṣḥāb-i-Kahf"* (the Companions of the Cave). Some people, however, have raised the objection that this story concerns a city of Asia Minor, and the Qur'ān does not discuss or refer to any event that might have taken place outside Arabia; therefore it would be against the Quranic style and spirit to label this Christian story as the story of *"Aṣḥāb-i-Kahf"*. In our opinion this objection is not correct. The Qur'ān means to impress and warn the Arabs by relating stories concerning the various ancient tribes who had transgressed from the right path and with whom they were familiar, whether they lived and flourished inside Arabia or

outside it. It is for this very reason that a mention has been made of the ancient history of Egypt in the Qur'ān, whereas Egypt has never been a part of Arabia. The question is that when the history of Egypt can be mentioned in the Qur'ān, why cannot Rome and the Roman history with which the Arabs were as familiar as with the Egyptian history? The Roman frontiers adjoined the northern Ḥijāz and the Arab caravans traded with the Romans almost throughout the year. Then there were a number of Arab tribes who were directly under Roman domination and the Roman Empire was in no way unknown to the Arabs, a fact which is fully borne out by Sūrah Ar-Rūm. Another thing which should be borne in mind is that the story of the Sleepers of the Cave has been related in the Qur'ān in response to a query raised by the disbelievers of Makkah, who had been prompted by the Jews and Christians to question the Holy Prophet on such matters as were wholly unknown to the Arabs in order to test his Prophethood.

10. That is, when they had believed sincerely, Allah increased their faith in the guidance and enabled them to become firm and steadfast on the way of the Truth even at the risk of their lives rather than surrender before falsehood.

11. When these God-worshipping youths fled the habitations to take refuge in the hills, the city of Ephesus was the principal centre of idol-worship and sorcery in Asia Minor. There was a great temple dedicated to the goddess Diana, which was well-known in the whole world and attracted devotees from far and wide. The sorcerers, workers of magic and occult arts, sooth-sayers and amulet-writers of Ephesus were well-known and their black business had spread throughout Syria and Palestine, even as far as Egypt. The Jews also had a big share in it, who attributed this art to Prophet Solomon. (Please see *Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature* under 'Ephesus', for details). The predicament in which the righteous people living in an environment of idolatry and superstition were involved can well be imagined from the remark of "the Companions of the Cave" that occurs in v. 20: "..... if they succeed in over-powering us, they will surely stone us to death or force us back into their Faith."

12. It has not been mentioned that in accordance with this mutual resolve, they left the city and went to a secret Cave in the mountains in order to escape from death or forced apostasy.

13. This is to show that the mouth of the Cave faced the north. That is why the light of the sun could not enter inside the Cave and the one who passed by it could not see who was inside it.

14. That is, "If some one could have peeped at the Seven Persons from outside and seen them turning from one side to the other at intervals, he would have thought that they were not asleep but were relaxing themselves."

[Contd. on p. 18

مِّنْهُمْ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ ۭ قَالُوْا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا اَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ ۭ قَالُوْا رَبُّكُمْ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا
لَبِثْتُمْ ۭ فَابْعَثُوْٓا اَحَدَكُمْ بِوَرِقِكُمْ هٰذِهٖٓ اِلَى الْمَدِيْنَةِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ اَيُّهَآ اَزْكٰى طَعَامًا
فَلْيَاْتِكُمْ بِرِزْقٍ مِّنْهُ وَلْيَتَلَطَّفْ وَلَا يُشْعِرَنَّ بِكُمْ اَحَدًا ۝١٩ اِنَّهُمْ اِنْ يَّظْهَرُوْا
عَلَيْكُمْ يَرْجُمُوْكُمْ اَوْ يُعِيْدُوْكُمْ فِيْ مِلَّتِهِمْ وَلَنْ تُفْلِحُوْٓا اِذًا اَبَدًا ۝٢٠ وَكَذٰلِكَ
اَعْثَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ لِيَعْلَمُوْٓا اَنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ وَّاَنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهَا ۝٢١ اِذْ
يَتَنَازَعُوْنَ بَيْنَهُمْ اَمْرَهُمْ فَقَالُوا ابْنُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ بُنْيَانًا ۭ رَبُّهُمْ اَعْلَمُ بِهِمْ ۭ قَالَ
الَّذِيْنَ غَلَبُوْا عَلٰٓى اَمْرِهِمْ لَنَتَّخِذَنَّ عَلَيْهِمْ مَّسْجِدًا ۝٢١ سَيَقُوْلُوْنَ ثَلٰثَةٌ رَّابِعُهُمْ
كَلْبُهُمْ ۚ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ خَمْسَةٌ سَادِسُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ رَجْمًۢا بِالْغَيْبِ ۚ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ سَبْعَةٌ
وَّثَامِنُهُمْ كَلْبُهُمْ ۭ قُلْ رَّبِّيْٓ اَعْلَمُ بِعِدَّتِهِمْ مَّا يَعْلَمُهُمْ اِلَّا قَلِيْلٌ ۬ فَلَا تُمَارِ
فِيْهِمْ اِلَّا مِرَاۗءً ظَاهِرًا ۠ وَّلَا تَسْتَفْتِ فِيْهِمْ مِّنْهُمْ اَحَدًا ۝٢٢ وَلَا تَقُوْلَنَّ
لِشَايْءٍ اِنِّىْ فَاعِلٌ ذٰلِكَ غَدًا ۝٢٣ اِلَّآ اَنْ يَّشَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ ۡ وَاذْكُرْ رَّبَّكَ اِذَا نَسِيْتَ وَ
قُلْ عَسٰٓى اَنْ يَّهْدِيَنِ رَبِّيْ لِاَقْرَبَ مِنْ هٰذَا رَشَدًا ۝٢٤ وَلَبِثُوْا فِيْ كَهْفِهِمْ
ثَلٰثَ مِائَةٍ سِنِيْنَ وَازْدَادُوْا تِسْعًا ۝٢٥ قُلِ اللّٰهُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا لَبِثُوْا ۚ لَهٗ غَيْبُ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ اَبْصِرْ بِهٖ وَاَسْمِعْ ۭ مَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا يُشْرِكُ
فِيْ حُكْمِهٖٓ اَحَدًا ۝٢٦ وَاتْلُ مَآ اُوْحِيَ اِلَيْكَ مِنْ كِتَابِ رَبِّكَ ۭ لَا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمٰتِهٖ ۚ
وَلَنْ تَجِدَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ مُلْتَحَدًا ۝٢٧ وَاصْبِرْ نَفْسَكَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ
بِالْغَدٰوةِ وَالْعَشِيِّ يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَهٗ ۚ وَلَا تَعْدُ عَيْنٰكَ عَنْهُمْ ۚ تُرِيْدُ زِيْنَةَ الْحَيٰوةِ
الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَلَا تُطِعْ مَنْ اَغْفَلْنَا قَلْبَهٗ عَنْ ذِكْرِنَا وَاتَّبَعَ هَوٰىهُ وَكَانَ اَمْرُهٗ
فُرُطًا ۝٢٨ وَقُلِ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكُمْ ۡ فَمَنْ شَاۗءَ فَلْيُؤْمِنْ وَّمَنْ شَاۗءَ فَلْيَكْفُرْ ۭ اِنَّا

نصف القرآن باعتبار عدد الحروف إن التاء بعد الهاء من النصف الأول والهاء التالية من النصف الأخير

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And in the same miraculous way We raised them up again[16] so that they may ask one another (about their wonderful experience). One of them asked, "Well, how long have you remained in this condition?" The others answered, "May-be, we have remained so for a day or a part of a day." Then they declared, "Your Lord knows best how long we have remained in this condition. So let us send one of us with this silver coin to the city, and he should look for a place wherein he can get the best food so that he may bring something to eat. He should, however, conduct himself with caution lest anyone should discover our whereabouts; for if they succeed in over-powering us, they will surely stone us to death or force us back into their Faith, and in that case we will never be able to obtain true success."—In this way We revealed their secret to the people of the city[17] so that they should know that Allah's promise is true and that there is no doubt about (the coming of) the Hour of Resurrection.[18] (But it is a pity that instead of considering this aspect of the matter) they were at that time disputing among themselves with regard to them (the Sleepers of the Cave). Some of them said, "Let us build a wall against them, for their Lord alone knows best about them".[19] But those people who prevailed in their matter,[20] said, "We will build a place of worship as a memorial for them".[21] 19-21

Some people will say, "They were three and the fourth was their dog", and some others will say, "They were five and the sixth was their dog." These are mere irrelevant guesses. There are still others who say, "They were seven and the eighth was their dog."[22] Say, "My Lord alone knows best how many they were." There are a few people only who know their correct number: so you should not enter into discussions with them about their number except in a cursory way: nor ask anyone about them[23] and never say about any matter, "I will do this tomorrow (for you cannot do anything) except that Allah wills it." If ever you inadvertently utter anything like this, you should at once remember your Lord and say, "I hope that my Lord will guide me[24] in this matter with that thing which is nearest to the right way for me"—and some people say that they remained in their Cave for three hundred years and some others add nine more years[25] (to the reckoning of the period). O Prophet, say, "Allah knows best about the period of their stay there, for He is fully aware of all that is hidden in the heavens and the earth." What an excellent Seer 22-26

and Hearer He is! There is no other guardian of the creation in the heavens and the earth, and He does not associate anyone with Himself in His authority.

27-28 O Prophet,[26] recite (the very same) that has been revealed to you in the Book of your Lord, for no one is authorised to make any change whatsoever in the Word of your Lord and (if you will make any change to please any one) you will find no place of refuge to protect you from Him.[27] And keep yourself whole-heartedly content with those who pray to their Lord morning and evening in order to win His approval, and do not turn your attention away from them. Do you desire the allurements of the world[28]? Do not follow the one[29] whose heart We have made neglectful of Our remembrance and who follows his own lust and goes to extremes in the conduct of his affairs.[30]

Contd. from p. 15.]

15. Allah had so arranged their refuge that none dared go inside the Cave and know about them for it was pitch dark in the Cave and the dog was keeping watch at the entrance. If someone ever peeped into the Cave and saw the Sleepers, he took them for some robbers and at once turned on his heels. This was the reason why their refuge remained a secret to the outer world for such a long period.

16. They were roused from their sleep in the same miraculous way that was employed in sending them to sleep and keeping them hidden from the outer world.

17. The secret of their sleep was revealed when one of them went to Ephesus to buy food for them and offered a coin of the period of Emperor Decius. As it was a changed world, he naturally attracted attention for he was wearing a costume of 300-year old fashion and spoke a language different from that in vogue. This was because during those two centuries the language, culture, dress etc., had undergone a marked change. So the shopkeeper looked askance at him and, according to a Syriac tradition, suspected that he had dug up some ancient treasure. Accordingly, he gathered some people of his neighbourhood and they took him before the ruler. On questioning, it was discovered that he was one of those followers of Christ, who had fled the city 300 years ago to save their Faith. As most of the population had embraced Christianity, the news immediately spread throughout the city and a big crowd of the people along with the Christian Roman Ruler, arrived at the Cave. It was then that the Sleepers of the Cave came to know

that they had slept for about three hundred years. So after making salutations to their Christian brothers they lay down and their souls left their bodies.

18. According to the Syriac tradition, at the time of this occurrence, hot discussions were going on in Ephesus about Resurrection and the Hereafter. Though the people had embraced Christianity under the influence of the Roman Empire, yet traces of *shirk* and idolatry of the Romans and the effects of the Greek philosophy were still very powerful. So in spite of the Christian creed of the Hereafter, many people denied this, or at least were sceptical about this. To add to this the Sadducee sect of the Jews, who formed a great part of the population of the city, openly denied the Hereafter and professed to base this on the Torah. The Christian scholars, however, could not put forward any strong arguments to refute them: so much so that the reports of the polemical discussion given in Matthew, Mark and Luke, attributed to Prophet Christ, are admittedly very weak even according to the Christian scholars. (Please refer to Matthew 22: 23-33, Mark 12: 18-27, Luke 20: 27-40). That is why the disbelievers in the Hereafter were having the upper hand and even the believers were being involved in doubts about it. It was at that time that the Sleepers of the Cave were raised up and furnished an absolute proof of the life-after-death and turned the scales in favour of the believers in this dispute.

19. It appears from the context that this was the saying of the righteous people from among the Christians. They were of the opinion that a wall should be raised at the entrance of the Cave in order to let the Sleepers remain in the same condition in which they were, for they argued that their Lord alone knew best about their rank and position and the reward they deserved.

20. The people "who prevailed in their matter" were the Roman rulers and the priests of the Christian Church, who did not let the righteous Christians have their way. This was because by the middle of the fifth century, the common people, especially the orthodox among the Christians, had become fully involved in *shirk* and the worship of saints and tombs. They used to visit the tombs of the saints to worship them and kept the statues of Jesus, Mary and the apostles in their churches: so much so that a few years before the rising up of the Sleepers of the Cave, in 431 A.D., a great council of the representatives of the Christian World had been held in Ephesus itself, in which it was resolved that the creed of the divinity of Christ and of Mary as the mother of God, should be included in the articles of the Christian Church. If we keep in view the year 431, it becomes clear that by "those who prevailed in their matter" are meant the leaders of the Church and the officers of the government, who had the reins of the religious and political powers in their hands. In fact these were the people who were the upholders of *shirk* and who decided that a mausoleum should be built over the Cave of the Sleepers to make it a place of worship.

21. It is an irony that some people among the Muslims have misconstrued this verse of the Qur'ān so as to make it lawful for themselves to build mausoleums, monuments and mosques over the tombs of the righteous persons and saints. The Qur'ān has, in fact, pointed out the deviation of the workers of iniquity who prevailed upon others and built a place of worship over the Cave of the Sleepers, who were indeed a Sign of Resurrection and of the life-after-death. But they abused this good opportunity and produced another means of practising *shirk*.

One fails to understand how anyone can deduce from this verse an argument for the legality of building mosques over the tombs of the righteous people, when the Holy Prophet has categorically prohibited this:

(1) "Allah has cursed those women who visit tombs and those people who build mosques over them and burn lights over them" (Aḥmad, Tirmizī, Abū Dawūd, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah).

(2) "Beware that the people, who have passed before you, made the tombs of their Prophets the places of their worship. I forbid you to do that." (Muslim)

(3) "Allah has cursed the Jews and the Christians, for they made the tombs of their Prophets the places of their worship." (Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī).

(4) "The behaviour of those people was strange: if a righteous person from among them, died they would build a mosque over his grave and draw his pictures. They will be treated as worst criminals on the Day on Resurrection." (Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī).

Thus, it is clear from the above Sayings of the Holy Prophet that building of the places of worship over the tombs is utterly unlawful; the Qur'ān has merely stated as a historical fact the sinful act of the Christian priests and the Roman rulers and has not sanctioned such a thing. Therefore no God-fearing person can turn this into an argument for building mosques over the tombs.

Incidentally, it will be worthwhile to cite a statement of Rev. T. Arundell who published his *Discoveries in Asia Minor* in 1834. He says that he had seen the remains of the Mausoleums of Mary and the Seven Sleepers on a hillock near the remains of the ancient city of Ephesus.

22. This shows that about three hundred years after this event, at the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān, different stories had become current among the Christians about the Sleepers of the Cave, but generally these stories had no authentic source behind them. This was because that was not the age of the press in which authentic books might have been published. Therefore naturally the stories of events were carried from place to place by means of oral traditions, and with the passage of time many tales of fiction got mixed up with the real story.

23. This is meant to impress that the real thing in this story is not the number of the Sleepers but the lessons it teaches: (1) A true believer should not on any account turn away from the truth and bow before falsehood. (2) A believer should not merely rely on the material means but on Allah. He should trust in God and follow the right way, even though the outward adverse circumstances might appear to be unfavourable. (3) It is wrong to suppose that Allah is bound by any so-called "Law of Nature", for He is able to do any thing He wills even though that might seem to be against some common experience. He has the power to change any so-called law of nature, whenever and wherever He wills and bring about any extraordinary "supernatural" thing. So much so that He can raise up anyone who might have been asleep for two hundred years, as if he had slept only for a few hours, without letting any change take place in his appearance, dress, health, indeed in anything during the passage of time. (4) This teaches us that Allah has the power to bring to life all the generations –past, present and future— all together as asserted by the Prophets and Divine Scriptures. (5) It teaches us that ignorant people have always been perverting the Signs of Allah which are sent for the right guidance of the people. That is how the miracle of the Sleepers of the Cave, which had been shown as a proof of the Hereafter, had been turned into a means *of shirk*, as if they were some saints who had been sent only for this purpose.

It is obvious from the above-mentioned real lessons, which one can learn from the story of the Sleepers, that a wise man will pay his attention to these things and not divert it in search of their number, their names, the colour of their dog and the like. Only those people, who have no interest for the reality but for superficial things, will spend their time and energy in making investigations about such things. That is why Allah instructed the Holy Prophet: "You should not enter into useless and irrelevant discussions about such things, if other people try to involve you in them. Instead of wasting your time in such useless things, you should concentrate your attention only on your mission." That is why Allah has not Himself told their exact number lest it should encourage such people as are always hankering after useless things.

24. This is a parenthetical clause which has been inserted here because of its relevancy to the preceding verse, in which it was asserted that the correct number of the Sleepers of the Cave is known only to Allah and a research into it is a useless task. Therefore one should refrain from investigating into unimportant things, nor enter into discussions about them. This has led to the instruction contained in the parenthetical clause for the benefit of the Holy Prophet and the Believers who have been told never to make a positive assertion like this: "I will do this thing tomorrow", for you do not know whether you will be able to do that

[Contd. on p.24

اَعْتَدْنَا لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ نَارًا ۙ اَحَاطَ بِهِمْ سُرَادِقُهَا ؕ وَاِنْ يَّسْتَغِيْثُوْا يُغَاثُوْا بِمَآءٍ
كَالْمُهْلِ يَشْوِى الْوُجُوْهَ ؕ بِئْسَ الشَّرَابُ ؕ وَسَآءَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا ﴿29﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ
عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ اِنَّا لَا نُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ مَنْ اَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا ﴿30﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ
تَجْرِىْ مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْاَنْهٰرُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيْهَا مِنْ اَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَّيَلْبَسُوْنَ
ثِيَابًا خُضْرًا مِّنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَّاِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُّتَّكِـِٕيْنَ فِيْهَا عَلَى الْاَرَآئِكِ ؕ نِعْمَ الثَّوَابُ ؕ
وَحَسُنَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا ﴿31﴾ وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَّثَلًا رَّجُلَيْنِ جَعَلْنَا لِاَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ
مِنْ اَعْنَابٍ وَّحَفَفْنٰهُمَا بِنَخْلٍ وَّجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زَرْعًا ﴿32﴾ كِلْتَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ اٰتَتْ
اُكُلَهَا وَلَمْ تَظْلِمْ مِّنْهُ شَيْـًٔا ۙ وَّفَجَّرْنَا خِلٰلَهُمَا نَهَرًا ﴿33﴾ وَّكَانَ لَهٗ ثَمَرٌ ۚ فَقَالَ
لِصَاحِبِهٖ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهٗٓ اَنَا اَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَّاَعَزُّ نَفَرًا ﴿34﴾ وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهٗ وَ
هُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهٖ ۚ قَالَ مَآ اَظُنُّ اَنْ تَبِيْدَ هٰذِهٖٓ اَبَدًا ﴿35﴾ وَّمَآ اَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ
قَآئِمَةً ۙ وَّلَئِنْ رُّدِدْتُّ اِلٰى رَبِّىْ لَاَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا ﴿36﴾ قَالَ لَهٗ صَاحِبُهٗ
وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهٗٓ اَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِىْ خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوّٰىكَ
رَجُلًا ﴿37﴾ لٰكِنَّا۠ هُوَ اللّٰهُ رَبِّىْ وَلَآ اُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّىْٓ اَحَدًا ﴿38﴾ وَلَوْلَآ اِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ
قُلْتَ مَا شَآءَ اللّٰهُ ۙ لَا قُوَّةَ اِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ ۚ اِنْ تَرَنِ اَنَا اَقَلَّ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَّوَلَدًا ﴿39﴾
فَعَسٰى رَبِّىْٓ اَنْ يُّؤْتِيَنِ خَيْرًا مِّنْ جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ
فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيْدًا زَلَقًا ﴿40﴾ اَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَآؤُهَا غَوْرًا فَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيْعَ لَهٗ طَلَبًا ﴿41﴾ وَاُحِيْطَ
بِثَمَرِهٖ فَاَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ عَلٰى مَآ اَنْفَقَ فِيْهَا وَهِىَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلٰى عُرُوْشِهَا وَ
يَقُوْلُ يٰلَيْتَنِىْ لَمْ اُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّىْٓ اَحَدًا ﴿42﴾ وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَّهٗ فِئَةٌ يَّنْصُرُوْنَهٗ مِنْ دُوْنِ
اللّٰهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنْتَصِرًا ﴿43﴾ هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلّٰهِ الْحَقِّ ؕ هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَّخَيْرٌ

Proclaim, "This is the Truth from your Lord: now whosoever will, he may accept it and whosoever will, he may reject it".[31] (As for those who reject this,) We have prepared for such workers of iniquity a fire whose flames have encircled them.[32] If they will ask for water there, they will be treated with such a drink as will have its residue like that of oil[33] and burn their lips: what an evil drink and what an evil abode! As regards those, who accept it and do righteous deeds, they should rest assured that We do not let go waste the reward of such people: they will have evergreen gardens with canals flowing beneath them: they will be adorned with bracelets[34] of gold and will wear green coloured robes of silk and rich brocade and will be reclining upon raised thrones.[35] What an excellent reward and what an excellent abode! 29-31

O Muhammad, present a parable[36] before them. There were two persons; to one of those We gave two gardens of vine and surrounded them with a fence of date-palm trees and We kept a piece of land between them for cultivation. Both of the vine-yards yielded abundant fruit and did not fail anywise in bringing forth their produce, and We caused a canal to flow in their midst. And the owner of the gardens got much benefit. In spite of all this, while conversing with his neighbour, he said, "I have more of wealth than you and have mightier men at my service." Then he entered his "Paradise",[37] while he was unjust to himself, and said, "I don't think that this wealth of mine will ever perish, and I do not believe that the Hour of Resurrection will ever come. Anyhow if ever I am returned to my Lord, I will get even a grander place than this."[38] 32-36

His neighbour rebuked him during the conversation, saying, "What ! do you disbelieve in the Being Who has created you from clay, then from sperm drop and shaped you as a perfect man[39]? As for myself; Allah alone is my Lord and I set up no partners with Him. And when you were entering your garden, why didn't you say, 'Only that shall happen what He will: neither I nor any one else has any power.'[40] If you find me now less in wealth and offspring than you, my Lord may bestow on me a better garden than yours and send from heaven on your garden a catastrophe that might turn it into a barren plain, or its water might sink into the earth and you may not be able to bring it out in any way." At last (it so happened that) all his fruit 37-44

produce was destroyed and, seeing his vines overturned on the trellises, he began to wring his hands at the loss of what he had spent on it, saying, "I wish I had not associated a partner with my Lord!"—He was so helpless that neither could he find any host to help him against Allah, nor was himself able to avert that catastrophe—It was then that he realized that all the power of helping rests with Allah, the True One. That reward is the best Which He bestows and that end is the best to which He leads.

Contd. from p.21

thing or not: you have neither the knowledge of the unknown nor have full powers to do what you like. If ever inadvertently you utter anything like this, you should at once remember your Lord and say, *"Inshā Allah."* Besides this you do not know whether there will be any good for you in the thing about which you say, "I will do this." It is possible that you may do another thing better than that. Therefore you should trust in God and say, "I hope that my Lord will guide me in this matter with that thing which is nearer to the right way for me."

25. This sentence is connected with the theme preceding the parenthetical clause like this: "Some people will say, 'They were three and the fourth was their dog.....' and some people will say that they remained in the Cave for three hundred years and some others would add nine more years (to the reckoning of the period)". We are of the opinion that the number of the years "300 and 309" have not been stated by Allah Himself but Allah has cited these as sayings of the people. This opinion is based on this succeeding sentence: "Allah knows best about the period of their stay there." If the number of years, given in v. 25, had been from Allah, this succeeding sentence would have been meaningless. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās has also opined that this is not the saying of Allah but that of the people which has been cited as a part of the story.

26. After relating the story of the Sleepers of the Cave, the Qur'ān begins to review the condition of the Muslims of Makkah at the time of the revelation of the Sūrah.

27. This does not mean at all that, God forbid, the Holy Prophet was inclined to make any changes in the Qur'ān to please the disbelievers of Makkah and was thinking of some formula of compromise with the chiefs of the Quraish which necessitated a warning that he was not authorised to do so. As a matter of fact, though this was apparently addressed to the Holy Prophet, it was really meant for the disbelievers that they should not entertain any hope whatsoever for anything like this, as if to say, "You must understand it once for all that Our Messenger is not authorised to make any changes in Our Revelation, for he has to convey

precisely just as it is sent down to him. If you want to accept it, you will have to accept it in its entirety as it is being sent by the Lord of the Universe: and if you want to reject it, you may do so but you must understand it well that no modification even in the least, will be made in it to please you." This was the answer to the repeated demand of the disbelievers. "If you do insist, O Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), that we should accept your Message in its entirety, then make certain modifications in it to accommodate some creeds and customs of our forefathers, and we will accept your Message. This is our offer for a compromise and this will save our people from dis-union." This demand of the disbelievers has been cited in the Qur'ān at several places and the same answer has been given, e.g. "When Our clear Revelations are recited to them, those who do not expect to meet Us, say, 'Bring an other Qur'ān in its stead or make some amendments in it' ...." (X: 15)

28. Though these words have also been addressed to the Holy Prophet, they are really meant for the chiefs of the Quraish. According to a Tradition related by Ibn 'Abbās, the chiefs of the Quraish would say to the Holy Prophet that they considered it below their dignity to sit with such people as Bilāl, Ṣuhaib, 'Ammār, Khabbāb, Ibn-Mas'ūd and the like who generally remained in his company: and that if he should send them away, they would be willing to attend his meetings in order to learn about his Message. At this Allah revealed this verse: "And keep yourself whole-heartedly content with those who pray to their Lord morning and evening in order to win His approval and do not turn your attention away from them: (Do you desire to discard these sincere but poor people so that the chiefs of the Quraish, the well-to-do people, should come and sit near you?)" This was meant to warn the chiefs of the Quraish to this effect: "Your wealth, your pomp and show of which you are so proud, has no value at all in the sight of Allah and His Messenger; nay, those poor people are really more worthy in their sight, for they are sincere and always remember Allah." The same was the attitude of the chiefs of Prophet Noah's people, who said, "And we see also that none but the meanest and the most shallow of our people have become your followers." ... (Noah replied,) "I am not going to drive away those who have believed in me, nor can I say about those whom you disdain, 'Allah has not bestowed any good on them' . . ." (XXI: vv. 27, 29, 31)

29. That is, "Do not yield to what he says, nor submit to him, nor fulfil his desire, nor follow his bidding."

30. The original Arabic text may also mean, "Who discards the truth, breaks all moral limits and rushes on headlong." But in both cases it comes to this: "The one, who is neglectful of Allah and becomes a slave of his lust, inevitably transgresses all limits and becomes a victim of immoderation. Therefore the one,

who will submit to him, will also follow the same way and wander about in deviation after him."

31. This verse makes it quite plain that the story of the Sleepers of the Cave has been related to tell the opponents of Islam: "This is the Truth from your Lord: now whosoever wills, he may accept it and whosoever wills, he may reject it. But people must understand that no compromise will be made in regard to the Truth just as the Sleepers of the Cave did not make any compromise with regard to their creed. They did not make any compromise in regard to the Doctrine of *Tauḥīd* after they had believed in it and categorically declared, "Our Lord is the One Who alone is the Lord of the heavens and the earth." After this declaration they did not in any way accede to the making of any compromise with their people, who had gone astray, but firmly declared, "We will not give Him up and pray to other deities, because it will be the most improper thing, if we do so." After making this declaration they left their people and deities and took refuge in the Cave without taking any provisions with them. After this when they rose up, the only thing about which they showed any anxiety, was that their people might not succeed in forcing them back to their own faith. After relating these things, the Qur'ān addresses the Holy Prophet to the effect (though these words are really meant for the opponents of Islam): "It is absolutely out of question whether any compromise can be made with *mushriks* and disbelievers. Present the truth intact to them whether they accept it or not. If they do not accept it, they themselves will meet with an evil end. As regards those, who have accepted the Truth (whether they be youngsters or poor, indigent people or slaves or labourers,) they are really those people who have a worth with Allah, and they alone will be honoured. Therefore you should not discard them and prefer the chiefs and the rich people who may be neglectful of Allah and be slaves of their lust, even though they might be possessors of worldly grandeur."

32. The Arabic word سُرادِق (*Surādiq*) literally means sides of a tent but, as used in the case of Hell, it may mean its external boundaries to which its flames and heat may reach. According to some commentators, it applies to the future tense ".... its flames will encircle them" so as to refer to the flames of Hell in the Hereafter. But we are of the opinion that its flames have already encircled, in this very world, these workers of iniquity, who have turned away from the Truth and that they cannot escape them.

33. The Arabic word مُهل (*muhl*) has several lexical meanings. According to some people, it means "the residue of oil"; according to others, "lava", which is formed by the melting of things in the earth; according to some, "molten matter" and according to others "pus and blood".

34. The dwellers of Paradise will be adorned with bracelets of gold like the kings of ancient times. This will be to show that they will be adorned like the kings of this world, whereas an unbeliever and wicked king will be disgraced there.

35. The Arabic word ارائك *(arā'ik)* is plural of *arīkah* which is that kind of throne that is covered with an umbrella. This is also to show that in Paradise the Believers will sit on thrones like the kings of this world.

36. In order to understand the significance of this parable we should keep in view v. 28 in which arrogant chiefs of Makkah were told that the poor Companions of the Holy Prophet would not be discarded to please them.

37. He considered his gardens to be "Paradise". Thus he behaved like those mean persons, who, when rise to power and wealth, are always involved in the misunderstanding that they are enjoying "Paradise" in this world; therefore they do not stand in need of any other Paradise.

38. That is, "I don't think there is any life-after-death, but supposing there be one, I shall fare even better there than in my present life, for my prosperity is a clear proof that I am a favourite of God."

39. This shows that "unbelief " in Allah is not confined to the denial of the existence of God in so many words, but arrogance, pride, vanity and the denial of the Hereafter are also *kufr*. Although that person did not deny the existence of Allah, may be he professed it as is apparent from his words ("——If ever I am returned to my Lord—"), yet in spite of his profession, his neighbour charged him with unbelief in Allah. This is because the person, who considers his wealth and his grandeur etc., to be the fruits of his own power and capability and not the favours of Allah, and who thinks that they are everlasting and none can take them away from him and that he is not accountable to anyone, is guilty of "unbelief in Allah", even though he might profess belief in Him, for he acknowledges Allah as a Being and not as his Master, Owner and Sovereign. In fact, belief in Allah demands not merely the profession of His existence but also the acknowledgment of His Sovereignty, Mastery, Rule and the like.

40. That is, "If we are able to do anything, it is by the help and support of Allah alone."

[Contd. on p. 30

عُقُبًا ﴿44﴾ وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَّثَلَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَآءٍ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ
بِهٖ نَبَاتُ الْاَرْضِ فَاَصْبَحَ هَشِيْمًا تَذْرُوْهُ الرِّيٰحُ ۭ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
مُّقْتَدِرًا ﴿45﴾ اَلْمَالُ وَالْبَنُوْنَ زِيْنَةُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَالْبٰقِيٰتُ الصّٰلِحٰتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ
رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَّخَيْرٌ اَمَلًا ﴿46﴾ وَيَوْمَ نُسَيِّرُ الْجِبَالَ وَتَرَى الْاَرْضَ بَارِزَةً ۙ وَّحَشَرْنٰهُمْ
فَلَمْ نُغَادِرْ مِنْهُمْ اَحَدًا ﴿47﴾ وَعُرِضُوْا عَلٰي رَبِّكَ صَفًّا ۭ لَقَدْ جِئْتُمُوْنَا كَمَا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ
اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ۭ بَلْ زَعَمْتُمْ اَلَّنْ نَّجْعَلَ لَكُمْ مَّوْعِدًا ﴿48﴾ وَوُضِعَ الْكِتٰبُ فَتَرَى
الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ مُشْفِقِيْنَ مِمَّا فِيْهِ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ يٰوَيْلَتَنَا مَالِ هٰذَا الْكِتٰبِ لَا يُغَادِرُ
صَغِيْرَةً وَّلَا كَبِيْرَةً اِلَّآ اَحْصٰىهَا ۚ وَوَجَدُوْا مَا عَمِلُوْا حَاضِرًا ۭ وَلَا يَظْلِمُ
رَبُّكَ اَحَدًا ﴿49﴾ وَاِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةِ اسْجُدُوْا لِاٰدَمَ فَسَجَدُوْٓا اِلَّآ اِبْلِيْسَ ۭ كَانَ
مِنَ الْجِنِّ فَفَسَقَ عَنْ اَمْرِ رَبِّهٖ ۭ اَفَتَتَّخِذُوْنَهٗ وَذُرِّيَّتَهٗٓ اَوْلِيَاۗءَ مِنْ دُوْنِيْ وَ
هُمْ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ ۭ بِئْسَ لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ بَدَلًا ﴿50﴾ مَآ اَشْهَدْتُّهُمْ خَلْقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ
وَلَا خَلْقَ اَنْفُسِهِمْ ۠ وَمَا كُنْتُ مُتَّخِذَ الْمُضِلِّيْنَ عَضُدًا ﴿51﴾ وَيَوْمَ يَقُوْلُ
نَادُوْا شُرَكَاۗءِيَ الَّذِيْنَ زَعَمْتُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيْبُوْا لَهُمْ وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ
مَّوْبِقًا ﴿52﴾ وَرَاَ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ النَّارَ فَظَنُّوْٓا اَنَّهُمْ مُّوَاقِعُوْهَا وَلَمْ يَجِدُوْا عَنْهَا
مَصْرِفًا ﴿53﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا فِيْ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ ۭ وَكَانَ
الْاِنْسَانُ اَكْثَرَ شَيْءٍ جَدَلًا ﴿54﴾ وَمَا مَنَعَ النَّاسَ اَنْ يُّؤْمِنُوْٓا اِذْ جَاۗءَهُمُ الْهُدٰى
وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوْا رَبَّهُمْ اِلَّآ اَنْ تَاْتِيَهُمْ سُنَّةُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ اَوْ يَاْتِيَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ
قُبُلًا ﴿55﴾ وَمَا نُرْسِلُ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ اِلَّا مُبَشِّرِيْنَ وَمُنْذِرِيْنَ ۚ وَيُجَادِلُ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوْا بِهِ الْحَقَّ وَاتَّخَذُوْٓا اٰيٰتِيْ وَمَآ اُنْذِرُوْا هُزُوًا ﴿56﴾ وَ

And O Prophet, bring home to them the reality of this worldly life by a parable. It is like the vegetation of the earth that flourished luxuriantly when We sent down rain water from the sky, but afterwards the same vegetation was turned into chaff, which is blown away by the wind: Allah has power over everything.[41] Likewise this wealth and the offspring are mere transitory adornment of worldly life: in fact the abiding good deeds are best in the sight of your Lord in regard to their end, and hold out for you greater hopes. The only thing, for which you should prepare, is the Day when We will set the mountains in motion,[42] and when you will find the Earth quite naked,[43] and We will muster together all human beings in a way as to leave none at all behind,[44] and all shall be presented before your Lord in rows—Well! you may see that you have come before Us in the same condition in which We created you at first[45]: You were under the delusion that We had not fixed any time of appointment with you—Then the record of deeds shall be set before them. At that time you will see that the criminals will be afraid of the record of their book of life and will say, "Woe to us! What sort of a book this is! It has left nothing unrecorded of our doings, small or great." They will see before them everything, whatsoever they had done, and your Lord will not be unjust to anyone in the least.[46] 45-49

Remember! When We said to the angels, "Bow down before Adam". They bowed down but Iblis did not.[47] He was one of the *jinns*, so he chose the way of disobedience to his Lord's Command.[48] What, would you then discard Me and make him and his offspring your patrons, though they are your enemies? What a bad substitute it is that these workers of iniquity are taking ! 50

I did not call them to witness the creation of the heavens and the earth nor did I associate them in their own creation.[49] It is not for Me to make My supporters those who lead others astray. 51

What they will do on the Day when their Lord will say to them: "Now call all those whom you considered to be My partners."[50] They will call them but they will not respond and come to their help, and We will set a gulf of perdition common between them.[51] All the criminals will see the Fire on that Day and will have a foreboding that they are going to fall into it, but will not find any place of escape. 52-53

54-55 We have devised different ways in the Qur'ān to make the people understand its Message, but man is by nature very contentious. (The question is) what kept them back from accepting guidance when it came before them and from asking the forgiveness of their Lord? It is nothing more than this that they are waiting for the same thing to happen to them that visited the former communities; or that they should see the scourge of Allah coming before them![52]

56 The only mission for which We send the Messengers is to convey good news and stern warning,[53] but the disbelievers employ weapons of falsehood to defeat the Truth, and they hold up to ridicule My servants and the warnings that have been sent to them.

Contd. from p. 27]

41. "Allah has power over everything": He gives life and also death: He causes the rise and the downfall: It is by His command that the seasons change. Therefore, O disbelievers, if you are enjoying prosperity today, you should be under no delusion that this condition will remain for ever. That God, by Whose command these things have been bestowed on you, has the power to snatch away all this by another command.

42. The mountains will begin to move about like clouds when the gravitation of the earth shall be brought to an end. The Qur'ān has described the same thing in XXVII: 88 in this way: "When you see the mountains, you consider them to be firmly fixed, but they shall be floating about like clouds at that time."

43. "You will find the Earth quite naked": You will find no vegetation and no building on it and it will become a barren plain. It is the same thing that has been stated in v. 8 of this Chapter.

44. That is, "We will muster together every human being from the first Man, Adam, to the last one born in the last moment of the Day of Resurrection: even that child which had breathed the first breath after its birth, shall be resurrected and all shall be mustered at one and the same time."

45. This thing will be addressed to those who denied the Hereafter, as if to say, "Well, now you see that the information given by the Prophets has come out to be true. They told you that Allah would bring you to life again as He first brought you out from the wombs of your mothers but you disbelieved in it. Now say whether you have been brought to life for the second time or not."

46. "Your Lord will not be unjust to anyone in the least": Neither will an evil deed not committed by someone have been recorded in his Conduct Register,

nor shall anyone be punished more than one deserved for his crime, nor shall an innocent person be punished at all.

47. The reference to the story of Adam and Iblīs has been made here to warn the erring people of their folly. It is an obvious folly that people should discard their Prophets, who were their well-wishers, and get entangled in the snare set by their eternal enemy, Iblīs, who has been jealous of man ever since he refused to bow down before Adam and became accursed.

48. It was possible for Iblīs to disobey Allah because he was not one of the angels but one of the *jinns*. It must be noted that the Qur'ān is very explicit that the angels are inherently obedient:

(1) "They do not show arrogance; they fear their Lord Who is above them, and do whatever they are bidden." (XVI: 50)

(2) "..... They do not disobey the Command that is given to them by their Lord and do whatever they are bidden to do." (LXVI: 6)

In contrast to the angels, the *jinns* have been, like human beings, given the option to obey or not to obey. Therefore they have been given the power to believe or disbelieve, to obey or not to obey. This thing has been made explicit here by saying that Iblīs was one of the *jinns*, so he deliberately chose the way of disobedience. Incidentally, this verse removes all those misunderstandings that are generally found among the common people that Iblīs was one of the angels and not an ordinary angel but the instructor of the angels. As regards the difficulty that arises because of this statement of the Qur'ān, "When We said to the angels, 'Bow down before Adam. They bowed down but Iblīs did not'," it should be noted that the Command to the angels was meant for all those on the Earth who were under the administration of the angels so that they should also be made submissive to man. Accordingly all these creatures bowed along with the angels but Iblīs refused to bow down along with them.

49. This thing has been asserted to impress on the disbelievers that the satans were not entitled to their submission and worship, for they had no share at all in the creation of the heavens and the earth, nay, they themselves were the creation of Allah: therefore Allah alone was worthy of worship.

50. This theme has already been stated at several places in the Qur'ān. This is to impress that it is *shirk* to discard the commandments and the guidance of Allah and to follow the orders and guidance of any other than Allah, though one may not be professing with one's tongue that there is any partner of Allah: nay, if one might be cursing others but at the same time following their orders instead of

[Contd. on p.34

مَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهٖ فَاَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا وَنَسِيَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدٰهُ ؕ اِنَّا
جَعَلْنَا عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ اَكِنَّةً اَنْ يَّفْقَهُوْهُ وَفِيْٓ اٰذَانِهِمْ وَقْرًا ؕ وَاِنْ تَدْعُهُمْ اِلَى
الْهُدٰى فَلَنْ يَّهْتَدُوْٓا اِذًا اَبَدًا ﴿٥٧﴾ وَرَبُّكَ الْغَفُوْرُ ذُو الرَّحْمَةِ ؕ لَوْ يُؤَاخِذُهُمْ
بِمَا كَسَبُوْا لَعَجَّلَ لَهُمُ الْعَذَابَ ؕ بَلْ لَّهُمْ مَّوْعِدٌ لَّنْ يَّجِدُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ
مَوْئِلًا ﴿٥٨﴾ وَتِلْكَ الْقُرٰٓى اَهْلَكْنٰهُمْ لَمَّا ظَلَمُوْا وَجَعَلْنَا لِمَهْلِكِهِمْ مَّوْعِدًا ﴿٥٩﴾ وَاِذْ
قَالَ مُوْسٰى لِفَتٰىهُ لَآ اَبْرَحُ حَتّٰٓى اَبْلُغَ مَجْمَعَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ اَوْ اَمْضِيَ حُقُبًا ﴿٦٠﴾
فَلَمَّا بَلَغَا مَجْمَعَ بَيْنِهِمَا نَسِيَا حُوْتَهُمَا فَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيْلَهٗ فِي الْبَحْرِ سَرَبًا ﴿٦١﴾ فَلَمَّا
جَاوَزَا قَالَ لِفَتٰىهُ اٰتِنَا غَدَآءَنَا ۫ لَقَدْ لَقِيْنَا مِنْ سَفَرِنَا هٰذَا نَصَبًا ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالَ
اَرَءَيْتَ اِذْ اَوَيْنَآ اِلَى الصَّخْرَةِ فَاِنِّيْ نَسِيْتُ الْحُوْتَ ۫ وَمَآ اَنْسٰنِيْهُ اِلَّا الشَّيْطٰنُ
اَنْ اَذْكُرَهٗ ۚ وَاتَّخَذَ سَبِيْلَهٗ فِي الْبَحْرِ ۖ عَجَبًا ﴿٦٣﴾ قَالَ ذٰلِكَ مَا كُنَّا نَبْغِ ۚ فَارْتَدَّا
عَلٰٓى اٰثَارِهِمَا قَصَصًا ﴿٦٤﴾ فَوَجَدَا عَبْدًا مِّنْ عِبَادِنَآ اٰتَيْنٰهُ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا وَ
عَلَّمْنٰهُ مِنْ لَّدُنَّا عِلْمًا ﴿٦٥﴾ قَالَ لَهٗ مُوْسٰى هَلْ اَتَّبِعُكَ عَلٰٓى اَنْ تُعَلِّمَنِ مِمَّا
عُلِّمْتَ رُشْدًا ﴿٦٦﴾ قَالَ اِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيْعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿٦٧﴾ وَكَيْفَ تَصْبِرُ عَلٰى مَا
لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهٖ خُبْرًا ﴿٦٨﴾ قَالَ سَتَجِدُنِيْٓ اِنْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ صَابِرًا وَّلَآ اَعْصِيْ لَكَ
اَمْرًا ﴿٦٩﴾ قَالَ فَاِنِ اتَّبَعْتَنِيْ فَلَا تَسْـَٔلْنِيْ عَنْ شَيْءٍ حَتّٰٓى اُحْدِثَ لَكَ مِنْهُ
ذِكْرًا ﴿٧٠﴾ فَانْطَلَقَا ۫ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا رَكِبَا فِي السَّفِيْنَةِ خَرَقَهَا ؕ قَالَ اَخَرَقْتَهَا لِتُغْرِقَ
اَهْلَهَا ۚ لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْـًٔا اِمْرًا ﴿٧١﴾ قَالَ اَلَمْ اَقُلْ اِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيْعَ مَعِيَ
صَبْرًا ﴿٧٢﴾ قَالَ لَا تُؤَاخِذْنِيْ بِمَا نَسِيْتُ وَلَا تُرْهِقْنِيْ مِنْ اَمْرِيْ عُسْرًا ﴿٧٣﴾
فَانْطَلَقَا ۫ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا لَقِيَا غُلٰمًا فَقَتَلَهٗ ۙ قَالَ اَقَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا زَكِيَّةًۢ بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ ؕ

Now, who can be more unjust than the person before whom his Lord's Revelations are recited to admonish him, and he turns away from them and forgets the evil end to which he has paved the way with his own hands? As regards those people, who have adopted such an attitude, We have put coverings over their hearts which do not let them listen to the Qur'ân, and We have produced heaviness in their ears. While in this state, they will never be guided aright howsoever you may invite them to the Guidance.[54] 57

Your Lord is very Forgiving and very Merciful: Had He willed to seize them for their evil deeds, He would have sent immediately a scourge on them but He has appointed a time for its fulfilment, and they will find no way out to escape from it.[55] 58

These habitations which were stricken with the scourge are before you:[56] when they committed iniquity We annihilated them, and We had appointed a term for their annihilation. 59

(Now relate to them the event regarding Moses,) when Moses said to his attendant, "I will not bring my journey to an end until I reach the confluence of the two rivers; otherwise I will continue my journey for years."[57] And it so happened that when they reached the confluence, they became neglectful of their fish and it burrowed its way to the river as through a tunnel. When they had passed on further, Moses said to his attendant, "Let us have our breakfast, for we are dead tired because of to-day's journey". The attendant said, "Did you not notice what a strange thing happened when we were taking rest by the side of that rock? I totally forgot about the fish and satan made me so neglectful of it that I could not mention it to you: the fish slipped into the river in a marvellous manner." Moses replied, "That is exactly what we were seeking".[58] Accordingly, they both went back, retracing their footsteps, and there they found one of our servants whom We had blessed with special favour and had given him a special knowledge from Ourselves.[59] 60-65

Moses said to him, "May I accompany you, so that you may teach me also that Wisdom, which has been taught to you?" He answered, "You cannot bear with me, and you cannot have the patience with regard to that matter of which you have no knowledge". Moses said, "If Allah wills, you will find me patient and I will not 66-70

disobey you in any matter". He said, "Well, if you want to accompany me, you should ask me no questions about anything until I myself mention it to you."

71-73 So they proceeded on until they boarded a boat, and that person bored a hole in the boat. Moses cried out, "What! have you bored a hole in it so that all the passengers may be drowned? This is a grievous thing that you have done". He answered, "Didn't I tell you that you would not be able to bear with me patiently"? Moses replied, "Please do not rebuke me for my forgetfulness, and do not take me to task in regard to my conduct".

74 Then they journeyed on until they met a boy and that person slew him. Moses cried out, "Have you killed an innocent person, though he had killed nobody? Surely this is a horrible deed that you have committed".

Contd. from p.31]

Divine Commandments, even then that one shall be guilty of *shirk*. For instance, we see that everyone in this world curses satans but still follows them. According to the Qur'ān, in spite of cursing them, if people follow satans, they shall be guilty of setting up satans as partners with Allah. Though this will not be *shirk* in so many words, it will be tantamount to the practice of *shirk* and the Qur'ān denounces this as *shirk*.

51. Generally the commentators have assigned two meanings to this. The one is the same that we have adopted in our translation and the other is this: "We will cause enmity between them." That is, "Their friendship in this world shall be turned into bitter enmity in the Hereafter."

52. This is to warn the people that the Qur'ān has left no stone unturned in making the Truth plain. It has employed all kinds of arguments, parables, similitudes and used all the possible effective ways to appeal to the heart and the mind of man, and adopted the best possible style. In short, nothing has been left that could persuade the people to accept the Truth. If, in spite of this, they do not accept the truth, it is obvious that they are waiting for God's scourge like the one that visited the former communities to make them realize their error.

53. This verse has two meanings:

(1) We send Our Messengers to forewarn the people before the coming of the judgment of the good results of obedience and the evil consequences of disobedience. But these foolish people are not taking advantage of these

forewarnings and insist on seeing the same evil end from which the Messengers desire to save them.

(2) If they insist on meeting with the scourge, they should not demand this from the Messenger because the Messenger is sent not to bring a scourge but to warn the people beforehand to escape from it.

54. Allah puts a covering over the heart of a person and makes his ears hard of hearing the Truth when he adopts the attitude of contention, dispute, wrangling and argumentation towards the admonition of a well-wisher and tries to defeat the truth with the weapons of falsehood and cunning. Naturally this attitude produces in him obduracy and obstinacy so that he turns a deaf ear towards guidance, and is unwilling to realize his error before seeing his evil end. For such people pay no heed to admonition and warning and insist on falling into the abyss of perdition: then and then alone they are convinced that it was perdition towards which they were rushing headlong.

55. This is to warn the foolish people that they should not be deluded by the respite that is given to them and presume that they will never be taken to task whatever they may go on doing. They forget that Allah gives them respite because He is Forgiving and Forbearing and does not punish the evil-doers on the spot, for His Mercy demands that the evil-doers should be given respite so that they may mend their ways.

56. The ruined habitations were of Sabā, Thamūd, Midian and the people of Prophet Lot, which were visited by the Quraish during their trade journeys, and which were quite well known to other Arabs also.

57. Though this story was told in answer to the question of the disbelievers, it has been used to impress a very important truth on the minds of both the disbelievers and the believers. It is this: those people who draw their conclusions only from the seeming aspects of events, make a very serious error in their deductions, for they only see what is apparent and do not go deep into the Divine Wisdom that underlies them. When they daily see the prosperity of the tyrants and the afflictions of the innocent people, the affluence of the disobedient people and the indigence of the obedient people, the enjoyments of the wicked people and the adversity of the virtuous people, they get involved in mental conflicts, nay, they become victims of misunderstandings because they do not comprehend the wisdom behind them. The disbelievers and the tyrants conclude from this that the world is functioning without any moral laws and has no sovereign, and, if there is one, he must be senseless and unjust: therefore one may do whatever one desires for there is none to whom one shall be accountable. On the other hand, when the believers see those things, they become so frustrated and disheartened that sometimes their faiths are put to a very hard trial. It was to

unravel the wisdom behind this mystery that Allah slightly lifted the curtain from the Reality governing His factory, so that Moses might see the wisdom behind the events that are happening day and night and how their seeming aspect is quite different from the Reality.

Now let us consider the question: when and where did this event take place? The Qur'an says nothing about this. There is a tradition related by 'Aufi in which he cites a saying of Ibn 'Abbās to this effect: "This event happened after the destruction of Pharaoh when Prophet Moses had settled his people in Egypt". But this is not supported by other more authentic traditions from Ibn 'Abbās which have been cited in the collection of Bukhāri and other books of Traditions, nor is there any other source which may prove that Prophet Moses ever settled in Egypt after the destruction of Pharaoh. On the contrary, the Qur'ān says explicitly that Prophet Moses passed the whole of his life after Exodus from Egypt in the desert (Sinai and *At-Tih).* Therefore the tradition from 'Aufi cannot be accepted. However, if we consider the details of this story, two things are quite obvious: (1) These things would have been demonstrated to Prophet Moses in the earlier period of his Prophethood because such things are needed in the beginning of Prophethood for the teaching and training of the Prophets. (2) As this story has been cited to comfort the Believers of Makkah, it can be reasonably concluded that these demonstrations would have been shown to Prophet Moses, when the Israelites were encountering the same conditions as the Muslims of Makkah did at the time of the revelation of this Sūrah. On the basis of these two things, we are of the opinion (and correct Knowledge is with Allah alone) that this event relates to the period, when the persecution of the Israelites by Pharaoh was at its height and, like the chiefs of the Quraish, Pharaoh and his courtiers were deluded by delay in the scourge that there was no power above them to take them to task, and like the persecuted Muslims of Makkah, the persecuted Muslims of Egypt were crying in their agony, as if to say, "Our Lord! how long will the prosperity of these tyrants and our adversity continue ?" So much so that Prophet Moses himself cried out: ".... Our Lord, Thou hast bestowed on Pharaoh and his nobles splendour and possessions in the worldly life; O our Lord, hast Thou done this that they might lead astray the people from Thy Way?..." (X: 88)

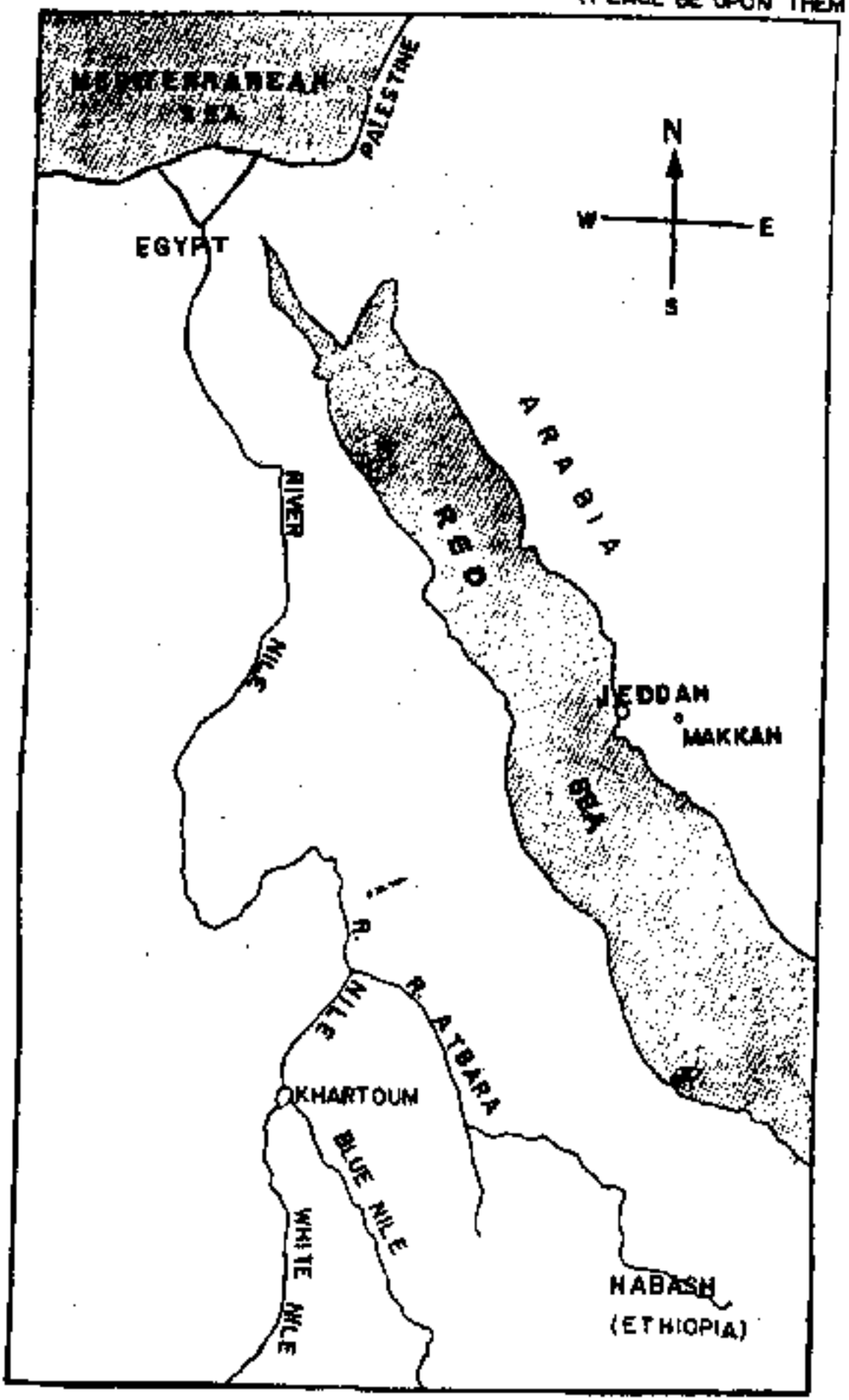
If our conjecture is correct, then it may be concluded that probably this event took place during Prophet Moses' journey to Sudan, and by the confluence of the rivers is meant the site of the present city of Khartum where the Blue Nile and the White Nile meet together.

The Bible does not say anything about this event but the Talmud does relate this though it assigns it to Rabbi Jochanan, the son of Levi, instead of to Prophet Moses, and according to it the other person was Elijah who had been

MAP No.1

MAP RELATING OF THE STORY OF KHIDR AND MOSES

(PEACE BE UPON THEM



taken up alive to heaven and joined with the angels for the purpose of the administration of the world. *(The Talmud Selections* by H. Polano, pp. 313-16).

It is just possible that like the events, which happened before the Exodus, this event also might not have remained intact but during the passage of centuries changes and alterations might have been made in it. But it is a pity that some Muslims have been so influenced by the Talmud that they opine that in this story Moses does not refer to Prophet Moses but to some other person bearing the same name. They forget that every tradition of the Talmud is not necessarily correct, nor have we any reason to suppose that the Qur'ān has related the story concerning some unknown person bearing the name "Moses". Above all, when we learn from an authentic Tradition related by Ubayy-bin-Ka'ab that the Holy Prophet himself made it clear that in this story, by Moses is meant Prophet Moses, there is absolutely no reason why any Muslim should consider any statement of the Talmud at all.

The Orientalists have, as usual, tried to make a "research" into the "sources" of this story and have pointed out that "The Kuranic story may be traced back to three main sources:"(1) The Gilgamesh Epic, (2) The Alexander Romance and (3) The Jewish Legend of Elijah and Rabbi Joshua ben Levi *(Encyclopaedia of Islam* new edition and *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* under the heading Al-Khaḍir). This is because these malicious "scholars" decide beforehand that their "scientific research" must lead to the conclusion that the Qur'ān is not a revealed book: therefore they have, anyhow or other, to produce a proof that whatever Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) has presented as Revelation, has been plagiarized from such and such "sources". In this these people brazenfacedly use "facts" and "quotations" so cunningly and cleverly as to achieve their mean end and one begins to have nausea at their "research". If that is research what these bigoted forgers make, then one is compelled to curse their "knowledge and research".

We ask them to answer our questions in order to expose their "research":

(1) What proof have you got to make the claim that the Qur'ān has based a certain statement on the contents of a couple of ancient books ? Obviously it will not be "research" to build this claim on the scant basis that a certain statement made in the Qurān is similar to the one found in these books.

(2) Do you possess any knowledge that at the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān there was a library at Makkah from which the Holy Prophet collected material for the Qur'ān? This question is pertinent because if a list were to be made of the numerous books in different languages, which you allege were sources of the stories and statements contained in the Qur'ān, it will become

[Contd. on p.40

لَقَدْ جِئْتَ شَيْـًٔا نُّكْرًا ﴿74﴾

الجزء ١٦

قَالَ اَلَمْ اَقُلْ اِنَّكَ لَنْ تَسْتَطِيْعَ مَعِيَ صَبْرًا ﴿75﴾ قَالَ اِنْ سَاَلْتُكَ

عَنْ شَيْءٍ بَعْدَهَا فَلَا تُصٰحِبْنِيْ ۚ قَدْ بَلَغْتَ مِنْ لَّدُنِّيْ عُذْرًا ﴿76﴾ فَانْطَلَقَا ۫ حَتّٰۤى

اِذَاۤ اَتَيَاۤ اَهْلَ قَرْيَةِ ِۨاسْتَطْعَمَاۤ اَهْلَهَا فَاَبَوْا اَنْ يُّضَيِّفُوْهُمَا فَوَجَدَا فِيْهَا جِدَارًا

يُّرِيْدُ اَنْ يَّنْقَضَّ فَاَقَامَهٗ ۭ قَالَ لَوْ شِئْتَ لَتَّخَذْتَ عَلَيْهِ اَجْرًا ﴿77﴾ قَالَ هٰذَا

فِرَاقُ بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنِكَ ۚ سَاُنَبِّئُكَ بِتَاْوِيْلِ مَا لَمْ تَسْتَطِعْ عَّلَيْهِ صَبْرًا ﴿78﴾ اَمَّا

السَّفِيْنَةُ فَكَانَتْ لِمَسٰكِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ فِي الْبَحْرِ فَاَرَدْتُّ اَنْ اَعِيْبَهَا وَكَانَ

وَرَآءَهُمْ مَّلِكٌ يَّاْخُذُ كُلَّ سَفِيْنَةٍ غَصْبًا ﴿79﴾ وَاَمَّا الْغُلٰمُ فَكَانَ اَبَوٰهُ مُؤْمِنَيْنِ

فَخَشِيْنَاۤ اَنْ يُّرْهِقَهُمَا طُغْيَانًا وَّكُفْرًا ﴿80﴾ فَاَرَدْنَاۤ اَنْ يُّبْدِلَهُمَا رَبُّهُمَا خَيْرًا مِّنْهُ

زَكٰوةً وَّاَقْرَبَ رُحْمًا ﴿81﴾ وَاَمَّا الْجِدَارُ فَكَانَ لِغُلٰمَيْنِ يَتِيْمَيْنِ فِي الْمَدِيْنَةِ وَ

كَانَ تَحْتَهٗ كَنْزٌ لَّهُمَا وَكَانَ اَبُوْهُمَا صَالِحًا ۚ فَاَرَادَ رَبُّكَ اَنْ يَّبْلُغَاۤ اَشُدَّهُمَا

وَيَسْتَخْرِجَا كَنْزَهُمَا ۖ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ ۚ وَمَا فَعَلْتُهٗ عَنْ اَمْرِيْ ۭ ذٰلِكَ تَاْوِيْلُ

مَا لَمْ تَسْطِعْ عَّلَيْهِ صَبْرًا ﴿82﴾ وَيَسْـَٔلُوْنَكَ عَنْ ذِي الْقَرْنَيْنِ ۭ قُلْ سَاَتْلُوْا عَلَيْكُمْ

مِّنْهُ ذِكْرًا ﴿83﴾ اِنَّا مَكَّنَّا لَهٗ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ سَبَبًا ﴿84﴾ فَاَتْبَعَ

سَبَبًا ﴿85﴾ حَتّٰۤى اِذَا بَلَغَ مَغْرِبَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا تَغْرُبُ فِيْ عَيْنٍ حَمِئَةٍ وَّوَجَدَ

عِنْدَهَا قَوْمًا ۭ قُلْنَا يٰذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ اِمَّاۤ اَنْ تُعَذِّبَ وَاِمَّاۤ اَنْ تَتَّخِذَ فِيْهِمْ

حُسْنًا ﴿86﴾ قَالَ اَمَّا مَنْ ظَلَمَ فَسَوْفَ نُعَذِّبُهٗ ثُمَّ يُرَدُّ اِلٰى رَبِّهٖ فَيُعَذِّبُهٗ عَذَابًا

نُّكْرًا ﴿87﴾ وَاَمَّا مَنْ اٰمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَهٗ جَزَآءَ ِۨالْحُسْنٰى ۚ وَسَنَقُوْلُ لَهٗ

مِنْ اَمْرِنَا يُسْرًا ﴿88﴾ ثُمَّ اَتْبَعَ سَبَبًا ﴿89﴾ حَتّٰۤى اِذَا بَلَغَ مَطْلِعَ الشَّمْسِ وَجَدَهَا

He answered, "Didn't I tell you that you would not be able to bear with me patiently"? Moses said, "If after this, I ask anything of you, you may not let me accompany you. Well, now I have afforded you with an excuse from myself". 75-76

Then they travelled on until they reached a certain habitation and requested its inhabitants to give them some food but they declined to entertain them. There they saw a wall which was about to fall down. That person set it up again. Moses said, "Had you wanted, you could have demanded payment for your labour". The other said, "That will do: we must now part company. Now I explain those things about which you could not keep patience. As regards the boat, it belonged to a few poor persons who toiled on the river. I intended to damage it because further on there was the territory of a king who forcibly seized every boat. As for the boy, his parents were true Believers and we feared lest he should trouble them with his rebellion and unbelief. Therefore we wished that in his stead their Lord may grant them another child who may be more righteous and filial. As regards the wall, it belonged to two orphan boys, who reside in this city. A treasure for them lies buried under this wall. As their father was a righteous man, your Lord willed that when these children attain their maturity, they should dig out their treasure. All this has been done as a mercy from your Lord: I have not done anything of my own authority. This is the interpretation of those things about which you could not keep patience."[60] 77-82

And O Muhammad, they ask you about Ẓul-Qarnain[61]: tell them, "I am going to recite to you an account of him"[62] 83

We had established his power on the Earth and had provided him with every kind of ways and means. At first, he made preparations for an expedition (to the West and marched on) till he reached the limit where the sun set,[63] and found it setting in black waters,[64] and there he saw a people. We said to him, "O Ẓul-Qarnain! you have the power to punish them and also the option to treat them generously".[65] He said, "We will punish that one of them who will commit iniquity: then he shall be returned to his Lord and He will inflict on him a grievous torment: And as for the one, who will believe and do righteous deeds, there is a generous recompense and 84-88

We will prescribe for him easy tasks."

Contd. from p.37]

long enough for a big library. Have you got any proof that Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) had arranged for such translators as translated into Arabic those books from different languages for his use? If it is not so and your allegation is based on a couple of journeys which the Holy Prophet made outside Arabia, a question arises: How many books did the Holy Prophet copy or commit to memory during these trade journeys before his Prophethood? And how is it that even a day before he claimed to be a Prophet, no sign at all was displayed in his conversation that he had gathered such information as was revealed in the Qur'ān afterwards?

(3) How is it then that the contemporary disbelievers of Makkah and the Jews and the Christians, who like you, were always in search of such a proof, could not put forward even a single instance of plagiarism? They had a good reason to produce an instance of this because they were being challenged over and over again to refute the claim that the Qur'ān was a revealed book and it had no other source than Divine Knowledge and that if they said that it was a human work, they were to prove this by bringing the like of it. Though this challenge had broken the back of the contemporary opponents of Islam, they could not point out even a single plausible source that might prove reasonably that the Qur'an was based on it. In the light of these facts one may ask, "Why had the contemporaries of the Holy Prophet failed in their research and how have the opponents of Islam succeeded in their attempt today after the passage of more than a thousand years?"

(4) The last and the most important question is: Does it not show that it is bigotry and malice that has misled the opponents of Islam to discard the possibility that the Qur'ān may be a revealed book of Allah and to concentrate all their efforts to prove that it is not so at all ? The fact that its stories are similar to those contained in the former books, could be considered equally in this light that the Qur'ān was a revealed book and was relating them in order to correct those errors that had crept into them during the passage of time. Why should their research be confined to prove that those books are the real source of the stories of the Qur'ān and not to consider the other possibility that the Qur'ān itself was a revealed book?

An impartial person who will consider these questions will inevitably arrive at the conclusion that the "research" which the orientalists have presented in the name of "knowledge" is not worth any serious consideration.

58. That is, "The same was the sign of the place of our destination". This shows that Prophet Moses had taken this journey at Allah's behest to meet His Servant. He had been told that he would meet the Servant at the place where the fish would disappear.

59. The name of this Servant has been stated to be "Khiḍr" in all the authentic books of traditions. Thus there is no reason why it should be considered at all that his name was Elijah, as some people have asserted under the influence of the Israelite traditions. Their assertion is incorrect not only because it contradicts the assertion of the Holy Prophet but it is also absurd because Prophet Elijah was born several hundred years after Prophet Moses.

Though the Qur'ān does not mention the name of the attendant of Prophet Moses, according to some traditions he was Joshua, the son of Nun, who succeeded him.

60. In connection with this story, a very hard problem arises to which an answer must be found: Two of the three things done by Ḥaḍrat Khiḍr are obviously against those commandments of the Law which have always been in force since the creation of man. No law allows anyone the right to damage the property of another and kill an innocent person. So much so that if a man were to know by inspiration that some usurper would illegally seize a certain boat, and that a certain boy would be involved in a rebellion and unbelief, even then no law, sent down by Allah, makes it lawful that one should bore a hole in the boat and kill the innocent boy by virtue of one's inspiration. If in answer to this, one were to say that Ḥaḍrat Khiḍr committed these two acts by the Commands of Allah, this does not solve the problem, for the question is not this, "By whose command did Ḥaḍrat Khiḍr commit these acts"? but it is this: "What was the nature of these commands"? This is important because Ḥaḍrat Khiḍr did these acts in accordance with Divine Command, for he himself says that these acts of his were not done by his own authority, but were moved by the mercy of Allah, and Allah Himself has testified this by saying: "We gave him a special knowledge from Ourselves". Thus it is beyond any doubt that these acts were done by the Command of Allah, but the question about the nature of the command remains there, for it is obvious that these commands were not legal because it is not allowed by any Divine Law, and the fundamental principles of the Qur'ān also do not allow that a person should kill another person without any proof of his guilt. Therefore we shall have to admit that these commands belonged to one of those decrees of Allah in accordance with which one sick person recovers, while another dies: one becomes prosperous and the other is ruined. If the Commands given to Ḥaḍrat Khiḍr were of this nature, then one must come to the conclusion that Ḥaḍrat Khiḍr was an angel (or some other kind of Allah's creation) who is not bound by the Divine Law prescribed for

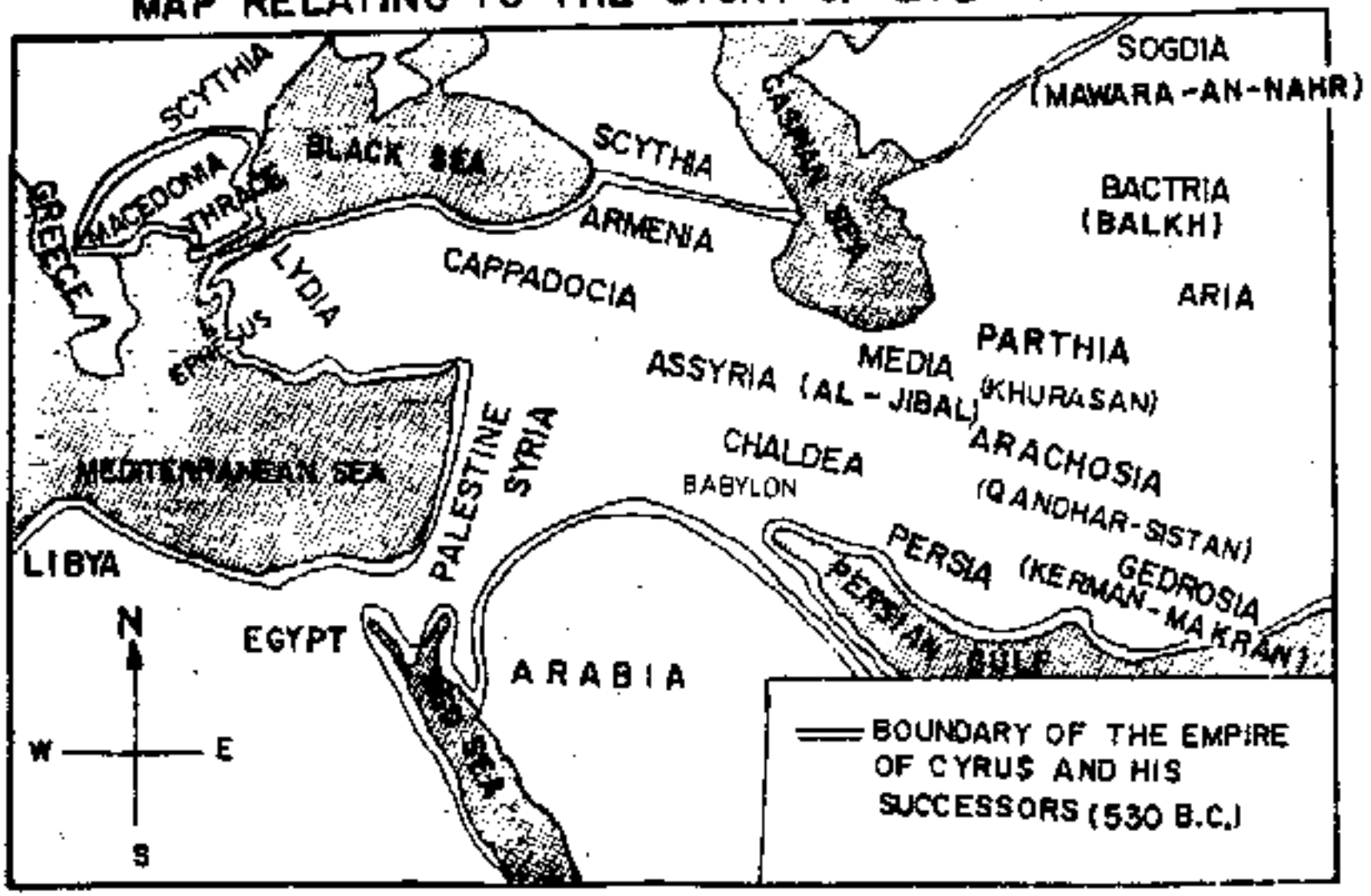
human beings, for such commands as have no legal aspect, can be addressed to angels only. This is because the question of the lawful or the unlawful cannot arise about them: they obey the Commands of Allah without having any personal power. In contrast to them, a man shall be guilty of a sin whether he does any such thing inadvertently by intuition or by some inspiration, if his act goes against some Divine Commandment. This is because a man is bound to abide by Divine Commandments as a man, and there is no room whatsoever in the Divine Law that an act may become lawful for a man merely because he had received an instruction by inspiration and had been informed in a secret way of the wisdom of that unlawful act.

The above-mentioned principle has been unanimously accepted by scholars of the Divine Law and the leaders of Sufism. 'Allāmah Ālūsī has cited in detail the sayings of 'Abdul Wahhāb Shi'irānī, Muḥy-ud-Dīn ibn-'Arabī, Mujaddid Alf Thānī, Shaikh 'Abdul-Qādir Jīlānī, Junaid Baghdādī, Sirrī Saqti, Abul-Hussain An-nūrī, Abū Sa'īd-al-Kharrāz, Aḥmad ud-Dainaurī and Imām Ghazzālī to this effect that it is not lawful even for a sūfi to act in accordance with that inspiration of his own which goes against a fundamental of law. *(Rūḥ-ul-Ma'ānī*, Vol. XVI, pp. 16-18). That is why we have come to the conclusion that Ḥaḍrat Khiḍr must be an angel, or some other kind of Allah's creation, exempted from human law, for he could not be the only exception to the above-mentioned formula. Therefore we inevitably come to the conclusion that he was one of those Servants of Allah who act in accordance with the will of Allah and not in accordance with the Divine Law prescribed for human beings.

We would have accepted the theory that Ḥaḍrat Khiḍr was a human being, if the Qur'ān had plainly asserted that the "servant" to whom Prophet Moses was sent for training, was a man, but the Qur'ān does not specifically say that he was a human being but says that he was "one of Our Servants", which does not show that he was necessarily a human being. Besides this, there is no Tradition which specifically says that Ḥaḍrat Khiḍr was a human being. In the authentic traditions related by Sa'īd bin Jubair, Ibn 'Abbās, Ubāyy bin Ka'ab from the Holy Prophet, the Arabic word, رَجُل (*rajul*) has been used for Ḥaḍrat Khiḍr, which though generally used for human beings, is not exclusively used for human beings. In the Holy Qur'ān itself, this word has been used for *jinns* also (LXXII: 6). It is also obvious that when a *jinn* or an angel or an invisible being will come before a human being, he will surely come in human shape and, in that form, he will be called a *bashar* (man), just like the angel who came before Mary in the shape of a human being (XIX: 17). Thus the word *rajul*, used for Ḥaḍrat Khiḍr in the above-mentioned Tradition by the Holy Prophet, does not necessarily mean that he was a human being. Therefore we are quite justified in the light of the above discussion to believe that Ḥaḍrat Khiḍr was one of the angels or some other kind of Allah's

MAP. No. 2

MAP RELATING TO THE STORY OF ZUL-QARNAIN



creation who is not bound by the Divine Law prescribed for human beings. Some of the former scholars of the Qur'ān have also expressed the same opinion which has been cited by Ibn Kathīr in his Commentary on the authority of Māwardī.

61. It is quite obvious that the conjunction *"wao"* joins this story with the previous story of Khiḍr. Thus it is a self-evident proof that the previous two stories of the "Sleepers of the Cave" and "Moses and Khiḍr" were also related in answer to the queries of the disbelievers of Makkah who, in consultation with the people of the Book, had put these questions to Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) as a test of his Prophethood.

62. The identification of Ẓul-Qarnain has been a controversial matter from the earliest times. In general the commentators have been of the opinion that he was Alexander the Great but the characteristics of Ẓul-Qarnain described in the Qur'ān are not applicable to him. However, now the commentators are inclined to believe that Ẓul-Qarnain was Cyrus, an ancient king of Iran. We are also of the opinion that probably Ẓul-Qarnain was Cyrus, but the historical facts, which have come to light up to this time, are not sufficient to make any categorical assertion.

Now let us consider the characteristics of Ẓul-Qarnain in the light of his story as given in the Qurān:

(1) The title Ẓul-Qarnain ("The Two-Horned") should have been quite familiar to the Jews, for it was at their instigation that the disbelievers of Makkah put this question to the Holy Prophet. Therefore we must turn to the Jewish literature in order to learn who was the person known as "The Two-Horned" or which was the kingdom known as "The Two-Horned."

(2) Ẓul-Qarnain must have been a great ruler and a great conqueror whose conquests might have spread from the East to the West and on the third side to the North or to the South. Before the revelation of the Qur'ān there had been several persons, who were such great conquerors. So we must confine our research for the other characteristics of Ẓul-Qarnain to one of these persons.

(3) This title should be applicable to such a ruler who might have constructed a strong wall across a mountain pass to protect his kingdom from the incursions of Gog and Magog. In order to investigate this thing, we will have to determine as to who were Gog and Magog. We will also have to find out when such a wall was built and by whom and to which territory it was adjacent.

(4) Besides possessing the above-mentioned characteristics, he should also be a God-worshipper and a just ruler, for the Qur'ān has brought into prominence these characteristics more than anything else.

[Contd. on p.46

تَظْلُعُ عَلٰى قَوْمٍ لَّمْ نَجْعَلْ لَّهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهَا سِتْرًا ﴿٩٠﴾ كَذٰلِكَ ۚ وَقَدْ اَحَطْنَا بِمَا
لَدَيْهِ خُبْرًا ﴿٩١﴾ ثُمَّ اَتْبَعَ سَبَبًا ﴿٩٢﴾ حَتّٰۤى اِذَا بَلَغَ بَيْنَ السَّدَّيْنِ وَجَدَ مِنْ دُوْنِهِمَا
قَوْمًا ۙ لَّا يَكَادُوْنَ يَفْقَهُوْنَ قَوْلًا ﴿٩٣﴾ قَالُوْا يٰذَا الْقَرْنَيْنِ اِنَّ يَاْجُوْجَ وَمَاْجُوْجَ
مُفْسِدُوْنَ فِى الْاَرْضِ فَهَلْ نَجْعَلُ لَكَ خَرْجًا عَلٰۤى اَنْ تَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَهُمْ
سَدًّا ﴿٩٤﴾ قَالَ مَا مَكَّنِّىْ فِيْهِ رَبِّىْ خَيْرٌ فَاَعِيْنُوْنِىْ بِقُوَّةٍ اَجْعَلْ بَيْنَكُمْ وَ
بَيْنَهُمْ رَدْمًا ﴿٩٥﴾ اٰتُوْنِىْ زُبَرَ الْحَدِيْدِ ؕ حَتّٰۤى اِذَا سَاوٰى بَيْنَ الصَّدَفَيْنِ قَالَ
انْفُخُوْا ؕ حَتّٰۤى اِذَا جَعَلَهٗ نَارًا ۙ قَالَ اٰتُوْنِىْۤ اُفْرِغْ عَلَيْهِ قِطْرًا ﴿٩٦﴾ فَمَا اسْطَاعُوْۤا اَنْ
يَّظْهَرُوْهُ وَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوْا لَهٗ نَقْبًا ﴿٩٧﴾ قَالَ هٰذَا رَحْمَةٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّىْ ۚ فَاِذَا جَآءَ وَعْدُ
رَبِّىْ جَعَلَهٗ دَكَّآءَ ۚ وَكَانَ وَعْدُ رَبِّىْ حَقًّا ﴿٩٨﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَّمُوْجُ
فِىْ بَعْضٍ وَّنُفِخَ فِى الصُّوْرِ فَجَمَعْنٰهُمْ جَمْعًا ﴿٩٩﴾ وَّعَرَضْنَا جَهَنَّمَ يَوْمَئِذٍ
لِّلْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَرْضَا ﴿١٠٠﴾ الَّذِيْنَ كَانَتْ اَعْيُنُهُمْ فِىْ غِطَآءٍ عَنْ ذِكْرِىْ وَكَانُوْا لَا
يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ سَمْعًا ﴿١٠١﴾ اَفَحَسِبَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْۤا اَنْ يَّتَّخِذُوْا عِبَادِىْ مِنْ دُوْنِىْۤ اَوْلِيَآءَ ؕ
اِنَّاۤ اَعْتَدْنَا جَهَنَّمَ لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ نُزُلًا ﴿١٠٢﴾ قُلْ هَلْ نُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِالْاَخْسَرِيْنَ اَعْمَالًا ﴿١٠٣﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ
ضَلَّ سَعْيُهُمْ فِى الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ يَحْسَبُوْنَ اَنَّهُمْ يُحْسِنُوْنَ صُنْعًا ﴿١٠٤﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ
الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ وَلِقَآئِهٖ فَحَبِطَتْ اَعْمَالُهُمْ فَلَا نُقِيْمُ لَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ
وَزْنًا ﴿١٠٥﴾ ذٰلِكَ جَزَآؤُهُمْ جَهَنَّمُ بِمَا كَفَرُوْا وَاتَّخَذُوْۤا اٰيٰتِىْ وَرُسُلِىْ هُزُوًا ﴿١٠٦﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنّٰتُ الْفِرْدَوْسِ نُزُلًا ﴿١٠٧﴾ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا لَا يَبْغُوْنَ
عَنْهَا حِوَلًا ﴿١٠٨﴾ قُلْ لَّوْ كَانَ الْبَحْرُ مِدَادًا لِّكَلِمٰتِ رَبِّىْ لَنَفِدَ الْبَحْرُ قَبْلَ اَنْ تَنْفَدَ
كَلِمٰتُ رَبِّىْ وَلَوْ جِئْنَا بِمِثْلِهٖ مَدَدًا ﴿١٠٩﴾ قُلْ اِنَّمَاۤ اَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوْحٰۤى اِلَىَّ اَنَّمَاۤ اِلٰهُكُمْ

Then he made preparations (for another expedition and marched on) till he reached the limit where the sun rose. There he saw the sun rising on a people, whom We had not given any shelter from sun shine.[66] This was their condition and We know well whatever Zul-Qarnain possessed. 89-91

Then he made preparations (for another expedition and marched on) till he reached between two mountains,[67] where he found a people who could hardly understand any language.[68] They said, "O Zul-Qarnain, Gog and Magog[69] spread chaos in this land; should we then pay a tribute to you so that you may build a bulwark between us and them ?" He said, "What my Allah has granted me is more than enough. You should help me only with manual labour and I will build a barrier between you and them.[70] Come, bring sheets of iron for me. "When he had filled the space between the two mountains, he said to the people, "Now, ply your bellows." They did so till that (iron-wall) became redhot and he said, "Now let me pour molten brass upon it". This was such a barrier that Gog and Magog could not scale over it, nor were they able to dig through it. Zul-Qarnain said, "This is a mercy from my Lord; but when the time of my Lord's promise shall come, He will level it to dust[71] and the promise of my Lord is true."[72] 92-98

And on that Day,[73] We will let loose the people to come close together tumultuously (like the waves of an ocean), and the trumpet shall be blown, and We will gather together all mankind. On that Day Hell shall be brought before the unbelievers who had become blind to My admonition and turned a deaf ear to it. 99-101

What,[74] do these people, who have disbelieved, presume that they would make My servants their helpers beside Me[75] ? We have prepared Hell for the hospitality of such people. 102

O Muhammad, say to them, "Should We tell you who are the most unsuccessful people and miserable failures in regard to their deeds? They are those, whose endeavours, in the worldly life, had all gone astray from the Right Way [76] but all along they were under the delusion that everything they were doing, was rightly directed: those are the people who rejected the Signs of their Lord and did not believe that they would ever go before Him. Therefore all their deeds were lost, for We will assign no weight to them on the Day of 103-108

Resurrection.[77] Their recompense is Hell for the disbelief they showed and for the mockery they adopted in regard to My Signs and My Messengers. However, for the hospitality of those people who did righteous deeds, there will be gardens of Paradise wherein they will abide for ever and they will never desire to go anywhere out of them."[78]

109 O Muhammad, say to them, "If the waters of the ocean were to become ink to write the Words[79] of my Lord, it would exhaust but the Words of my Lord will not exhaust: nay, even if We brought as much ink again, it will not suffice for that".

Contd. from p.43]

The first of these characteristics is easily applicable to Cyrus, for according to the Bible Prophet Daniel saw in his vision that the united kingdom of Media and Persia was like a two-horned ram before the rise of the Greeks. (Dan. 8: 3, 20). The Jews had a very high opinion of "The Two-horned" one, because it was his invasion which brought about the downfall of the kingdom of Babylon and the liberation of the Israelites (Please also refer to E.N. 8 of Chapter XVII).

The second characteristic is applicable to him to a great extent but not completely. Though his conquests spread to Syria and Asia Minor in the West and to Bākhtar (Balkh) in the East, there is no trace of any of his great expeditions to the North or to the South, whereas the Qur'ān makes an explicit mention of his third expedition. Nevertheless, this third expedition is not wholly out of question for history tells us that his kingdom extended to Caucasia in the North. As regards Gog and Magog, it has been nearly established that they were the wild tribes of Central Asia who were known by different names: Tartars, Mongols, Huns and Scythians,who had been making inroads on settled kingdoms and empires from very ancient times. It is also known that strong bulwarks had been built in southern regions of Caucasia, though it has not been as yet historically established that these were built by Cyrus.

As regards the last characteristic, Cyrus is the only known conqueror among the ancient rulers, to whom this may be applicable, for even his enemies have been full of praise for him for his justice, and, Ezrā, a book of the Bible, asserts that he was a God-worshipper and a God-fearing king who set free the Israelites because of his God-worship, and ordered that the Temple of Solomon should be rebuilt for the worship of Allah, Who has no partner.

In the light of the above, we admit that of all the conquerors, who had passed away before the revelation of the Qur'ān, Cyrus alone is the one to whom

the characteristics of "Ẓul-Qarnain" are most applicable, but we need more evidence to determine specifically that Cyrus is definitely "Ẓul-Qarnain." Anyhow, there is no other conqueror to whom the characteristics stated in the Qur'ān are as much applicable as to Cyrus.

Historically it is enough to say that Cyrus was a Persian ruler, whose rise began about 549 B.C. In a few years, he conquered the kingdom of Media and Lydia and afterwards conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. After this no powerful kingdom was left to oppose him. His conquests extended to Sind and the territory known as Turkistan on one side, and to Egypt and Libya and to Thrace and Macedonia and to Caucasia and Khawarzam in the North. In fact, the whole civilized world was under his sway.

63. "The limit where the sun set" does not mean the "place" of the setting of the sun.

According to Ibn Kathīr, it means that he marched to the West conquering one country after the other till he reached the last boundary of the land, beyond which there was ocean.

64. "He found the sun setting in black muddy waters of the sea": if Ẓul-Qarnain was Cyrus, then that place would be the western limit of Asia Minor and the "black waters" would be the Aegean Sea. This interpretation is supported by the use of the word "*'ain*" instead of "*baḥr*" in the Qur'ān.

65. "We said to him" does not necessarily mean that Allah directly revealed to him these words, and that Ẓul-Qarnain was a Prophet or was the one who received inspiration from Allah, and the same is the reasonable conjecture. This concerns the time when Ẓul-Qarnain had taken possession of the land as a conqueror and the conquered people were utterly at your mercy. Then Allah posed a question before his conscience, as if to say, "Now is the time of your trial. These people are utterly at your mercy, and you have the option either to behave unjustly towards them or to treat them generously."

66. That is, "When he advanced towards the East, conquering one country after the other, he reached a territory where the limits of the civilized world had come to an end and beyond which was the territory of barbaric people, who had no shelter at all of tents or buildings."

67. The "two mountains" must have been parts of that mountain range which runs between the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea (as stated in v. 96). This must be so because beyond them was the territory of Gog and Magog.

68. That is, "It was difficult to communicate with them: their language was almost foreign to Ẓul-Qarnain and his companions, and, as they were quite

barbaric, none could understand their language, nor were they acquainted with any foreign language."

69. As has already been pointed out in E.N. 62, Gog and Magog were the wild tribes of North Eastern Asia which, from the very early times had been making inroads on settled kingdoms and empires in Asia and Europe and ravaging them. According to Genesis (Chapter 10), they were the descendants of Japheth, the son of Noah, and the Muslim historians have also accepted this. And according to the book of Ezekiel (Chapters 38, 39), they inhabited the territories of Meshech (Moscow) and Tubal (Tubalsek). According to the Israelite historian Josephus, they were the Scythians and their territory spread to the north and the east of the Black Sea. According to Jerome, Magog inhabited the territory to the north of Caucasia near the Caspian Sea.

70. That is, "As a ruler it is my duty to protect you from the ravages of your enemies: therefore it is not lawful for me to levy any extra taxes on you for this purpose. The treasury that Allah has placed in my custody, suffices for this purpose. You shall, however, have to help me with your manual labour."

71. That is, "Though I have built a very strong iron-wall, as far as it was possible for me, it is not ever-lasting, for it will last only as long as Allah wills, and will fall down to pieces when the time of my Lord's promise shall come. Then no power in the world shall be able to keep it safe and secure."

As regards the time of Allah's promise, it has two meanings: (1) It may mean the time of the destruction of the wall, and (2) it may also mean the time of the death and destruction of everything destined by Allah at the end of the world i.e., the Hour of Resurrection.

Some people have entertained the misunderstanding that the wall attributed here to Zul-Qarnain refers to the famous Wall of China, whereas this wall was built between Derbent and Dar'yal, two cities of Daghestan in the Caucasus, the land that lies between the Black Sea and the Caspian. There are high mountains between the Black Sea and Dar'yal having deep gorges which cannot allow large armies to pass through them. Between Derbent and Dar'yal, however, there are no such mountains and the passes also are wide and passable. In ancient times savage hordes from the north invaded and ravaged southern lands through these passes and the Persian rulers who were scared of them had to build a strong wall, 50 miles long, 29 feet high and 10 feet wide, for fortification purposes, ruins of which can still be seen. Though it has not yet been established historically who built this wall in the beginning, the Muslim historians and geographers assign it to Zul-Qarnain because its remains correspond with the description of it given in the Qur'an.

Ibn Jarīr Ṭabari and Ibn Kathīr have recorded the event, and Yaqūt has mentioned it in his *Mu'jam-ul-Buldān* that when after the conquest of Azerbaijan, Ḥadrat 'Umar sent Surāqah bin 'Amr, in 22 A.H. on an expedition to Derbent, the latter appointed 'Abdur Rehmān bin Rabī'ah as the chief of his vanguard. When 'Abdur Rehmān entered Armenia, the ruler Shehrbrāz surrendered without fighting. Then when 'Abdur Rehmān wanted to advance towards Derbent, Shehrbrāz informed him that he had already gathered full information about the wall built by Ẓul-Qarnain, through a man, who could supply all the necessary details and then the man was actually presented before 'Abdur Rehmān. *(Ṭabari,* Vol. III, pp. 235-239; *Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah,* Vol. VII, pp. 122-125, and *Mu'jam-ul-Buldān,* under *Bāb-ul-Abwāb:* Derbent).

Two hundred years later, the Abbasid Caliph Wāthiq (227-233 A.H.) despatched a party of 50 men under Sallām-ul-Tarjumān to study the wall of Ẓul-Qarnain, whose observations have been recorded in great detail by Yaqūt in *Mu'jam-ul-Buldān* and by Ibn Kathīr in *Al-Bidāyah.* They write that this expedition reached Sāmarrah from where they reached Ṭiflis (the present Ṭbilisi) and then through As-Sarīr and Al-Lān, they reached Fīlānshah, from where they entered the Caspian territory. From there they arrived at Derbent and saw the wall. *(Al-Bidāyah* Vol. II, p. 111, Vol. VII, pp. 122-125; *Mu'jam-ul-Buldān:* under *Bāb-ul-Abwāb).* This clearly shows that even up till the third century of *Hijrah* the Muslim scholars regarded this wall of the Caucasus as the wall of Ẓul-Qarnain.

Yaqūt in his *Mu'jam-ul-Buldān* has further confirmed the same view at a number of places. For instance, under Khazar (Caspian) he writes:

"This territory belongs to the Turks, which adjoins the Wall of Zul-Qarnain just behind *Bāb-ul-Abwāb,* which is also called Derbent." In the same connection, he records a report by Aḥmad bin Faḍlān, the ambassador of Caliph Al-Muqtadar-billah, who has given a full description of the Caspian land, saying that Caspian is the name of a country whose capital is Itil (near the present Astrakhan) right through which flows River Itil, which joins the Caspian from Russia and Bulghar.

Regarding *Bāb-ul-Abwāb* he says that this city is called both Al-Bāb and Derbent, which is a highly difficult passage for the people coming from the northern lands towards the south. Once this territory was a part of the kingdom of Nausherwan, and the Persian rulers paid particular attention to strengthening their frontiers on that side.

72. Here the story of Ẓul-Qarnain comes to an end. Though this story has been related in answer to the questions put by the disbelievers of Makkah as a test along with the stories of the "Sleepers of the Cave" and "Moses and Khidr", the

Qur'ān has utilized this story, too, for its own aim and object, as if to say, "Ẓul-Qarnain, about whose glory you have heard from the people of the Book, was not merely a conqueror, but also a believer of the doctrines of *Tauḥīd* and the life-after-death and acted upon the principles of justice and generosity. He was not a mean person like you who have been puffed up by the possession of petty estates, and give yourselves airs of superiority."

73. "On that Day": "The Day of Resurrection". As if to continue the theme of life-after-death to which Ẓul-Qarnain referred as the "time of my Lord's promise", the Qur'ān has added verses 99-101 to it.

74. This is the conclusion of the whole Sūrah and is not connected with the story of Ẓul-Qarnain only but with the subject-matter of this Sūrah as a whole. That theme was enunciated at the beginning of the Sūrah (1-8): The Holy Prophet invited his people (1) to give up *shirk* and adopt the doctrine of *Tauḥīd* instead, (2) to give up the worship of the world and to believe in the life of the Hereafter. But the chiefs of his people, who were puffed up with their wealth and grandeur, not only rejected his invitation but also persecuted and insulted those righteous people who had accepted his invitation. The discourse deals with the same themes and utilizes in an excellent manner the three stories which were related in answer to the questions put by the opponents of Islam as a test of his Prophethood.

75. That is, "Do they still stick to their presumption even after hearing all this, and believe that their attitude will be profitable for them?"

76. This verse has two meanings. The one is the same that we have adopted in the translation. The other meaning is this: "...those who confined all their endeavours to the worldly life". That is, whatever they did, they did for this world without paying any regard to God and the Hereafter. As they considered the worldly life to be the real life, they made the success and prosperity in this world their sole aim and object. Even if they professed the existence of Allah, they never paid any heed to the two implications of this profession: to lead their lives in a way to please Allah and to come out successful on the Day they shall have to render an account of what they did in this world. This was because they considered themselves to be mere rational animals who were absolutely independent and free from every kind of responsibility and had nothing else to do but to enjoy the good things of the world like animals in a meadow.

77. "All their deeds were lost" in the sense that they will be of no avail to them in the life-after-death, even though they might have considered them as their great achievements but the fact is that they will lose all their value as soon as the world shall come to an end. When they will go before their Lord, and all their deeds shall be placed in the Scales, they will have no weight at all whether they

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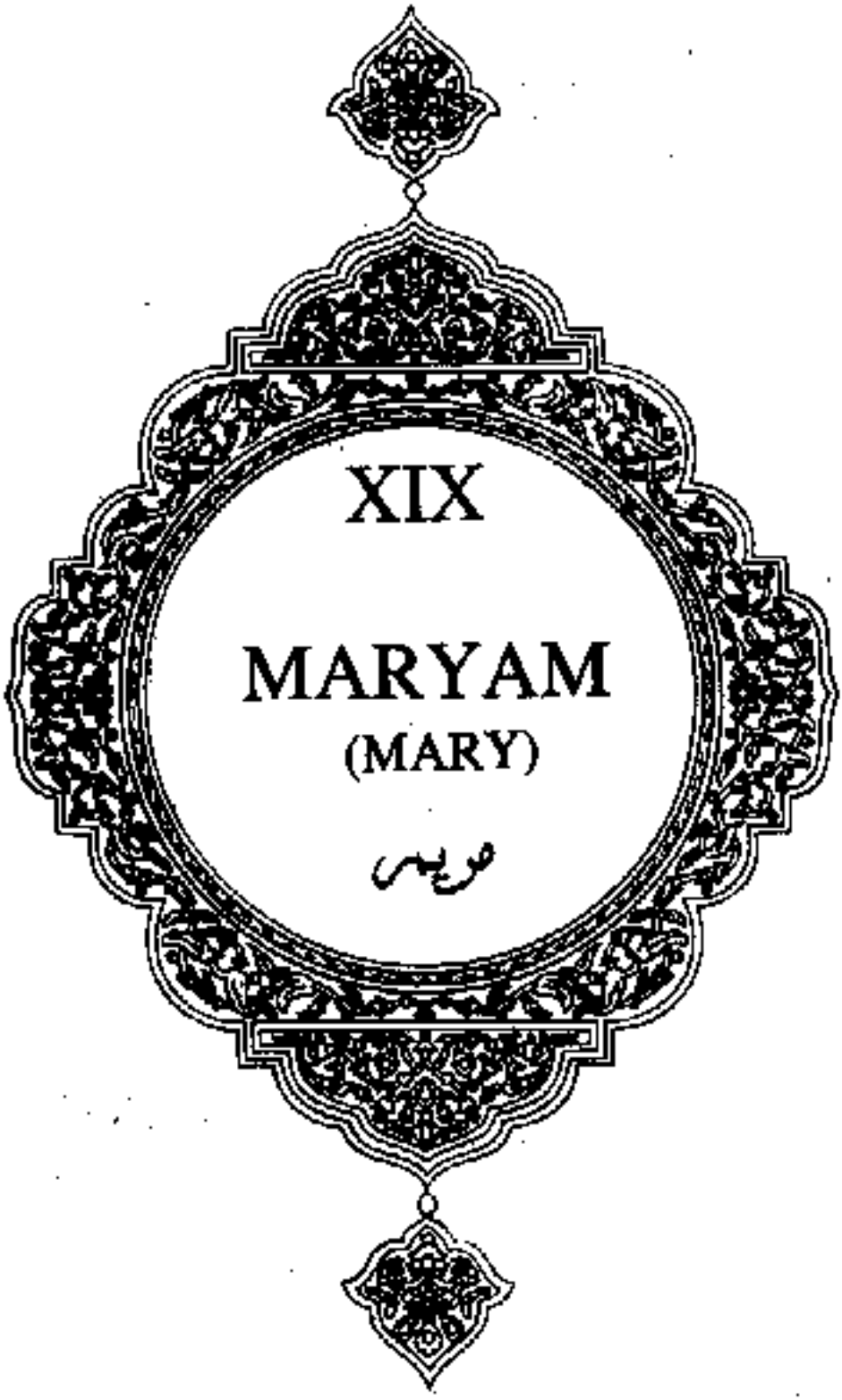
إِلَٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ ۖ فَمَن كَانَ يَرْجُو لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا ﴿١١٠﴾

O Muhammad say to them, "I am a human being like you: it has been revealed to me that your Deity is only One Allah. Therefore the one who expects to meet his Lord, should not associate with Him any other deity in His worship." 110

had built great palaces, established great universities and libraries, set up great factories and laboratories, constructed highways and railways, in short, all their inventions, industries, sciences and arts and other things of which they were very proud in this world, will lose their weights in the Scales. The only thing which will have weight there will be that which had been done in accordance with the Divine instructions and with the intention to please Allah. It is, therefore, obvious that if all of one's endeavours were confined to the worldly things and the achievement of worldly desires whose results one would see in this world, one should not reasonably expect to see their results in the Hereafter, for they would have gone waste with the end of this world. It is equally obvious, that only the deeds of the one, who performed them strictly in accordance with His instructions to win His approval with a view to avail of their results in the Hereafter, will find that his deeds had weight in the Scales. On the contrary, such a one will find that all his endeavours in the world had gone waste.

78. "...they will never desire to go anywhere (else)," because they will find no place and no condition better than those in Paradise.

79. By "Words" are meant "the marvellous works, the excellences and the wonders of His Power and Wisdom".



XIX

MARYAM
(MARY)

مريم

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XIX

MARYAM (MARY)

مریم

INTRODUCTION

Name.

It takes its name from v. 16.

Period of Revelation.

It was revealed before the Migration to Ḥabash. We learn from authentic Traditions that Ḥaḍrat Ja'afar recited vv. 1-40 of this Sūrah in the court of Negus when he called the migrants to his court.

Historical Background.

We have already briefly referred to the conditions of that period in the Introduction to Sūrah Al-Kahf. Here we shall give rather fuller details of the same conditions, which will be helpful in grasping the meaning of this Sūrah and the other Sūrahs of the period. When the chiefs of the Quraish felt that they had failed to suppress the Islamic Movement by ridicule, sarcasm, and by holding out promises and threats and by making false accusations, they resorted to persecution, beating and economic pressure. They would catch hold of the new Muslims of their clans and persecute them, starve them and would even inflict physical torture on them in order to coerce them to give up Islam. The most pitiful victims of their persecution were the poor people and the slaves and the porteges of the Quraish. They were beaten black and blue, were imprisoned and kept thirsty and hungry and were dragged on the burning sands of Makkah. The people would get work from the professional labourers but would not pay them their wages. As an

instance we give below the story of Ḥaḍrat Khabbāb bin Arat, which is given in *Bukhārī* and *Muslim:*

"I used to work as a blacksmith in Makkah. Once I did some work for 'Ās bin Wā'il. When I went to ask for my wages, he said, 'I will not pay your wages unless you disown Muhammad'."

In the same connection Ḥaḍrat Khabbāb says, "One day the Holy Prophet was sitting in the shadow of the Ka'abah. I went to him and said, 'O Messenger of Allah ! persecution has now gone to its extreme; why do you not pray to Allah (for relief) ?' At this the Holy Prophet was greatly moved. He said, 'The believers before you were persecuted much more than you. Their bones were scraped with combs of iron and their heads were cut with saws, but still they did not give up their Faith. I assure you that Allah will fulfil this Mission, and there will come a period of such peace that one would travel from Ṣan'ā' to Ḥadramaut, and he will have no fear from anyone, save Allah. But you people have become impatient so soon'." *(Bukhārī)*

When the conditions became unbearable, the Holy Prophet, in the month of Rajab of the fifth year of Prophethood, gave advice to his Companions to this effect: "You may well migrate to Ḥabash, for there is a king, who does not allow any kind of injustice to anyone, and there is good in his land. You should remain there till the time Allah provides a remedy for your affliction".

Accordingly, in the first instance, eleven men and four women left for Ḥabash. The Quraish pursued them up to the coast but fortunately they got a timely boat for Ḥabash at the sea-port of Shu'aibah, and they escaped arrest. Then after a few months, other people migrated to Ḥabash and their number rose to eighty-three men and eleven women of the Quraish and seven non-Quraish. After this, only forty persons were left with the Holy Prophet at Makkah.

There was a great hue and cry in Makkah after this Migration, for every family of the Quraish was adversely affected by this. There was hardly a family of the Quraish which did not lose a son, a son-in-law, a daughter, a brother, or a sister. For instance, there were among the Migrants the near relatives of Abū Jahl, Abū Sufyān and other chiefs of the Quraish who were notorious for their persecution of the Muslims. As a result of this, some of them became even more bitter in their

cunnity of Islam, while there were others who were so moved by this that they embraced Islam. For instance, this Migration left a deep mark on Ḥadrat 'Umar. One of his relatives, Lailā, daughter of Ḥathmah, says, "I was packing my luggage for Migration, while my husband, 'Amr bin Rabiy'ah, had gone out. In the meantime 'Umar came there and began to watch me, while I was engaged in preparation for the journey. Then he said, 'Are you also going to migrate?' I answered, 'Yes! by God, you people have persecuted us much. But the wide earth of Allah is open for us. Now we are going to a place where Allah will grant us peace'! At this, I noticed such signs of emotion on the face of 'Umar as I had never seen before. He simply said, 'May God be with you' and went away."

After the migration, the Quraish held consultations, and decided to send 'Abdullah bin Abī Rabiy'ah, half brother of Abū Jahl, and 'Amr bin 'Ās to Ḥabash with precious gifts so as to persuade Negus to send the migrants back to Makkah. Ḥadrat Umm Salmah (a wife of the Holy Prophet), who was among the migrants, has related this part of the story in detail. She says, "When these two clever statesmen of the Quraish reached Ḥabash, they distributed the gifts among the courtiers of the King and persuaded them to recommend strongly to him to send the migrants back. Then they saw Negus himself and, presenting rich gifts to him, said, "Some headstrong brats of our city have come to your land and our chiefs have sent us to you with the request that you may kindly send them back. These brats have forsaken our faith and have not embraced your faith either, but have invented a new faith". As soon as they had finished their speech, all the courtiers recommended their case, saying, "We should send such people back to their city for their people know them better. It is not proper for us to keep them here". At this the King was annoyed and said, "I am not going to give them back without proper enquiry. As these people have put their trust in my country rather than in any other country and have come here to seek shelter, I will not betray them. At first I will send for them and investigate into the allegations these people have made against them. Then I will take final decision". Accordingly, the King sent for the Companions of the Holy Prophet and asked them to come to his court.

When the migrants received the message of the King, they assembled and held consultations as to what they should say to the King.

At last they came to this unanimous decision: "We will present before the King the teachings of the Holy Prophet without adding anything to or withholding anything from them and leave it to him whether he lets us remain here or turns us out of his country". When they came to the court, the King put the problem abruptly before them: "I understand that you have given up the faith of your own people and have neither embraced my faith nor any other existing faith. I would like to know what your new faith is." At this, Ja'afar bin Abī Tālib, on behalf of the migrants, made an extempore speech to this effect: "O King! We were sunk deep in ignorance and had become very corrupt; then Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) came to us as a Messenger of God, and did his best to reform us. But the Quraish began to persecute his followers, so we have come to your country in the hope that here we will be free from persecution". After his speech, the King said, "Please recite a piece of the Revelation which has been sent down by God to your Prophet". In response, Ḥadrat Ja'afar recited that portion of Sūrah Maryam which relates the story of Prophets John and Jesus (Allah's peace be upon them). The King listened to it and wept, so much so that his beard became wet with tears. When Ḥadrat Ja'afar finished the recital, he said: "Most surely this Revelation and the Message of Jesus have come from the same source. By God ! I will not give you up into the hands of these people".

Next day 'Amr bin 'Ās went to Negus and said, "Please send for them again and ask them concerning the creed they hold about Jesus, the son of Mary, for they say a horrible thing about him". The King again sent for the migrants, who had already learnt about the scheme of 'Amr. They again sat together and held consultations in regard to the answer they should give to the King, if he asked about the belief they held about Prophet Jesus. Though this was a very critical situation and all of them were uneasy about it, they decided that they would say the same thing that Allah and His Messenger had taught them. Accordingly, when they went to the court, the King put them the question that had been suggested by 'Amr bin 'Ās. So Ja'afar bin Abi Ṭālib stood up and answered without the least hesitation: "He was a Servant of Allah and His Messenger. He was a Spirit and a Word of Allah which had been sent to virgin Mary." At this the King picked up a straw from the ground and said, "By God, Jesus was not worth this straw more than what you have said about him." After this the King returned the gifts

sent by the Quraish, saying, "I do not take any bribe". Then he said to the migrants, "You are allowed to stay here in perfect peace".

Theme and Subject

Keeping in view this historical background, it becomes quite obvious that this Sūrah was sent down to serve the migrants as a "provision" for their journey to Habash, as if to say, "Though you are leaving your country as persecuted emigrants to a Christian country, you should not in the least hide anything from the teachings you have received. Therefore you should plainly say to the Christians that Prophet Jesus was not the son of God."

After relating the story of Prophets John and Jesus in vv. 1-40, the story of Prophet Abraham has been related (vv. 41-50) also for the benefit of the Migrants for he also had been forced like them to leave his country by the persecution of his father, his family and his country men. On the one hand, this meant to console the Emigrants that they were following the footsteps of Prophet Abraham and would attain the same good end as that Prophet did. On the other hand, it meant to warn the disbelievers of Makkah that they should note it well that they were in the position of the cruel people who had persecuted their forefather and leader, Abraham, while the Muslim Emigrants were in the position of Prophet Abraham himself.

Then the mention of the other Prophets has been made in vv. 51-65 with a view to impress that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) had brought the same way of life that had been brought by the former Prophets but their followers had become corrupt and adopted wrong ways.

In the concluding passage (vv. 66-98), a strong criticism has been made of the evil ways of the disbelievers of Makkah, while the Believers have been given the good news that they would come out successful and become the beloved of the people, in spite of the worst efforts of the enemies of the Truth.

سُوْرَةُ مَرْيَمَ مَكِّيَّةٌ — آيَاتُهَا ٩٨ — رُكُوعَاتُهَا ٦

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

كٓهٰيٰعٓصٓ ﴿١﴾ ذِكْرُ رَحْمَتِ رَبِّكَ عَبْدَهٗ زَكَرِيَّا ﴿٢﴾ اِذْ نَادٰى رَبَّهٗ نِدَآءً خَفِيًّا ﴿٣﴾ قَالَ
رَبِّ اِنِّيْ وَهَنَ الْعَظْمُ مِنِّيْ وَاشْتَعَلَ الرَّاْسُ شَيْبًا وَّلَمْ اَكُنْۢ بِدُعَآئِكَ رَبِّ
شَقِيًّا ﴿٤﴾ وَاِنِّيْ خِفْتُ الْمَوَالِيَ مِنْ وَّرَآءِيْ وَكَانَتِ امْرَاَتِيْ عَاقِرًا فَهَبْ لِيْ مِنْ
لَّدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا ﴿٥﴾ يَّرِثُنِيْ وَيَرِثُ مِنْ اٰلِ يَعْقُوْبَ ۖ وَاجْعَلْهُ رَبِّ رَضِيًّا ﴿٦﴾ يٰزَكَرِيَّآ
اِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلٰمِ اسْمُهٗ يَحْيٰى ۙ لَمْ نَجْعَلْ لَّهٗ مِنْ قَبْلُ سَمِيًّا ﴿٧﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اَنّٰى
يَكُوْنُ لِيْ غُلٰمٌ وَّكَانَتِ امْرَاَتِيْ عَاقِرًا وَّقَدْ بَلَغْتُ مِنَ الْكِبَرِ عِتِيًّا ﴿٨﴾ قَالَ كَذٰلِكَ ۚ
قَالَ رَبُّكَ هُوَ عَلَيَّ هَيِّنٌ وَّقَدْ خَلَقْتُكَ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَمْ تَكُ شَيْـًٔا ﴿٩﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ
اجْعَلْ لِّيْٓ اٰيَةً ۭ قَالَ اٰيَتُكَ اَلَّا تُكَلِّمَ النَّاسَ ثَلٰثَ لَيَالٍ سَوِيًّا ﴿١٠﴾ فَخَرَجَ عَلٰى
قَوْمِهٖ مِنَ الْمِحْرَابِ فَاَوْحٰٓى اِلَيْهِمْ اَنْ سَبِّحُوْا بُكْرَةً وَّعَشِيًّا ﴿١١﴾ يٰيَحْيٰى خُذِ
الْكِتٰبَ بِقُوَّةٍ ۭ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ الْحُكْمَ صَبِيًّا ﴿١٢﴾ وَّحَنَانًا مِّنْ لَّدُنَّا وَزَكٰوةً ۭ وَكَانَ
تَقِيًّا ﴿١٣﴾ وَّبَرًّۢا بِوَالِدَيْهِ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ جَبَّارًا عَصِيًّا ﴿١٤﴾ وَسَلٰمٌ عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَ وُلِدَ وَ
يَوْمَ يَمُوْتُ وَيَوْمَ يُبْعَثُ حَيًّا ﴿١٥﴾ وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتٰبِ مَرْيَمَ ۘ اِذِ انْتَبَذَتْ مِنْ
اَهْلِهَا مَكَانًا شَرْقِيًّا ﴿١٦﴾ فَاتَّخَذَتْ مِنْ دُوْنِهِمْ حِجَابًا ۡ فَاَرْسَلْنَآ اِلَيْهَا رُوْحَنَا
فَتَمَثَّلَ لَهَا بَشَرًا سَوِيًّا ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَتْ اِنِّيْٓ اَعُوْذُ بِالرَّحْمٰنِ مِنْكَ اِنْ كُنْتَ تَقِيًّا ﴿١٨﴾
قَالَ اِنَّمَآ اَنَا رَسُوْلُ رَبِّكِ ۡ لِاَهَبَ لَكِ غُلٰمًا زَكِيًّا ﴿١٩﴾ قَالَتْ اَنّٰى يَكُوْنُ لِيْ غُلٰمٌ
وَّلَمْ يَمْسَسْنِيْ بَشَرٌ وَّلَمْ اَكُ بَغِيًّا ﴿٢٠﴾ قَالَ كَذٰلِكِ ۚ قَالَ رَبُّكِ هُوَ عَلَيَّ هَيِّنٌ ۚ وَ

XIX

MARYAM (MARY)

مریم

Verses: 98 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Kāf Hā Yā 'Ain Ṣād. Here is an account[1] of the mercy your Lord showed to His servant Zachariah,[2] when he invoked his Lord in an under tone. 1-3

He prayed, "O my Lord ! My very bones have become rotten, and my head is glistening with age. My Lord! I have never been disappointed in my prayer to Thee. I now fear (the consequences of) the evil ways of my kinsmen after me,[3] and my wife is barren! I, therefore, pray Thee to bless me by Thy grace with a successor, who may inherit my heritage and that of the descendants of Jacob;[4] and O Lord, make him a desirable person." 4-6

(The answer was:) "O Zachariah, We give you the good news of a son, who will be called Yahyā (John) . We have not created any other man of this name before."[5] 7

He said, "Lord, how can I beget a son when my wife is barren, and I have become impotent because of old age ?" 8

In answer, it was said, "So shall it be. Your Lord says, 'This is easy for Me, even as I created you before this, when you were nothing at all'."[6] 9

Zachariah said, "Lord, appoint a sign for me". He said, "The sign for you is that you shall not talk to the people for three consecutive days." 10

After this, he came out of the sanctuary[7] to his people, and made signs, asking them, "Glorfy God morning and evening."[8] 11

12 To John We said, "Observe the Divine Book with a firm resolve."[9]

13-15 We blessed him with "judgment"[10] while he was yet a child, and bestowed on him tenderness of heart[11] and purity from Ourself; and he was very pious and dutiful to his parents, and he was neither arrogant nor disobedient. Peace was on him on the day he was born and on the day he died, and peace shall be on him on the day he will be raised to life.[12]

16-17 And, O Muḥammad, relate in this Book the story of Mary:[13] how she had retired in seclusion from her people to the eastern side and had hung down a screen to hide herself from them.[14] There We sent to her Our Spirit ("an angel") and he appeared before her in the form of a perfect man.

18 Mary cried out involuntarily, "I seek God's refuge from you, if you are a pious man."

19 He replied, "I am a mere messenger from your Lord and have been sent to give you a pure son."

20 Mary said, "How can I bear a son, when no man has touched me, and I am not an unchaste woman?"

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1. For comparison please see the story of Zachariah as given in vv. 34—57 of Āl-i-'Imrān (III) and the E.N.'s thereof.

2. In order to understand the position held by Ḥadrat Zachariah, a descendant of Prophet Aaron, one should be acquainted with the system of priesthood among the children of Israel.

After the conquest of Palestine, the whole land was divided among the 12 tribes of the descendants of Prophet Jacob as inheritance, and the 13th tribe (the Levites) were entrusted with religious services and duties. Even among the Levites, the house that was separated "to sanctify the most holy things .... to burn incense before the Lord, to minister unto him, and to bless in his name for ever" was the house of Prophet Aaron. The other Levites were not allowed to enter the Temple? "Because their office was to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the Lord, in the courts, and in the chambers, and in the purifying of all holy things, and the work of the service of the house of the God .... And to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the Lord in the Sabbaths, in the new moon, and on the set festivals."

The descendants of Aaron were divided into 24 families, who came to serve the house of the Lord by turns. One of these families was of Abiah whose chief was Zachariah. Thus it was Zachariah's duty to go into the house on his family's turn and burn incense before the Lord. (For details, see I Chronicles, chapters 23, 24).

3. That is, "I see none among my kinsmen, the family of Abiah, who is religiously and morally sound and capable of carrying on the work of the mission that has been entrusted to me."

4. That is, "I do not pray for a successor to inherit me alone, but a successor who may inherit the good ways of the house of Jacob."

5. In Luke the words are: "There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name." (I: 61)

6. This dialogue is meant to impress that Allah is able to do whatever He wills and can make an impotent man and a barren woman give birth to a child, and likewise a virgin can be made to conceive a child.

7. For the explanation of *mihrāb* (sanctuary), see E.N. 36 of Āl-i-'Imrān (III).

8. Below we reproduce the details of this event as given in Luke's Gospel so that the reader may study and compare the Qurānic with the Christian version. The references and additions within the brackets are ours:

"There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, (see Banī Isrā'īl (XVII): E.N. 9) a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abiah: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name wag Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; (there is no mention of Zacharias' prayer anywhere in the Bible) and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John (that is, Yahyā). And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord (Sayyidan: a great Leader according to the Qur'ān, III: 39), and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink (the Quranic version: *Taqiyyan*: pious and pure); and he shall be filled with

the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb (the Qur'ān says: 'We blessed him with "judgment" while he was yet a child'). And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit of the power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

"And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. (This is different from the Qur'ān, which gives it as a Sign, whereas according to Luke, it was a punishment. Moreover, the Qur'ān mentions it as the silence for 'three consecutive days', but Luke says that Zacharias remained dumb till the birth of John). And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless." (Luke, I: 5-22).

9. The details regarding the birth of Prophet John, according to the Divine will, and his coming of age, have been left out. Here, in one sentence, the Mission of Prophethood entrusted to him on attaining maturity has been stated, which was "to observe and follow the Torah in letter and spirit, and to exhort the Israelites as well to do the same."

10. The Arabic word *ḥukm* implies ability (1) to make decisions, (2) to form right opinions, (3) to interpret the Divine Law, (4) to solve problems, and (5) it also means 'authority from Allah to decide affairs'.

11. The Arabic word *ḥanān* is almost synonymous with 'mother love'. In other words, Prophet John bore in his heart the same kind of intense love for Allah's servants as a mother has for her child.

12. In order to have a fuller understanding of the Mission and the pure character of Prophet John, about which brief references have been made in this Sūrah and Sūrah Āl-i-'Imrān, it will be useful to study this story as given in different Books of the New Testament in the following order:

According to Luke, Prophet John was older than Prophet Jesus by six months and their mothers were cousins. He was appointed a Prophet at the age of 30 years, and according to the Gospel of John, he started his mission of inviting

the people toward God in Jordan. He would say: "I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Make straight the way of the Lord." (John, I: 23)

According to Mark, "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptizm of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins." (Mark, I: 4-5). He thus came to be known as John the Baptist, and the Israelites held him as a prophet. (Mat. 21: 26). Prophet Jesus said about John: "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a man greater than John the Baptist." (Mat. 11 : 11)

"John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leather girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey." (Mat. 3: 4). He would say: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Mat. 3: 2). By this he meant that very soon Prophet Jesus was going to start his Mission of Prophethood. The same thing has been said about him in the Qur'an: ". . . he (John) will come to confirm a Command from Allah." (III: 39). For the same reason he has been called 'a sign of or pointer to' Prophet Jesus.

He urged the people to observe the Fast and Prayers. (Mat. 9: 14, Luke, 5: 33, 11: 1). He would also tell them, ". . . He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise." (Luke 3: 11). When the tax-collectors asked, "Master, what shall we do?" He said unto them, "Exact no more than that what is appointed you." (12-13), and when the soldiers sought his guidance, he said: "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages." (Luke, 3: 14)

When the corrupt scholars, Pharisees and Sadducees of the Israelites, came to be baptized by him, he rebuked them, saying: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?..think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father... now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." (Mat-3 :7-10)

The Jewish ruler of his time, Herod Antipas, in whose tetrarchy he was performing his Mission of inviting the people to the Truth, had been so deeply influenced by the Roman civilization that he was causing sin and evil to spread freely in the land. He had kept Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, unlawfully in his house; when Prophet John reproved him for this and raised his voice against other evils being committed by him, Herod got him arrested and sent to jail. However, he held him in high esteem for his piety and righteousness and even feared him on account of the great respect he enjoyed among the people. On the

[Contd. on p.68

لِنَجْعَلَهٗۤ اٰيَةً لِّلنَّاسِ وَرَحْمَةً مِّنَّا ۚ وَكَانَ اَمْرًا مَّقْضِيًّا ﴿٢١﴾ فَحَمَلَتْهُ فَانْتَبَذَتْ
بِهٖ مَكَانًا قَصِيًّا ﴿٢٢﴾ فَاَجَآءَهَا الْمَخَاضُ اِلٰى جِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ ۚ قَالَتْ يٰلَيْتَنِىْ مِتُّ
قَبْلَ هٰذَا وَكُنْتُ نَسْيًا مَّنْسِيًّا ﴿٢٣﴾ فَنَادٰىهَا مِنْ تَحْتِهَاۤ اَلَّا تَحْزَنِىْ قَدْ جَعَلَ
رَبُّكِ تَحْتَكِ سَرِيًّا ﴿٢٤﴾ وَهُزِّىْۤ اِلَيْكِ بِجِذْعِ النَّخْلَةِ تُسٰقِطْ عَلَيْكِ رُطَبًا
جَنِيًّا ﴿٢٥﴾ فَكُلِىْ وَاشْرَبِىْ وَقَرِّىْ عَيْنًا ۚ فَاِمَّا تَرَيِنَّ مِنَ الْبَشَرِ اَحَدًا ۙ فَقُوْلِىْۤ
اِنِّىْ نَذَرْتُ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ صَوْمًا فَلَنْ اُكَلِّمَ الْيَوْمَ اِنْسِيًّا ﴿٢٦﴾ فَاَتَتْ بِهٖ قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهٗ ؕ
قَالُوْا يٰمَرْيَمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتِ شَيْـًٔا فَرِيًّا ﴿٢٧﴾ يٰۤاُخْتَ هٰرُوْنَ مَا كَانَ اَبُوْكِ امْرَاَ
سَوْءٍ وَّمَا كَانَتْ اُمُّكِ بَغِيًّا ﴿٢٨﴾ فَاَشَارَتْ اِلَيْهِ ؕ قَالُوْا كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَنْ كَانَ
فِى الْمَهْدِ صَبِيًّا ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالَ اِنِّىْ عَبْدُ اللّٰهِ ۖ اٰتٰنِىَ الْكِتٰبَ وَجَعَلَنِىْ نَبِيًّا ﴿٣٠﴾ وَّ
جَعَلَنِىْ مُبٰرَكًا اَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُ ۖ وَاَوْصٰنِىْ بِالصَّلٰوةِ وَالزَّكٰوةِ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا ﴿٣١﴾
وَّبَرًّا بِوَالِدَتِىْ ۫ وَلَمْ يَجْعَلْنِىْ جَبَّارًا شَقِيًّا ﴿٣٢﴾ وَالسَّلٰمُ عَلَىَّ يَوْمَ وُلِدْتُّ وَ
يَوْمَ اَمُوْتُ وَيَوْمَ اُبْعَثُ حَيًّا ﴿٣٣﴾ ذٰلِكَ عِيْسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۚ قَوْلَ الْحَقِّ الَّذِىْ
فِيْهِ يَمْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ مَا كَانَ لِلّٰهِ اَنْ يَّتَّخِذَ مِنْ وَّلَدٍ ۙ سُبْحٰنَهٗ ؕ اِذَا قَضٰۤى اَمْرًا
فَاِنَّمَا يَقُوْلُ لَهٗ كُنْ فَيَكُوْنُ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ رَبِّىْ وَرَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوْهُ ؕ هٰذَا صِرَاطٌ
مُّسْتَقِيْمٌ ﴿٣٦﴾ فَاخْتَلَفَ الْاَحْزَابُ مِنْۢ بَيْنِهِمْ ۚ فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ
مَّشْهَدِ يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ اَسْمِعْ بِهِمْ وَاَبْصِرْ ۙ يَوْمَ يَاْتُوْنَنَا لٰكِنِ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ الْيَوْمَ
فِىْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَاَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْحَسْرَةِ اِذْ قُضِىَ الْاَمْرُ ۘ وَهُمْ فِىْ غَفْلَةٍ وَّهُمْ
لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اِنَّا نَحْنُ نَرِثُ الْاَرْضَ وَمَنْ عَلَيْهَا وَاِلَيْنَا يُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَاذْكُرْ فِى
الْكِتٰبِ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ ۘ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ صِدِّيْقًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿٤١﴾ اِذْ قَالَ لِاَبِيْهِ يٰۤاَبَتِ لِمَ تَعْبُدُ مَا لَا يَسْمَعُ

The angel replied, "So shall it be. Your Lord says, 'This is an easy thing for Me to do, and We will do so in order to make that boy a Sign for the people[15] and a blessing from Us, and this must happen." 21

Accordingly, Mary conceived the child; and with it she went away to a distant place.[16] Then the throes of childbirth urged her to take shelter under a date palm. There she began to cry, "Oh! would that I had died before this and sunk into oblivion."[17] At this the angel at the foot of her bed consoled her, saying, "Grieve not at all, for your Lord has set a spring under you; as for your food, shake the trunk of this tree and fresh, ripe dates will fall down for you; so eat and drink and refresh your eyes; and if you see a man, say to him, 'As I have vowed to observe the fast (of silence) for the sake of the Merciful, I will not speak to anyone today'."[18] 22-26

Then she brought the child to her people. They said, "O Mary! This is a heinous sin that you have committed. O sister of Aaron![19] your father was not a wicked man, nor was your mother an unchaste woman."[19a] 27-28

(In answer to this) Mary merely pointed towards the infant. The people said, "How shall we talk with him, who is but an infant in the cradle" ?[20] 29

Whereupon the child spoke out, "I am a servant of Allah: He has given me the Book and He has appointed me a Prophet, and He has made me blessed wherever I may be. He has enjoined upon me to offer Ṣalāt and give Zakāt so long as I shall live. He has made me dutiful to my mother,[20a] and He has not made me oppressive and hard-hearted. Peace be upon me on the day I was born and peace shall be on me on the day I die and on the day I am raised to life."[21] 30-33

This is Jesus, the son of Mary, and this is the truth about him concerning which they are in doubt. It does not behove God to beget a son for He is far above this. When He decrees a thing, He only says, "Be", and it does come into being.[22] 34-35

(And Jesus had declared) "Allah is my Lord and your Lord, so worship Him; this is the Right Way."[23] But in spite of this, the sects began to have differences among themselves.[24] So those who adopted the ways of disbelief shall suffer a horrible woe, when they witness the 36-40

Great Day. On that Day when they shall appear before Us, their ears and their eyes shall become very sharp, but today these transgressors (neither hear nor see the Truth and) have strayed into manifest deviation. O Muḥammad, now that these people are not paying heed and are not believing, warn them of the horrors of the Day, when judgment shall be passed, and they will have nothing left for them but vain regret. Ultimately, We will inherit the Earth and all that is on it, and everyone shall be returned to Us.[25]

Contd. from p.65]

contrary, Herodias thought that the moral consciousness that Prophet John was producing among the people was directly aimed at women like herself and pulling them down in the public eye. Thus she nursed a grudge against him and would have him killed but could not. Soon an opportunity came her way. On the birthday banquet of Herod, her daughter danced and so delighted Herod and others that the king said to her, 'Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.' The girl asked her mother what she should ask for. The mother said, 'Ask for the head of John the Baptist.' The girl went back to the king and requested to have there and then the head of John the Baptist on a dish. Herod felt sorry to hear this, but could not reject the demand of the daughter of his beloved. He at once got Prophet John killed in the prison and presented his head on a dish to the dancing girl. (Mat. 14: 3-12, Mark, 6 :17-29, Luke, 3 :19-20).

13. For comparison, see Āl-i-'Imrān (III): 34-57, and An-Nisā (IV) :156 and E.N.'s thereof.

14. The Sanctuary where she had retired for devotion was an eastern chamber in the Temple, and as was customary she had hung a curtain to conceal herself from the people. It cannot be Nazareth as some people have wrongly taken it to be, because Nazareth is to the north of Jerusalem.

15. The word "So shall it be" are very significant as has been stated in E:N. 6. The plain meaning is this: "A pure son shall be born to you just as your Lord has decreed, even though no man has touched you." The same was the response to prophet Zachariah as stated in v. 9 above. And it is a sheer perversion to interpret it as: "So shall it be that a man will touch you and a son will be born to you." For, if it were to mean: "You will bear a son like all other women of the world," the subsequent two sentences: "Your Lord says, 'This is an easy thing for Me to do, and We will make that boy a Sign for the people'," would have become meaningless: Had this birth been an ordinary birth like the birth of every other child, there would have been no occasion to boast: "It is an easy thing, and that it

will be made a Sign (miracle). This will be so because the child will speak in the cradle."

16. When she conceived the child, she left the Sanctuary and went to a distant place (Bethlehem) in order to escape the bitter criticism of the people. They would have said, "Look at the virgin daughter of the pious house of Aaron ! She has conceived a child and that, too, in the Sanctuary where she had retired for devotion!" Thus she temporarily succeeded in concealing the shame of the conception: but this event itself is a proof that prophet Jesus was born without a father. Had Mary been married and had a husband, she would not have left his or her parents' house by herself and chosen a distant place for the purpose of delivery.

17. The words "Would that..." show the extreme state of anxiety in which Mary found herself at the time. She did not utter these words on account of the labour pains but due to the pangs of sorrow as to how she would conceal the child from her people. The angel's words---"Grieve not at all"—explain why she had spoken these desperate words. When a married girl is delivering her first baby, she might be dying with pains, but she is never so sorrowful and grieved.

18. That is, "You need not say anything with regard to the child. It is now Our responsibility to answer the critics." This also indicates why Mary was so sad and grieved. Had she been married and given birth to her first baby like any other mother, there was no occasion to tell her to observe "a fast of silence", though it was a common custom among the Jews.

19. "Sister of Aaron" may either mean that Mary had a brother of the name of Aaron, or it may mean that she belonged to the family of Prophet Aaron. The first meaning is supported by a tradition of the Holy Prophet and the second is plausible because that is supported by the Arabic idiom. But we are inclined to the second meaning, for the wording of the said tradition does not necessarily mean that she actually had a brother named Aaron. The tradition as related in *Muslim, Nasā'ī, Tirmizi*, etc. says that when the Christians of Najrān criticised the Qurānic version of stating Mary as the sister of Aaron before Ḥadrat Mughirah bin Shu'bah, he was not able to satisfy them, because Prophet Aaron had passed away centuries earlier. When he presented the problem before the Holy Prophet, he replied, "Why didn't you say that the Israelites named their children after their Prophets and other pious men?" That is, "You could have answered their objection like this as well." (See also E.N. 32 of Āl-i-'Imrān).

19a. How can the people who reject the miraculous birth of Prophet Jesus, explain why Mary's whole community had come out to curse and condemn her when she had appeared before them with the child?

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وَلَا يُبْصِرُ وَلَا يُغْنِي عَنْكَ شَيْـًٔا ﴿42﴾ يٰٓاَبَتِ اِنِّيْ قَدْ جَآءَنِيْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَمْ يَاْتِكَ
فَاتَّبِعْنِيْٓ اَهْدِكَ صِرَاطًا سَوِيًّا ﴿43﴾ يٰٓاَبَتِ لَا تَعْبُدِ الشَّيْطٰنَ ۭ اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ
عَصِيًّا ﴿44﴾ يٰٓاَبَتِ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ اَنْ يَّمَسَّكَ عَذَابٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ فَتَكُوْنَ لِلشَّيْطٰنِ وَلِيًّا ﴿45﴾
قَالَ اَرَاغِبٌ اَنْتَ عَنْ اٰلِهَتِيْ يٰٓاِبْرٰهِيْمُ ۚ لَىِٕنْ لَّمْ تَنْتَهِ لَاَرْجُمَنَّكَ وَاهْجُرْنِيْ مَلِيًّا ﴿46﴾ قَالَ
سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكَ ۚ سَاَسْتَغْفِرُ لَكَ رَبِّيْ ۭ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ بِيْ حَفِيًّا ﴿47﴾ وَاَعْتَزِلُكُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ
دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَاَدْعُوْا رَبِّيْ ۤ عَسٰٓى اَلَّآ اَكُوْنَ بِدُعَاۗءِ رَبِّيْ شَقِيًّا ﴿48﴾ فَلَمَّا اعْتَزَلَهُمْ وَمَا
يَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ۙ وَهَبْنَا لَهٗٓ اِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوْبَ ۭ وَكُلًّا جَعَلْنَا نَبِيًّا ﴿49﴾ وَ
وَهَبْنَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ رَّحْمَتِنَا وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ عَلِيًّا ﴿50﴾ وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتٰبِ
مُوْسٰٓى ۡ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ مُخْلَصًا وَّكَانَ رَسُوْلًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿51﴾ وَنَادَيْنٰهُ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّوْرِ
الْاَيْمَنِ وَقَرَّبْنٰهُ نَجِيًّا ﴿52﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهٗ مِنْ رَّحْمَتِنَآ اَخَاهُ هٰرُوْنَ نَبِيًّا ﴿53﴾ وَ
اذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتٰبِ اِسْمٰعِيْلَ ۡ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ وَكَانَ رَسُوْلًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿54﴾ وَ
كَانَ يَاْمُرُ اَهْلَهٗ بِالصَّلٰوةِ وَالزَّكٰوةِ ۡ وَكَانَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهٖ مَرْضِيًّا ﴿55﴾ وَاذْكُرْ فِي
الْكِتٰبِ اِدْرِيْسَ ۡ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ صِدِّيْقًا نَّبِيًّا ﴿56﴾ وَّرَفَعْنٰهُ مَكَانًا عَلِيًّا ﴿57﴾ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ الَّذِيْنَ
اَنْعَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّةِ اٰدَمَ وَمِمَّنْ حَمَلْنَا مَعَ نُوْحٍ ۡ
وَّمِنْ ذُرِّيَّةِ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاِسْرَاۗءِيْلَ ۡ وَمِمَّنْ هَدَيْنَا وَاجْتَبَيْنَا ۭ اِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ
اٰيٰتُ الرَّحْمٰنِ خَرُّوْا سُجَّدًا وَّبُكِيًّا ﴿58﴾ فَخَلَفَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ اَضَاعُوا
الصَّلٰوةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهَوٰتِ فَسَوْفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غَيًّا ﴿59﴾ اِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَاٰمَنَ وَ
عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ يَدْخُلُوْنَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ شَيْـًٔا ﴿60﴾ جَنّٰتِ عَدْنِ ۨ
الَّتِيْ وَعَدَ الرَّحْمٰنُ عِبَادَهٗ بِالْغَيْبِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ وَعْدُهٗ مَاْتِيًّا ﴿61﴾ لَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ فِيْهَا

السجدة ۱۵

And relate in this Book the story of Abraham;[26] indeed he was a righteous man and a Prophet. (Remind them of the time,) when he said to his father, "Dear father! why do you worship those things, which do not hear nor see nor avail you anything? Dear father! I have received that knowledge which you have not got; so you should follow me and I will guide you on the Right Way. Dear father! do not serve Satan,[27] for Satan is disobedient to the Merciful. Dear father! I am afraid lest you should incur the scourge of God and become Satan's companion." 41-45

The father replied, "O Abraham! have you renounced my deities? If you do not desist from this, I will stone you to death: so get away from me for ever". 46

Abraham said, "I bid farewell to you; I will pray to my Lord to forgive you[27a] for He is very kind to me. I forsake all of you as well as those whom you invoke instead of Allah: I will invoke my Lord alone: I do hope that I shall not fail to gain my object by invoking my Lord." 47-48

Accordingly, when he left those people and their deities besides Allah, We granted to him descendants like Isaac and Jacob, and We made each of them a Prophet and We bestowed on them Our Mercy and We blessed them with true high renown.[28] 49-50

And mention in this Book Moses: he was a chosen person,[29] and he was a Messenger Prophet.[30] We called him from the right side[31] of Ṭūr, and honoured him with secret talk,[32] and We made his brother Aaron a Prophet and gave to him (as an assistant). 51-53

And make a mention in this Book of Ismael: he was true to his promise and was a Messenger Prophet. He enjoined his people to offer Salāt and give Zakāt, and his Lord was well pleased with him. 54-55

And make a mention in this Book of Idrīs:[33] he was a righteous man, and a Prophet; and We had raised him to a high position.[34] 56-57

These are the Messengers on whom Allah bestowed His favours: they were from the descendants of Adam, and from the seed of those whom We carried in the Ark with Noah, and from the seed of Abraham and of Israel. They were among those people whom We guided aright and made Our chosen ones. They were so tender-hearted 58

that when the Revelations of the Merciful were recited to them, they fell down prostrate in a state of weeping.

59-61 Then there came after them those degenerate people, who lost their Ṣalāt[35] and followed their lusts:[36] so they shall soon encounter the consequences of their deviation. However, those, who repent and believe and do righteous deeds, will enter the Garden and they will not be wronged in the least. They will have those everlasting Gardens, which the Merciful has promised to His servants, while yet they have not seen them,[37] and most surely that promise shall be fulfilled.

Contd. from p.69]

20. People who misinterpret the Qur'ān translate this verse as: "How shall we talk with him, who is but a child of yesterday ?". They attribute these words to the elderly people of the Jews, who said years later, when Jesus was a grown up boy, that they could not have any useful dialogue with a mere kid. But the person who keeps the whole context in view, will realize that this interpretation is absurd and has been given merely to avoid the miracle. As a matter of fact, the dialogue took place when the people were condemning Mary who being unmarried, had brought forth a child, and not when the child had grown up into manhood. V. 46 of Āl-i-'Imrān (III) and v. 110 of Al-Mā'idah (V) also support the view that Prophet Jesus had uttered these words as a baby in the cradle and not when grown up. In the first verse, the angel while giving the good news of a son to Mary, says: "He will speak to the people alike when in the cradle and when grown up"; in the other verse, Allah Himself says to Prophet Jesus: ".....you talked to the people even in the cradle as you talked when you were grown up."

20a. The words used are: ".....dutiful to my mother", and not "dutiful to my parents". This is another proof of the fact that Jesus had no father, and for the same reason he has been called 'Jesus son of Mary' everywhere in the Qur'ān.

21. This speech in the cradle by Jesus was the 'Sign' to which the angel referred in v. 21. As Allah intended to punish the children of Israel for their continuous wicked ways and evil deeds, He made a pious virgin girl of the family of Prophet Aaron, who had devoted herself to worship in the Temple under the patronage of Zachariah, bear a child and bring it before her people in order to concentrate the whole attention of the thousands of people assembled there on this extraordinary event. Then He made this new born child speak out even in the cradle that he had been appointed a Prophet. Though they had seen this wonderful Sign of Allah, they rejected the Prophethood of Jesus and brought him to the court for crucifixion, and thus incurred the wrath of Allah. (For further details, please see Āl-i-'Imrān (III): E.N.'s 44 and 53, and An-Nisā (IV): E.N.'s 212,213).

22. In vv. 1-35, it has been shown that the "Doctrine of the son of God" in regard to Prophet Jesus is absolutely wrong. For just as the miraculous birth of Prophet John did not make him the 'son of God', so the miraculous birth of Prophet Jesus could not make him the son of God. For the births of both were the result of the same sort of miracle as they have been mentioned together in the same context in the Gospel of Luke. Therefore, it is mere distortion that the Christians should regard one as the servant of God and the other as the son of God.

23. This declaration by Jesus has been cited to tell the Christians that Jesus also taught the same Doctrine of *Tauḥīd* as was taught by all other Prophets. And it was they who had invented the doctrine of *shirk* by making him the son of God. (Please also refer to Āl-i-'Imrān (III): E.N. 68, and Al-Mā'idah (V): E.N.'s 100, 101 and 130).

24. That is, the sects of the Christians.

25. Here the address which was meant to be delivered before King Negus and his courtiers comes to an end. In the Introduction to this Sūrah, we have already stated the historical background of this address. In order to form an idea of its great significance, it should be kept in mind that:

(a) this address was sent down at the time when the persecuted Muslims of Makkah were going to migrate to a Christian kingdom so that they may present before the Christians the true Islamic creed about Prophet Jesus. This shows that the Muslims under no circumstances should conceal the Truth; (b) it shows a most wonderful moral courage of the Muslim Migrants to Ḥabash that they recited this address in the royal court at the critical moment, when the courtiers who had been bribed were bent on handing them over to their enemies. They indeed were faced with the real threat that this frank Islamic criticism of the basic articles of the Christian Faith might turn the king against them and he might hand them over to the Quraish. But in spite of this, they presented the whole truth before the king without the least hesitation.

26. From here the address is directed towards the people of Makkah, who had forced their own near and dear relatives to emigrate from their homes, just as Prophet Abraham had been exiled by his own father and brethren. The story of Prophet Abraham has been selected for this purpose because the Quraish professed to accept him as their religious leader and were proud of being his descendants.

27. It should be noted that the literal translation of the Arabic text is: "Do not worship Satan", though Abraham's father and the other people did not worship

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لَغْوًا إِلَّا سَلٰمًا ۖ وَلَهُمْ رِزْقُهُمْ فِيهَا بُكْرَةً وَّعَشِيًّا ﴿٦٢﴾ تِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِي نُورِثُ
مِنْ عِبَادِنَا مَنْ كَانَ تَقِيًّا ﴿٦٣﴾ وَمَا نَتَنَزَّلُ إِلَّا بِأَمْرِ رَبِّكَ ۖ لَهُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِينَا
وَمَا خَلْفَنَا وَمَا بَيْنَ ذٰلِكَ ۚ وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ نَسِيًّا ﴿٦٤﴾ رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فَاعْبُدْهُ وَاصْطَبِرْ لِعِبَادَتِهِ ۚ هَلْ تَعْلَمُ لَهُ سَمِيًّا ﴿٦٥﴾ وَيَقُولُ
الْإِنْسَانُ أَإِذَا مَا مِتُّ لَسَوْفَ أُخْرَجُ حَيًّا ﴿٦٦﴾ أَوَلَا يَذْكُرُ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنٰهُ
مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلَمْ يَكُ شَيْئًا ﴿٦٧﴾ فَوَرَبِّكَ لَنَحْشُرَنَّهُمْ وَالشَّيٰطِينَ ثُمَّ لَنُحْضِرَنَّهُمْ
حَوْلَ جَهَنَّمَ جِثِيًّا ﴿٦٨﴾ ثُمَّ لَنَنْزِعَنَّ مِنْ كُلِّ شِيعَةٍ أَيُّهُمْ أَشَدُّ عَلَى الرَّحْمٰنِ
عِتِيًّا ﴿٦٩﴾ ثُمَّ لَنَحْنُ أَعْلَمُ بِالَّذِينَ هُمْ أَوْلَى بِهَا صِلِيًّا ﴿٧٠﴾ وَإِنْ مِّنْكُمْ إِلَّا
وَارِدُهَا ۚ كَانَ عَلَى رَبِّكَ حَتْمًا مَّقْضِيًّا ﴿٧١﴾ ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا وَّنَذَرُ
الظّٰلِمِينَ فِيهَا جِثِيًّا ﴿٧٢﴾ وَإِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ ءَايٰتُنَا بَيِّنٰتٍ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
لِلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓا ۙ أَيُّ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ خَيْرٌ مَّقَامًا وَّأَحْسَنُ نَدِيًّا ﴿٧٣﴾ وَكَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ
مِّنْ قَرْنٍ هُمْ أَحْسَنُ أَثَاثًا وَّرِءْيًا ﴿٧٤﴾ قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ فِي الضَّلٰلَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ لَهُ
الرَّحْمٰنُ مَدًّا ۚ حَتّٰى إِذَا رَأَوْا مَا يُوعَدُونَ إِمَّا الْعَذَابَ وَإِمَّا السَّاعَةَ ۚ
فَسَيَعْلَمُونَ مَنْ هُوَ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا وَّأَضْعَفُ جُنْدًا ﴿٧٥﴾ وَيَزِيدُ اللّٰهُ الَّذِينَ
اهْتَدَوْا هُدًى ۗ وَالْبٰقِيٰتُ الصّٰلِحٰتُ خَيْرٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ ثَوَابًا وَّخَيْرٌ مَّرَدًّا ﴿٧٦﴾
أَفَرَءَيْتَ الَّذِي كَفَرَ بِـَٔايٰتِنَا وَقَالَ لَأُوتَيَنَّ مَالًا وَّوَلَدًا ﴿٧٧﴾ أَطَّلَعَ الْغَيْبَ أَمِ
اتَّخَذَ عِنْدَ الرَّحْمٰنِ عَهْدًا ﴿٧٨﴾ كَلَّا ۚ سَنَكْتُبُ مَا يَقُولُ وَنَمُدُّ لَهُ مِنَ
الْعَذَابِ مَدًّا ﴿٧٩﴾ وَنَرِثُهُ مَا يَقُولُ وَيَأْتِينَا فَرْدًا ﴿٨٠﴾ وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ
اللّٰهِ ءَالِهَةً لِّيَكُونُوا لَهُمْ عِزًّا ﴿٨١﴾ كَلَّا ۚ سَيَكْفُرُونَ بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ وَيَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ

There they will not hear any idle talk but only what shall be good and sensible,[38] and they will get their provisions regularly in the morning and evening. That is the Garden which We will give as an inheritance to that one of Our servants, who leads a pious life. 62-63

O Muhammad,[39] we do not come down save at the bidding of your Lord; to Him belongs all that is before us and all that is behind us and all that lies between, and your Lord is never forgetful. He is the Lord of the Heavens and the Lord of the Earth, and of all that is between them; so serve Him and be steadfast in His service.[40] Do you know of any other being equal in rank to Him ?[41] 64-65

Man says, "What! after I am once dead, shall I again be brought to life"? Does not the man remember that We made him at first when he was nothing? By your Lord! We will muster them and the Satans along with them;[42] then We will gather them round Hell and throw them down on their knees: then We will pick out from every band, each one of those who had been most rebellious against the Merciful;[43] then We know very well which of them deserves most to be thrown into Hell? And there is none of you who will not be presented before the confines of Hell,[44] for this is a settled decree, which your Lord will bring in force; then We will deliver those who were pious (in the world), and will leave the transgressors there on their knees. 66-72

When Our plain Revelations are recited to them, the disbelievers say to the Believers, "Tell us, which of the two of our parties is in a better condition and has grander meetings"?[45] And how many a generation have We destroyed before them, who had more abundant riches than they and were grander in splendour! Say to them, "The Merciful gives respite to the one who falls into deviation up to the time when such people see that thing with which they had been threatened—the scourge of God or the Hour of Resurrection. Then they realize who was in worse plight and whose party was weaker. In contrast to them, Allah increases in guidance those who adopt the righteous way;[46] and the abiding deeds of righteousness are better in the sight of your Lord in regard to their reward and their end. 73-76

Then, have you seen the person who denies Our Revelations, and boasts, "I shall continue to be blessed with riches and children"?[47] 77-80

What! has the unseen been revealed to him? Or has he taken a pledge from the Merciful?—By no means ! We will take down whatever he boasts of, [48] and will increase his chastisement all the more and We will inherit the riches and the helpers of which he boasts of, he shall appear before Us all alone.

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Satan in the same sense as they worshipped idols. But as they followed and obeyed Satan, he accused them of worshipping Satan. Thus it is clear that if somebody follows and obeys Satan, he virtually worships him. For Satan has never been a deity in the sense that people have made him an object of worship; nay, they have always been cursing him and following him at the same time. (For further details see Sūrah Al-Kahf (XVIII) E.N.'s 49-50).

27a. For explanation, please see Sūrah At-Taubah (IX): E.N. 112.

28. This is to give comfort to the Migrants who had been forced to migrate from their homes. They were told that they would be honoured and blessed with true renown just as Prophet Abraham had been blessed with true renown after his Migration.

29. The word used is *mukhlas*, which means "purified". In other words, Allah had specially chosen Prophet Moses for the Mission of Prophethood.

30. *"Rasūl"* literally means 'the one who is sent'; therefore it is used for an ambassador, envoy, messenger and representative. The Qur'ān has used this title for angels, who are sent by Allah on a special mission, or for the human beings who brought His Message to mankind.

As regards the word *"Nabī"*, it literally means the one who brings news, or the one who is high in rank, or the one who shows the way. This title is used for the Prophets in all the three senses. Thus Moses was a Messenger Prophet because he was a Messenger of high rank who gave news from Allah and showed the Right Way to the people.

The Qur'ān does not necessarily differentiate between the use of the two titles, for sometimes it uses the title *Rasūl* for one person at one place and the title *Nabī* for the same person at another place, and sometimes uses both the titles together for one and the same person. However, at some places each title has been used in a way as to show that there is some technical distinction between the two, though that has not been precisely marked out, except that every *Rasūl* (Messenger) is a *Nabī* (Prophet) as well, but every *Nabī* may not be a *Rasūl*, and that a *Rasūl* has a special and more important mission to perform. This is supported by a Tradition of the Holy Prophet, which has been reported by Imām Ahmad from Abū Umāmah and by Hākim from Hadrat Abū Zarr. When the Holy

Prophet was asked how many "Messengers" and "Prophets" had been sent to the world, he said that the number of the Messengers was 313 or 315 and of the Prophets 1,24,000

31. "The right side of Ṭūr" means the eastern side of the mountain. As Prophet Moses, on his way from Midian to Egypt, was passing from the southern side of Mt. Ṭūr, the eastern side would lie on his right and the western on his left if he faced the mountain, otherwise a mountain by itself cannot have a right or a left side.

32. See E.N. 206 of Sūrah An-Nisā (IV).

33. There is a difference of opinion as to who Prophet Idrīs was. Some commentators opine that he was a Prophet from among the Israelites, but the majority of them are inclined to the view that he was a Prophet before Noah. There is no authentic Tradition which may help determine his identity. The next verse (58), however, supports the view that he appeared before Prophet Noah. For of all the Prophets mentioned, he alone was the one who may be said to be "from the descendants of Adam."

The commentators are of the opinion that Idrīs was Enoch of the Old Testament, about whom it is said:

"And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years..., and he was not; for God took him." (Gen. 5: 21-24)

In Talmud, there are greater details about Enoch, which are briefly as follows: "Before Noah when the descendants of Adam began to degenerate, the angel of God called to Enoch, who led a pious life away from the people, and said, 'O Enoch, arise, come out from seclusion, and go about among the people of the earth, guiding them to the path which they should follow and the ways which they should adopt.'

"Receiving this Divine Command, Enoch left his seclusion and gathered the people together and preached to them what he had been commanded, with the result that they listened to him and adopted the worship of God. Enoch ruled over mankind for 353 years: his rule was based on justice and truth, and consequently God favoured mankind with all kinds of blessings." (H. Polano: *The Talmud Selections*, pp. 18-21)

34. The plain meaning is that God had favoured Idrīs with a high rank, but according to the Israelite traditions, God took up Idrīs (Enoch) to heavens. The Bible says: "... and he was not; for God took him", but the Talmud has a long story to tell; which ends with the words:

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ضِدًّا ﴿٨٢﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّآ اَرْسَلْنَا الشَّيٰطِيْنَ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ تَؤُزُّهُمْ اَزًّا ﴿٨٣﴾ فَلَا تَعْجَلْ
عَلَيْهِمْ ؕ اِنَّمَا نَعُدُّ لَهُمْ عَدًّا ﴿٨٤﴾ يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ اِلَى الرَّحْمٰنِ وَفْدًا ﴿٨٥﴾ وَّ
نَسُوْقُ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ اِلٰى جَهَنَّمَ وِرْدًا ﴿٨٦﴾ لَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ الشَّفَاعَةَ اِلَّا مَنِ اتَّخَذَ
عِنْدَ الرَّحْمٰنِ عَهْدًا ﴿٨٧﴾ وَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمٰنُ وَلَدًا ﴿٨٨﴾ لَقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْـًٔا
اِدًّا ﴿٨٩﴾ تَكَادُ السَّمٰوٰتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْهُ وَ تَنْشَقُّ الْاَرْضُ وَ تَخِرُّ الْجِبَالُ هَدًّا ﴿٩٠﴾
اَنْ دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمٰنِ وَلَدًا ﴿٩١﴾ وَ مَا يَنْۢبَغِيْ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ اَنْ يَّتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا ﴿٩٢﴾ اِنْ كُلُّ
مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ اِلَّاۤ اٰتِي الرَّحْمٰنِ عَبْدًا ﴿٩٣﴾ لَقَدْ اَحْصٰىهُمْ وَ عَدَّهُمْ
عَدًّا ﴿٩٤﴾ وَ كُلُّهُمْ اٰتِيْهِ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فَرْدًا ﴿٩٥﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
سَيَجْعَلُ لَهُمُ الرَّحْمٰنُ وُدًّا ﴿٩٦﴾ فَاِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنٰهُ بِلِسَانِكَ لِتُبَشِّرَ بِهِ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ
وَ تُنْذِرَ بِهٖ قَوْمًا لُّدًّا ﴿٩٧﴾ وَ كَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ ؕ هَلْ تُحِسُّ
مِنْهُمْ مِّنْ اَحَدٍ اَوْ تَسْمَعُ لَهُمْ رِكْزًا ﴿٩٨﴾

81-82 These people have set up other gods than Allah so that they may become their supporters.[49] But they will have no supporter; all of them will not only disown their worship[50] but also become their opponents.

83-87 Do you not see that over those disbelievers We have appointed the Satans, who incite them urgently to oppose the Truth? Well, you need not become impatient for the coming of the scourge on them, for We are numbering their days.[51] The day is coming near, when We will present the righteous people like honoured guests before the Merciful, and drive the criminals to Hell like thirsty flocks. At that time no one shall have the ability to intercede except the one who may

have received permission from the Merciful.[52]

They say that the Merciful has adopted a son. What an absurd thing that you have invented! It is well nigh that the heavens might crack and the earth split asunder and the mountains crumble down at this hideous thing that they should ascribe a son to the Merciful! It does not behove the Merciful to adopt a son. All those who are in the heavens and the earth, are going to be presented before Him as servants, for He has encircled them and kept a strict account of them; everyone shall be presented before Him individually on the Day of Resurrection. 88-95

Most surely the time is coming near, when the Merciful will fill the hearts with love of those who have believed and are doing righteous works.[53] So, O Muhammad, We have made this Qur'ān easy, and sent it down in your tongue so that you should give good news to the pious and warn the obdurate people. We have destroyed many a people before them: do you find any trace of them or do you hear any whisper from them anywhere ? 96-98

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"Enoch ascended to heaven in a whirlwind, with chariot and horses of fire."

35. It appears that the degenerate people totally discarded Ṣalāt, or they had become neglectful and careless in its observance. This is the first evil that is committed by a degenerate people; for, after this there remains no connection whatever between them and God. Here it has been stated as a universal principle that the degeneration of the people of all the former Prophets started with the abandonment of Ṣalāt by them.

36. This was the inevitable result of the loss of the connection with Allah. As they became more and more neglectful of their Ṣalāt, their lusts took complete hold of them and they fell to the lowest depths of moral depravity and began to follow their whims instead of the Divine Commands.

37. That is, the promised Gardens which are yet unseen by His servants.

38. The word used is *Salām,* which means 'free from defect and fault'. It implies to mean that the greatest blessing that man will enjoy in Paradise will be that there he will hear no idle, vile or indecent talk; all the dwellers of Paradise will be neat and clean and pure people and every individual will be gentle and right-minded by nature; everybody will be secure against backbiting, slander and

indecent songs and other ugly sounds. Whatever men will hear will be good, sensible and right.

This is indeed a great blessing which only that person can fully appreciate, who possesses a neat and fine taste, because only such a one can feel the misery of living among a dirty society, where his ears are never immune against lies, backbiting, slander, and mischievous and sensual talk.

39. This paragraph is a parenthesis, which has been inserted at the end of one theme and before the commencement of the other. It is obvious from this that this Sūrah was sent down after a long delay. At that time the Holy Prophet and his Companions were passing through very hard times and were always expecting a Revelation to guide and comfort them. When Gabriel (peace be upon him) came with the angels with this Revelation, he at first delivered that part of the Message which was immediately needed. Then before proceeding further, he said these words by the leave of Allah as an explanation for the delay and to give them comfort from Allah and counsel of fortitude. This interpretation is not only borne out by the wording of the passage but also by some Traditions of the Holy Prophet, which have been cited by Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Kathīr, and the author *of Rūh ul-Ma'ānī* in their commentary on this passage.

40. That is, "You should not only follow strictly the Way of service and face all the obstacles and afflictions with patience, but also should not get uneasy, if there is a delay in Revelation and help. You should rest content with His service as an obedient servant and perform persistently the duties and responsibilities entrusted to you as a Servant and Messenger."

41. The word *Sami'* literally means 'a name sake'. Here it implies: "Allah is the only Deity: do you know of any other deity besides Him? If there is none, and you know that there is none, then you do not have any alternative but to serve Him and obey His Commands."

42. The "Satans" are the leaders who persuade the wicked people to enjoy themselves in this worldly life, for there is no life in the Hereafter, where they shall have to present themselves before Allah and give an account of their deeds.

43. The leader of every rebel band.

44. According to some traditions, "to be presented before the confines of Hell" means 'to enter Hell', but none of these traditions is authentic. Then this interpretation goes against the Qur'ān and a great many authentic Traditions, which clearly state that the true Believers will never be cast into Hell. Lexically also, *vurūd* (being presented unto) is not synonymous with *dukhūl* (causing to enter). Therefore, the correct meaning would be that every human being will be

presented before Hell, but then, as the next verse clarifies, the pious people will be rescued and the transgressors left therein on their knees.

45. In response to the recital of clear Revelations, instead of accepting their Message, the unbelievers put such questions as these to the Believers to show that they were in the right: Who has grander houses to live in? Who has a higher standard of life? Who enjoys splendid meetings? If we are enjoying all these things while you are deprived of them, you may decide for yourselves whether we, who are enjoying happy worldly lives, are in the wrong, or you who are living miserable lives of indigence are in the right? (Also see Sūrah Al-Kahf (XVIII): E.N.'s 37-38).

46. That is, "On every critical occasion, Allah guides them to make right decisions and helps them to adopt the right way, and protects them from evil and wrong things; thus they go on making more and more progress on the right way."

47. The boastful person was not a particular man but a typical chief of the disbelievers of Makkah. Everyone of them claimed, "Howsoever you may call me an erroneous and un-righteous person and threaten me with the Divine scourge, the fact is that I am more prosperous than you today and shall continue being blessed with favours in future as well. Just have a look at my riches, at my grandeur and at my estate, and at my well-known sons, and then say where you see any signs of the wrath of God."

48. That is, the boastful words of his shall also be included in the record of his crimes and he shall have to bear the consequences of his arrogant claim.

49. The Arabic word *'Izzan* (from *'Izzat*) implies a powerful and strong person whom nobody may dare do any harm; here it means a person's having such a strong supporter that no enemy or opponent of his may even cherish an evil intention against him.

50. That is, they will say, "We never asked them to worship us nor were we aware that these foolish people were worshipping us."

51. That is: "Endure their persecutions patiently a little more, for the time of their punishment is coming near, for We have given them respite for a fixed term, and let that term expire."

52. This implies two things: (1) Intercession will be allowed only for the one who might have received permission for it from the Merciful, that is, the one who believed in Allah in the world and made himself deserving of His pardon. (2) Only that one will be able to plead intercession who might have got permission for this from the Merciful, and not those ones whom people themselves had made their intercessors without any reason.

53. This is to comfort the righteous people who were being persecuted and insulted in the streets of Makkah. They are being assured that the time is coming near when the people will honour and love them because of their righteous deeds and good conduct. Hearts will be attracted towards them and the world will hold them in high esteem. And this will happen according to a universal principle. Those who are wicked, proud and haughty and try to rule over the people with falsehood and hypocrisy can never captivate the hearts of the people; on the other hand, those who invite the people to the right way with truth, honesty, sincerity and good conduct succeed in winning their hearts in the end, even though at first they might have to face the indifference and opposition of the dishonest people.



XX

Ṭā Hā

طٰهٰ

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XX
Ṭā Hā

طٰهٰ

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah takes its name from its first word *"Ṭā Hā"*. This name, like the names of many other Sūrahs, is merely symbolic.

Period of Revelation

The period of its revelation is the same as of Sūrah Maryam. It is just possible that it was sent down during the Migration to Ḥabash or just after it. Anyhow, it is certain that this Sūrah was revealed before Ḥaḍrat 'Umar embraced Islam.

According to a well-known and authentic tradition when Ḥaḍrat 'Umar set out to kill the Holy Prophet, he met a certain person, who said, "Before you do anything else, you should know that your own sister and brother-in-law have embraced Islam". Hearing this, he directly went to the house of his sister. There he found his sister, Fātimah, and his brother-in-law, Sa'īd bin Zaid, learning the contents of a scroll from Khabbāb bin Art. When Fātimah saw him coming she hid the scroll at once, but Ḥaḍrat 'Umar had heard the recital, so he began to interrogate them about it. Then he began to thrash his brother-in-law, and wounded his sister, who tried to protect him. At last both of them confessed, "We have become Muslims; you may do whatever you like." As Ḥaḍrat 'Umar was moved to see blood running down from her head, he said, "Show me the thing you were reading." The sister asked him to promise on oath that he would not tear it, and added, "You cannot touch

it unless you have a bath." Accordingly, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar took his bath and when he began to read the scroll, which contained this Sūrah, he spontaneously spoke out, "What an excellent thing!" At this Ḥaḍrat Khabbāb, who had hidden himself at the sound of his footsteps, came out of his hiding and said, "By God, I have high expectations that Allah will get great service from you to propagate the Message of His Prophet, for just yesterday I heard the Holy Prophet praying to Allah, 'My Lord, make Abul Ḥakam bin Hishām (Abū Jahl) or 'Umar bin Khattāb a supporter of Islam. So O 'Umar, turn to Allah, turn to Allah'!" These words proved to be so persuasive that he at once accompanied Ḥaḍrat Khabbāb and went to the Holy Prophet to embrace Islam. This happened a short time after the Migration to Ḥabash.

Theme and Topics of Discussion

This Sūrah begins with the enunciation of the object of the Revelation of the Qur'ān to this effect: "O Muḥammad, this Qur'ān has not been sent down to you to put you unnecessarily to some great affliction. It does not demand from you to perform the impossible task of imbuing the hearts of the obdurate disbelievers with Faith. It is merely an admonition meant to guide on to the Right Path those who fear God and want to save themselves from His punishment. This Qur'ān is the Word of the Master of the earth and the heavens and Godhead belongs to Him alone. These two facts are eternal whether one believes them or not."

After this introduction, the Sūrah abruptly moves on to relate the story of Prophet Moses without any apparent relevancy and without even hinting at its applicability to the events of the period. However, if we read between the lines, we realize that the discourse is addressed very relevantly to the people of Makkah. But before we explain the hidden meaning of the discourse, we must keep in view the fact that the Arabs in general acknowledged Moses as a Prophet of God. This was so because they had been influenced by the large number of the Jews around them and by the neighboring Christian kingdoms. Now let us state those things which are hidden in between the lines of the story:

1. Allah does not appoint a Prophet by the beat of drums or by celebrating the occasion in a regular and formal ceremony, as if to say, "We are appointing such and such a person as Our

Prophet from today." On the contrary, He bestows Prophethood in a confidential manner just as He did in the case of Prophet Moses. Therefore you should not consider it strange if Hadrat Muhammad has been appointed as a Prophet all of a sudden and without any public proclamation.

2. The fundamental principles presented by Prophet Muhammad—*Tauhīd* and the Hereafter—are just the same as were taught to Prophet Moses at the time of his appointment.

3. Prophet Muhammad has been made the standard-bearer of the Message of the Truth among the people of the Quraish all by himself without material provisions, just as Prophet Moses was entrusted with the Mission to go to a tyrant king like Pharaoh and ask him to give up his attitude of rebellion. These are the mysterious ways of Allah. He catches hold of a way-farer of Midian on his way to Egypt and says, "Go and fight with the greatest tyrant of the time." He did not provide him with armies and provisions for this Mission. The only thing He did was to appoint his brother as his assistant at his request.

4. You, O People of Makkah, should note it well that Pharaoh employed the same devices against Prophet Moses as you are employing against Prophet Muhammad—frivolous objections, accusations, and cruel persecutions. You should know that Allah's Prophet came out victorious over Pharaoh, who possessed large armies and war equipments. Incidentally, the Muslims have been consoled and comforted, though not in so many words, that they should not be afraid of fighting with the Quraish against fearful odds, for the mission which is supported by Allah comes out victorious in the end. At the same time, the Muslims have been exhorted to follow the excellent example of the magicians of Egypt, who remained steadfast in their Faith, though Pharaoh threatened them with horrible vengeance.

5. An incident from the story of the Israelites has been cited to show in what ridiculous manner the idolisation of false gods and goddesses starts and that the Prophets of God do not tolerate even the slightest tinge of this preposterous practice. Likewise,

Prophet Muḥammad is following the former Prophets in opposing *shirk* and idol-worship today.

Thus, the story of Moses has been used to throw light on all those matters which were connected with the conflict between the Holy Prophet and the Quraish. Then at the end of the story, the Quraish have been briefly admonished, as if to say, "The Qur'ān has been sent down in your tongue for your own good. If you listen to it and follow its admonition, you will be doing so for your own good but if you reject it, you will yourselves meet with an evil end."

After this the story of Prophet Adam has been related, as if to tell the Quraish, "The way you are following is the way of Satan, whereas the right way for a man is to follow his father Adam. He was beguiled by Satan, but when he realized his error, he plainly confessed it and repented and again turned back to the service of Allah and won His favour. On the other hand, if a person follows Satan and sticks to his error obdurately in spite of admonition, he does harm to himself alone like Satan."

In the end, the Holy Prophet and the Muslims have been advised not to be impatient in regard to the punishment to the disbelievers, as if to say, "Allah has His Own scheme concerning them. He does not seize them at once but gives them sufficient respite. Therefore you should not grow impatient but bear the persecutions with fortitude and go on conveying the Message."

In this connection, great emphasis has been laid on *Ṣalāt* so that it may create in the believers the virtues of patience, forbearance, contentment, resignation to the will of God and self-analysis for these are greatly needed in the service of the Message of the Truth.



طٰهٰ ۝١ مَآ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْاٰنَ لِتَشْقٰٓى ۝٢ اِلَّا تَذْكِرَةً لِّمَنْ يَّخْشٰى ۝٣ تَنْزِيْلًا
مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ الْاَرْضَ وَالسَّمٰوٰتِ الْعُلٰى ۝٤ اَلرَّحْمٰنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوٰى ۝٥ لَهٗ مَا
فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَمَا تَحْتَ الثَّرٰى ۝٦ وَاِنْ تَجْهَرْ بِالْقَوْلِ
فَاِنَّهٗ يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ وَاَخْفَى ۝٧ اَللّٰهُ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۭ لَهُ الْاَسْمَاۗءُ الْحُسْنٰى ۝٨ وَ
هَلْ اَتٰىكَ حَدِيْثُ مُوْسٰى ۝٩ اِذْ رَاَ نَارًا فَقَالَ لِاَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوْٓا اِنِّىْٓ اٰنَسْتُ نَارًا
لَّعَلِّيْٓ اٰتِيْكُمْ مِّنْهَا بِقَبَسٍ اَوْ اَجِدُ عَلَى النَّارِ هُدًى ۝١٠ فَلَمَّآ اَتٰىهَا نُوْدِيَ يٰمُوْسٰٓى ۝١١

XX

ṬĀ HĀ

طٰہٰ

Verses: 135 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

1-8 Ṭā Hā. We have not sent down the Qur'ān to you to put you in distress. This is an Admonition for every such person who fears (God).[1] This has been sent down by that Being, Who has created the earth and the high heavens. The Merciful is sitting on the throne of the Kingdom (of the universe)[2]: He is the Owner of all that which is in

1. This verse makes plain the meaning of the previous one. The object of the Revelation of the Qur'ān is not to make the Holy Prophet do something impossible and to put him to unnecessary distress by demanding from him to imbue the hearts of the obdurate people with Faith, but to admonish those people who have fear of Allah. Therefore the Holy Prophet should not waste his efforts

the heavens and the earth and all that which is between them and under the soil. Whether you utter your supplication in a loud voice (it makes no difference) for He hears not only what is said in a low voice but also what is kept most secret.[3] He is Allah: there is no god but He; all the excellent names are for Him.[4]

And has the history of Moses reached you? When he saw a fire[5] 9-10
he said to his family, "Wait a bit, I have seen a fire: it may be that I bring a burning brand for you, or find guidance (to the way) at the fire."[6]

When he reached there, a voice called out, "O Moses, I am your 11

on those people who have no fear of God left in them, and who do not bother at all about what is Truth and what is falsehood.

2. That is, "After creating the universe, He is ruling over it and conducting all the affairs of its management."

3. That is, "You need not complain to Allah in a loud voice against the persecution from which you and your companions are suffering and the mischievous machinations your enemies are devising to defeat you for Allah is fully aware of all those things, and He hears even the complaints you cherish in your hearts."

4. That is, "He possesses all the excellent attributes and characteristics."

5. This happened when Prophet Moses was returning to Egypt after passing several years in exile in Midian, along with his wife whom he had married there. According to the early part of his history, which has been related in Sūrah XXVIII (Al-Qaṣaṣ), an Egyptian had been killed by Prophet Moses; so he had to leave Egypt in order to escape arrest and had taken refuge in Midian.

6. It appears that this happened during a night of winter, when Prophet Moses was passing through the southern part of the Sinai Peninsula. When he saw a fire at a distance, he went towards it in the hope that he might get some of it to keep his wife and children warm during the night, or at least get some guidance concerning the direction of his journey. But instead of this it was his good fortune that he found the guidance to the Right Way.

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إِنِّيٓ أَنَا رَبُّكَ فَٱخْلَعْ نَعْلَيْكَ ۖ إِنَّكَ بِٱلْوَادِ ٱلْمُقَدَّسِ طُوًى ﴿١٢﴾ وَأَنَا ٱخْتَرْتُكَ
فَٱسْتَمِعْ لِمَا يُوحَىٰٓ ﴿١٣﴾ إِنَّنِيٓ أَنَا ٱللَّهُ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّآ أَنَا فَٱعْبُدْنِى وَأَقِمِ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ
لِذِكْرِىٓ ﴿١٤﴾ إِنَّ ٱلسَّاعَةَ ءَاتِيَةٌ أَكَادُ أُخْفِيهَا لِتُجْزَىٰ كُلُّ نَفْسٍۭ بِمَا تَسْعَىٰ ﴿١٥﴾ فَلَا
يَصُدَّنَّكَ عَنْهَا مَن لَّا يُؤْمِنُ بِهَا وَٱتَّبَعَ هَوَىٰهُ فَتَرْدَىٰ ﴿١٦﴾ وَمَا تِلْكَ بِيَمِينِكَ
يَٰمُوسَىٰ ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَ هِىَ عَصَاىَ ۖ أَتَوَكَّؤُا۟ عَلَيْهَا وَأَهُشُّ بِهَا عَلَىٰ غَنَمِى وَلِىَ
فِيهَا مَـَٔارِبُ أُخْرَىٰ ﴿١٨﴾ قَالَ أَلْقِهَا يَٰمُوسَىٰ ﴿١٩﴾ فَأَلْقَىٰهَا فَإِذَا هِىَ حَيَّةٌ تَسْعَىٰ ﴿٢٠﴾
قَالَ خُذْهَا وَلَا تَخَفْ ۖ سَنُعِيدُهَا سِيرَتَهَا ٱلْأُولَىٰ ﴿٢١﴾ وَٱضْمُمْ يَدَكَ إِلَىٰ
جَنَاحِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضَآءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوٓءٍ ءَايَةً أُخْرَىٰ ﴿٢٢﴾ لِنُرِيَكَ مِنْ ءَايَٰتِنَا ٱلْكُبْرَى ﴿٢٣﴾
ٱذْهَبْ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ إِنَّهُۥ طَغَىٰ ﴿٢٤﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ ٱشْرَحْ لِى صَدْرِى ﴿٢٥﴾ وَيَسِّرْ لِىٓ
أَمْرِى ﴿٢٦﴾ وَٱحْلُلْ عُقْدَةً مِّن لِّسَانِى ﴿٢٧﴾ يَفْقَهُوا۟ قَوْلِى ﴿٢٨﴾ وَٱجْعَل لِّى وَزِيرًا
مِّنْ أَهْلِى ﴿٢٩﴾ هَٰرُونَ أَخِى ﴿٣٠﴾ ٱشْدُدْ بِهِۦٓ أَزْرِى ﴿٣١﴾ وَأَشْرِكْهُ فِىٓ أَمْرِى ﴿٣٢﴾ كَىْ
نُسَبِّحَكَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَنَذْكُرَكَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٣٤﴾ إِنَّكَ كُنتَ بِنَا بَصِيرًا ﴿٣٥﴾ قَالَ قَدْ
أُوتِيتَ سُؤْلَكَ يَٰمُوسَىٰ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ مَنَنَّا عَلَيْكَ مَرَّةً أُخْرَىٰٓ ﴿٣٧﴾ إِذْ أَوْحَيْنَآ إِلَىٰٓ
أُمِّكَ مَا يُوحَىٰٓ ﴿٣٨﴾ أَنِ ٱقْذِفِيهِ فِى ٱلتَّابُوتِ فَٱقْذِفِيهِ فِى ٱلْيَمِّ فَلْيُلْقِهِ ٱلْيَمُّ
بِٱلسَّاحِلِ يَأْخُذْهُ عَدُوٌّ لِّى وَعَدُوٌّ لَّهُۥ ۚ وَأَلْقَيْتُ عَلَيْكَ مَحَبَّةً مِّنِّى ۖ وَ
لِتُصْنَعَ عَلَىٰ عَيْنِىٓ ﴿٣٩﴾ إِذْ تَمْشِىٓ أُخْتُكَ فَتَقُولُ هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ مَن يَكْفُلُهُۥ ۖ
فَرَجَعْنَٰكَ إِلَىٰٓ أُمِّكَ كَىْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنَ ۚ وَقَتَلْتَ نَفْسًا فَنَجَّيْنَٰكَ
مِنَ ٱلْغَمِّ وَفَتَنَّٰكَ فُتُونًا ۚ فَلَبِثْتَ سِنِينَ فِىٓ أَهْلِ مَدْيَنَ ۙ ثُمَّ جِئْتَ
عَلَىٰ قَدَرٍ يَٰمُوسَىٰ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَٱصْطَنَعْتُكَ لِنَفْسِى ﴿٤١﴾ ٱذْهَبْ أَنتَ وَأَخُوكَ بِـَٔايَٰتِى وَ

Lord; take off your shoes,[7] for you are in the sacred valley of Ṭuwā.[8] And I have chosen you: so listen to what is revealed. It is I Who am Allah; there is no god but Me: so worship Me and establish *Ṣalāt* to remember Me.[9] The Hour of Resurrection is sure to come, but it is My will to keep the time of its coming secret so that every soul may be recompensed according to its labours.[10] Therefore let not any person who does not believe in it and has become a slave of his lusts, turn your thoughts away from it, lest you perish— And O Moses, what is this in your right hand?"[11] 12-17

Moses replied, "It is my staff: I lean upon it and I beat down leaves with it for my flock, and I have quite a few other uses for it."[12] 18

He said, "Cast it down, O Moses." 19

So he cast it down and immediately it turned into a snake, which began to run about. 20

He said, "Catch hold of it and do not fear for We will again restore it to its former state. Now clasp your hand under your arm-pit: it will come out shining without any hurt (to you).[13] This is the second Sign: this is because We are going to show you Our great Signs. Now go to Phaṛaoh for he has become rebellious." 21-24

Moses said, "Lord, open my breast for me[14] and make my task easy for me, and remove the impediment from my tongue so that people may understand my speech,[15] and appoint a counsellor for me from my own family, and strengthen my hands by means of Aaron, who is my brother,[16] and make him my associate in my work so that we may glorify Thee and remember Thee always. Thou hast always been watching over us." 25-35

He said, "Your request is granted, O Moses. We have shown favour to you for the second time.[17] Recall the time when We inspired your mother with this idea by means of a Revelation: 'Place this child in a box and put the box in the river; the river will cast it on to the bank and My enemy and his enemy will pick it up. I Myself made you an object of love and so arranged things that you should be brought up under My supervision. Recall the time when your sister was walking along; then she said: 'May I inform you of one, who will bring up this child in the best manner?' Thus We returned you to your mother so that her eye might be cooled and she might not be grieved. And (also 36-42

remember that) you killed a certain person and We freed you from its evil (consequences) and put you through various trials and you stayed with the people of Midian for several years. Now you have come back at the right time: O Moses, I have moulded you for My Mission. You and your brother should go (on the Mission) with My Signs. And see that you do not show any negligence in remembering Me."

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7. Probably, it is because of this that the Jews do not say their prayers with their shoes on. The Holy Prophet, however, removed this misunderstanding, saying, "Act in contrast to the practice of the Jews who do not say their prayers with their shoes or leather socks on." (Abu Dā'ūd). It does not, however, mean that one must say one's prayers with the shoes on, but it is merely to make it lawful to say prayers with shoes on. This is confirmed by another tradition, related by Abū Dā'ūd from 'Amar bin 'Ās, that he had seen the Holy Prophet saying his prayer both with and without the shoes.

There are other traditions also to this effect but it should also be kept in mind that there were no carpets, mats, etc. in the mosques in those days, not even in the Holy Prophet's Mosque. Therefore it would be improper to go with shoes on into the mosques of today which have carpets, mats, etc. However, one may say one's prayer on grassy plots or open ground with shoes on.

8. In general, the commentators are of the opinion that Ṭuwā was the name of the valley, but according to some it means, "The valley that had been made sacred for the time being."

9. This is the real object of *Ṣalāt*. It has been prescribed to remind people that they should not become neglectful of Allah by worldly diversions and that they should remember that man is not an unbridled free being but a servant of Allah. *Ṣalāt* has been prescribed five times a day to remind man of Allah's presence.

Some people are of the opinion that it means: "Establish *Ṣalāt*, so that I may remember you."

Incidentally, according to this verse, if one forgets to offer a prayer in time, one should offer it when one recollects it. This is also supported by a tradition related by Ḥaḍrat Anas: "If one forgets to offer a certain prayer at the proper time, he should offer it whenever he recollects this; for there is no other expiation for this omission." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmed). There is another tradition related by Abū Hurairah to the same effect: It was inquired from the Holy Prophet: "What should we do if we remained asleep during the time of prayer?" The Holy Prophet said, "There is no sin if one remained asleep. The sin is that one

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should neglect one's prayer intentionally while awake. Therefore if one forgets to offer a prayer or remained asleep one should offer that prayer on remembering it or on awaking." (Tirmizī, Nasā'ī, Abū Dā'ūd).

10. After *Tauhīd* the second thing that was revealed to all the Prophets was the reality of the "Hereafter", and they were appointed to impart its knowledge to their peoples. Here its object has also been stated. The Hour of Resurrection is destined to come so that every one should get the recompense in the Hereafter of what one did in this world, and that Hour has been kept secret to fulfil the requirement of the trial. For the one who believes in the Hereafter will always be on his guard against any deviation from the Right Way, and the one who does not believe in the coming of that Hour will remain engaged in other things, for he will think that he did not see any sign of the coming of the Hour.

11. This question was not asked for the sake of getting any information, for Allah knew that Moses held a staff in his hand. The question was posed with a view to impressing upon him the fact that it was a staff so that he might be mentally prepared to see the miracle which was going to be performed with it.

12. Prophet Moses deliberately prolonged his answer and did not stop at: "It is my staff". This was because he naturally wanted to prolong the dialogue to make the privilege meeting last longer.

13. That is, "Your hand will shine brightly like the sun, but it will not cause any hurt to you." It is strange that the Bible interprets this miracle, saying that 'his hand was leprous as snow but it was turned again as his other flesh'. The Talmud also interprets the miracle in the same way and adds that this was a miracle which was meant for Pharaoh who was suffering from leprosy. It is a pity that the same interpretation has been adopted by our own commentators, though the correct interpretation is the one that has been adopted by us, and many former commentators. Obviously, it is bad taste to attribute to a Prophet the repugnant miracle of leprosy and that, too, before a king in his court.

14. That is, "Fill my heart with the courage that may enable me to perform the obligations connected with the great Mission of a Messenger, and give me the confidence for its fulfilment". Prophet Moses prayed for this because he realized the grave responsibilities of the great Mission.

15. Prophet Moses prayed to Allah for this because he was conscious that he was not a fluent speaker but was slow of speech. He also knew that as a Messenger he would have to be fluent in order to impress Pharaoh and his

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لَا تَنِيَا فِيْ ذِكْرِيْ ﴿42﴾ اِذْهَبَآ اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ اِنَّهٗ طَغٰى ﴿43﴾ فَقُوْلَا لَهٗ قَوْلًا لَّيِّنًا
لَّعَلَّهٗ يَتَذَكَّرُ اَوْ يَخْشٰى ﴿44﴾ قَالَا رَبَّنَآ اِنَّنَا نَخَافُ اَنْ يَّفْرُطَ عَلَيْنَآ اَوْ اَنْ
يَّطْغٰى ﴿45﴾ قَالَ لَا تَخَافَآ اِنَّنِيْ مَعَكُمَآ اَسْمَعُ وَاَرٰى ﴿46﴾ فَاْتِيٰهُ فَقُوْلَآ اِنَّا رَسُوْلَا
رَبِّكَ فَاَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ ۗ وَلَا تُعَذِّبْهُمْ ۗ قَدْ جِئْنٰكَ بِاٰيَةٍ
مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ ۗ وَالسَّلٰمُ عَلٰى مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الْهُدٰى ﴿47﴾ اِنَّا قَدْ اُوْحِيَ اِلَيْنَآ اَنَّ الْعَذَابَ
عَلٰى مَنْ كَذَّبَ وَتَوَلّٰى ﴿48﴾ قَالَ فَمَنْ رَّبُّكُمَا يٰمُوْسٰى ﴿49﴾ قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِيْٓ
اَعْطٰى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهٗ ثُمَّ هَدٰى ﴿50﴾ قَالَ فَمَا بَالُ الْقُرُوْنِ الْاُوْلٰى ﴿51﴾
قَالَ عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّيْ فِيْ كِتٰبٍ ۚ لَا يَضِلُّ رَبِّيْ وَلَا يَنْسَى ﴿52﴾ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ
لَكُمُ الْاَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَّسَلَكَ لَكُمْ فِيْهَا سُبُلًا وَّاَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً ۗ
فَاَخْرَجْنَا بِهٖٓ اَزْوَاجًا مِّنْ نَّبَاتٍ شَتّٰى ﴿53﴾ كُلُوْا وَارْعَوْا اَنْعَامَكُمْ ۗ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ
لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّاُولِي النُّهٰى ﴿54﴾ مِنْهَا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ وَفِيْهَا نُعِيْدُكُمْ وَمِنْهَا نُخْرِجُكُمْ
تَارَةً اُخْرٰى ﴿55﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَرَيْنٰهُ اٰيٰتِنَا كُلَّهَا فَكَذَّبَ وَاَبٰى ﴿56﴾ قَالَ اَجِئْتَنَا
لِتُخْرِجَنَا مِنْ اَرْضِنَا بِسِحْرِكَ يٰمُوْسٰى ﴿57﴾ فَلَنَاْتِيَنَّكَ بِسِحْرٍ مِّثْلِهٖ فَاجْعَلْ
بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكَ مَوْعِدًا لَّا نُخْلِفُهٗ نَحْنُ وَلَآ اَنْتَ مَكَانًا سُوًى ﴿58﴾
قَالَ مَوْعِدُكُمْ يَوْمُ الزِّيْنَةِ وَاَنْ يُّحْشَرَ النَّاسُ ضُحًى ﴿59﴾ فَتَوَلّٰى فِرْعَوْنُ
فَجَمَعَ كَيْدَهٗ ثُمَّ اَتٰى ﴿60﴾ قَالَ لَهُمْ مُّوْسٰى وَيْلَكُمْ لَا تَفْتَرُوْا عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا
فَيُسْحِتَكُمْ بِعَذَابٍ ۚ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنِ افْتَرٰى ﴿61﴾ فَتَنَازَعُوْٓا اَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ وَ
اَسَرُّوا النَّجْوٰى ﴿62﴾ قَالُوْٓا اِنْ هٰذٰنِ لَسٰحِرٰنِ يُرِيْدٰنِ اَنْ يُّخْرِجٰكُمْ مِّنْ
اَرْضِكُمْ بِسِحْرِهِمَا وَيَذْهَبَا بِطَرِيْقَتِكُمُ الْمُثْلٰى ﴿63﴾ فَاَجْمِعُوْا كَيْدَكُمْ ثُمَّ ائْتُوْا

"Go both of you to Pharaoh, for he has transgressed all bounds. Talk to him in a gentle manner; may be that he is convinced by admonition or imbued with fear."[18] 43-44

The two[18a] said, "Lord, we dread that he will behave unjustly towards us or treat us cruelly." He answered, "Have no fear: I am with you: I hear everything and see everything. Go to him and say, 'We are Messengers from your Lord, so let the Israelites go with us, and do not oppress them. We have come to you with Signs from your Lord; and peace is for him who follows the Right Way. We have been informed by Revelation that there is scourge for him who rejects it and turns away.'"[19] 45-48

Pharaoh[20] said, "Well, who is the Lord of you both, O Moses?"[21] 49

Moses replied, "Our Lord is He[22] Who has given a distinctive form to everything and then guided it aright."[23] 50

Pharaoh said, "And what was the position of the generations who have passed before ?"[24] 51

Moses replied, "The knowledge of that is with my Lord, secure in a writing; my Lord neither errs nor forgets."[25] 52-55

He[26] it is Who has spread the earth as a bed for you, and made paths for you to move about (from place to place); He sent down rain water from above and produced different kinds of vegetation: eat of these and graze your cattle. Surely there is many a Sign in this for those who possess common sense.[27] We have created you from this earth and We will return you into it and then will bring you forth out of it once again.[28]

We showed all (kinds of) Our Signs[29] to Pharaoh, but he went on treating them as falsehood and refused to believe. He said, "O Moses, have you come to drive us out of our land by the power of your sorcery?[30] Well, we will also bring as strong a sorcery as yours. So settle with us when and where should the encounter take place; then neither should we back out of this agreement nor you. Come out in the open field." 56-58

Moses replied, "Let the encounter take place on the Day of the 59

Feast, and the people assemble after the rising of the sun."[31]

60 Pharaoh then withdrew and gathered together all his devices, and came to the encounter.[32]

61 (On the very occasion) Moses warned (his adversaries), saying,[33] "O unfortunate people, do not invent falsehoods in regard to Allah:[34] otherwise He will destroy you by a scourge: for whoso invented a falsehood, perished."

62-64 Hearing this, a difference of opinion arose among them concerning the issue, and they began to hold secret consultations.[35] At last some of them decided the issue, saying,[36] "These two are no more than sorcerers. Their object is to drive you out of your homeland by the power of their sorcery, and bring to an end your ideal way of life.[37] Therefore muster up all your devices and come into the field with a united front.[38] You should realize that whoso comes out victorious today, he will win (the battle of ideology)."

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courtiers. This is confirmed by the Bible (Exodus 4: 10) but the Talmud gives a strange explanation for this impediment in his speech. According to it, when he was a child he burnt his tongue with a live coal to escape punishment from Pharaoh whose crown he had taken off from his head and put it on his own head. The same story has been adopted by many of our commentators, though it is absurd on the face of it. Our interpretation is also confirmed by the Qur'ān. The fact is, that at first he was not a fluent speaker and Pharaoh had also taunted him on this impediment (XLIII: 52). Prophet Moses realized the same for he said, "My brother Aaron is more fluent than I, so send him with me as a helper, so that he may support me (with his fluent speech)." (XXVIII: 34). Afterwards this impediment in his speech was removed and he was able to deliver very fluent speeches. This may be testified by his speeches which have been cited both in the Bible and in the Qur'ān for they are masterpieces of eloquence and rhetoric.

Above all, it does not stand to reason that Allah should appoint a lisper or a stammerer or a stutterer as His Messenger. That is why the Messengers have always been the best of mankind in regard to their appearance, personality and capabilities for they had to be most impressive both in their appearance and conduct, so that they could not be made the target of ridicule and contempt by the people because of such personal defects as stammering or stuttering.

16. Prophet Aaron was three years older than Prophet Moses (Exodus, 7:7).

17. Allah recounts the favours He had shown to Prophet Moses since his birth in order to impress on him the fact that he had been brought up under Divine care right from his birth for the purpose of appointing him as a Messenger. Here mere references have been made but in Sūrah XXVIII (Al-Qaṣaṣ) details of the favours have been given.

18. The only two ways of bringing a man to the Right Way are: (1) To convince him by argument and admonition, or (2) to warn him of the consequences of deviation.

18a. It appears that they implored Allah thus before going before Pharaoh when Prophet Moses had reached Egypt and Aaron had joined him in the propagation of the Mission.

19. A comparative study of this incident as given in the Bible and the Talmud will show that the Qur'ān does not copy the stories from these books, but gives its own version in order to portray the Messengers in their true glory and dignity. According to the Bible, when God said to Moses that He would send him to Pharaoh, Moses replied, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3: 11). God persuaded and encouraged Moses by giving him Signs but he was still reluctant and said, "O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of *him whom* thou wilt send." (Exodus 4: 13). And the Talmud goes even further than this and says that there was an argument between God and Moses for seven days that he should become a Prophet but Moses did not accept the offer. At this God was angry with him and so made his brother Aaron a partner in his Prophethood. Moreover, He deprived the descendants of Moses of the office of priesthood and bestowed it on the descendants of Aaron. These two versions depict Allah to be suffering from human weaknesses and Prophet Moses from inferiority complex.

20. Here the details have been omitted. These have been given in VII: 103-108, XXVI: 10-33, XXVIII: 28-40, LXXIX: 15-25.

As regards the necessary information about Pharaoh, see E.N. 85 of Chapter VII.

21. Pharaoh addressed Prophet Moses because he was, in regard to Prophethood, the senior of the two. It is also possible that he deliberately addressed him in order to exploit his impediment in speech, and ignored Prophet Aaron, who was more fluent.

As regards the implication of this question of Pharaoh, he meant to say, "You say that you have brought a Message from my Lord to me. Who is that Lord? You should know that I am the Lord of Egypt and the people of Egypt". In regard to this claim of his, see LXXIX: 24, XLIII: 51, XXVIII: 38 and XXVI: 29.

It may also be noted that by this claim Pharaoh did not mean to say that he was the sole deity of his people nor did it mean that none other was worshipped in Egypt. As a matter of fact, he himself based his right of sovereignty on his claim of being the incarnation of the sungod. And we also learn from the history of Egypt that there were many other gods and goddesses. In fact, what he claimed was that he was politically the Lord of not only Egypt but also of the whole of mankind theoretically. Therefore, he would not acknowledge that there was any supreme sovereign over him whose delegate might bring an order to him and demand its obedience from him.

22. That is, "We acknowledge Him alone as our Lord in every sense: He is our Sustainer, our Maker, our Master, our Sovereign and is Supreme in everything, and there is no other lord in any sense but He."

23. This concise sentence needs serious attention. It means that it is Allah alone Who has created everything and given it its distinctive structure, form, capabilities, characteristics, etc.

(1) For instance, man has been given the hands and feet which are given the most appropriate structure that was needed for their right functioning.

(2) A human being, an animal, a plant, mineral and the like, air, water and light—everything has been given that particular form which was needed for its right functioning in the universe.

(3) Then He has guided everything aright to function properly. It is He Who has taught everything the way to fulfil that object for which it has been created. He has taught the ear to hear and the eye to see; the fish to swim and the swallow to fly; the earth to grow vegetation and the tree to blossom and bear fruit. In short, He is not only the Creator of everything but also its Guide and Teacher.

Prophet Moses employed this concise and meaningful sentence to convey the Message to Pharaoh and his people. He not only gave a suitable reply to Pharaoh as to who his Lord was, but also told him why He was his Lord, and how there was no other lord than He. The argument implied in it was this: As Pharaoh and every one of his subjects was obliged to Allah for his human form and could not live even for a moment without the functioning of the different parts of his body which were performing their functions in accordance with the guidance of

Allah, so Pharaoh's claim that he was the lord of the people was absurd, and its acknowledgment by his people that he was their Lord, a folly.

Besides this, Prophet Moses also hinted at the need of Prophethood which was denied by Pharaoh. When Allah guides everything in the universe, He has also to fulfil the need of the guidance of mankind. Whereas the guidance of the animals and birds has been provided by instinct, the guidance of rational human beings has been provided by sending Messengers who appealed to them by rational arguments.

24. The question posed by Pharaoh was very subtle. He meant to say, "If there is no other lord than the One Who has given a distinctive form to everyone, then what will be the position of our forefathers who had been worshipping other deities since centuries? Were all those people in error? Did all of them deserve torment? Did they all lack common sense ?" Thus Pharaoh perhaps wanted to give vent to his anger against Prophet Moses for showing disrespect to his forefathers. At the same time he also wanted to incite his courtiers and the common people of Egypt against the Message of Prophet Moses. And this trick has always been used against the people who propagate the Truth and has always proved very effective to incite those people who lack common sense. This same trick has been mentioned here for it was being employed at the very time against the Holy Prophet by the people of Makkah.

25. This answer is full of wisdom. If Prophet Moses had said, "Yes, they all lacked common sense and had gone astray and would become the fuel of Hell", this answer, though true, would have served the very purpose Pharaoh had in mind in putting the question. But the answer given by the Prophet was true and it frustrated the trick of Pharaoh as well. His answer was to this effect: "Well, those people have now gone before their Lord, and I have no means of judging their deeds and intentions. However, their whole record is safe and secure with Allah, and nothing can escape Him. Allah alone knows how to deal with them. What concerns you and me is our own position and attitude to life. We should be more concerned about our own end than of those who have already passed away into Allah's presence."

26. It is quite obvious that vv. 53-55 are an addition by Allah to the foregoing answer by Prophet Moses. There are other instances of this in the Qur'ān that Allah added a few sentences to the speech of someone by way of admonition. Moreover, it is connected not only with the preceding verse but also with the whole reply of Prophet Moses (vv. 50-52).

27. That is, "Those, who use their common sense in their search for the Truth, find a way to the Reality by the help of these Signs, which clearly show that

the universe has One Lord Who alone is sustaining it, and there is no room here for any other lord."

28. That is, "Every man has to pass through three stages: (1) from birth to death, (2) from death to Resurrection, and (3) from the Day of Resurrection to Eternity. According to this verse, all the three stages will take place on this Earth.

29. "Signs" comprised those arguments which were based on natural phenomena and human life and those miracles which were given to Prophet Moses. These arguments are contained in the speeches of Prophet Moses which he delivered before Pharaoh, and the miracles which he showed and are mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān.

30. Here by sorcery are meant the miracles of the staff and the shining hand, which according to the details given in Chapters VII and XXVI, were shown to Pharaoh by Prophet Moses in his first visit to his court. On seeing these miracles Pharaoh was so upset that he cried out, "Have you come to drive us out of our country by the power of your sorcery? although he knew that it had never happened in history that a magician had conquered a country by the power of sorcery. Moreover, there were hundreds of magicians in his own country, who used to show their feats to earn rewards and prizes. Accordingly, Pharaoh's statement that "you are a sorcerer" on the one hand, and his apprehension that "you want to snatch my kingdom" on the other, were a clear indication of his perturbed mind. In fact, Pharaoh had come to understand that the well-reasoned speech of Moses and his miracles were bound to influence not only his courtiers, but also the common people and accordingly he tried to play upon their prejudices through falsehood and treachery. He did not admit that it was a miracle, but called it sorcery. He wanted to create an impression that any sorcerer of his empire could turn a staff into a serpent. He also incited the people, saying: "Look! he says that your forefathers were on the wrong way and deserved perdition. So beware of him! He is not a Prophet. He simply aspires for power. He wants that the Israelites should again capture power here like the times of Joseph and wrest the reigns of government from the Copts." Pharaoh, in fact, wanted to suppress the invitation to the Truth through such devices. (For details please see E.N.'s 87 to 89 of Chapter VII; E.N. 75 of Chapter X).

31. The object of Pharaoh was this: "Once the sorcerers are able to transform the staffs and ropes into serpents, the entire effect of the miracle performed by Moses would disappear from the people's minds. That was exactly to Moses' advantage, who suggested that it was no good fixing an ordinary day or place for the purpose. The Day of the Feast was at hand. People would flock on that occasion from all corners of the empire. Therefore, the encounter should be

held in the open so that all might witness it, and in the day time so that every one should be able to see it clearly."

32. Pharaoh and his courtiers considered the coming encounter as a decisive one as far as their own future was concerned and, therefore, they attached the utmost importance to it. Courtiers were sent throughout the country to muster round all the magicians wherever available. People were especially encouraged to come in the largest numbers to witness the magic skills so as to keep them immune from the awe inspired by the staff of Moses. It was openly said that the fate of their religion hinged on the skill of their magicians: their religion could survive only if they won; otherwise the religion of Moses would have its sway (see XXVI: 34-51).

Here one should bear in mind the fact that the religion of the royal family and the elite of Egypt was much different from that of the common people. They had separate gods and temples and different creeds and concepts about the life after death. They also differed in the practice of religion as well as in the ideologies. (Toynbee: *A Study of History:* Somervell's Abridgment Vols. I-VI, pp. 31-32). Moreover, there were sufficiently strong pockets of the population, who under the influence of various religious upheavels, were prone to prefer Monotheism to a creed of polytheism. Besides this, there was also a fairly large element of the worshippers of One God for the Israelites and their fellow believers were at least ten. per cent of the total population. Pharaoh also remembered that about 150 years earlier a religious revolution had been brought about by Pharaoh Amenophis IV or Akhenaton (1377-1360 B.C.) by military force, which had abolished all deities except Aton, a single, universal god, which was worshipped by the king and his family. Though this religious revolution had been reversed later by another king, yet its influence remained, and Pharaoh dreaded that Moses might bring about yet another revolution.

33. The "adversaries" whom Prophet Moses addressed were Pharaoh and his courtiers who had dubbed him as a "sorcerer", and not the common people, who had yet to see the encounter between him and the magicians.

34. "The falsehoods" were that they had dubbed Allah's Messenger as a "sorcerer" and his miracles as "a piece of sorcery".

35. This shows that those people felt in their hearts that their position was weak and knew that the miracle shown by Prophet Moses was not a piece of magic. Therefore, they had come for the encounter with hesitation and fear. But when the timely, sudden warning of Prophet Moses shook them to the core, they began to debate the wisdom of holding the encounter on the Feast Day in an open

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صَفًّا ۚ وَقَدْ اَفْلَحَ الْيَوْمَ مَنِ اسْتَعْلٰى ﴿64﴾ قَالُوْا يٰمُوْسٰٓى اِمَّآ اَنْ تُلْقِيَ وَ
اِمَّآ اَنْ نَّكُوْنَ اَوَّلَ مَنْ اَلْقٰى ﴿65﴾ قَالَ بَلْ اَلْقُوْا ۚ فَاِذَا حِبَالُهُمْ وَعِصِيُّهُمْ
يُخَيَّلُ اِلَيْهِ مِنْ سِحْرِهِمْ اَنَّهَا تَسْعٰى ﴿66﴾ فَاَوْجَسَ فِيْ نَفْسِهٖ خِيْفَةً مُّوْسٰى ﴿67﴾
قُلْنَا لَا تَخَفْ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْاَعْلٰى ﴿68﴾ وَاَلْقِ مَا فِيْ يَمِيْنِكَ تَلْقَفْ مَا صَنَعُوْا ۭ
اِنَّمَا صَنَعُوْا كَيْدُ سٰحِرٍ ۭ وَلَا يُفْلِحُ السّٰحِرُ حَيْثُ اَتٰى ﴿69﴾ فَاُلْقِيَ السَّحَرَةُ
سُجَّدًا قَالُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا بِرَبِّ هٰرُوْنَ وَمُوْسٰى ﴿70﴾ قَالَ اٰمَنْتُمْ لَهٗ قَبْلَ اَنْ اٰذَنَ
لَكُمْ ۭ اِنَّهٗ لَكَبِيْرُكُمُ الَّذِيْ عَلَّمَكُمُ السِّحْرَ ۚ فَلَاُقَطِّعَنَّ اَيْدِيَكُمْ وَاَرْجُلَكُمْ
مِّنْ خِلَافٍ وَّلَاُوصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ فِيْ جُذُوْعِ النَّخْلِ ۡ وَلَتَعْلَمُنَّ اَيُّنَآ اَشَدُّ عَذَابًا
وَّاَبْقٰى ﴿71﴾ قَالُوْا لَنْ نُّؤْثِرَكَ عَلٰي مَا جَاۗءَنَا مِنَ الْبَيِّنٰتِ وَالَّذِيْ فَطَرَنَا
فَاقْضِ مَآ اَنْتَ قَاضٍ ۭ اِنَّمَا تَقْضِيْ هٰذِهِ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا ﴿72﴾ اِنَّآ اٰمَنَّا بِرَبِّنَا
لِيَغْفِرَ لَنَا خَطٰيٰنَا وَمَآ اَكْرَهْتَنَا عَلَيْهِ مِنَ السِّحْرِ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ خَيْرٌ وَّاَبْقٰى ﴿73﴾ اِنَّهٗ
مَنْ يَّاْتِ رَبَّهٗ مُجْرِمًا فَاِنَّ لَهٗ جَهَنَّمَ ۭ لَا يَمُوْتُ فِيْهَا وَلَا يَحْيٰى ﴿74﴾ وَمَنْ
يَّاْتِهٖ مُؤْمِنًا قَدْ عَمِلَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ فَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ لَهُمُ الدَّرَجٰتُ الْعُلٰى ﴿75﴾ جَنّٰتُ
عَدْنٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۭ وَذٰلِكَ جَزٰۗؤُا مَنْ تَزَكّٰى ﴿76﴾
وَلَقَدْ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلٰى مُوْسٰٓى ۙ اَنْ اَسْرِ بِعِبَادِيْ فَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ طَرِيْقًا فِي الْبَحْرِ
يَبَسًا ۙ لَّا تَخٰفُ دَرَكًا وَّلَا تَخْشٰى ﴿77﴾ فَاَتْبَعَهُمْ فِرْعَوْنُ بِجُنُوْدِهٖ فَغَشِيَهُمْ مِّنَ
الْيَمِّ مَا غَشِيَهُمْ ﴿78﴾ وَاَضَلَّ فِرْعَوْنُ قَوْمَهٗ وَمَا هَدٰى ﴿79﴾ يٰبَنِيْٓ اِسْرَاۗءِيْلَ
قَدْ اَنْجَيْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ عَدُوِّكُمْ وَوٰعَدْنٰكُمْ جَانِبَ الطُّوْرِ الْاَيْمَنَ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكُمُ
الْمَنَّ وَالسَّلْوٰى ﴿80﴾ كُلُوْا مِنْ طَيِّبٰتِ مَا رَزَقْنٰكُمْ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا فِيْهِ فَيَحِلَّ

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The magicians[39] said, "O Moses, will you cast down (your things) or shall we cast down first?" 65

Moses replied, "No, cast down (yours)." 66-70

Suddenly it so appeared to Moses that their cords and staffs were running about by the power of their magic,[40] and Moses' heart was filled with fear.[41] We said, "Don't fear for you will come out victorious. Cast down what is in your hand, and it will swallow up all their sham creation;[42] for they are mere tricks of a magician; and a magician can never succeed, howsoever skilled he may be." Accordingly, at the end of the encounter, all the magicians were cast down to prostration[43] and they cried out, "We believe in the Lord of Aaron and Moses."[44]

Pharaoh said, "Have you believed in him before I gave you permission? Obviously, he is your master who has taught you sorcery.[45] Well, now I will have your hands and feet cut off on alternate sides[46] and crucify you on the trunks of palm-trees [47] then you shall know whose punishment is more terrible and lasting (mine or that of Moses)."[48] 71

The magicians replied, "By Him Who has created us, we can never prefer you (to the Truth) after we have seen clear Signs.[49] Therefore you may do your worst, for at the most you can pass judgment concerning this worldly life. We have believed in our Lord so that He may pardon our errors, and forgive us the sin of sorcery which you forced us to practice. Allah is Best and Eternal." --In fact,[50] for the one who comes before his Lord as a criminal, there shall be Hell, wherein he shall neither live nor die.[51] As for the one, who comes before Him as a Believer, who has done good deeds, all such people will have the highest ranks for them. They will dwell for ever in the evergreen Gardens beneath which canals flow. Such is the reward of the one who adopts purity. 72-76

We[52] sent this Revelation to Moses: "Set forth with My servants during the night and make for them a dry path across the sea.[53] Have no fear of being overtaken nor be afraid (while passing through the sea)." 77

Pharaoh pursued them with his hosts but the sea overwhelmed 78-79

them completely.[54] Pharaoh had misled his people and had not guided them aright.[55]

80 O children of Israel,[56] We rescued you from your enemy and fixed a time for your attendance on the right side of Ṭūr,[57,58] and sent

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place in the broad day light. For they thought that if they were defeated in the presence of the common people, all would come to know of the difference between magic and a miracle and they would lose the battle once for all.

36. Those who were of this view must have been a few fanatics of Pharaoh's party—who were prepared to go to any extent to oppose Prophet Moses. Those hot-headed people must have been preparing the public for a determined encounter, while the saner and experienced among them must have been advising caution and restraint.

37. Probably those people based their argument on two things:

(1) If their magicians were also able to turn their staffs into serpents, it would be a clear proof that Moses too was a sorcerer.

(2) If, on the other hand, Moses won, the rulers would lose their country, and their ideal way of life, which reflected their culture, their arts, their civilization, their recreations, etc. would automatically come to an end. Therefore they should do all they could to defeat Moses.

38. They also urged them to present a united front and not to show their differences on the very occasion of the encounter. For, they argued, any hesitation and secret consultation before the very eyes of the public would show that they did not consider themselves to be in the right.

39. That confidence was subsequently restored among Pharaoh's party by the speech of the head-strong people, and the magicians were asked to come into the field for the encounter, has been omitted.

40. In VII: 116, it was stated: "When they threw down their devices they bewitched the eyes of the people and filled their hearts with terror." Here it is stated that it was not the common people alone who were terrified by their magic but Prophet Moses too suffered from its effect. He not only seemed to see that the staffs and cords were running about like serpents but he also felt a dread of them.

41. It appears that no sooner did Prophet Moses say, "Cast down", than the magicians immediately cast their staffs and cords and it seemed as if hundreds of serpents were running towards him, and he instinctively felt a dread of them. And there is nothing strange in this because a Prophet is after all a human being.

Besides this, it is also possible that Prophet Moses apprehended that the demonstration of the magic might create a misunderstanding among the people about his miracle.

This is also a proof that a Prophet too can be influenced by magic to a certain extent like the common people, though magicians have no power to produce any effect on his Prophethood or interfere with Revelation, or misguide him. Therefore there is no reason why one should consider as false those traditions in which it has been stated that the Holy Prophet suffered temporarily from the effect of magic.

42. This is capable of two interpretations: (1) the staff, which was turned into a dragon by a miracle, actually swallowed up all the staffs and cords which had been made to appear as serpents. (2) The dragon of the staff did not actually swallow up the serpents of the magicians but wiped out the effect of their magic from these things and they again became ordinary cords and staffs. We prefer the second interpretation because the wording of VII: 117 and XXVI: 45 is this: "It swallowed up their false magic", and here the wording is: "It will swallow up all their sham creation". Obviously, the staffs and cords were not their creation but the magic which had made them appear like serpents.

43. When they saw the power of the staff of Moses, they involuntarily fell prostrate as if some one had made them do so, because they were convinced that it was a miracle and not a feat of magic.

44. This profession of faith by the magicians shows that every one was aware of the basic object of the encounter. It was not an encounter between the feats of the magicians and those of Prophet Moses, but it was to decide whether the claim of Prophet Moses that he was a Messenger of Allah was true or not. If this staff was actually turned into a dragon, it was by means of a miracle. On the other hand, Pharaoh intended to prove by the feats of his magicians that it was not a miracle but a feat of magic. Incidentally, this also shows that Pharaoh and his magicians and the common people fully understood the distinction between a miracle and a feat of magic. That is why when the magicians saw that it was a miracle shown by the power of Allah which had exposed their magic, they did not say that Moses was a more skilful magician, but straightway fell prostrate, saying, "We believe in the Lord of Aaron and Moses."

It is obvious that the defeat turned the tables on Pharaoh who had himself arranged the encounter "to expose" Prophet Moses. He had mustered all his magicians with a view to demonstrating before the public that there was nothing extraordinary in turning a staff into a serpent for this could be done by every magician. But the defeat of the magicians and their acknowledgment testified that

Moses was really a Messenger of Allah and the transformation of the staff was not a feat of magic but a miracle.

45. In VII : 123, it has been stated : "Indeed it was a plot you conspired in the city to deprive the rightful owners of their power." Here the same thing has been further explained, as if to say, "It is not merely a plot between you and him but it appears that Moses is your master and leader. You conspired beforehand that you would be defeated by your master in the encounter to prove that he was a Messenger who had shown the miracle of the staff to frustrate your magic and bring about a political revolution in the country."

46. That is, "Right hand and left foot or *vice versa.*"

47. This was a very cruel way of punishment in ancient times. They fixed a long pole in the ground or used the trunk of a tree for this purpose. Then a piece of wood was tied across it at the top. Then the hands of the criminal were nailed on to it and he was left hanging there for hours to die a slow, painful death.

48. This was the last trick played by Pharaoh to win the losing game. He held out the threat of a cruel punishment in order to coerce them to admit that there really was a conspiracy between Prophet Moses and them against the kingdom. But the fortitude and determination of the magicians turned the tables on him. The very fact that they were ready to endure the terrible punishment proved to the world that they had sincerely believed in the Prophethood of Moses and that the charge of conspiracy was an impudent trick that had been invented as a device.

49. It may also be interpreted like this: "It cannot be that we should prefer you to these plain Signs which have come before us and to that Being Who has created us."

50. This is a saying of Allah, which has been added to the foregoing words of the magicians.

51. This is the most terrible of all the punishments that have been mentioned in the Qur'ān. The criminal will prefer death to the horrible life in Hell, but death will not come to him. He will remain in that state of agony without any hope of relief from it.

52. Here the details of the events which happened during the long period of Prophet Moses' stay in Egypt have been omitted. For these please see VII: 130-147, X: 83-92, XL: 23-50 and XLIII: 46-56.

53: This happened when God at last appointed a night for the exodus of the Israelites and the other Muslims from Egypt. They were asked to gather at a fixed place and set forth as a caravan. Just at the time when they reached the coast of the Red Sea from where they had to cross to the Sinai Peninsula, Pharaoh

arrived there with a large army in their pursuit. We learn from XXVI: 61 -63 that when they were literally between the devil and the deep sea, Allah commanded Moses to smite the sea with his staff and according to this verse the sea tore asunder and stood like two high walls on both sides, leaving a dry path between them for the caravan to pass. Thus, it is quite clear and plain that it was a miracle, and not the result of a wind storm or tide, for when the water rises in this way it does not remain standing like two high walls, leaving a dry path between them. (For details see E.N. 47 of Chapter XXVI).

54. According to XXVI: 64-66, Pharaoh with his hosts followed the caravan on the dry path and they were all drowned. In II :50, it has been stated that the Israelites had reached the other shore and saw them drowning in the sea. From X: 90-92, we learn that Pharaoh professed to believe in God while he was drowning but this was rejected by God and he was told that his dead body would be preserved for the coming generations to serve as a lesson for them.

55. This was a subtle warning to the disbelievers of Makkah, as if to say, "Your chiefs and leaders are leading you on the same way on which Pharaoh led his people; now you may yourselves see that he did not guide them aright."

In conclusion, it will be worth while to consider the version as given in the Bible, for this will make it plain that it is absolutely false and ridiculous to say that the Qur'ān has copied these stories from the Israelite traditions. We learn from Exodus the following:

(1) According to 4: 2-5, the miracle of the staff was given to Prophet Moses, and in 4:17 he was instructed: "And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs", but according to 7: 9, the same rod was transferred to Prophet Aaron and then it remained with him to work miracles.

(2) The first dialogue between Prophet Moses and Pharaoh has been given in Chapter 5, but there is no mention in it whatever of the Doctrine of *Tauhīd* presented by Moses. In answer to Pharaoh's question: "Who *is* the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord", Moses and Aaron merely said, "The God of the Hebrews hath met with us". (5: 2-3).

(3) The encounter with the magicians has been summed up in a few sentences thus: "And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Shew a miracle for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast *it* before Pharaoh, *and* it shall become a serpent. And Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh, and they did so as the Lord had commanded: and Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh, and before his servants, and it became a serpent. Then Pharaoh also

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عَلَيْكُمْ غَضَبِيْ ۚ وَمَنْ يَّحْلِلْ عَلَيْهِ غَضَبِيْ فَقَدْ هَوٰى ﴿٨١﴾ وَاِنِّيْ لَغَفَّارٌ
لِّمَنْ تَابَ وَاٰمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا ثُمَّ اهْتَدٰى ﴿٨٢﴾ وَمَآ اَعْجَلَكَ عَنْ
قَوْمِكَ يٰمُوْسٰى ﴿٨٣﴾ قَالَ هُمْ اُولَآءِ عَلٰٓى اَثَرِيْ وَعَجِلْتُ اِلَيْكَ رَبِّ لِتَرْضٰى ﴿٨٤﴾
قَالَ فَاِنَّا قَدْ فَتَنَّا قَوْمَكَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِكَ وَاَضَلَّهُمُ السَّامِرِيُّ ﴿٨٥﴾ فَرَجَعَ مُوْسٰٓى
اِلٰى قَوْمِهٖ غَضْبَانَ اَسِفًا ۚ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اَلَمْ يَعِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ وَعْدًا حَسَنًا ۗ
اَفَطَالَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْعَهْدُ اَمْ اَرَدْتُّمْ اَنْ يَّحِلَّ عَلَيْكُمْ غَضَبٌ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ
فَاَخْلَفْتُمْ مَّوْعِدِيْ ﴿٨٦﴾ قَالُوْا مَآ اَخْلَفْنَا مَوْعِدَكَ بِمَلْكِنَا وَلٰكِنَّا حُمِّلْنَآ اَوْزَارًا
مِّنْ زِيْنَةِ الْقَوْمِ فَقَذَفْنٰهَا فَكَذٰلِكَ اَلْقَى السَّامِرِيُّ ﴿٨٧﴾ فَاَخْرَجَ لَهُمْ عِجْلًا
جَسَدًا لَّهٗ خُوَارٌ فَقَالُوْا هٰذَآ اِلٰهُكُمْ وَاِلٰهُ مُوْسٰى ۙ فَنَسِيَ ﴿٨٨﴾ اَفَلَا يَرَوْنَ
اَلَّا يَرْجِعُ اِلَيْهِمْ قَوْلًا ۙ وَّلَا يَمْلِكُ لَهُمْ ضَرًّا وَّلَا نَفْعًا ﴿٨٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ قَالَ
لَهُمْ هٰرُوْنُ مِنْ قَبْلُ يٰقَوْمِ اِنَّمَا فُتِنْتُمْ بِهٖ ۚ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ الرَّحْمٰنُ
فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ وَاَطِيْعُوْٓا اَمْرِيْ ﴿٩٠﴾ قَالُوْا لَنْ نَّبْرَحَ عَلَيْهِ عٰكِفِيْنَ حَتّٰى يَرْجِعَ
اِلَيْنَا مُوْسٰى ﴿٩١﴾ قَالَ يٰهٰرُوْنُ مَا مَنَعَكَ اِذْ رَاَيْتَهُمْ ضَلُّوْٓا ﴿٩٢﴾ اَلَّا تَتَّبِعَنِ ۗ
اَفَعَصَيْتَ اَمْرِيْ ﴿٩٣﴾ قَالَ يَبْنَؤُمَّ لَا تَاْخُذْ بِلِحْيَتِيْ وَلَا بِرَاْسِيْ ۚ اِنِّيْ خَشِيْتُ
اَنْ تَقُوْلَ فَرَّقْتَ بَيْنَ بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ وَلَمْ تَرْقُبْ قَوْلِيْ ﴿٩٤﴾ قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكَ
يٰسَامِرِيُّ ﴿٩٥﴾ قَالَ بَصُرْتُ بِمَا لَمْ يَبْصُرُوْا بِهٖ فَقَبَضْتُ قَبْضَةً مِّنْ اَثَرِ
الرَّسُوْلِ فَنَبَذْتُهَا وَكَذٰلِكَ سَوَّلَتْ لِيْ نَفْسِيْ ﴿٩٦﴾ قَالَ فَاذْهَبْ فَاِنَّ لَكَ
فِي الْحَيٰوةِ اَنْ تَقُوْلَ لَا مِسَاسَ ۖ وَاِنَّ لَكَ مَوْعِدًا لَّنْ تُخْلَفَهٗ ۚ وَانْظُرْ
اِلٰٓى اِلٰهِكَ الَّذِيْ ظَلْتَ عَلَيْهِ عَاكِفًا ۭ لَنُحَرِّقَنَّهٗ ثُمَّ لَنَنْسِفَنَّهٗ فِي الْيَمِّ

down *manna* and *salva* to you.[59]—Eat of the pure provision We have given you and do not transgress after this; otherwise My wrath will visit you. And he who is visited by My wrath is bound to perish except the one who repents and believes and does righteous deeds and then follows the straight path, for I am very forgiving for such a one.[60] 81-82

"And Moses,[61] what has hastened you to come here before your people?"[62] 83

He said, "They are just coming behind me: I have hastened to come before Thee, O my Lord, so that Thou mayst be pleased with me." He said, "Well, listen! We put your people to a trial after you and the Sāmirī[63] has misled them." 84-85

Moses returned to his people in a state of anger and grief. Reaching there, he said, "O my people, did not your Lord make good promises with you ?[64] Had a long time passed since those promises were fulfilled?[65] Or did you want Allah's wrath to come down upon you that you went against your Covenant with me?"[66] 86

They answered, "We did not go against the Covenant with you of our own accord; it so happened that we felt burdened with the ornaments of the people and we merely threw them down.[67] ---- Then[68] the Sāmirī also put down something like these and forged the shape of a calf which lowed like an ox. Then the people cried out, 'This is your god and the god of Moses: Moses has forgotten it." Did they not see that it did not respond to their prayer nor had it any power to hurt and benefit them ? 87-89

Aaron had already warned the people, saying, "O people, you have been involved in mischief by this (calf) In fact, your Lord is Rahmān, so follow me and submit to me." But they replied, "We will go on worshipping it till Moses comes back to us."[69] 90-91

(After rebuking the people, Moses turned to Aaron) and said, "O Aaron, what prevented you from following my way when you saw that they were going astray? What, did you disobey my command?"[70] 92-93

Aaron said, "O son of my mother, do not seize me by my beard nor pull the hair of my head.[71] I was afraid that you might say on your return, 'You sowed discord among the Israelites and did not 94

pay due heed to my words'!"[72]

95 (Then Moses turned to Sāmirī) and said, "O Sāmirī, what have you to say about the matter?"

96 He replied, "I saw what the people did not see: so I took a handful of dust from the footprints of the Messenger, and sprinkled it (on the calf), for so did my soul prompt me."[73]

97 Moses said, "Well, get away! now you shall have to say throughout your life: 'Touch me not'.[74] And there is an appointed time for your reckoning which is inevitable. And just have a look at your god which you cherished so much: now We will burn it and shatter it and cast the ashes into the sea.

Contd. from p.107]

called the wise men and the sorcerers: now the magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their enchantments. For they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods." (7: 8-12)

When we compare this with the version of it in the Qur'ān, it becomes obvious that the description in the Bible lacks the real essence of the whole encounter, for it does not mention that the encounter took place on the Day of the Feast in the open as a result of a regular challenge, and there is no mention at all that the magicians became believers in the Lord of Moses and Aaron and remained steadfast in their faith even in face of terrible threats.

(4) According to the Qur'ān, Prophet Moses demanded full freedom and liberty for the Israelites, but according to the Bible his demand was only this: "Let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God." (5:3)

(5) In Chapters 11 to 14, the details of the events concerning the exodus from Egypt to the drowning of Pharaoh have been given. Though these contain some useful information and details about the events which have been briefly described in the Qur'ān, they contain some strange contradictions as well. For instance, in 14:15-16 the staff (rod) again comes into the hands of Prophet Moses, who is commanded: ".... lift thou up thy rod, and stretch out thine hand over the sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go on dry *ground* through the midst of the sea." But in vv. 21 -22, it is said: "And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go *back* by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry *land*, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea

upon the dry *ground:* and the waters *were* a wall unto them, on their right hand, and on their left."

It is not clear whether the sea was divided by a miracle or by a strong "east wind" which incidentally has never been known to divide the sea into two parts leaving a dry path between them.

It will also be worth while to make a study of these events as given in the Talmud. The Talmudic account differs from the Biblical version but is nearer to the one given in the Qur'ān. A comparative study of the two clearly shows that the one is based on direct Revelation from Allāh and the other on centuries old oral traditions which have been handed down from one generation to the other and thus considerably tampered with. (See H. Polano: *The Talmud Selections*, pp. 150-154).

56. The part of the story relating to their journey from the Red Sea to the foot of Mount Ṭūr has been omitted. This has already been given in VII:138-147. It has also been stated there that the Israelites said to Moses, "O Moses, make a god also for us like the gods these people have". (See VII:138 and its E.N. 98).

57. That is, on the eastern side of *Ṭūr*

58. According to II: 51 and VII: 142, Prophet Moses and the chiefs of the Israelites were summoned to Mount Ṭūr for receiving the Divine Commandments on stone tablets for the guidance of the people. (See E.N. 71 of Chapter II).

59. For details please see E.N. 73 of Chapter II and E.N. 119 of Chapter VII. According to the Bible, *manna* and *salva* started being provided to the Israelites when they were passing through the wilderness between Elim and Sinai. According to Exodus, *manna* and *salva* were sent down thus:

"And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host. And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground. And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat .....And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it was like coriander seed, white; and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey." (16: 13-15, 31).

In Numbers, the following details have been given:

"And the people went about, and gathered it, and ground it in mills, or beat *it* in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it: and the taste of it

was as the taste of fresh oil. And when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the *manna* fell upon it." (11: 8-9).

60. According to this verse (82), there are four conditions for forgiveness:

(1) Repentance: to refrain from rebellion, disobedience, *shirk* or disbelief.

(2) Faith: sincere belief in Allah and the Messenger and the Book and the Hereafter.

(3) Righteous works : to do good deeds according to the instructions of Allah and His Messenger.

(4) Guidance: to follow the right way steadfastly and to refrain from straying into any wrong path.

61. From here the same account is resumed that was interrupted by the parenthesis (vv. 81-82). The Israelites were told to stay on the right side of Mount Ṭūr, and they would be given the Commandments after forty days.

62. This shows that in his eagerness to see his Lord as soon as possible, Prophet Moses had left them in the way and reached the meeting place alone. For the details of that meeting the reader should see VII: 143-145. Here only that portion has been mentioned which is connected with the calf-worship by the Israelites. This has been stated here to bring home to the disbelievers of Makkah how idol-worship starts and how deeply a Prophet of Allah is concerned about this evil.

63. It is obvious from the last letter *'yā'* that Sāmirī was not the proper name of the person, for this Arabic letter is always added to show a person's connection with his race or clan or place. Moreover, the prefix *'al'* (definite article 'the') in the original Arabic text clearly denotes that the Sāmirī was a particular man from among many other persons of the same race or clan or place, who had propagated the worship of the golden calf. In fact, this does not require any further explanation than this, but this has been necessitated because many Christian missionaries and the Western Orientalists have tried to criticise the Holy Prophet and the Qur'ān on this account. They say, (God forbid,) "This is a proof of the grievous ignorance of history on the part of Muḥammad, the author of the Qur'ān, and is one of the anachronisms of the Qur'ān." They base this absurd criticism on the assumption that this Sāmirī was the inhabitant of Samaria, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Israel, which was built in 925 B.C. long after this happening; then centuries after this, a generation of the Samaritans came into existence as a result of inter-marriage between the Israelites and the non-Israelites. As the Samaritans worshipped the golden calf, the critics accuse the Holy Prophet of inventing this story on the basis of mere hearsay. They say that the Holy Prophet

might have heard something like this from the neighbouring Jews and inserted it in the Qur'ān. This is not all. They also criticise that Hāmān who was a courtier of Cyrus has been mentioned in the Qur'ān as a minister of Pharaoh. It is a pity that these so-called scholars seem to think that in the ancient times there used to be only one person bearing one name in a clan or a place, and there was absolutely no possibility of another person or persons having the same name. They do not know, or pretend they do not know, that during the time of Prophet Abraham, a famous people known as the Sumerians inhabited 'Iraq and the neighbouring regions, and it is just possible that during the time of Prophet Moses there were some people known as the Sāmirīs who might have migrated to Egypt from 'Iraq. Besides this, according to the Bible (1 Kings, 16: 24), Samaria itself was built on a hill which was bought from Shemer and named Samaria after him. This is a clear proof that there were people named Shemer (or Sumer) even before Samaria came into existence and it is also just possible that some clans might have been called "Sāmirī".

64. That is, "Did not Allah fulfil the promises He made with you of showing His favours to you? For instance, He safely brought you out of Egypt and not only freed you from the slavery of your enemy but also destroyed him totally. He provided you with provisions in the desert and in the mountainous regions." It may also be translated like this: "Did not Allah make a good promise with you?" In that case, it will mean: "He made a promise that he will give you the Law and Guidance: was this not a good promise for your well being and betterment?"

65 That is, "Had a long time passed since those great favours were done to you that you forgot them? Had long ages passed since you were afflicted with persecution by your enemy that you committed such a blasphemy?" It may also be translated like this: "Had you to wait for a long time for the fulfilment of God's promise that you became so impatient?" In that case, the meaning is obvious: "You had not to wait for a long time to see the fulfilment of the promise of Guidance. Therefore there was no excuse for what you did."

66. This Covenant was the one which every community makes with its Prophet and promises that it will steadfastly follow the Guidance brought by him and will not worship anyone except Allah.

67. This excuse was put forward by those people who were involved in the *shirk* fabricated by the Sāmirī. They meant to say, "We did not throw down the ornaments with the intention of setting up a calf nor did we know what was going to be made of these, but when the calf was brought before us, we involuntarily got involved in *shirk*."

The Arabic text which we have translated into: "We felt burdened with the ornaments of the people", simply means this: "The heavy ornaments which our men and women were wearing like the Egyptians proved very burdensome to us in our wanderings in the desert and we did not know how to get rid of them for it appeared very difficult for us to travel in the desert with them." But according to the Bible these ornaments had been borrowed by every family of the Israelites from their Egyptian neighbours with this intention, "....and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters and ye shall spoil the Egyptians....and let every man borrow of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold....And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians....so that they lent unto them *such things* as *they required.* And they spoiled the Egyptians." And that, too, on the advice of Prophet Moses, whom God Himself had instructed to do this "noble deed." (Exodus, 3: 14-22, 11 : 2-3, and 12: 35-36).

It is a pity that some of our commentators have interpreted this verse in the light of the above traditions of the Bible. They say that the Israelites felt burdened with the weight of those ornaments which they had borrowed from their Egyptian neighbours, with the intention of carrying them away as a "spoil" bestowed by God.

We are of the opinion that the clause of the verse under discussion means this: "When the people were tired of carrying their ornaments on their bodies, they decided by mutual consultation that all the ornaments should be gathered at one place and it should be noted down how much gold and silver belonged to each of the owners. Then it should be melted into bars and rods and placed on the backs of the beasts of burden." Accordingly, they might have brought their ornaments and thrown them in the common heap.

68. It is obvious from the context that the answer of the people ended with "threw them down", and Allah Himself has added the remaining story up to the end of the paragraph. It appears from this that the people including the Sāmirī went on bringing their ornaments and throwing them down into the heap while they were absolutely unaware of what was going to be done by the Sāmirī. After this the Sāmirī offered his services to melt it. Then he shaped it into a calf which lowed like a cow. Thus the Sāmirī deluded the people, saying, "This god of yours has come into being by itself for I had simply thrown the gold in the fire."

69. Here the Qur'ān exonerates Prophet Aaron from the sin of taking any part in the calf-worship, but in contrast to this, the Bible makes him wholly responsible for making the golden calf and setting it up as a god. According to Exodus:

"And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him,

Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for *as for* this Moses, the man that brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which *are* in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring *them* unto me. And all the people broke off the golden earrings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* unto Aaron. And he received them at his hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw *it*, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord." (32: 1-5).

It is just possible that the real name of the Sāmirī was also Aaron which later on might have misled the Israelites to attribute the making of the golden calf to Prophet Aaron. Thus it is obvious that the Qur'ān has shown a favour to the Jews and Christians by exonerating Prophet Aaron from the sin, but it is an irony that the Christian missionaries and the Orientalists still insist that the Qur'ān is guilty of anachronism and that the calf was made a deity of worship by a holy prophet of theirs. In their blind obduracy they forget that even according to the Bible this was a great sin. (Exodus, 32: 21). A little further on in the same chapter the Bible again contradicts itself. It says that Prophet Moses ordered the Levites to kill all their kinsfolk, their friends and their fellow country men who had been guilty of the sin of calf-worship. Accordingly, about three thousand men fell that day. (Exodus, 32: 27-29).

Now the question arises: Why was Prophet Aaron not killed, if he was the inventor of the calf-worship? Why didn't the Levites ask Prophet Moses to kill his brother, Prophet Aaron, who was the real sinner, just as they were asked to kill theirs. The Bible also says that after this Moses went back to the Eternal and prayed Him to forgive their sins or blot him out of His list of the living, and the Eternal answered: "Whosoever has sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book" (Exodus, 32: 31-33). But we learn from the Bible that the name of Prophet Aaron was not blotted out, but, on the other hand, he and his sons and his family were given the charge of the sanctuary and the office of priesthood (Numbers, 18: 1-7). Thus it is quite evident from the internal testimony of the Bible itself, that it contradicts itself and supports the Qur'ān in its exoneration of Prophet Aaron.

70. The "command" refers to the instructions which Prophet Moses gave to his brother Aaron when he made him his deputy in his absence when he went up to Mount Ṭūr: "After me take my place and do the right and follow not the way of the mischief-makers". (VII: 142).

71. See VII: 150.

72. It can also be interpreted like this: "You did not wait for orders from

[Contd. on p. 118

نَسْفًا ﴿١٠٥﴾ فَيَذَرُهَا قَاعًا صَفْصَفًا ﴿١٠٦﴾ لَّا تَرَىٰ فِيهَا عِوَجًا وَلَا أَمْتًا ﴿١٠٧﴾
يَوْمَئِذٍ يَتَّبِعُونَ الدَّاعِيَ لَا عِوَجَ لَهُ ۖ وَخَشَعَتِ الْأَصْوَاتُ لِلرَّحْمَٰنِ
فَلَا تَسْمَعُ إِلَّا هَمْسًا ﴿١٠٨﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ لَّا تَنفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ إِلَّا مَنْ أَذِنَ لَهُ الرَّحْمَٰنُ
وَرَضِيَ لَهُ قَوْلًا ﴿١٠٩﴾ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِهِ
عِلْمًا ﴿١١٠﴾ وَعَنَتِ الْوُجُوهُ لِلْحَيِّ الْقَيُّومِ ۖ وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ حَمَلَ ظُلْمًا ﴿١١١﴾ وَمَن
يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا يَخَافُ ظُلْمًا وَلَا هَضْمًا ﴿١١٢﴾ وَكَذَٰلِكَ
أَنزَلْنَاهُ قُرْآنًا عَرَبِيًّا وَصَرَّفْنَا فِيهِ مِنَ الْوَعِيدِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ أَوْ يُحْدِثُ
لَهُمْ ذِكْرًا ﴿١١٣﴾ فَتَعَالَى اللَّهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ ۗ وَلَا تَعْجَلْ بِالْقُرْآنِ مِن قَبْلِ
أَن يُقْضَىٰ إِلَيْكَ وَحْيُهُ ۖ وَقُل رَّبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا ﴿١١٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ عَهِدْنَا إِلَىٰ آدَمَ
مِن قَبْلُ فَنَسِيَ وَلَمْ نَجِدْ لَهُ عَزْمًا ﴿١١٥﴾ وَإِذْ قُلْنَا لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ اسْجُدُوا لِآدَمَ
فَسَجَدُوا إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ ۖ أَبَىٰ ﴿١١٦﴾ فَقُلْنَا يَا آدَمُ إِنَّ هَٰذَا عَدُوٌّ لَّكَ وَلِزَوْجِكَ فَلَا
يُخْرِجَنَّكُمَا مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ فَتَشْقَىٰ ﴿١١٧﴾ إِنَّ لَكَ أَلَّا تَجُوعَ فِيهَا وَلَا تَعْرَىٰ ﴿١١٨﴾ وَ
أَنَّكَ لَا تَظْمَأُ فِيهَا وَلَا تَضْحَىٰ ﴿١١٩﴾ فَوَسْوَسَ إِلَيْهِ الشَّيْطَانُ قَالَ يَا آدَمُ هَلْ

O people, your God is Allah alone Who has no other god beside Him: His knowledge embraces everything." 98

O Muhammad,[75] thus do We relate to you the history of the past events, and We have given you an "Admonition" from Our Own Self.[76] Whoso will turn away from it, he shall bear a heavy burden of sin on the Day of Resurrection; and all such people shall always remain under its heavy burden, and it will be a very heavy responsibility indeed that they shall have to bear on the Day of Resurrection.[77] On that Day, when the Trumpet will be blown[78] and We will muster the criminals while their eyes shall be dimmed (with terror),[79] they will whisper to one another, "You hardly stayed for ten days on the Earth."[80]—We know full well[81] what they will be talking; (We also know that) at that time the most careful estimator among them will say, "No, your life on the Earth was but for a day."[82]—They ask you, "Well, where will the mountains go on that Day?" Say to them, "My Lord will reduce them to fine dust and scatter it away. He will turn the Earth into an empty level plain, wherein you will neither see any curve nor crease."[83]—On that Day the people will come straight to the call of the summoner; no one will dare show any haughtiness, and all the voices will be hushed before the Merciful and you will hear nothing but a whispering murmur.[84] On that Day no intercession shall avail save his whom the Merciful may allow to intercede and be pleased to give him a hearing.[85] ----He is fully aware of all that is before the people and of all that is behind them but others do not have full knowledge of it.[86]—The people will hang their heads with awe before the Living One, the Eternal. Loser shall be the one who will be carrying the burden of the sin of an iniquity, but whoso does righteous deeds and is a Believer as well, he shall have no fear of any injustice nor shall he be deprived of his rights.[87] 99-112

And, O Muhammad, thus have We sent this down as an Arabic Qur'ān[88] and have given therein warnings in various ways, perhaps these people may be saved from perverseness or that this may help arouse understanding in them.[89] 113

So, high and exalted is Allah, the True King.[90] 114

And see that you do not hasten to recite the Qur'ān before its revelation is completed to you, and pray, "O my Lord, give me more

of knowledge.''[91]

115-120 We[92] gave a command to Adam before this[93], but he forgot it, and We did not find firmness of purpose in him.[94] Recall to mind the time when We said to the angels: "Bow yourselves to Adam;" they all bowed down except Iblīs, who refused. At this, We said to Adam,[95] "He is an enemy to you and to your wife.[96] Be on your guard lest he should have you expelled from the Garden[97] and you find yourself in great distress. For here you have quite a few facilities: you neither starve nor remain naked nor suffer from thirst nor from sun."[98] But Satan seduced him,[99] saying "O Adam, should I show you the tree which gives eternal life and everlasting kingdom?"[100]

Contd. from p.115]

me". In order to understand fully the statement of Prophet Aaron, one should read this verse along with verse 150 of Chapter VII, where he says: "Son of my mother, these people overpowered me and were going to kill me: so, let not the enemies gloat over me: do not count me among the people who have done wrong." Now if both these verses are read together, one can easily see the true picture of the event: Prophet Aaron did his utmost to stop the people from committing the sin of calf-worship, but they revolted against him and might even have killed him. Fearing a clash between them, therefore, he held his peace lest Prophet Moses, on his return, might blame him for letting the situation worsen and failing to control it effectively in his absence. The last clause of VII: 150 also gives the hint that there existed among the people a good number of the enemies of the two brothers.

73. There has been a good deal of divergence of opinion in regard to the interpretation of this verse. According to the majority of the early commentators and their followers, it means: "The Sāmirī saw the Messenger (Angel Gabriel) when he was passing and took a handful of dust from his footprints. Then he sprinkled this upon the idol of the golden calf. This created life in it and it began to low like a living calf." The Qur'ān, in fact, does not say that this actually happened but merely cites the reply given by the Sāmirī to Prophet Moses when the latter took him to task for the great sin he had committed.

There are others who interpret the words of the Sāmirī; like this: "I saw a weakness in the Messenger (Prophet Moses) or in his Creed, which others did not see. Therefore I followed in his footsteps to a certain limit but afterwards I left his way." This interpretation was most probably put forward first of all by Abū Muslim Isfahānī. Then Imām Rāzī not only cited it in his own Commentary but also approved of it. And now it is being followed by some modernistic commentators, who try to prove their own favourite theories by giving far-fetched

interpretations to the obvious meaning of the words of the Qur'ān. Such people forget that the Qur'ān has not been sent down in the terminology of enigmas, riddles and puzzles but in clear, plain and intelligible Arabic. Therefore the Qur'ān would have never employed the words it has used in the Text to convey the meaning given by them because their usage cannot support that far-fetched interpretation. What such interpreters really mean to imply is that Allah has failed to express Himself clearly and plainly; therefore, they wish to come to His rescue by their interpretations in order to save Him from the ridicule of the "learned" people.

If we study the verse in the context in which it occurs, we shall be able to understand easily that the Sāmirī was a mischief-monger who had contrived his deceitful scheme after a good deal of consideration. As he appears to have been a good craftsman, he caused the golden calf he had made to produce a lowing sound, and successfully deluded the ignorant and simple people. He did not rest content with this but impudently invented the story that he had seen what the common people could not see and that he had taken a handful of the dust from the footprints of the Messenger and sprinkled it on the calf which made it low like a living calf. It is possible that by the "Messenger", he meant Prophet Moses himself and might have cunningly tried to flatter him, saying, that the dust of his footprints was miraculous. By saying so, he was playing the most subtle trick. He wanted to offer an intellectual bait to Moses so that he might feel elated about the miraculous effect of the dust trodden by his feet and utilize his services for propagating his own miraculous acts. Anyhow, the fact is that the Qur'ān has presented the whole thing as a trick of the Sāmirī and has not given the account as if it were a real event by itself. The subsequent reaction of Prophet Moses to the statement of the Sāmirī clearly shows that he considered it as a deceitful story, and so laid the curse on him.

74. The words show that he was not only made an outcast for life but was made to inform the people himself that he was an outcast, as given in Leviticus:

"And the leper in whom the plague *is*, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days wherein the plague *shall be* in him he shall be defiled; he *is* unclean: he shall dwell alone; without the camp *shall* his habitation *be*". (13: 45-46).

We conclude from this that either he was inflicted with leprosy as a scourge by Allah or the punishment inflicted on him was that, being a moral "leper", he should be made an outcast and should himself proclaim to be an unclean and impure person, saying, "Touch me not".

75. Now that the story of Prophet Moses comes to an end, the same theme, that was interrupted by this story, has been resumed.

76. That is, the Qur'ān about which it was said at the beginning of the Sūrah that it had not been sent down to put the Holy Prophet in distress, and that it was an Admonition for the God-fearing.

77. Here the people have been warned that whoso will turn away from the Qur'ān and will reject its guidance, he shall do harm to himself only and not to Allah and His Messenger, and that the one, who rejects His Message, shall inevitably be punished in the Hereafter. And this warning holds good for every people, every country and every age. This is because there are only two alternatives for an individual or a community, whom the Message of the Qur'ān reaches. They can either accept it or reject it; there is no third way.

78. As regards the nature of the blowing of the "Trumpet" on the Day of Resurrection, it may be likened to the blowing of the bugle in the army to muster or disperse the soldiers. It is obvious that these words and terms have been used because these are known to the people. Therefore it will be wrong to consider the "Trumpet" to be exactly like the bugles and trumpets of this world.

79. According to some Commentators, it means this: "The bodies of the criminals will turn white as if no drop of blood had been left in them."

80. The original text may also be interpreted to mean: "After your death, you may have passed hardly ten days till now." As regards the interpretation adopted in the translation, it is supported by XXIII: 112-113: "When Allah will ask them, 'For how many years did you stay on the Earth?' They will say, 'We stayed there for a day or a part of a day: You may ask those who have kept the record!" The second interpretation is supported by XXX: 55-56: "And on the day when Resurrection will take place, the criminals will declare on oaths, 'We have not remained in the state of death for more than an hour.' And likewise they were deluded on the Earth. On the other hand, those who have been given Knowledge and Faith will say, 'According to the Book of Allah, you have remained in this state up to the Day of Resurrection, and this is the very Day of Resurrection, but you did not know of it'." Both the interpretations are supported by other verses of the Qur'ān. It is clear from these that they will consider both the life on the Earth and the life in the interval between death and Resurrection to be very short. They will consider the earthly life to be very short because, against all their expectations, they will have to face the eternal life in the Hereafter which they denied in their earthly life. As they had made no preparation for this life, they will wring their hands with regret that they had ruined their eternal life for the sake of a few transitory pleasures of the short life they had been given on the Earth. As

regards the duration of the interval between death and Resurrection, they will consider it to be very short, for they will imagine that they had been suddenly awakened by the "Trumpet" from their last sleep or unconsciousness in their earthly life. Thus, they will not at first realize that the "Trumpet" was the signal for the Day of Resurrection because they had no expectation whatever that the Day of Resurrection would ever come. As a matter of fact, they used to make fun of this Day as a nonsensical thing.

81. This is a parenthisis that has been inserted to remove this doubt of the hearers: "How has it been known today what the people will be talking in whispers in the Plain of Resurrection?"

82. This is another parenthisis which has been inserted in answer to another objection raised by some hearer. It appears that when this Sūrah was being recited, some one might have raised this question as a ridicule: 'Where will these high mountains go on the Day of Resurrection, for it appears from your description of Resurrection that all the people of the world will be running about in a level plain?' In order to understand the background of the question, it should be kept in mind that Makkah, where this Sūrah was first recited on the occasion of its revelation, is surrounded on all sides by high mountains. The answer to this question follows immediately: "Allah will reduce them to fine dust and scatter it away."

83. According to the Qur'ān, the earth will take a new shape in the Hereafter:

"The earth will be spread." (LXXXIV: 3).

"The bottoms of the oceans will be split (and the whole water will sink down in the earth.)" (LXXXII: 3).

"The oceans will be filled up". (LXXXI: 6).

"The mountains will be reduced to fine dust and scattered away and there will be left no curve or crease in the earth". (XX: 105-107).

"On that day the earth will be totally changed". (XIV: 48).

"And it will be turned into a garden and given to the pious people to dwell therein for ever." (XXXIX: 74).

This shows that ultimately this earth will be turned into Paradise which will be inherited by the pious and righteous servants of Allah. The whole earth will become one country, and there will be no mountains, oceans, rivers and deserts which today divide it into countless countries and homelands and divide mankind

as well into as many tribes, races and classes. Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās and Qatādah have held this same view that Paradise will be established on this very earth.

84. The original Arabic word *(hams)* is used for the sound of footsteps, the sound of whispering and other low sounds. What it implies here is that the people will be so awe-stricken on that Day that there will be no sound other than that of footsteps and whispering.

85. This has another interpretation also: "On that Day intercession will not be effective except in the case of the one for whom the Merciful may allow it and be pleased to hear it for him." Both these interpretations are supported by the following:

"Who is there that can intercede with Him except by His own permission?" (11: 255).

"On that Day when the spirit and the angels will stand with folded hands, they will not be able to say anything except what the Merciful will permit, and they will say the right thing." (LXXVIII: 38).

"They do not intercede for anyone except for whom the Merciful may be pleased to listen to, and they are always fearful of Him." (XXI: 28).

"There are many angels in the heavens whose intercession avails nothing at all except when it is made after getting permission from Allah, and for the one for whom He wills to hear and approves of it." (LIII: 26).

86. Here the reasons for the restrictions on intercession have been stated. On the one hand, no angel, no prophet, no saint, nor anyone else knows, nor can know, the full details about the records of others. On the other hand, Allah has full knowledge of all the deeds and misdeeds of everyone and He knows who deserves pardon or punishment, and how much. If, therefore, there had been full freedom for intercession the whole purpose of the creation of man would have become meaningless. According to this verse, the door against intercession has not been entirely closed. The righteous people will be allowed to show their sympathy for other human beings as they did in the world, but they will have to get permission for this beforehand and even then make only a right sort of recommendation.

87. From this, it is clear that in the Hereafter the case of every individual will be decided on merits. If a man had been guilty of iniquity and injustice in regard to the rights of God or the rights of man or even his own rights, he shall be dealt with accordingly. On the other hand, those, who are both believers and workers of righteous deeds, shall have no fear that they would be deprived of their rights or punished even though they were innocent.

88. " .... thus .. Qur'ān": This means that the Qur'ān is full of such high themes, wise teachings and admonitions as are contained in the preceding portion of this Sūrah as well as in the other Sūrahs of the Book.

89. That is, "The Arabic Qur'ān might awaken them from their heedlessness and they might recollect the forgotten lessons and feel that they are going astray and might realize the consequences thereof."

90. Such sentences as this are usually found in the Qur'ān at the end of a discourse so that it may end with the praise of Allah. It is plain from the context that the discourse ends with "the True King."

91. At the end of the discourse, the Angel cautions the Holy Prophet by Allah's Command to guard against a thing that had been noticed during the Revelation, for it was not considered appropriate to do so during its recital. It is obvious from the wording of the caution that the Holy Prophet was trying to learn the revealed discourse and was repeating it during its recital by the Angel. Naturally this might have diverted his attention over and over again from listening to and grasping the Revelation. Therefore it was felt necessary that he should be taught the right method of the receipt of the message of Revelation and be asked not to try to commit it to memory during the Revelation.

This sentence shows that this portion of Sūrah Ṭā Hā is one of the earliest Revelations, for we learn from the other early Sūrahs that the Holy Prophet tried to commit to memory the Qur'ānic Revelation and Allah cautioned him against it. For instance in LXXV: 16-19, he was told: "Do not move your tongue over and over again in order to learn the Revelation, for it is Our responsibility to cause you to remember it by heart and recite it. Therefore when it is being recited to you, listen to it carefully. Then it is also Our responsibility to make its meanings clear to you."

Again in LXXXVII: 6, he was assured: "We will teach you how to recite it and you will not forget it." It appears that afterwards when the Holy Prophet had learnt how to receive the messages of Revelation, this did not occur. That is why there is no such caution in the Sūrahs of the later period.

92. From here begins a new discourse, which probably was sent down some time after the preceding discourse (see E.N. 90), and it was incorporated in this Sūrah by the command of Allah because both deal with the same theme. The following are the similarities between the two:

(1) Both the discourses remind mankind of the "forgotten lesson", the Admonition, which Allah had taught man on the occasion of his creation.

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اَدُلُّكَ عَلٰى شَجَرَةِ الْخُلْدِ وَمُلْكٍ لَّا يَبْلٰى ﴿١٢٠﴾ فَاَكَلَا مِنْهَا فَبَدَتْ لَهُمَا سَوْاٰتُهُمَا
وَطَفِقَا يَخْصِفٰنِ عَلَيْهِمَا مِنْ وَّرَقِ الْجَنَّةِ ۛ وَعَصٰٓى اٰدَمُ رَبَّهٗ فَغَوٰى ﴿١٢١﴾
ثُمَّ اجْتَبٰهُ رَبُّهٗ فَتَابَ عَلَيْهِ وَهَدٰى ﴿١٢٢﴾ قَالَ اهْبِطَا مِنْهَا جَمِيْعًا ۢ بَعْضُكُمْ
لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ ۚ فَاِمَّا يَاْتِيَنَّكُمْ مِّنِّيْ هُدًى ۙ فَمَنِ اتَّبَعَ هُدَايَ فَلَا يَضِلُّ وَ
لَا يَشْقٰى ﴿١٢٣﴾ وَمَنْ اَعْرَضَ عَنْ ذِكْرِيْ فَاِنَّ لَهٗ مَعِيْشَةً ضَنْكًا وَّنَحْشُرُهٗ
يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ اَعْمٰى ﴿١٢٤﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ لِمَ حَشَرْتَنِيْٓ اَعْمٰى وَقَدْ كُنْتُ بَصِيْرًا ﴿١٢٥﴾
قَالَ كَذٰلِكَ اَتَتْكَ اٰيٰتُنَا فَنَسِيْتَهَا ۚ وَكَذٰلِكَ الْيَوْمَ تُنْسٰى ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِيْ
مَنْ اَسْرَفَ وَلَمْ يُؤْمِنْۢ بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهٖ ۭ وَلَعَذَابُ الْاٰخِرَةِ اَشَدُّ وَاَبْقٰى ﴿١٢٧﴾ اَفَلَمْ
يَهْدِ لَهُمْ كَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنَ الْقُرُوْنِ يَمْشُوْنَ فِيْ مَسٰكِنِهِمْ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ
لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّاُولِي النُّهٰى ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ لَكَانَ لِزَامًا وَّاَجَلٌ
مُّسَمًّى ﴿١٢٩﴾ فَاصْبِرْ عَلٰي مَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ قَبْلَ طُلُوْعِ الشَّمْسِ
وَقَبْلَ غُرُوْبِهَا ۚ وَمِنْ اٰنَاۗيِٕ الَّيْلِ فَسَبِّحْ وَاَطْرَافَ النَّهَارِ لَعَلَّكَ
تَرْضٰى ﴿١٣٠﴾ وَلَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ اِلٰى مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهٖٓ اَزْوَاجًا مِّنْهُمْ زَهْرَةَ الْحَيٰوةِ
الدُّنْيَا ۙ لِنَفْتِنَهُمْ فِيْهِ ۭ وَرِزْقُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ وَّاَبْقٰى ﴿١٣١﴾ وَاْمُرْ اَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلٰوةِ وَ
اصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا ۭ لَا نَسْـَٔلُكَ رِزْقًا ۭ نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكَ ۭ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلتَّقْوٰى ﴿١٣٢﴾ وَقَالُوْا لَوْ
لَا يَاْتِيْنَا بِاٰيَةٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ ۭ اَوَلَمْ تَاْتِهِمْ بَيِّنَةُ مَا فِي الصُّحُفِ الْاُوْلٰى ﴿١٣٣﴾ وَلَوْ
اَنَّآ اَهْلَكْنٰهُمْ بِعَذَابٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِهٖ لَقَالُوْا رَبَّنَا لَوْلَآ اَرْسَلْتَ اِلَيْنَا رَسُوْلًا فَنَتَّبِعَ
اٰيٰتِكَ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ نَّذِلَّ وَنَخْزٰى ﴿١٣٤﴾ قُلْ كُلٌّ مُّتَرَبِّصٌ فَتَرَبَّصُوْا ۚ
فَسَتَعْلَمُوْنَ مَنْ اَصْحٰبُ الصِّرَاطِ السَّوِيِّ وَمَنِ اهْتَدٰى ﴿١٣٥﴾

At last, both of them (Adam and his wife) ate of the fruit (of the forbidden tree). As a result thereof, the nakedness of each appeared before the other, and they began to cover themselves up with leaves from the Garden.[101] Adam disobeyed his Lord and went astray from the right way.[102] Afterwards his Lord chose him[103] and accepted his repentance and gave him Guidance, saying,[104] "Get down from here both of you (Man and Satan): you will remain enemies to each other. After this, if you receive Guidance from Me, whoso will follow that Guidance, he will neither go astray nor be involved in wretchedness, and whoso will turn away from My Admonition, he shall have a wretched life[105] in the world, and We shall raise him up blind on the Day of Resurrection."[106]—He will say, "Lord, why have you raised me blind here, whereas I was blessed with sight in the world ?" Allah will say, "Yes; you forgot Our Revelations when they came to you, (as if you were blind), so you are being forgotten today".[107]—This is how We recompense (in this world)[108] those who transgress the bounds and do not believe in the Revelations of their Lord. And the torment of the Hereafter is more terrible and more lasting. 121-127

Have these people[109] not received any guidance (from this lesson of history) that We have destroyed before them many a generation in whose (ruined) habitations they move about today? In fact, there are many Signs in this for sagacious people.[110] 128

Had not a decree been fore-ordained by your Lord and a term for respite been appointed, judgement on them would have been passed now immediately. Therefore O Muḥammad, endure what they say and glorify your Lord with His praise before the rising of the sun and before its setting, and glorify Him during the hours of the night and at the extremes of the day:[111] perhaps you may feel satisfied.[112] And do not cast an envious look at the worldly property We have bestowed on different kinds of people, for We have given them all that to put them to trial, and the lawful provision[113] of your Lord is better and more lasting: enjoin *Ṣalāt* on the members of your family[114] and yourself also observe it strictly. We do not ask any provision of you, for it is We Ourself Who give you provision. And the ultimate good is for piety.[115] 129-132

They say, "Why does he not bring us a Sign from his Lord?" 133-135
Has not a clear Sign come to them containing all the teachings of the former Scriptures?[116] Had We destroyed them with a scourge before its coming, these very people would have said, "Our Lord, why did you not send a Messenger to us so that we would have followed Your Revelations before we were humiliated and disgraced?" O Muḥammad say to them, "Everyone is waiting for the ultimate result;[117] so you may also wait, for you will soon come to know who are following the straight path and who are rightly guided."

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(2) Both teach that it is Satan who seduces man to forget that lesson. He succeeded in this by causing his first parents to forget it; since then he has been forgetting it over and over again and, therefore, has been cautioned against this.

(3) Both warn man that his ultimate success or failure depends upon his attitude towards this "Admonition."

(4) Both warn mankind to discriminate between an inadvertent error and an intentional rebellion and their consequences. If man (like Prophet Adam and his offspring and the magicians of Pharaoh) realizes that he has been seduced by Satan, his eternal enemy, and then repents of his error, he is forgiven. But there is no forgiveness for intentional rebellion as was the case with Satan, Pharaoh and the Sāmirī.

93. The story of Prophet Adam has already been stated in 11: 30-39, VII: 11-27, 189, XV: 28-42, XVII: 61-65 and XVIII: 51-52. But at every place only that part of the story which was relevant to the context has been cited. Therefore, in order to understand the whole story well, one should read it in all the Sūrahs along with the relevant E.N's.

94. This means that he disobeyed the Command because he lacked the firmness of purpose and not because of intentional rebellion. He did not say, "I don't care a fig for Allah. If it is His Command, let it be. I will do whatever I like. Who is Allah to intervene in my private affairs?"

On the contrary, he disobeyed because he forgot Allah's Command, and did not show firmness of purpose and determination against the temptations presented by Satan. This is shown by his subsequent repentance.

95. Here the Command, which was given to Prophet Adam, has not been mentioned, which was: "You must not eat the fruit of this tree." This has been mentioned at other places but has been omitted here because the emphasis here is

on this weakness of man that he is easily seduced by Satan in spite of the forewarnings and admonitions to this effect.

96. Both knew that Satan was their enemy, for Adam himself had witnessed the demonstration of his enmity, when he had refused to bow down before him and declared in plain words, "I am better than he; Thou didst create me of fire and him of clay". (VII: 12, XXXVIII: 76, see also XV: 33). "Should I bow before the one whom Thou hast created out of clay?" And then added, "Just consider was he worthy of this that Thou hast exalted him over me?" (XVII: 61-62). Then Satan did not rest content with this bragging of superiority but evinced his jealousy by giving an open challenge that he would prove it by seducing Adam. (VII: 16, 17; XV: 36-42; XVII: 62-66; XXXVIII: 82-83).

97. This was to forewarn both of them of the consequences of disobedience of the Command.

98. This is the explanation of the "distress" which they had to undergo immediately after their expulsion from the Garden. Here instead of mentioning the high and perfect blessings of the Garden, only four basic necessities of life have been stated, namely, food, drink, dress, and shelter, as if to say, "In the Garden you are being supplied with all these necessities without any labour from you. But if you succumb to the temptations and seduction of Satan, you will be totally deprived not only of these facilities but also of the higher blessings of the Garden. In that case, you will have to work so hard for these necessities that very little energy and time and leisure will be left with you to strive for higher aims of life."

99. According to this verse, it was Adam whom Satan primarily wanted to seduce and not Eve. Though according to VII: 20, he tempted both of them and both were seduced, but Satan's efforts were mainly directed to Adam. On the contrary, according to the Bible, the serpent first tempted the woman "to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree and then she seduced her husband". (Genesis, 3).

100. According to this verse, Satan tempted Adam to eat the fruit of the tree so that he might get eternal life and everlasting kingdom, and according to VII: 20, he put an additional temptation in their way, saying that they would become angels and immortal.

101. No sooner did they disobey the "Command" than they were deprived of all the facilities, but naturally the immediate effect of this as felt by them was that they were stripped of their garments. Then gradually, as they felt thirsty, hungry etc., they realized that they had been deprived of all the facilities that they enjoyed in the Garden.

102. It is worth while to understand the nature of human weakness which helped Satan to seduce Adam and Eve. They succumbed to seduction because

Satan tempted them in the garb of a true friend and well-wisher even though they knew full well that he was their enemy. For Adam had a direct knowledge of the envy and enmity of Satan, who had challenged to seduce and ruin him in his very presence. Allah had also warned them to guard against the envy of and the temptations by Satan and had informed them of the consequences of disobedience. Above all, Adam and Eve still believed in Allah and never thought of intentional disobedience. But in spite of this, when Satan tempted them in the garb of a friend, they disobeyed their Lord: they forgot the "Command" for the time being for lack of firmness of purpose. And since then this human weakness has persisted in their descendants during all ages.

103. ".....His Lord chose him" because he did not disobey Him intentionally and did not persist in sin arrogantly. As soon as he realized his error he felt ashamed of it and asked Allah's pardon: "O our Lord, we have wronged ourselves gravely; if Thou dost not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we shall be totally ruined".(VII: 23). In contrast to Adam and Eve, Satan was cursed because he not only disobeyed his Lord but also persisted in his sin, and boldly challenged Him that it was He Who was responsible for his disobedience, for He had preferred Adam whom He had created of clay over him whom He had made of fire.

104. That is, "Allah not only pardoned him but also gave him Guidance and taught him the way to follow it."

105. "Wretched life in this world" does not mean a life of poverty. It means that such a one shall be deprived of the peace of mind, even though he may be a millionaire or the ruler of a vast empire, for the one, who will turn away from the "Admonition", will win all the worldly successes by unlawful means and, therefore, will always be suffering from pangs of a guilty conscience and deprived of the peace of mind and real happiness.

106. Here the story of Prophet Adam ends. In the light of this part of the story which has been related here and at other places in the Qur'ān, I have come to the conclusion (and correct knowledge is with Allah alone) that the "vicegerency of the Earth" was the same as was initially bestowed on Adam in the Garden, which might have been created in the heavens or on this Earth. Anyhow the vicegerent of Allah was supplied gratis with all the necessities of life and the angels were placed under his command for service. This was to enable him to discharge the high and noble obligations of vicegerency, without any worry about the procurement of the necessities of life. But in order to make him permanent in this office, it was necessary to put him to a test so that all his capabilities, excellences and weaknesses might be known. Accordingly, he had to take his test in which some of his weaknesses came to the surface: he was prone to be seduced

by greed and temptation: he did not remain firm in obedience: he was capable of forgetfulness. That is why he was given the "vicegerency" as a trial in the Earth for a fixed term up to the Day of Judgment. During this period of trial, he had himself to make arrangements for the necessities of life though he was allowed to exploit all the resources of the Earth and to rule over other creatures. The trial is this: does he or does he not obey his Lord in spite of having the power to obey or not to obey? And if he forgets or is seduced by greed, does he or does he not repent through warning and admonition, when he realizes his error? At the same time, his Lord has warned him that a full and perfect record of all his deeds and misdeeds is being kept, and that he shall be judged on the Day of Reckoning in accordance with it. Those who will come out successful will be given permanent vicegerency and that eternal life and everlasting kingdom by which Satan seduced him. The righteous servants will become the heirs to the Garden, if they had obeyed their Lord or repented after "forgetfulness". It should also be noted well that life in the Garden will not merely be to "eat, drink and be merry", but there will be such higher things to achieve as no human being can conceive in this world. That is why only those blessings of the Garden have been mentioned in the Qur'ān which can be comprehended by human beings in this world.

It will be worth while to make a comparative study of the account of Adam and Eve as given in the Qur'ān with that given in the Bible. According to Genesis:

"And the Lord God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree....the tree of life....and the tree of knowledge of good and evil....And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayst freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die .... And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.... And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." (2:7-25). "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?.... And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall he as gods, knowing good and evil....she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and wife

hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where *art* thou? And he said, I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And He said, who told thee that thou *wast* naked? Hast thou eaten, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to *be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.....And the woman said, the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou *art* cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire *shall be* to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed *is* the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life:.... In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread. Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them. And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken." (3 :1-23).

It is obvious that the Bible has not done justice to Adam and Eve, nay, even to God Himself. On the other hand, the account given in the Qur'ān is itself a clear proof that the stories given in it have not been copied from the Bible; for the Qur'ān not only corroborates those parts of the Bible which have remained untampered but also corrects its wrong statements.

107. The Qur'ān has described the different conditions and experiences through which the criminals will pass from the Day of Resurrection to the time of their entry into Hell: "You were neglectful of this; now We have removed the curtain from before you and your sight has become very sharp." (L: 22). "He is only deferring them to the Day when all eyes shall stare with consternation. They will be running in terror with heads uplifted and eyes fixed upwards and hearts void". (XIV: 42-43). "We have fastened the augury of every man to his own neck and on the Day of Resurrection We will bring forth a writing which he will find like an open book. (It will be said to him :) 'Here is your record: read it. Today you can yourself reckon your account'". (XVII : 13-14).

In the light of the above and this verse (126), it appears that in the Hereafter, the criminals shall be enabled to see the horrible sights and to realize the consequences of their evil deeds, but in other respects they will be like the blind man 'who cannot see his way and is deprived of even a staff to feel his way, nor is there anyone to guide him. So he stumbles and is knocked about and does not know where to go and how to satisfy his needs. This very state has been expressed thus: "You forgot Our Revelations when they came to you, so you are being forgotten today", as if, "you were blind and had no one to look after you."

108. This refers to the "wretched life" which will be the lot of those who turn away from the "Admonition" in this worldly life.

109. "These people" of Makkah.

110. That is, "In this lesson of History and in the observation of the archaeological remains and in this experience of mankind".

111. This is to comfort and console the Holy Prophet, as if to say, "Allah does not intend to destroy them yet, for He has appointed for them a term of respite, so you should endure with patience whatever they do against you and hear their harsh talk and go on performing the obligations of your Mission. For this purpose you should offer *Ṣalat* in accordance with the prescribed times because it will create in you necessary forbearance and fortitude".

"Glorify your Lord" means: "Offer your prescribed Prayers", as is clear from v. 132:

Incidentally, in this verse (130) the times of *Ṣalāt* have been prescribed: (1) Fajr Prayer before sunrise, (2) 'Aṣr Prayer before sunset, (3) 'Ishā and Tahajjud Prayers during the hours of night. Morning and Afternoon (Dhuhr) and Evening (Maghrib) Prayers "at the extremes of the day." (See also E.N.'s. 91 to 97 of Chapter XVII.)

112. The original Arabic Text admits of two meanings:

(1) "Rest content with your present condition in which you have to hear many unpleasant things for the sake of your Mission, and submit to this decree that they are not being punished for the time being, for they will continue to persecute you and at the same time lead prosperous lives."

(2) "Go on performing your Mission, for as a result of this, you will be fully satisfied."

This second meaning is supported by (a) XVII: 79: "That time is not far, when your Lord may exalt you to a laudable position," which follows the commandment about *Ṣalāt*, (b) XCIII: 4-5: "Surely the later period of life will be

better for you than the former, and in the near future your Lord will give you so much that you will be fully satisfied."

113. It means: "It does not behove you and your companions to be envious of the riches of the wicked people who are amassing wealth by unlawful means. The best thing for you is the lawful provision which you earn by your hard labour, even though this may be meagre in quantity. That is better for the pious and righteous and is of everlasting virtue."

114. That is, "Teach your children also that lawful provision is much better than the unlawful riches of the wicked people. For this purpose, enjoin them to say their prescribed Prayers, for this will change their attitude, their standard of values, and make them contented with pure provisions and virtuous life in preference to the life of sin and luxury."

115. It implies this: "We do not ask you to offer your Prayers for any benefit of Our own. We ask you to do that for your own good, because this will create piety in you which will bring about true success for you in this world and in the Hereafter."

116. This means that the Qur'ān itself is a great miracle, for though it is being presented by an unlettered person from among them, it contains the essence of the teachings and guidance of all the previous Divine Books. Not only this: it makes those teachings and guidance so plain and clear that even a simple man of the desert can benefit from them.

117. That is, "Ever since the Message of Islam is being presented in your city (Makkah), it is not only every person of this city who is waiting for its ultimate result but also every one outside it, who has heard of it,"


XXI
AL-ANBIYĀĀ'
الأنبياء

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXI
AL-ANBIYĀĀ'

الانبياء

INTRODUCTION

Name

The name of this Sūrah has not been taken from any verse but it has been called *Al-Anbiyāā'* because it contains a continuous account of many *Anbiyāā'* (Prophets) . Nevertheless, it is a symbolic name and not a title.

Period of Revelation

Both the subject-matter and the style of the Sūrah indicate that it was sent down in the third stage of the life of the Holy Prophet at Makkah. (See Introduction to Chapter VI).

Subject and Topics

This Sūrah discusses the conflict between the Holy Prophet and the chiefs of Makkah, which was rampant at the time of its Revelation and answers those objections and doubts which were being put forward concerning his Prophethood and the doctrines of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter. The chiefs of Makkah have also been rebuked for their machinations against the Holy Prophet and warned of the evil consequences of their wicked activities. They have been admonished to give up their indifference and heedlessness that they were showing about the Message. At the end of the Sūrah, they have been told that the person whom they considered to be a "distress and affliction" had in reality come to them as a blessing.

Main Themes

In vv. 1-47, the following themes have been discussed in particular:

(1) The objection of the disbelievers that a human being could not be a Messenger and therefore they could not accept Muḥammad (peace be upon him) as a Prophet, has been refuted.

(2) They have been taken to task for raising multifarious and contradictory objections against the Holy Prophet and the Qur'ān.

(3) Their wrong conception of life has been proved to be false because it was responsible for their indifferent and heedless attitude towards the Message of the Holy Prophet. They believed that life was merely a sport and pastime and had no purpose behind or before it and there was no accountability or reward or punishment.

(4) The main cause of the conflict between the disbelievers and the Holy Prophet was their insistence on the doctrine of *shirk* and antagonism to the doctrine of *Tauḥīd*. So the doctrine of *shirk* has been refuted and the doctrine of *Tauḥīd* reinforced by weighty and impressive though brief arguments.

(5) Arguments and admonitions have been used to remove another misunderstanding of theirs. They presumed that Muḥammad (peace be upon him) was a false prophet and his warnings of a scourge from God were empty threats, Just because no scourge was visiting them in spite of their persistent rejection of the Prophet.

In vv. 48-91, instances have been cited from the important events of the life-stories of the Prophets to show that all the Prophets, who were sent by God, were human beings and had all the characteristics of a man except those which were exclusive to Prophethood. They had no share in Godhead and they had to implore Allah to fulfil each and every necessity of theirs.

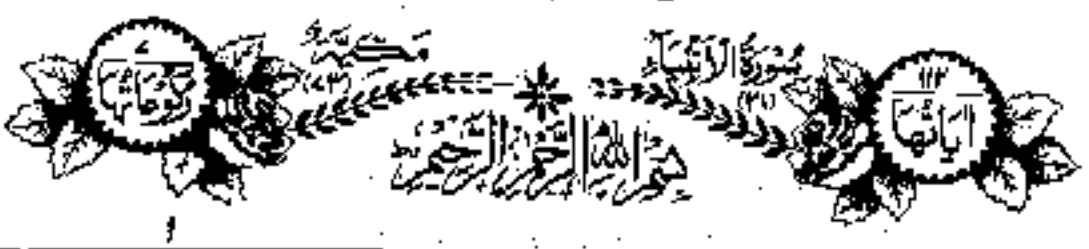
Along with these two other things have also been mentioned:

(1) All the Prophets had to pass through distress and affliction; their opponents did their worst to thwart their mission, but in spite of it they came out successful by the extraordinary succour from Allah.

(2) All the Prophets had one and the same "Way of Life", the same as was being presented by Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him), and that was the only Right Way of Life and all other ways invented and introduced by mischievous people were utterly wrong.

In vv. 92-106, it has been declared that only those who follow the Right Way, will come out successful in the final judgment of God and those who discard it shall meet with the worst consequences.

In vv. 107-112, the people have been told that it is a great favour of Allah that He has sent His Messenger to inform them beforehand of this Reality and that those, who consider his coming to be an affliction instead of a blessing, are foolish people.



الجزء ١٧

اِقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ وَهُمْ فِيْ غَفْلَةٍ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ۝١ مَا يَاْتِيْهِمْ

مِّنْ ذِكْرٍ مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ مُّحْدَثٍ اِلَّا اسْتَمَعُوْهُ وَهُمْ يَلْعَبُوْنَ ۝٢ لَاهِيَةً قُلُوْبُهُمْ
وَاَسَرُّوا النَّجْوَى ۖ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا ۖ هَلْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ ۚ اَفَتَاْتُوْنَ
السِّحْرَ وَاَنْتُمْ تُبْصِرُوْنَ ۝٣ قٰلَ رَبِّيْ يَعْلَمُ الْقَوْلَ فِي السَّمَآءِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۖ
وَهُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ۝٤ بَلْ قَالُوْٓا اَضْغَاثُ اَحْلَامٍ بَلِ افْتَرٰىهُ بَلْ هُوَ
شَاعِرٌ ۖ فَلْيَاْتِنَا بِاٰيَةٍ كَمَآ اُرْسِلَ الْاَوَّلُوْنَ ۝٥ مَآ اٰمَنَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ
اَهْلَكْنٰهَا ۚ اَفَهُمْ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ۝٦ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَا قَبْلَكَ اِلَّا رِجَالًا نُّوْحِيْٓ اِلَيْهِمْ
فَسْـَٔلُوْٓا اَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝٧ وَمَا جَعَلْنٰهُمْ جَسَدًا لَّا
يَاْكُلُوْنَ الطَّعَامَ وَمَا كَانُوْا خٰلِدِيْنَ ۝٨ ثُمَّ صَدَقْنٰهُمُ الْوَعْدَ فَاَنْجَيْنٰهُمْ
وَمَنْ نَّشَآءُ وَاَهْلَكْنَا الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ ۝٩ لَقَدْ اَنْزَلْنَآ اِلَيْكُمْ كِتٰبًا فِيْهِ ذِكْرُكُمْ ۖ
اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ۝١٠ وَكَمْ قَصَمْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ كَانَتْ ظَالِمَةً وَّاَنْشَاْنَا بَعْدَهَا
قَوْمًا اٰخَرِيْنَ ۝١١ فَلَمَّآ اَحَسُّوْا بَاْسَنَآ اِذَا هُمْ مِّنْهَا يَرْكُضُوْنَ ۝١٢ لَا تَرْكُضُوْا
وَارْجِعُوْٓا اِلٰى مَآ اُتْرِفْتُمْ فِيْهِ وَمَسٰكِنِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُسْـَٔلُوْنَ ۝١٣ قَالُوْا يٰوَيْلَنَآ
اِنَّا كُنَّا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ۝١٤ فَمَا زَالَتْ تِّلْكَ دَعْوٰىهُمْ حَتّٰى جَعَلْنٰهُمْ حَصِيْدًا خٰمِدِيْنَ ۝١٥
وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَآءَ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا لٰعِبِيْنَ ۝١٦ لَوْ اَرَدْنَآ اَنْ نَّتَّخِذَ
لَهْوًا لَّاتَّخَذْنٰهُ مِنْ لَّدُنَّآ ۖ اِنْ كُنَّا فٰعِلِيْنَ ۝١٧ بَلْ نَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ عَلَى
الْبَاطِلِ فَيَدْمَغُهٗ فَاِذَا هُوَ زَاهِقٌ ۚ وَلَكُمُ الْوَيْلُ مِمَّا تَصِفُوْنَ ۝١٨ وَلَهٗ مَنْ

XXI
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Verses: 112 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the merciful, the Compassionate.

The time of the reckoning of the people has drawn near,[1] and yet they are turning away (from the Admonition) in heedlessness.[2] They give a mere formal hearing to every new Revelation[3] that comes to them from their Lord and remain engaged in the game (of life) for their hearts are preoccupied (with other matters.)[4] 1-3

And the unjust people whisper to one another, saying, "This man is no more than a human being like yourselves. What ! will you, then, be enticed by his sorcery while you perceive it ?"[5]

To this the Prophet replied, "My Lord has the knowledge of everything that is said in the heavens and the earth for He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing."[6] 4

Then, they say, "It is a bundle of incoherent dreams: nay, he himself has invented it: nay, he is a poet;[7] if not, let him bring a sign like the signs with which the former Prophets were sent." The fact, however, is that no habitation, which We destroyed before them, believed (in spite of signs); now, will they, then, believe ?[8] 5-6

And, O Muḥammad, We sent before you also human beings as Messengers, to whom We revealed (Our Message).[9] If you (O objectors,) have no knowledge of this, you may ask the people of the Book.[10] We did not give them such bodies as could survive without food nor were they immortal. Then We fulfilled Our promises with them and ultimately delivered them and whomsoever We willed, and destroyed the transgressors.[11] 7-9

O people, We have sent down to you a Book, which deals with matters concerning yourselves. What, do you not understand this?[12] 10

11-15 Many a habitation of wicked people is there, which We crushed to pieces, and after them raised up another people. When they perceived Our Scourge[13] they began to flee the place. (Then it was said to them:) "Do not run away: go back to the same life of luxury and the houses where you were making merry: perhaps you may be asked about it."[14] They cried out, "Woe be to us: indeed we were wrong-doers." They went on crying out this very thing till We threshed them, leaving no spark of life in them.

We have not created for a pastime the heavens and the earth and whatever is between them.[15] Had We meant to make it a plaything and nothing more than this, We would have done it by Ourself.[16] But We give falsehood a hard blow with the Truth, which breaks its head and falsehood vanishes away in no time; and there is woe for you because of the falsehoods you invent.[17]

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1. "The time....near": the time of Resurrection. This is to warn the people that the time of Resurrection when they will have to appear before their Lord to render their accounts is not far. This was because the coming of the Holy Prophet was a sign and a clear evidence of the fact that mankind had entered the last stage of its history. The Holy Prophet himself explained it by holding out two of his adjoining fingers and said, "I have been sent at a time which joins to the time of Resurrection just as these two fingers adjoin". By this he meant to say, "No other Prophet is coming between me and the Resurrection. Therefore mend your ways now, for after me no guide is coming with good news and warning".

2. That is, "They do not pay heed to any warning nor reflect on their end nor listen to the admonition of the Messenger."

3. "New Revelation": A new Sūrah of the Qur'ān.

4. The words of the original Text may also be interpreted as: "They do not take life seriously but treat it as a sport and a joke".

5. This may also be translated as: "What, are you then being ensnared by his magic?"

The disbelievers, who were the chiefs of Makkah, whispered to one another to this effect: "Anyhow this man cannot be a Prophet because he is a human being like us and eats and drinks and has wife and children like us. We see nothing unusual about him that might distinguish him from us and make him worthy of the office of Prophethood. We, however, admit that there is some magic in his talk and personality. That is why any one who listens to him or goes near

him is charmed. Therefore, the best thing for you is not to listen to him at all, nor go near him, for listening to him or going near him will only be involving yourselves intentionally in his snare."

The reason why they accused the Holy Prophet of practising magic was that even his antagonists were "charmed" by his personality, when they met him. Muḥammad bin Ishāq (d. 152 A.H.) says, "Once 'Utbah bin Rabī'ah, the father-in-law of Abū Sufyān, said to the chiefs that he wanted to see Muḥammad and give him counsel. They said, 'We have full confidence in you; you may go and have a talk with him.' Accordingly, he went to the Holy Prophet and said, 'Dear nephew, you know that you were held in great honour here before this and you belong to a noble family. Why have you then brought this affliction to your people? You have caused discard among them: you consider your people to be fools: you speak ill of their religion and deities, and you declare their deceased forefathers to be disbelievers. My dear nephew, if your object is to become a rich man, we can give you so much wealth that you will become the richest man among us: if you are seeking a high rank, we will make you our chief, even our king, if you so like. But if you are suffering from a mental illness which makes you see illusions, we will have you treated by the best physicians.' He went on talking in this strain and the Holy Prophet remained silent. When he had a long talk, the Holy Prophet said, 'Abul Walīd, have you had your say or do you want to say anything more?' He replied that he had said what he had to say. Then the Holy Prophet said, 'Now listen to me'. And he began to recite Sūrah Ḥā Mīm Sajdah (Chapter XLI) after *Bismillah* and 'Utbah listened to him as if he had been charmed. When the Holy Prophet came to v. 38, he fell down in prostration. Then raising his head, he said, 'O Abul Walīd, I have said whatever I had to say, and you have heard it. Now I have nothing more to say'. After this 'Utbah walked back towards the chiefs who perceived him to be a changed man, and remarked, 'By God ! his face shows that he is not the same man that he was when he went from here.' When he came to them, they asked, 'What has been the result of your mission'? He answered, 'By God, today I have heard a thing the like of which I had never heard before. By Allah! It is not poetry nor sorcery nor divination. O people of Quraish, I advise you to leave him to himself. From what I have heard from him, I conclude that his Message is going to bring about a great revolution here. If the Arabs overcome him, you will stand absolved from the charge of murdering your own brother, and if he over-powers the Arabs, his sovereignty will be your own sovereignty and his honour your own honour.' The people answered, 'By God! you, too, O Abul Walīd, have been charmed by him'. To this he replied, 'I have expressed my opinion. Now it is for you to accept or reject it'." *(Ibn Hishām,* Vol. I, pp. 313-314).

Baihaqī, in his narration of the above event, makes this addition: "When the Holy Prophet recited v. 13: 'If they turn away from your Message, say to them, I have warned you of the coming of a thunderbolt like the thunderbolt that visited the 'Ād and the Thamūd', 'Utbah placed his hand on the mouth of the Holy Prophet, saying, 'For God's sake, have mercy on your own people'."

In this connection, Ibn Ishāq has cited another event. Once a man from the clan of Arāsh came to Makkah with some camels and Abū Jahl bought them. When he demanded their price, he put him off by lame excuses. At last the man came to the Sanctuary of the Ka'bah and began to bewail publicly the dishonesty of Abū Jahl. The Holy Prophet was also sitting in a corner of the Sanctuary. The chiefs of the Quraish said to the man, "We cannot help you in any way in this matter; look, there is a man sitting: go to him and he will get you your money." Accordingly the Arāshī went towards the Holy Prophet and the chiefs began to whisper jokingly, "Today there will be great fun!" When the man expressed his complaint before the Holy Prophet, he at once stood up and accompanied him to the house of Abū Jahl, followed by an informer of the chiefs. The Holy Prophet knocked at Abu Jahl's door, who asked from inside, "Who is there"? He answered, "Muḥammad". Hearing this, he at once came out and the Holy Prophet said to him, "Pay this man his dues." Accordingly, Abu Jahl went in without uttering a word, brought the price of the camels and paid the man. At this the informer ran back to the Quraish and told them the whole story and said, "By God, today I have seen something which I had never seen before. When Abu Jahl came out, Muḥammad asked him to pay the dues, and he obeyed him as if he were spell bound." *(Ibn Hishām,* Vol. II, pp. 29-30).

It was this "charm" of the personality, character and words of the Holy Prophet which these people considered to be the effects of "charm" and warned the people not to go near him for fear of his "magic."

6. This was the answer of the Prophet to their false propaganda and whispering campaign. Instead of giving a 'tit for tat' answer, he said, "My Lord will deal with you for He hears everything and knows everything."

7. The background of this verse is this: "When the message of the Holy Prophet started gaining adherents, the chiefs of Makkah decided among themselves to start a propaganda campaign to counteract it. For this purpose they decided that every visitor to Makkah for pilgrimage should be approached and his mind so poisoned against the Holy Prophet that he does not even go near and listen to him. Though this campaign continued throughout the year, in the pilgrimage season specially a large number of men were deputed to go to the tents of the pilgrims to warn them to beware of the Holy Prophet. Different sorts of things were said against the Holy Prophet during these talks. Sometimes it was said that he was a

sorcerer, or that he had fabricated the Qur'ān himself but attributed it to Allah. Some would say that his 'Revelations' were the words of an insane person and a bundle of incoherent ideas. Others would say that these were ordinary poetic ideas which were being dubbed as the words of Allah. All they wanted to do was to poison the minds of the visitors irrespective of the correctness of their own versions. They had no considered and definite opinion in the matter.

This false propaganda, however, had just the opposite effect. The name of the Holy Prophet became known throughout the length and breadth of the country through the nefarious activities of the chiefs of Makkah. A positive kind of approach from the Muslims would not have achieved the same publicity in years as was achieved so rapidly through this negative campaign of the Quraish. It set everybody thinking: "After all, who is this man against whom such a campaign of vilification has been started?" The serious type among them rather came to the conclusion that they must hear the Holy Prophet himself and said to themselves: "After all we are not children who can be easily enticed away".

For instance, Ibn Isḥâq has related in detail the story of Ṭufail-bin-'Amr Dausī in his own words: "I was a poet of the clan of Daus. Once I went to Makkah and was, on my arrival there, surrounded by some people of the Quraish who told me all sorts of things against the Holy Prophet. So I grew suspicious and tried to avoid him as far as possible. The very next day, when I went to visit the Sanctuary, I saw him saying his prayer. By chance, I heard a few sentences and felt that what he was reciting were excellent words. I said to myself, 'I am a poet and a sensible young man and no child who cannot discriminate between the right and the wrong. Why should I not therefore meet him and inquire what he is reciting?' Accordingly, I followed him to his house and said, 'The people had so much poisoned me against you that I had actually put cotton into my ears lest I should hear your voice, but what I have heard today from you by chance was so appealing that I feel urged to inquire into your Message rather in detail. At this the Holy Prophet recited a passage of the Qur'ān, as a result of which I embraced Islam there and then. On my return home I induced my father and wife to become Muslims, which they did, and then invited the people of my clan to embrace Islam with the result that till the Battle of the Trench as many as eighty families from my clan had entered the fold of Islam." *(Ibn Hishām,* Vol. II, pp. 22-24).

According to another tradition cited by Ibn Isḥāq, the chiefs of the Quraish confessed in their private meetings that all their charges against the Holy Prophet were false. According to him, addressing a meeting, Naḍr bin Ḥārith once said, "You cannot overcome Muḥammad by the methods you are adopting against him. When he was a young man you regarded him as your best-mannered person and looked upon him as your most truthful and honest man. Now that he has attained

advanced age, you say, 'He is a sorcerer: he is a sooth-sayer: he is a poet: he is insane.' By God, he is not a sorcerer, for we very well know what kind of people the sorcerers are and what kind of tricks they resort to. By God, he is not a sooth-sayer, for we are fully aware of the guess-works of the sooth-sayers. By God, he is not a poet for we know what poetry is and can judge that his words cannot be classified under poetry in any sense. By God, he is not insane, for we all know what nonsensical things the insane people utter. Therefore, O chiefs of the Quraish, let us think of some other plan to defeat him". After this, he himself proposed that stories from Persia like those of Rustam and Asfandyār should be given publicity to divert the people's attention from the Qur'ān. Accordingly, they put this scheme into practice and Nadr himself began to relate such stories before the people. (*Ibn Hishām*, Vol. I, pp. 320-321).

8. This contains a concise answer to the demand for a sign to the effect :

(1) You ask for Signs like the ones which were shown by the former Messengers but you forget that those obdurate people did not believe in spite of the Signs shown to them.

(2) While demanding a Sign, you fail to realize that the people, who disbelieved even after seeing a Sign, were inevitably destroyed.

(3) It is indeed a favour of Allah that He is not showing the Sign as demanded by you. Therefore, the best course for you would be to believe without seeing a Sign. Otherwise, you will meet the same dooth that the former communities met, when they did not believe even after seeing the Signs.

9. This is the answer to their objection: "This man is no more than a human being like yourselves", and therefore, cannot be a Messenger of God. They have been told that the former Prophets, too, whom you also recognize as Prophets, were human beings and were blessed with Revelations from Allah.

10. That is, "You may have it testified by the Jews, who are the enemies of Islam like you, and are teaching you the ways to oppose it, that all the Messengers including Prophet Moses were human beings."

11. History not only tells us that the former Messengers were human beings but it also contains a lesson that they all received Allah's succour as promised by Him and their enemies were completely destroyed. Therefore you should seriously consider the goal for which you are heading.

12. This is a comprehensive answer to the various objections which were being raised in desperation by the disbelievers of Makkah against the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet, as if to say: "What is there in this Book that you cannot understand? Why don't you consider it in the right spirit? There is nothing

contradictory in it: it discusses you and your own problems and affairs of life; it describes your own nature, origin and end; it discriminates between good and evil and presents high moral qualities which your own consciences endorse and confirm. Why don't you, then, use your minds to understand this simple and easy thing?"

13. That is, "When they realized that Allah's scourge was actually coming....."

14. This is a very meaningful sentence. It may mean:

(1) "Examine this scourge minutely so that if someone asks you about it, you may be able to give an accurate account of it."

(2) "Hold your grand meetings as usual: perhaps your servants may come with folded hands before you to receive orders."

(3) "Hold your councils as before, perhaps people may still come to ask for your wise counsels."

15. This was to refute their entire conception of life which was based on the assumption that man was free to do whatever he liked, and there was none to call him to account or take him to task: that there was no life in the Hereafter where one's good deeds would be rewarded and evil deeds punished. In other words, this meant that the whole universe had been created without any serious purpose and therefore there was no need to pay any heed to the Message of the Prophet.

16. That is, "This world has been created with a definite purpose and not as a plaything; for, if he had wanted to enjoy a sport, We would have done so without creating a sentient, rational and responsible creature like you. Far be it from Us to put man to trial and conflict for the sake of mere fun."

17. That is, "The object for which this world has been created is to stage a conflict between the Truth and falsehood. And you yourselves know that in this conflict falsehood has always been defeated and destroyed: You should, therefore, consider this reality seriously, for, if you build the system of your life on the false presumption that it is mere fun, you will meet with the same consequences as the former people did, who presumed that the world was a mere show and pastime. Therefore you should reconsider your whole attitude towards the Message which has come to you. Instead of making fun of it and scoffing at the Messenger, you should take a warning from the fate of the former peoples."

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فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ وَمَنْ عِنْدَهٗ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِهٖ وَلَا
يَسْتَحْسِرُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ يُسَبِّحُوْنَ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لَا يَفْتُرُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ اَمِ اتَّخَذُوْٓا اٰلِهَةً
مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ هُمْ يُنْشِرُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ لَوْ كَانَ فِيْهِمَآ اٰلِهَةٌ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ لَفَسَدَتَا ۚ فَسُبْحٰنَ
اللّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ لَا يُسْـَٔلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْـَٔلُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾
اَمِ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اٰلِهَةً ؕ قُلْ هَاتُوْا بُرْهَانَكُمْ ۚ هٰذَا ذِكْرُ مَنْ مَّعِيَ وَ
ذِكْرُ مَنْ قَبْلِيْ ؕ بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۙ الْحَقَّ فَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَمَآ
اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَّسُوْلٍ اِلَّا نُوْحِيْٓ اِلَيْهِ اَنَّهٗ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّآ اَنَا فَاعْبُدُوْنِ ﴿٢٥﴾
وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمٰنُ وَلَدًا سُبْحٰنَهٗ ؕ بَلْ عِبَادٌ مُّكْرَمُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ لَا يَسْبِقُوْنَهٗ
بِالْقَوْلِ وَهُمْ بِاَمْرِهٖ يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ
وَلَا يَشْفَعُوْنَ ۙ اِلَّا لِمَنِ ارْتَضٰى وَهُمْ مِّنْ خَشْيَتِهٖ مُشْفِقُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَمَنْ
يَّقُلْ مِنْهُمْ اِنِّيْٓ اِلٰهٌ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖ فَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِيْهِ جَهَنَّمَ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي
الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَرَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اَنَّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ كَانَتَا رَتْقًا
فَفَتَقْنٰهُمَا ؕ وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَآءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ ؕ اَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا
فِي الْاَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ اَنْ تَمِيْدَ بِهِمْ ۪ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيْهَا فِجَاجًا سُبُلًا لَّعَلَّهُمْ
يَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا السَّمَآءَ سَقْفًا مَّحْفُوْظًا ۚ وَّهُمْ عَنْ اٰيٰتِهَا مُعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾
وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ؕ كُلٌّ فِيْ فَلَكٍ يَّسْبَحُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾
وَمَا جَعَلْنَا لِبَشَرٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ الْخُلْدَ ؕ اَفَاْئِنْ مِّتَّ فَهُمُ الْخٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ كُلُّ
نَفْسٍ ذَآئِقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ؕ وَنَبْلُوْكُمْ بِالشَّرِّ وَالْخَيْرِ فِتْنَةً ؕ وَاِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾
وَاِذَا رَاٰكَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اِنْ يَّتَّخِذُوْنَكَ اِلَّا هُزُوًا ؕ اَهٰذَا الَّذِيْ يَذْكُرُ

All that exists in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah :[18] and (the angels) who are near Him[19] disdain not to serve Him, nor do they feel wearied :[20] they glorify Him night and day without taking rest. 19-20

Have the earthly deities they have set up the power to give life and raise the (inanimate) things?[21] 21

Had there been other deities besides Allah in the heavens and the earth, both (the heavens and the earth) would have gone out of order.[22] So, absolutely free is Allah, Lord of the Throne,[23] from the false things they ascribe to Him. He is accountable to none for what He does, but all others are accountable (to Him). 22-23

Have they discarded Him and set up other deities? Say to them, O Muhammad, "Bring your authority; here is this Book, which contains Admonition for the people of my time, and there are also those Books which contained Admonition for the former people."[24] But most of these people have no knowledge of the Reality; therefore they have turned away from it.[25] The fact is that to every Messenger whom We sent down before you, We revealed this same thing: "There is no other deity than Me: so worship Me alone." 24-25

They say, "The Merciful has offspring."[26] Glory be to Allah! they are His mere servants who have been honoured: they do not exceed[3] the limits in their talk before Him and just do His bidding. He knows whatever is before them and also whatever is hidden from them; they do not intercede for anyone except for the one for whom Allah pleases to hear a plea, and they live in awe of Him.[27] And if anyone of them were to say, "I am also a deity besides Allah", We would send him to Hell, for this is the recompense from Us for such workers of iniquity. 26-29

Have not the people, who have disbelieved (the Message), ever considered this: the heavens and the earth were at first one mass; then We parted them,[28] and created every living thing from water?[29] Do they not acknowledge (that this is Our Creation) ? And We set mountains firmly in the earth lest it should tilt to one side along with them,[30] and We left therein open paths[31] so that they may find their way.[32] And We made the sky a safe canopy,[33] but in spite of this they do not pay due heed to its signs.[34] And it is Allah, Who has made the night and the day 30-33

and created the sun and the moon; all of them are floating, each in its own orbit.[35]

34-35 And,[36] O Muḥammad, no man have We made immortal before you; then, if you die, will they live on for ever? Every living being has to taste death,[37] and We are putting all of you to trial by passing you through good and bad conditions,[38] and ultimately you shall return to Us.

36 When these disbelievers see you, they scoff at you: they say, "What! Is this the man who speaks slightingly of your deities"?[39] But as for them they discard with disdain the mention of the Merciful.[40]

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18. From here begins the discourse on the confirmation of *Tauḥīd* and the refutation of *shirk* for these were the actual bases of the conflict between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers of Makkah. The line of argument is this: The whole system of the universe is a clear proof that there is One Allah Who is its Creator, Sovereign, Ruler, and Lord and it is a falsehood that there are many gods who are partners in His Kingdom and Sovereignty, or that there is a Supreme God Who has under Him some minor gods to conduct the affairs of His Kingdom. This proof is also based on the preceding verses in which it has been stated that the universe has not been created as a pastime or a plaything, but for a serious purpose and that there has always been a conflict between the Truth and falsehood, and falsehood has always been defeated and destroyed.

19. That is, the angels whom the *mushriks* of Arabia believed to be the children of God and worshipped them as partners in Godhead.

20. That is, "They are engaged in His service day and night without grumbling or ever feeling wearied."

21. This question has been posed to bring home to the disbelievers that when they themselves believed that there is no being other than Allah who can give life to inanimate matter, why do they then acknowledge other deities besides Allah?

22. This concise sentence contains two arguments:

(1) The obviously simple argument is that no institution, no household, not to speak of the vast universe containing multitudes of countless distant stars, can function smoothly and properly, if it has two masters.

(2) The deeper argument is that the system of the whole universe, including that of the earth, is functioning according to a universal law. It could not work so even for a moment, if there had been no proper proportion, balance, harmony

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and coordination between the different powers and countless things. This is a clear proof that there is a universal and all-powerful law and system which binds and forces these powers and things to co-operate and coordinate between themselves with a perfect proportion and harmony and this could not have happened if there had been different independent rulers. The existence of such a system is itself a clear proof that there must be One All-Powerful Manager and Administrator governing and ruling the whole universe. For further details, please see E. N. 47 of Banī Isrā'īl (XVII).

23. That is, "The Sovereign of the whole universe."

24. The first two were rational arguments and this is a historical one. This means that the study of all the former Scriptures shows that the Creator of the universe is One Allah and He alone is worthy of service and worship, while "Your religion is neither supported by rational arguments nor by historical evidence."

25. It is their lack of the knowledge of the Reality which has created this indifference towards the Message of the Prophet, and the same has made them heedless of the Message.

26. "Offspring" here refers to the angels as is clear from v. 28. The disbelievers of Arabia believed that the angels were the daughters of God.

27. These two verses refute the two reasons for which the *mushriks* had made the angels their deities:

(1) They took them for the offspring of Allah.

(2) They thought that if they worshipped the angels, they would be so pleased that they would intercede with Allah on their behalf. (See X:18; XXXIX:3).

In this connection, it should also be noted that the Qur'ān refutes the doctrine of intercession of the *mushriks*, saying, that their so-called intercessors are not qualified to intercede for anyone. This is so because they have no knowledge of the hidden things, whereas Allah knows all that is hidden from or open to them. Therefore, the angels or Prophets or saints shall be allowed intercession only with the prior permission of Allah. As Allah alone has the power to hear or accept intercession, none else is entitled to divine worship or rights. For further details, please see Ṭā Hā (XX): E. N.'s 85-86.

28. From the wording of the Text, it appears that at first the whole universe was a single mass of matter; then it was split into different parts and the earth and the other heavenly bodies were formed. For fuller details, please see Ḥā Mīm (XLI): E. N.'s 13-15.

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اٰلِهَتَكُمْ ۚ وَهُمْ بِذِكْرِ الرَّحْمٰنِ هُمْ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ خُلِقَ الْاِنْسَانُ مِنْ عَجَلٍ ؕ [36]
سَاُورِيْكُمْ اٰيٰتِيْ فَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلُوْنِ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مَتٰى هٰذَا الْوَعْدُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ [37]
صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ لَوْ يَعْلَمُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا حِيْنَ لَا يَكُفُّوْنَ عَنْ وُّجُوْهِهِمُ النَّارَ وَ [38]
لَا عَنْ ظُهُوْرِهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ بَلْ تَاْتِيْهِمْ بَغْتَةً فَتَبْهَتُهُمْ فَلَا [39]
يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ رَدَّهَا وَلَا هُمْ يُنْظَرُوْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَلَقَدِ اسْتُهْزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ [40]
فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِيْنَ سَخِرُوْا مِنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ قُلْ مَنْ يَّكْلَؤُكُمْ [41]
بِالَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ مِنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ ؕ بَلْ هُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّهِمْ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ اَمْ [42]
لَهُمْ اٰلِهَةٌ تَمْنَعُهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِنَا ؕ لَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ نَصْرَ اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ
مِّنَّا يُصْحَبُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ بَلْ مَتَّعْنَا هٰٓؤُلَآءِ وَاٰبَآءَهُمْ حَتّٰى طَالَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْعُمُرُ ؕ [43]
اَفَلَا يَرَوْنَ اَنَّا نَاْتِي الْاَرْضَ نَنْقُصُهَا مِنْ اَطْرَافِهَا ؕ اَفَهُمُ الْغٰلِبُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ قُلْ [44]
اِنَّمَآ اُنْذِرُكُمْ بِالْوَحْيِ ۚ وَلَا يَسْمَعُ الصُّمُّ الدُّعَآءَ اِذَا مَا يُنْذَرُوْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَلَئِنْ [45]
مَّسَّتْهُمْ نَفْحَةٌ مِّنْ عَذَابِ رَبِّكَ لَيَقُوْلُنَّ يٰوَيْلَنَآ اِنَّا كُنَّا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَنَضَعُ [46]
الْمَوَازِيْنَ الْقِسْطَ لِيَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ فَلَا تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا ؕ وَاِنْ كَانَ مِثْقَالَ
حَبَّةٍ مِّنْ خَرْدَلٍ اَتَيْنَا بِهَا ؕ وَكَفٰى بِنَا حٰسِبِيْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسٰى وَ [47]
هٰرُوْنَ الْفُرْقَانَ وَضِيَآءً وَّذِكْرًا لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَيْبِ [48]
وَهُمْ مِّنَ السَّاعَةِ مُشْفِقُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَهٰذَا ذِكْرٌ مُّبٰرَكٌ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ ؕ اَفَاَنْتُمْ لَهٗ [49]
مُنْكِرُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَآ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ رُشْدَهٗ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَكُنَّا بِهٖ عٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ اِذْ [51]
قَالَ لِاَبِيْهِ وَقَوْمِهٖ مَا هٰذِهِ التَّمَاثِيْلُ الَّتِيْٓ اَنْتُمْ لَهَا عٰكِفُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ قَالُوْا [52]
وَجَدْنَآ اٰبَآءَنَا لَهَا عٰبِدِيْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ قَالَ لَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ اَنْتُمْ وَاٰبَآؤُكُمْ فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ [53]

Man is a creature of haste (and impatience).[41] Well, you need not be impatient: I will show you My signs before long.[42]---They ask, "Anyhow, when will this threat be made good, if you speak the truth?" Would that the disbelievers knew something about the time, when they shall neither be able to protect their faces from the Fire nor their backs, nor will they get any succour from anywhere! For that catastrophe will occur all of a sudden and will overpower them so abruptly that they shall neither be able to ward it off nor shall they get any respite. As for their scoff, the Messengers before you also have been scoffed at, but the scoffers were encircled by that very doom at which they used to scoff. 37-41

O Muhammad, ask them, "Who is there to protect you from the Merciful in the night or in the day?"[43] (None!) Yet they are paying no heed to the Admonition of their Lord. Do they have gods who can defend them against Us? (No) for they can neither help themselves nor are they helped by Us. The fact is that We provided them and their forefathers with provisions of life until the period grew too long for them.[44] But can they not see that We are coming in the land, shrinking its boundaries for them on all sides ?[45] Do they, then, expect to come out victorious (over Us)?[46] Say to them, "I am warning you on the authority of Revelation".-- But the deaf do not hear the call when they are warned. However, even if the slightest torment of your Lord touched them,[47] they would forthwith cry out, "Woe to us ! no doubt we were wrong-doers". 42-46

On the Day of Resurrection, We will set up just and accurate balances so that no one will be wronged in the least in anyway; even if it be an act equal in weight to a grain of mustard seed, We will bring it forth (to be weighed) and We suffice for reckoning.[48] 47

Before[49] this We bestowed on Moses and Aaron the Criterion and Light and "Admonition"[50] for the betterment of those righteous[51] people, who fear their Lord though they have not seen Him, and dread the Hour[52] (of Reckoning). And now We have sent down this blessed "Admonition" (for you). Do you, then, reject this? 48-50

Even before that, We had blessed Abraham with the discretion he displayed, for We knew him well.[53] Recall to mind the occasion[54] when he said to his father and his people, "What are these images to 51-54

which you are so devoted"? They replied, "We found our forefathers worshipping them". He said, "You have gone astray and so had your forefathers manifestly deviated from the Right Way."

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29. From the wording of the Text, it appears that Allah made water the cause and origin of life. See also An-Nūr (XXIV): 45.

30. For explanation, see E. N. 12 of An-Naḥl (XVI).

31. "Open paths" are the passes between high mountains and the valleys and ravines made by the rivers in the mountainous regions and other natural ways that connect different regions on the earth.

32. This is a very meaningful sentence. It may mean that the people may find paths for travelling on the earth, and it may also mean that the wisdom that underlies the skill and the system of their creation may guide them to the Reality.

33. For explanation, see Al-Ḥijr (XV): E. N's 8 and 10-12.

34. That is, "Those signs which are in the sky".

35. The use of the words *kullun* (all) and *yasbaḥūn* (float) in the plural (for more than two) indicates that not only the sun and the moon but all the heavenly bodies are floating in their own separate orbits and none of them is fixed or stationary. These verses (30-33) are capable of being interpreted in the modern scientific terms in accordance with the present day conceptions of Physics, Biology and Astronomy.

Here it should also be noted that vv. 19-23 refute *shirk* while vv. 30-33 present positive proofs of *Tauḥīd*. They imply that the creation and regular functioning of the universe clearly show that it is the work of One All-Powerful Creator, and no sensible person can say that it has been created as a mere pastime for the sake of fun. When the fact is this and you see proofs of the Doctrine of *Tauḥīd* all around yourself, in the earth and heavens, why do you reject the Message of the Prophet and demand other Signs from him?

36. From here the same theme of the conflict between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers, that was interrupted by vv. 19-33, has been resumed.

37. This is a brief answer to all those warnings and curses with which the Holy Prophet was being threatened and the conspiracies which the Quraish were hatching against him day and night. On the one hand, the women of the Quraish cursed him because according to them he had ruined their home life by enticing away their kith and kin; while on the other, the chiefs of the Quraish threatened him with horrible consequences for the propagation of Islam. After the emigration

to Habash especially, which almost affected every home of Makkah, these curses and threats increased all the more. This verse is meant to comfort and console the Holy Prophet as well so that he should continue his mission without any fear of their threats.

38. That is, Allah is always putting human beings to test and trial both through adversity and affluence. This is to judge whether prosperity makes them proud, cruel and slaves of their lusts or they become grateful to Allah. On the other hand, He inflicts adversity upon them in order to see whether they remain within the prescribed and lawful limits or become low-spirited and down-hearted. A sensible person therefore should not be deluded by prosperity and adversity, but should keep their trial element in view and try to pass through it gracefully.

39. It should be noted that this sentence contains only the reason why they scoffed at him, but does not refer to the expression of "scoff" itself. Obviously, the disbelievers must have been using some other words or expressions of derision to avenge themselves on the Holy Prophet for his rejecting their self-made deities.

40. This is to rebuke the disbelieves, as if to say, "You cherish so much love of your self-made idols and false gods that you cannot tolerate anything against them; so much so that you scoff at the Messenger of Allah, but, as for you, you are not ashamed that you are stung to the quick when you hear the name of the Merciful and discard His mention with disdain."

41. This is not the literal translation of the Text; its purport according to the Arabic usage is: "Man is a hasty and impatient creature by his very nature." The same thing has been stated in XVII:11: "Man is very hasty and impatient."

42. From the succeeding sentences it is obvious that "Signs" here stands for the things that have been mentioned therein—the "threat" of the scourge of Allah, Resurrection and Hell. They made fun of these, as if to say: "This man threatens us with the scourge of Allah and the torment of the Day of Resurrection if we deny him and that we shall become fuel of Hell; but nothing of the sort has befallen us. We are as strong as ever and nothing seems to be happening".

43. That is to say, "Who is there to protect and save you from the scourge of Allah if you are suddenly visited by it any time during the night or day?"

44. In other words it means: "These people have been deluded by Our favour and Our provisions. They think they are enjoying prosperity and good life as their personal right and there is none to take it away from them. They have forgotten that there is God above them Who is able to make or mar their fortune".

45. In this connection, see Ar-Ra'd (XIII): 41 and E. N. 60 thereof. Here

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مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿54﴾ قَالُوْٓا اَجِئْتَنَا بِالْحَقِّ اَمْ اَنْتَ مِنَ اللّٰعِبِيْنَ ﴿55﴾ قَالَ بَلْ رَّبُّكُمْ رَبُّ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ الَّذِيْ فَطَرَهُنَّ ۖ وَاَنَا عَلٰى ذٰلِكُمْ مِّنَ الشّٰهِدِيْنَ ﴿56﴾ وَ
تَاللّٰهِ لَاَكِيْدَنَّ اَصْنَامَكُمْ بَعْدَ اَنْ تُوَلُّوْا مُدْبِرِيْنَ ﴿57﴾ فَجَعَلَهُمْ جُذٰذًا اِلَّا
كَبِيْرًا لَّهُمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ اِلَيْهِ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿58﴾ قَالُوْا مَنْ فَعَلَ هٰذَا بِاٰلِهَتِنَآ اِنَّهٗ لَمِنَ
الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿59﴾ قَالُوْا سَمِعْنَا فَتًى يَّذْكُرُهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهٗٓ اِبْرٰهِيْمُ ﴿60﴾ قَالُوْا فَاْتُوْا
بِهٖ عَلٰٓى اَعْيُنِ النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْهَدُوْنَ ﴿61﴾ قَالُوْٓا ءَاَنْتَ فَعَلْتَ هٰذَا بِاٰلِهَتِنَا
يٰٓاِبْرٰهِيْمُ ﴿62﴾ قَالَ بَلْ فَعَلَهٗ ۖ كَبِيْرُهُمْ هٰذَا فَسْـَٔلُوْهُمْ اِنْ كَانُوْا يَنْطِقُوْنَ ﴿63﴾
فَرَجَعُوْٓا اِلٰٓى اَنْفُسِهِمْ فَقَالُوْٓا اِنَّكُمْ اَنْتُمُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿64﴾ ثُمَّ نُكِسُوْا عَلٰى رُءُوْسِهِمْ ۚ
لَقَدْ عَلِمْتَ مَا هٰٓؤُلَآءِ يَنْطِقُوْنَ ﴿65﴾ قَالَ اَفَتَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا
يَنْفَعُكُمْ شَيْـًٔا وَّلَا يَضُرُّكُمْ ﴿66﴾ اُفٍّ لَّكُمْ وَلِمَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ۭ اَفَلَا
تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿67﴾ قَالُوْا حَرِّقُوْهُ وَانْصُرُوْٓا اٰلِهَتَكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ فٰعِلِيْنَ ﴿68﴾ قُلْنَا يٰنَارُ
كُوْنِيْ بَرْدًا وَّسَلٰمًا عَلٰٓى اِبْرٰهِيْمَ ﴿69﴾ وَاَرَادُوْا بِهٖ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنٰهُمُ الْاَخْسَرِيْنَ ﴿70﴾
وَنَجَّيْنٰهُ وَلُوْطًا اِلَى الْاَرْضِ الَّتِيْ بٰرَكْنَا فِيْهَا لِلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿71﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهٗٓ
اِسْحٰقَ ۭ وَيَعْقُوْبَ نَافِلَةً ۭ وَكُلًّا جَعَلْنَا صٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿72﴾ وَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ اَىِٕمَّةً يَّهْدُوْنَ
بِاَمْرِنَا وَاَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرٰتِ وَاِقَامَ الصَّلٰوةِ وَاِيْتَاۗءَ الزَّكٰوةِ ۚ وَ
كَانُوْا لَنَا عٰبِدِيْنَ ﴿73﴾ وَلُوْطًا اٰتَيْنٰهُ حُكْمًا وَّعِلْمًا وَّنَجَّيْنٰهُ مِنَ الْقَرْيَةِ
الَّتِيْ كَانَتْ تَّعْمَلُ الْخَبٰٓئِثَ ۭ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا قَوْمَ سَوْءٍ فٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿74﴾ وَاَدْخَلْنٰهُ
فِيْ رَحْمَتِنَا ۭ اِنَّهٗ مِنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿75﴾ وَنُوْحًا اِذْ نَادٰى مِنْ قَبْلُ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا
لَهٗ فَنَجَّيْنٰهُ وَاَهْلَهٗ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿76﴾ وَنَصَرْنٰهُ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الَّذِيْنَ

They said, "What! are you presenting your real ideas before us, or are you jesting"?[55] He answered, "Nay, in fact your Lord is the same Who is the Lord of the heavens and the earth and their Creator! I bear witness to this, and, by God, I will out-wit your idols in your absence."[56] Accordingly, he broke them into pieces,[57] but he left the major one intact so that they might turn to it.[58] (On their return when they saw the plight of their idols,) they said, "Who has done this to our gods? Indeed he must be a spiteful person." Some replied, "We heard a young man called Abraham talking about them". At this, they said, "Then seize him, and bring him here before the people so that they may witness (how severely he is dealt with)".[59] (When Abraham came there,) they asked, "O Abraham, have you done this to our gods?" He answered, "Nay, all this has been done by their chief; you may ask them, if they can speak".[60] This turned them to (search) their own conscience, and they said (to themselves), "Surely you yourselves are in the wrong". But soon after this their minds became perverse,[61] and they said, "You know that they cannot speak". At this Abraham said, "Do you even then discard Allah and worship these things which are unable to do any good or harm to you? Fie upon you and the deities you worship instead of Allah! What! have you got no sense at all?" They said, "Burn him alive and avenge your gods, if you want to take any action". At this, We commanded, "O fire! be cool and become safe for Abraham".[62] They intended to do some harm to Abraham, but We frustrated them in their evil design. Then We brought him and Lot[63] safely to the land, which We have made blessed for all the people of the world.[64] Then We bestowed on him Isaac and added Jacob to him,[65] and We made each of them righteous. We appointed them leaders who guided others by Our Command. We also enjoined them by Revelation to do righteous deeds and establish *Ṣalāt* and pay *Zakāt* dues, and they all worshipped Us.[66] 55-73

And We bestowed judgment and knowledge[67] on Lot, and delivered him from that habitation which committed indecent deeds. Indeed, they were a very wicked, perverse and disobedient people. And We admitted Lot into Our Mercy: he was, indeed, of the righteous people. 74-75

And We blessed Noah with the same favour; remember that he had invoked Us[68] before those Prophets; We heard his prayer and 76-77

delivered him and the people of his house from the great calamity[69] and helped him against those who had treated Our Revelations as false. They were indeed a very wicked people, so We drowned them all together.

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it bears an additional meaning also: "Do they not see that an All-Powerful Being is showing His Signs every now and then everywhere on the earth in the form of famines, epidemics, floods, earthquakes and other calamities; millions of people are killed, habitations and harvests are destroyed and other damages are caused, which frustrate all human designs?"

46. It means: "When they know that all the resources and provisions of life are in Our hands and that We can increase or decrease them as We will, have they the power and strength to defend themselves against Our punishment? Can they not see from these "Signs" that their power, prosperity and luxury are not everlasting and that there is an All-Powerful Allah to seize and punish them?"

47. That is, "The same scourge which they are demanding to be hastened and of which they are making fun."

48. See also vv. 8-9 and E.N.'s 8-9 of Al-A'arāf (VII). It is difficult for us to understand the exact nature of the "Balance". Anyhow it is clear that the "Balance" will weigh accurately all the human moral deeds instead of material things, and will help judge whether a man is virtuous or wicked and how much. The Qur'ān has used this word to make mankind understand that every deed, good or bad, will be weighed and judged according to merit.

49. From here begin the stories of the Prophets. If we consider these stories in the context in which they occur, it becomes plain that these have been related to impress the following themes:

(1) All the former Prophets were human beings: therefore there is nothing strange or unusual that a human being like Muḥammad has been sent as a Messenger (Allah's peace be upon him).

(2) The Mission and teachings of this Prophet are the same as of those who were sent before him.

(3) All the Prophets had been granted a privileged position by Allah, Who blessed them with special favours. For instance, though they were made to suffer from hardships and persecutions for years, ultimately Allah heard their prayers and helped them in miraculous ways against their enemies and persecutors.

(4) In spite of Allah's special favours on them they were no more than His humble servants and human beings and had no share whatever in Godhead; so much so that sometimes they committed errors of judgment, fell ill, were put to trials and even committed faults, for which they were called to account by Allah.

50. All the three words have been used in praise of the Torah: (l) A Criterion which distinguished the Truth from falsehood. (2) A Light which showed the Right Way of life, and (3) An Admonition, which reminded the erring descendants of Adam to remember the lesson they had forgotten.

51. Though it was sent for the good of all human beings, only the pious people, having these characteristics, could benefit from it.

52. The Hour of "Resurrection".

53. The Arabic word رُشْد *(rushd)* is very comprehensive and means righteousness as well.

"We had blessed Abraham with discretion;" "The discretion he showed in discriminating between the right and the wrong etc. was not of his own acquirement but had been bestowed on him by Us."

"We knew him well": "We knew that he was worthy of Prophethood; therefore We appointed him as such". According to VI:124: " .... Allah knows best whom to entrust with His Mission ...." It contains a subtle answer to the objection raised by the chiefs of the Quraish: "Why has Allah appointed this man (the Holy Prophet) to the office of Prophethood, when he is in no way superior to us?" This objection has been answered, as if to say, "The same objection might even have been raised against Prophet Abraham by his people, but We knew his capabilities. Therefore We selected him for Prophethood."

In this connection, please also see II: 124-141, 258-260; VI: 74-84; IX: 114; XI: 69-76; XIV: 35-41; XV: 51-58 and XVI: 120-122 and the E.N's thereof.

54. Before proceeding further it should be kept in mind that the incident from the history of Prophet Abraham has been cited here to refute the erroneous creeds of the Quraish. This was meant to hit them hard for they were the descendants of Prophet Abraham and were proud of their relationship with him. It was he who had built the Ka'abah which had become the centre of the whole of Arabia and they, being its keepers, were its most important clan. Therefore, they could not remain indifferent to this answer.

55. The literal translation will be: "Are you presenting the Truth before us, or just playing with us?" They were so sure of the truth of their creed that they could never imagine that anyone could be serious in declaring it to be false.

56. That is, "If you do not understand this by argument, I will present a practical proof that these idols are helpless and have no powers. Therefore, it is wrong to make them your deities".

57. This was that practical proof. In the absence of the priests and attendants, Prophet Abraham entered their central Temple and broke all the idols to pieces.

58. The pronoun in the original Text may be translated into "it" or "him". In the former case, it will refer to the chief idol and in the latter to Prophet Abraham. In the first case, it will imply a subtle sarcasm in order to make them realize that their creed of idol-worship was foolish, for obviously the chief idol could not break the minor idols. In the second case, it will refer to Prophet Abraham, who thought that they might turn to him about the "incident" and he might get an opportunity to have a frank talk with them about their absurd creed.

59. This was exactly what Prophet Abraham expected to happen. He wished that the matter should not remain confined to the priests and the attendants but the common people also should be present there to witness that their deities were helpless and their priests were deluding them about their powers. The priests committed the same folly as was later committed by Pharaoh when he arranged an encounter between Prophet Moses and the magicians in the open in front of the multitudes of the common people, and the former got an opportunity to show publicly the miracle of the staff which shattered the illusory, magical tricks of the magicians.

60. The very sentence, "You may ask them, if they can speak", is a clear proof that it was not a lie when Prophet Abraham said, "All this has been done by their chief." What he intended by this was to make them realize and confess that their idols were helpless because they could do nothing to protect themselves, and could not even speak. It is clear that when a person poses an unreal question for the sake of argument in order to bring home the fact that the position taken by the other party is untenable, it cannot be considered as a lie; firstly, because the speaker himself never intended it to be a lie, and secondly, because the addressees also knew that it was not a lie.

The foregoing remarks have been necessitated because of a "tradition" that Prophet Abraham told three "lies" in his life, of which one is the above-mentioned event. The second "lie" is contained in XXXVII: 89: "I am indisposed", and the third "lie" is not contained in the Qur'ān but in the Bible that he declared his wife to be his sister. (Gen. 12:12,13, 18,19). It is a pity that this "tradition" has given rise to two divergent opinions. The orthodox traditionalists actually believe that Prophet Abraham told these lies just because an "authentic

tradition" says so. They do not consider that it is far better to discard the "tradition" according to which a Prophet is accused of being a "liar". On the other hand, those who are against the Traditions, discard all of them just because this solitary tradition, which has been reported as authentic by *Bukhārī* and *Muslim*, is unreliable on the very face of it. Obviously it needs no elaborate arguments to prove that all the traditions cannot be discarded just because one or a few of them are unreliable. As regards the upholders of the first opinion, they have gone to the other extreme and think that a tradition can be discarded in spite of the authenticity of its reporters for cogent reasons. They do this without reference to the contents of the tradition itself. But if the text of the tradition itself clearly shows that such a thing could not have been said by the Holy Prophet, there is no reason to insist that it should be accepted as authentic merely because its reporters are authentic.

This tradition is unreliable for other reasons also. As has already been shown, the first "lie" is no lie at all. As regards the second "lie", ("I am indisposed"), it cannot be considered as a lie unless it is proved beyond doubt that Prophet Abraham was perfectly healthy at that time, and the text does not testify this. As regards the third "lie", the event stated in the Bible in chapter 12 of Genesis is absurd on the face of it. When Prophet Abraham went to Egypt with his wife Sārah, he was, according to the Bible itself, 75 years old and his wife was 65. Therefore the very age of Sārah is a clear proof that she could not be a "fair woman to look upon" to force Prophet Abraham to pose that she was his sister in order to save his life. The tradition under discussion, which accuses Prophet Abraham to be guilty of telling a lie, has accordingly no basis at all and cannot be taken as reliable in spite of its authentic reporters.

61. Literally the original Text means: "They were turned down upon their heads." Some commentators have interpreted it to mean: "They hung down their heads with shame". But this does not fit in the context and the wording of the Text. The right interpretation would be: "When they considered the answer of Prophet Abraham, they realized that they themselves were in the wrong, because they had set up helpless idols as deities, which could not even speak a word as to who had broken them. But soon after this, they were overpowered by obduracy and ignorance which perverted their minds and they again relapsed into crookedness."

62. Though this is one of those miracles which have been clearly stated in the Qur'ān, there are people who try to "prove" that there was no such miracle at all. According to this passage (vv. 68-70), Prophet Abraham was actually threatened to be burnt alive and he was accordingly thrown into the burning fire; but Allah ordered the fire to become cool and harmless for him. In the face of the clear words of the Qur'ān, these people deny this miracle because according to

them it is impossible even for Allah to go beyond the routine of the physical laws. They say that miracles cannot appeal to the rationalists of the modern age, and therefore these should be interpreted in accordance with physical laws. They forget that according to the Qur'ān, Allah is able to do everything, and He does extraordinary and unusual things which cannot be explained by "science". Therefore they should accept the Qur'ān as it is or discard it, but they should not twist it to suit their so-called rationalism.

63. According to the Bible, Prophet Abraham had two brothers, Nahor and Ḥarān; Prophet Lot was the son of Ḥarān (Gen. 11:26), and he was the only person to believe in Prophet Abraham. (XXIX: 26).

64. The "blessed land" refers to Syria and Palestine, which contains both material and spiritual blessings. It is one of the most fertile regions in the world; moreover, it was blessed for two thousand years with more Prophets than any other region of the world.

65. That is, "We made his son a Prophet and his grandson too".

66. This important event of the life of Prophet Abraham has found no mention whatever in the Bible. In fact nothing about his life in 'Irāq —his conflict with Nimrod, his father and the community at large, his efforts to eradicate idolatry, the incident of his being cast into the fire, which ultimately led to his forced exile from the country—is mentioned anywhere in the Bible. The Bible merely mentions his migration, and that too, in a manner as if a family was migrating from one country to another in search of livelihood. There is another interesting difference between the Qur'ān and the Bible. According to the Qur'ān, the father of Abraham, who was a *mushrik*, was foremost in tyrannizing over his son, but the Bible gives a different account, which is as follows:

"Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees. And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife *was* Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. But Sarai was barren; she had no child. And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and settled there. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran." (Gen. 11:27-32).

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name

great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 12: 1-3).

The Talmud, however, gives quite a few details about the life of Prophet Abraham about the period of his stay in 'Irāq, which are generally the same as given in the Qur'ān, but there is a glaring discrepancy in some of the important events. In fact, one can clearly feel that the account given in the Talmud is full of heterogeneous and hypothetical things while the one given in the Qur'ān is most clear and contains nothing unworthy of Prophet Abraham. We reproduce below the account as given in the Talmud so that the reader may know the difference between the Qurānic and Jewish versions. This will also remove the misunderstanding of those who think that the Qur'ān has borrowed stories from the Bible or Jewish literature.

According to the Talmud, "The wise men saw a large star in the sky on the night Abram was born and they advised Nimrod to kill the child born in the house of Terah. The King decided to kill the child but Terah hid his child and had a servant's son killed in exchange. Terah thereupon hid his wife and child in a cave where they lived for ten years. In the 11th year Abram was taken by Terah to Noah, where he lived under the guidance of Noah and his son Shem for 39 years. During the same period Abram married his niece Sarai, who was 42 years his junior. (The Bible does not mention that Sarai was the niece of Abram; moreover, the difference in their ages is mentioned as ten years). (Gen. 11: 29, 17: 17).

The Talmud then says, "Abram left Noah at the age of 50 and came back to his father. Here he found that his father was an idolator and had twelve idols in the house according to the twelve months of the year. He tried to preach to his father against idolatry but when the latter did not listen to him, Abram one day broke all the idols in the house. Seeing this Terah went straight to Nimrod and complained that the son who was born in his house 50 years ago had misbehaved and broken the idols. He wanted the King's verdict on this. Nimrod summoned Abram for interrogation, but the replies given by Abram were straight, terse and clear. Nimrod sent him to jail and then referred the matter to the Council for a decision. The Council decided that Abram should be burnt to death. A fire was accordingly prepared and Abram was cast into it. His brother and father-in-law Haran was also similarly cast into the fire. Haran was punished because Nimrod enquired of Terah as to why he had another child killed in place of Abram when he wanted to kill Abram on the day of his birth. Terah replied that this was done at the instigation of Haran. Nimrod accordingly let off Terah but threw Haran into the fire along with Abram. Haran was burnt to death instantly but people saw that

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كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا ؕ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا قَوْمَ سَوْءٍ فَاَغْرَقْنٰهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿77﴾ وَدَاوٗدَ وَ
سُلَيْمٰنَ اِذْ يَحْكُمٰنِ فِي الْحَرْثِ اِذْ نَفَشَتْ فِيْهِ غَنَمُ الْقَوْمِ ۚ وَكُنَّا
لِحُكْمِهِمْ شٰهِدِيْنَ ﴿78﴾ فَفَهَّمْنٰهَا سُلَيْمٰنَ ۚ وَكُلًّا اٰتَيْنَا حُكْمًا وَّعِلْمًا ۫ وَّسَخَّرْنَا
مَعَ دَاوٗدَ الْجِبَالَ يُسَبِّحْنَ وَالطَّيْرَ ؕ وَكُنَّا فٰعِلِيْنَ ﴿79﴾ وَعَلَّمْنٰهُ صَنْعَةَ لَبُوْسٍ
لَّكُمْ لِتُحْصِنَكُمْ مِّنْۢ بَاْسِكُمْ ۚ فَهَلْ اَنْتُمْ شٰكِرُوْنَ ﴿80﴾ وَلِسُلَيْمٰنَ الرِّيْحَ
عَاصِفَةً تَجْرِيْ بِاَمْرِهٖۤ اِلَى الْاَرْضِ الَّتِيْ بٰرَكْنَا فِيْهَا ؕ وَكُنَّا بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
عٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿81﴾ وَمِنَ الشَّيٰطِيْنِ مَنْ يَّغُوْصُوْنَ لَهٗ وَيَعْمَلُوْنَ عَمَلًا دُوْنَ ذٰلِكَ ۚ
وَكُنَّا لَهُمْ حٰفِظِيْنَ ﴿82﴾ وَاَيُّوْبَ اِذْ نَادٰى رَبَّهٗۤ اَنِّيْ مَسَّنِيَ الضُّرُّ وَاَنْتَ
اَرْحَمُ الرّٰحِمِيْنَ ﴿83﴾ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهٗ فَكَشَفْنَا مَا بِهٖ مِنْ ضُرٍّ ۫ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ اَهْلَهٗ
وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَّعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا وَذِكْرٰى لِلْعٰبِدِيْنَ ﴿84﴾ وَاِسْمٰعِيْلَ
وَاِدْرِيْسَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ ؕ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿85﴾ وَاَدْخَلْنٰهُمْ فِيْ رَحْمَتِنَا ؕ اِنَّهُمْ
مِّنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿86﴾ وَذَا النُّوْنِ اِذْ ذَّهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ اَنْ لَّنْ نَّقْدِرَ عَلَيْهِ
فَنَادٰى فِي الظُّلُمٰتِ اَنْ لَّاۤ اِلٰهَ اِلَّاۤ اَنْتَ سُبْحٰنَكَ ۖ اِنِّيْ كُنْتُ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿87﴾
فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهٗ ۙ وَنَجَّيْنٰهُ مِنَ الْغَمِّ ؕ وَكَذٰلِكَ نُنْجِي الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿88﴾ وَزَكَرِيَّاۤ
اِذْ نَادٰى رَبَّهٗ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْنِيْ فَرْدًا وَّاَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْوٰرِثِيْنَ ﴿89﴾ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهٗ ۫
وَوَهَبْنَا لَهٗ يَحْيٰى وَاَصْلَحْنَا لَهٗ زَوْجَهٗ ؕ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا يُسٰرِعُوْنَ فِي الْخَيْرٰتِ
وَيَدْعُوْنَنَا رَغَبًا وَّرَهَبًا ؕ وَكَانُوْا لَنَا خٰشِعِيْنَ ﴿90﴾ وَالَّتِيْۤ اَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا
فَنَفَخْنَا فِيْهَا مِنْ رُّوْحِنَا وَجَعَلْنٰهَا وَابْنَهَاۤ اٰيَةً لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿91﴾ اِنَّ هٰذِهٖۤ اُمَّتُكُمْ
اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً ۖ وَّاَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوْنِ ﴿92﴾ وَتَقَطَّعُوْۤا اَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ كُلٌّ اِلَيْنَا

And We bestowed the same favour upon David and Solomon: 78-79
Remember the occasion when the two were judging a case regarding a field into which the goats of other people had strayed at night, and We Ourself were watching their conduct of the case. At that time We guided Solomon to the right decision, though We had bestowed wisdom and knowledge upon both of them.[70]

We had subdued to David the mountains and the birds which 79-82
joined with him in Our praise:[71] It was We Who had done all this. And We taught him for your benefit the armourer's craft so that you might protect yourselves from each other's violence.[72] Are you, then, grateful?[73] And We had subdued to Solomon the strongly blowing wind which sped at his bidding to the land wherein We had placed Our blessings,[74] for We had the knowledge of everything. And We had subjected to him many of the satans who dived into the sea for him, and performed other works besides this: and We kept watch over all of them.[75]

And We had given Job[76] the same (blessing of wisdom and 83-84
knowledge). Remember when he invoked his Lord, saying, "I have been afflicted with the disease, and Thou art most Merciful."[77] We heard his prayer and relieved him of his affliction[78] and gave him back not only those of his family but also as many more with them as a favour from Us so that it may serve as a reminder to Our worshippers.[79]

And the same blessing was bestowed upon Ismael and Idrīs[80] 85-86
and Zul-Kifl,[81] because they all practised fortitude. We admitted them to Our mercy because they were of the righteous people.

And We showed a favour to Zun-nūn :[82] Remember when he 87-88
went away in anger[83] for he thought that We would not take him to task for this.[84] But afterwards he invoked Us from the depths of darkness,[85] saying, "There is no God but Thou: glory be to Thee: I had indeed committed a wrong". So We heard his prayer, and delivered him from the affliction: Thus do We deliver the believers.

And (We showed a favour) to Zacharias, when he invoked his 89-90
Lord, saying, "O Lord, do not leave me childless though Thou alone art the best Inheritor". So We heard his prayer, and bestowed on him Yahyā (John) and made his wife fit. (to bear a child) for him.[86] These

people exerted their utmost in righteous deeds and called upon Us with love and fear and they remained humble before Us.[87]

91 And (We blessed) that woman who had kept her chastity.[88] We breathed into her of Our Spirit[89] and made her and her son a Sign to the whole world.[90]

92-93 Indeed this community of yours is one community, and I am your Lord: so worship Me alone. But the people (of their own accord) cut asunder their (one) Creed into many religions;[91]— they have all to return to Us.

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Abram was walking unhurt through the flames. When Nimrod was informed of it, he witnessed it with his own eyes and cried out: 'O man of the God of Heaven, come out of the fire and stand before me'. Thereupon, Abram came out and Nimrod became one of his believers and gave him many costly presents. After this, according to the Talmud, Abram stayed in 'Irāq for two more years when Nimrod saw a dreadful dream and the astrologers told him that the destruction of his empire would come through Abram and that he should, therefore, put him to death. Nimrod sent people to kill Abram but Abram came to know of the plot before-hand through Eleazar, a slave presented to him by Nimrod himself. Abram accordingly fled and took refuge with Noah where Terah also met him off and on secretly. The father and the son at last decided to leave the country and Noah and his son Shem also approved of their plan. Accordingly, Terah along with his son Abram and his grandson Lot and his grand-daughter and son's wife Sarai, left Ur and went to Ḥarah." (H. Polano: The Talmud Selections, London, pp. 30-42).

Can a reasonable person after reading this account of the Talmud ever imagine that this could be a source book for the story as given in the Qur'ān ?

67. The original Arabic word *ḥukm* is very comprehensive. It means judgment, wisdom and discretion, and authority from Allah. *'Ilm* stands for the revealed knowledge of the Truth. Thus, "We bestowed *ḥukm* and *'ilm* on Lot": "We appointed Lot as a Prophet". (For the story of Lot, see VII: 80-84; XI: 70-83; XV: 57-74 and the E.N.'s thereof).

68. This refers to Prophet Noah's prayer which he at last made after having tried his utmost to reform his people: "Lord, help me for I have been overpowered". (LIV: 10), and "Lord, do not leave even a single disbeliever on the earth." (LXXI: 26).

69. "Great calamity" may either refer to living a miserable life among the wicked people, or to the Flood. (For the story of Prophet Noah, see VII: 59-64; X: 72-74; XI: 25-48, and XVII: 3 and the E.N.'s thereof).

70. There is no mention of this event in the Bible nor in the Jewish literature. According to the Muslim commentators, it happend like this: The goats of one person entered into the field of another person at night. The latter brought his complaint to Prophet David who decided that the strayed goats should be given to the owner of the field. Prophet Solomon, however, differed with this and opined that the goats should remain with the owner of the field up to the time that the former tilled and prepared the field as before. In regard to this Allah says, "We led Solomon to the right decision". As regards the legal aspect of the matter we cannot say with certainty what is the Islamic law in such a case nor is there any Tradition of the Holy Prophet to explain or support it. That is why the jurists have differed about it.

It should, however, be noted that in this context, the incident has been cited to show that the Prophets were after all human beings in spite of their God-given powers and abilities. In this case, Prophet David committed an error of judgment because he was not guided by Allah as was Prophet Solomon, though both of them were Prophets. In the succeeding passage the wonderful powers of both have been mentioned to show that they were God-given and did not make anyone a god.

Incidentally, we learn from this verse that if two judges give different decisions about one and the same case, both of them will be regarded as righteous, though the decision of only one of them will be correct, provided that both are duly qualified for sitting in judgement on the case. The Holy Prophet has stated the same principle more elaborately. In a Tradition of *Bukhārī*, he is reported by 'Amar bin 'Āṣ to have said, "If a judge does his very best to arrive at the right decision, he will get a double reward in case of a right judgment and a single reward if his judgment is wrong." According to another Tradition, cited by Abu Da'ūd and Ibn Mājah, on the authority of Buraidah, he is reported to have said, "Judges are of three kinds and only one of them will go to Paradise: the one who recognizes the Truth and decides according to it. On the other hand, the one who recognizes the Truth but gives his decision against it, will go to Hell, and he too, who sits in judgment on a case without the necessary knowledge (and competence)."

71. From the wording of the Text, it is clear that "the mountains and the birds" were not subjected to Prophet David but were joined with him in glorifying Allah. This is also supported by XXXVIII:19: "We had subdued the mountains by Our Command so that they praised Us with him (David) in the morning and

evening, and the birds too, which gathered together and repeated Our praise with him". And, according to XXXIV: 10; "We commanded the mountains to repeat Our praise with him and also the birds to do the same." We are of the opinion that it means this: "When Prophet David sang hymns of Allah's praise and glory, in his rich and sweet voice, the mountains echoed back his melodies and the birds gathered round him and the whole scene became charming." Our interpretation is supported by this Tradition:

"Once when Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā Ash'arī, who had an extremely sweet voice, was reciting the Holy Qur'ān, the Holy Prophet, who was passing by, stood and listened to him for a long time. When he finished the recital, the Holy Prophet remarked: 'This man has been granted a portion of the melody of David'."

72. According to XXXIV: 10-11, it was like this: "....And We made the iron soft for him (and commanded him): 'Make coats of mail complete in every way, and arrange the plates properly....'". This shows that Allah had made Prophet David an expert in the use of iron, and had especially taught him the art of an armourer for defence purposes. This fact is confirmed by archaeological and historical researches, for according to these the iron-age in the world started between 1200 and 1000 BC and this was precisely the period of Prophet David. At first the Hittites in Syria and Asia Minor, who flourished between 2000 and 1200 BC, discovered a method of melting and moulding iron, but they guarded it as a close secret from the world, and it could not be put to common use. Later on, the Philistines came to know of it, but they too guarded it as a secret. The incessant defeats suffered by the Israelites at the hands of the Hittites and the Philistines before King Saul, were due mainly to the use of chariots of iron in their wars by the latter. (Joshua, 17:16; Judges, 1: 19, 4: 2-3). In 1020 BC when Saul became ruler over the Israelites by Allah's Command, he subdued the Canaanites and recaptured most of Palestine. After him Prophet David (1004-965 BC) not only annexed the whole of Palestine and Jordan to the Israeli kingdom but a major portion of Syria as well. This was the time when the secret of armour making, so closely guarded by the Hittites and the Philistines, became well known and even cheaper articles of daily use began to be made. The recent archaeological excavations conducted in Edom, to the south of Palestine, which is rich in iron ore, have brought to light furnaces for melting and moulding iron. The furnace-excavated near Ezion-geber, a port on the Gulf of 'Aqabah, in the time of Prophet Solomon, seems to have been built on the principles which are used in the modern blast furnaces. It is therefore natural that Prophet David must have first of all utilized this discovery for war purposes, because a little earlier the hostile Canaanites around his kingdom had made life really difficult for his people. The Bible also says that Prophet David was an expert in the art of melting and using iron for war purposes. (See Joshua, 17: 16; Judges, 1:19 and 4: 2-3).

73. For further details about Prophet David, please see II:251 and XVII: 55 and the E.N.'s thereof.

74. This is also explained in XXXIV: 12: "And for Solomon We had subjected the wind which covered a month's journey in the morning and a month's journey in the evening", and in XXXVIII: 36: "So We subjected the wind to him. It blew softly at his bidding whither-soever he wanted it to blow." Thus it is clear that the wind was so subjected to Prophet Solomon that the voyages to places at one month's sea journey could be performed conveniently, because a favourable wind was always blowing for his ships to and from those places.

It is confirmed by the Bible that Prophet Solomon had developedsea trade on a large scale. (I Kings, 10: 22). On the one side, his trade ships sailed from Ezion-geber, through the Red Sea, towards Yaman and other southern and eastern lands, and on the other, his naval fleet called Thar-shish, sailed on the Mediterranean to the western countries. The great furnace which he had built at Ezion-geber for melting and moulding ores extracted from the copper and iron mines in the 'Arabah in Edom, has been confirmed by modern archaeological researches as well. This molten iron and copper was used in building ships besides being put to other uses. The Qur'ân refers to this when it says: "....and We made a fountain of molten copper to flow for him (Solomon)...." (XXXIV:12).

As regards the subjection of the wind, it may mean that Allah, by His special favour, had so arranged that the wind—and sea voyages in those days depended entirely on wind—was always favourable for Prophet Solomon's fleet. But if we take the literal meaning of v. 81: "it sped at his bidding", there will be no harm, for Allah is able to give such powers to any of His servants He pleases.

75. The subjection of "satans" has been explained in XXXIV:12-13. Incidentally, these verses of the Qur'ān clearly show that the satans and jinns who worked for Prophet Solomon belonged to quite a different genus from human beings. Therefore, it is wrong to pervert the Qur'ān to prove that "they were human beings" as some modernist commentators have tried to do. It is obvious from the wording of the Qur'ān and the context in which the story of the jinns has been related, that they were not human beings. Had they been so this would have been no special favour to Solomon, because human beings had already built the gigantic monuments like the pyramids of Egypt.

76. There is a wide divergence of opinion concerning the personality, period and nationality of Prophet Job. Some commentators opine that he was an Israelite, while others think that he was an Egyptian or an Arab who lived before Prophet Moses, or during the time of Prophets David and Solomon. As all these conjectures are based on the Book of Job, which is self-contradictory and against

the Qur'ān, nothing can be said about him with certainty, but in the light of the Book of Isaiah (8th century BC) and the Book of Ezekiel (6th century BC), which are more trustworthy works, he lived in the 9th century BC or even earlier. As regards his nationality, the context in which his name occurs in IV: 163 and VI: 84, it may be assumed that he was an Israelite. According to a saying of Ḥadrat Wahb bin Munabbih, he might have been from the offspring of Esau, a son of Prophet Isaac.

77. The words of the prayer are note-worthy. Prophet Job mentions his distress but does not say anything more to his Lord except: "Thou art most Merciful" This is a great proof of his fortitude, noble and contented nature.

78. How his disease was cured has been explained in XXXVIII: 42: "Stamp the ground with your foot: here is cool water for you to wash with and to drink." From this it appears that no sooner did he stamp the ground than a spring gushed forth. He took bath and drank the water and was cured of his disease. The nature of the treatment hints that he was suffering from a skin disease. This is confirmed by the Bible as well. "Satan smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown."- (Job, 2:7).

79. It will be worth-while to compare the high character of Prophet Job as given in the Qur'ān with that in the Book of Job in the Bible. The Qur'ān presents him as a veritable picture of patience and fortitude and an excellent model for the worshippers of Allah, but his general picture presented in the Book of Job is that of a man who is full of grievance against God: "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in *which* it was said, There is a man child conceived .... Let them curse (the night) that curse the day, ...Because it shut not the doors of my *mother's* womb, nor did sorrow from mine eyes. Why died I not from the womb?" (Chapter 3)..... "Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balance together.....the arrows of the Almighty *are* within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me." (Chapter 6).... "I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself? And why dost thou not pardon my transgressions, and take away my iniquity? (Chapter 7: 20-21).

His three friends try to console him and counsel patience, but in vain. He says, "My soul is weary of my life....I will speak in the bitterness of my soul" (10:1).... "I have heard many such things: miserable comforters are ye all." (16: 2) .... "So these three men ceased to answer Job ..... Then was kindled the wrath of *Elihu*.... against Job.... because he justified himself rather than God." (32:1-3), but he also failed to console him....Then the Lord himself came down and condemned the three friends and Elihu and rebuked Job and then forgave him, accepted him and blessed him." (Chapters 41, 42).

It should be noted that in the first two chapters of this Book, Prophet Job is presented as a perfect and upright man who feared God, but in the following chapters he becomes an embodiment of grievance against God, as though the estimate of Satan about him was correct and that of God incorrect. Thus this Book itself is a clear evidence that it is neither the Word of God nor of Prophet Job but had been written afterwards by some literary man and incorporated in the Bible as a scripture.

80. For explanation, see Sūrah Maryam (XIX): E. N. 33.

81. Zul-Kifl is not the name but the title of a righteous man, which literally means 'a man of luck'. Here it does not refer to worldly prosperity but to his high character and ranks in the Hereafter. He has also been mentioned by this title in XXXVIII: 48. There are different opinions about his identity and nationality: some have regarded him as Zacharias (but this is not correct because Zacharias has been mentioned separately in v. 89); others say he was Elias, or Joshua, son of Nun, or Elisha, but this again is incorrect, because in Sūrah Ṣād (XXXVIII: '49) Elisha and Zul-Kifl have been mentioned as separate personalities; some others say that he was Prophet Job's son, named Bishr, who succeeded him as Prophet.

'Allāmah Ālūsī says, "The Jews claim that he was Ezekiel who was appointed to Prophethood during the captivity (597 BC) of the Israelites and he performed his mission in a habitation by the side of the Chebar canal."

These conflicting opinions indeed confirm nothing. The modern commentators, however, are inclined to believe that he was Ezekiel, though there is no convincing argument about it. This opinion is sound because his description in this verse "that he was a patient and righteous man and was blessed by God" is fully confirmed by the Book of Ezekiel. He was one of those people who had been taken prisoner by Nebuchadnezzer at the downfall of Jerusalem, who settled the Israeli exiles at Tel-abib by the river Chebar in Irāq. Here, in 594 BC, Ezekiel was raised to Prophethood when he was hardly 30, and he continued preaching the message of God to the exiled Israelites as well as to the iniquitous people and rulers of Jerusalem for full 22 years. In the 9th year of his mission, his wife whom he called "the desire of his eyes" died, but when the people came to mourn her death, he warned them of the wrath of God and the impending disaster. (Chapter 24:15-21). The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel in the Bible is one of those scriptures which appear to be genuine and divinely' inspired.

82. That is, Jonah. Literally *Zun-Nūn* means "the man of the fish". He was called so because he was devoured by a fish by the Command of Allah. (Also See XXXVII:142 and X:98 and its E.N.'s 98-100).

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رٰجِعُوْنَ ﴿93﴾ فَمَنْ يَّعْمَلْ مِنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا كُفْرَانَ لِسَعْيِهٖ ۚ وَ
إِنَّا لَهٗ كٰتِبُوْنَ ﴿94﴾ وَحَرٰمٌ عَلٰى قَرْيَةٍ اَهْلَكْنٰهَآ اَنَّهُمْ لَا يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿95﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا
فُتِحَتْ يَاْجُوْجُ وَمَاْجُوْجُ وَهُمْ مِّنْ كُلِّ حَدَبٍ يَّنْسِلُوْنَ ﴿96﴾ وَاقْتَرَبَ الْوَعْدُ
الْحَقُّ فَاِذَا هِىَ شَاخِصَةٌ اَبْصَارُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ۭ يٰوَيْلَنَا قَدْ كُنَّا فِيْ غَفْلَةٍ
مِّنْ هٰذَا بَلْ كُنَّا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿97﴾ اِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ حَصَبُ
جَهَنَّمَ ۭ اَنْتُمْ لَهَا وٰرِدُوْنَ ﴿98﴾ لَوْ كَانَ هٰٓؤُلَاۗءِ اٰلِهَةً مَّا وَرَدُوْهَا ۭ وَكُلٌّ فِيْهَا
خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿99﴾ لَهُمْ فِيْهَا زَفِيْرٌ وَّهُمْ فِيْهَا لَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿100﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ سَبَقَتْ
لَهُمْ مِّنَّا الْحُسْنٰٓى ۙ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ عَنْهَا مُبْعَدُوْنَ ﴿101﴾ لَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ حَيْسَهَا ۚ وَهُمْ
فِيْ مَا اشْتَهَتْ اَنْفُسُهُمْ خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿102﴾ لَا يَحْزُنُهُمُ الْفَزَعُ الْاَكْبَرُ وَتَتَلَقّٰىهُمُ
الْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةُ ۭ هٰذَا يَوْمُكُمُ الَّذِيْ كُنْتُمْ تُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿103﴾ يَوْمَ نَطْوِي السَّمَاۗءَ كَطَيِّ
السِّجِلِّ لِلْكُتُبِ ۭ كَمَا بَدَاْنَآ اَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُّعِيْدُهٗ ۭ وَعْدًا عَلَيْنَا ۭ اِنَّا كُنَّا فٰعِلِيْنَ ﴿104﴾
وَلَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِي الزَّبُوْرِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ اَنَّ الْاَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِيَ الصّٰلِحُوْنَ ﴿105﴾
اِنَّ فِيْ هٰذَا لَبَلٰغًا لِّقَوْمٍ عٰبِدِيْنَ ﴿106﴾ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ اِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿107﴾
قُلْ اِنَّمَا يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيَّ اَنَّمَآ اِلٰهُكُمْ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ ۚ فَهَلْ اَنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿108﴾ فَاِنْ
تَوَلَّوْا فَقُلْ اٰذَنْتُكُمْ عَلٰى سَوَاۗءٍ ۭ وَاِنْ اَدْرِيْٓ اَقَرِيْبٌ اَمْ بَعِيْدٌ مَّا
تُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿109﴾ اِنَّهٗ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تَكْتُمُوْنَ ﴿110﴾ وَاِنْ
اَدْرِيْ لَعَلَّهٗ فِتْنَةٌ لَّكُمْ وَمَتَاعٌ اِلٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿111﴾ قٰلَ رَبِّ احْكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ ۭ وَ
رَبُّنَا الرَّحْمٰنُ الْمُسْتَعَانُ عَلٰي مَا تَصِفُوْنَ ﴿112﴾

Then whosoever does good deeds, and he is a believer as well, his work will not be treated slightingly: We are recording it all. And it is not possible that the habitation We have once destroyed gets another lease of life[92] until Gog and Magog are let loose: they will swoop down from every height, and the time of the fulfilment of the True Promise will draw near,[93] whereupon the eyes of those who had disbelieved will be struck with amazement: they will say, "Woe to us: we were heedless of this: nay, we were wrong-doers."[94] As a matter of fact, you and your deities, whom you worship beside Allah, are fuel of Hell, wherein you have to enter;[95] had they really been God, they would not have gone there; now therein they will dwell for ever. There they will groan,[96] but they shall hear nothing (in response due to the roaring noise). As for those for whom We will already have ordained good (rewards), they will be kept far away from it[97] they will not hear even its faintest sound — and they shall dwell for ever in the midst of those things which they will desire and cherish most; the time of the great fright will not trouble them at all;[98] the angels will rush forth to receive them, saying: "This is the very Day which you were promised!" 94-103

On that Day, We will roll up the sky as the leaves of paper are rolled up in a written scroll. We will bring forth the creation once again as We had originated it before. This is a promise We have made to Ourself, and We have to fulfil it. And We have written in the Psalms after the Admonition: "Our righteous servants shall inherit the land". Surely in this is a great news for those people who worship Us.[99] 104-106

O Muhammad! We have sent you to be a real blessing for the people of the world.[100] Say to them, "That which is revealed to me is this: Your Deity is One Deity only. Will you, then, surrender to Him?" If even then, they turn away from it, tell them plainly, "I have warned you openly; now I do not know whether that thing with which you are being threatened[101] is near at hand or far off. (You should, however, note it well that) Allah has the knowledge of what is uttered aloud and also of what you talk about secretly.[102] I think that this (delay) may be a trial for you,[103] and you are being given respite to enjoy yourselves for an appointed term". 107-111

(At long last) the Messenger said, "O my Lord, pass Thy Judgment with the truth. And, O people, we trust in our Lord, the 112

Merciful, to help us against the things you say".

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83. Prophet Jonah left his people before he received Allah's Command for migration.

84. He presumed that he should leave the place which was going to be visited by the scourge of Allah. This was not by itself an offence but it was an offence for a Prophet to leave the place of his Mission without the permission of Allah.

85. "....darkness": the darkness in the belly of the fish and the darkness of the sea over and above it.

86. "Made his wife fit": "We cured his wife of sterility." As "Thou alone art the best Inheritor", I shall have no grief even if Thou dost not give me any child. (For further details, please see III: 37-41 and XIX: 2-14 and the E.N.'s thereof).

87. It will be worth while to reiterate the reasons why the stories of the Prophets have been cited in this sūrah.

(1) The story of Prophet Zacharias has been cited to impress on the minds that all the Prophets were human beings and servants of Allah and had no tinge of Godhead in them. They had no power to bestow children upon others because they themselves had to pray to Allah for children for themselves.

(2) The story of Prophet Jonah has been cited to show that even a great Prophet like him did not go unnoticed when he committed an error in regard to Allah's Message. But when he repented, Allah, by His grace, delivered him alive from the belly of the fish.

(3) The mention of Prophet Job has been made to show that even Prophets were put to hard trials and afflictions and even they had to beg Allah to restore them to health, not to speak of curing others of diseases.

Along with these, the other important thing which is meant to be impressed is that all the Prophets believed in the doctrine of *Tauḥīd*. That is why they begged and prayed to One Allah alone to fulfil their needs and requirements. Though they met with trials, Allah helped them and granted their prayers in supernatural and miraculous ways.

88. That is, "Mary (Allah's peace be upon her)".

89. It should be noted that the incident of the birth of Prophet Jesus was not different from that of Prophet Adam, because the wording of the Arabic Text

in the two cases is almost identical: (See XXXVIII: 71-72). Besides this in verse 91, almost similar words have been used in regard to the birth of Jesus Christ. (See also IV:171 and LXVI:12). Allah Himself has stated that the birth of Prophet Jesus was just like the birth of Prophet Adam: "In the sight of Allah, the case of the birth of Jesus is like that of Adam, whom He created out of dust and said, 'Be', and he was." (III: 59). In the light of these verses, we may conclude that Allah uses words like: "We breathed into him or her of Our spirit" for miraculous births. (For fuller details please see IV: E.N's 212-213).

90. That is, "The mother and the son were not partners of God nor had any share whatever in Godhead, but were a Sign from among the Signs of God." (See XIX: E.N. 21 also).

91. In this verse, the addressees are the whole of mankind. It means: "O mankind, in reality all of you belonged to one community and had one and the same religion and all the Prophets brought one and the same Creed which was this: 'Allah alone is the Lord of all mankind: therefore they should worship Him alone.'" But afterwards the people corrupted this Creed and invented and adopted the things they liked and mixed their own theories, whims and practices in it. This brought into being countless communities and religions. Thus it is absolutely wrong to say that a particular Prophet was the founder of a particular religion and another of another, and so on. The very fact that different religions came into being at different periods of time, does not prove that the Prophets created these differences. It is obvious that the Prophets of God could not found different religions nor could they teach their followers to worship any beings other than Allah.

92. The Arabic Text of v. 95 may be interpreted in three ways:

(1) The community which is once destroyed by the scourge of Allah can never have a second or new life.

(2) After its destruction, its people are not given a second chance for their test: then they shall be presented in the Court of Allah for final judgment.

(3) When a community transgresses the last limits in its wickedness, injustices and disobedience, and Allah ordains to destroy it, no other chance of repentance is given to it because it becomes incapable of turning back to right guidance.

93. For the details about Gog and Magog, see E.N.'s 62 and 69 of Sūrah Al-Kahf (XVIII). They will be let loose in the sense that they will swoop down on the regions of the earth like a beast of prey which is set free from its cage suddenly.

"The time of the fulfilment of the true promise" will come on the eve of Resurrection and the appearance of Gog and Magog will be a sign of it. In a Tradition related in Muslim, by Huzaifah bin Asid Ghifārī, the Holy Prophet said, "Resurrection will not take place until ten signs appear:

(1) The smoke. (2) Dajjāl. (3) Dābbat-ul-Arḍ. (4) rising of the sun from the west. (5) coming down of Jesus, son of Mary. (6) sudden attack of Gog and Magog. (7-9) three land slides—one in the east, the second in the west and the third in Arabia. (10) the flare up of a great fire from Yaman which will drive the people to the Plain of Resurrection. In another Tradition the Holy Prophet stated that after the swoop of Gog and Magog, Resurrection will be so near that it may take place at any moment just as a pregnant woman might deliver the child at any moment, in the day or night, after her term has expired. But the reference to the appearance of Gog and Magog in the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth does not indicate that they will swoop on mankind jointly; it may be that they will clash against each other near the time of Resurrection and their mutual conflict might result in a universal catastrophe and destruction.

94. "We were heedless of this" contains a kind of excuse in it, as if to say, "The Prophets warned us of the Day of Resurrection but we were wrong-doers and paid no heed to their warning".

95. We learn from ttaditions that 'Abdullah bin Azza'arā raised an objection in this connection, saying, "According to this not only our deities but Prophets Jesus and 'Uzair and the Angels also will become fuel for Hell because they are also worshipped." The Holy Prophet replied, "Yes, everyone who would approve of his own worship instead of Allah's will go to Hell along with those who worshipped him." He meant to say, "There is no reason why Prophets Jesus and 'Uzair and the Angels should go to Hell because they never approved that they should be worshipped instead of Allah, and were not responsible for this, on the other hand, they taught people to worship Allah alone". Of course, those who tried to become deities and became partners in the *shirk* of others will certainly go to Hell along with their worshippers. Likewise those, who induced others to take deities other than Allah, will go to Hell. Satan comes under this category for he induces others to make deities. Thus it is Satan who is made the real deity whom they obey and commit *shirk*. Besides this, idols of stone and wood and other accessories of *shirk* will also be thrown into Hell along with the *mushriks so* that the latter should see that their deities were becoming a cause of the intensity of their torture of fire instead of becoming their intercessors.

96. The Arabic word زفير (*zafīr*) means 'hard breathing' because of excessive heat, hard work and weariness.

97. These will be the people who practised virtue and righteousness in this world. Allah has already promised that they will be kept safe from the torture and will be granted salvation.

98. That is, "The time of mustering and going before Allah will be very dreadful for the common people but the righteous people will have full peace of mind because everything will be happening according to their expectations. Their faith and the righteous deeds they did in the world, will help console them by the grace of Allah and, instead of grief and sorrow, they will be filled with the hope that they are going to get their promised rewards."

99. The interpretation of this verse has given rise to a great misunderstanding. Some people have tried to interpret it in a way, which is entirely opposed to the ideology of the Qur'ān. They interpret it to mean: "The inheritance of the kingdom and the resources of the earth are given to the righteous people alone in this worldly life, and upon them alone Allah showers His favours and blessings." Then they apply this formula conversely and conclude that the gift of this inheritance of the earth is the sole criterion between the "righteous" and the "unrighteous" men. The righteous is the one who inherits the sovereignty of the earth and the unrighteous the one who is deprived of this inheritance. But when they apply their formula in the historical perspective, they find that most of those nations which have inherited the earth in the past and are inheriting it today, have been and are mostly disbelieving, *mushriks*, atheists and immoral, and that these are not the characteristics of the righteous people when judged by the criterion put forward by the Qur'ān. From Nimrod and Pharaoh to the present day communist despots, who have been inheriting the earth, were and are unbelievers and the enemies of God and therefore could not be considered righteous, according to the Qurānic formula. Faced with this situation, they start arguing that there must be some error in the conception of the "righteous" which should be such as would fit all the inheritors of the earth whether they were Caliphs like Abū Bakr Siddīq and 'Umar Farūq or Chingez and Halākū. This research leads them to the Darwinian theory of the survival of the fittest and they assume fitness to be a synonym of "righteousness".

According to this new conception or definition of "righteousness", the proposition would plainly mean: "Any person, or a group of persons, who is capable of conquering and subduing countries by military force and has the ability to exploit the resources of the earth successfully is a 'righteous servant of Allah' and his achievement is a criterion and message of righteousness and worship for other human beings to follow. Consequently, if they fail to achieve the inheritance of the earth, they will neither be regarded among the righteous nor among the servants of Allah".

As a result of this interpretation of the verse, and this conception of "righteousness" and "service", they were confronted with the interpretation of some basic and fundamental articles of the Islamic Faith. For instance, according to the Qur'ān, no deed, howsoever good, could be regarded as righteous without belief in Allah, the Hereafter, the Prophets and the Books. Moreover, the invitation of the Prophet to accept the moral and legal systems of Islam would become meaningless. Then these people could not reconcile their interpretation with the teachings of the Qur'ān that obedience to the Holy Prophet and the Commandments of Allah was absolutely essential for a righteous man and that the lack of this would make a person a disbeliever and a transgressor who deserved the wrath of Allah. If they had faced this problem boldly and honestly, they would have realized that their interpretation was wrong, but instead of this, they very impudently changed the universally accepted conception of Faith, Islam, *Tauḥīd*, Prophethood and the Hereafter in order to make these basic articles of the Faith fit in with their interpretation of this verse. Thus, they turned all the teachings of the Qur'ān upside down and tampered with its meaning without the least hesitation.

Now let us consider their interpretation and point out its errors:

(1) Their interpretation contradicts the teachings of the Qur'ān as a whole, for according to these virtue, piety and goodness do not comprise material progress and ability to rule over the land. Moreover, if the Qurānic word "Sālih" (virtuous, good) is regarded as synonymous with "Ṣāhib Ṣalāḥiyyat" *(i.e.* possessor of fitness and competence), this one verse will clash with the whole of the Qur'ān.

(2) They isolate this verse from its context and ascribe to it whatever meaning they like; otherwise, they would have seen that the "inheritance" referred to in the context is the promise to the Believers which is to be fulfilled in the Hereafter, and thus has nothing to do with inheritance in this world.

If this verse is interpreted in the context in which it occurs, it becomes very plain from the preceding verses that this promise to the righteous people holds good for the life in the Hereafter. This thing has been made more explicit in XXXIX: 73-74. According to this passage (which is definitely about life in the Hereafter), when the pious people will enter into Paradise, they will say: "God be praised, Who has fulfilled His promise and made us heirs to the land."

Now let us consider this matter in the light of the Psalms (whether the Book of Psalms in the Bible is genuine or tampered with, because the real Psalms of Prophet David are nowhere available) to which this verse refers. According to 37:9-29: "....evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked *shall* not *be:* yea, thou

shalt diligently consider his place, and it *shall* not *be*. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace....and their inheritance shall be for ever....The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein for ever." Thus the Psalms also confirm word for word verse 105. It is obvious that "(They shall) dwell therein for ever" refers to the life in the Hereafter.

As regards the inheritance of the earth in this worldly life, Allah gives it as a heritage to those of His servants whom He pleases (VII:128), irrespective of whether they are believers or disbelievers, righteous or wicked, not as a reward but for their trial. "....Your Lord will make you rulers on the earth, and then He will see how you conduct yourselves." (VII:129). The heritage of the earth in this worldly life is neither permanent nor everlasting. It is merely bestowed as a trial for different communities. On the other hand, the heritage of the "land" referred to in v. 105 is permanent and for ever and, according to the Qur'ān, it will be bestowed on the basis of this formula: "The land belongs to Allah and He will make only His righteous servants heirs to it not for their test but as a permanent reward for the righteous attitude they adopted in this worldly life."

100. This verse (107) can also be translated as: "We have sent you only as a blessing for the people of the world". In both cases it will mean that the appointment of the Holy Prophet is indeed a blessing and mercy of Allah to the whole world. This is because he aroused the neglectful world from its heedlessness and gave it the knowledge of the criterion between truth and falsehood, and warned it very clearly of both the ways of salvation and ruin. This fact has been stated here to tell the disbelievers of Makkah that they were quite wrong in their estimate of the Holy Prophet that he was an affliction and distress for them because they said, "This man has sown seeds of discard among our clans and separated near relatives from each other." They have been told here, "O foolish people, you are wrong to presume that he is an affliction for you; but he is in reality a blessing and mercy of Allah for you."

101. That is, "I do not know the time and the form of the punishment of Allah for your rejection of the Message. It may come at any time in any shape."

102. This refers to their secret schemes, plots and their whispering campaign which have been mentioned in v. 3. There, too, the Prophet had said, "My Lord has the knowledge of everything that is said in the heavens or the earth for He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing". (v. 4). This was to warn them that they would be taken to task for these things, too.

103. This was a "trial" because the delay in the "punishment" was deluding them into believing "All the things put forward by the Prophet are false: had he been a true Prophet of Allah we would have been punished long before this for our disbelief." They did not realize that the reason for the delay was that Allah willed to give them respite for mending their ways.



XXII

AL-ḤAJJ

الحج

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

In the name of Allāh, the Merciful, the Compassionate

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah takes its name from v. 27.

Period of Revelation

As this Sūrah contains the characteristics of both the Makkī and the Madanī Sūrahs, the commentators have differed as to its period of revelation, but in the light of its style and themes we are of the opinion that a part of it (vv 1-24) was sent down in the last stage of the Makkī life of the Holy Prophet a little before migration and the rest (vv. 25-78) during the first stage of his Madanī life. That is why this Sūrah combines the characteristics of both the Makkī and the Madanī Sūrahs.

The sudden change of the style from v. 25 shows that probably vv. 25-78 were sent down in the month of Ẓul-Ḥijjah in the very first year after *Hijrah*. This is indicated by vv. 25-41 and confirmed by the occasion of the revelation of vv. 39-40. It appears that the month of Ẓul-Ḥijjah must have brought to the immigrants nostalgic memories of their homes in Makkah and naturally they must have thought of their Sacred City and of their Ḥajj congregation there, and grieved to think that the *mushrik* Quraish had debarred them from visiting the Sacred Mosque. Therefore, they might even have been praying for and expecting Divine permission to wage war against those tyrants who had expelled them from their homes and deprived them of visiting the House of Allah and made it difficult for them to follow the way of Islam. It was at this psychological occasion that these verses were sent down. That is why the purpose for which *Masjid-al-Ḥarām* was built has been specifically mentioned. It has been made plain that Ḥajj (pilgrimage) had been enjoined for the worship of One Allah. But it is an irony that afterwards it had been dedicated to the rituals of *shirk* and the worshippers of One

Allah had been debarred from visiting it. Therefore, permission for waging war against those tyrants has been given to oust them from there and to establish the righteous way of life for establishing virtue and eradicating evil. According to Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, 'Urwah bin Zubair, Zaid bin Aslam, Muqātil bin Ḥayyān, Qatādah and other great commentators, v. 39 is the first verse that grants the Muslims permission to wage war. Collections of Ḥadīth and books on the life of the Holy Prophet confirm that after this permission actual preparations for war were started and the first expedition was sent to the coast of the Red Sea in Ṣafar A.H. 2, which is known as the Expedition of Waddān or Al-Abwā'.

Subject Matter and Theme

This Sūrah is addressed to: (1) The *mushriks* of Makkah, (2) the wavering Muslims, and (3) the True Believers. The *mushriks* have been warned in a forceful manner to this effect: "You have obdurately and impudently persisted in your ideas of ignorance and trusted in your deities instead of Allah, though they possess no power at all and you have repudiated the Divine Messenger. Now you will meet the same end as has been the doom of those like you before. You have only harmed yourselves by rejecting Our Prophet and by persecuting the best element of your own community; now your false deities shall not be able to save you from the wrath of God". At the same time, they have been admonished time and again for their creed of *shirk* and sound arguments have been given in favour of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter.

The wavering Muslims, who had embraced Islam but were not prepared to endure any hardship in its way, have been admonished to this effect: "What is this faith of yours? On the one hand, you are ready to believe in Allah and become His servants provided you are given peace and prosperity but, on the other, if you meet with afflictions and hardships in His Way, you discard your Allah and cease to remain His servants. You should bear in mind that this wavering attitude of yours cannot avert those misfortunes and losses which Allah has ordained for you."

As regards the true Believers, they have been addressed in two ways: (1) in a general way so as to include the common people of Arabia also, and (2) in an exclusive way:

(1) The Believers have been told that the *mushriks* of Makkah had no right to debar them from visiting the Holy Mosque. They had no right to prevent anyone from performing Ḥajj because the Holy Mosque was not their private property. This objection was not only justified but it also acted as an effective political weapon against the Quraish. For it posed this question to the other clans of Arabia: Were the Quraish mere attendants of the Holy Mosque or its owners? It implied that if they succeeded in debarring the Muslims from Ḥajj without any protest from others, they would feel encouraged in future to debar from Ḥajj and 'Umrah the people of any other clan, who happened to have strained relations with the Quraish. In order to emphasize this point, the history of the construction of the Holy Mosque has been cited to show that it was built by Prophet Abraham by the Command of Allah and he had invited all the peoples to perform Ḥajj there. That is why those coming from outside had enjoyed equal rights with the local people from the very beginning. It has also been made clear that that House had not been built for the rituals of *shirk* but for the worship of One Allah. Thus it was sheer tyranny that the worship of Allah was being forbidden there while the worship of idols enjoyed full license.

(2) In order to counteract the tyranny of the Quraish, the Muslims were allowed to fight with them. They were also given instructions to adopt the right and just attitude as and when they acquired power to rule in the land. Moreover, the Believers have been officially given the name of "Muslims", saying, "You are the real heirs to Abraham and you have been chosen to become witnesses of the Truth before mankind. Therefore you should establish Ṣalāt and pay the Zakāt dues in order to become the best models of righteous life and perform Jihād for propagating the Word of Allah." (vv. 41, 77, 78.)

It will be worth while to keep in view the introductions to Chapters II (Al-Baqarah) and VIII (Al-Anfāl).

سُوْرَةُ الْحَجِّ (٢٢) مَدَنِيَّةٌ (١٠٣) رُكُوْعَاتُهَا ١٠ اٰيَاتُهَا ٧٨

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوْا رَبَّكُمْ ۚ اِنَّ زَلْزَلَةَ السَّاعَةِ شَيْءٌ عَظِيْمٌ ۝١ يَوْمَ تَرَوْنَهَا
تَذْهَلُ كُلُّ مُرْضِعَةٍ عَمَّآ اَرْضَعَتْ وَتَضَعُ كُلُّ ذَاتِ حَمْلٍ حَمْلَهَا وَ
تَرَى النَّاسَ سُكٰرٰى وَمَا هُمْ بِسُكٰرٰى وَلٰكِنَّ عَذَابَ اللّٰهِ شَدِيْدٌ ۝٢ وَمِنَ
النَّاسِ مَنْ يُّجَادِلُ فِى اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَّيَتَّبِعُ كُلَّ شَيْطٰنٍ مَّرِيْدٍ ۝٣ كُتِبَ
عَلَيْهِ اَنَّهٗ مَنْ تَوَلَّاهُ فَاَنَّهٗ يُضِلُّهٗ وَيَهْدِيْهِ اِلٰى عَذَابِ السَّعِيْرِ ۝٤ يٰٓاَيُّهَا
النَّاسُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ فِىْ رَيْبٍ مِّنَ الْبَعْثِ فَاِنَّا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ
نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ مُّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَّغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِّنُبَيِّنَ
لَكُمْ ۭ وَنُقِرُّ فِى الْاَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَآءُ اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا
ثُمَّ لِتَبْلُغُوْٓا اَشُدَّكُمْ ۚ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُّتَوَفّٰى وَمِنْكُمْ مَّنْ يُّرَدُّ اِلٰٓى اَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ
لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ عِلْمٍ شَيْـًٔا ۭ وَتَرَى الْاَرْضَ هَامِدَةً فَاِذَآ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا
الْمَاۗءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ وَاَنْۢبَتَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍۢ بَهِيْجٍ ۝٥ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ
الْحَقُّ وَاَنَّهٗ يُحْيِ الْمَوْتٰى وَاَنَّهٗ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ۝٦ وَّاَنَّ السَّاعَةَ
اٰتِيَةٌ لَّا رَيْبَ فِيْهَا ۙ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَبْعَثُ مَنْ فِى الْقُبُوْرِ ۝٧ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ
مَنْ يُّجَادِلُ فِى اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَّلَا هُدًى وَّلَا كِتٰبٍ مُّنِيْرٍ ۝٨ ثَانِيَ
عِطْفِهٖ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۭ لَهٗ فِى الدُّنْيَا خِزْيٌ وَّنُذِيْقُهٗ يَوْمَ
الْقِيٰمَةِ عَذَابَ الْحَرِيْقِ ۝٩ ذٰلِكَ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ يَدٰكَ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَيْسَ بِظَلَّامٍ
لِّلْعَبِيْدِ ۝١٠ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّعْبُدُ اللّٰهَ عَلٰي حَرْفٍ ۚ فَاِنْ اَصَابَهٗ خَيْرُ

XXII

AL-ḤAJJ

الحج

Verses: 78 *Revealed at Al-Madīnah*

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

O people, save yourselves from the wrath of your Lord: the fact 1-2
is that the earthquake of the Resurrection is a terrible thing.[1] On the Day you behold it, you will see that every suckling woman will forsake her suckling,[2] and every pregnant female will cast her burden, and the people will appear to you to be intoxicated, though they will not be drunk, but the dreadful torment from Allah will be such (as to make them reel like drunkards[3]).

There are some among the people, who indulge in discussions 3-7
about Allah without any knowledge[4] and follow every rebellious Satan, concerning whom it has been decreed that he will mislead whoever takes him for a friend and will show him the way to the torment of Hell. O people, if you have any doubt about Life after death, you should know that We first created you of clay, then of a sperm-drop[5], then of a clot of blood, then of a lump of flesh, shaped or shapeless.[6] (We are telling you this) so that We may make the reality plain to you. And We make those (sperm drops), which We will, remain in the wombs for a fixed period, then We bring you forth as a child; then (We nourish you) so that you may attain to your full youth. And there may be among you one who is recalled earlier and one who is returned to the most abject age so that he should know nothing even after knowing all he could.[7] And you see the land lying dry and barren, but as soon as We send down rain water upon it, it stirs (to life), and swells and brings forth every kind of luxuriant vegetation. This is so because Allah is the Truth.[8] He brings the dead to life and He has power over everything and (this is a proof that) the Hour of Resurrection is sure to come and there is absolutely no doubt about it, and most surely He will raise up those who are lying in the graves.[9]

8-10 There are still others who arrogantly[10] dispute about Allah without any knowledge[11] and guidance[12] and illuminating Book,[13] so that they may lead people astray from Allah's Way.[14] Such a one shall incur disgrace in this world, and on the Day of Resurrection, We will make him taste the torment of the Fire, saying, "This is the future you have prepared for yourself with your own hands". In fact, Allah is not unjust to His servants.

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1. According to the early commentators, this earthquake will be a prelude to Resurrection. This will probably take place when the earth will begin to rotate in the reverse order, and the sun will rise in the west. In a lengthy Tradition reported by Ibn Jarīr, Ṭabarānī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim from Abū Hurairah, the Holy Prophet has stated that when the first Trumpet will be blown, there will be a general confusion; at the second all people will die and at the third they will be brought back to life and presented before Allah. At the first blowing of the Trumpet, the earth will begin to rock like a boat which is beaten about by huge waves, or like a hanging lamp which is moved from side to side by a strong wind.

This condition has been depicted in the Qur'ān at several other places. For instance LVI: 6; LXIX: 13-14; LXXIII: 14, 17-18; LXXIX : 6-9 and XCIX: 1-3.

According to other commentators, this earthquake will occur when the dead will be brought back to life and presented before their Lord. Though this is supported by some Traditions, we prefer the first interpretation (in spite of the fact that the Tradition reported by Abū Hurairah is "weak") because that is supported by clear verses of the Qur'ān.

2. This is to show the intensity and horror of the earthquake. At that time there will be so much confusion and terror that mothers will forsake their dear children at the very time they will be suckling them.

3. It should be noted that it is not meant to depict here the condition of the Resurrection but to impress upon the people the dreadful torment of the Hour in order to admonish them to mend their ways. This is supported by the subsequent passage.

4. They do not indulge in discussions or disputes about the Being or existence of Allah but about His rights and powers and His Revelations, as is evident from the succeeding passage. When the Holy Prophet tried to convince them of *Tauhīd* and Resurrection, inevitably the dispute arose whether there is One Allah, the sole Sovereign or there were other partners as well in His Godhead and whether He has the power to bring about Resurrection, etc.

5. "..... created you .....sperm-drop": The first man Adam was created directly from clay and after him the process of procreation started by means of sperm-drop. This has been stated in XXXII: 7-8 as well. It may also mean that man is created from sperm-drop but his body is made of those elements which are all available in the earth.

6. This refers to the different stages of development of the child in the womb of its mother. This description is based on observation and not on scientific research, and there was no need for it for the purpose for which reference to this has been made here.

7. That is, "In old age man is again reverted to the same condition in which he was in childhood. He loses his senses and knows little or nothing like a child".

8. The Arabic Text may mean three things:

(1) Allah is telling the Truth and you are wrong in presuming that there is no possibility of life-after-death.

(2) Allah's existence is not merely a supposition but it is a Reality. He is not only the First Cause but has supreme authority, and is conducting every affair in the universe according to His Will, Knowledge and Wisdom.

(3) All His designs and works are based on Truth and are, therefore, serious, meaningful and full of wisdom.

9. In this passage, different stages of the life of man, the effects of rain on the earth and the growth of vegetation have been cited as pointers to five realities:

(1) "Allah alone is the Truth".

(2) "He brings the dead to life".

(3) "He has power over everything".

(4) "The Day of Resurrection and the end of the world is inevitable".

(5) Most surely Allah will bring back to life all the people who have died".

Let us now consider how these signs point to the above five realities:

(1) "Allah is the Truth": In order to prove this, let us first take the case of man. All the stages of his development are a clear proof that Allah has designed them with wisdom. He takes his birth from a sperm-drop which itself is produced in a wonderful manner. The food, which a man takes, turns into hair, flesh, bones and a part of it is turned into semen, which is potentially

[Contd. on p. 190

اطْمَاَنَّ بِهٖ ۚ وَاِنْ اَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةُ ۨ انْقَلَبَ عَلٰى وَجْهِهٖ ۚ خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةَ ۚ
ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿١١﴾ يَدْعُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَضُرُّهٗ وَمَا لَا
يَنْفَعُهٗ ۚ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الضَّلٰلُ الْبَعِيْدُ ﴿١٢﴾ يَدْعُوْا لَمَنْ ضَرُّهٗۤ اَقْرَبُ مِنْ نَّفْعِهٖ ۚ
لَبِئْسَ الْمَوْلٰى وَلَبِئْسَ الْعَشِيْرُ ﴿١٣﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ ۚ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يُرِيْدُ ﴿١٤﴾ مَنْ كَانَ يَظُنُّ
اَنْ لَّنْ يَّنْصُرَهُ اللّٰهُ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ فَلْيَمْدُدْ بِسَبَبٍ اِلَى السَّمَآءِ ثُمَّ
لْيَقْطَعْ فَلْيَنْظُرْ هَلْ يُذْهِبَنَّ كَيْدُهٗ مَا يَغِيْظُ ﴿١٥﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ اٰيٰتٍۭ بَيِّنٰتٍ ۙ
وَّاَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يُّرِيْدُ ﴿١٦﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَالَّذِيْنَ هَادُوْا وَالصّٰبِـُٔوْنَ
وَالنَّصٰرٰى وَالْمَجُوْسَ وَالَّذِيْنَ اَشْرَكُوْۤا ۖ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۚ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيْدٌ ﴿١٧﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَسْجُدُ لَهٗ مَنْ فِي
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ وَالنُّجُوْمُ وَالْجِبَالُ وَ
الشَّجَرُ وَالدَّوَآبُّ وَكَثِيْرٌ مِّنَ النَّاسِ ۭ وَكَثِيْرٌ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِ الْعَذَابُ ۭ وَمَنْ
يُّهِنِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ مُّكْرِمٍ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَفْعَلُ مَا يَشَآءُ ﴿١٨﴾ هٰذٰنِ خَصْمٰنِ ع ١٥
اخْتَصَمُوْا فِيْ رَبِّهِمْ ۡ فَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا قُطِّعَتْ لَهُمْ ثِيَابٌ مِّنْ نَّارٍ يُّصَبُّ مِنْ
فَوْقِ رُءُوْسِهِمُ الْحَمِيْمُ ﴿١٩﴾ يُصْهَرُ بِهٖ مَا فِيْ بُطُوْنِهِمْ وَالْجُلُوْدُ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَهُمْ
مَّقَامِعُ مِنْ حَدِيْدٍ ﴿٢١﴾ كُلَّمَاۤ اَرَادُوْۤا اَنْ يَّخْرُجُوْا مِنْهَا مِنْ غَمٍّ اُعِيْدُوْا فِيْهَا ۠ ٢
وَذُوْقُوْا عَذَابَ الْحَرِيْقِ ﴿٢٢﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُدْخِلُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ ٤٢
جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيْهَا مِنْ اَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَّ ١٩
لُؤْلُؤًا ۭ وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيْهَا حَرِيْرٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَهُدُوْۤا اِلَى الطَّيِّبِ مِنَ الْقَوْلِ ۚ وَهُدُوْۤا

And there is a type of man who serves Allah standing on the borders (of the Faith);[15] if some good comes to him, he is satisfied (with his Faith), but if he encounters a trial, he turns his back (upon it).[16] Thus he loses both this world and the Hereafter: this is the manifest loss.[17] Then, instead of Allah, he invokes those who can do him neither harm nor good: this is the last extremity of deviation. He invokes those who are more likely to do him harm than good.[18] What an evil guardian he chooses and what an evil companion![19] As for those who believed and did righteous deeds,[20] Allah will admit them to Gardens underneath which canals will be flowing. Allah does whatever He wills.[21] As for the one who presumes that Allah will neither help him in this world nor in the Hereafter, he should (if he can) ascend the sky by a rope and cut a hole into it and then peep through it and see for himself whether any device of his can avert his doom, which he abhors[22] —And We have sent down this Qur'ān with clear teachings such as these, but Allah alone guides whomsoever He wills. 11-16

As regards those who believed[23] and those who became Jews[24] and the Sabaeans[25] and the Christians[26] and the Magians[27] and those who committed *shirk*,[28] Allah will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection,[29] for everything is in the sight of Allah. Do you not see that everything in the heavens and the earth bows down before Allah?[30-31] and so do the sun, and the moon and the stars, and the trees and the beasts and a large number of the people[32] and even a large number of those who have deserved the torment.[33] And the one whom Allah degrades and disgraces has none to make him worthy of honour;[34] Allah does whatever He wills.[35] 17-18

These are the two parties who have disputed about their Lord.[36] As regards those who have disbelieved, garments of fire have already been cut out for them ;[37] over their heads shall be poured boiling water, which will melt not only their skins but also the inner parts of their bellies and there shall be maces of iron to lash them. Whenever in their anguish they will try to come out of Hell, they shall be driven back into it (with the rebuke): "Taste now the torment of burning." As regards those, who believed and did righteous works, Allah will admit them into Gardens underneath which canals will be flowing: there they will be decorated with golden bracelets and pearls,[38] and their garments will be of silk: (This is because) they were guided to accept the pure 19-24

Word,[39] and shown the Way of the All Praiseworthy.[40]

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capable of producing millions of human beings. It is the Wise and True God Who decides which of these millions of seeds from the semen should be utilized to make a woman pregnant by mixing the seed with the egg-cell. This insignificant thing turns into a living child in nine months in the womb of the mother. If we consider the different stages of the child's birth we come to the inevitable conclusion that all these have been designed by the True, Ever-Living Designer. For it is He Who decides whether it should be a male or a female, seeing or blind, etc. Then it is He Who decides how long a child is destined to live. All these things are a clear proof that Allah alone is the Truth.

(2) "He brings the dead to life": Even a little thinking on the right lines will convince every sensible and honest man that this process of bringing the dead to life is continuously going on before our eyes. Every human being has been created from a "dead" sperm-drop. Then he gets life from "dead things" like food containing dead matter like coal, iron, lime, salts, gases, which help make him a living human being. Then let us consider our surroundings. Seeds of different things which had been scattered here and there by the wind and birds, and the roots of different kinds of vegetation which lay rotten and dead in the soil, spring up to life as soon as there occurs a sprinkling of rain water. This process of the dead coming to life is observed during every rainy season year after year.

(3) "Allah has power over everything": There are people who believe that no doubt Allah created everything and is governing the universe, but He cannot do anything in the future in addition to or apart from this. This is because they do not observe the phenomena of His powers which have been and are appearing every moment. They do not realize that if man—His creation —can perform wonderful feats of science which could not even be dreamt of in the former ages, why should Allah alone be held as having only limited powers ?

(4) "The Day of Resurrection is inevitable" and "Most surely Allah will bring back to life all the people who have died": These two are the rational corollaries of the preceding three premises. Allah is All-Powerful and therefore can bring about Resurrection at any moment He wills. He can also bring back to life all the dead people just as He brought to life human beings out of nothing in the first instance. As He is All-Wise, He has not created human beings without any object and purpose. He will judge their worldly lives in accordance with the object and purpose for which He created them. He will call them to account for everything He entrusted to them. This is very simple: even human beings ask one another to render an account of the

property etc. they entrust to others. Likewise, Allah's wisdom requires to call every human being to account for the things entrusted to him. Then human nature also demands that there should be a differentiation between good and bad, and it expects the reward of good works and dreads the punishment of bad deeds. That is why the people have set up judicial courts. Thus man cannot imagine that the Creator will not call him to account for the things, powers and faculties, etc. which He has entrusted to him. Therefore common sense confirms that Allah will hold the Last Judgment so that every one should get his due reward and his due punishment.

10. That is, they are so stiff-necked, proud, arrogant, obdurate and obstinate that they do not pay any heed to "Admonition".

11. "Knowledge": that personal information which is gained directly through observation and experience.

12. "Guidance": that information which is gained by reasoning or through another person who has knowledge.

13. "Illuminating Book": Source of information gained from Divine Revelation.

14. V. 3 mentioned those people who have themselves gone astray, but v. 9 mentions those who have not only deviated from the Right Way themselves but are also bent upon misleading others from it.

15. This type of man is a time server, who stands on the boundary line between Islam and *kufr so* that he may join the winning side whether it be Islam or *kufr*.

16. As this type of man has a weak character and wavers between *kufr* and Islam he becomes the slave of his "self". He accepts Islam for the sake of self-interest: he is faithful to it if all his wishes are fulfilled and he has a life of ease and comfort; he is well-pleased with his Allah and is "firm" in his faith. On the contrary, if his "faith" demands some sacrifice from him, or he is visited by some affliction, or encounters some hardship and loss in the way of Allah, or he does not have his way, he begins to waver about the Godhead of Allah and the Prophethood of the Messenger and becomes sceptical about everything of the "Faith". Then he is ready to bow down before any power from which he expects some benefit and security from loss.

17. This is a great moral proposition that has been stated concisely. The fact is that the wavering man remains a loser in this world as well as in the Next World, and fares worse even than an unbeliever. The unbeliever applies himself exclusively to the benefits of this world and becomes more or less successful in his

object because he is not handicapped by the fear of Allah, accountability of the Hereafter and restrictions of Divine Law. Likewise a true believer follows the way of Allah with fortitude and perseverance and may as well become successful in this world, but even if he loses it altogether, he is assured of success in the Next World. But the "wavering Muslim" becomes a loser both in this world and in the Next World because he is handicapped by doubt and indecision and cannot make his choice between the two worlds. As he cannot decide whether there is Allah and the Hereafter, he cannot apply himself exclusively to the worldly affairs with that single-mindedness which the unbeliever enjoys. And when he thinks of Allah and the Hereafter, the allurements of this world and the fear of the disadvantages here and the abhorrence of observing the Divine restrictions do not let him apply himself exclusively to the demands of the Hereafter. This conflict between "God-worship" and "World-worship" makes him a loser in this world as well as in the next.

18. Vv. 12-13 clarify two things about the deities whom the *mushriks* invoke. Firstly, they can do a person neither any good nor any harm; nay, it is more probable that they do harm rather than good. For when the *mushrik* invokes other deities than Allah, he loses his faith forthwith. Secondly, the *mushrik* himself knows that there is no guarantee or probability of any good from his 'god' who is utterly helpless and powerless. As regards the occasional grant of his request through his god, this is done by Allah merely to test his faith.

19. That is, the one, who leads a person to the way of *shirk*, is the worst guardian and the worst comrade, whether he be a human being or a satan.

20. "Those who believed and did righteous deeds" are quite different from the wavering Muslims, for they have a firm belief in Allah, His Prophet and the Hereafter. Therefore they follow the way of Truth both in prosperity and in adversity.

21. That is, "Allah's powers are unlimited: He may bestow anything on anyone He wills in this world or in the Hereafter or in both, and bar anything from anyone. None has the power to interfere with what He wills and does".

22. There is a great divergence of opinion about the exact meaning of this verse. Some of the interpretations are:

(1) One who presumes that Allah will not help him (Muḥammad: Allah's peace be upon him), he should hang himself by a rope from the ceiling.

(2) One who presumes that Allah will not help him (Muḥammad: Allah's peace be upon him), he should ascend the sky by a rope and try to stop Allah's help.

(3) One who presumes that Allah will not help him (Muḥammad: Allah's peace be upon him), he should ascend the sky and stop the process of Revelations.

(4) One who presumes that Allah will not help him (Muḥammad: Allah's peace be upon him), he should ascend the sky and stop his provisions.

(5) The one who presumes that Allah will not help him (the presumer himself), he should hang himself by a rope from the ceiling of his house.

(6) The one who presumes that Allah will not help him (the presumer himself), he should try to ascend the sky to seek help.

The first four interpretations are obviously irrelevant to the context, and the last two, though they might fit in with the context, do not explain the real meaning of the verse. If we consider this in the context, it becomes obvious that the one who presumes is "the one who serves Allah standing on the border". This is to rebuke him, as if to say, "You may do whatever you can to change the decrees of Allah, but you will see that no device of yours can succeed, whether these decrees are favourable to your designs or unfavourable to them."

Obviously, "he should ascend the sky ..... cut a hole into it" has not been used in the literal but in the figurative sense.

23. This means the "Muslims" of every age who believed in the Prophets of Allah and His Books upto the time of Prophet Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him): they included both the sincere Muslims and the wavering Muslims.

24. See E.N. 72 of Chapter IV (An-Nisā').

25. "Sabaeans": In ancient times two sects were known by this title:

(1) The followers of Prophet John, who were found in upper Irāq in large numbers and practised baptism.

(2) The worshippers of stars, who ascribed their creed to Prophets Shiṯ and Idrīs (peace be upon them) and believed that the elements were governed by the planets and the planets by the angels. Their centre was at Harrān with branches spread all over Irāq. These people have been well known for their knowledge of philosophy and science and their achievements in medicine.

Probably here the first sect is referred to, because the second sect was not known by this name at the time the Qur'ān was revealed.

26. See E. N. 36 of Chapter V (Al-Mā'idah).

27. That is, the fire-worshippers of Iran, who believed in two gods —one of light and the other of darknesses—and regarded themselves as the followers of Zoroaster. Their creed and morals were so corrupted by Mazdak that a brother could easily enter into matrimony with his sister.

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إِلَىٰ صِرَاطِ الْحَمِيدِ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَيَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَ
الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ الَّذِي جَعَلْنَاهُ لِلنَّاسِ سَوَاءً الْعَاكِفُ فِيهِ وَالْبَادِ ۚ وَمَن
يُرِدْ فِيهِ بِإِلْحَادٍ بِظُلْمٍ نُّذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَإِذْ بَوَّأْنَا لِإِبْرَاهِيمَ مَكَانَ
الْبَيْتِ أَن لَّا تُشْرِكْ بِي شَيْئًا وَطَهِّرْ بَيْتِيَ لِلطَّائِفِينَ وَالْقَائِمِينَ وَالرُّكَّعِ
السُّجُودِ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَأَذِّن فِي النَّاسِ بِالْحَجِّ يَأْتُوكَ رِجَالًا وَعَلَىٰ كُلِّ ضَامِرٍ يَأْتِينَ
مِن كُلِّ فَجٍّ عَمِيقٍ ﴿٢٧﴾ لِّيَشْهَدُوا مَنَافِعَ لَهُمْ وَيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ فِي أَيَّامٍ
مَّعْلُومَاتٍ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُم مِّن بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ ۖ فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطْعِمُوا الْبَائِسَ
الْفَقِيرَ ﴿٢٨﴾ ثُمَّ لْيَقْضُوا تَفَثَهُمْ وَلْيُوفُوا نُذُورَهُمْ وَلْيَطَّوَّفُوا بِالْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ ﴿٢٩﴾
ذَٰلِكَ ۖ وَمَن يُعَظِّمْ حُرُمَاتِ اللَّهِ فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُ عِندَ رَبِّهِ ۗ وَأُحِلَّتْ لَكُمُ
الْأَنْعَامُ إِلَّا مَا يُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فَاجْتَنِبُوا الرِّجْسَ مِنَ الْأَوْثَانِ وَاجْتَنِبُوا قَوْلَ
الزُّورِ ﴿٣٠﴾ حُنَفَاءَ لِلَّهِ غَيْرَ مُشْرِكِينَ بِهِ ۚ وَمَن يُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ فَكَأَنَّمَا خَرَّ مِنَ
السَّمَاءِ فَتَخْطَفُهُ الطَّيْرُ أَوْ تَهْوِي بِهِ الرِّيحُ فِي مَكَانٍ سَحِيقٍ ﴿٣١﴾ ذَٰلِكَ ۖ وَ
مَن يُعَظِّمْ شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ فَإِنَّهَا مِن تَقْوَى الْقُلُوبِ ﴿٣٢﴾ لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ إِلَىٰ
أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ثُمَّ مَحِلُّهَا إِلَىٰ الْبَيْتِ الْعَتِيقِ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنسَكًا
لِّيَذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَىٰ مَا رَزَقَهُم مِّن بَهِيمَةِ الْأَنْعَامِ ۗ فَإِلَٰهُكُمْ إِلَٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ
فَلَهُ أَسْلِمُوا ۗ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُخْبِتِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ الَّذِينَ إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ وَ
الصَّابِرِينَ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَهُمْ وَالْمُقِيمِي الصَّلَاةِ ۙ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾
وَالْبُدْنَ جَعَلْنَاهَا لَكُم مِّن شَعَائِرِ اللَّهِ لَكُمْ فِيهَا خَيْرٌ ۖ فَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ
اللَّهِ عَلَيْهَا صَوَافَّ ۖ فَإِذَا وَجَبَتْ جُنُوبُهَا فَكُلُوا مِنْهَا وَأَطْعِمُوا الْقَانِعَ وَ

Those who disbelieved,[41] and are (now) debarring others from the Way of Allah and from visiting that Sacred Mosque,[42] which We have assigned to all mankind with equal rights for its dwellers and the out-siders,[43] (surely deserve punishment); whosoever shall deviate from righteousness, and adopt in this (Sacred Mosque) the way of iniquity,[44] We will make him taste a painful chastisement. 25

Recall to mind the time when We assigned the site of this House (the Ka'bah) to Abraham, saying, "Do not associate anything as a partner with Me; keep My House clean and pure[45] for those who go round it and for those who stand and bow down and prostrate (in worship), and make a proclamation to the people to come to you for Hajj from far and near, on foot and on lean[46] camels[47] so that they may witness the benefits that have been made available here for them ;[48] and during the known appointed days, they should mention the name of Allah over the cattle He has provided them :[49] then they may eat their flesh and also give of it to the indigent and needy.[50] Then they should clean off their *"dirt"*[51] fulfil their vows[52] and go round the "Ancient House".[53] 26-29

This was (the object for which the Ka'bah was built,) and whoso observes the sanctity of the things ordained by Allah, it will be best for him in the sight of his Lord.[54] 30

And the cattle have been made lawful for you[55] except what has already been mentioned to you[56]: therefore guard yourselves against the filth of idols,[57] and refrain from all false things.[58] Become Allah's sincere servants, turning away from everything and without associating any partner with Him. for the one who associates a partner with Allah, becomes like him who has fallen from heaven. Then either the birds will snatch him away or the wind will blow him off to a place where he will be shattered into pieces.[59] 30-31

This is the fact of the matter: (so understand it well.) And whoso observe the sanctity of what have been ordained as Symbols[60] of Allah, do so because of the piety of the hearts.[61] 32

You are permitted to derive benefits from the cattle dedicated for sacrifice) up to an appointed time.[62] Thereafter the (lawful) place (of their sacrifice) is near the Ancient House.[63] 33

34-35 For every community We have prescribed a way of sacrifice so that the people (of that community) should pronounce the name of Allah over the cattle which He has provided for them,[64] (but one and the same object underlies all the different ways). So your Deity is One Deity: surrender to Him alone. And, O Prophet, give good news to those who adopt a humble way,[65] whose hearts are filled with awe when Allah is mentioned before them: who endure with fortitude any affliction that befalls them: and who establish *Salāt* and, expend of what We have given them.[66]

36 And We have included the camels[67] (dedicated for sacrifice) among the Symbols of Allah, for there is much good for you in them.[68] Therefore make them stand[69] and mention the name of Allah over them,[70] and when (after the sacrifice,) their backs lie still on the ground,[71] you may eat of their flesh and give of it to the contented ones and to those who ask for it. Thus have We subjected these animals to you so that you may be grateful.[72]

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28. That is, "The *mushriks* of Arabia and of other countries, who had no special name like those mentioned above."

29. That is, "Allah will pass His judgment on the Day of Resurrection in regard to all the differences and disputes which take place between different people and different religions and will decide which of them was right and which was wrong."

30. See E.N. 25 Chapter XIII (Ar-Ra'd) and E.N. 41 of Chapter XVI (An-Naḥl).

31. That is, "Angels, stars, planets, etc. and all the creation that exists in other parts of the universe, whether it is rational and possesses freedom of will and choice like man, or irrational like animals, vegetation, solid matter, air and light."

32. That is, "A large number of the people bow down before Allah not by compulsion but willingly. On the other hand, there are many other people who bow down before Him under compulsion along with everything else in the universe, but they deserve punishment because they refuse to obey Allah in those spheres of life in which they have the choice to obey or not to obey."

33. That is, though the Final Judgment will be passed on the Day of Resurrection, a discerning eye can see even today those "who have already deserved the torment." For instance, the man who rejects the Message of the open

book of Nature and the Message of the Prophets and adopts self-made false creeds and then disputes about them with the Believers, proves himself to be in manifest error in this world as well.

34. In this verse "honour" and "disgrace" mean the acceptance of the Truth and its rejection. It is obvious that the one who does not see manifest realities is doomed to disgrace: for Allah lets him attain what he desires and works for; and when Allah does not bestow on anyone the honour of following the Truth, there is none else who can bestow it on him

35. Here it is obligatory to perform a *sajdah* (prostration), which is agreed upon by all Jurists. For further details please See E.N. 157 of Chapter VII (Al-A'rāf).

36. Here all the disputants about Allah have been divided into two main categories in spite of their large numbers:

(1) Those who believe in the Message of the Prophets and adopt the righteous way of life.

(2) Those who reject their Message and follow different ways of disbelief, though they may have countless differences and disputes among themselves.

37. See v. 50 and E.N. 58 of Chapter XIV (Ibrāhīm) for explanation.

38. This is to show that they will be honoured like the kings and chiefs who used to wear ornaments of gold and jewelry in the period the Qur'ān was revealed.

39. "Pure Word": though it may imply every pure thing, here it refers to the basic articles of the Faith.

40. As already stated in the Introduction, the portion of the Sūrah, which was sent down at Makkah, comes to an end here. Though its style is clearly that of the Makkī Sūrahs and there is nothing to indicate that any part (or the whole) of it was revealed at al-Madīnah, yet the words, "these are the two parties", have given rise to the misunderstanding that this verse was revealed at al-Madīnah. Some commentators are of the opinion that the two parties referred to were the parties who met in the Battle of Badr, but there is nothing in the context to support this opinion. On the other hand, from the context in which these words occur, it becomes obvious that the two parties referred to were the "Believers and the disbelievers." For the conflict between Belief and disbelief has always been going on ever since the creation of man and will go on upto the Day of Resurrection.

Incidentally, this latter view helps prove that the Qur'ān is a continuous whole and every part of it is closely connected with the other: whereas the

comments mentioned earlier would imply that there is no continuous theme in the Qur'ān but different parts of it have been put together without rhyme or reason.

41. "Those who disbelieved" were the people who rejected the Message of the Holy Prophet. The subsequent theme clearly shows that they were the disbelievers of Makkah.

42. That is, "They debarred the Holy Prophet and his followers from performing Ḥajj and 'Umrah".

43. That is, "This is not exclusively the property of any person or family or clan but is meant for all mankind alike. Therefore none has any right to debar others from it."

In this connection, two questions have arisen among the Jurists of Islam:

(1) What is meant by the "Sacred Mosque" ? Does it mean the mosque itself or includes the whole "Inviolable Place" of Makkah?.

(2) What is meant by "equal rights" of its dwellers and the outsiders ?

According to some jurists it means the "Sacred Mosque" itself and not the whole of Inviolable Makkah. They base this opinion on the apparent wording of the Qur'ān, and say that by "equal rights" is meant equal rights only in regard to worship in it. They cite a Tradition of the Holy Prophet to support their opinion. He said: "O children of 'Abd Manāf, those of you who will have authority over the affairs of the people, should not stop anybody from moving round the Ka'bah or from offering prayers in it at any time of the day or night."

Imām Shāfi'ī and others who support this view are of the opinion that it is wrong to conclude from this verse that the rights of the dwellers and the outsiders are equal in every respect, but they are equal only in regard to the right of worship and in nothing else, for the people of Makkah owned the lands and the houses of Makkah before Islam and also after it. So much so that during the time of Caliph 'Umar, the house of Safwān bin Umayyah was actually purchased from him for the purpose of making a prison in Makkah.

The others who hold that the "Sacred Mosque" refers to the whole of the "Inviolable Place" of Makkah derive their authority from verses 196 and 217 of Chapter II (Al-Baqarah). They argue that Ḥajj is not performed only in the Ka'bah (the Sacred Mosque), but the pilgrim has to visit Minā, Muzdalifah, 'Arafat, etc. for the performance of Ḥajj rites. Thus, they hold that equality is not merely in regard to worship in the "Sacred Mosque", but in regard to all other rights in Makkah. As this place has been appointed for Ḥajj by Allah for all alike, none has any right of ownership in it. Anyone can stay anywhere he likes and none can prohibit him from doing so. They cite many Traditions in support of their opinion:

(1) 'Abdullah bin 'Umar reports that the Holy Prophet said: "Makkah is the place where travellers have to stay: therefore its lands cannot be sold nor can anyone charge rent for its houses."

(2) According to Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī, the Holy Prophet said: "Makkah has been made an "Inviolable Place" by Allah: therefore selling its land and charging of rent for its houses is unlawful". Mujāhid has also reported a tradition almost in similar words.

(3) 'Alqamah says, "During the time of the Holy Prophet, and of the first three Caliphs, the lands of Makkah were regarded as common property and one could live there or allow others to live therein."

(4) 'Abdullah bin 'Umar says, "Caliph 'Umar had ordered that no resident of Makkah should close the door of his house during the Ḥajj season." According to Mujāhid; Caliph 'Umar had ordered that the people of Makkah should not put doors to enclose their courtyards but keep them open so that anyone who liked might come in and stay there. The same has been related by 'Atā' with the addition that Suhail bin 'Amr was the only exception to this rule, who was allowed to put a door in his courtyard in order to safeguard his camels in connection with his trade.

(5) 'Abdullah bin 'Umar also says that the one who receives rent for his house in Makkah fills his belly with fire.

(6) 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās says that Allah has made the whole of Makkah the "Sacred Mosque" where all have equal rights, Therefore the people of Makkah have no right to charge rent.

(7) 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Aziz sent an order to the governor of Makkah to this effect: "No rent should be charged for the houses of Makkah because it is unlawful".

On the basis of the above traditions, quite a few of the followers of the Companions and also, Imāms Malik, Abū Ḥanīfah, Sufyān Thaurī, Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal and Isḥāq bin Rāhawayah from among the Jurists, are of the opinion that it is unlawful to sell a piece of land and to charge rent, at least during the Ḥajj season, in Makkah. However, the majority of the Jurists are of the opinion that people can own houses in Makkah and can sell them as buildings but not as land.

In my opinion, this last view seems to be the right one because it conforms with the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and the practice of the rightly-guided Caliphs. It is obvious that Allah has not made Ḥajj obligatory for the Muslims of the whole world in order to provide a means of income for the people of Makkah. As Allah has set apart the "Inviolable Place" for the benefit of all the Believers, that land is

not the property of anyone and every pilgrim has the right to stay anywhere he can find room for himself.

44. It does not imply any specific act, but means every act that deviates from righteousness and falls under the definition of iniquity. Though all such acts are sins at all times and places, their commission in the "Inviolable Place" makes them all the more heinous; so much so that the commentators are of the opinion that even taking of an unnecessary oath brings it under the same category.

Besides common sins, there are certain other things whose commission in the " Inviolable Place" brings them under the same category. For instance:

(1) It is prohibited to take legal action even against a murderer, etc. who takes shelter within the "Inviolable Place": so much so that he cannot be arrested as long as he remains therein. This sanctity of the "Inviolable Place" is being observed since the time of Prophet Abraham. The Qur'ān says, "Whoso even enters it, he becomes safe and secure . . ." (III: 97).

(2) The consensus of opinion is that there can be no retribution within the "Inviolable Place" for the crimes committed outside it. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar and 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās declared, "We will not take any action in it even against the murderer of our fathers."

(3) It is unlawful to wage war or shed blood within it. On the second day of the conquest of Makkah, the Holy Prophet declared, "O people, Allah has made Makkah a Sanctuary since the very creation of this world, and it will remain so by Allah's ordinance up to the Day of Resurrection; therefore, it is not lawful for any man, who believes in Allah and the Day of Resurrection, to shed blood here". Then he added, "Suppose a man legalizes bloodshed here on the basis of the precedent that I waged war here, tell him, 'Allah made it lawful for His Messenger and not for you'. It was made lawful for me for a short interval of the day. Then it was again made "Inviolable" as before".

(4) It is unlawful to cut naturally growing trees or uproot the grass which has grown there. It is also prohibited to hunt birds and animals within the boundary or to drive them out from the "Inviolable Place" for hunting. It is, however, lawful to kill a serpent, a scorpion and other harmful animals and to uproot dry grass and "Izkhir" which is a kind of grass.

(5) It is prohibited to pick up anything that has fallen to the ground. In a Tradition, reported by Abū Dāwūd, the Holy Prophet prohibited people to pick up anything belonging to a pilgrim that had fallen to the ground.

(6) It is unlawful for a pilgrim who comes with the intention of performing Ḥajj or 'Umrah' to enter therein without *Iḥrām*. However, there is a divergence of opinion in regard to the entry of others than the pilgrims without *Iḥrām*.

According to 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās no one is allowed to enter therein without *Iḥrām* in any case, and this has been supported by a saying each of Imām Aḥmad and Imām Shāfi'ī. According to other sayings of Imāms Aḥmad and Shafi'ī, those people who have to visit the "Inviolable Place" frequently in connection with trade and business, are excepted. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, however, holds the view that the person who lives within the limits of the appointed *"Mīqāts"* can visit Makkah without *Iḥrām* but the outsiders cannot enter it without *Iḥrām*.

45. Some commentators opine that the address to Prophet Abraham ends with v. 26 and say that the Command contained in v. 27 was addressed to the Holy Prophet; but this opinion does not fit in with the context. For it is obvious that this Command also was addressed to Prophet Abraham when he had built the Ka'bah. Moreover, the command implies that the House of Allah had been built for the worship of One Allah and there was general permission from the very first day for all worshippers to visit it for performing Ḥajj.

46. The expression "lean camels" has been deliberately used to depict the picture of the camels of pilgrims coming from far-off places to perform Ḥajj.

47. In my opinion the address to Prophet Abraham comes to an end with v. 27 and vv. 28-29 have been added to emphasize and give further instructions for the performance of Ḥajj. We have based this opinion on the use of the epithet "Ancient House of the Ka'bah". It could not have been used at the time when Prophet Abraham built it. (For further details about the construction of the Ka'bah see II: 125-129, III: 96, 97 and XIV: 35-41).

48. "The benefits" include both religious and worldly benefits. It was due mainly to the Ka'bah that during the period of 2500 years between the times of Prophet Abraham and the Holy Prophet, the Arabs, in spite of their tribal life, remained attached to one central place and continued to visit it from all parts of Arabia for performing Ḥajj year after year. This in turn preserved their language, their culture and their Arab identity. Then during the course of the year they were afforded at least four months of perfect peace when anybody and everybody could safely travel alone or in trade caravans; thus the ritual of Ḥajj was directly beneficial to economic life of the country as well. For details see III: 97 and E.N's 80, 81 thereof, and V: 97 and E.N. 113 thereof.

49. "The cattle" here imply the camel, cow, sheep and goat as has been clearly mentioned in VI: 142-144. "... they should mention the name of Allah over the cattle" implies that they should slaughter the cattle for Allah's sake and in His name, as is clear from the subsequent sentences. Allah's name should be recited at the time the cattle are slaughtered to show that the Muslims are to slaughter and sacrifice animals in Allah's name alone so as to distinguish them

from the disbelievers who slaughtered animals without mentioning Allah's name or by mentioning other names than that of Allah.

As regards "the known appointed days", there is a difference of opinion as to their exact identity. Some of the opinions as to what the "appointed days" mean are:

(1) The first ten days of Zil-Ḥajj. This view is supported by Ibn 'Abbās, Ḥasan Baṣri, Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī, Qatādah and several other Companions and their followers. Imāms Abu Ḥanīfah, Shāfi'ī and Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal have also favoured this view.

(2) The tenth of Zil-Ḥajj and the three days following it. This view is supported by Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī, Ḥasan and 'Aṭā'. Imāms Shāfi'ī and Aḥmad are also reported to have favoured this in a saying each.

(3) The tenth day of Zil-Hajj and the two following days. This view has been supported by Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, 'Alī, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās, Anas bin Mālik, Abū Hurairah, Sa'īd bin Musayyab and Sa'īd bin Jubair. Ṣufyān Thaurī, Imām Mālik, Imām Abū Yūsuf and Imām Muḥammad from among the Jurists have also adopted it, and the Ḥanafites and the Malikites are also generally agreed on this.

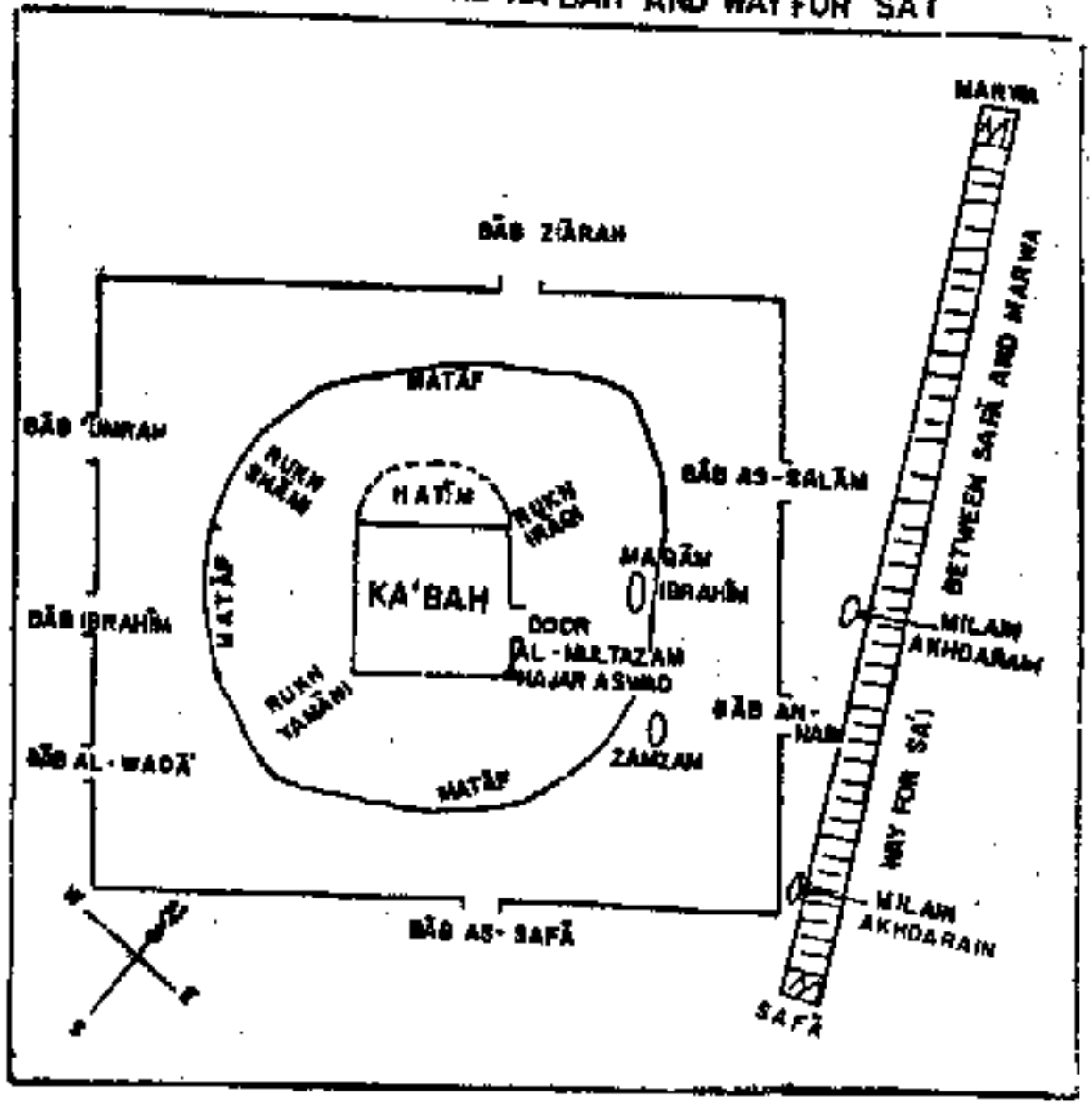
50. The imperative mood of the verb has given rise to the misunderstanding that it is obligatory to eat their flesh and also to give of it to the needy people, Imāms Shāfi'ī and Mālik opine that it is good to eat of it and it is obligatory to give of it to others. According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, both these things are permitted but are not obligatory. It is good to eat of it, for the people in the days of ignorance considered it unlawful to eat sacrificial meat of their own animals, and it is good to give of it to the poor by way of help. Ibn Jarīr has cited instances from Ḥasan Baṣrī, 'Aṭā', Mujāhid and Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī to prove that the imperative mood does not always imply a command, as for example in V: 2 and LXII: 10. Thus, ".... give of it to the indigent" does not mean that the flesh cannot be given to a rich person for the Companions of the Holy Prophet used to give of it to their friends, neighbours, relatives whether they were rich or poor. According to Ibn 'Umar, one-third of the flesh may be consumed at home, one-third may be given to the neighbours and the remaining one-third distributed among the needy.

51. It means that after performing the essential Ḥajj rites, one should put off *Iḥrām*, have a shave, bath, etc. for one is free from the restrictions of *Iḥrām* after Ḥajj. However, one is not allowed to have sexual relations with his wife till one has performed the *Ṭawāf* of *Ziyārah* or *Ifāḍah*.

52. That is, the vow one has made for that occasion.

MAP No-3

OUTLINE MAP OF THE KA'BAH AND WAY FOR SA'I



53. The Arabic word *'Atīq*, which has been used for the Ka'bah, is very meaningful for it implies:

(1) ancient,

(2) free from the sovereignty and ownership of anyone,

(3) honoured and revered.

I am of the opinion that here the word *Ṭawāf* refers to the circumambulation performed on the tenth day of Ẓil-Ḥajj after setting aside *Iḥrām*, as the last ritual of Ḥajj, and is called *Ṭawāf* of *Ifādāh* or *Ziyārah* (Visit).

54. Though the "command" is of a general nature, here it refers particularly to the prohibitions which are connected with the "Sacred Mosque", Ḥajj, 'Umrah and Makkah. Incidentally, there is a subtle hint in it to the Quraish; who had driven out the Muslims from Makkah and debarred them from Ḥajj and violated the sanctity of the "Ancient House" by associating indecent, filthy, and ungodly rites with Ḥajj and the House in contradiction to the ways of Abraham.

55. "And the cattle have been made lawful for you ...." has been cited here for two objects:

(1) It is to refute the custom of the Quraish under which certain cattle—*baḥīrah, sāibah, waṣilah and ḥām*—were considered unlawful. They are being told that these are also lawful like other cattle.

(2) It is not unlawful as was held by the Quraish to eat the flesh of the cattle even in the state of "*Iḥrām*".

56. This refers to VI: 145 and XVI: 115 in which Allah has forbidden the Muslims to eat what dies of itself, blood, flesh of swine or what has been slaughtered in any name other than Allah's.

57. That is, "Refrain from and guard against the worship of idols just as you avoid filthy and dirty things".

58. Though the expression "false things" is general and implies lies, false evidence, calumny, etc., here it particularly refers to those false creeds, rites, and rituals and superstitious things on which *kufr* and *shirk* have been founded. It is obvious that there is no greater lie than associating others with Allah in His Being, Attributes, Powers and Rights. It was a falsehood to make *baḥīrah*, etc. unlawful. See also XVI :116.

To take a false oath and give a false evidence also come under this Commandment. A Tradition from the Holy Prophet says:

"A false evidence is equal to *shirk* with Allah."

That is why according to the Islamic Law, a false witness should be punished and disgraced. Imāms Abū Yūsuf and Muhammad have expressed the opinion that a person who brings a false witness in the court should be publicly exposed and sentenced to a long imprisonment. This was the actual practice in the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar. According to Makhūl, he said:

"Such a person should be whipped, his head shaved and face blackened and he should be sentenced to a long imprisonment."

'Abdullah bin 'Āmir has reported from his father that a person's false evidence was established in Ḥaḍrat 'Umar's court, whereupon the Caliph kept him exposed to public for a day, saying that he was so and so and a false witness so that people might recognize him, and then he imprisoned him. These days this can be done by publishing the culprit's name in the newspapers, etc.

59. In this parable "heaven" means the original human nature. Man by nature is the servant of none else but Allah and inherently accepts the Doctrine of *Tauḥīd*. That is why the one who follows the guidance of the Prophets becomes firm in these dictates of his nature and soars higher and higher. On the other hand, the one who rejects Allah or associates a partner with Him falls down from the "heaven" of his nature. Then he either becomes a victim of satans and evil leaders like the birds of the parable, which snatch away the fallen man, or he becomes a slave of his lusts, passions, whims, etc., which have been likened to the wind in the parable. They lower him down from one wrong position to the other till he falls into the deepest abyss of degradation.

60. "Symbols of God worship": the performance of Ṣalāt, Ḥajj, Fasting, etc., or things like a Mosque or sacrificial offerings, etc. (See V: 2 and E.N.'s 5-7 thereof).

61. That is, the observance of the sanctity of the "Symbols" by a man is a proof that there is piety in his heart. On the other hand, the man who violates their sanctity proves himself to be void of piety and fear of God. It shows that he either does not believe at all in Allah or adopts a rebellious attitude against Him.

62. This is to remove the misunderstanding about getting any benefit from the animals dedicated for sacrifice as they were also included in the "Symbols of Allah. This was necessitated because the Arabs believed that it was unlawful to get any benefit from them. One could neither ride on them nor carry any load on them nor consume their milk, after they had been dedicated for sacrifice during Ḥajj. In this verse that misunderstanding has been removed. Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah and Anas have reported that the Holy Prophet saw a man walking in a miserable condition on foot leading his camel by the nose-string. When the Holy Prophet

asked him to ride on it, he replied that it was his sacrificial offering. The Holy Prophet again urged him to ride on his camel.

There is a divergence of opinion in regard to the interpretation of "an appointed time". Some commentators, particularly Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah, Mujāhid, Ḍaḥḥāk and 'Aṭā' are of the view that it refers to the time of the dedication of the animals for sacrifice. Obviously this is not the correct view, because in that case the permission to get benefit from them becomes meaningless. There are other commentators including 'Urwah bin Zubair and 'Aṭā' bin Abī Rabāḥ, who are of the view that "appointed time" means the time of sacrifice and one can get benefit from them up till then. One may ride on them, drink their milk, take their young ones for use and shear their hair, wool, etc. Imām Shāf'i has adopted this view. The Ḥanafites are of the opinion that one can get benefit from them, if need be, though it is preferable not to do so.

63. It does not mean that the sacrifice is to be made in the precincts of the "Ancient House" of the Ka'ah. The Qur'ān uses the "House of Allah" or Masjid-i-Ḥarām for the whole of the "Inviolable Place" of Makkah and not for that particular building. (V: 95).

64. This verse implies two things:

(1) Sacrifice has been an essential part of the worship of One Allah in all the revealed religions. In order to inculcate *Tauḥīd*, Allah prohibited sacrifice for anyone other than Himself. This was in keeping with the other prohibitions which were made for others than Allah. For instance, "prostration" before anyone other than Allah, making vows for others than Allah, visiting holy places others than those prescribed by Allah, fasting in the name of others than of Alla, etc., were all prohibited.

(2) The other thing which has been common in all the revealed religions was the object of the sacrifice in the name of Allah though its details have been different in different religions, times and countries.

65. The Arabic word *'mukhbitin'* has no equivalent in English; It includes those who (1) give up pride, arrogance and adopt humility before Allah, (2) surrender themselves to His service and slavery, and (3) accept His decrees sincerely.

66. It means that righteous people spend their lawful provisions in the Way of Allah to meet their own and their dependents' lawful needs, to help their relatives, neighbours and other needy people, on public works and propagation of the Word of Allah. It does not include expenditure in unlawful ways for unlawful

[Contd. on p.208

الْمُعْتَرَّ ۚ كَذٰلِكَ سَخَّرْنٰهَا لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿36﴾ لَنْ يَّنَالَ اللّٰهَ لُحُوْمُهَا وَ
لَا دِمَآؤُهَا وَلٰكِنْ يَّنَالُهُ التَّقْوٰى مِنْكُمْ ۚ كَذٰلِكَ سَخَّرَهَا لَكُمْ لِتُكَبِّرُوا اللّٰهَ عَلٰى
مَا هَدٰىكُمْ ۚ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿37﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُدٰفِعُ عَنِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۚ اِنَّ
اللّٰهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ خَوَّانٍ كَفُوْرٍ ﴿38﴾ اُذِنَ لِلَّذِيْنَ يُقٰتَلُوْنَ بِاَنَّهُمْ ظُلِمُوْا ۚ وَاِنَّ
اللّٰهَ عَلٰى نَصْرِهِمْ لَقَدِيْرُ ﴿39﴾ الَّذِيْنَ اُخْرِجُوْا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ بِغَيْرِ حَقٍّ اِلَّآ اَنْ
يَّقُوْلُوْا رَبُّنَا اللّٰهُ ۚ وَلَوْلَا دَفْعُ اللّٰهِ النَّاسَ بَعْضَهُمْ بِبَعْضٍ لَّهُدِّمَتْ صَوَامِعُ
وَبِيَعٌ وَّصَلَوٰتٌ وَّمَسٰجِدُ يُذْكَرُ فِيْهَا اسْمُ اللّٰهِ كَثِيْرًا ۚ وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللّٰهُ
مَنْ يَّنْصُرُهٗ ۚ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيْزٌ ﴿40﴾ اَلَّذِيْنَ اِنْ مَّكَّنّٰهُمْ فِى الْاَرْضِ اَقَامُوا
الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتَوُا الزَّكٰوةَ وَاَمَرُوْا بِالْمَعْرُوْفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ ۗ وَلِلّٰهِ عَاقِبَةُ
الْاُمُوْرِ ﴿41﴾ وَاِنْ يُّكَذِّبُوْكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوْحٍ وَّعَادٌ وَّثَمُوْدُ ﴿42﴾
وَقَوْمُ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَقَوْمُ لُوْطٍ ﴿43﴾ وَّاَصْحٰبُ مَدْيَنَ ۚ وَكُذِّبَ مُوْسٰى فَاَمْلَيْتُ
لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ ثُمَّ اَخَذْتُهُمْ ۚ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيْرِ ﴿44﴾ فَكَاَيِّنْ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ اَهْلَكْنٰهَا
وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ فَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلٰى عُرُوْشِهَا وَبِئْرٍ مُّعَطَّلَةٍ وَّقَصْرٍ مَّشِيْدٍ ﴿45﴾
اَفَلَمْ يَسِيْرُوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ فَتَكُوْنَ لَهُمْ قُلُوْبٌ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ بِهَآ اَوْ اٰذَانٌ
يَّسْمَعُوْنَ بِهَا ۚ فَاِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْاَبْصَارُ وَلٰكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوْبُ الَّتِيْ فِى
الصُّدُوْرِ ﴿46﴾ وَيَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ وَلَنْ يُّخْلِفَ اللّٰهُ وَعْدَهٗ ۚ وَاِنَّ يَوْمًا
عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ كَاَلْفِ سَنَةٍ مِّمَّا تَعُدُّوْنَ ﴿47﴾ وَكَاَيِّنْ مِّنْ قَرْيَةٍ اَمْلَيْتُ لَهَا
وَهِيَ ظَالِمَةٌ ثُمَّ اَخَذْتُهَا ۚ وَاِلَيَّ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿48﴾ قُلْ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنَّمَآ اَنَا
لَكُمْ نَذِيْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿49﴾ فَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّرِزْقٌ

(Note it well that) neither their flesh reaches Allah nor their blood, but it is your piety that reaches Him.[73] Thus has Allah subjected these animals to you so that you should glorify Him for the guidance He has given you.[74] And, O Prophet, give good news to those who do righteous works. 37

Assuredly[75] Allah defends those who have believed[76] for He does not like any treacherous, ungrateful wretch[77] at all. Permission (to fight) has been granted to those against whom war has been waged because they have been treated unjustly,[78] and Allah is certainly able to help them.[79] These are the people who have been expelled unjustly from their homes[80] only for the reason that they said, "Our Lord is Allah."[81] Had Allah not repelled one people by means of another people, monasteries, churches, synagogues[82] and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is often mentioned, would have been demolished.[83] Allah will surely help those people who help Him:[84] Allah is indeed All-Powerful, All-Mighty. These are the people who, if We give them power in the land, will establish Ṣalāt, pay the *Zakāt* dues, enjoin what is right and forbid what is evil,[85] and the final decision of all affairs is in the hand of Allah.[86] 38-41

O Prophet, if they[87] treat you as false, (you should remember that) before them the people of Noah, and the tribes of 'Ād and Thamūd, and the peoples of Abraham and Lot and the dwellers of Midian had treated their Prophets as false and likewise Moses was also rejected. At first I gave respite to all these disbelievers and then seized them.[88] Now you can see for yourselves how terrible was My chastisement![89] There are (the ruins of) many a wicked habitation which We destroyed: today they are lying upside down upon their roofs. How many a well has been rendered useless,[90] and how many a lofty castle is lying in ruins! Have they not gone about in the land so as to make their hearts think and ears hear? The fact, however, is that it is the hearts in the breasts and not the eyes that become blind.[91] 42-46

These people are demanding of you to hasten the chastisement.[92] Allah will never fail to fulfil His threat, but a day with your Lord is equal to a thousand years as you reckon.[93] There has been many a wicked habitation, whom at first I gave respite and then seized it, and all shall have to return to Me. 47-48

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purposes. The Qur'ānic term *Infāq* implies neither over-spending nor being miserly and stingy, but spending one's wealth on oneself and others according to one's means and status in society.

67. Seven persons can become partners in the sacrifice of one camel and likewise in the sacrifice of one cow and the like, as enjoined by the Holy Prophet in a Tradition reported by Jābir bin 'Abdullah in the Collection of Ḥadīth by Muslim.

68. That is, "You should sacrifice animals because you get many benefits from them to show your gratitude to Allāh, the Giver, and also to acknowledge His Supremacy and Sovereignty".

69. It should be noted that a camel is sacrificed while it is standing. This was enjoined by the Holy Prophet and is supported by Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, Ḍaḥḥāk, etc. Muslim and Bukhārī have reported a Tradition from Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Umar, who saw a man slaughtering his camel in the sitting position. He said to him, "Tie one foot of your camel and make it stand, because that is the way of Abul Qāsim (peace be upon him)". According to a tradition reported by Ḥaḍrat Jabīr bin 'Abdullah, in Abū Dāwūd, the Holy Prophet and his Companions would tie a left foot of the camel and would make it stand on three feet; then they would slaughter it. The same is implied by the subsequent sentence: " ...and after their backs lie still on the ground .....", i.e. when they fall down to the ground after enough of their blood has run out.

70. "Mention the name of Allah over them" implies that animals should be slaughtered by pronouncing the name of Allah over them, because without that their flesh would be unlawful to eat. This shows that in the Islamic Law there is no conception of slaughtering an animal without pronouncing the name of Allah over it. According to Traditions, there are different wordings for pronouncing the name of Allah over the animals at the time of their slaughter. Some of these are:

(1) *Bismillahi Allahu Akbar; Allahumma minka wa laka:* "In the name of Allah, Allah is most Great! O Allah, this is Thine and is presented to Thee".

(2) *Allāhu Akbar; Lā ilāha ill-Allāhu; Allahumma minka wa laka:* "Allah is most Great: There is no god but Allah: O Allah, this is Thine and is presented to Thee".

(3) *Innī wajjahtu wajhiya lillazī faṭar-as-samāwati wal-arḍa, ḥanīf-an-wa mā anā min-al-mushrikīn. Inna Ṣalātī wa nusukī wa maḥyāya wa mamātī lillāhi Rabb-il-'ālamīn. Lā sharika lahū wa bi-zālika umirtu wa anā min-al-Muslimīn. Allahumma minka wa laka.*

"I have turned my face sincerely towards the Being Who created the heavens and the earth, and I am not from among the idolatrous people. My Ṣalât and my rites of worship and my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the universe, Who has no partner with Him. This is what I have been enjoined and I am the first to surrender to Him. O Allah! This is Thine, and is presented to Thee".

71. ".....lie still on the ground....." means till they die completely, for the Holy Prophet prohibited to cut off a piece of flesh, if there is still any sign of life in the slaughtered animal; if this is done, the piece of flesh would be unlawful.

72. This is another reason why animals should be sacrificed: "They should be sacrificed as a mark of gratitude to Allah Who has subjected them to you".

73. 'This prescribes a very important condition for the sacrifice made in the worship of Allah. A sacrifice is acceptable to Allah only if it is accompanied by piety and sincerity. Though sacrifice is a Symbol of Allah, yet it has been made plain that it is accepted only if it is accompanied by piety, saying, "Neither their flesh reaches Allah nor their blood, but it is your piety ...." This was also meant to condemn the ritual of the days of ignorance, when the Arabs took the flesh to the Ka'bah and smeard its walls with the blood of the sacrificed animal.

74. ".... you should glorify Allah" at the time of sacrifice verbally also in order to acknowledge that the animals really belong to Allah and to no one else. One of the sentences uttered at the time of sacrifice is *Allahumma minka wa laka* (O Allah, this animal is Thine and is presented to Thee).

It should be noted well that the command of sacrifice as contained in verses 36 and 37 is not for the pilgrims alone and that the performance of sacrifice is not confined to Makkah on the occasion of Ḥajj. It is a general command for all those Muslims who are well off. They have been enjoined to be grateful to Allah because He has subjected these animals for the good of all human beings. Therefore they are required to sacrifice the animals during these days so that they may spiritually join those who go to Makkah to perform Ḥajj.

There are many authentic Traditions to the effect that the Holy Prophet made sacrifice on this occasion, while he was personally at al-Madinah:

(1) "The one who does not perform sacrifice even though he can should not join us in the 'Id Prayer". (Musnad Aḥmad, Ibn Mājah).

(2) According to a Tradition reported by Ibn 'Umar, the Holy Prophet dwelt at al-Madinah for ten years and performed sacrifice every year. (Tirmizi).

(3) According to Ḥadrat Anas, the Holy Prophet said:

"The one who sacrificed an animal before the 'Id Prayer, should offer another sacrifice; but the one who sacrificed his animal after the 'Id Prayer, did the right thing and followed the way of the Muslims". (Bukhārī)

In this connection, it is note-worthy that no 'Id Prayer is held on the tenth of Ẓil-Ḥajj in Makkah: therefore the injunction was meant for all Muslims and not only for those performing Ḥajj at Makkah.

Thus, it is clear that the sacrifice on the occasion of 'Id which is observed in the whole Muslim world is a Sunnah of the Holy Prophet and has been enjoined by him. The only dispute is whether it is obligatory in nature or only a Sunnah. Ibrāhim Nakha'ī, Imāms Abu Ḥanīfah, Mālik, Muḥammad and, according to a Tradition, Imām Abu Yūsuf too, are of the opinion that it is Obligatory in nature. On the other hand, Imāms Shāfi'ī and Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal regard it only as a Sunnah of the Muslims, and Sufyān Thaurī has also agreed with them, saying that there will be no harm if a person does not offer a sacrifice. It is, however, an irony that some of the "learned" Muslims of our time, who follow neither the Qur'ān nor the Sunnah, and are only guided by personal whims, have declared that if there is a consensus of opinion of the Muslims, they can give up the practice of sacrifice on the occasion of 'Id.

75. From here the address for the first time prepares the Muslims for *Jihād*. In order to understand this, we should keep in view the preceding portion (vv. 19-24) in which the ideological conflict between the two parties (Believers and disbelievers) and the result thereof have been described. This naturally serves as a prelude to the armed conflict between the two parties. That is why in vv. 26-37 the immediate causes which necessitated war have been stated to serve as an introduction and justification for war with the disbelievers of Makkah.

After the migration to al-Madīnah, when the first Ḥajj season approached, it naturally brought along with it anguish and anger both for the *Muhājirs* and the *Anṣār*, who had been debarred from visiting Makkah and performing Ḥajj, That is why, in this passage (vv. 26-37) the rituals and the objects of Ḥajj have been described to bring home to the disbelievers that they had no right to debar anyone from Ḥajj. On the other hand, the Muslims are being prepared to fight not with the intention of wreaking vengeance but for the sake of reform. At the same time sacrifice on the occasion of Ḥajj has been prescribed as a permanent rite to enable them (and the Muslims of the whole world) to commemorate Ḥajj and the rites connected with it, so that they might refrain from wreaking vengeance on the people of Makkah for the persecution to which they had been subjected. They have, therefore, been enjoined to fight to bring about better conditions and not to take revenge on their persecutors.

76. The Arabic word *mudāfi'at* implies two things:

(1) to fight with the enemy to ward off his aggressive attack;

(2) to fight with the enemy not just once but whenever the need arises. Allah has assured the Believers that He will defend them against the enemy every time there is a conflict between Islam and *kufr*. This is to encourage the Believers that they will not be left alone in their defence, but Allah Himself will be a party with them and will help them to frustrate the cunning designs of the enemy and to ward off their attacks. Indeed this verse is a great encouragement for the Believers, for it imbues their hearts with spirit and strength which nothing else can.

77. Allah becomes a party with the Believers because they are justified in waging war against the disbelievers who are treacherous and ungrateful to Allah in spite of His many blessings and favours to them.

78. This (v. 39) is the first verse of the Qur'ān in which permission to fight was given in the month of Ẓil-Ḥajj in the first year after Hijrah according to our research. Then the command to fight was given in vv. 190, 191, 193, 216 and 244 of Chapter II (Al-Baqarah) in Rajab or Sha'ban of A.H. 2.

79. ".....and Allah is certainly able to help them": this assurance was urgently needed by the persecuted Muslims whose fighting strength at that time was very meagre—not even a thousand including all the migrants and the Muslims of al-Madinah. On the other hand, the fighting strength of the Quraish by themselves was much greater. Besides, they had all the other *mushrik* clans of Arabia at their back and were joined later by the Jews as well. Therefore, this assurance was most opportune and the challenge to the disbelievers was very significant, for it meant to say that they were not fighting against a small number of the Muslims but against Allah. Therefore, "You are welcome to fight if you dare".

80. The mention of their expulsion from their homes in v. 40 is a clear proof that this portion of Sūrah al-Ḥajj was revealed at al-Madinah.

81. In order to have an idea of the severe persecution of the Muslims, a few instances of this are cited.

(1) Ḥaḍrat Ṣuhaib Rūmī was deprived of everything, when he was about to migrate to al-Madinah. When he reached there, he had nothing with him except the clothes he was wearing. Though he had earned all that through his own labours he was deprived of everything by the disbelievers of Makkah.

(2) When Ḥaḍrat Abu Salmāh was about to leave Makkah with his wife and a suckling child, his in-laws forcibly separated his wife from him, and then the

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كَرِيْمٌ ﴿٥١﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ سَعَوْا فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِنَا مُعٰجِزِيْنَ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٥١﴾
وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَّسُوْلٍ وَّلَا نَبِيٍّ اِلَّآ اِذَا تَمَنّٰٓى اَلْقَى الشَّيْطٰنُ
فِيْٓ اُمْنِيَّتِهٖ ۚ فَيَنْسَخُ اللّٰهُ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطٰنُ ثُمَّ يُحْكِمُ اللّٰهُ اٰيٰتِهٖ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ
عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٥٢﴾ لِّيَجْعَلَ مَا يُلْقِي الشَّيْطٰنُ فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِيْنَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ
وَّالْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوْبُهُمْ ۗ وَاِنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ لَفِيْ شِقَاقٍ بَعِيْدٍ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَّلِيَعْلَمَ الَّذِيْنَ
اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ اَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ فَيُؤْمِنُوْا بِهٖ فَتُخْبِتَ لَهٗ قُلُوْبُهُمْ ۗ وَاِنَّ
اللّٰهَ لَهَادِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَلَا يَزَالُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
فِيْ مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْهُ حَتّٰى تَاْتِيَهُمُ السَّاعَةُ بَغْتَةً اَوْ يَاْتِيَهُمْ عَذَابُ يَوْمٍ
عَقِيْمٍ ﴿٥٥﴾ اَلْمُلْكُ يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلّٰهِ ۚ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَهُمْ ۗ فَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
فِيْ جَنّٰتِ النَّعِيْمِ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَكَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَاُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
مُّهِيْنٌ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ هَاجَرُوْا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ قُتِلُوْٓا اَوْ مَاتُوْا لَيَرْزُقَنَّهُمُ
اللّٰهُ رِزْقًا حَسَنًا ۗ وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرّٰزِقِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ لَيُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ مُّدْخَلًا
يَّرْضَوْنَهٗ ۗ وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَعَلِيْمٌ حَلِيْمٌ ﴿٥٩﴾ ذٰلِكَ ۚ وَمَنْ عَاقَبَ بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوْقِبَ
بِهٖ ثُمَّ بُغِيَ عَلَيْهِ لَيَنْصُرَنَّهُ اللّٰهُ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَعَفُوٌّ غَفُوْرٌ ﴿٦٠﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ
اللّٰهَ يُوْلِجُ الَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُوْلِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي الَّيْلِ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ سَمِيْعٌۢ
بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٦١﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَاَنَّ مَا يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ هُوَ
الْبَاطِلُ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيْرُ ﴿٦٢﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ اَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ
مَآءً ۖ فَتُصْبِحُ الْاَرْضُ مُخْضَرَّةً ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَطِيْفٌ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿٦٣﴾ لَهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ
مَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۗ وَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَهُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيْدُ ﴿٦٤﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ

O Muḥammad, say to them: "O people, I am merely a warner[94] who informs you plainly (of the coming evil time)." So those who believe and do righteous deeds shall have forgiveness and honourable provision,[95] and those, who will strive to discredit Our Revelations, shall become the dwellers of Hell. 49-51

And, O Muḥammad, (it has always been so with) every Messenger and Prophet[96] We sent before you that whenever he had a desire,[97] Satan tried to interfere with his desire.[98] But Allah eradicates the mischiefs worked by Satan and confirms His Revelations,[99] for Allah is All-Knowing, All-Wise,[100] (He allows this) so that He may make Satan's obstacles a trial for those, whose hearts suffer from the disease (of hypocrisy) and whose hearts are false——the fact is that these unjust people have gone far away in their enmity—and so that those who have knowledge may realize that this (Message) is the Truth from Allah and may believe in it, and their hearts may submit humbly to it. Most surely Allah always guides the Believers to the Straight Way.[101] 52-54

Yet the disbelievers will always remain in doubt about it until the Hour of Resurrection overtakes them suddenly or the scourge of a "barren" day[102] descends upon them. On that Day Allah will reign supreme, and He will judge between them; then those who will have believed and done righteous works, will go to the Gardens of Bliss, but those who will have disbelieved and treated Our Revelations as false, shall receive an ignominious punishment. As for those, who left their homes for the sake of Allah and then were killed or died, Allah will make for them a generous provision) and Allah is the best of Providers. He will admit them to a place with which they will be well pleased; indeed Allah is All-Knowing and Clement.[103] This is about them. As regards the one, who takes vengeance equal to the wrong that had been done to him, and has again been oppressed, Allah will surely help him[104]; Allah is Forgiving and Forbearing.[105] 55-60

So it is[106] because it is Allah Who brings forth the day from the night and the night from the day[107] and He hears everything and sees everything.[108] This is so because it is Allah alone Who is the Truth and all others, whom they invoke besides Him, are falsehood,[109] and Allah is the Supreme and the Exalted One. Do you not see that Allah sends down rain water from the sky and the land becomes green because of it?[110] 61-64

The fact is that Allah works in imperceptible ways and is fully aware of everything.[111] To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and the earth and undoubtedly Allah is All-Sufficient and All-Praiseworthy.[112]

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people of his own family tore away the child from them. Thus the poor woman had to pass one whole year in sorrow and grief. After a year, she secured the child somehow and journeyed from Makkah to al-Madīnah with it all alone on a dangerous route.

(3) 'Ayyāsh bin Rabī'ah was a half brother of Abū Jahl. When he migrated to al-Madīnah, he was followed by Abu Jahl and another brother of his, and they told him the lie: "Your mother has taken the oath that she will not move from the sun to the shade nor comb her hair until she should see you ('Ayyāsh) You should therefore go back with us to Makkah, show her your face and then come back". He was taken in by this trick. When they were journeying back the two brothers made him a prisoner, took him to Makkah with his hands and feet tied, and proclaimed, "O people of Makkah, this is how these lads should be treated and set right". He remained in that state for a long time and was at last rescued by a brave Muslim.

82. *Ṣaumah* (pl. *Ṣawāmi*), *Biy'ah* and *Ṣalawāt* in the original Text are the places of worship of the monks who have left the world, the Christians and the Jews respectively. *Ṣalawāt* was *Ṣalautā* in Aramaic, which might be the origin of the English words salute and salutation.

83. In this sentence, a Divine principle has been stated:

"Allah does not let a group of people or a community have authority for ever. Every now and then He repels one group by means of another".

If this had not been the case, the permanent dominator would have created chaos not only in the political and economic spheres, but would have encroached upon the places of worship as well. This "principle" has also been stated in v. 251 of Chapter II (Al-Baqarah).

84. Those "who help Allah" are the people who invite mankind to *Tauhīd* and exert their utmost to establish the "True Faith" and righteousness. For further explanation see E.N. 50 of Chapter III (Āl-i-'Imrān).

85. ".....if We give them power ..... evil": In this one sentence, the real aim of the Islamic State and the characteristics of those who conduct its affairs have been stated concisely but comprehensively. Those who help Allah and deserve His succour behave righteously, establish Ṣalāt, make arrangements for the

collection of Zakāt and use their power and authority to propagate good and eradicate evil.

86. That is, "It is Allah Who decides whom to give power in the land and when". This is meant to remove the misunderstanding of the proud and arrogant people who think that the destiny of the land and its dwellers is in their hands, and there is none to depose them from power. But Allah dethrones the most haughty ruler in supernatural ways and gives power to the most humble in order to show that He is All-Powerful, All-Mighty.

87. "The disbelievers of Makkah".

88. The instances of some peoples who rejected their Prophets have been cited to impress that they were given respite to reform themselves before they were punished. Therefore, "O people of Makkah, you should not be deluded by the delay in your punishment. When the term of respite comes to an end, you shall also be punished like the former people, if you do not mend your ways in the meantime".

89. The Arabic word *Nakir* is very comprehensive and implies two meanings:

(1) Displeasure at the evil conduct of the other, and

(2) a terrible punishment which disfigures the culprit so badly that he cannot even be recognized. The sentence therefore will mean: "Just see when I seized them for this evil conduct, how terrible was My chastisement".

90. In Arabic a "well" is synonymous with a "habitation". Thus "many a well .... useless" means "many a habitation has been destroyed".

91. The words ".... the hearts .... blind" have been used in the metaphorical and not in the literal sense. Since the heart is regarded as the centre of emotions, feelings and of mental and moral qualities, these words have been used to imply that their obduracy has inhibited them from feeling and acting rationally.

92. This refers to the oft-repeated challenge by the disbelievers: "Well, if you are a true prophet, why does not that chastisement come with which you have been threatening us, for we have been rejecting your claim of being a true Prophet of Allah ?"

93. That is, "The decisions of Allah do not follow your time and calendar, nor do the consequences of your wrong attitudes appear immediately after the deeds". Therefore it will be very foolish on the part of a people to argue that the

threat of punishment was empty just because a decade or a century had passed since they had adopted a wicked attitude and conduct with impunity.

94. That is, "I am merely a warner and not the maker of your destinies. It is Allah Who passes judgement and decides about the punishment."

95. "The Believers shall have forgiveness" means that Allah will overlook their faults, weaknesses, and acts of omission and commission. They will have "honourable provisions" means that they will have excellent supplies which will be given to them in an honourable way.

96. For the distinction between *Nabī* and *Rasūl*, refer to E. N. 30 of Chapter XIX (Maryam).

97. The Arabic word *tamannā* has two meanings: "desire" and "to recite" something.

98. If the first meaning is taken, it will imply: "Satan tried to prevent the fulfilment of his desire." If the second meaning is taken, it will imply: "When the Prophet recited the Revelations, Satan created different sorts of doubts about its truth and meanings in the minds of the people."

99. If the first meaning is adopted, it will imply: "Allah fulfils the Prophet's desire and makes his Mission successful in spite of the obstacles of Satan and confirms the truth of His Revelations by fulfilling His promises to the Prophet". In case of the second meaning, it will imply: "Allah eradicates all the doubts and objections inspired by Satan in the hearts of the people and clarifies the confusion created about any verse of the Qur'ān in subsequent Revelations".

100. "Allah is All-Knowing" and has full knowledge of the mischief worked by Satan and of its effects, and being "All-Wise", He counteracts every mischief of Satan.

101. That is, "Allah lets Satan work such mischiefs to put to the test both the righteous and the wicked people". The people with a perverted mentality deduce wrong conclusions from these and deviate from the Right Way, while those, who think on the right lines, realize that all these things are the mischiefs of Satan and that the Message of the Prophet is based on the Truth. They conclude that the very fact that Satan has been so much agitated and become active against it is a clear proof of its being the Truth. It is very important to understand the real significance of this passage (vv. 52-54) for this has given rise to a grave misunderstanding.

If we consider it in the context in which it occurs, it becomes obvious that it was sent down to refute the wrong appraisal of the casual observers that the Holy Prophet had "failed" to achieve his desired object. This was because he had

striven for thirteen long years to persuade his people to accept his Message but the apparent result was that he had not only failed in this, but he and the small band of his followers had been forced to leave their homes. As this "exile" contradicted his claim that he was a Prophet of Allah and had His approval and succour with him, some people became sceptical about it. Moreover, they became doubtful about the truth of the Qur'ān, because they were not being visited by the scourge, which was inflicted on those who treated the Prophet as false. His antagonists scoffed at him, saying, "Where is that succour of Allah and the scourge with which we were threatened?" The answer to these doubts of the disbelievers was given in the preceding passage, and in this passage the addressees were those who were influenced by this propaganda. Briefly the whole answer was to this effect:

"It is not a new thing that the people of a Messenger have treated him as an impostor for it has always been happening like this: You can see from the remnants of those peoples who treated their Messengers as impostors how they were punished for their mischief. You can learn a lesson from them, if you will. As regards the delay in the coming of scourge, the Qur'ān never threatened the disbelievers with immediate punishment, nor is it the job of the Messenger to inflict punishments. The scourge is sent by Allāh, but He is not hasty in sending His torment. He gives respite to the people to mend their ways as He is giving you now. Therefore, you should not be under any delusion that the threats of scourge are empty threats.

"It is also not a new thing that the desires and wishes of a Prophet meet with obstacles or that false propaganda is made against his Message for the same has already happened with regard to the Messages of the former Prophets. But ultimately Allah eradicated the mischief worked by Satan and made the Message successful. Therefore you should take a warning from the past history of Satan's mischiefs and their ultimate failure. You should note it well that the obstacles and the mischiefs of Satan are a trial and means that help attract the righteous people towards Islam and winnow the dishonest people away from it".

It is a pity that in spite of the above clear and simple meaning of the passage which fits in well with the context, a grave misunderstanding has arisen because of a tradition which has not only changed its meaning entirely and rendered it irrelevant in the context but has helped make doubtful the very basic Articles of the Faith. Therefore we are making a critical appraisal of the tradition in order to show how to make the right use of traditions for the correct interpretation of the Qur'ān.

According to this tradition, the Holy Prophet had a strong longing and desire to this effect: "I wish some Revelations were sent down to tone down the abhorrence of the *mushrik* Quraish against Islam so as to bring them nearer to it,

or at least the criticism against their creed may not be so severe as to arouse their enmity".

While he was cherishing this desire, it so happened that one day when he was sitting in a big gathering of the Quraish, Sūrah An-Najm (LIII) was sent down and he began to recite it. When he came to vv. 19, 20: "Have you ever considered about this *Lāt* and this *'Uzzā*, and a third (goddess) *Manāt*," all of a sudden he recited, "These are exalted goddesses; indeed their intercession may be expected". After this he continued to recite Sūrah An-Najm up to the last verse and then fell down in prostration and all the Muslims and the *mushriks* of the Quraish also did the same, for the latter said, "Now we have no difference with Muhammad; we also profess that Allah is the Creator and the Provider and that these deities of ours are merely our intercessors with Him". After this, when in the evening Angel Gabriel came, he said, "What have you done? I did not bring these two sentences". At this the Holy Prophet became very sad and Allah sent down vv. 73 75 of Sūrah Banī Isrā'il (XVII): "O Muhammad! these people have left no stone unturned to tempt you away from that which We have revealed to you so that you might fabricate something in Our name. Had you done that, they would have made you their friend. It was just possible that you might have inclined a little towards them, if We had not given you strength. But if you had done so, We would have made you taste double chastisement in this world as well as in the Hereafter: then you would have found no helper against Us".

But in spite of this, he continued to be grieved till Allah sent down v. 52 of this Sūrah (Al-Ḥajj) in which Allah consoled him, saying that the same had been happening to the former Prophets.

Another thing that happened in the meantime was that the story reached the migrants to Ḥabash that there had been a reconciliation between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers of Makkah. Accordingly, many of them returned to Makkah only to learn that the news of reconciliation was wrong and the conflict between Islam and *kufr* was raging as furiously as before.

Now let us make a critical study of this story which has been cited by Ibn Jarīr and many other commentators and is even contained in many collections of Traditions.

(1) None of its reporters, except Ibn 'Abbās, is a Companion.

(2) There are many major discrepancies and variations in its details.

(3) The wording ascribed to the Holy Prophet in praise of the idols in each Tradition is different from that of others.

Moreover, these words have been attributed to different sources according to different Traditions: (a) These words were put in by Satan during the Revelation and the Holy Prophet imagined that they were revealed by Gabriel. (b) He himself uttered these words inadvertently, being urged by his own desire. (c) He was dozing when he uttered these words. (d) He intentionally uttered these words but in a manner as to question their veracity. (e) Satan interpolated these words into the Revelation, giving an impression that the Holy Prophet himself had recited them. (f) It was one of the *mushriks* who had recited these words.

Yet scholars of Tradition like Ḥāfiz Ibn Ḥajar and jurists like Abu Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ and rationalists like Zamakhshari and commentators like Ibn Jarīr accept this story as true and consider it as a commentary on verse 52 of this Sūrah. Ibn Ḥajar argues like this:

"Even though the links by which this Tradition has been related are either weak or "broken", except in one case, the very fact that it has been related through so many "links" is a proof that there is some truth about it. The one which has strong links is by Sa'īd bin Jubair who has related it from Ibn 'Abbās and the reporters of two more Traditions (which have been cited by Ṭabari) have been declared authentic by Bukhārī and Muslim".

On the other side, there are other eminent scholars who declare this story to be utterly baseless. Ibn Kathīr says, "All the links of this Tradition are unauthentic and I have found no correct version of this with continuous links". Baihaqi says, "This story has not been proved to be correct by the rules of reporting". When Ibn Khuzaimah was asked about it, he said, "This story has been invented by heretics". Qāzi 'Ayāḍ says, "The very fact that this Tradition is neither contained in any of the six authentic collections of Ḥadīth nor has it been related in an authentic way by authentic reporters shows its weakness". Besides them, Imām Rāzī, Qāzī Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabī, Ālūsi etc. have rejected it altogether.

It is a pity that even those who reject this story have not done full justice to their cases. There are some who reject it because its "links" are weak. In other words, they would have accepted it, if its links were strong. Then there are others who reject it because its acceptance makes the whole Faith doubtful. This kind of reasoning may satisfy the believers but it cannot satisfy those who are already sceptical or intend to make a research into it with a view to making a correct appraisal of Islam. They will rather say, "When a story is related by an eminent Companion and is contained in the collections of Traditions, there is no reason why we should reject it just because it makes your Faith doubtful".

Now let us consider the story critically and rationally to prove that it is unacceptable.

(1) Its internal evidence proves it to be wrong: (a) According to the story the incident happened after the first migration to Ḥabash, for according to it some of the migrants returned to Makkah after hearing the story. Now the fact is that the migration took place in the month of Rajab of the fifth year of Prophethood and some of the migrants returned to Makkah three months later, *i.e.* in Shawwāl of the same year. (b) Verses 73-75 of Chapter XVII in which the Holy Prophet was "reproved" for this incident were revealed in the eleventh or twelfth year of Prophethood. In other words, he was "reproved" by Allah five or six years after the incident. (c) This verse (52) in which the interpolation by Satan was abrogated was sent down in the first year of Hijrah, *i.e.* about two years after the reproof. Can a person in his senses believe that the Holy Prophet was reproved for the interpolation after six years, and it was abrogated after nine years ?

(2) According to the story, this interpolation was made in Sūrah An-Najm. When the Holy Prophet was reciting the words, "And a third (goddess) *Manāt*", he also recited the interpolated sentence, and then continued the recital up to the end of the Sūrah. It is said that the disbelievers of Makkah were so pleased with the interpolation that they declared, "The differences between us and Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) have now come to an end".

Let us now read vv. 19-23 of An-Najm along with the alleged interpolation (in italics): "Have you ever considered about the reality of this *Lāt* and *'Uzzā* and a third (goddess) *Manāt? These are exalted goddesses; indeed their intercession may be expected.* What, do you have sons for yourselves and daughters for Him (Allāh) ? This is indeed an unfair division. They are nothing but mere names which you and your forefathers have invented. Allah has sent down no authority in regard to them. They follow only conjectures and the whims of their own minds, although right guidance has come from their Lord".

Even a casual reader will detect an obvious contradiction in the passage. Immediately after "praising" the goddesses there is a hard hit on their worshippers, as if to say: "O foolish people! How is it that you have ascribed daughters to Allah and sons to yourselves? All this is your own invention which has no authority from Allah". On the face of it, the interpolation makes the passage absurd which cannot be assigned even to a rational person not to speak of Allah. Then the story presumes that all the Quraish who were listening to it must have lost their senses; otherwise they could not have declared that their differences with Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) had been made up from thence.

From this internal evidence it has become clear that this story is absurd and meaningless.

(3) Now let us consider whether the occasions ascribed by the commentators to the revelation of the verses under discussion, fit in with the chronological

order of the Qur'ān. According to the story, the interpolation in Sūrah An-Najm (LIII) was made in the fifth year of Prophethood; the reproof was made in vv. 73-75 of Banī Isrā'īl (XVII) and then the interpolation was annulled and the incident explained in vv. 52-54 of Sūrah Al-Ḥajj (XXII). Now there could be only two possibilities about the time of their revelation: either the verses containing the reproof and the abrogation were sent down in the period in which the interpolation took place, or the verse containing the reproof was sent down along with Sūrah Al-Ḥajj (XXII). In the first case, the question arises: Why were these verses (XVII: 73-75) not inserted in An-Najm (LIII)? Why were they held in abeyance for six long years and then inserted in Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl (XVII), when it was revealed, and vv. 52-54 (containing the abrogation) inserted in Sūrah Al-Ḥajj (XXII) after a further delay of more than two years? Does it mean that the verses were sent down on one occasion and inserted years later haphazardly in one Sūrah or the other? In the second case, the question would arise: Does it stand to reason that the verses containing the reproof (XVII: 73-75) were sent down six years after the interpolation, and the verse of abrogation (XXII: 52) nine years after the incident? Still another question arises: What was the occasion of the revelation of the verses of reproof and abrogation in Chapters XVII and XXII in the context in which they occur?

(4) Now let us turn to the third principle of correct appraisal of the Qur'ān.

For a correct appreciation of the Qur'ān it is essential to consider whether a particular commentary fits in with the relevant context of the Qur'ān or not. If we make even a cursory study of XVII: 71-73, (Banī Isrā'īl), it will become obvious that there was no occasion for the alleged reproof in v. 73 and that there is no tinge of reproof in it, for the words of the verse refute the allegation that the Prophet was taken in by the mischief of the disbelivers. Then in Sūrah Al-Ḥajj (XXII), if we make a critical study of the verses that precede vv. 52-54 and follow them, it will become obvious that there was no occasion to console the Prophet for the "interpolation" and to annul it after nine years.

(5) We reiterate that no Tradition, however strong links it might have, can be accepted when the Text itself is a clear evidence against it, and when it does not fit in with the wording, the context, the order etc. of the Qur'ān. When the incident is considered in this background, even a sceptical research scholar would be convinced that the Tradition is absolutely wrong. As regards a believer, he can never accept it, when he knows that it contradicts not only one verse but a large number of other verses of the Qur'ān. He would rather believe, that the reporters of the Tradition might have been deluded by Satan and not the Holy Prophet. He would never believe that the Holy Prophet could interpolate even a single word in the Qur'ān under the influence of a desire of his own: or that there could ever occur such a desire in his mind that

he should make a compromise with the disbelievers by associating *shirk* with *Tauḥīd:* or that he could ever wish that Allah might not say anything to displease the disbelievers: or that the Revelation was made in such an unsafe and doubtful manner as to enable Satan to mix with it even a word in a manner as if it was also brought by Gabriel. Each of these things is contradictory to the clear Revelation of the Qur'ān and the basic Articles of the Faith which we have learnt from the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet. God forbid that we should accept any such Tradition that might lead to the above-mentioned presumptions just because the Tradition seems to be "authentic" in every way.

It will be worth-while to consider the question: How is it that so many reporters of Traditions have related this story? Does it not show that there must have been some reality about it? Otherwise, so many reporters, who included many authentic and eminent scholars, could not have made such an heinous slander against the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet. Its answer is contained in the authentic collections of Traditions by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Nasā'ī and Musnad Ahmad. The reality of the incident is this:

The Holy Prophet recited Sūrah An-Najm and performed prostration at the end of it. At this, all the hearers, both the Muslims and the *mushriks*, fell down in prostration. This was what really happened and there is nothing strange about it. Let us depict the occasion: The Holy Prophet was reciting a forceful piece of the eloquent Qur'ān in a very impressive manner. Naturally the occasion produced an emotional effect and all the listeners instinctively fell down in prostration along with him. It was because of such ecstasies produced by the Holy Prophet's recital of the Qur'ān as this that the disbelievers dubbed him a "sorcerer". As regards the story that the Holy Prophet praised the deities of the disbelievers, it appears that the Quraish concocted the story to hide their "defeat". Probably someone or other of them explained away their defeat, saying, "We ourselves heard Muḥammad praising our deities. Therefore we also fell down in prostration along with him". As regards the migrants to Ḥabash, they returned to Makkah when they heard the concocted story that there had been a compromise between the Holy Prophet and the Quraish. It appears that some of those people who had seen the Muslims and the *mushriks* falling down together in prostration, presumed that peace had been made between them, so the story travelled to the migrants in Ḥabash who had no means to verify it and thus thirty-three of them returned to Makkah.

Naturally these three things—prostration by the Quraish, their explanation of it, and the return of the migrants from Ḥabash—combined to evolve that story. So much so that some authentic people were also deluded by it, for to err is human, and the pious and intelligent people are no exception to it. However, the error of the latter proves to be more harmful, because their credulous followers

accept with closed eyes their misconceptions along with their right conclusions. On the other hand, mischief mongers collect all such errors of the righteous people and exploit them to prove that all the collections of Traditions are false and should be rejected forthwith.

102. The epithet "barren" has been applied to the "day" in its metaphorical and not literal sense. A "day" is barren if all the plans, hopes and devices remain unproductive in it, or it does not bring forth its night. For instance, the days on which the people of Prophet Noah, the tribes of 'Ād and Thamūd, the people of Lot and of Midian met with their destruction by scourge from Allah, were barren days in this sense, because those days did not bring forth any "tomorrow" for them, and no device of theirs could avert their doom.

103. As Allah is All-Knowing, He knows well those who left their homes for His sakĕ and what reward they deserve. He is Clement, and forgives minor errors and weaknesses of the people; therefore these things will not hinder Him from rewarding the Believers for their services and sacrifices.

104. The preceding verses referred to those persecuted people who could not retaliate and here the reference is to those victims of persecution who could fight back.

From this verse, Imām Shāfi'ī has concluded that "retaliation" will be effected in the way as life was taken in the original act. If a person is killed by immersion in water, the killer also should be put to death by immersion in water; or if a person is burnt to death, the killer also will be burnt to death. The Hanafites dispute this. According to them, retaliation against a murderer will be incurred in one and the same established way no matter how life was taken by the culprit in the originat act.

105. This verse (60) may imply two things:

(1) Allah forgives that "killing" which is done in self-defence, though killing of people is not a good thing in itself.

(2) As Allah, Whose slaves the Believers are, is Forgiving and Forbearing, they should also forgive and forbear as far as possible. Though they have the right of retaliation, they should not resort to carnage and massacre.

106. "So it is" (as stated in the preceding paragraph) because Allah is the Ruler of the universe and has the power to give punishments and rewards to those who deserve them.

107. The fact that "Allah brings forth .....day" is a proof that He is the Master, Sovereign and Ruler of the universe. But the deeper meaning of the verse is that Allah, Who is able to bring forth the light of the day out of the

[Contd. on p. 226

مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَالْفُلْكَ تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ ۚ وَيُمْسِكُ السَّمَاءَ أَنْ تَقَعَ عَلَى
الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ
يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ ﴿٦٦﴾ لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنْسَكًا هُمْ نَاسِكُوهُ
فَلَا يُنَازِعُنَّكَ فِي الْأَمْرِ وَادْعُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ ۖ إِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ هُدًى مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَإِنْ
جَادَلُوكَ فَقُلِ اللَّهُ أَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ اللَّهُ يَحْكُمُ بَيْنَكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ فِيمَا
كُنْتُمْ فِيهِ تَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۗ إِنَّ
ذَٰلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ ۚ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَيَعْبُدُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَا لَمْ
يُنَزِّلْ بِهِ سُلْطَانًا وَمَا لَيْسَ لَهُمْ بِهِ عِلْمٌ ۗ وَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِنْ نَصِيرٍ ﴿٧١﴾ وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ
عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ تَعْرِفُ فِي وُجُوهِ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا الْمُنْكَرَ ۖ يَكَادُونَ يَسْطُونَ
بِالَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ آيَاتِنَا ۗ قُلْ أَفَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِشَرٍّ مِنْ ذَٰلِكُمُ ۗ النَّارُ ۖ وَعَدَهَا اللَّهُ
الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۖ وَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿٧٢﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ضُرِبَ مَثَلٌ فَاسْتَمِعُوا لَهُ ۚ إِنَّ
الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَنْ يَخْلُقُوا ذُبَابًا وَلَوِ اجْتَمَعُوا لَهُ ۖ وَإِنْ
يَسْلُبْهُمُ الذُّبَابُ شَيْئًا لَا يَسْتَنْقِذُوهُ مِنْهُ ۚ ضَعُفَ الطَّالِبُ وَالْمَطْلُوبُ ﴿٧٣﴾ مَا
قَدَرُوا اللَّهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ﴿٧٤﴾ اللَّهُ يَصْطَفِي مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ
رُسُلًا وَمِنَ النَّاسِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٧٥﴾ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ ۗ وَ
إِلَى اللَّهِ تُرْجَعُ الْأُمُورُ ﴿٧٦﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا ارْكَعُوا وَاسْجُدُوا وَاعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمْ وَ
افْعَلُوا الْخَيْرَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ ۚ هُوَ اجْتَبَاكُمْ
وَمَا جَعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ مِنْ حَرَجٍ ۚ مِلَّةَ أَبِيكُمْ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ۚ هُوَ سَمَّاكُمُ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ۙ
مِنْ قَبْلُ وَفِي هَٰذَا لِيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْكُمْ وَتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ

السجدة

Do you not see that He has subdued to you all that is in the earth and that He has subjected the boat to the law that she floats over the sea at His bidding, and He is supporting the sky in a way that it cannot fall down without His permission ?[113] The fact of the matter is that Allah is very Kind and Merciful to the people. He it is Who has given you life and causes your death, and He will again bring you to life; yet Man denies the Truth.[114] 65-66

For every community[115] We have prescribed a way of worship,[116] which it follows; therefore, O Muhammad, let them not dispute with you concerning this matter.[117] And invite the people to the Way of your Lord, for you are on the Straight Way.[118] And if they dispute with you, say to them, "Allah knows full well what you are doing: on the Day of Resurrection, Allah will judge between you concerning that about which you differ". Do you not know that Allah has full knowledge of everything in the heavens and the earth ? Every thing has been recorded in a Book; this is an easy thing for Allah.[119] 67-70

They worship, besides Allah, those for whom He has sent down no authority nor they themselves have any knowledge about them.[120] Such transgressors have no helper.[121] And when Our clear Revelations are recited to them, you perceive signs of disdain in the faces of the disbelievers as though they were going to assault those who recite Our Revelations to them. Say to them, "May I inform you of a thing worse than this?[122] It is the Fire which Allah has promised for those who reject the Truth; and what an evil abode it is !" 71-72

O mankind! A parable is related to you: so listen to it. The deities, whom you invoke instead of Allah, cannot create a fly even though they may all combine together for this purpose. Nay ! if a fly snatches away something from them, they cannot get it back from it. How weak are the suppliants and how weak those whom they supplicate.[123] They do not recognize the true worth of Allah as they should: the fact is that Allah alone is All-Mighty, All-Powerful. 73-74

Allah chooses His Messengers from among the angels and also from among the human beings (to convey His decrees).[124] He hears everything and knows everything. He knows whatever is open before them as well as that which is hidden from them,[125] and all matters are presented before Him.[126] 75-76

77-78 O people, who have believed, bow down and prostrate yourselves before Allah, worship your Lord and do righteous deeds: it may be that you attain true success.[127] Exert your utmost for the cause of Allah as one should.[128] He has chosen you for His service[129] and has not laid on you any hardship in your religion.[130] Therefore, be steadfast in the religion of your father Abraham.[131] Allah had called you "Muslims" before this and has called you[132] (by the same name) in this (Qur'ān) also so that the Messenger may be a witness in regard to you and you may be witnesses in regard to the rest of mankind.[133]

Contd. from p.223]

darkness of the night, has the power to bring out the light of the Truth out of the darkness of disbelief and ignorance, and the light of justice out of the darkness of tyranny.

108. He hears everything and sees everything and is not unaware of anything.

109. As Allah is in fact the Sovereign of the universe, His worshippers will surely attain true success and the worshippers of false gods will meet with utter failure.

110. This verse has a deeper meaning also, though apparently it merely declares that Allah alone has the power to send down rain which makes the land green. The deeper meaning is that the rainfall of the blessed Revelation will, in the near future, turn the barren land of Arabia into a garden of knowledge, morality and bring forth a high and righteous civilization.

111. The original word *Latīf* in the Text has no equivalent in English. The word "subtle" has not been used because of its bad associations. *Latīf* implies that Allah fulfils His designs in such fine ways that it is difficult to understand them till they become real and apparent.

As He is fully aware of everything, He knows how to conduct the affairs of His Kingdom.

112. He alone is "All-Sufficient" and does not stand in need of anyone in any way. He is "All-praiseworthy" because all praise belongs to Him alone whether anyone praises Him or not.

113. Here "the sky" implies the whole of the universe above and below the earth where everything is held in its own place and sphere.

114. That is, "Though man sees every reality presented by the Prophets, yet he denies it".

115. That is, "The Community of every Prophet".

116. Here the Arabic word *mansak* has been used in its most comprehensive sense which also includes "sacrifice" (v. 34). It means service, worship, in short, "the whole way of life". The same theme has been expressed in V: 48: "We prescribed a law and a way of life for each of you".

117. That is, "Now you have brought a way of life just as the former Prophets brought "ways of life" for their people. Therefore the people have no right to dispute with you concerning the "Law" you have brought".

118. This confirms the explanation given in E.N. 117 above.

119. In order to understand the significance of this paragraph, we should keep in view vv. 55-57 with which this is connected.

120. That is, "Neither there is any mention of their deities in any revealed Book nor have they any other source of knowledge about them nor any authority to worship them. Therefore, it is sheer ignorance that they have associated their self-invented deities with Allah and worship them, make vows and offer sacrifices to them and supplicate them for their needs etc. This is to warn the foolish people that they are absolutely wrong in expecting that their deities would help them in this world and in the Hereafter? because they have no power to help them. Thus, they will find no helper, for Allah alone could help them and they have already displeased Him by their rebellious behaviour.

122. That is, "You will meet with a far worse state of anguish than that which you display against those who recite Divine Revelations to you.

123. This parable has been cited to impress upon the idol-worshippers that their deities are absolutely powerless, for even if they all collaborated to create an insignificant thing like a fly, they could not; nay, even if a fly snatched away anything from them they could not prevent it. This shows how weak they themselves are and how powerless are the idols they supplicate.

124. In continuation of the refutation of *shirk*, Allah has taken two kinds of the most revered of "deities" to show their real status, as if to say, "The angels and the Prophets whom you have set up as deities are mere Messengers of Allah. Allah has chosen them to convey His Messages to human beings and this does not make them God or partners in His Godhead."

125. The Qur'ān employs this sentence to refute the creed of the *mushriks* in regard to intercession, as if to say, "You imagine that angels, prophets, saints,

and the like can intercede with Allah on your behalf and therefore you worship them. You are absolutely wrong, for none of your deities knows what is good for you and what is not: Allah alone hears everything, sees everything and knows everything. Therefore He has not given the right of intercession and recommendation to anyone except when He Himself is pleased to give such permission."

126. This is to impress upon them that every affair and every matter, big or small, is presented before Allah for a decision. Therefore you should not invoke anyone else than Allah, for all others are utterly helpless and powerless and cannot even fulfil their own desires and needs.

127. This is the right way of attaining true success, but even after adopting these ways of worship and performing good deeds one should not rest content or be proud that he would surely attain success because he is worshipping Allah and is doing good deeds. He should only expect that Allah will by His grace accept his services and bless him with true success.

Imām Shāfi'ī, Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, 'Abdullāh bin Mubārak and Isḥāq bin Rāhawayah hold the view that this verse of Sūrah Al-Ḥajj requires a 'prostration'. But Imām 'Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Mālik, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Sa'īd bin al-Musayyab, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī and Sufyān Thaurī dispute this. The arguments of the two sides are briefly as follows:

The former group of commentators base their opinion on the following:

(1) The verb in the verse is in the imperative mood.

(2) The Tradition of 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir, which has been reported by Imām Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, Tirmizī, Ibn Mardūyah and Baihaqi, says, "I asked, 'O Messenger of Allah ! Does the merit of Sūrah Al-Ḥajj consist in the fact that it contains two verses requiring prostration?' He replied, 'Yes, the one who does not prostrate on these two verses, should not recite them.' "

(3) The Tradition of Abū Dāwūd and Ibn Mājah in which 'Amr bin 'Āṣ says that he was told by the Holy Prophet that there were two verses requiring prostration in Sūrah Al-Ḥajj.

(4) Sayings of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, 'Alī, 'Uthmān, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās, Abul Dardā, Abū Mūsā Ash'arī and 'Ammār bin Yāsir to the effect that Sūrah Al-Ḥajj contains two prostrations.

The latter group of commentators argue as follows;

(1) The verse contains a command both for *Sajdah* (prostration) and for *Rukū'* (bowing in prayer), which implies the whole Islamic Prayer according to the Qur'ānic usage, and not 'prostration' alone.

(2) The tradition reported by 'Uqbah bin 'Āmir is unauthentic as it has weak links.

(3) The Tradition of 'Amr bin 'Āṣ is also unreliable, because its reporters are not well known.

(4) As for the sayings of the Companions, Ibn 'Abbās has clearly explained that prostration in respect of the first verse (in Sūrah Al-Ḥajj) is obligatory, whereas in regard to the second, it is only suggestive.

128. The Arabic word *Jihād* is very comprehensive. It includes every kind of effort, exertion, conflict and war. *Jihād* for the cause of Allah means that it should be performed for His service and for His approval against those who prevent others from following His Way. The performance of *Jihād* also requires that one should first of all fight against one's own self in order to subdue it. For there can be no true *Jihād* unless one fights against one's evil self and subdues one's desires and lusts to the obedience of Allah. The Holy Prophet himself has emphasized the need for this *Jihād*. Once when the warriors for the cause of Allah returned from *Jihād*, he said: "You have returned from the lesser *Jihād* to the greater *Jihād*." They asked, "What is that greater *Jihād*?" The Holy Prophet replied, "It is the *Jihād* against one's own desires and lusts."

Moreover, the battlefield for *Jihād* is, in fact, the whole world, and Islam demands that one should exert one's utmost against all the rebels of Allah and the wicked powers with all of one's heart and mind and body and wealth.

129. The direct addressees of this were the Companions of the Holy Prophet, for they were the first who had the honour to be chosen for this service; others have been addressed only indirectly being their followers. This thing has been mentioned in the Qur'an in other ways as well. For reference, see II: 143 and III: 110.

130. ".....(Allah) has not laid on you any hardship in your religion." That is, "The creed you have been given is very simple and straightforward and the laws and regulations you have to obey are practicable. You are free within its bounds to make as much progress as you can." This was to impress that the lives of the Muslims were free from all those useless and unnatural restrictions which had been imposed upon the former communities by their priests and law-givers. The negative aspect of the same thing has been mentioned in VII: 157: "... He enjoins them to follow virtue and forbids them from evil: He makes pure things lawful for them and impure things unlawful. He relieves them of their burdens and frees them from the shackles that bound them."

131. Though Islam may be called the religion of Prophets Noah, Moses, Jesus, etc., yet the Qur'ān emphasizes over and over again that it is the religion of

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فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ وَاعْتَصِمُوا بِاللّٰهِ هُوَ مَوْلٰىكُمْ فَنِعْمَ الْمَوْلٰى وَنِعْمَ النَّصِيرُ ﴿٧٨﴾

78 Therefore, establish Ṣalāt and pay the Zakāt dues, and hold fast to Allah,[134] for He is your Guardian: What an excellent Guardian and what an excellent Helper!

Prophet Abraham. Therefore, "You should follow it." This is for three reasons:

(1) The first addressees of the Qur'ān were the Arabs who were more familiar with Prophet Abraham than with any other Prophet and acknowledged him to be a holy personage and their leader.

(2) Prophet Abraham alone was the person whom the Jews, the Christians, the Muslims and the *mushriks* of Arabia and of the adjoining countries unanimously acknowledged as a great Prophet.

(3) When the Qur'ān invites all these communities to follow the way of Abraham, it in fact, admonishes them that all their religions had been invented long after Prophet Abraham and, therefore, were not trustworthy because they contradicted many things taught by him. As for the *mushriks* of Arabia, they also acknowledged that idol-worship among them had been started by 'Amr bin Luhayy, who was a leader of Banī Khuzā'ah, and had brought an idol, called Hubal, from Moab in about 600 B.C. So the religion to which Prophet Muḥammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) invited them was the same pure, un-adulterated religion which was taught by Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him).

For further details, see E.N.'s 134, 135 of Chapter II (Al-Baqarah) and E.N.'s 58, 79 of Chapter III (Āl-'Imrān) and E.N.'s 119, 120 of Chapter XVI (An-Naḥl)

132. Here the word "you" has not been addressed exclusively to those Believers who lived at the time of the revelation of this verse, or those who believed after its revelation. It includes all those human beings, who, from the beginning of human history, believed in *Tauḥīd*, the Hereafter, Prophethood and the Divine Books. They were not "Jews", "Christians", etc., but "Muslims" in the sense that they had surrendered themselves to Allah. Likewise the followers of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) are not Muḥammadens but "Muslims".

133. For Explanation, see E. N. 144 of Chapter II (Al-Baqarah).

134. ".... hold fast to Allah": Follow exclusively the Guidance and the law of Allah: obey Him alone: fear Him and have all your hopes and expectations in Him: invoke Him alone for help: trust in Him and pray to Him for all your needs.



XXIII

AL-MU'MINŪN

المؤمنون

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXIII
AL-MU'MINŪN

المؤمنون

INTRODUCTION

Name.

The Sūrah takes its name, Al-Mu'minūn, from the first verse.

Period of Revelation.

Both its style and theme indicate that it was revealed during the middle stage of Prophethood at Makkah. Reading between the lines, one feels that a bitter conflict had begun between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers of Makkah, though the persecution by them had not yet become tyrannical. It appears that the Sūrah was sent down during the climax of the "Famine" in Makkah (vv. 75-76), which according to authentic traditions occurred during the middle stage of Prophethood. Moreover, according to a tradition related by 'Urwah bin Zubair, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar who had embraced Islam by that time, said, "This Sūrah was revealed in my presence and I myself observed the state of the Holy Prophet during its revelation. When the revelation ended, the Holy Prophet remarked, 'On this occasion ten such verses have been sent down to me that the one who measures up to them, will most surely go to Paradise'. Then he recited the initial verses of the Sūrah." (Aḥmad, Tirmizi, Nasā'ī, Ḥākim).

Theme and Topics.

The central theme of the Sūrah is to invite the people to accept and follow the Message of the Holy Prophet and the whole Sūrah revolves round this theme.

SUMMARY

1-11 The fact that the people who have accepted the Message of the Holy Prophet have started acquiring such and such noble qualities of character is a practical proof of the truth of the Message.

12-22 In this passage, attention has been drawn to the creation of man and the universe to impress that the whole universe including man's own self, is a clear proof of the truth of the Holy Prophet's Message, which invites the people to accept *Tauhid* and life in the Hereafter.

23-54 Then the stories of the former Prophets and their communities have been cited as historical evidences of the truth of the Message. They prove the following things:

(a) The objections and the doubts that the antagonists are raising against the Message of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) are not new. These were raised against the former Prophets also whom they themselves acknowledged as Messengers of Allah. Therefore they should learn a lesson from their history and judge for themselves whether the Prophets were in the right or their objectors.

(b) The Message of *Tauhid* and the Hereafter that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) is conveying is the same as was brought by the former Prophets; therefore they should accept it.

(c) They should take a warning from the consequences met by those communities who rejected the Message of their Prophets.

(d) All the Prophets brought one and the same religion from Allah and they all belonged to one and the same community. All other religions were invented by the people themselves and none of them is from Allah.

55-67 After relating the stories of the Prophets, a fundamental principle has been enunciated: Success and prosperity in the worldly life is not a criterion of success in the sight of Allah. If some persons (or a person) are enjoying prosperity, wealth, power and the like in this world, it does not mean that they are the favourites of Allah. Likewise, the poverty and adversity of other people is not a proof that Allah is displeased with them. The real criterion is Faith (or lack of it) and piety

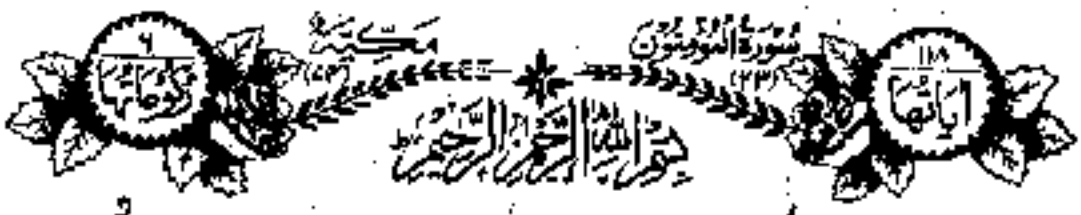
(or lack of it). This declaration was needed because the antagonists of the Holy Prophet were the great chiefs of Makkah, who (and their followers) were deluded by their own prosperity that God and their deities were well pleased with them. On the other hand, they argued, the fact that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and his followers were indigent and in a state of helplessness, was a clear proof that Allah was not pleased with them, and they were under the curse of their deities.

In this passage different arguments have been used to convince them that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was a true Prophet of Allah. Then they have been told that the Famine (vv. 75-76) was merely a warning and therefore "it is better for you to mend your ways; otherwise you will be visited by a terrible scourge". 68-77

Again they have been invited to observe the Signs in the universe and in their own selves because these are clear proofs of the truth of the Message of the Holy Prophet. 78-95

The Holy Prophet has been told not to adopt any wrong way in retaliation to counteract the evil ways of the enemies, and to guard against the incitement of Satan. 96-97

In this concluding passage, the enemies of the truth have been warned that they shall have to render an account in the Hereafter and bear the consequences of their persecution of the Believers: therefore they should mend their ways. 98-118



المؤمنون ١٨

هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُوْنَ ۝٣ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِلزَّكٰوةِ فٰعِلُوْنَ ۝٤ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ
لِفُرُوْجِهِمْ حٰفِظُوْنَ ۝٥ اِلَّا عَلٰٓى اَزْوَاجِهِمْ اَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُهُمْ فَاِنَّهُمْ
غَيْرُ مَلُوْمِيْنَ ۝٦ فَمَنِ ابْتَغٰى وَرَآءَ ذٰلِكَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْعٰدُوْنَ ۝٧ وَالَّذِيْنَ
هُمْ لِاَمٰنٰتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رٰعُوْنَ ۝٨ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَلٰى صَلَوٰتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُوْنَ ۝٩
اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْوٰرِثُوْنَ ۝١٠ الَّذِيْنَ يَرِثُوْنَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ ؕ هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ۝١١ وَ
لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ مِنْ سُلٰلَةٍ مِّنْ طِيْنٍ ۝١٢ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنٰهُ نُطْفَةً فِيْ قَرَارٍ
مَّكِيْنٍ ۝١٣ ثُمَّ خَلَقْنَا النُّطْفَةَ عَلَقَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْعَلَقَةَ مُضْغَةً فَخَلَقْنَا الْمُضْغَةَ
عِظٰمًا فَكَسَوْنَا الْعِظٰمَ لَحْمًا ۗ ثُمَّ اَنْشَاْنٰهُ خَلْقًا اٰخَرَ ؕ فَتَبٰرَكَ اللّٰهُ اَحْسَنُ
الْخٰلِقِيْنَ ۝١٤ ثُمَّ اِنَّكُمْ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ لَمَيِّتُوْنَ ۝١٥ ثُمَّ اِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ تُبْعَثُوْنَ ۝١٦
وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا فَوْقَكُمْ سَبْعَ طَرَآئِقَ ۖ وَمَا كُنَّا عَنِ الْخَلْقِ غٰفِلِيْنَ ۝١٧
وَاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءًۢ بِقَدَرٍ فَاَسْكَنّٰهُ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۖ وَاِنَّا عَلٰى ذَهَابٍ
بِهٖ لَقٰدِرُوْنَ ۝١٨ فَاَنْشَاْنَا لَكُمْ بِهٖ جَنّٰتٍ مِّنْ نَّخِيْلٍ وَّاَعْنَابٍ لَّكُمْ
فِيْهَا فَوَاكِهُ كَثِيْرَةٌ وَّمِنْهَا تَاْكُلُوْنَ ۝١٩ وَشَجَرَةً تَخْرُجُ مِنْ طُوْرِ سَيْنَآءَ
تَنْۢبُتُ بِالدُّهْنِ وَصِبْغٍ لِّلْاٰكِلِيْنَ ۝٢٠ وَاِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْاَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً ؕ
نُسْقِيْكُمْ مِّمَّا فِيْ بُطُوْنِهَا وَلَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَنَافِعُ كَثِيْرَةٌ وَّمِنْهَا تَاْكُلُوْنَ ۝٢١

وقف لازم
وقف لازم

XXIII
AL-MU'MINŪN
المؤمنون

Verses: 118

Revealed at Makkah

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

Most certainly those Believers have attained true success,[1] who[2] perform their Ṣalāt with humility:[3] who refrain from vain things:[4] who spend their Zakāt dues in appropriate ways:[5] who guard their private parts scrupulously,[6] except with regard to their wives and those women who are legally in their possession, for in that case they shall not be blame-worthy, but those, who go beyond this (in lust for sexual desires), shall be transgressors:[7] who are true to their trusts and their promises:[8] and who strictly guard their Prayers.[9] These are the heirs who will inherit Paradise[10] and dwell therein for ever.[11] 1-11

We created man from an essence of clay: then turned him into a sperm-drop in a safe place: then changed the sperm drop into a clot of blood and the clot into a piece of flesh: then turned the piece of flesh into bones: then clothed the bones with flesh:[12] and then brought him forth as quite a different creation (from the embryo).[13] So blessed is Allah, the best of all creators.[14] Then after this you shall all die: then most surely you shall be raised up on the Day of Resurrection. 12-16

And We have made seven paths above you :[15] We were not novice in the art of creation.[16] And We sent down rain from the sky in due measure and lodged it in the earth :[17] and We are able to take it away as We will.[18] Then with that rain We caused vine-yards and palm-groves to spring up. In those gardens there are delicious fruits[19] from which you obtain sustenance.[20] And We created the tree which grows on Mount Sinai:[21] it gives oil and is used as food also by those who like to eat it. 17-20

In fact, there is a lesson for you in the cattle: We give you as a 21-22

drink of that which is in their bellies,[22] and besides this you get other benefits from them: you eat their flesh and are carried from place to place on them and on ships.[23]

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1. "Believers", who have attained true success, are those who have accepted the Message of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), and have acknowledged him as their guide and followed the way of life taught by him.

This assertion cannot be fully appreciated unless one keeps in view the background in which it was made. On the one hand, there were the well-to-do and prosperous chiefs of Makkah, the opponents of Islam, whose business was thriving and who were enjoying every good thing of life, and on the other hand, there were the followers of Islam majority of whom were either poor from the beginning, or had been reduced to poverty by ruthless antagonism to Islam. Therefore, the assertion, "Most certainly the Believers have attained true success", with which the discourse begins, was meant to tell the disbelievers that the criterion of success and failure that they had in mind was not correct. It was based on misconceptions besides being transitory and limited in nature: it led to failure and not true success. On the contrary, the followers of Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), whom they regarded as failures, were truly successful, because by accepting the invitation to the Right Guidance given by the Messenger of Allah, they had struck a bargain which would lead them to true success and everlasting bliss in this world as well as in the Hereafter, whereas by rejecting the Message the opponents had incurred loss and would meet with the evil consequences both in this world and in the next.

This is the main theme of the Sūrah and the whole discourse, from the beginning to the end, is meant to impress the same.

2. The noble characteristics of the Believers pointed out in vv. 2-9 are the arguments to prove the above assertion. In other words, it has been stated that people with such and such traits and qualities only can attain true success in this world and in the Hereafter.

3. *Khāshi'ūn* in the Text is from *khushū'* (to bow down, to express humility) which is a condition of the heart as well as of the body. *Khushū'* of the heart is to fear and stand in awe of a powerful person, and *khushū'* of the body is to bow one's head and lower one's gaze and voice in his presence. In *Ṣalāt* one is required to show *khushū'* both of the heart and of the body, and this is the essence of the Prayer. It has been reported that when the Holy Prophet once saw a person offering his Prayer as well as playing with his beard, he remarked: "Had he *khushū'* in his heart, his body would have manifested it."

Though *khushū'* is actually a condition of the heart, as stated by the above tradition, it is manifested by the body as a matter of course. The *Shari'ah* has

enjoined certain etiquette which, on the one hand, helps produce *khushū'* in the heart, and on the other, helps sustain the physical act of the Prayer in spite of the fluctuating condition of the heart. According to this etiquette, one should neither turn to the right or left, nor raise one's head to look up: one may, however, look around from the corner of the eye, but as far as possible, one must fix the gaze on the place where the forehead would rest in prostration; one is also forbidden to shift about, incline side ways, fold the garments or shake off dust from them. It is also forbidden that while going down for prostration, one should clean the place where one would sit or perform prostration. Similarly it is disrespectful that one should stand stuffy erect, recite the verses of the Qur'ān in a loud resounding voice, or sing them, or belch or yawn repeatedly and noisily. It has also not been approved that one should offer the Prayer in a hurry. The injunction is that each article of the Prayer should be performed in perfect peace and tranquillity, and unless one article has been completely performed, the next should not be begun. If one feels hurt by something during the Prayer, one may cast it aside by one hand, but moving the hand repeatedly or using both the hands for the purpose is prohibited.

Along with this etiquette of the body, it is also important that one should avoid thinking irrelevant things during the Prayer. If thoughts come to the mind without one's intention, it is a natural human weakness, but one should try one's utmost that the mind and heart are wholly turned towards Allah, and the mind is in full harmony and tune with the tongue, and as soon as one becomes conscious of irrelevant thoughts one should immediately turn the attention to the Prayer.

4. Literally, *laghv* is anything nonsensical, meaningless and vain, which is in no way conducive to achieving one's goal and purpose in life. The Believers pay no heed to such useless things and they show no inclination or interest for them. If by chance they see such things being indulged in, they keep away and avoid them scrupulously, or treat them with utmost indifference. This attitude has been described in Al-Furqān (XXV): 72, thus: " ... if they have to pass by what is vain, they pass by like dignified people."

This is indeed one of the outstanding characteristics of the Believer. He is a person who feels the burden of responsibility at all times; he regards the world as a place of test, and the life as the limited time allowed for the test. This feeling makes him behave seriously and responsibly throughout life just like the student who is taking an examination paper with his whole mind and body and soul absorbed in it. Just as the student knows and feels that each moment of the limited time at his disposal is important and decisive for his future life, and is not inclined to waste it, so the Believer also spends each moment of his life on works which are useful and productive in their ultimate results. So much so that even in matters of

recreation and sport, he makes a choice of only those things which prepare him for higher ends in life and do not result in mere wastage of time. For him time is not something to be killed but used profitably and productively.

Besides this, the Believer is a person who possesses a right thinking mind, pure nature and fine taste: he has no inclination to indecent things: he can talk useful and healthy things but cannot indulge in idle talk: he has a fine taste of humour, but is not given to jesting, joking, ridicule, etc. nor can he endure dirty jokes and fun. For him a society in which the ears are never immune from abusive language, back-biting, slander, lying, dirty songs and indecent talk is a source of torture and agony. A characteristic of the promised Paradise is: " . . therein you will not hear anything vain or useless."

5. The word *Zakāt* literally means purification and development—to help something grow up smoothly and develop without obstruction. As an Islamic term, it implies both the portion of wealth taken out for the purpose of purifying the rest of wealth and the act of purification itself. The words of the original Text mean that the Believer constantly practises purification. Thus the meaning is not confined to the paying off of *Zakāt* dues only but it is extended to self-purification which includes purification of morals as well as wealth, property and life in general. Then it does not mean purification of one's own self, but includes the purification of the lives of other people as well. So the verse means: "The Believers are the people who purify themselves as well as others." This thing has been stated at other places in the Qur'ān also, for instance: "Successful is he who practised purification and remembered his Lord and prayed." (LXXXVII: 14-15), and: "Successful is he who purified himself and failure is he who corrupted it." (XCI: 9-10). But this verse is more comprehensive in meaning because it stresses the purification of both society and one's own person.

6. They are modest in every sense of the word. They are free from sex abuse and sex perversion. They are so modest that they even conceal those parts of their bodies which the Law forbids to expose before others. For explanation, see E.N.'s 30 and 32 of An-Nūr (XXIV).

7. This is a parenthesis which is meant to remove the common misunderstanding that sex desire is an evil thing in itself and satisfying it even in lawful ways is not desirable, particularly for the righteous and godly people. This misunderstanding would have been strengthened had it been only said that the Believers guard their private parts scrupulously, because it would have implied that they live unmarried lives, away from the world, like monks and hermits. Therefore a parenthesis has been added to say that there is nothing wrong in satisfying the sex desire in lawful ways. What is evil is that one should transgress the prescribed limits for satisfying the sex desire.

Here are briefly a few injunctions which are based on this parenthetical clause:

(1) Two categories of women have been excluded from the general command of guarding the private parts: (a) wives, (b) women who are legally in one's possession, *i.e.* slave-girls. Thus the verse clearly lays down the law that one is allowed to have sexual relations with one's slave-girl as with one's wife, the basis being possession and not marriage. If marriage had been the condition, the slave-girl also would have been included among the wives, and there was no need to mention them separately. Some modern commentators, who dispute the permissibility of having sexual relations with the slave-girl, argue from An-Nisā' (IV) : 25 to prove that one can have sexual relations with a slave-girl only after entering wedlock with her, because that verse enjoins that if a person cannot afford to marry a free Muslim woman, he may marry a Muslim slave-girl. But these commentators have a strange characteristic: they accept a part of a verse if it suits them, but conveniently ignore another part of the same verse if it goes against their wish and whim. The law about marrying the slave-girls as enunciated in IV :25 reads: "....you may marry them with the permission of their guardians and give them their fair dowries." Obviously the person under reference here is not the master of the slave girl himself but the person who cannot afford to marry a free Muslim woman, and therefore wants to marry a slave-girl, who is in the possession of another person. For if the question had been of marrying one's own slave-girl, who would then be the "guardian" whose permission would have to be sought? Then, the interpretation they give of this verse contradicts other verses dealing with the same subject in the Qur'ān. A sincere person, who wants to understand the Qur'ānic law in this regard should study An-Nisā' (IV): 3, 25; Al-Aḥzāb (XXXIII): 50, 52, and Al-Ma'ārij (LXX): 30 together with this verse of Al-Mu'minūn. (For further explanation, see E.N. 44 of An-Nisā).

(2) The law prescribed in the parenthesis is only applicable to men as is clear from the Text. A woman in the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar did not understand this fine point of the language and indulged in sexual gratification with her slave. When her case was brought before the consultative body of the Companions, they gave the unanimous decision: "She misinterpreted the Book of Allah" Nobody should entertain the doubt that if this exception is meant for the men only, how could then the husbands become lawful for the wives? This doubt is unjustified because when the husbands are exempted from the command of guarding their private parts in regard to their wives, the wives automatically stand exempted from the command with regard to their husbands, and there is no need to grant them exemption separately. Thus the command of exemption remains applicable and effective only in respect of the man and the woman

legally in his possession, and the slave becomes unlawful for the woman possessing him. The wisdom of why the slave has been forbidden to the woman is that he can only statisfy her sexual desire but cannot become guardian and governor of herself and her household, which leaves a serious flaw in the family life.

(3) The sentence ".... but those who go beyond this (in lust for sexual desire), shall be transgressors" has made satisfaction of sex desire in other ways unlawful, whether it be through fornication, homosexuality, sex gratification with animals, or some other means. The jurists differ only with regard to masturbation. Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal regards it as lawful, but Imāms Mālik and Shāfi'ī regard it as absolutely unlawful: and though the Ḥanafites also regard it as unlawful, they give the opinion that if a person indulges sometimes in masturbation under the fit of passion, it is expected that he will be forgiven the error.

(4) Some commentators have proved the prohibition of *Mut'ah* (temporary marriage) from this verse. They argue that the "woman with whom one has entered into wedlock temporarily, can neither be regarded as a wife nor a slave-girl. A slave-girl obviously she is not, and she is also not a wife, because the legal injunctions normally applicable to the wife are not applicable to her. She neither inherits the man nor the man her; she is neither governed by the law pertaining to *'Iddah* (waiting period after divorce or death of husband), divorce, subsistence, nor by that pertaining to the vow by man that he will not have conjugal relations with her, false accusation, etc. She is also excluded from the prescribed limit of four wives. Thus, when she is neither a "wife" nor a "slave-girl" in any sense, she will naturally be included among those "beyond this", whose seeker has been declared a "transgressor" by the Qur'ān.

This is a strong argument but due to a weakness in it, it is difficult to say that this verse is decisive with regard to the prohibition of *Mut'ah*. The fact is that the Holy Prophet enjoined the final and absolute prohibition of *Mut'ah* in the year of the conquest of Makkah, but before it *Mut'ah* was allowed according to several authentic traditions. If *Mut'ah* had been prohibited in this verse, which was admittedly revealed at Makkah, several years before the migration, how can it be imagined that the Holy Prophet kept the prohibition in abeyance till the conquest of Makkah? The correct position therefore is that prohibition of *Mut'ah* is not based on any express law of the Qur'ān but is based on the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet. Had it not been prohibited by the *Sunnah*, it would have been difficult to declare it as prohibited only on the authority of this verse.

It would be worth-while to clarify two other points in connection with *Mut'ah*:

(a) Its prohibition is based on the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet and therefore it is wrong to say that it was prohibited by Ḥaḍrat 'Umar. As a matter of fact, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar only enforced it as a law of Islam and publicised it among the people. This had not been done earlier because the Holy Prophet had forbidden *Mut'ah* only during the latter part of his worldly life.

(b) The Shi'ite view that *Mut'ah* is absolutely lawful and permissible has no sanction and support in the Qur'ān or *Sunnah*. The fact is that a few of the Companions, their followers and jurists who regarded it permissible in the early days of Islam, did so only in case of extreme necessity and need. None of them held the view that it was absolutely lawful like marriage and could be practised in normal circumstances. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, who is generally cited as a prominent supporter of the view of permissibility, has himself explained his position thus: "It is just like carrion which is lawful for a person only in extreme necessity." Even Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās had to revise his opinion when he saw that people were abusing permissibility and had started practising *Mut'ah* freely regardless of genuine need and necessity. Again, even if the question, whether Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās and the few like-minded jurists had revised their opinion or not, is ignored, the fact is that the supporters of *Mut'ah* allow it only in case of extreme necessity. Holding *Mut'ah* as absolutely permissible, practising it without any real necessity, or resorting to it even when one has a legally wedded wife or wives is a kind of licence which is abhorred by good taste, much less it be attributed to the *Sharī'ah* of Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) and imputed to the learned jurists of his family. I think that among the Shi'ite Muslims themselves no respectable person would like that somebody should ask for the hand of his daughter or sister not in marriage but for the purpose of *Mut'ah*. For if *Mut'ah* is held as absolutely permissible, it would imply that there should exist in society a low class of women, like the prostitutes, who should be available for the purpose as and when required, or if not that, *Mut'ah* be restricted to the daughters and sisters of the poor stratum of society and the well-to-do be given the freedom and right to exploit them as and when they like. Can such an injustice and discrimination be expected of the Divine Law? And will Allah and His Messenger permit an act which every respectable woman would regard not only disgraceful for herself but shameful, too?

8. The Believers fulfil the terms of the trusts which are placed in their charge. In this connection it should be noted that the Arabic word *amānāt* is very comprehensive and includes all those trusts which are placed in their charge by Allah or society or individuals. Likewise *'ahd* includes all those compacts, pledges, and promises which are made between Allah and man, and man and man. The Holy Prophet himself used to impress the importance of the fulfilment of pledges in his addresses: "The one, who does not fulfil the terms of his trust, has

no Faith, and the one, who does not keep promises and pledges has no Islam." (Baihaqī) According to a Tradition reported both by Bukhārī and Muslim, he said: Four characteristics are such that if a person has all the four in him, he is beyond any doubt a hypocrite, and the one who has one of these, is a hypocrite to that extent till he gives it up:

(a) When something is placed in his trust, he commits breach of the trust, (b) when he speaks, he tells a lie, (c) when he makes a promise, he breaks it, and, (d) when he has a quarrel with somebody, he exceeds all limits (of decency and morality)"

9. *Ṣalawāt* is plural of *Ṣalāt*. In verse 2 the act of *Ṣalāt* itself was implied, but here the plural number implies the individual Prayers offered in their own times. "They strictly guard their Prayers": they strictly adhere to the prescribed times of the Prayers: they perform them with due regard for their pre-requisites, conditions and articles with clean body and dress and necessary ablutions: they do not regard their Prayers as an unnecessary burden, which has to be cast off somehow: they do not recite mechanically but understand what they recite and are conscious that they are supplicating their Lord like humble servants.

10. *Firdaus* (Paradise) is a common word found in almost all human languages in very nearly similar forms. It means a vast garden adjoining the dwelling of a person and enclosed by defence walls and containing all kinds of fruit trees, especially vines. In some languages, the word has the sense of containing pet birds and animals, too. *Firdaus* was in common use in pre-Islamic Arabic literature. The Qur'ān, however, has used it for a plurality of gardens as in Al-Kahf (XVIII) :107. This gives the idea that *Firdaus* is a vast place containing a great number of gardens, vineyards, etc.

The inheritance of Paradise by Believers has been explained in detail in E.N. 83 of Sūrah Ṭā Hā (XX) and E.N. 99 of Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' (XXI).

11. The substance of this passage may be summed up in four parts for the further understanding of the Sūrah:

(1) The above-mentioned excellent qualities of the Believers are not confined to any race, nation or country.

(2) These excellences can be attained only by sincere Faith and excellent moral qualities, and by the observance of prescribed laws in all the aspects of life.

(3) True success is not confined to transitory worldly and material prosperity but it comprises both success in this life and in the life after death in the Hereafter, and is attained by sincere Faith and righteous deeds. This is a fundamental principle which cannot be falsified either by the worldly

"success" of the evil-doers or by the temporary "failure" of the righteous people.

(4) Let us reiterate that these excellent characteristics of the Believers have been presented as a practical proof of the truth of the Message of the Holy Prophet, for these were the result of its acceptance. This should be kept in mind in the study of the succeeding passages, wherein the same subject has been pursued from different angles. This will also help to show the connection between this and the succeeding passages.

12. For explanation see E.N.'s 5, 6 and 9 of Sūrah Ḥajj (XXII).

13. Now let the disbelievers consider the Message of the Holy Prophet by observing their own creation, for this will convince them of its truth by proving its doctrine of *Tauḥīd*. The origin of man is from a mere inanimate sperm-drop, which undergoes several changes in the womb of the mother. But after this, when it sees the light of the day, it is quite a different creation from the embryo in the womb. Now it can hear, it can see, and in due course of time it can talk and think. Then, when he reaches adulthood and maturity, he is capable of performing wonderful deeds. It is obvious that Allah alone could create all these characteristics in an inanimate sperm-drop.

14. The various stages of the creation of man have been cited to prove that Allah is All-Blessed and there is no human language which can describe the praise of which He is worthy, as if to say, "That Allah Who is able to develop an essence of clay into a perfect man, does not have any partner in His Godhead. Moreover, He has the power to raise him up again after his death, and is capable of working even greater wonders."

15. The original Arabic word *ṭarā'iq* has more than one meaning. It may refer to the paths of the seven planets, with which the man of the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān was familiar, or to the seven heavens. It should be noted that this word has not been used as a modern scientific term, but as a common word according to the Arabic usage of the period in order to invite the people's attention to the wonders of the heavens, whose creation is certainly a greater thing than the creation of men. (XL: 57).

16. This may also be translated as: "We were not nor are heedless of Our creation." According to the first translation, it will mean that the whole of the creation has been brought about in a perfect manner with a definite design and purpose, for Allah—their Creator—is perfect in every respect. The creation itself

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وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا نُوْحًا اِلٰى قَوْمِهٖ فَقَالَ
يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ؕ اَفَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَقَالَ الْمَلَؤُا
الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْ قَوْمِهٖ مَا هٰذَاۤ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ ۙ يُرِيْدُ اَنْ يَّتَفَضَّلَ
عَلَيْكُمْ ؕ وَلَوْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ لَاَنْزَلَ مَلٰٓئِكَةً ۚ مَّا سَمِعْنَا بِهٰذَا فِيْۤ اٰبَآئِنَا الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾
اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا رَجُلٌۢ بِهٖ جِنَّةٌ فَتَرَبَّصُوْا بِهٖ حَتّٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ
انْصُرْنِيْ بِمَا كَذَّبُوْنِ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَاَوْحَيْنَاۤ اِلَيْهِ اَنِ اصْنَعِ الْفُلْكَ بِاَعْيُنِنَا وَ
وَحْيِنَا فَاِذَا جَآءَ اَمْرُنَا وَفَارَ التَّنُّوْرُ ۙ فَاسْلُكْ فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلٍّ زَوْجَيْنِ
اثْنَيْنِ وَاَهْلَكَ اِلَّا مَنْ سَبَقَ عَلَيْهِ الْقَوْلُ مِنْهُمْ ۚ وَلَا تُخَاطِبْنِيْ فِي
الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا ۚ اِنَّهُمْ مُّغْرَقُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَاِذَا اسْتَوَيْتَ اَنْتَ وَمَنْ مَّعَكَ عَلَى
الْفُلْكِ فَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ نَجّٰىنَا مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَقُلْ رَّبِّ
اَنْزِلْنِيْ مُنْزَلًا مُّبٰرَكًا وَّاَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْمُنْزِلِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ ؕ وَّاِنْ
كُنَّا لَمُبْتَلِيْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ ثُمَّ اَنْشَاْنَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ قَرْنًا اٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ فَاَرْسَلْنَا
فِيْهِمْ رَسُوْلًا مِّنْهُمْ اَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرُهٗ ؕ اَفَلَا
تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَقَالَ الْمَلَاُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا وَكَذَّبُوْا بِلِقَآءِ الْاٰخِرَةِ
وَاَتْرَفْنٰهُمْ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۙ مَا هٰذَاۤ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ ۙ يَاْكُلُ مِمَّا تَاْكُلُوْنَ
مِنْهُ وَيَشْرَبُ مِمَّا تَشْرَبُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَئِنْ اَطَعْتُمْ بَشَرًا مِّثْلَكُمْ اِنَّكُمْ اِذًا
لَّخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ اَيَعِدُكُمْ اَنَّكُمْ اِذَا مِتُّمْ وَكُنْتُمْ تُرَابًا وَّعِظَامًا اَنَّكُمْ مُّخْرَجُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾
هَيْهَاتَ هَيْهَاتَ لِمَا تُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ اِنْ هِيَ اِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوْتُ وَنَحْيَا
وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَبْعُوْثِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا رَجُلٌ افْتَرٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا وَّمَا

We sent Noah to his people:[24] he said, "O my people, worship Allah alone; you have no other deity than Him. Are you not afraid (of *shirk*)"?[25] Those of the chiefs of his people, who had rejected his Message, said, "This person is no more than a human being like yourselves.[26] By this, he merely intends to obtain superiority over you.[27] Had Allah willed, He would have sent down angels.[27-a] Since the time of our forefathers we have never heard (that a human being came as a Messenger). Obviously this man is possessed: wait a little more: (may be he is cured)". Noah prayed, "Lord, help me against these people for they have treated me as an impostor".[28] At this, We revealed to him: Build an ark under Our supervision, according to Our instructions. Then, when Our Command comes and "*at-Tannūr*"[29] begins to boil up, take aboard a pair of every species of animals, and also the members of your own family except those against whom the judgement has already been passed; and do not plead with Me for the workers of iniquity, for they are doomed to be drowned. Then, when you have boarded the ark along with your companions, say, "Praise be to Allah Who has delivered us from the wicked people",[30] and pray, "Lord, let my landing from this ark be at a blessed place, for Thou art the best of harbourers".[31] 23-29

There are many Signs in this story,[32] and We always put people to the test.[33] 30

After them We raised a people of another generation.[34] Then We sent to them a Messenger from among themselves, (who said,) "Worship Allah alone: you have no other deity than Him. Are you not afraid (of disbelief) ?" Those of the chiefs of his people, who had rejected the Message and denied the life in the Hereafter and whom We had given prosperity in this worldly life,[35] said, "This person is no more than a human being like yourselves, for he eats of what you eat and drinks of what you drink. Now if you submit to a human being like yourselves, you shall indeed be losers.[36] What! does he tell you that after you are dead and turned into dust and become mere bones, you shall be brought out alive (from graves)? Impossible! Just impossible is that which you are being threatened with. There is no other life than this worldly life. We will live here and die here and will not be raised up again. This man is merely an impostor, who is inventing lies in the name of Allah,[36-a] and we are not going to believe in what he says". 31-38

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a proof that it is not the work of a novice or an inexpert. All the physical laws of the entire system of the universe are so closely interconnected as to prove that it is the creation of the All-Wise Allah. If we take the second translation, it will mean that Allah has not been heedless in making provisions for every thing according to its nature from the most insignificant to the greatest of all.

17. The "rain" may refer to the rainfall, which comes down every now and then. It may also refer to the great store of water which Allah sent down at the time of the creation of the earth to fulfil its various needs till the Last Day, and which still exists in the shape of seas, lakes, sub-soil water, etc. It is the same water which evaporates in summer and freezes in winter and is carried by winds from place to place and spread over the earth by rivers, springs and wells to cause the growth of multitudes of things, and then is again restored to the seas, lakes, etc. Neither has this store of water been decreased by a drop nor was there any need to increase it by a drop since its creation. Today it is too well known how water comes about by the combination of oxygen and hydrogen in a certain ratio. The question is why can't more water be produced when oxygen and hydrogen still exist in abundance in the world? Who caused them to combine in the proper ratio in the beginning to produce oceans of water and who now stops them from coming together to produce an extra drop? Then when water evaporates, who causes oxygen and hydrogen to remain combined in water vapours even in the gaseous state. Have the atheists and polytheists, who believe in independent deities for water, air, summer and winter, any answer to this question?

18. This is to warn that Allah is able to take away the water if He so wills, and deprive the world of its most important means of life. Thus, this verse is more comprehensive in meaning than verse 30 of Sūrah Al-Mulk (LXVII):

"Ask them: Have you ever considered that if the water of your wells should sink down into the earth, who would then restore to you running springs of water?"

19. That is, other kinds of fruits than dates and grapes.

20. That is, you sustain yourselves by the produce that you get from these gardens in the shape of fruit, corn, wood, etc.

21. That is, the olive-tree, which is the most important product of the lands around the Mediterranean Sea. The olive-tree can last for 2,000 years or so, so much so that some trees in Palestine are said to be existing since the time of Prophet Jesus. It has been attributed to Mount Sinai probably for the reason that the area whose well known and prominent place is Mount Sinai is its original habitat.

22. That is, milk. Refer to An-Naḥl (XVI): 66 and E.N. 54 thereof.

23. The benefits of cattle as means of conveyance have been mentioned here along with the ships, because in Arabia, camel was used mainly for this purpose, and has been called "the ship of the desert" for the same reason.

24. See also Al-A'arāf (VII): 59-64, Yūnus (X): 71-73, Hūd (XI): 25-48, Banī Isrā'īl (XVII): 3 and Al-Anbiyā' (XXI): 76-77.

25. That is, "Are you not afraid that if you set up partners and associates with Allah, Who is the real Sovereign, and worship and submit to them, you shall incur His wrath and punishment ?"

26. There has been a common deviation that "a human being cannot be a Prophet, and a Prophet cannot be a human being." That is why the Qur'ān has refuted this wrong conception over and over again, and has stated forcefully that all the Prophets were human beings and that a human being only could be sent as a Prophet to human beings. For details, see Al-A'arāf (VII,): 63, 69, Yūnus (X): 2, Hūd (XI): 27-31, Yūsuf (XII): 109, Ar-Ra'd (XIII): 38, Ibrahīm (XIV): 10-11, An-Naḥl (XVI): 43, Banī Isrā'īl (XVII): 94-95, Al-Kahf (XVIII): 110, Al-Anbiyā' (XXI): 3, 34, Al-Mu'minūn (XXIII): 33-34, 47, Al-Furqān (XXV): 7, 20, Ash-Shu'arā' (XXVI): 154, 186, Yā Sīn (XXXVI): 15, Ḥā Mīm Sajdah (XLI): 6 along with the relevant E.N.'s.

27. This accusation is another old objection, which has always been raised against those who tried to reform their people. Their opponents always accused them of exploiting "religion" to gain domination in the land. Prophets Moses, Aaron and Jesus were accused of the same and so was Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him). So much so that the disbelievers of Makkah offered to make the Holy Prophet their king, if he gave up his Message.

As a matter of fact, the people who exhaust themselves in pursuit of worldly benefits and gains, cannot believe that somebody in this world could also exert himself sincerely and selflessly for the sake of human welfare. They regard deceptive slogans, which they raise to capture power, and false promises, which they make day and night to bring about reforms as natural. They think that sincerity and selflessness can be employed only to deceive people and these cannot be put to any better use. That is why the epithet of "power hungry" for the reformers in all ages has been used by those already in power as if their own power and domination in the land was their birth-right, and they were in no way blame-worthy for struggling for it and achieving it. (For further explanation, see E.N. 36 below)

In this connection, it should also be noted that all those, who try to reform the prevalent corrupt system of life, have inevitably to fight against those in power

in order to establish the righteous system. That is why the powers that be, have always been against the Prophets and their followers, who had to dislodge the corrupt rulers. It is, however, obvious that there is a vast difference between those who want power to gain their own selfish ends and those who want it to reform their people.

27a. This is a clear proof of the fact that Noah's people were not disbelievers in the existence of God nor did they reject Him as Lord of the universe and the angels as His obedient servants. They were only guilty of *shirk*: they had set up other deities as partners in God's attributes and powers and rights.

28. "Help me against these people": 'Take Thy vengeance on these people for they have denied me." Verse 10 of Al-Qamar (LIV) says: "Then cried Noah to his Lord, 'I am overcome, so take Thy vengeance on these people" and verses 26-27 of Noah (LXXI) say: "And Noah said, 'O my Lord, do not leave of these disbelievers any dweller upon the earth, for if Thou sparest them, they will mislead Thy servants and will beget none but sinners and disbelievers'."

29. Some commentators think that *tannūr* means the earth; others take it for the highest part of the earth; and still others think that the words *fār-at-tannūr* in the Text have been used for the break of Dawn. There are some who express the opinion that the words have been used metaphorically for the creation of turmoil. But in view of the context, we see no reason why one should take a far-fetched figurative meaning of a clear word of the Qur'ān. It appears that a particular oven *(tannūr)* had been ear-marked for the deluge to start from, which was to all appearances an unexpected origin of the doom of the wretched people.

30. The fact that Allah should be praised and thanked for the annihilation of those people, is a clear proof that they were the most wicked and villainous people in the world.

31. "Landing" here does not simply mean touching and resting on the land, but it also implies the sense of "hospitality", as if to say: "O God, now we are Thy guests and Thou alone art our Host."

32. At the conclusion of the story of Prophet Noah, particular attention has been drawn to the many Signs in the story from which one can learn many lessons. For instance, the Prophet who invited the people to *Tauhīd* was in the right and those who practised and insisted on *shirk* and disbelief were in the wrong and were destroyed: that the same kind of conflict, which took place between Prophet Noah and his people, was going on in Makkah. Therefore, ultimately the Holy Prophet will come out victorious over his antagonists just like Prophet Noah.

33. This can also be translated as: "We had to or have to put people to the test." In each case the purpose is to warn the people that they will not be left alone

after they have been granted power in the land and over good things of life, but Allah will put them to the test to see how they used their power. Whatever happened with the people of Noah was in accordance with this law, and the same will happen in future with any community which is raised to power.

34. The people of 'Ād, who were raised to power after the people of Noah. (Refer to Al-A'arāf: 69).

35. It should be noted that all those people who opposed the Messengers had three common characteristics: (1) They were the chiefs of their people. (2) They denied life in the "Hereafter". (3) They were prosperous in the worldly life. Obviously, they loved the life of this world and could never conceive that their way of life, which had made them chiefs and brought prosperity, could ever be wrong. Therefore they opposed their Messengers, who took away their peace of mind by preaching that there was a life-after-death and they shall have to render an account to Allah of what they did in this world. And this was exactly what was happening at Makkah.

36. Some commentators have wrongly opined that the chiefs exchanged these remarks against the Messenger between themselves. These remarks in fact were addressed to the common people. When the chiefs felt that the Message was spreading among the common people and there was a real danger that they would be influenced by the pure character of the Messenger and that their superiority then would automatically come to an end, they began to delude them by raising such objections against him. It is worth while to note that both the chiefs of the people of Noah and the chiefs of the people of 'Ād accused their Messengers of the "lust for power" but as regards themselves, they thought that power and prosperity were their inherent rights and they were in every respect entitled to be the chiefs of their people.

36a. These words show that the people of 'Ād too, were not disbelievers in the existence of God. They too were involved in the sin of *shirk*. Refer to Al-A'arāf (VII): 70, Hūd (XI): 53-54, Ḥā Mīm Sajdah (XLI): 14, and Al-Aḥqāf (XLVI): 21-22.

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نَحْنُ لَهٗ بِمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿38﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ انْصُرْنِيْ بِمَا كَذَّبُوْنِ ﴿39﴾ قَالَ عَمَّا قَلِيْلٍ
لَّيُصْبِحُنَّ نٰدِمِيْنَ ﴿40﴾ فَاَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ بِالْحَقِّ فَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ غُثَآءً ۚ فَبُعْدًا
لِّلْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿41﴾ ثُمَّ اَنْشَاْنَا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ قُرُوْنًا اٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿42﴾ مَا تَسْبِقُ مِنْ
اُمَّةٍ اَجَلَهَا وَمَا يَسْتَاْخِرُوْنَ ﴿43﴾ ثُمَّ اَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا تَتْرَا ۭ كُلَّمَا جَآءَ اُمَّةً
رَّسُوْلُهَا كَذَّبُوْهُ فَاَتْبَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ بَعْضًا وَّجَعَلْنٰهُمْ اَحَادِيْثَ ۚ فَبُعْدًا لِّقَوْمٍ
لَّا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿44﴾ ثُمَّ اَرْسَلْنَا مُوْسٰى وَاَخَاهُ هٰرُوْنَ ۙ بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿45﴾
اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَا۟ئِهٖ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوْا وَكَانُوْا قَوْمًا عَالِيْنَ ﴿46﴾ فَقَالُوْٓا اَنُؤْمِنُ لِبَشَرَيْنِ
مِثْلِنَا وَقَوْمُهُمَا لَنَا عٰبِدُوْنَ ﴿47﴾ فَكَذَّبُوْهُمَا فَكَانُوْا مِنَ الْمُهْلَكِيْنَ ﴿48﴾ وَلَقَدْ
اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿49﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَاُمَّهٗٓ اٰيَةً وَّ
اٰوَيْنٰهُمَآ اِلٰى رَبْوَةٍ ذَاتِ قَرَارٍ وَّمَعِيْنٍ ﴿50﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الرُّسُلُ كُلُوْا مِنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ
وَاعْمَلُوْا صَالِحًا ۭ اِنِّيْ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿51﴾ وَاِنَّ هٰذِهٖٓ اُمَّتُكُمْ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً
وَّاَنَا رَبُّكُمْ فَاتَّقُوْنِ ﴿52﴾ فَتَقَطَّعُوْٓا اَمْرَهُمْ بَيْنَهُمْ زُبُرًا ۭ كُلُّ حِزْبٍۢ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ
فَرِحُوْنَ ﴿53﴾ فَذَرْهُمْ فِيْ غَمْرَتِهِمْ حَتّٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿54﴾ اَيَحْسَبُوْنَ اَنَّمَا نُمِدُّهُمْ
بِهٖ مِنْ مَّالٍ وَّبَنِيْنَ ﴿55﴾ نُسَارِعُ لَهُمْ فِي الْخَيْرٰتِ ۭ بَلْ لَّا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿56﴾ اِنَّ
الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ مِّنْ خَشْيَةِ رَبِّهِمْ مُّشْفِقُوْنَ ﴿57﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿58﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ بِرَبِّهِمْ لَا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿59﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يُؤْتُوْنَ مَا اٰتَوْا
وَّقُلُوْبُهُمْ وَجِلَةٌ اَنَّهُمْ اِلٰى رَبِّهِمْ رٰجِعُوْنَ ﴿60﴾ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ يُسٰرِعُوْنَ فِي الْخَيْرٰتِ
وَهُمْ لَهَا سٰبِقُوْنَ ﴿61﴾ وَلَا نُكَلِّفُ نَفْسًا اِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۭ وَلَدَيْنَا كِتٰبٌ يَّنْطِقُ
بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿62﴾ بَلْ قُلُوْبُهُمْ فِيْ غَمْرَةٍ مِّنْ هٰذَا وَلَهُمْ

At this the Messenger prayed, "Lord, help me against these people, who have treated me as an impostor". In answer, it was said, "The time is nearing when they shall be remorseful". In due course a great scourge overwhelmed them in all justice and We cast them away like scum.[37]–So away with the wicked people ! 39-41

After them We raised other peoples. No people ceased to exist before its appointed term nor could any people outlive it. Then We sent Our Messengers in succession. Whenever a Messenger came to his people, they treated him as an impostor: so We went on destroying one people after the other till We made them mere legends.–Accursed be those who do not believe.[38] 42-44

Then We sent Moses and his brother Aaron with Our Signs and a clear Authority[39] to Pharaoh and his nobles. But they received them with arrogance, for they were very haughty people.[40] They said, "What! should we believe in these two men who are human beings like ourselves[40-a] and whose people are our bondsmen?"[41] So they treated them as impostors and incurred destruction.[42] As regards Moses, We gave him the Book so that the people might be guided by it. 45-49

And We made the son of Mary and his mother a Sign[43] to mankind and We gave them shelter on a plateau where they could have peace, and which was watered by running springs.[44] 50

O Messengers,[45] eat of pure things and do righteous deeds,[46] for I am fully aware of what you do. And you all belong to one and the same community, and I am your Lord: so fear Me.[47] 51-52

Yet afterwards people divided themselves into different sects, and each sect rejoices in what it has.[48]–Well, leave them deeply involved in their heedlessness up to an appointed term.[49] 53-54

Do they think that, by continuing to provide them with wealth and children, We are solicitous for their welfare? Nay, they do not understand the reality of the matter.[50] Those who feel the fear of their Lord;[51] who believe in the Signs of their Lord;[52] who do not associate anyone with their Lord;[53] who give whatever they give, and whose hearts are filled with awe by the very idea that they shall have to return to their Lord:[54] they indeed are the people, who work for their true welfare and try to be the first to attain it. We do not burden anyone with 55-63

more than he can bear.[55] And We have a book which tells accurately (about everyone),[56] and the people will in no case be treated unjustly.[57] But these people are heedless of this,[58] and their deeds are also of a different nature (from those mentioned above).

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37. Lexically, the word *ghuthā'* means the rubbish which is brought by flood waters and is deposited on the banks to rot there.

38. That is, "Those who do not believe in the Messengers."

39. The use of "a clear Authority" along with "Our Signs" may either mean that the "Signs" were a clear proof that they were Messengers of Allah, or the "Signs" may refer to all other miracles of Prophet Moses than the "staff", which may stand here for a clear Authority, because the miracles shown by means of it were a clear proof that the two brothers had been sent by Allah.

40. The words in the Text may either mean: (1) They were highly arrogant and tyrannous people, or (2) They showed haughtiness and selfconceit.

40a. For explanation, see E.N. 26.

41. *'Ābid* is worshipper. According to the Arabic usage, to be a "worshipper" and a "bondsman" are almost synonymous. Therefore when the Prophets invited their people to worship Allah alone, they wanted them to worship and serve and obey none but Allah, and that is the real significance of the word "*'ibādat*". For further explanation, see E.N. 50 of Al-Kahf (XVIII).

42. For fuller details of the story of Prophet Moses and Pharaoh, see Al-Baqarah (II): 49-50, Al-A'arāf (VII): 103-136, Yūnus (X): 75-92, Hūd (XI): 96-99, Banī Isrā'īl (XVII): 101-104, Ṭā Hā (XX): 9-80 along with the relevant E.N.'s.

43. The wording "We made the son of Mary and his mother a Sign" is very significant, because it means that neither the son of Mary nor his mother was each a separate Sign, but both of them together were a Sign. This verse is a clear proof that a son was born to Mary without cohabitation with a man and that Jesus had no father. For fuller details see Āl-'Imrān (III): 45-49, An-Nisā' (IV): 156, 171, Maryam (XIX): 16-35 and Al-Anbiyā' (XXI): 91 and the relevant E.N.'s.

In this connection, it should also be noted that the case of the error in regard to Prophet Jesus and his mother was different from the error in regard to other Prophets, who were rejected because they were human beings. But the deviation in regard to Prophet Jesus and his mother was that the credulous people raised them from the low position of human beings to the high rank of Godhead.

On the other hand, those, who went to the other extreme accused Mary of unchastity, although they were witnesses of the miraculous birth of Jesus and had heard him speak in the cradle.

44. Different people have mentioned different places, like Damascus, Ar-Ramlah, Jerusalem and Egypt, in regard to the plateau where Allah gave them shelter. From the Christian traditions it appears that Mary had to leave her home twice after the birth of Prophet Jesus, first in the time of Herod when she took him to Egypt and stayed there till Herod's death, and then in the time of Archelaus when she took him to Nazareth in Galilee. (Matthew, 2: 13-23). Therefore it cannot be said with certainty to which of these two emigrations the Qur'ān refers here. It is, however, obvious that the place of shelter was a plateau which provided them with all the necessities of life.

45. In the preceding passage (vv. 23-50), the stories of some Prophets have been related as individuals, but in this verse all of them have been addressed together. However, it does not mean that they were present at one and the same place at the time of address. As a matter of fact, this way of address has been adopted to show that the Message of all the Messengers, who came to different countries in different ages, was the same and they all belonged to one and the same community. (v. 52). Therefore the Message to one Messenger was meant to be the Message for each one of them. In this verse, they have been addressed together as if they were present at one and the same place in order to emphasize this same aspect of the matter. But it is an irony that some stupid people of this age have concluded that this verse has been addressed to those messengers who were to come after Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). It is obvious that this interpretation cannot fit in the context in which the verse occurs.

46. "Pure things" implies that they should be wholesome and must have been earned in lawful ways. Here the instruction, "eat of pure things", is meant to refute the theory and practice of asceticism. The Qur'ān teaches the middle way between the life of asceticism and that of licence. The fact that the instruction, "eat of pure things", precedes "do righteous deeds", is meant to impress that righteous deeds are meaningless without eating lawful provisions. The Holy Prophet impressed this very thing, saying, "O people, Allah is pure and loves pure things." Then he recited this verse (51) and said, "A person makes a long pilgrimage in a dishevelled condition and prays with raised hands, 'O my Lord, O my Lord', whereas he eats unlawful food, wears unlawful clothes and has been brought up on unlawful provisions. How can such a one expect that Allah will grant his prayer?" (Related by Abū Hurairah).

47. The original Arabic word *ummat* (community) comprises those individuals who have something basic common among them. All the Messengers of

Allah belonged to one and the same community because they had the same creed and the same religion and the same Message. See also Al-Baqarah (II): 130-133 and 213, Āl-'Imrān (III): 19-20, 33-34, 64, 79-85, An-Nisā'(IV): 150-152, Al-A'arāf (VII): 59, 65, 73, 85, Yūsuf (XII): 37-40, Maryam (XIX) :49-59, and Al-Anbiyā' (XXII): 71-93 along with the relevant E.N.'s.

48. This is not a mere statement of a fact, but it is a link of the same argument which is being put forward from the very beginning of the Sūrah. The argument is this: Islam has been the real and original religion of all the Prophets from Noah to Jesus (Allah's peace be upon them all), because all of them brought and taught the same doctrines of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter. On the contrary, all the other religions are the perversions of "the real and original religion", which has been tampered with in many ways. Therefore, those who are following the perverted religions are in the wrong and not the Holy Prophet who is inviting them to "the real and original religion".

49. There is a gap between v. 53 and v. 54, which has been left to the listener to fill, because the background of the whole discourse itself helps to fill it. Five years had passed since the Holy Prophet had been inviting his people to the original religion. He had left no stone unturned to convince them by reasoning and by historical evidence that his Message was based on the truth. His people had seen the practical results of the acceptance of his Message and had witnessed his own high character which was by itself a guarantee that he was a trustworthy man. But in spite of all this, his people were rejoicing in their erroneous beliefs which they had inherited from their forefathers. This was not all. They had become his bitter enemies and were trying to defeat him and his Message by every wicked machination.

After filling the gap, the meaning of verse 51 becomes quite clear. It does not mean that the Holy Prophet should give up his preaching and leave the disbelievers to themselves. This way of address has been employed to shake and rouse the disbelievers. This verse warns them to realize that the time was coming near when they would see for themselves that the Messenger was in the right and they were in the wrong.

50. This question has been posed as a proof of the main theme of the Sūrah. It is meant to remove their misconception of "success", "welfare" and "prosperity", which the disbelievers had formed to delude themselves. According to them, the one, who enjoyed the good things of life and wielded power and influence in the society, had attained "success". On the other hand, the one who was deprived of these things was a "failure". This misconception had involved them in another serious misunderstanding. They thought that the one who had attained "success" was in the right, and the beloved of Allah. Otherwise, how

could he have attained all the "successes"? On the contrary, the one who was apparently deprived of these things was surely wrong in his creed and erroneous in his deeds, and was under the wrath of God (or gods). As this misconception is one of the greatest deviations of the materialists, the Qur'ān has stated it and refuted it in different ways at different places and made the reality plain. For instance, see Al-Baqarah (II): 126, 212, Al-A'arāf (VII): 32, At-Taubah (IX): 55, 69, 85, Yūnus (X): 17, Hūd (XI) :3, 27-31, 38-39, Ar-Ra'd (XIII): 26, Al-Kahf (XVIII): 28, 32-43, 103-105, Maryam (XIX): 77-80, Ṭā Hā (XX): 131-132, Al-Anbiyā' (XXI) :44 along with the relevant E.N.'s.

In order to remove the above-mentioned misconceptions one should keep in view the following:

(1) "Success" is a far higher thing than the material prosperity and the transitory success of an individual, community or nation

(2) It is absolutely wrong to consider "prosperity" and "success" as a criterion of truth and falsehood.

(3) It should be noted well that this world is a place of test and trial and not a place of reward and retribution. It is true that even in this world, sometimes there is some punishment or reward, but it is on a very limited scale, and even in this, there is an aspect of the test. Therefore it is an utter folly to consider material "success" and "prosperity" to be a proof that the recipient is in the right and so the beloved of the Lord, and *vice versa*. Moreover, the tests and trials of individuals and communities are of many varieties and a seeker after truth must understand at the outset that the worldly "success" or "failure" of the people is not the result of ultimate reward or punishment and cannot be regarded as the criterion for the right or wrong creed, morals and actions and a sign of being the beloved of God or otherwise.

(4) One must have a firm belief that truth and righteousness will ultimately gain victory over falsehood and wickedness. As regards the criterion of truth and falsehood and right and wrong, one must judge this in the light of Revelations and teachings of the Messengers, because common sense confirms the same, and it is also supported by the general conception which mankind has always had of good and evil.

(5) As a corollary of the above, it would have become clear that according to the Qur'ān (and this is confirmed by common sense), the conception of "reward" and "punishment" should also be different from the common one. For instance, if a wicked person or community is enjoying "prosperity", it is not a reward of its evil deeds but a harder test for it, and it is not a blessing but the wrath of Allah. It means that Allah has decided to punish the "prosperous people" with a severe scourge. On the other hand, if the righteous people are

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أَعْمَالٌ مِّنْ دُوْنِ ذٰلِكَ هُمْ لَهَا عٰمِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ حَتّٰٓى إِذَآ أَخَذْنَا مُتْرَفِيْهِمْ
بِالْعَذَابِ إِذَا هُمْ يَجْـَٔرُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ لَا تَجْـَٔرُوا الْيَوْمَ ۖ إِنَّكُمْ مِّنَّا لَا تُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾
قَدْ كَانَتْ اٰيٰتِىْ تُتْلٰى عَلَيْكُمْ فَكُنْتُمْ عَلٰٓى أَعْقَابِكُمْ تَنْكِصُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ مُسْتَكْبِرِيْنَ ۖ
بِهٖ سٰمِرًا تَهْجُرُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ أَفَلَمْ يَدَّبَّرُوا الْقَوْلَ أَمْ جَآءَهُمْ مَّا لَمْ يَأْتِ اٰبَآءَهُمُ
الْأَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ أَمْ لَمْ يَعْرِفُوْا رَسُوْلَهُمْ فَهُمْ لَهٗ مُنْكِرُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ أَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ بِهٖ
جِنَّةٌ ۚ بَلْ جَآءَهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَأَكْثَرُهُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كٰرِهُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَلَوِ اتَّبَعَ الْحَقُّ
أَهْوَآءَهُمْ لَفَسَدَتِ السَّمٰوٰتُ وَالْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيْهِنَّ ۚ بَلْ أَتَيْنٰهُمْ بِذِكْرِهِمْ
فَهُمْ عَنْ ذِكْرِهِمْ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ أَمْ تَسْـَٔلُهُمْ خَرْجًا فَخَرَاجُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ ۖ وَّ
هُوَ خَيْرُ الرّٰزِقِيْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَإِنَّكَ لَتَدْعُوْهُمْ إِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَإِنَّ ع ٦
الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ عَنِ الصِّرَاطِ لَنٰكِبُوْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَلَوْ رَحِمْنٰهُمْ وَكَشَفْنَا
مَا بِهِمْ مِّنْ ضُرٍّ لَّلَجُّوْا فِىْ طُغْيَانِهِمْ يَعْمَهُوْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَخَذْنٰهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ
فَمَا اسْتَكَانُوْا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَمَا يَتَضَرَّعُوْنَ ﴿٧٦﴾ حَتّٰٓى إِذَا فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ بَابًا ذَا
عَذَابٍ شَدِيْدٍ إِذَا هُمْ فِيْهِ مُبْلِسُوْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾ ع ٧ وَهُوَ الَّذِىْٓ أَنْشَأَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَ
الْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْـِٔدَةَ ۚ قَلِيْلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِىْ ذَرَأَكُمْ فِى الْأَرْضِ
وَإِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُوْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِىْ يُحْىٖ وَيُمِيْتُ وَلَهُ اخْتِلَافُ الَّيْلِ وَ
النَّهَارِ ۚ أَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ بَلْ قَالُوْا مِثْلَ مَا قَالَ الْأَوَّلُوْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ قَالُوْٓا ءَإِذَا مِتْنَا
وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَّعِظَامًا ءَإِنَّا لَمَبْعُوْثُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ لَقَدْ وُعِدْنَا نَحْنُ وَاٰبَآؤُنَا هٰذَا مِنْ
قَبْلُ إِنْ هٰذَآ إِلَّآ أَسَاطِيْرُ الْأَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ قُلْ لِّمَنِ الْأَرْضُ وَمَنْ فِيْهَآ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ
تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ سَيَقُوْلُوْنَ لِلّٰهِ ۚ قُلْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ قُلْ مَنْ رَّبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ السَّبْعِ

They will continue their misdeeds till We bring punishment on 64-67
the epicureans among them:[59] then they will begin to bellow.[60] –Now[61]
stop your groanings: you will get no help from Us this Day; for when
My Revelations were recited to you, you turned on your heels (hearing
the voice of the Messenger).[62] In your arrogance you paid no heed to
him, ridiculed him in your meeting places[63] and talked nonsense about
him.

Have the disbelievers never considered the Word[64]? Or, has he 68-71
brought something the like of which had not come to their forefathers?[65]
Or, did they not know their Messenger well that they fight shy of him
(as if he were a stranger)?[66] Or, are they really convinced that he is
possessed (by a jinn)?[67] Nay! the real thing is that he has brought the
Truth and most of them have aversion to the Truth.—And had the Truth
followed their lusts, the whole system of the heavens and the earth, and
of all who dwell in them, would have been disrupted.[68]—Nay, We have
brought them admonition for their own good, but they are turning away
from it.[69]

Are you demanding some recompense from them? Allah's 72-74
recompense is best for you, for He is the best Providence.[70] As a matter
of fact, you are inviting them to the Straight Path, but it suits those,
who do not believe in the Hereafter, to deviate from the Straight Path.[71]

If We take compassion on them and relieve them of their 75-77
affliction, they will persist blindly in their rebellion:[72] for even now,
when they are suffering from a torment, they have not bowed before
their Lord nor humbled themselves. However, when We will smite them
with a dreadful scourge, you will see that they will despair of all good
and become desperate.[73]

It is Allah Who has endowed you with the faculties of hearing 78-83
and seeing and given you hearts to think, but you do not show any
gratitude.[74] It is He Who has scattered you in the earth, and before Him
you shall all be mustered. It is He Who gives life and ordains death, and
controls the alternation of the night and the day.[75] Can you not
understand this ?[76] Nay! these people say what their forefathers said
before them. They say, "Shall we be raised up again, when we have
turned into dust after death and become mere bones? We have heard

many such threats and so did our forefathers before us. These are nothing but ancient tales".[77]

84-85 Say to them, "Tell me, if you know, whose is the earth and all who dwell in it?" They will say, "Allah's". Ask them, "Then why do you not understand this"?.[78]

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suffering from hardships and afflictions, it is not a punishment from Allah but a blessing in disguise to pass them through the "fire" to remove impurity, if any, from the pure gold. If this hard trial is a blessing for the righteous people, it is a test for the wicked people to give them a severe punishment for the persecution of the former.

51. That is, they do not live a carefree life devoid of the fear of God. They live in awe of Him and are fully conscious that He oversees and watches them in all their motives and actions and they are thus deterred from thinking and doing evil.

52. "Signs" here means both Divine Revelations to the Prophets and the signs found in man's own self and in the universe around him. To believe in the verses of the Book is to affirm them, and to believe in the signs of human self and the universe is to affirm the realities which they point to.

53. Though belief in the Revelations itself engrains the doctrine of *Tauhīd* in the hearts, yet the believers have been warned to guard against *shirk*. This is because, in spite of believing in the Revelations, man is inclined to commit *shirk* in one form or the other, for instance, in exaggerating the teachings of the Prophets and righteous people, supplicating and serving others than Allah, etc.

54. This verse (60) may be elaborated like this: "They serve their Lord and try their best to obey Him and do righteous deeds, but all along they remain humble in their hearts and are not puffed up with the pride of their piety: nay, in spite of all their good deeds, their hearts are always filled with awe that they shall have to render an account to their Lord, and they are not sure whether they will come out successful in the judgment of their Lord or not."

A concrete interpretation of this verse is afforded by Caliph 'Umar. Although he served his Allah in a way that was exemplary, yet he was so afraid of accountability to Him that he is reported to have said before death: "I shall consider it a favour, if I am neither rewarded nor punished in the Hereafter." Hadrat Ḥasan Baṣrī has expressed the same thing in a beautiful manner: "A believer obeys Allah and is yet fearful of Him, and a hypocrite disobeys Allah and is yet fearless of Him."

55. The enunciation of this fundamental proposition, in the context in which it occurs, is very meaningful. In the preceding passage (vv. 57-61), the characteristics of those people, who deserve true success, have been stated, and in this verse (62), it has been made clear that those excellent qualities can be attained by anyone who tries to achieve true success, as if to say, "The conditions We have laid down for true success are within the reach of those who strive for it, for 'We do not burden ... Therefore if you, O disbelievers, desire to achieve true success, you should follow the example of the Believers from among yourselves, who have really attained it"

56. According to the Qur'ān, an elaborate "conduct book" of every individual is being maintained accurately. This records every word he utters, every deed or act he performs, even every hidden thought and intention that he cherishes in his heart and mind. See also Al-Kahf (XVIII) :49 and E.N. 46 thereof.

57. That is, neither a person will be accused of and punished for something he had not done, nor will he be deprived of the full reward of a good act that he had done.

58. They are heedless that everything they are saying and doing, is being recorded in some "book" and that they shall have to render an account of everything.

59. The epicureans will probably be punished in this worldly life because in the enjoyment of luxury and pleasure they forgot the rights of the other people and transgressed the prescribed limits.

60. *Ju'ār* is bellowing by a bull painfully. Here the word has been used tauntingly for a groaning person who does not deserve any mercy, as if to say, "Now that you are going to be punished for your misdeeds, you have started bellowing."

61. That is, they will be told this at that time.

62. That is to say, "In the worldly life you did not pay any heed to what the Messenger said; nay, you did not even like to hear his voice."

63. The meeting places where the people of Makkah gathered together at night to hold consultations, to gossip and tell tales, etc.

64. That is, "Do they mean to imply that they reject the Message because they do not understand it? whereas the Qur'ān is not an enigma, nor is it being presented in an incomprehensible language, nor does it deal with themes and

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وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٨٦﴾ سَيَقُوْلُوْنَ لِلّٰهِ ؕ قُلْ اَفَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ قُلْ مَنْۢ بِيَدِهٖ
مَلَكُوْتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّهُوَ يُجِيْرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾
سَيَقُوْلُوْنَ لِلّٰهِ ؕ قُلْ فَاَنّٰى تُسْحَرُوْنَ ﴿٨٩﴾ بَلْ اَتَيْنٰهُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَاِنَّهُمْ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿٩٠﴾
مَا اتَّخَذَ اللّٰهُ مِنْ وَّلَدٍ وَّمَا كَانَ مَعَهٗ مِنْ اِلٰهٍ اِذًا لَّذَهَبَ كُلُّ اِلٰهٍۢ بِمَا خَلَقَ
وَلَعَلَا بَعْضُهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ ؕ سُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُوْنَ ﴿٩١﴾ عٰلِمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
فَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾ قُلْ رَّبِّ اِمَّا تُرِيَنِّيْ مَا يُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿٩٣﴾ رَبِّ فَلَا تَجْعَلْنِيْ
فِي الْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَاِنَّا عَلٰٓى اَنْ نُّرِيَكَ مَا نَعِدُهُمْ لَقٰدِرُوْنَ ﴿٩٥﴾ اِدْفَعْ بِالَّتِيْ
هِيَ اَحْسَنُ السَّيِّئَةَ ؕ نَحْنُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا يَصِفُوْنَ ﴿٩٦﴾ وَقُلْ رَّبِّ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ
هَمَزٰتِ الشَّيٰطِيْنِ ﴿٩٧﴾ وَاَعُوْذُ بِكَ رَبِّ اَنْ يَّحْضُرُوْنِ ﴿٩٨﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَآءَ اَحَدَهُمُ
الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُوْنِ ﴿٩٩﴾ لَعَلِّيْٓ اَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيْمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلَّا ؕ اِنَّهَا
كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ قَآئِلُهَا ؕ وَمِنْ وَّرَآئِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ اِلٰى يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ فَاِذَا نُفِخَ فِي
الصُّوْرِ فَلَآ اَنْسَابَ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ وَّلَا يَتَسَآءَلُوْنَ ﴿١٠١﴾ فَمَنْ ثَقُلَتْ مَوَازِيْنُهٗ
فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ وَمَنْ خَفَّتْ مَوَازِيْنُهٗ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ خَسِرُوْٓا
اَنْفُسَهُمْ فِيْ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ تَلْفَحُ وُجُوْهَهُمُ النَّارُ وَهُمْ فِيْهَا كٰلِحُوْنَ ﴿١٠٤﴾
اَلَمْ تَكُنْ اٰيٰتِيْ تُتْلٰى عَلَيْكُمْ فَكُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُوْنَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ قَالُوْا رَبَّنَا غَلَبَتْ عَلَيْنَا
شِقْوَتُنَا وَكُنَّا قَوْمًا ضَآلِّيْنَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ رَبَّنَآ اَخْرِجْنَا مِنْهَا فَاِنْ عُدْنَا فَاِنَّا ظٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿١٠٧﴾
قَالَ اخْسَـُٔوْا فِيْهَا وَلَا تُكَلِّمُوْنِ ﴿١٠٨﴾ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ
رَبَّنَآ اٰمَنَّا فَاغْفِرْ لَنَا وَارْحَمْنَا وَاَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرّٰحِمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ فَاتَّخَذْتُمُوْهُمْ
سِخْرِيًّا حَتّٰٓى اَنْسَوْكُمْ ذِكْرِيْ وَكُنْتُمْ مِّنْهُمْ تَضْحَكُوْنَ ﴿١١٠﴾ اِنِّيْ جَزَيْتُهُمُ

Say to them, "To whom do the seven heavens and the Glorious Throne belong?" They will say, "To Allah"[79] Say, "Then why do you not fear Him".[80] Say to them, "Tell me, if you know, whose is the Sovereignty[81] over everything? And who is that Being who gives protection while none can give protection against Him?" They will surely reply, "This power belongs to Allah." Say, "How then are you so bewitched?"[82] The fact is that We have brought the Truth before them and undoubtedly these people are liars.[83] Allah has no offspring,[84] and there is no other deity as a partner with Him. Had it been so, every deity would have become an independent ruler over its creation; moreover, in that case, they would have tried to override one another.[85] Exalted is Allah and free from the sort of things they attribute to Him. He has full knowledge of all that is open and hidden,[86] and He is far above the *shirk* these people invent. 86-92

O Muḥammad, pray, "Lord, if You inflict, during my presence among them, that punishment with which they are being threatened, then, O my Lord, do not include me among these unjust people[87] And the fact is that We have the power to make you a witness of what they are being threatened with. 93-95

O Muḥammad, repel evil with that which is best: We are fully aware of what they utter against you. And pray, "Lord, I seek refuge in You from the promptings of the satans; more than that: I seek refuge in You, my Lord, even from their coming near me".[88] 96-98

(Those people will not desist from their doing) till when deathcomes to any one of them, he will say, "Lord, send me back to the world[89] which I have left: I hope I will now do righteous deeds."[90]--By no means![91] it is a mere saying that he is uttering:[92] for now there is a barrier between the dead (and the world which they have left) up to the Day[93] when they shall be raised up again. Then, when the Trumpet will be blown, all (worldly) relations between them shall cease to function and they will not inquire about one another.[94] Then only those whose scales will be heavy,[95] will attain success; and those, whose scales will be light, will be the people who made themselves liable to loss;[96] they shall abide in Hell for ever. The "Fire" will scorch their faces so as to expose their jaws[97]--(It will be said to them,) "Are you not the same people, who treated as lies My Revelations, when they were recited to you?" They will say, "Our Lord, our bad luck 99-110

prevailed over us, and we were, indeed, erring people. Our Lord, now take us out of this place: after this, if we be guilty of such a thing, we shall indeed be wrong-doers." In answer to this, Allah will say, "Get away from here, remain herein and do not speak to Me.[98] For, you are the very same people, who made fun of some of Our servants when they prayed to Us, 'Our Lord, we have believed: so forgive us and have mercy on us, for You are the Most Merciful of all who show mercy? So much so that in your obduracy, you even forgot My very existence, and went on scoffing at them

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subjects which are beyond human understanding. The fact is that they understand everything it presents, but they oppose and reject it, because they have no intention to follow and believe what it presents."

65. That is, "Is the Qur'ān presenting something which they had never heard before? No, that is not so. Allah had been sending His Messages through His Prophets, who came to Arabia and in the adjoining lands and they are well acquainted with them, especially with Prophets Abraham and Ismael, and Hūd, Ṣaleḥ and Shoaib, who are acknowledged by them as Prophets of God, and who were not idol-worshippers but enjoined the worship of One God." For further explanation, see E.N. 84 of Al-Furqān (XXV), E.N. 5 of As-Sajdah (XXXII) and E.N. 35 of Sabā (XXXIV).

66. That is, "Do they reject the Message because Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) who is inviting them to it, is a stranger among them? No, this is not so, for he was born and bred among them in a noble family; he bears a pure and high character: he has been truthful, upright, trustworthy, honest and morally chaste throughout his life: he is a noble and gentle person, peace-loving and just by nature, honest in word and deed, sympathetic and helpful to the weak and poor. And they themselves testified to all this before he claimed to be a Messenger of Allah. Then he has been consistently preaching the same Message from the first day of his Mission. Then whatever he has preached he has first practised it himself and demonstrated its truth: there has been no contradiction between his word and deed: he and his followers have faithfully and honestly put into practice the Message of the Qur'ān and shown excellent results." For further details, see E.N. 21 of Al-An'ām (VI), E.N. 21 of Yūnus (X) and E.N. 105 of Banī Isrā'īl (XVII).

67. That is, "Do they reject his Message because they regard Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) to be possessed by a *Jinn?* No, this is also not correct, because in their heart of hearts, they themselves regard him as a wise and sagacious person. It is therefore ridiculous to regard a man like him to be

possessed by a jinn, for such a person cannot say wise things and do noble deeds like him. How strange that a person possessed by a *jinn* (or having epileptic fits according to the western orientalists) should utter and recite sublime discourses of the Qur'ān and start and guide a successful Movement which should revolutionise the way of life not only of his own people but of the whole world."

68. This brief sentence expresses a great reality which should be understood well. The foolish people in the world generally feel offended by a person who points out the Truth to them. They do not like to hear and consider the Truth because it goes against their desires and interests but the Truth remains the Truth and cannot be changed after one's personal whims and wishes. Man is subject to the eternal and unalterable laws operating in the universe and has therefore to adjust his thinking, desires and conduct accordingly and should try to discover the Truth and Reality through experience, reasoning and observation. Only a foolish person can stick to and regard his personal whims, wishes and prejudices to be the reality and refuse to hear and consider any argument, however rational and scientific, simply because it goes against them.

69. Here the word *zikr* means:

(1) Mention of human nature and its demands, (2) admonition, (3) esteem, honour and fame.

In the light of these, the full meaning of the verse will be: "Your rejection of the Qur'ān is irrational, for it contains the mention of those things which develop the best in human nature: it is an admonition that will result in your own good and well-being, and it will bring esteem and honour for you in this world as well as in the Hereafter."

70. This was yet another proof of the Holy Prophet's Prophethood: he was conveying the Message without demanding any recompense for it, and he had no self-interest in it. Nay, he had staked his business, reputation, peaceful home life, relationships with the unbelieving kindred for the success of his Mission and was being ruthlessly persecuted for its sake. A selfish person could not have risked his all for the sake of only worldly motives. He would rather have exploited the racial and tribal prejudices of his people to become their ruler and leader. On the contrary, his Message not only cut at the root of those prejudices but tended to destroy the very bases which helped his tribe to wield influence and authority over the polytheists of Arabia. This is an argument which the Qur'ān has advanced again and again as a proof of the truth of the Mission of the other Prophets as well. See Al-An'ām (VI): 90, Yūnus (X): 72, Hūd (XI): 29, 51, Yūsuf (XII): 104, Yā Sīn (XXXVI): 21 along with the relevant E.N.'s.

71. This was the real reason why they were deviating from the Right Path. As they did not believe in the Hereafter, they thought that no account would be taken from them of what they did in this world. Therefore it did not matter whether they followed the Truth or falsehood. Their only aim in life was to gratify the lusts of the flesh and gratify them in the best way possible.

72. The affliction alluded to in this verse was the famine which occurred in Makkah some time after the advent of Prophethood. According to Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, when the Quraish persistently refused to accept the invitation of the Holy Prophet and started putting up stiff resistance, he prayed, "O Allah, help me against them with a seven-year famine like the seven-year famine of the time of Prophet Joseph." So a severe famine started in Makkah with the result that people were obliged to eat carrion. This famine has been alluded to in a number of Makki Sūrahs. For instance see Al-An'ām (VI): 42-44, Al-A'arāf (VII): 94-99, Yūnus (X): 11, 12, 21, An-Nahl (XVI): 112-113 and Ad-Dukhān (XLIV): 10-16 along with the relevant E.N.'s.

73. The Arabic word *mublis* is used for one whom frustration makes so desperate and obdurate that he does not hesitate to resort to any crime. The Devil has been called *Iblis* for the same reason.

74. The disbelievers have been told to consider the great blessings of eyes, ears, mind and heart and use them as human beings should, and show gratitude to the Creator by accepting His Message.

75. If one makes the right use of one's faculties and observes these things properly, one can find the Truth, for it is obvious that the great mechanism of the universe could not have come into existence by a mere accident. There must be its Creator who need not have any associates or partners and that the universe could not have been created without a purpose as a mere sport. The very existence of a wonderful, rational thinking and feeling creature—Man—who has been delegated with powers, is a clear proof that his life will not come to an end at death.

76. Here attention is being drawn to the proof of both *Tauḥīd* and Life-after-death, and in the other phenomena cited to the refutation of both *shirk* and rejection of the Hereafter.

77. Their denial of the Life-after-death implied the denial of the powers and wisdom of Allah as well.

78-79. That is, "If you acknowledge this, why do you not then understand that none but Allah deserves to be worshipped and that when He has once created the earth and all the things in it, it is not difficult for Him to re-create them once again?"

80. That is, "Why are you not afraid of rebelling against Him and worshipping others besides Him? Why do you not dread that one day you shall have to give an account of all your deeds to the All-Powerful Sovereign of the universe?"

81. The word *malakūt* in the Text is a strong word which combines both sovereignty and ownership. The verse therefore means: "Whose is the Sovereignty and Who possesses the real ownership rights over everything?"

82. In order to understand the significance of this question, we should know that the art of magic makes a thing appear different from what it really is. Thus the question will mean: "Who has bewitched you that, in spite of knowing and acknowledging all these things, you do not understand the Reality ? Who has bewitched you that even after acknowledging Allah to be the Owner and the All-Powerful Sovereign, you set up other owners and sovereigns along with Him or make them partners with Him and worship them ? Who has deluded you that you should dare to be treacherous and unfaithful to Allah knowing that none can protect you against Him, and forget that you will be called to account for these things?"

In this connection, it should also be noted that this question has a subtle meaning also. The Quraish accused the Holy Prophet of practising magic and sorcery. This question turns the tables on them, as if to say, "O foolish people, the man who presents the Reality appears to you to be a sorcerer, while those leaders who say things against Reality, against common sense and against your own convictions and beliefs, do not appear to you to be sorcerers at all."

83. They are liars because they say that others besides Allah have a share in His Godhead and that there is no Life-after-death, because their first saying contradicts their own admission that Allah is the Owner and the Sovereign of the universe. Then their second assertion is based on the presumption that the All-Powerful Allah cannot recreate what He has created once. This is clearly a contradiction in terms.

84. It should be noted that this is a general refutation of the belief that Allah has a child or children, and incidentally refutes the Christian belief that Christ is the son of God. Yet even some eminent commentators confine this to the refutation of the Christian belief. Obviously, there is no reason why it was necessary to refute the Christian belief specifically in this context, when the whole discourse has been directed towards the disbelievers of Makkah alone, who were, like the Christians, guilty of this sort of *shirk*.

85. Here the argument of *Tauhid* is based on this principle : Had there

[Contd. on p.268

الْيَوْمَ بِمَا صَبَرُوْٓا ۙ اَنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْفَآئِزُوْنَ ﴿١١١﴾ قٰلَ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِي الْاَرْضِ عَدَدَ
سِنِيْنَ ﴿١١٢﴾ قَالُوْا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا اَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ فَسْـَٔلِ الْعَآدِّيْنَ ﴿١١٣﴾ قٰلَ اِنْ
لَّبِثْتُمْ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا لَّوْ اَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١١٤﴾ اَفَحَسِبْتُمْ اَنَّمَا خَلَقْنٰكُمْ عَبَثًا وَّ
اَنَّكُمْ اِلَيْنَا لَا تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿١١٥﴾ فَتَعٰلَى اللّٰهُ الْمَلِكُ الْحَقُّ ۚ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ رَبُّ
الْعَرْشِ الْكَرِيْمِ ﴿١١٦﴾ وَمَنْ يَّدْعُ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ ۙ لَا بُرْهَانَ لَهٗ بِهٖ ۙ فَاِنَّمَا
حِسَابُهٗ عِنْدَ رَبِّهٖ ۭ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُفْلِحُ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَقُلْ رَّبِّ اغْفِرْ وَ
ارْحَمْ وَاَنْتَ خَيْرُ الرّٰحِمِيْنَ ﴿١١٨﴾

111-115 Today I have recompensed them for their fortitude, and they have triumphed over you."[99] Then Allah will inquire from them, "For how many years did you live on the Earth?" They will say, "We stayed there for a day or for part of a day.[100] You may inquire from those who kept account." It will be said, "Well, you know now that you stayed there for a little while only. What a pity! you did not realize it then.[101] Did you think that We had created you without any purpose,[102] and that you would never be brought back to Us?"

116-117 So Exalted is Allah,[103] the true and real Sovereign. There is no god other than He: He is the Lord of the Glorious Throne. Therefore, if some one invokes any other deity along with Allah, whereof he has no proof,[104] he shall have to give an account to his Lord.[105] Such disbelievers can never attain "success".[106]

118 O Muḥammad, say, "Lord, forgive and have mercy! You are the most Merciful of all, who show mercy".[107]

Contd. from p.267]

been more than one God or partners in Godhead, there would have been serious differences, conflicts and wars among the different sovereigns and rulers. See Banī Isrā'īl (XVII): 42 and E.N. 47 thereof, and Al-Anbiyā' (XXI): 22 and E. N. 22 thereof.

86. This contains a subtle allusion to the refutation of the doctrine of "intercession". See E.N.'s 85, 86 of Ṭā Hā (XX) and E.N. 27 of Al-Anbiyā' (XXI).

87. This prayer does not mean that, God forbid, there was any real danger of the Holy Prophet's also being involved in the punishment, or that if he had not invoked this prayer, he might have been invoked in it. This way of address has been adopted to warn that all people should fear Allah's punishment. They should not demand it nor persist in their wickedness, if Allah gives them respite. As a matter of fact, Allah's punishment is a thing which should be dreaded not only by the sinful people but also by the righteous people, and they should all seek His refuge from it, for when the scourge of God comes, it does not destroy only the wicked people but may also involve the righteous people in it. Therefore the right course for those, who have to live in a wicked society, is that they should always pray to Allah for His refuge, for one does not know when that scourge might come down.

88. For explanation, see E.N.'s 71, 72 of Al-An'ām (VI), E.N.'s 138, 150 to 153 of Al-A'arāf (VII), E.N. 39 of Yūnus (X), E.N. 48 of Al-Ḥijr (XV), E.N.'s 122 to 124 of An-Naḥl (XVI), E.N.'s 58 to 63 of Banī Isrā'īl (XVII), and E.N.'s 35 to 41 of Ḥā Mīm Sajdah (XLI).

89. In the original Text plural number has been used for Allah, which may be for reverence, or may include the angels as well, who will be seizing the criminal soul. The entreaty would be: "O my Lord! send me back!"

90. It occurs at several places in the Qur'ān that each of the criminals, after his death till his entry into Hell, and even after that, will plead again and again: "Lord, send me back to the world: I will no more disobey Thee: I will now do righteous deeds." See Al-An'ām (VI): 27, 28, Al-A'arāf (VII): 53, Ibrāhīm (XIV): 44, 45, Ash-Shu'arā' (XXVI): 102, Al-Fāṭir (XXXV): 37, Az-Zumar (XXXIX): 58, 59, Al-Mu'min (XL): 10-12, and Ash-Shūrā (XLII): 44 along with the relevant E.N.'s.

91. That is, "He will never be sent back nor given another opportunity, for in that case the test and trial for which man is sent in this world becomes meaningless." For further explanation, see Al-Baqarah (II): 210 and E. N. 228 thereof, and E.N.'s 6, 139, 140 of Al-An'ām (VI) and E.N. 26 of Yūnus (X).

92. That is, "Now, when he has met his doom, he has nothing more to say than that he should be sent back to the world; so let him say what he likes; he will never be allowed to go back."

93. That is, "Now there is a 'barrier' between them and the world, which will not allow them to go back to it. Therefore they shall remain in that state up to the Day of Resurrection."

94. It does not mean that the father will not remain "father" and the son will not remain "son", etc.. It only means that they will not be able to help each other, nor shall they be able to enquire about each other as father and son, for each one will be worried and anxious about his own plight. See also Al-Ma'ārij (LXX): 10-14, and 'Abasa (LXXX: 34-37.

95. That is, those whose good deeds will be heavy and will out-weigh their evil deeds.

96. For the criterion of "success" and "failure" in the Hereafter, please refer to E.N.'s 1 and 50 above.

97. The word *kâlih* means a face whose skin has been removed so as to expose the jaws. When somebody asked Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd the meaning of *kālih*, he said, "Haven't you seen the scorched head of a slaughtered animal?"

98. "...do not speak to Me" "...do not plead your case with Me." According to some traditions, these will be their last words and they shall never be allowed to speak again, but this is contradicted by the Qur'ān itself in the succeeding verses. Therefore, it only means this that they will not be able to plead their case again.

99. This is again a reference to those who will deserve success or be doomed to failure in the Hereafter.

100. For explanation, see Ṭā Hā (XX): 103 and E.N. 80 thereof.

101. That is, "Our Messengers warned you that the life in this world is transitory and is for test and trial, but you did not realize it then and denied that there was any life in the Hereafter and behaved in accordance with that belief."

102. The Arabic word *'abathan* in the Text also means "for the sake of sport". Then the verse will mean: "Did you think that We had created you merely for the sake of sport and there was no purpose behind your creation ? Therefore you may eat, drink, be merry and enjoy yourself as you please."

103. Allah is above this that He should create you without any purpose and that you may associate partners with Him with impunity.

104. It may also be translated as: "The one who invokes any other deity along with Allah, has nothing to support him in this act."

105. That is, he cannot escape accountability.

106. Again, the reference is to those who will attain true success and to those who will be deprived of it.

107. Compare and contrast this "prayer" with verse 109. Here the Holy Prophet has been told to make the same prayer as contained in verse 109, as if to say, "You (and your followers) should supplicate Allah with the same prayer so that, if the people scoff at you, they themselves might provide a proof of a strong case against themselves."


XXIV
AL-NŪR
اَلنُّور

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXIV
AL-NŪR
سُورَةُ النور

INTRODUCTION

Name

This Sūrah takes its name, An-Nūr, from verse 35.

Period of Revelation

The consensus of opinion is that it was sent down after the Campaign against Banī al-Muṣṭaliq and this is confirmed by vv. 11-20 that deal with the incident of the "Slander", which occurred during that Campaign. But there is a difference of opinion as to whether this Campaign took place in 5 A.H. before the Battle of the Trench or in 6 A.H. after it. It is important to decide this issue in order to determine whether this Sūrah was sent down earlier or Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb (XXXIII), which is the only other Sūrah containing the Commandments about the observance of purdah by women. Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb was admittedly sent down on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench. Now if this Battle occurred earlier, it would mean that the initial instructions in connection with the Commandments of purdah were sent down in Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb and they were complemented later by the Commandments revealed in this Sūrah. On the other hand, if the Campaign against Banī al-Muṣṭaliq occurred earlier, the chronological order of the Commandments would be reversed, and it would become difficult to understand the legal wisdom and implications of the Commandments of purdah.

According to Ibn Sa'd, the Campaign against Banī al-Muṣṭaliq took place in Sha'bān, 5 A.H. and the Battle of the Trench in Zil-Qa'dah the same year. This opinion is based on some traditions from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah about the events connected with the "Slander" in which she

refers to a dispute between Hadrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah and Sa'd bin Mu'āz. Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Mu'āz, according to authentic traditions, died during the Campaign against Banī Quraizah, which took place immediately after the Battle of the Trench. It is, therefore, evident that he could not be present in 6 A.H. to take part in a dispute about the "Slander".

On the other hand, Muḥammad bin Ishāq says that the Battle of the Trench took place in Shawwāl 5 A.H. and the Campaign against Banī al-Muṣṭaliq in Sha'bān 6 A.H. This opinion is supported by many authentic traditions from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and others. According to these traditions, (1) the Commandments about purdah had been sent down in Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb before the incident of the "Slander", (2) the Holy Prophet had married Ḥaḍrat Zainab in Zil-Qa'dah 5 A.H. after the Battle of the Trench, (3) Ḥamnah, sister of Ḥaḍrat Zainab, had taken a leading part in spreading the "Slander", just because Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah was a rival of her sister. All this evidence supports the view of Muḥammad bin Ishāq.

Now let us consider the two opinions a little more closely. The only argument in favour of the first opinion is the mention of the presence of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Mu'āz in a dispute connected with the incident of the "Slander". But this argument is weakened by some other traditions from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, in which she mentions Ḥaḍrat Usaid bin Ḥudair instead of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Mu'āz in this dispute. It may, therefore, be assumed that there has been some confusion regarding the two names in reporting the traditions. Moreover, if we accept the first opinion, just because of the mention of the name of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Mu'āz in some traditions, we encounter other difficulties that cannot be resolved in any way. For, in that case, we shall have to admit that the revelation of the Commandments of purdah and the Holy Prophet's marriage with Ḥaḍrat Zainab had taken place even earlier than the Battle of the Trench. But we learn from the Qur'ān and many authentic traditions that both these events happened after that Battle and the Campaign against Banī Quraizah. That is why Ibn Hazm, Ibn Qayyim and some other eminent scholars have held the opinion of Muḥammad bin Isḥāq as correct, and we also hold it to be so. Thus, we conclude that Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb was sent down earlier than Sūrah An-Nūr, which

was revealed in the latter half of 6 A.H. several months after Sūrah Al-Aḥzab.

Historical Background

Now let us review the circumstances existing at the time of the revelation of this Sūrah. It should be kept in mind that the incident of the "Slander", which was the occasion of its revelation, was closely connected with the conflict between Islam and the disbelievers.

After the victory at Badr, the Islamic movement began to gain strength day by day; so much so that by the time of the Battle of the Trench, it had become so strong that the united forces of the enemy numbering about ten thousand failed to crush it and had to raise the siege of Al-Madinah after one month. It meant, and both the parties understood it well, that the war of aggression which the disbelievers had been waging for several years, had come to an end. The Holy Prophet himself declared: "After this year, the Quraish will not be able to attack you: now you will take the offensive."

When the disbelievers realized that they could not defeat Islam on the battlefield, they chose the moral front to carry on the conflict. It cannot be said with certainty whether this change of tactics was the outcome of deliberate consultations, or it was the inevitable result of the humiliating retreat in the Battle of the Trench, for which all the available forces of the enemy had been concentrated. They knew it well that the rise of Islam was not due to the numerical strength of the Muslims nor to their superior arms and ammunition nor to their greater material resources: nay; the Muslims were fighting against fearful odds on all these fronts. They owed their success to their moral superiority. Their enemies realized that the pure and noble qualities of the Holy Prophet and his followers were capturing the hearts of the people, and were also binding them together into a highly disciplined community. As a result of this, they were defeating the *mushriks* and the Jews both on the peace and on the war fronts, because the latter lacked discipline and character.

Under the above-mentioned circumstances, the wicked designs of the disbelievers led them to start a campaign of vilification against the Holy Prophet and the Muslims in order to destroy the bulwark of morale that was helping them to defeat their enemies. Therefore the strategy was to attain the assistance of the hypocrites to spread slanders against

the Holy Prophet and his followers so that the *mushriks* and the Jews could exploit these to sow the seeds of discord among the Muslims and undermine their discipline.

The first opportunity for the use of the new strategy was afforded in Zil-Qa'dah 5 A.H. when the Holy Prophet married Hadrat Zainab (daughter of Jahsh), who was the divorced wife of his adopted son, Zaid bin Hārithah. The Holy Prophet had arranged this marriage in order to put an end to the custom of ignorance, which gave the same status to the adopted son that was the right only of the son from one's own loins. The hypocrites, however, considered it a golden opportunity to vilify the Holy Prophet from inside the community, and the Jews and the *mushriks* exploited it from outside to ruin his high reputation by this malicious slander. For this purpose fantastic stories were concocted and spread to this effect: "One day Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) happened to see the wife of his adopted son and fell in love with her; he manoeuvred her divorce and married her." Though this was an absurd fiction it was spread with such skill, cunning and artfulness that it succeeded in its purpose; so much so that some Muslim traditionists and commentators also have cited some parts of it in their writings, and the orientalists have exploited these fully to vilify the Holy Prophet. As a matter of fact, Hadrat Zainab was never a stranger to the Holy Prophet that he should see her by chance and fall in love with her at first sight. For she was his first cousin, being the daughter of his real paternal aunt, Umaimah, daughter of 'Abdul Muttalib. He had known her from her childhood to her youth. A year before this incident, he himself had persuaded her against her will to marry Hadrat Zaid in order to demonstrate practically that the Quraish and the liberated slaves were equal as human beings. As she never reconciled herself to her marriage with a liberated slave, they could not pull on together for long, which inevitably led to her divorce. The above-mentioned facts were well known to all, yet the slanderers succeeded in their false propaganda with the result that even today there are people who exploit these things to defame Islam.

The second slander was made on the honour of Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, a wife of the Holy Prophet, in connection with an incident which occurred while he was returning from the Campaign against Banī al-

Muṣṭaliq. As this attack was even severer than the first one and was the main background of this Sūrah, we shall deal with it in greater detail.

Let us say a few words about 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, who played the part of a villain in this attack. He belonged to the clan of Khazraj and was one of the most important chiefs of Al-Madīnah. The people had even intended to make him their king a little before the Holy Prophet's migration there, but the scheme had to be dropped because of the changed circumstances. Though he had embraced Islam, he remained at heart a hypocrite and his hypocrisy was so manifest that he was called the "Chief of the Hypocrites". He never lost any opportunity to slander Islam in order to take his revenge.

Now the main theme. When in Sha'bān 6 A.H. the Holy Prophet learnt that the people of Banī al-Muṣṭaliq were making preparations for a war against the Muslims and were trying to muster other clans also for this purpose, he forestalled and took the enemy by surprise. After capturing the people of the clan and their belongings, the Holy Prophet made a halt near Muraisi', a spring in their territory. One day a dispute concerning taking water from the spring started between a servant of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar and an ally of the clan of Khazraj, and developed into a quarrel between the Muhājirs (immigrants) and the Anṣār (Muslims of Madīnah), but was soon settled. This, however, did not suit the strategy of 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, who also had joined the expedition with a large number of hypocrites. So he began to incite the Anṣār, saying, "You yourselves brought these people of the Quraish from Makkah and made them partners in your wealth and property. And now they have become your rivals and want domination over you. If even now you withdraw your support from them, they shall be forced to leave your city." Then he swore and declared, "As soon as we reach back Al-Madīnah, the respectable people will turn out the degraded people from the city."[1]

When the Holy Prophet came to know of this, he ordered the people to set off immediately and march back to Al-Madīnah. The forced march continued up to noon the next day without a halt on the way so that the people became exhausted and had no time for idle talk.

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1. These words of his have been cited in the Qur'ān: LXIII: 8.

Though this wise judgment and quick action by the Holy Prophet averted the undesirable consequences of the mischief, 'Abdullah bin Ubayy got another opportunity for doing a far more serious and greater mischief, i.e. by engineering a "Slander" against Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, for that was a mischief which might well have involved the young Muslim Community in a civil war, if the Holy Prophet and his sincere and devoted followers had not shown wisdom, forbearance and marvellous discipline in dealing with it. In order to understand the events that led to the incident of the "Slander", we cite the story in Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah's own words. She says:

"Whenever the Holy Prophet went out on a journey, he decided by lots[1] as to which of his wives should accompany him. Accordingly, it was decided that I should accompany him during the expedition to Banī al-Muṣṭaliq. On the return journey, the Holy Prophet halted for the night at a place which was the last stage on the way back to Al-Madīnah. It was still night, when they began to make preparations for the march. So I went outside the camp to ease myself. When I returned and came near my halting place, I noticed that my necklace had fallen down somewhere. I went back in search of it but in the meantime the caravan moved off and I was left behind all alone. The four carriers of the litter had placed it on my camel without noticing that it was empty. This happened because of my light weight due to lack of food in those days. I wrapped myself in my sheet and lay down in the hope that when it would be found that I had been left behind, a search party would come back to pick me up. In the meantime I fell asleep. In the morning, when Ṣafwān bin Mu'aṭṭal Sulamī[2] passed that way, he saw me and recognised

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1. The *Sharī'ah* has allowed to decide a matter by drawing lots when the lawful rights of several persons are equal and there is no reason to prefer one to the other but the right can be given to only one of them. Obviously this is not so in a lottery.

2. Safwan was one of those Companions, who had taken part in the Battle of Badr. He might have remained behind because: (1) He was in the habit of over-sleeping even after sunrise according to some traditions, or (2) which is more likely, he had been instructed by the Holy Prophet to remain behind to make a search for anything that might have been left in the camping ground because of darkness.

me for he had seen me several times before the Commandment about purdah had been sent down. No sooner did he see me than he stopped his camel and cried out spontaneously: "How sad ! the wife of the Holy Prophet has been left here!" At this I woke up all of a sudden and covered my face with my sheet. Without uttering another word, he made his camel kneel by me and stood aside, while I climbed on to the camel back. He led the camel by the nose-string and we overtook the caravan at about noon, when it had just halted and nobody had yet noticed that I had been left behind. I learnt afterwards that this incident had been used to slander me and 'Abdullah bin Ubayy was foremost among the slanderers. (According to other traditions, when Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah reached the camp on the camel, led by Ṣafwān, and it was known that she had been left behind, 'Abdullah bin Ubayy cried out, 'By God, she could not have remained chaste. Look, there comes the wife of your Prophet openly on the camel led by the person with whom she passed the night.')

"When I reached Al-Madīnah, I fell ill and stayed in bed for more than a month. Though I was quite unaware of it, the news of the "Slander" was spreading like a scandal in the city, and had also reached the Holy Prophet. Anyhow, I noticed that he did not seem as concerned about my illness as he used to be. He would come but without addressing me directly, would inquire from others how I was and leave the house. Therefore it troubled my mind that something had gone wrong somewhere. So I took leave of him and went to my mother's house for better nursing.

"While I was there, one night I went out of the city to ease myself in the company of Mistah's mother, who was a first cousin of my father. As she was walking along she stumbled over something and cried out spontaneously, 'May Miṣṭaḥ perish!' To this I retorted, 'What a good mother you are that you curse your own son-the son who took part in the Battle of Badr.' She replied, 'My dear daughter, are you not aware of his scandal-mongering?' Then she told me everything about the campaign of the "Slander". (Besides the hypocrites, some true Muslims also had been involved in this campaign, and among them who took leading part in it, were Miṣṭaḥ, Ḥassān bin Thābit, the famous poet of Islam, and Ḥamnah, daughter of Jahsh and sister of Ḥaḍrat Zainab). Hearing this horrible story, my blood curdled, and I immediately returned home, and passed the rest of the night in crying over it.

"During my absence the Holy Prophet took counsel with 'Ali and Usāmah bin Zaid about this matter. Usāmah said good words about me to this effect: 'O Messenger of Allah, we have found nothing but good in your wife. All that is being spread about her is a lie and calumny.' As regards 'Ali, he said, 'O Messenger of Allah, there is no dearth of women; you may, if you like, marry another wife. If, however, you would like to investigate into the matter, you may send for her maid-servant and enquire into it through her.' Accordingly, the maid-servant was sent for and questioned. She replied, 'I declare on an oath by Allah, Who has sent you with the Truth, that I have never seen any evil thing in her, except that she falls asleep when I tell her to look after the kneaded dough in my absence and a goat comes and eats it.'

"On that same day the Holy Prophet addressed the people from the pulpit, saying: 'O Muslims, who from among you will defend my honour against the attacks of the person who has transgressed all bounds in doing harm to me by slandering my wife. By God, I have made a thorough enquiry and found nothing wrong with her nor with the man, whose name has been linked with the "Slander". ' At this Usaid bin Ḥudair (or Sa'd bin Mu'āz[1] according to other traditions) stood up and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, if that person belongs to our clan, we will kill him by ourselves, but if he belongs to the Khazraj clan, we will kill him if you order us to do so.' Hearing this Sa'd bin 'Ubādah,[2] chief of

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1. Most probably the reason why some traditionists have named Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Mu'az in this connection is that 'Ā'ishah might have simply mentioned the person as the "chief of the Aus clan" and they thought it was Sa'd bin Mu'āz, though he had died before this incident and had been succeeded by Ḥaḍrat Usaid bin Ḥudair as the chief of Aus.

2. Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah was a righteous and sincere Muslim and a devoted follower of the Holy Prophet and was one of those prominent persons, who helped spread Islam in Al-Madīnah. But in spite of all his virtues, he was strongly prejudiced in his attachment to his own clan. That is why he defended 'Abdullah bin Ubayy only because he belonged to his clan. This prejudice clung to him till his death. On the day of the conquest of Makkah, he said, "This is the day of killing in this inviolable place." At this the Holy Prophet was much annoyed and took the banner back from him. The same was the reason why he alone did not acknowledge Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr, a Quraish, as

the Khazraj clan, stood up and said, 'You lie! you can never kill him. You are saying this just because the person belongs to our clan of Khazraj. Had he belonged to your clan, you would never have said so.' Ḥaḍrat Usaid retorted, 'You are a hypocrite: that is why you are defending a hypocrite.' At this, there was a general turmoil in the mosque, which would have developed into a riot, even though the Holy Prophet was present there the whole time. But he cooled down their anger and came down from the pulpit."

The remaining details of the incident will be cited along with our commentary on the Text, which honourably absolved Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah from the blame. But here we would only want to point out the enormity of the mischief that was engineered by 'Abdullah bin Ubayy: (1) It implied an attack on the honour of the Holy Prophet and Ḥaḍrat Abu Bakr Siddīq. (2) He meant to undermine the high moral superiority which was the greatest asset of the Islamic Movement. (3) He intended to ignite civil war between the Muhājirs and the Ansār, and between Aus and Khazraj, the two clans of the Anṣār.

Theme and Topics

This Sūrah and vv. 28-73 of Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb (of which this is the sequel) were sent down to strengthen the moral front, which at that time was the main target of the attack, vv. 28-73 of Al-Aḥzāb were sent down concerning the Holy Prophet's marriage with Ḥaḍrat Zainab, and on the occasion of the second attack (the "Slander" about Hadrat 'Ā'ishah), Sūrah An-Nūr was sent down to repair the cracks that had appeared in the unity of the Muslim Community. If we keep this in view during the study of the two Sūrahs, we shall understand the wisdom that underlies the Commandments about purdah. Allah sent the following instructions to strengthen and safeguard the moral front, and to counteract the storm of propaganda that was raised on the occasion of the marriage of Ḥaḍrat Zainab:

(1) The wives of the Holy Prophet were enjoined to remain within their private quarters, to avoid display of adornments and to be cautious in their talk with other persons (vv. 32, 33).

Caliph after the death of the Holy Prophet although everybody else from among the Muhajirs and Ansār took the oath of allegiance to him.

(2) The other Muslims were forbidden to enter the private rooms of the Holy Prophet and instructed to ask whatever they wanted from behind the curtain. (v. 53).

(3) A line of demarcation was drawn between the *maḥram* and the non-*maḥram* relatives. Only the former were allowed to enter the private rooms of those wives of the Holy Prophet with whom they were so closely related as to prohibit marriage with them. (v. 55).

(4) The Muslims were told that the wives of the Prophet were prohibited for them just like their own real mothers; therefore every Muslim should regard them with the purest of intentions. (vv. 53,54).

(5) The Muslims were warned that they would invite the curse and scourge of Allah if they offended the Holy Prophet. Likewise it was a heinous sin to attack the honour of or slander any Muslim man or woman. (vv. 57, 58).

(6) All the Muslim women were enjoined to cover their faces with their sheets if and when they had to go out of their houses. (v. 59).

On the occasion of the second attack, this Sūrah was sent down to keep pure and strengthen the moral fibre of the Muslim society, which had been shaken by the enormity of the slander. We give below a summary of the Commandments and instructions in their chronological order so that one may understand how the Qur'ān makes use of the psychological occasion to reform the Community by the adoption of legal, moral and social measures.

(1) Fornication which had already been declared to be a social crime (IV: 15, 16) was now made a criminal offence and was to be punished with a hundred lashes.

(2) It was enjoined to boycott the adulterous men and women and the Muslims were forbidden to have any marriage relations with them.

(3) The one, who accused the other of adultery but failed to produce four witnesses, was to be punished with eighty lashes.

(4) The Law of *Li'ān* was prescribed to decide the charge of adultery against his own wife by a husband.

(5) The Muslims were enjoined to learn a lesson from the incident of the "Slander" about Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, as if to say, "You should be very cautious in regard to charges of adultery against the people of good reputation, and should not spread these; nay, you should refute and suppress them immediately." In this connection, a general principle was enunciated that the proper spouse for a pure man is a pure woman, for he cannot pull on with a wicked woman for long, and the same is the case with a pure woman, as if to say, "When you knew that the Holy Prophet was a pure man, nay, the purest of all human beings, how could you believe that he had experienced happiness with a wicked woman and exalted her as the most beloved of his wives? For it was obvious that an adulterous woman could not have been able to deceive, with her affected behaviour, a pure man like the Holy Prophet. You ought also to have considered the fact that the accuser was a mean person while the accused was a pure woman. This should have been enough to convince you that the accusation was not worth your consideration; nay, it was not even conceivable.

(6) Those who spread news and evil rumours and propagate wickedness in the Muslim Community, deserve punishment and not encouragement.

(7) A general principle was laid down that relations in the Muslim Community should be based on good faith and not on suspicion: everyone should be treated as innocent unless he is proved to be guilty and *vice versa*.

(8) The people were forbidden to enter the houses of others unceremoniously and were instructed to take permission for this.

(9) Both men and women were instructed to lower their gaze and forbidden to cast glances or make eyes at each other.

(10) Women were enjoined to cover their heads and breasts even inside their houses.

(11) Women were forbidden to appear with make-up before other men except their servants or such relatives with whom their marriage is prohibited.

(12) They were enjoined to hide their make-ups when they went out of their houses, and even forbidden to put on jingling ornaments, while they moved out of their houses.

(13) Marriage was encouraged and enjoined even for slaves and slave-girls, for unmarried people help spread indecency

(14) The institution of slavery was discouraged and the owners and other people were enjoined to give financial help to the slaves to earn their freedom under the law of *Mukātabat*.

(15) Prostitution by slave-girls was forbidden in the first instance, for prostitution in Arabia was confined to this class alone. This in fact implied the legal prohibition of prostitution.

(16) Sanctity of privacy in home life was enjoined even for servants and under-age children including one's own. They were enjoined not to enter the private rooms of any man or woman without permission, especially in the morning, at noon and at night.

(17) Old women were given the concession that they could set aside their head-covers within their houses but should refrain from display of adornments. Even they were told that it was better for them to keep themselves covered with head-wrappers.

(18) The blind, lame, crippled and sick persons were allowed to take any article of food from the houses of other people without permission, for it was not to be treated like theft and cheating, which are cognizable offences.

(19) On the other hand, the Muslims were encouraged to develop mutual relationships by taking their meals together, and the nearest relatives and intimate friends were allowed to take their meals in each other's house without any formal invitation. This was to produce mutual affection and sincere relationships between them to counteract any future mischief. Side by side with these instructions, clear signs of the Believers and the hypocrites were stated to enable every Muslim to discriminate between the two. At the same time the Community was bound

together by adopting disciplinary measures in order to make it stronger and firmer than it was at the time so as to discourage the enemies from creating mischief in it.

Above all, the most conspicuous thing about this discourse is that it is free from the bitterness which inevitably follows such shameful and absurd attacks. Instead of showing any wrath at this provocation, the discourse prescribes some laws and regulations and enjoins reformative commandments and issues wise instructions that were required at the time for the education and training of the Community. Incidentally, this teaches us how to deal with such provocative mischiefs coolly, wisely and generously. At the same time, it is a clear proof that this is not the word of Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) but of a Being Who is observing all human conditions and affairs from the highest level, and guiding mankind without any personal prejudices, feelings and leanings. Had this been the word of the Holy Prophet; there would have been at least some tinge of natural bitterness in spite of his great generosity and forbearance, for it is but human that a noble man naturally becomes enraged when his own honour is attacked in this mean manner.



سُوْرَةٌ اَنْزَلْنٰهَا وَفَرَضْنٰهَا وَاَنْزَلْنَا فِيْهَآ اٰيٰتٍۢ بَيِّنٰتٍ لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ۝١
اَلزَّانِيَةُ وَالزَّانِيْ فَاجْلِدُوْا كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ مِّنْهُمَا مِائَةَ جَلْدَةٍ ۖ وَّلَا تَاْخُذْكُمْ
بِهِمَا رَاْفَةٌ فِيْ دِيْنِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْاٰخِرِ ۚ وَلْيَشْهَدْ
عَذَابَهُمَا طَآئِفَةٌ مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۝٢ اَلزَّانِيْ لَا يَنْكِحُ اِلَّا زَانِيَةً اَوْ مُشْرِكَةً ۖ
وَّالزَّانِيَةُ لَا يَنْكِحُهَآ اِلَّا زَانٍ اَوْ مُشْرِكٌ ۚ وَحُرِّمَ ذٰلِكَ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۝٣ وَ
الَّذِيْنَ يَرْمُوْنَ الْمُحْصَنٰتِ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَاْتُوْا بِاَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَآءَ فَاجْلِدُوْهُمْ ثَمٰنِيْنَ
جَلْدَةً وَّلَا تَقْبَلُوْا لَهُمْ شَهَادَةً اَبَدًا ۚ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُوْنَ ۝٤ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ
تَابُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ وَاَصْلَحُوْا ۚ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ۝٥ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَرْمُوْنَ
اَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُمْ شُهَدَآءُ اِلَّآ اَنْفُسُهُمْ فَشَهَادَةُ اَحَدِهِمْ اَرْبَعُ
شَهٰدٰتٍۭ بِاللّٰهِ ۙ اِنَّهٗ لَمِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ۝٦ وَالْخَامِسَةُ اَنَّ لَعْنَتَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ

XXIV
AL-NŪR
اَلنُّور

Verses: 64 *Revealed at Al-Madīnah*

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

This is a Sūrah which We have sent down and We have made it mandatory, and We have sent down clear Commandments in it[1] so that you may learn lessons. 1

The woman and the man guilty of fornication, flog each one of them with a hundred stripes,[2] and let not any pity for them restrain you in regard to a matter prescribed by Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day,[3] and let some of the believers witness the punishment inflicted on them.[4] 2

A man guilty of adultery (or fornication) shall not marry any but the woman guilty of the same or a *mushrik* woman, and none shall marry a woman guilty of adultery (or fornication) but the man guilty of the same or a *mushrik* man; such marriages are forbidden to true believers.[5] 3

As for those persons who charge chaste women with false accusations but do not produce four witnesses, flog them with eighty stripes and never accept their evidence afterwards, for they themselves are transgressors, except those who repent and reform themselves; Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.[6] 4-5

As for those who accuse their own wives but have no witness except themselves, the evidence of one of them is that he shall swear four times by Allah and declare that he is true (in his charge). Then the fifth time he shall declare that Allah's curse be upon him if he be false (in his charge). 6-7

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1. In all these sentences the emphasis is on "We", which implies that it is Allah Who has revealed this and none else; therefore, "You should not treat these

instructions lightly like the word of an ordinary preacher. You should note it well that these have been sent down by One Who controls your lives and destinies and from Whom you can never escape even after your death."

The second sentence emphasizes that the instructions sent down in this Sūrah are not of the nature of advice which you may accept or reject at will. These are mandatory Commandments which must be obeyed. If you are a believer and a true Muslim you are obliged to act upon them.

The third sentence states that the instructions given in this Sūrah are free from any ambiguity and are couched in clear and plain words. Therefore, you cannot put up the excuse that you could not act upon them as you did not understand them.

This is the 'Preamble' of this blessed Message after which the specific Commandments follow. The tone of the preamble itself indicates the great importance which Allah has attached to the Commandments contained in Sūrah An-Nūr. The preamble of no other Sūrah containing Commandments is so forceful as this.

2. There are various legal, moral and historical aspects of this problem which need explanation, for if these are not clarified in detail, the modern man will find it difficult to understand the Divine Law concerning it. Accordingly, we shall discuss the various aspects of the problem below:

(1) The common meaning of *zinā* which everyone knows is: "Sexual intercourse between a man and a woman without the legal relationship of husband and wife existing between them." There has been complete unanimity of view among all the social systems from the earliest times to this day that this act is morally wicked, religiously sinful and socially evil and objectionable, and there has been no dissenting voice except from those stray individuals who have subordinated their moral sense to their lust, or who in their misguided notions try to be "original" and "philosophical" in their approach. The universal unanimity of view in this respect is due to the fact that man by nature abhors *zinā*. In fact, the future of human race and civilization depends on this that the relationship between the husband and wife should be built upon the basis of an enduring and everlasting bond of fidelity, which should not only be fully recognized in the social life but should also be guaranteed by the existing social structure. Without this the human race cannot survive. This is because the human child requires years of tender care and training for its survival and development and a woman alone cannot bear the burden without the cooperation of the man who became the cause of the birth of

the child. Similarly human civilization itself is the product of the corporate life of a man and a woman, their setting up a home, bringing up a family, and establishing mutual relationships and inter-connections between families. If men and women were to lose sight of this essential fact, that is, the establishment of a home and raising a family, and were to meet freely just for pleasure and lust, the entire structure of human society would crumble. In fact, the very foundations on which the structure of human civilization and culture has been built will topple down and the whole basis of the concept of a social life will disappear. It is for these reasons that free mixing of men and women, without any recognized and stable bonds of fidelity, is abhorrent to human nature, and it is for this reason that in every age *zinā* has been considered as a moral evil and, in religious terminology, a grave sin. Accordingly, the social systems in every age recognised and adopted the institution of marriage and also adopted preventive measures against adultery or fornication. The forms of the measures adopted in this direction have, however, differed under different social, cultural and religious systems. This difference has been the result of the realization of the disastrous effects of adultery (or fornication) in varying degrees: some societies have considered it to be more heinous than others, and some have conceived it clearly and some others not so clearly and confused it with other problems.

(2) Though adultery (or fornication) has always been accepted as an evil, opinion has differed as to whether it is legally a punishable offense or not, and this is where Islam differs from other religions and systems of law. Social systems which have been akin to human nature have always considered illicit intercourse between man and woman a serious crime and prescribed severe punishments for it. But with the deterioration in moral standards, this morality grew weaker and weaker and the attitude towards this crime became more and more tolerant.

The first common lapse in this connection was caused by the invidious distinction between fornication and adultery. The former as such was taken as an ordinary offense while the latter only was held as a punishable crime.

Zinā, as defined under various laws, means "sexual intercourse between a man (whether married or bachelor) and a woman, who is not the wife of anybody." This definition takes into account the position of the woman rather than of the man. If a woman is without a husband, the illicit intercourse with her amounts to fornication irrespective of the fact whether the man is married or not. The ancient laws of Egypt, Babylon, Assyria and India provided very light punishments for it, and the same were adopted by the Greeks and the Romans.

which finally influenced the Jewish attitude. According to the Bible, only monetary compensation is payable for such an offense. The Commandment on the subject is as follows:

"And if a man entice a maid that is not betrothed, and lie with her, he shall surely endow her to be his wife. If her father utterly refuses to give her unto him, he shall pay money according to the dowry of virgins." (Exod. 22: 16,17)

The same Commandment is repeated in different words in Deuteronomy, which is as below:

"If a man finds a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with, and they be found; Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver (about fifty-five rupees), and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her." (Deut. 22: 28, 29).

Under the Jewish law, if a priest's daughter acts immorally, she is to be sentenced to burning and the man with whom she was alleged to have acted immorally was to suffer strangulation. (Everyman's Talmud, pp. 319, 320).

To judge the extent to which this conception resembles that of the Hindus, it will be worthwhile to compare it with the laws of Manu. According to him, "Anybody who commits illicit intercourse with an unmarried girl of his own caste with her consent does not deserve any punishment. If the father of the girl is willing, the man should compensate him and marry the girl. But if the girl happens to belong to a higher caste and the man belongs to a lower caste, the girl should be turned out from her parents' house and the limbs of the man should be cut off." (Adhiai 8. Ashlok 365, 366). This punishment may be changed into burning him alive, if the girl happens to be a Brahman. (Ashlok 377).

Under all these laws, illicit intercourse with a married woman only was the real and major crime. The deciding factor for treating it as a crime was not the illicit relationship between the man and the woman but the likelihood of an awkward situation under which a child might have to be reared up by a man (the real husband of the woman), who was not its father. It was therefore not the act of *zinā* itself but the danger of the mixing up of progenies and the problem of rearing up somebody else's child at the expense of another and a possibility of its inheriting his property, that was the real basis of treating it as a crime and holding both the man and the woman as criminals. Under the Egyptian law, the man was to receive a severe beating with sticks and the nose of the woman was to be cut off. Similar punishments existed in Babylon, Assyria and Iran. According to the Hindus, the woman was to be thrown to the dogs to be torn apart and the man was to be put on a hot iron bed with fire all around him to burn him alive. At first the Greek and the Roman laws gave a man the right to kill his wife if he found her

involved in adultery. He had also the option to demand monetary compensation. In the first century B.C. Augustus Caesar enacted that half the property of the man should be confiscated and he should be exiled. In case of the woman, half her dowry should be written off and one-third of her assets confiscated, and she should also be sent out to a distant part of the country. Constantine changed this law and imposed death penalty both for the man and for the woman. In the times of Leo and Marcian, this punishment was changed to imprisonment for life. Justinian further reduced the punishment and ordered that the woman should be flogged with stripes and sent to a monastery and the husband should be given the right to take her out within two years if he liked, otherwise she was to remain there for ever.

Under the Jewish law, the orders for illicit intercourse with a married woman are as under:

"And whosoever lieth carnally with a woman, that is a bondmaid, betrothed to an husband, and not at all redeemed, nor freedom given her, she shall be scourged; they shall not be put to death, because she was not free." (Leviticus 19: 20).

"And the man that committeth adultery with *another* man's wife, *even he* that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death." (Leviticus 20: 10).

"If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, *both* the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel." (Deuteronomy 22: 22).

"If a damsel *that is* a virgin be betrothed unto an husband and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, *being* in the city, and the man, because he had humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you. But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the man only that lay with her shall die: But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; *there is* in the damsel no sin worthy of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so is this matter." (Deuteronomy 22: 23-26).

However, long before the advent of Christ, the Jewish jurists and scholars, the rich and the poor, had practically ceased to observe these laws. Though it was written in the Old Testament, and it was considered as a Divine Commandment, nobody was inclined to apply it practically; in the entire Jewish history, there is not a single instance where this commandment was ever enforced. When Jesus Christ embarked upon his prophetic mission, and invited the people to the eternal truth, the learned Jews, seeing that there was no way to stop the tide, brought a

woman guilty of adultery before him and asked him to decide her case. (John 8: 1-11). Their object was to create a dilemma for Christ and to tempt and embarrass him. If he decided in favour of any punishment other than stoning, they would vilify him saying, "Here comes a strange Prophet who has changed the Divine Law for the sake of worldly considerations." And if he were to give the verdict of stoning, this would, on the one hand, bring him in direct clash with the Roman law, and on the other, give them the opportunity to tell the people, "Look! Will you believe in a Prophet who will expose you to all the severities of the Torah?" But Jesus turned the tables on them with one sentence, saying: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." This put the jurists to shame and they departed one by one in humiliation, and the moral degeneration of the learned in law was totally exposed. When the woman was left alone, Jesus admonished her and after her repentance let her go. Jesus did this because he was neither a judge of any court competent to decide the case, nor any evidence had been produced against her, nor was there any government to enforce the Divine Law.

On the basis of this incident and some miscellaneous sayings of Jesus on different occasions, the Christians formed an utterly erroneous conception about the crime of *zinā*. According to them, illicit intercourse between an unmarried man and an unmarried woman is a sin but not a punishable offence. But if either of them (or both) is married, adultery is treated as a crime. It is so not because of the illicit intercourse as such but because of the vow of fidelity taken by each of them before the priest at the altar. Nevertheless, there is no punishment even for this, except that the wife has the right to sue her adulterous husband and claim separation for having violated the vow of fidelity. On the other side, the husband of the adulterous woman can also sue his wife for separation and can also claim compensation from the man who had illicit intercourse with his wife. This is the punishment in the Christian law for adultery. The irony is that even this punishment is a double-edged sword, because a woman, though entitled to separation from her husband by proving his infidelity and getting rid of him cannot remarry under the Christian law. Similarly the husband who sues his wife for infidelity can obtain judicial separation, but cannot remarry. Both the man and the woman who accuse each other of infidelity in a Christian court, will be deprived of the right of remarriage for the rest of their lives.

The Western laws of the modern times, which have also been adopted by the Muslims in various countries, are based on such conceptions. According to them, *zinā* may be an evil, and an immoral and sinful thing, but it is not a crime. It becomes a crime only when illicit intercourse is committed without the consent of the other party. As for adultery by a married man, this only provides a cause for complaint to his wife who may, if she likes, prove it and get a divorce. Similarly in the case of an adulteress, her husband can lodge a complaint against her and

also against the man with whom adultery was committed and can sue both of them to claim divorce from the woman and monetary compensation from the man.

(3) The Islamic Law, in contrast to all these conceptions, holds *zinā* as a punishable crime and its committal by the married person enhances the guilt all the more. This is not so because of the violation of the oath of fidelity taken by the man or the woman nor because of the encroachment on the conjugal rights of the other, but because the criminal resorted to an unlawful method when there existed a lawful method for satisfying his sex desires. The Islamic Law views *zinā* as an act which, if allowed to be indulged in freely, will strike at the very roots of both human race and human civilization. In the interest of the preservation of the human race and the stability of human civilization, it is imperative that relationship between man and woman should be regulated only through lawful and reliable means. And it is not possible to restrain this relationship if opportunities for free mixing of the sexes are allowed to exist, for it cannot be expected from a man or a woman to be prepared to bear the onerous responsibilities of the family life if he or she has the opportunities for the gratification of the sex desires without this. For in that case it will be as meaningless as buying a ticket for a railway journey when people can travel without a ticket as well. A ticket is essential only when travelling without a ticket is declared to be an offence. If somebody is found travelling without a ticket because he cannot afford to buy it, he is a criminal though in a lesser degree. But if a rich man resorts to this, his guilt becomes all the more serious.

(4) Islam does not rely on punitive law alone for saving humanity from the menace of *zinā*. It employs both reformatory and prohibitory measures on a large scale. It has provided legal punishment only as a last resort. Islam does not want that the people should go on committing this crime and getting flogged with stripes day and night. Its real aim is that the people should not commit this crime at all and there should be no occasion to resort to the extreme punishment. For this purpose Islam first of all purifies man: it imbues him with the fear of All-Powerful and All-Knowing Allah; it inculcates in him the sense of accountability for his actions in the Hereafter from which even death cannot release him. It fills him with obligation of obedience to Divine Law which is sure to follow true Faith. Then, it repeatedly warns him that *zinā* and unchastity are heinous crimes, which Allah will call to account with a severe reckoning. This theme occurs again and again in the Qur'ān. Moreover, Islam provides all possible facilities for a man to marry. If he is not satisfied with one wife, he is allowed to take up to four. If the husband and the wife cannot pull on amicably, there are provisions for separation. In case of a

dispute between the two, provision exists for reconciliation through the intervention of the members of the family and failing that through the judicial courts so that they should either reconcile or separate and then remarry wherever they like. All this has been explained in Sūrahs Al-Baqarah, An-Nisā and At-Talāq. In this Sūrah too, it is not considered good and right to remain unmarried and a clear Commandment has been given that marriages should be arranged between unmarried persons and even slaves (men and women) should not be allowed to remain unmarried. Then Islam puts an end to all those factors which allure a man to *zinā* or provide occasions for it. A year before the punishment for *zinā* was prescribed, women were commanded (in Sūrah Al-Ahzāb) to cover themselves with sheets and lower their head-covers over their faces when going out of their houses. The wives of the Holy Prophet (Allah's peace be upon him), who were a model for every Muslim family, were ordered to restrict themselves to their houses with decorum and dignity and not to display their charms and adornments. Moreover, they were required to communicate with men from behind the curtain if there be any need for that. This was a model which was followed by all the believing women who considered the Prophet's wives and daughters patterns of virtue and not the immodest women of the age of 'ignorance'. Similarly, the free mixing of the men and women was discouraged before it was declared as a criminal offence and women were prohibited from going out openly in make-up.

After adopting such measures *zinā* was declared to be a punishable offence and spreading of indecency in any way was also prohibited. Prostitution was legally banned and severe punishment was prescribed for charging men and women with adultery and propagating it without proof. Men were enjoined to restrain their gaze so that unrestricted feasting of eyes should not lead to lust for beauty and further on to illicit love. At the same time women were also enjoined to differentiate between *maḥram* and non-*maḥram* relatives.[1] This enables one to understand the entire scheme of reform, a constituent part of which is the prescribed punishment for *zinā*. This extreme punishment is for those incorrigible persons who persist in resorting to the illegal course for the gratification of their sex desires in spite of all the measures adopted to reform the individual and society. They certainly deserve to be flogged. Punishment of a wicked person serves as a psychological deterrent for those who have similar tendencies. This

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1. *Maḥram* relatives are those between whom marriage is not permissible under the Islamic Law, e.g. father and daughter, uncle and niece, nephew and aunt, and so on. Non-*maḥram* are those between whom marriage is permissible e.g. cousins, *etc.*

punishment is not merely a punishment for the criminal but is a declaration of the policy that the Islamic society has no room for debauchery and people cannot be allowed to live lives of indulgence and pleasures without restraint. If one tries to understand the Islamic scheme of reform from this point of view, one will realize that not a single part of the law can either be dispensed with or amended. Only a fool who assumes the role of a self-styled reformer, without understanding this Divine Law, will ever think of changing it, or a mischievous person, who deliberately wants to alter the very object of the social order designed by Allah, will try to tamper with it.

(5) *Zinā* was declared a culpable act in the third year of Hijrah, but, it was not a "legal" crime at that time; as such the police and the courts were not competent to initiate legal proceedings. It was considered as a social crime against the institution of family. Accordingly the members of the family themselves were competent to punish the accused. The Commandment at that time was that if four men should bear witness to having seen a man and a woman committing *zinā*, both the culprits should get a beating and the woman should be imprisoned in the house. But at the same time there was a suggestion that this Commandment would apply till further orders and that the real law was yet to follow. (See IV: 15). After about two to three years the present Commandment was revealed which cancelled the previous Commandment and declared *zinā* to be a cognizable offence.

(6) The punishment prescribed in this verse (2) is for sexual intercourse between unmarried persons; it does not apply to illicit intercourse after marriage, which is a much graver offence under the Islamic Law. This thing is implied in verses 15 and 25 of An-Nisā (IV) that the punishment being prescribed is for the unmarried offenders:

"If any of your women are guilty of indecency, call four witnesses from among yourselves to testify this. If they give evidence and prove the guilt, then confine them to their houses until death comes to them, or Allah opens some other way out for them." (IV: 15). "Whoso cannot afford to marry free Muslim women, he should marry one of the Muslim slave-girls in your possession; Allah has full knowledge of your Faith. You all belong to one and the same Community; therefore you may marry them with the permission of their guardians and give them their dowries so that they may live a decent life in wedlock and not in licentiousness nor may have secret illicit relations. Then if they are guilty of indecency, after they have been fortified by wedlock, they shall be given half the punishment prescribed for free women." (IV: 25).

Verse 15 held out a hope that Allah would open some other way out for those adulterous women who were to be imprisoned according to the Commandment contained in it. Thus, the Commandment in verse 2 of this Sūrah is

the same which was promised in IV: 15. Then in IV: 25 the punishment for a married slave-girl guilty of adultery has been prescribed. The word *muhsanāt* has been used twice in the same verse in the same context and one will have to concede that it has been used in the same sense at both the places. Now let us consider the sentence: "Whoso cannot afford to marry free Muslim women *(muhsanāt)*...." Obviously a *muhsanah* cannot mean a married woman; it can only mean an unmarried woman of a free family. Then at the end of the verse it has been enjoined that if a slave woman commits adultery after her marriage, she should be given half the punishment prescribed for a free unmarried woman. The context clearly indicates that in this sentence the word *muhsanāt* has the same meaning as in the first sentence, i.e. an unmarried woman, who enjoys the protection of a free family. Thus it is concluded from these two verses of An-Nisā that the Commandment contained in this verse of An-Nūr is the same that was promised in v. 15 of An-Nisā and it prescribes punishment for sexual intercourse between unmarried persons. (Also see E. N. 46 of An-Nisā).

(7) As regards the punishment for adultery after marriage, the Qur'ān does not mention it, but it has been prescribed in the Traditions. We learn from many authentic Traditions that not only did the Holy Prophet prescribe the punishment of stoning to death for it verbally but also enforced it practically in several cases. Then after him his successors not only enforced this punishment during their caliphates but also declared repeatedly that this was the legal punishment. The Companions and their followers were unanimous on this point and there is not a single saying of anyone to suggest that anybody doubted the authenticity of this law during that period. After them the jurists of all ages and countries have been unanimous that this is the legal punishment prescribed by the *Sunnah*, for there have been so many strong and continuous proofs of its authenticity that no scholar can refute them. In the entire history of the Muslims nobody ever denied this except the Kharijites and some Mu'tazilites and even they did not deny it on the ground that there was some weakness in the proof of its having been enjoined by the Holy Prophet, but because they considered it to be "against the Qur'ān". This was, however, due to their lack of understanding the Qur'ān. They argued that by using the words *Az-zāni' waz-zāniyatu* in their general sense the Qur'ān has prescribed a punishment of one hundred stripes for this crime. Therefore, according to them, the only punishment for adultery (or fornication) prescribed in the Qur'ān was this, and to prescribe a different punishment for the married persons who committed adultery would be against the Divine Law. But they forgot that the explanation of the Qur'ānic verses by the Holy Prophet carries the same weight and authority in law as the words of the Qur'ān itself, provided that the explanation is proved to be

from the Holy Prophet. The Qur'ān has used *As-sāriqu was-sāriqatu* in similar general terms and prescribed the punishment of amputation of hands for the thief, both male and female. Now if this Commandment were to be interpreted literally without the limitations authentically emanating from the Holy Prophet, the generality of the words used would demand that every man or woman, who steals a needle or a plum, should be declared to be a thief and his or her hand cut off from the shoulder. On the other hand, if a thief, who has stolen a million rupees, declares on his arrest that he has reformed himself and has repented of theft, he should be let off in accordance with: "But whoso repents after his iniquity and reforms himself, Allah will surely turn towards him with His favour." (IV: 39).

Likewise the Qur'ān forbids marriage only with a foster mother and a foster sister. According to their argument, such a ban should not apply to a foster daughter. The Qur'ān forbids a person to keep two sisters as wives at one and the same time; therefore if a person keeps the aunt (paternal or maternal) and her niece together as wives, he should not be charged with violating the Qur'ānic injunction. Again, the Qur'ān forbids marriage with a step-daughter only when she has been brought up in the house of her step-father; therefore, according to their way of reasoning, the absolute prohibition of marriage with a step-daughter should be regarded as against the Qur'ān. Similarly the Qur'ān allows mortgage only when a man is on a journey and nobody is available to prepare the loan documents; therefore if a person is at home and a scribe is also available, mortgage should be regarded as un-Qur'ānic. Then, the Qur'ān enjoins in general terms: "You should have witnesses whenever you buy or sell goods." Therefore, according to them, all sales and purchases taking place in the markets without witnesses should be unlawful.

These few instances should suffice to prove the error in the reasoning of those who hold the Commandment of stoning to death as against the Qur'ān. Nobody can deny the position and authority of the Prophet in the legal system of Islam. It is he alone who can explain the underlying intention of a Divine Command, its procedures and in what cases it will be applicable and in what there is another injunction. To deny this position and authority of the Prophet is not only against the principles of Islam but it also entails innumerable complications in practice.

(8) There is a difference of opinion among the jurists about the legal definition of *zinā*. According to the *Ḥanafīs*, it means frontal sexual intercourse of a man with a woman who is neither his wife nor his bondwoman, nor is there any valid reason to believe that the sexual act was committed under the misapprehension that the woman was his own wife or his own

bondwoman. According to this definition, sexual act with a woman in the rectum, or sodomy, or sex gratification with animals, does not constitute *zinā*. It is confined only to the frontal sexual intercourse with a woman without any legal right or any doubt thereof. According to the Shāfi'īs, *zinā* means insertion of the male sexual organ into the female sexual part, which though forbidden by law may be quite natural. According to the Mālikīs, *zinā* means the entry of the male sexual organ into the frontal sexual part, or in the rectum of a woman or man, without legal right or any doubt about its being legal. According to these two definitions, sodomy also will be included in *zinā*. The correct position, however, is that these definitions are removed from the common meaning of *zinā*. The Qur'ān always employs words in their ordinary meaning and according to their common usage, unless it uses a certain word as a term. In such a case the Qur'ān itself makes plain the particular sense of the term. In the context in which the word *zinā* occurs, there is no indication that it has been used in any particular sense. Accordingly the word will have to be taken in the sense in which it is commonly understood. It is, therefore, confined to an illicit intercourse with a woman in the natural way and does not extend to other forms of sexual gratification. Besides, it is well known that there was a difference of opinion about the punishment for sodomy among the Companions of the Holy Prophet. Had sodomy been included in *zinā* according to the Islamic terminology, there would have been no occasion for such a difference of opinion.

(9) Penetration of the glans of the penis is a sufficient legal ground for punishing the act of *Zinā*. It is not essential that the penetration should be full or the sexual intercourse should be complete. On the other hand, if there is no penetration of the glans of the penis, mere lying of the couple in the same bed or their caressing each other or their being found naked, is not a sufficient ground for declaring them to be guilty of *Zinā*; so much so that the Islamic Law does not bother to get the couple medically examined to establish their guilt of illicit sexual intercourse and then to get them punished according to the law. Those who are found in such an indecent condition are offenders and punishable according to the circumstances. The competent authority to determine the nature of the punishment is either a court or the legislature of the Islamic State. If the punishment is to be given in the form of flogging with stripes, it should not exceed ten stripes as specified in a Tradition: "Except in cases where a specific punishment has been prescribed by Allah, none should be flogged with more than ten stripes for any offence." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd). However, if a person is not caught red-handed but confesses his guilt himself, he should only be admonished to repent. According to a Tradition reported by 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, a man came to the Holy Prophet and

said, "I did everything with a woman except the sexual intercourse, outside the city. Now you may give me any punishment you may deem fit." Hadrat 'Umar said, "When Allah had concealed it, you also should have kept it concealed." The Holy Prophet, however, remained silent and the man went away. Then the Holy Prophet called him back and recited the following verse to him:

"Establish *salāt* the two ends of the day and in early part of the night; indeed virtues remove evils." (XI: 114) At this a man asked, "Does the Commandment apply to him alone?" The Holy Prophet replied: " No, it is for all." (Muslim, Tirmizī, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī).

Not only this: The Islamic Law does not permit that in cases where a man confesses his guilt without specifying his offence, any investigation be made to find out what the actual offence was. A man came to the Holy Prophet and said, "O Messenger of Allah, I deserve the prescribed punishment, so enforce the punishment on me." The Holy Prophet did not ask him what punishment he deserved. After the man had offered his prayers, he again came and said, "I am guilty: please punish me." The Holy Prophet asked: "Have you not offered your prayer with us?" When he replied in the affirmative, the Holy Prophet said: "Well Allah has pardoned your sin." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Ahmad).

(10) The mere fact that a person (man or woman) has committed *zinā*, is not enough to declare him guilty of it. For this there are certain conditions which must be satisfied. These conditions are different for fornication and for adultery. In the case of fornication, the offender should be of age and possessing normal common sense. If a child or a lunatic is guilty of it he does not incur the punishment prescribed for *zinā*. In the case of adultery, there are some additional conditions which are as under:

(a) There is unanimity of opinion that the offender must be a free person and not a slave. The Qur'ān itself has indicated that a slave shall not be stoned to death on the charge of *zinā*. As has already been stated, a slave-girl, if found guilty of adultery after marriage, shall get half the punishment prescribed for a free unmarried woman. The jurists are agreed that the same Qur'ānic Law will apply to a slave.

(b) The criminal must be a legally married person. This condition has also the unanimous support of all the jurists. According to this condition, a man who has had sexual intercourse with a slave-girl, or whose marriage was performed in an illegal manner, will not be treated as married and shall not be stoned to death but will be flogged with stripes if he commits *zinā*.

(c) Such a person should not only have been legally married but must have had sexual intercourse with his wife after marriage. The mere ceremony of

marriage does not entitle a man or a woman to be regarded as a *muḥsin* or a *muḥsanah* and be stoned to death in case of *zinā*. Most of the jurists are agreed on this condition. However, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imām Muḥammad have added a supplementary condition to the effect that a man or a woman will be treated as married only when he or she is a free person and is of age and possesses normal common sense at the time of marriage and sexual intercourse. According to this supplementary condition, if a man is married to a slave-girl, or to a minor or mad girl, and even has had sexual intercourse with her, he will not be punishable by stoning to death if found guilty of *zinā*. The same applies to the case of a woman who may have had intercourse with a slave or a mad or immature husband. She will not be stoned to death if found guilty of *zinā*. This is a very reasonable addition by these two far-sighted scholars.

(d) The criminal should be a Muslim. But Imām Shāfi'ī, Imām Abū Yūsuf and Imām Aḥmad have disputed this. According to them, even if a non-Muslim married person, who is a protege of the Islamic State, is found guilty of *zinā*, he will be stoned to death. But Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imām Mālik have concurred that the punishment of stoning to death for adultery after marriage, applies only to the Muslims. The most weighty argument advanced in this connection is that a man, who is to be given the extreme punishment of stoning to death, should be the one who, in spite of enjoying the complete state of *iḥṣān* does not refrain from committing adultery. The Arabic word *iḥṣān* means "moral fortification," which has three essential components. First, the man should be a believer in Allah and in the accountability after death and should owe allegiance to Divine Law. Second, he should be a free member of society and not a slave of somebody, which might hinder him from satisfying his desires in a lawful manner, and his helplessness and indigence should make him commit a sin when there is no family to help him in protecting his morality and honour. Third, he should be married and should have the means of statisfying his sex desires lawfully. Where these three components exist, the moral fortification would be complete and anybody who breaks through these three fortifications for the sake of illicit sex gratification, would really deserve the extreme penalty of being stoned to death. But in a case where the very first and foremost component of belief in Allah, in the Hereafter and in Divine Law, does not exist, the fortification is not complete, and accordingly, the gravity of the guilt is not such as to entail the extreme punishment. This is supported by a Tradition related by Ibn 'Umar and cited by Isḥāq bin Rāhavīah in his Musnad and Dāraquṭni in his Sunan: "Whoever is guilty of *shirk*, he is not *muḥṣan* (morally fortified)". There is, however, a difference of opinion whether Ibn 'Umar has quoted this as

a saying of the Holy Prophet or as his own verdict. In spite of this lacuna, the principle is very strong and sound in its theme.

It will not be correct to counteract the above argument by a deduction from the case brought by the Jews to the Holy Prophet in which he ordered the stoning of a person guilty of *zinā*. This is because all the authentic reports about the case show that it was not the Islamic Law of the land which was applied, but the punishment was awarded on the basis of the Jewish personal law itself. According to a Tradition cited by both Bukhārī and Muslim, when this case was brought before the Holy Prophet, he asked: "What is the punishment for this offence in your Torah?" When it was confirmed that the Torah prescribed stoning, the Holy Prophet said: "I pass the same judgment as has been prescribed in the Torah." According to another Tradition, at the time of the judgment the Holy Prophet remarked: "O Allah, I am the first man to revive Thy Commandment which they (the Jews) had rendered null and void." (Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Aḥmad).

(11) In order to hold a person guilty of *Zinā* as punishable, it is necessary to prove that he committed the act of his own free will . If a person is forced to commit the act under compulsion or pressure, he or she is neither an offender nor liable to any punishment. This is not only based on the general principle of the *Sharī'ah* that a person cannot be held responsible for acts done under compulsion, but this is also in accordance with the Qur'ānic Law. In the subsequent verses of this Sūrah the Qur'ān proclaims pardon for those women who are forced into prostitution. It has also been made clear in the various Traditions that in a case of rape only the man was punished and the woman, who had been violated, was let off. According to a Tradition cited by Tirmizī and Abū Da'ūd, a woman went out in darkness for prayers when on the way she was overpowered by a man and raped. She raised a hue and cry and the adulterer was caught red-handed and stoned to death by the order of the Holy Prophet, but the woman was let off. According to a Tradition in Bukhārī, a man raped a girl, during the Caliphate of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, who had the man flogged with stripes and let the girl off. It is clear from these instances that there is unanimity of opinion about the law in regard to the case of a woman raped or forced into prostitution. However, there is a difference of opinion in respect of the man who commits the act under compulsion and coercion. Imām Abū Yūsuf, Imām Muḥammad, Imām Shāfi'ī and Imām Ḥasan bin Ṣāliḥ express the opinion that the man too, who is forced to commit *zinā* under pressure, will be pardoned. Imām Zufar is of the opinion that he will not be let off because the act of *zinā* could not have been performed unless the male organ was fully excited, which means that his own lust and sex desire had urged him to commit the act. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah says that

if the act is done under coercion, of the government or any of its officials, the man will not be punished because when the government itself compels a man to commit it, it has no right to punish him. But if somebody else compels him to it, the adulterer will be punished because he could not have committed this without his own desire for it, as sexual lust cannot be aroused by coercion. Of the three opinions, the first one is convincing. This is because even if erection of the male organ is a proof of the sexual urge of the man, it is not necessarily a proof of his willing participation in the act. Suppose, for example, that a tyrant imprisons a simple God-fearing man and puts a beautiful young woman stripped naked in the same cell and does not want to release him until he commits *zinā* and the tyrant brings four witnesses to prove it in the court, it will not be justice to stone them to death or flog them with stripes in utter disregard of the circumstances. This is because there is a probability that circumstances may be created whereby sexual desire may overpower a man even though he may not be a willing partner. Supposing a man were imprisoned and not given anything to drink except wine; then if he drinks it, will he be punished simply because not a single drop of wine could have gone down his throat if he did not intend it, even though he was forced by the circumstances to drink it? For in order to establish a guilt, mere existence of intention is not enough, but it is also necessary to see that the person was in a position to exercise his free will. Therefore, if a person is placed in such circumstances that he is compelled to commit a crime, he will not be a real culprit in some cases, and in some his offence will be very light.

(12) The Islamic Law does not confer on anybody the authority except the government to sit in judgment against the man or the woman accused of *zinā* and none except an Islamic court has the authority to punish them. There is a complete consensus of all the jurists that in verse 2 the Commandment, "flog them with stripes", is not addressed to the common people but to the officials and judges of an Islamic government. There is, however, a difference of opinion whether the owner of a slave is competent to punish him or not. According to the Ḥanafī scholars, he is not, but according to the Shāfi'īs he is. The Mālikīs hold that the owner has no right to cut the hand in case of theft, but in case of *zinā*, calumny and drinking of wine, he can enforce the prescribed punishments.

(13) Under the Islamic Law the punishment for *Zinā* is a part of the law of the land. Accordingly it will apply to all people in the Islamic State whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims. Probably none of the jurists except Imām Mālik has differed with this opinion. As regards the opinion of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah that a non-Muslim guilty of *zinā* should not be stoned to death, it is not based on the reason that a non-Muslim is not a complete

muḥṣin, which is one of the conditions of stoning for *Zinā*, for this condition is not satisfied unless one is a Muslim. On the other hand, Imām Mālik says that a non-Muslim should not be stoned to death because the Commandment is a part of the Muslim personal law and the addressees are the Muslims and not the non-Muslims. As for the foreigner who has entered an Islamic State with due permission and is found guilty of *Zinā*, he should also be stoned according to Imām Shāfi'ī and Imām Abū Yūsuf, but according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imām Muḥammad he cannot be given the prescribed punishment.

(14) The Islamic Law does not make it obligatory that a person must confess his guilt of *zinā*, or those who have knowledge of it must inform the authorities about it. But in case his guilt comes to the notice of the authorities, there is then no room for pardoning the guilt. This is based on a Tradition of the Holy Prophet: "If any of you is guilty of any immorality, he should better remain hidden under the curtain of Allah, but if he discloses it to us, we shall certainly enforce the Law of Allah on him." According to a Tradition of Abū Da'ûd, when Mā'iz bin Mālik Aslamī; committed the crime of *zinā*, he, on the advice of Hazzāl bin Nu'aim, went before the Holy Prophet and confessed his guilt. The Holy Prophet ordered that he should be stoned to death, but at the same time he said to Hazzāl: "Would that you had kept the matter hidden: this would have been better for you." In another Tradition cited in Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'i, the Holy Prophet said: "You should yourselves pardon the crimes which merit prescribed punishments because when a crime which calls for such a punishment comes to my notice, it will become obligatory on me to award the punishment."

(15) Under the Islamic Law *Zinā* is not a compoundable crime. This is based on a Tradition which has been cited in almost all the collection of Hadīth. A boy who was working as a labourer in a certain house committed *Zinā* with the wife of his employer. The father of the boy gave 100 goats and one slave-girl to the man and made a compromise with him. But when the case came before the Holy Prophet, he said: "The goats and the slave-girl are yours and they are returned to you." Then he awarded the prescribed punishment to both the guilty ones. This shows that the crime of *zinā* is not compoundable and that under the Islamic Law, an outraged chastity cannot be compensated in terms of money. This shameless conception of monetary compensation for outraged modesty is a part of Western laws only.

(16) The Islamic government shall not take action against anybody for *zinā* unless it is fully proved. If the guilt is not proved, the authorities cannot pass orders for punishment even if they have the knowledge of the crime

through many other sources. There was a woman in Al-Madīnah who openly practised prostitution according to Traditions cited in Bukhārī and Ibn Mājah, but in spite of this no punishment was given to her as there was no proof of *zinā* against her; so much so that the Holy Prophet once uttered the following words about her:

"If I were to stone anybody to death without a proof, I would have certainly got this woman stoned."

(17) The first possible proof of *Zinā* is that proper evidence should be established against the criminal. The important components of the law are:

(a) The Qur'ān explicitly ordains that there should at least be four eye-witnesses to prove the guilt. This has been stated in An-Nisā (IV): 15, and in this Sūrah An-Nūr too, it has been reiterated twice (vv. 4, 13). A judge is not authorized to decide the case on the basis of his own knowledge even if he has seen with his own eyes the couple committing the crime.

(b) The witnesses should be reliable according to the Islamic Law of Evidence, which requires that they should not have been proved to be false witnesses on any previous occasion: they should not be dishonest, they should not be previous convicts, and there should be no proof of their having any personal grudge against the accused, etc. In short, no one can be stoned nor flogged with stripes on the basis of unreliable evidence.

(c) The witnesses should give evidence to the effect that they saw the man and the woman in the actual state of intercourse, i.e. the union was complete such as a piston in a cylinder, and a rope in a well.

(d) The witnesses should be unanimous in regard to the time, the place and the persons committing the crime. Any difference in these basic things will nullify their testimony.

These conditions amply indicate that the Islamic Law does not intend to punish people as a matter of course. It inflicts severe punishment only when, in spite of all the measures to reform and eradicate the evil, there still exists a shameless couple in the Islamic society who commits the crime in a way as to be witnessed by as many as four men.

(18) There is a difference of opinion as to whether pregnancy by itself in a free woman, when she has no known husband, or in a slave-girl, when she has no known master, is a sufficient circumstantial evidence for the establishment of the crime of *Zinā*. According to Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, this is a sufficient evidence, and the Mālikīs have adopted it. But the majority of the jurists are of the opinion that mere pregnancy is not a sufficient ground for stoning or flogging anybody with a hundred stripes. It is imperative

that such a serious punishment should be based either on the evidence or on the confession of guilt. One of the basic principles of the Islamic Law is that the benefit of doubt should go to the accused. This is supported by a Tradition of the Holy Prophet: "Avoid punishments wherever you find scope for it." (Ibn Mājah). In another Tradition, he said: "Try to avoid punishing the Muslims wherever possible and if there is a way for an accused to escape punishment, let him off. An error of judgment in letting off an accused is better than in punishing him." (Tirmizī) According to this principle, the existence of pregnancy is not a definite proof of *zinā*, however strong it may be for doubt. For there is a possibility that in one out of a million cases the semen of a man may enter the womb of a woman somehow or other without any sexual intercourse and make her pregnant. Even such a slight possibility of doubt should be enough to spare the accused of the horrible punishment for *zinā*.

(19) There is also a difference of opinion as to whether the witnesses will be punished for falsely accusing a person in case their evidence differs from one another, or if they are not able to prove the guilt. According to a section of the jurists they will be regarded as *qāzif* (one who makes a false accusation as a slanderer), and will be punished with 80 stripes each. Others say that they should not be punished because they came as witnesses and not as plaintiffs, Moreover, if the witnesses are to be punished like this, nobody will come forward as a witness in cases involving *zinā*. This is because in that case no one will volunteer to appear as a witness at the risk of punishment, for nobody can be certain that all the four witnesses will be unanimous in their evidence We consider this second opinion as more rational, for the benefit of doubt should also accrue to the witnesses as it does to the accused. Therefore, if lapse in their testimony cannot result in the extreme punishment to the accused, it should also not result in any punishment to the witnesses branding them as false witnesses, unless of course, their falsehood is clearly proved. In support of the first opinion, two strong arguments are offered:

First, the Qur'ān holds false accusation about *zinā* as a punishable offence. But this argument is incorrect because the Qur'ān makes a distinction between the *qāzif* (the slanderer) and the *shāhid* (one who appears in a court as an eye-witness). An eye-witness cannot be branded as a slanderer merely because the court did not hold his evidence as a sufficient proof of the crime.

The second argument is based on the case of Mughirah bin Shu'bah, in which Hadrat 'Umar punished Abū Bakrah and the other two eye-witnesses on the charge of false accusation. A critical study of the entire case shows that this precedent is not applicable to every case where the crime is not proved by proper evidence.

The facts of the case are that Mughīrah bin Sh u'bah, the Governor of Baṣrah, did not have good relations with Abū Bakrah, whose house was opposite to his house across the same street. One day the windows of the two houses were opened by a strong current of wind. When Abū Bakrah got up to close his window, he saw through the opposite window across the street Mughīrah in a state of actual sexual intercourse. He asked three of his friends (Nāf'i bin Kaladah, Ziād and Shibl bin Ma'bad) who were also sitting with him to stand up and witness what Mughīrah was doing. The friends asked him who was the woman. Abū Bakrah said that she was Umm Jamīl. The next day a complaint to this effect was sent to Ḥadrat 'Umar, who immediately suspended Mughīrah and appointed Abū Mūsā Ash'arī as Governor of Baṣrah. Mughīrah along with the witnesses was called to Al-Madīnah. When they were asked about the case, Abū Bakrah said that they had seen Mughīrah actually committing sexual intercourse with Umm Jamīl, but Ziād said that the woman was not clearly visible and that he could not say definitely whether it was Umm Jamīl or not. During the cross examination, Mughīrah proved that they could not have seen the woman distinctly from the place where they were standing. He also proved that there was a close resemblance between his wife and Umm Jamīl. Besides this, circumstantial evidence also showed that during the Caliphate of Ḥadrat 'Umar, the governor of a province could not have committed this crime in his official residence, especially when his wife was also living with him. Thus the supposition of Abū Bakrah and his companions that Mughīrah was having sexual intercourse with Umm Jamīl, instead of his own wife, was nothing but a misplaced suspicion. It was for this reason that Ḥadrat 'Umar not only acquitted the accused but also punished Abū Bakrah, Nāf'i and Shibl as slanderers. It is obvious that this isolated decision was based on the specific circumstances of the case and not on the principle that the witnesses must be punished when they are not able to prove the charge by their evidence. (For details of this case, see *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, Ibn al-'Arabi, Vol. II, pp. 88, 89).

(20) Besides the evidence, the other thing by which the offence of *zinā* can be established, is the confession of the accused himself. This confession must be in clear and plain words and the guilty one must confess that he committed *zinā* with a woman who was unlawful for him, He should also admit that the act of *zinā* was complete in every respect, The court must satisfy itself that the guilty person is confessing his guilt voluntarily without any external pressure and that, at the time of confession, he is in his right senses. Some jurists hold that one confession is not enough and that the guilty one must make four separate confessions. This is the view of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Aḥmad, Ibn Abī Lailā, Isḥāq bin Rāhaviah and Ḥasan bin Ṣāliḥ. But according to Imām Mālik, Imām Shāfi'ī, 'Uthmān al-Batti, only one confession is enough. In cases where the conviction is based on the confession of the guilty person himself without

the support of any other proof, the infliction of punishment should be suspended if during the course of punishment the guilty one retracts his confession. It does not matter even if it is quite evident that he is retracting his confession in order to escape the torture of punishment. This entire law is based on the precedents which have been cited in the Traditions in the various cases of *Zinā*.

The most important case is that of Mā'iz bin Mālik Aslamī, which has been related by a large number of reporters on the authority of many Companions of the Holy Prophet (Allah's peace be upon him) and almost all books of Traditions contain details with regard to it. Mā'iz was an orphan boy from the clan of Aslam who had been brought up by Hazzāl bin Nu'aim. He committed *zinā* with a freed slave-girl. Hazzāl said to him, "Go to the Holy Prophet and inform him of your sin; may be he prays for your forgiveness." Mā'iz went before the Holy Prophet in the Mosque and said, "I have committed *zinā*; please purify me." The Holy Prophet turned his face away from him and said, "Woe be to you, go back and pray to Allah for forgiveness." But the boy again appeared before the Holy Prophet and said the same thing and the Holy Prophet again turned his face away. The boy then repeated his offence for the third time and the Holy Prophet again turned his face away. Hadrat Abū Bakr warned the boy that if he confessed the crime for the fourth time, the Holy Prophet would get him stoned. But the boy persisted and repeated the same thing again. At this the Holy Prophet turned to him and said: "You might have only kissed or embraced or caressed her, or you might have looked at her with lust (and you thought it was an act of *Zinā*)." The boy said, "No." The Holy Prophet asked, "Did you lie with her in the same bed?" The boy replied in the affirmative. The Holy Prophet again asked: "Did you have sexual intercourse with her?" The boy again replied in the affirmative. The Holy Prophet then inquired in the most explicit Arabic expression specifically used for this act. Such a naked expression had never before been heard nor was ever heard afterwards from him. Had it not been the question of the life of an individual, the Holy Prophet would never have uttered such words. But the boy again replied in the affirmative to this explicit question. The Holy Prophet then asked: "Did you commit the act in such a manner that your male organ disappeared in her female part?" The boy answered, "Yes." Again he was asked whether the act was as complete as is a piston in a cylinder and a rope in a well. The boy again answered in the affirmative. Again he was asked whether he really understood what *zinā* meant, and the boy said, "Yes, I have committed the same act with her illegitimately which a husband commits legitimately with his wife." The Holy Prophet asked: "Are you married?" He said, "Yes". Again the Holy Prophet asked whether he had taken any wine. He said, "No", and one of the Companions smelt his mouth and confirmed that he had not. After this the Holy Prophet

inquired of his neighbors whether he was suffering from insanity. They replied that he had not exhibited any sign of insanity. Then the Holy Prophet said to Hazzāl: "Had you kept it secret, it would have been better for you." Then he ordered Mā'iz to be stoned to death and he was stoned to death outside the city. When they began to throw stones at him, Mā'iz tried to escape, and said, "O people, take me back to the Holy Prophet. The people of my clan deluded me, assuring that the Holy Prophet would not condemn me to death." But they did not let him escape. Afterwards when this incident was reported to the Holy Prophet, he said: "Why did you not let him off? Had you brought him to me, he might have repented, and Allah might have accepted his repentance."

The second incident is of Ghāmidiyyah, who was a woman from the clan of Ghāmid, a branch of Juhainah tribe. She also confessed four times that she had committed *zinā* and had become pregnant as a result thereof. At her first confession, the Holy Prophet said: "Woe be to you, go back and ask forgiveness of Allah and repent." But she said, "O Messenger of Allah, do you want to put me off like Mā'iz? I am pregnant as a result of *zinā*." As there existed pregnancy along with the confession, the Holy Prophet did not cross examine her in detail as he did in the case of Mā'iz. He said to her, "Well, if you do not accept my counsel, go back and come to me after the birth of the child." After delivery had taken place, she came along with the child and said, "Please purify me now." The Holy Prophet said: "Go and suckle your child, and come to me after the suckling is over." She again came after the weaning of the child and brought a piece of bread with her. She fed the child with the piece of bread before the Holy Prophet and said, "O Messenger of Allah, now the child has been weaned and has started taking bread." At this the Holy Prophet entrusted the child to a person to bring it up and ordered the stoning of the woman.

In both these cases, four confessions have clearly been mentioned. According to a Tradition, cited by Buraidah in Abū Da'ūd, the Companions of the Holy Prophet, in general, held the opinion that if Mā'iz and Ghāmidiyyah had not confessed their guilt four times, they would not have been stoned to death. In the third incident of this nature (which has been mentioned in para 15 above), the only words used therein, as contained in other Traditions, were: "Go and inquire from his wife about this. If she confesses her guilt, stone her to death". There is no mention of four confessions here and it is on the basis of this that some jurists have argued that only one confession is enough.

(21) The three cases mentioned above clearly show that a guilty person, who confesses his sin, will not be questioned about the other person with whom he or she committed *zinā*. This is because in that case two persons shall have to be punished instead of one. The Islamic Law is not anxious to

punish people. But if the guilty person names the other party to the crime, then that party will be interrogated and also punished in case of confession. But if the other party denies it, only the person confessing the guilt, will be punished. However, there is a difference of opinion among the jurists as to whether such a person will be punished for *zinā* or for false accusation. According to Imām Mālik and Imām Shāfi'ī, he will be awarded the prescribed punishment for *zinā*, because he has confessed that crime alone. According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and Imām Auzā'i, he shall be convicted as a false accuser, because the denial of the other party has made his crime of *zinā* doubtful but his guilt of false accusation stands proved anyhow. According to Imāni Muhammad and it is supported by a saying of Imām Shāfi'ī also, he will be punished for *zinā* as well as for slander. This is because he has confessed the guilt of *zinā* himself and has not been able to prove his accusation against the other party. A similar case was brought before the Holy Prophet. A Tradition to this effect cited in Musnad Aḥmad and in Abū Da'ūd by Sahl bin Sa'd contains these words: "A person confessed before the Holy Prophet that he had committed *zinā* with such and such a woman." The Holy Prophet inquired of the woman but she denied it. Then he gave him the prescribed punishment but forgave the woman. This Tradition, however, does not specify the punishment that was awarded. In another Tradition cited in Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'ī from Ibn 'Abbās, it has been stated that on the man's confession the Holy Prophet gave him the prescribed punishment for *zinā*. But when the woman denied it, the man was flogged with stripes for making a false accusation. But this Tradition is weak as regards its links, because one of its reporters, Qāsim bin Fayyāz, is not considered as reliable by many scholars of Traditions. Moreover, this Tradition appears to be opposod to reason because it cannot be expected of the Holy Prophet that he would first punish the man for *zinā* and then make an inquiry from the woman. Common sense and justice, which the Holy Prophet could not have overlooked, demanded that his case should not have been decided before making an inquiry from the woman. This is supported by a Tradition cited by Sahl bin Sa'd. Therefore, the second Tradition cannot be considered as reliable.

(22) There is a difference of opinion among the jurists as to what punishment should be given to the person who has been proved guilty of *zinā*. The various opinions in this regard are as under:

Punishment for married persons guilty of *Zinā*:

(a) According to Imām Aḥmad, Da'ūd Ẓāhirī: and Isḥāq bin Rāhavīah they shall be flogged with 100 stripes and then stoned to death.

(b) All other jurists are unanimous that they shall be stoned to death; stoning to death and flogging will not be combined together.

Punishment for unmarried persons:

(a) According to Imām Aḥmad, Imām Shāfi'ī, Da'ūd Zāhirī, Sufyān Thaurī, Ibn Abī Laila and Ḥasan bin Ṣāliḥ; the punishment is flogging with 100 stripes and exile for one year both for the man and the woman.

(b) According to Imām Mālik and Imām Auzā'ī, the man should be flogged with 100 stripes and exiled for one year, while the woman should only be flogged with 100 stripes. (According to these jurists, "exile" means that the guilty one should be banished from his own habitation and sent to such a distant place where one has to shorten one's prayer. But according to Zaid bin 'Alī and Imām Ja'far Sādiq, imprisonment also serves the purpose of exile.)

(c) Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and his disciples—Imām Abū Yūsuf, Imām Zufar and Imām Muḥammad—are of the opinion that the *"ḥadd"* (prescribed punishment) for *zinā* in such cases is only 100 stripes both for the man and for the woman. Any additional punishment, such as exile or imprisonment, is not *"hadd"* but *ta'zīr* (discretionary punishment). If the judge feels that the guilty man is of immoral character, or that the illicit relations of the guilty ones are too intimate, he may exile or imprsion them as the occasion may demand. The difference between *ḥadd* and *ta'zīr* is that *ḥadd* is a specific punishment which must be inflicted provided that the guilt has been proved according to the conditions laid down in the *Sharī'ah*, whereas *ta'zīr* is a punishment which has not been specified by the *Sharī'ah* with regard to its nature and gravity, but is determined by the court in accordance with the circumstances of the case.

All the above different opinions have been based on various Traditions of the Holy Prophet, which are given below:

According to a Tradition related by 'Ubādah bin Ṣāmit and cited by Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, Tirmizī and Imām Aḥmad, the Holy Prophet said: "Take it from me. Take it from me. Allah has prescribed the method for dealing with women guilty of *zinā*. An unmarried man committing *zinā* with an unmarried woman should get 100 stripes and one year's exile. The married man committing *zinā* with a married woman, should get 100 stripes and stoning to death." Though this Tradition is technically correct according to its authentic links, we learn from a large number of correct Traditions that it was neither acted upon during the time of the Holy Prophet nor during the rightly-guided Caliphate nor any jurist ever gave any verdict strictly in accordance with it.

According to a Tradition from Abū Hurairah and Zaid bin Khālid Juhanī, which has been cited by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmizī Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah and Aḥmad, a case was brought by two Beduins before the Holy Prophet. One of them said, "My son, who worked as a labourer in the house of this man, got involved with his wife. I compromised with him by giving him 100 goats and one slave-girl, but I have been told by the scholars that this is against the Book of Allah. Please decide the case between us according to the Book of Allah." The second man also said the same thing and asked for the decision according to the Divine Book. The Holy Prophet said: "I will decide according to the Divine Book. You should take back your goats and the slave-girl. Your son shall get 100 stripes and a year's exile." Then the Holy Prophet said to a man from the clan of Aslam: "O Unais, go to this man's wife and inquire from her about this. If she confesses her guilt, stone her to death." The woman confessed the guilt and was stoned to death. It should be noted that in this Tradition there is no mention of flogging the married woman before stoning her to death, whereas the unmarried man, guilty of *zinā* with a married woman, was punished with flogging and exile.

Besides this, the accounts of the cases of Mā'iz and Ghāmidiyyah, which have been cited in the various books of Traditions, do not mention anywhere that the Holy Prophet ordered flogging of the guilty person before stoning him or her to death.

There is no Tradition in any book of Traditions to the effect that the Holy Prophet, in any case, combined flogging with stoning to death. In all the cases of *zinā* by married persons, he awarded the punishment of stoning to death only.

In his well-known address, cited by Bukhāri, Muslim, Tirmizī, and Nasā'ī on the authority of various reporters, Hadrat 'Umar declared most emphatically that the punishment for *zinā* after marriage is stoning to death. Imām Ahmad also has cited various Traditions regarding this but in none of these there is any mention of flogging before stoning to death.

From among the rightly-guided Caliphs Ḥadrat 'Alī alone combined flogging with stoning to death in one case. Imām Aḥmad and Bukhārī have cited this case on the authority of 'Āmir Sha'bī that a woman named Shurāha confessed being pregnant as a result of illicit intercourse. Ḥadrat 'Alī got her flogged on Thursday and stoned to death on Friday, saying, "We flogged her according to the Book of Allah and stoned her to death in accordance with the *Sunnah* of the Prophet." There is no other case than this in which both the punishments were combined during the rightly-guided Caliphate.

According to a Tradition cited in Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'i on the authority of Jābir bin 'Abdullah, a man committed *zinā* and the Holy Prophet awarded him

the punishment of flogging. Afterwards when it came to be known that he was a married man, he ordered that he should be stoned to death. Besides this, we have already cited several other Traditions showing that the Holy Prophet awarded the punishment of flogging only to the unmarried persons guilty of *zinā*. For instance, the man who raped a woman while she was going out for prayers, and the man who confessed his crime of *zinā* but the woman did not, were given the punishment of flogging.

As regards "exile", the authority may use its own discretion. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar exiled Rabi'ah bin Umayyah bin Khalf on a charge of drinking and he fled and joined the Romans. At this Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said that in future he would not exile a man and a woman guilty of *zinā*, because he feared that there was a risk of mischief in it. *(Aḥkām al-Qur'ān,* Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, Vol. III, p. 315).

In the light of these traditions and cases as a whole, it becomes quite plain that the view of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and his disciples is correct: the punishment for a married man or woman for *zinā* is stoning to death alone while the punishment for unmarried persons is 100 stripes only. Flogging and stoning to death were never combined from the time of the Holy Prophet up to the Caliphate of Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān. As for combining flogging and exile, it was practised on some occasions while on others it was not. This clearly establishes the correctness of the way of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah.

(23) The first reference to the nature of flogging with stripes is implied in the word *fajlidū* of the Qur'ān itself. The word *jald* is derived from *jild*, which means "skin". Accordingly all lexicographers and commentators have taken it to mean that flogging should be carried out in such a way that its effect should be confined to the skin only and should not reach the flesh under it. The flogging that causes deep wounds into the flesh or tears it up into pieces is against the Qur'ān.

The whip or the cane used for the purpose of flogging should be medium in all respects: it should neither be thick and hard nor thin and soft. According to a Tradition cited by Imām Mālik in *Mu'aṭṭa*, the Holy Prophet asked for a whip for flogging but as it had worn out owing to long use, he said: "Bring a harder one." Then a new whip was brought which was very hard because of lack of use. The Holy Prophet said: "Get me one between these two." Accordingly a whip was brought which had been used in riding and with it he gave the flogging. A similar tradition has also been cited by Abū 'Uthmān an-Nahdī about Ḥaḍrat 'Umar that he always used a medium whip. *(Aḥkam al-Qur'ān,* Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, Vol. III, p. 322). A whip with knots or one having two or three prongs is also prohibited.

Flogging should also be of average intensity. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar used to instruct the flogger, "Strike in such a way that your armpit should not become

visible during flogging," i.e., Do not stretch your arm fully to strike with full force. (*Aḥkam al-Qur'ān*, Ibn al-'Arabi, Vol. II, p. 84, and *Aḥkam al-Qur'ān*. Al-Jaṣṣās, Vol. III, p. 322). All the jurists are agreed that:

(a) the stripe should not be such as may cause a wound;

(b) the flogging should not be confined to one and the same place but should be spread over the whole body;

(c) the face and the private parts, and, according to the Ḥanafis, the head also should be spared but all other parts should get some flogging. Ḥaḍrat 'Ali once said to the flogger, "Let every part of the body get its due share except the face and the private parts." According to another tradition, he said, "Save the head and the private parts only." (*Aḥkam al-Qur'ān*, Al-Jassās Vol. III, p. 321). The Holy Prophet has said: "When anyone of you is flogging, he should not strike on the face." (Abū Da'ūd).

While flogging, a man should be made to stand and a woman to sit. In the time of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Qāzī Ibn Abī Lailā of Kūfah got a woman flogged while she was standing. The Imām took a strong objection to it and openly declared it to be a wrong thing. Incidentally, this also throws light on Imām Abū Ḥanīfah's stand with regard to the law of the contempt of court. At the time of flogging, the woman should be in her full dress: her clothes should rather be tied down on her so that no part of her body might be exposed; her thick clothes only will be taken off; but in regard to a man, there is some difference of opinion. According to some jurists, he will be allowed to remain in his pyjamas only, and according to some others, the shirt will not be taken off. Hadrat Abū 'Ubaidah bin al-Jarrāḥ sentenced a person guilty of *zinā* to be flogged. The man said, "This sinful body should get a severe flogging." Then he started taking off his shirt, but Abū 'Ubaidah said, "Do not let him take off his shirt." (*Aḥkāmu al-Qur'ān*, Al-Jassās, Vol. III, p. 322). During the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, a man was flogged while he was wrapped in a sheet of cloth.

Flogging is prohibited in severe cold and in severe heat. In winter it should be done when it is hot and in summer when it is cool.

It is also not permissible to tie down a person at the time of flogging unless he tries to run away. According to 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, it is not permissible in the Islamic Community to flog anybody after stripping him naked or after tying him on a tripod.

Jurists have permitted that at least twenty stripes may be given daily but it is better to inflict full punishment at one and the same time.

Flogging should not be entrusted to uncouth, uncultured executioners, but it should be done by men of deep insight who understand how the flogging should

be carried out in order to meet the requirements of the *Sharī'ah*. Ibn Qayyim has cited in *zād al-Ma'ād* that the Holy Prophet employed the services of such pious and respectable people as 'Ali, Zubair, Miqdād bin 'Amr, Muḥammad bin Maslamah, 'Āṣim bin Thābit and Ḍaḥāk bin Sufyān for this purpose. (Vol. I, pp. 44, 45)

If the guilty person is suffering from some disease and there is no hope of his recovery or is too old, it is enough to strike him once with a branch of 100 twigs, or with a broom of 100 twigs in order to meet the requirements of the law. During the time of the Holy Prophet, an old man, who was suffering from some disease, was found guilty of *zinā* and the Holy Prophet awarded him the same kind of punishment. (Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī Ibn Mājah). In the case of a pregnant woman, the flogging will be postponed till the delivery and the complete discharge of blood after childbirth. But if she is to be stoned to death, the punishment will not be given till the child has been weaned.

If *zinā* is proved by evidence, the flogging will be initiated by the witnesses themselves. If the punishment is based on confession, the judge himself will initiate the punishment. This is to make the witnesses and the judge realize the seriousness of the matter. In the case of Shurāha, when Ḥaḍrat 'Alī decided to stone her to death, he said, "Had there been any witness to this crime, he should have initiated the stoning, but as she is being punished on the basis of confession, I will initiate it myself." According to the Ḥanafīs, this procedure is essential but according to the Shāfi'īs, it is not essential; it is, however, preferable according to all jurists.

After examining the above details of the law of flogging, just consider the audacity of those who hold this punishment as barbarous. This accusation becomes all the more ridiculous when the same people allow a harsher punishment in their jails. According to the existing law, not only the court but an ordinary superintendent of the jail also is authorized to award a punishment of 30 stripes to a prisoner for disobedience or insolence, and this flogging is carried out by a specialist who keeps himself ready and fit by regular practice and the canes are wetted beforehand so that they may cut through the body like a knife. The convict is stripped off his clothes and nothing but a thin cloth wetted with tincture of iodine is left to cover his private parts. Then he is tied down to a tripod to prevent him from making any movement at the flogging and the flogger comes running from a distance and strikes him with full force. Every time the same part (buttocks) is struck so hard that the flesh flies out like minced meat and often the bones become bare. Often it so happens that even the strongest man does not stand 30 canes and becomes unconscious and it takes a long time before his wounds are healed. It is an irony that those people, who are themselves enforcing this 'civilized'

punishment in jails today, have the cheek to call the punishment enjoined by Islam as "barbarous". Then the horrible tortures which are inflicted by their police not only on proved criminals but on suspects, especially those suspected of criminal crimes, are well known to every one.

(24) After a convict has been stoned to death, he (or she) will be treated like any other Muslim: his (or her) body will be washed and shrouded: funeral prayer will be said in the Islamic way, and he (or she) will be buried with due respect in a Muslim graveyard. Prayers for his forgiveness will be offered and it will be improper for anyone to talk ill of him. According to Jābir bin 'Abdullah Ansārī, as cited in Bukhārī, when Mā'iz bin Mālik was stoned to death, the Holy Prophet said good words about him and himself led his funeral prayer. A Tradition from Buraidah, as cited in Muslim, states that the Holy Prophet said: "Pray for the forgiveness of Mā'iz bin Mālik: he has offered such a repentance that if it were to be distributed over a whole community, it would suffice for the forgiveness of all its people." In the same Tradition it has been mentioned that when Ghāimidiyyah died due to stoning, her funeral prayer was led by the Holy Prophet. When Khāid bin Walid talked ill of her, the Holy Prophet said: "Khālid, hold your tongue! I swear by Him Who controls my life that her repentance was such that even if a cruel tax-collector had offered such a repentance, he would have been forgiven." According to Abū Hurairah, as cited in Abū Da'ūd, after the stoning of Mā'iz one day when the Holy Prophet was walking along, he heard two men talking ill of Mā'iz. When he had gone a few paces further, he saw the dead body of a donkey. He stopped there and asked the two men: "Come on and eat something out of it." They said, "O Prophet of Allah, who can eat a dead donkey?" The Holy Prophet replied: "Talking ill of your own brother was much worse than eating a dead donkey."

According to a Tradition from 'Imrān bin Ḥusain cited in Muslim, when the funeral prayer of Ghāmidiyyah was about to be offered, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said to the Holy Prophet, "Are we going to offer funeral prayer for this adulteress?" The Holy Prophet said: "She has offered such a repentance that if it were to be distributed over the whole of the population of Al-Madīnah, it would suffice for their forgiveness." According to another Tradition from Abū Hurairah, cited in Bukhārī: when a man was being punished for drinking, somebody said, "May God defame him!" The Holy Prophet said: "Do not utter such words and thus help Satan against him." In Abū Da'ūd there is an addition to this, according to which the Holy Prophet said: "Pray like this: 'O Allah, pardon him and show mercy to him'."

This is the true spirit of punishment in Islam. Islam does not punish even the biggest criminal with vindictiveness but with the intention to reform him. That is why after the punishment, mercy and compassion are shown towards him. In contrast to this, the modern civilization adopts a very mean attitude towards those who are killed by the state military or police and whose death is upheld by a judicial inquiry. It is not tolerated that even somebody may carry his dead body to the graveyard or utter a good word about him. In the face of this behaviour, they have the "moral courage" (a euphemism for impudence) to preach tolerance to the world.

(25) As regards the law of punishment concerning *zinā* with prohibited relations, see E.N. 33 of An-Nisā (IV), and for the punishment of sodomy see E.N.'s 64-68 of A'arāf (VII). As regards the committal of this heinous act with animals, some jurists treat it as *zinā* and hold that the guilty person deserves the prescribed punishment of this crime. But Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Yūsuf, Imām Muḥammad, Imām Zufar, Imām Mālik and Imām Shāfi'ī hold that it is not *zinā*, and therefore, the offender should be given the discretionary punishment and not the prescribed punishment. We have already stated that the discretionary punishment has been left to the judge, or if necessary the state legislature can devise some appropriate form of punishment for it.

3. The first thing that deserves attention in this verse is that the criminal law is being termed as the "Way of Allah". This shows that the "Way of Allah" does not merely consist in *Ṣalāt*, Fasting, *Ḥajj* and payment of *Zakāt* dues, but the law of the land is also a part of the "Way of Allah". The establishment of the "Way" does not mean the establishment of *Ṣalāt* alone but it also includes the establishment of the Divine Law and the system of law based on it. If these things are not established, the mere establishment of the system of *Ṣalāt* will be regarded as partial implementation of the "Way". But when instead of this an un-Islamic system of law is adopted, it amounts to the total rejection of the Divine Way itself.

The second thing which deserves attention is the warning from Allah that no feeling of compassion or pity should restrain you from inflicting the prescribed punishment on the guilty person. The same thing has been further elaborated by the Holy Prophet in the following Tradition:

"On the Day of Judgment, a judge who had reduced the punishment by one stripe in a certain case, will be called to account. He will be asked: 'Why did you do so?' He will say, 'It was out of pity for your people.' Allah will say: 'Well, it means you were more compassionate towards those people than Myself.' Then it will be ordered: 'Take him to Hell.' Another judge, who had enhanced the punishment by one stripe will be brought forth. He will be asked: 'Why did you do

so?' He will say, 'It was done to serve as a deterrent for others.' Allah will say: 'Well, it means you were wiser than I with regard to them.' It will be ordered: 'Take him to Hell.' *(Tafsīr Kabīr,* Vol. VI, p. 225).

The above applies to the case when reduction or enhancement in the punishment was the result of compassion or some other factor. But if the quantum of punishments were to be changed according to the status of the culprit, it would constitute the worst type of crime. According to a Tradition related by Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, the Holy Prophet (Allah's peace be upon him) said in an address: "The communities before you perished because whenever anyone from among their aristocrats committed a theft, he was forgiven but whenever an ordinary man committed the same offence, he was awarded the prescribed punishment." According to another Tradition, the Holy Prophet said: "The enforcement of one prescribed punishment is more beneficial to the people than 40 days of rainfall." (Nasā'ī, Ibu Mājah)

Some commentators have interpreted this verse to mean that the culprit should neither be forgiven after his guilt has been proved nor his punishment reduced. He must be flogged with 100 stripes. Some others have taken it to mean that the flogging should not be so light that the culprit may not feel its effect at all. The verse covers both the above interpretations and, in fact, both are plausible. It also means that the one guilty of fornication should get the same punishment which has been prescribed by Allah and no other type of punishment. It is a sin to inflict any other type of punishment instead of flogging even for the sake of compassion or pity. But if any other type of punishment is inflicted on the ground that flogging with stripes is a barbarous type of punishment, it amounts to *'kufr'*, which should never be tolerated even for a moment by a true Believer. To believe in the Divinity of Allah and then to call Him a barbarian, suits only those who are the meanest of hypocrites.

4. The punishment should be awarded publicly so that, on the one hand, the guilty one may feel disgraced and, on the other, it may serve as a deterrent for the other people. This throws light on the concept of punishment in Islam. In verse 38 of Al-Mā'idah (V), in connection with the punishment of theft, it was said:

"... it is the recompense for what they have earned, and an exemplary punishment from Allah."

And now here it is being enjoined that the adulterer should be given the punishment publicly. This shows that in Islamic Law punishment is awarded to meet three purposes:

(a) To inflict pain on the criminal for the excesses he committed against the other person or society,

(b) To stop him from repeating the crime,

(c) To serve as a deterrent for others, so that the people having evil inclinations in society may be deterred and dare not commit such crimes again.

Another advantage of awarding the punishment publicly is that the officials concerned should not be able to reduce or enhance the punishment at will while executing it.

5. That is, only an adulterous woman is a fit match for an adulterous man who has not repented, or an idolatrous woman. No believing, virtuous woman can be a match for him. It is forbidden for the Believers that they should give their daughters in marriage to such wicked people knowing them to be so. Similarly the fit match for adulterous women (who have not repented) can only be adulterous or idolatrous men; they are not fit for any righteous Believer. It is forbidden for the Believers that they should marry women who are known to possess immoral character. This thing applies to those men and women who persist in their evil ways, and not to those who repent and reform themselves, for after repentance and reformation they will no longer be regarded as "adulterous."

According to Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal, the prohibition of marriage with an adulterous man implies that such a marriage, if contracted, will have no legal effect. But this view is not correct. Prohibition does not have any legal implications. It cannot mean that if a person violates this prohibition, the marriage will be void, and the parties concerned will be involved in *zinā* in spite of marriage. For the Holy Prophet has stated: "The unlawful does not make the lawful unlawful." (Ṭabarānī, Dāraquṭnī). In other words, an illegal act does not make a legal act also illegal. Therefore, if a person commits *zinā* and then marries, his conjugal relations with his spouse cannot be considered as *zinā*, because in that case the other party of the marriage contract who is not immoral, will also have to be considered as involved in *zinā*. As a rule, no illegal act except open rebellion can cause the one guilty of it to be declared an outlaw, so that no act of his can be regarded legal after that. If the verse is considered in this light the plain meaning would be this: It is a sin to select such persons for marriage as are known to be immoral. The Believers should shun them, otherwise they will feel encouraged, whereas the *Sharī'ah* intends to segregate them as the undesirable and contemptible element of society.

Similarly this verse does not validate the marriage of an adulterous Muslim with an idolatrous woman and of an adulterous Muslim woman with an idolatrous man. The verse simply means to emphasize the act of *zinā*, and declares that the person who commits it being a Muslim, makes himself unfit for contracting a marriage in the pure and pious Muslim society. He should either

stripes so that he does not utter such a slander in future. Even if the accuser is an eye-witness of an immoral act, he should keep the secret and let the filth remain where it is instead of causing it to spread. However, if he has witnesses, he should abstain from publicising the matter in society but should bring the case to the notice of the authorities and get the criminals duly punished by the court of law. Below we give the details of the law in serial order:

(1) The context in which the words *wallaziina yarmūn-al-muhsanāt* (those who charge chaste women with false accusation) occur clearly shows that it does not imply any common sort of accusation but specifically the accusation of *zinā* against the chastity of pure women. Then the demand from the accusers to produce four witnesses in support of their accusation also shows that it relates to *zinā*, for in the entire Islamic Law producing four witnesses is the legal requirement only in a case *zinā* and in no other matter. The scholars are, therefore, agreed that this verse describes the law relating to the accusation of *zinā*, which has been termed *qazf* for convenience so that this law is not extended to cover cases of other accusations like that of theft, drinking, taking of interest, etc. Apart from *qazf*, the question of determining punishments for other allegations can be left to the discretion of the judge, or to the consultative council of the Islamic state, who can make general laws to cover cases of contempt and defamation as and when required

(2) Though the verse only mentions *al-muhsanāt* (pure and chaste women), the jurists are agreed that the law is not confined to the accusation in respect of women, but it extends to the accusation in respect of chaste men also. Likewise, though the masculine gender has been used for the accusers, the law is not confined to male accusers only but extends to female accusers as well. For as regards the gravity and wickedness of the crime, it does not make any difference whether the accuser or the accused is a man or a woman. Therefore in either case, the man or accuser or the woman accusing a virtuous and chaste man or woman of *zinā*, will be dealt with under this law.

(3) This law can be applied only in a case where the accuser has accused a *muhsan or muhsanah*, i.e., "a morally fortified" man or woman. In case the accused is not "morally fortified", the law cannot be applied. If a person who is not "morally fortified" is known for his immorality, there will be no question of the "accusation", but if he is not, the judge can use his discretion to award a punishment to the accuser, or the consultative council can make necessary laws to deal with such cases.

(4) For an act of *qazf* to be considered as punishable, it is not enough that somebody has accused somebody else of immorality without a proof, but

stripes so that he does not utter such a slander in future. Even if the accuser is an eye-witness of an immoral act, he should keep the secret and let the filth remain where it is instead of causing it to spread. However, if he has witnesses, he should abstain from publicising the matter in society but should bring the case to the notice of the authorities and get the criminals duly punished by the court of law. Below we give the details of the law in serial order:

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(4) For an act of *qazf* to be considered as punishable, it is not enough that somebody has accused somebody else of immorality without a proof, but

there are certain conditions which have to be fulfilled in respect of the *qāzif* (accuser), *maqzūf* (the accused) and the act of *qazf* itself.

As for the *qāzif*, he should satisfy the following conditions:

(a) He should be an adult: if a minor commits the crime of *qazf* he can be given a discretionary punishment but not the prescribed punishment.

(b) He should possess normal common sense: an insane and mentally abnormal person cannot be given the prescribed punishment; similarly, a person under the influence of an intoxicant, other than a forbidden intoxicant, e.g., chloroform, cannot be considered as guilty of *qazf*.

(c) He should have committed *qazf* out of his own free will or choice, and not under duress,

(d) He should not be the father or grandfather of *maqzūf* (the accused), for they cannot be given the prescribed punishment.

According to the Ḥanafīs, the fifth condition is that the accuser should not be drunk, because the person who only gesticulates cannot be held guilty of *qazf*. But Imām Shāfi'ī disputes this. He says that if the gesticulation of the drunk person is clear and unambiguous by which everybody can understand what he wants to say, he will be considered as a *qāzif*, because his gesticulation is no less harmful to defame a person than the word of mouth. On the contrary, the Ḥanafīs do not hold mere gesticulation as a strong enough ground for awarding the prescribed punishment of 80 stripes; they, therefore, recommend a discretionary punishment for it.

The conditions to be satisfied by *maqzūf* (the accused) are as follows:

(a) He should be possessing normal common sense, i.e., he should be accused of having committed *zinā* while in the normal state of mind; the accuser of an insane person (who might or might not have become sane later) cannot be held guilty of *qazf*, for the insane person cannot possibly safeguard his chastity fully; and even if the evidence of *zinā* is established against him, he will neither become deserving of the prescribed punishment nor incur personal defamation; therefore, the one accusing him also should not be held as deserving of the prescribed punishment of *qazf*. However, Imām Mālik and Imām Laith bin Sa'd hold that the *qāzif* of an insane person deserves to be awarded the prescribed punishment of *qazf*, because he is accusing another person of *zinā* without a proof thereof.

(b) He should be an adult, i.e., he should be accused of having committed *zinā* while being of full age legally; accusing a minor, or a grown up person that he committed *zinā* when a minor, does not deserve the prescribed punishment, for, like an insane person, a child also cannot fully

safeguard his honour and chastity. However, according to Imām Mālik, if a boy approaching the age of majority is accused of *zinā*, the accuser will not deserve the prescribed punishment, but if a girl of that age is accused of having submitted herself for *zinā*, when sexual intercourse with her is possible, her *qāzif* will deserve the prescribed punishment, for the accusation defames not only the girl's family but ruins the girl's future as well.

(c) He should be a Muslim, i.e., he should be accused of having committed *zinā* while in Islam. Accusing a non-Muslim, or a Muslim that he committed *zinā* when a non-Muslim, does not entail the prescribed punishment.

(d) He should be free; accusing a slave or a slave-girl, or a free person that he committed *zinā* when a slave, does not call for the prescribed punishment, for the helplessness and weakness of the slave can hinder him from safeguarding his honour and chastity. The Qur'ān itself has considered the state of slavery as excluded from the state of *iḥṣān* (moral fortification). (IV: 25). But Da'ūd Dhāhirī does not concede this argument; he holds that the *qāzif* of the slave or slave-girl also deserves the prescribed punishment of *qazf*.

(e) He should possess a pure and blameless character, i.e., he himself should be free from *zinā* proper and everything resembling therewith. This means that he should neither have been held guilty of *zinā* in the past, nor should have had sexual intercourse in an illegal marriage, nor with a slave girl who was not clearly in his possession legally, nor with a woman whom he mistook for his wife. His day to day life should be such that nobody could accuse him of immorality, nor he should have been held guilty of lesser crimes than *zinā* before. In all such cases the moral purity of the person falls into disrepute, and the accuser of such a person cannot deserve the prescribed punishment of 80 stripes. So much so that if the guilt of *zinā* against an accused person is proved on the basis of evidence just before the enforcement of the prescribed punishment on an accuser, the latter will be forgiven, because the former is no longer chaste and morally pure.

Though the prescribed punishment cannot be enforced in any of these five cases, it does not, however, mean that a person who accuses an insane person or a minor or a non-Muslim, or a slave, or an unchaste person of *zinā* without proof, does not even deserve a discretionary punishment.

Now let us consider the conditions which must be found in the act of *qazf* itself. An accusation will be considered as *qazf*, if either an accuser accuses a person of such a sexual act which, if proved to be correct by necessary evidence, would make the accused liable to the prescribed punishment, or the accuser holds

the accused as of illegitimate birth. But in either case the accusation must be unambiguous and in clear terms; vague references in which the accusation of *zinā* or illegitimacy depends upon the accuser's intention, are not reliable. For instance, using words like adulterer, sinner, wicked, immoral, etc. for a man, and prostitute, harlot, whore, etc. for a woman is only a reference and not *qazf*. Similarly, words which are used as an abuse like bastard, etc. cannot be regarded as *qazf*. There is, however, a difference of opinion among the jurists whether an allusion is also *qazf* or not. According to Imām Mālik, if the allusion is clear and is meant to charge the addressee of *zinā* or hold him as of illegitimate birth, it will be *qazf*, and the *qāzif* will be liable to the prescribed punishment. But Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and his companions and Imām Shafi'ī, Sufyān Thaurī, Ibn Shubrumah, and Ḥasan bin Sāleh hold the view that an allusion is in any way ambiguous and doubtful, and wherever there is doubt, prescribed punishment cannot be awarded. Imām Aḥmad and Isḥāq bin Rāhaviyah maintain that if an allusion is made in the heat of a quarrel or fight, it is *qazf*, but if in sport and fun, it is not. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar and Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, from among the Caliphs, awarded the prescribed punishment in cases of allusion. In the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, one of the two men, who were involved in a brawl, said to the other, "Neither was my father an adulterer nor was my mother an adulteress." The case was brought before Ḥaḍrat 'Umar. He asked those present there what they understood by the remark. Some said that the man had only praised his parents and had not imputed anything to the other man's parents. Others objected to the use of the words and said that by these he had clearly alluded that the other man's parents were adulterous. Ḥaḍrat 'Umar concurred with the latter and awarded the prescribed punishment. (Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, vol. III, p. 330). There is also a difference of opinion as to whether accusing somebody of sodomy is *qazf* or not. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah does not regard it *qazf*, but Imam Abū Yūsuf, Imām Muhammad, Imām Mālik and Imām Shāfi'ī hold it as *qazf* and recommend the prescribed punishment for it.

(5) There is a difference of opinion among the jurists as to whether *qazf* is a cognizable offence or not. Ibn Abī Lailā says that this is the right of Allah; therefore, the *qāzif* will be awarded the prescribed punishment whether *maqzūf* (the accused) demands it or not. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and his companions hold that it is certainly a right of Allah in so far as the enforcement of the prescribed punishment on the establishment of the offence is concerned, but in so far as the trial of the accuser under the law is concerned, it depends on the demand of the accused, and in this respect it is the right of man. The same is the opinion of Imām Shafi'ī, and Imām Auzā'ī. According to Imām Mālik, if the offence of *qazf* is committed in the presence of the ruler, it is a cognizable offence, otherwise legal action against the accuser will depend on the demand of the accused.

(6) *Qazf* is not a compoundable offence. If the accused does not bring the case to the court: it will be a different thing; but when the case is brought to the court. the accuser will be pressed to prove his accusation, and if he fails to prove it, he will be awarded the prescribed punishment. The court then cannot pardon him nor the accused himself. nor the matter can be settled by making monetary compensation, nor the accuser can escape punishment by offering repentance or apology. The Holy Prophet has instructed: "Forgive among yourselves offences that deserve the prescribed punishment, but when a case is brought before me. the punishment will become obligatory."

(7) According to the Hanafis, the demand for the prescribed punishment of *qazf* call either be made by the accused, or, if the accused is not there, by the one whose lineage suffers the stigma, e.g., the father, mother, children and the children's children. But according to Imām Mālik and Imām Shāfi'i. this right is inherited. If the accused dies. each one of his legal heirs can make the demand for the prescribed punishment. It is, however, strange that Imām Shāfi'i excludes the husband and the wife from this right on the ground that their marriage bond breaks with death. and the accusation against one spouse does not affect the lineage of the other. The fact is that both these arguments are weak. When it is conceded that the right to demand the prescribed punishment for *qazf* is inheritable, it will be against the Qur'ān to exclude the husband and the wife from the exercise of this right on the ground that their marriage bond breaks with death. because the Qur'ān itself has declared each of them as an heir on the death of the other. As for the argument that the accusation against one does not affect the lineage of the other, it may be correct in the case of the husband but it is absolutely wrong in the case of the wife; the man whose wife is accused of *zinā* has the lineage of his children automatically rendered doubtful. Moreover, it is not correct to think that the punishment for *qazf* has been prescribed only to protect the lineage of the people; honour along with lineage is equally important. Thus, it is no less damaging for a gentleman or a lady that his wife or her husband is accused of *zinā*. Therefore, if the right to demand the prescribed punishment for *qazf* be inheritable there is no reason why the husband and the wife should be debarred from exercising that right.

(8) After it has been established that a person has committed *qazf*, the only thing that can save him from the prescribed punishment is that he should produce four witnesses who should give evidence in the court that they have seen the accused committing *zinā* practically with such and such a man or woman. According to the Hanafis, all the four witnesses should appear at one and the same time in the court and they should give evidence

all together. For if they appear one after the other, each one of them will become a *qāzif*, and will need four witnesses to support him. But this is a weak argument. The correct position is the one adopted by Imām Shāfi'ī and 'Uthmān al-Battī, that it is immaterial whether the witnesses appear all together or come one after the other; it is rather better that as in other cases the witnesses should come one after the other and give evidence. The Ḥanafīs hold that it is not necessary that the witnesses should be righteous; even if the *qāzif* produces four immoral persons as witnesses, he will escape the prescribed punishment of *qazf*, and the accused also the prescribed punishment of *zinā*, because the witnesses are not righteous. However, if the *qāzif* produces witnesses who are unbelieving, or blind, or slave, or those already convicted of *qazf*, he will not escape the punishment. Imām Shāfi'ī holds that if the *qazif* produces witnesses who are immoral, he and his witnesses, all will become liable to the prescribed punishment, and the same is the opinion of Imām Mālik. But the view of the Ḥanafīs in this matter appears to be nearer the truth. According to them, if the witnesses are righteous, the *qāzif* will be acquitted of the charge of *qazf*, and the crime of *zina* will become established against the accused. But if the witnesses are not righteous, the *qāzif's* crime of *qazf*, the *maqzūf's* crime of *zinā* and the evidence of the witnesses will all stand doubtful, and none will be held liable to punishment on account of the element of doubt.

(9) The Qur'ān has given three Commandments in respect of the person who fails to produce proper evidence which can cause his acquittal of the crime of *qazf*:

(a) He should be awarded 80 stripes,

(b) His evidence should not be accepted in future,

(c) He himself is a transgressor.

After this the Qur'an says:

" .... except those who repent of it and mend their ways; Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.".

The question arises: To which of these three Commands is the forgiveness due to repentance and reformation as mentioned in the verse related? The jurists are agreed that it is not related to the first Command. That is, repentance will not render the punishment null and void, and the criminal will be given flogging in any case. The jurists are also agreed that the forgiveness is related to the third Command, which means that after repentance and reformation the criminal will no longer be a sinner and Allah will forgive him. (Here the difference of opinion is

only in this matter whether the criminal becomes a sinner due to the crime of *qazf* itself, or after his conviction by the court. Imām Shāfi'ī and Laith bin Sa'd hold that he becomes a sinner due to the crime of *qazf* itself, and therefore, they reject his evidence thenceforth. On the contrary, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, his companions and Imām Mālik maintain that he becomes a sinner after the enforcement of the sentence; therefore, till the enforcement of the sentence his evidence will be acceptable. But the truth is that in the sight of Allah the criminal becomes a sinner as a result of the crime of *qazf* itself, but for the people his being a sinner depends on his conviction by the court and the enforcement of the punishment on him). Now as far as the second Command, viz. "The evidence of *qāzif* should not be accepted in future", is concerned, there has been a great difference of opinion among the jurists as to whether the sentence ". . . except those who repent. ." is related to this or not. One group says that this sentence is related only to the last Command. That is, a person who repents and mends his ways, will no longer be a sinner in the sight of Allah and the common Muslims, but the first two Commands will remain effective, i.e. the sentence will be enforced on him and his evidence will never be accepted in future. To this group belong eminent jurists like Qāzī Shuraih, Sa'īd bin Musayyab, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Ibrahim Nakha'ī Ibn Sīrīn, Makḥūl, 'Abdur Rahmān bin Zaid, Abū Ḥanīfah, Abū Yūsuf, Zufar, Muḥammad, Sufyān Thaurī, and Hasan bin Sāleh. The other group says that the clause... except those who repent . . ." is not related to the first Command but is related to the other two. That is, after repentance, not only will the evidence of the offender who has been punished for *qazf* be acceptable, but he will also not be regarded as a sinner. This group comprises jurists of the status of 'Aṭa', Ṭa'ūs, Mujāhid, Sha'bi, Qāsim bin Muhammad, Sālim, Zuhrī, 'Ikrimah, 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Azīz, Ibn Abī Nujaih, Sulemān bin Yasār, Masrūq, Zaḥḥāk, Mālik bin Anas, 'Uthmān al-Batī, Laith bin Sa'd, Shāfi'ī, Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal and Ibn Jarīr Tabarī. Among other arguments, these scholars cite the verdict of Hadrat 'Umar which he gave in the case of Mughīrah bin Shu'bah. For, according to some traditions, after enforcing the punishment, Ḥadrat 'Umar said to Abū Bakrah and his two companions: "If you repent (or confess your lie), I shall accept your evidence in future, otherwise not." His companions confessed but not Abu Bakrah. On the face of it, it appears to be a strong argument. But from the details given above of Mughīrah bin Shu'bah's case, it would become obvious that it is not correct to cite this precedent in support of this view. For in that case, there was complete unanimity as far as the act (of sexual intercourse) was concerned and Mughīrah bin Shu'bah himself did not deny it. The point of dispute was the identity of the woman. Mughīrah said that she was his own wife, whom the accusers had mistaken for Umm Jamīl. Then it had also been established that the wife of Ḥadrat Mughīrah and Umm Jamīl resembled with each other to a degree that from the distance and in the kind of light that they were seen, the former could

be mistaken for the latter. But the circumstantial evidence was wholly in favour of Mughirah bin Shu'bah, and a witness of the case also had admitted that the woman was not clearly visible. That is why Ḥaḍrat 'Umar decided the case in favour of Mughirah bin Shu'bah, and after punishing Abū Bakrah, said the words as mentioned in the above-quoted traditions. This clearly shows that the real intention of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar was to impress on the accusers that they should confess that they had given way to undue suspicion and that they should repent of accusing people on the basis of such suspicions in future, otherwise their evidence would never be accepted. From this it cannot be concluded that in the eyes of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar the evidence of a person whose falsehood had been established, could become acceptable just after he had repented. The truth is that in this matter the view of the former group is more sound. None except Allah can know whether a person has repented sincerely or not. If a person repents before us, we may not consider him as a transgressor afterwards, but once his falsehood has been established, we cannot afford to trust him in future simply because he has uttered repentance. Moreover, the words in the Text themselves indicate that except those who repent ..." is related only to "... they themselves are transgressors". The reason is that the first two things, in the sentence ---" flog them with eighty stripes, and never accept their evidence afterwards"--have been given in the imperative form, while the third thing-- "they themselves are transgressors"--is a predicate. Then the clause"... except those who repent ..." just after the predicate itself indicates that the exception relates to the predicate and not to the two imperative sentences. Nevertheless, if it is conceded that the exception is not confined to the last sentence, one does not understand why it should be made to apply to "never accept their evidence" only and not extended to "flog them with eighty stripes" also.

(10) A question may be asked: Why should not the exception in "... except those who repent...." be made applicable to the first Command also? *Qazf* after all is a sort of defamation. Why should not a person who confesses his guilt, apologizes and repents, be let off, when Allah Himself says: "... except those who repent and mend their ways; Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." It will be strange that Allah forgives while the people do not forgive. The answer is that the act of *Taubah* (repentance) is not merely uttering the word *Taubah* with the tongue; it rather implies having a feeling of regrets, a resolve to reform and an inclination to do right; and this can only be known to Allah whether a person has repented sincerely or not. That is why on repentance worldly punishments are not forgiven but only punishments of the Hereafter; and that is why, Allah does not say that if the offenders repent, they may be forgiven, but says: "For those who repent, Allah is Forgiving and Merciful." If the worldly punishments

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إِنْ كَانَ مِنَ الْكٰذِبِيْنَ ۝ وَيَدْرَؤُا عَنْهَا الْعَذَابَ أَنْ تَشْهَدَ أَرْبَعَ شَهٰدٰتٍ
بِاللّٰهِ ۙ إِنَّهٗ لَمِنَ الْكٰذِبِيْنَ ۝ وَالْخَامِسَةَ أَنَّ غَضَبَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهَآ إِنْ كَانَ
مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ۝ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهٗ وَأَنَّ اللّٰهَ تَوَّابٌ
حَكِيْمٌ ۝ إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ جَآءُوْ بِالْإِفْكِ عُصْبَةٌ مِّنْكُمْ ۚ لَا تَحْسَبُوْهُ شَرًّا لَّكُمْ ۚ
بَلْ هُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ ۚ لِكُلِّ امْرِئٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّا اكْتَسَبَ مِنَ الْإِثْمِ ۚ وَالَّذِيْ تَوَلّٰى
كِبْرَهٗ مِنْهُمْ لَهٗ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ۝ لَوْلَآ إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوْهُ ظَنَّ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ وَ
الْمُؤْمِنٰتُ بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ خَيْرًا ۙ وَّقَالُوْا هٰذَآ إِفْكٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝ لَوْلَا جَآءُوْ عَلَيْهِ
بِأَرْبَعَةِ شُهَدَآءَ ۚ فَإِذْ لَمْ يَأْتُوْا بِالشُّهَدَآءِ فَأُولٰٓئِكَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ هُمُ الْكٰذِبُوْنَ ۝
وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهٗ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ لَمَسَّكُمْ فِيْ مَآ
أَفَضْتُمْ فِيْهِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ۝ إِذْ تَلَقَّوْنَهٗ بِأَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَتَقُوْلُوْنَ بِأَفْوَاهِكُمْ
مَّا لَيْسَ لَكُمْ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ وَّتَحْسَبُوْنَهٗ هَيِّنًا ۖ وَّهُوَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ عَظِيْمٌ ۝ وَلَوْ
لَآ إِذْ سَمِعْتُمُوْهُ قُلْتُمْ مَّا يَكُوْنُ لَنَآ أَنْ نَّتَكَلَّمَ بِهٰذَا ۖ سُبْحٰنَكَ هٰذَا بُهْتَانٌ
عَظِيْمٌ ۝ يَعِظُكُمُ اللّٰهُ أَنْ تَعُوْدُوْا لِمِثْلِهٖٓ أَبَدًا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ۝ وَيُبَيِّنُ
اللّٰهُ لَكُمُ الْاٰيٰتِ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ۝ إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُحِبُّوْنَ أَنْ تَشِيْعَ الْفَاحِشَةُ
فِي الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيْمٌ ۙ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ وَأَنْتُمْ
لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهٗ وَأَنَّ اللّٰهَ رَءُوْفٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ۝
يٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَتَّبِعُوْا خُطُوٰتِ الشَّيْطٰنِ ۚ وَمَنْ يَّتَّبِعْ خُطُوٰتِ الشَّيْطٰنِ فَإِنَّهٗ
يَأْمُرُ بِالْفَحْشَآءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۚ وَلَوْلَا فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَتُهٗ مَا زَكٰى مِنْكُمْ
مِّنْ أَحَدٍ أَبَدًا ۙ وَّلٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُزَكِّيْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ سَمِيْعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ۝ وَلَا

(As for the woman), it shall avert the punishment from her if she swears four times by Allah that the man is false (in his charge) and the fifth time she invokes Allah's wrath upon herself, if he be true (in his charge).[7] If Allah had not shown you His grace and mercy and if Allah had not been most Forgiving and All-Wise, (you would have been in a great fix because of accusing your wives). 8-10

Those who have invented the slander,[8] are some of your own people.[9] You should not, however, regard this matter as evil for it has good in it for you.[10] Whoso took any part in this, he earned his share of the sin accordingly, and the one, who had the greatest share of responsibility in it,[11] shall have a terrible punishment. When you heard of it, why didn't the Believing men and the Believing women have a good opinion of themselves,[12] and why did they not say, "This is a manifest slander?"[13] Why did the slanderers not bring four witnesses (to prove their charge)? Now that they have not brought witnesses, they themselves are liars in the sight of Allah.[14] Were it not for Allah's grace and mercy towards you in this world and in the Hereafter, a painful scourge would have visited you because of the things in which you were involved. (Just think how erroneous you were,) when you passed this lie on from one tongue to the other and uttered with your mouths that of which you had no knowledge. You took it as a trifling matter whereas it was a grave offence in the sight of Allah. 11-15

Why did you not, as soon as you heard of it, say, "It is not proper for us to utter such a thing ? Glory be to Allah ! This is a great slander." Allah admonishes you that in future you should never repeat a thing like this, if you are true Believers. Allah makes His Revelations clear to you, and He is All-Knowing, All-Wise.[15] 16-18

As for those, who like that indecency should spread among the Believers, they deserve a painful punishment in this world and in the Hereafter,[16] for Allah knows and you do not know (its consequences).[17] If Allah had not shown His grace and mercy to you, (this scandal would have produced very evil results): Allah is indeed very Kind and Merciful. 19-20

O Believers, do not follow in Satan's footsteps, for he will incite to indecency and wickedness any who will follow him. If Allah had not shown His grace and mercy to you, none of you would have 21

been able to cleanse yourself,[18] for it is Allah alone Who cleanses whom He wills, and Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.[19]

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are also excused on repentance, there will be no offender who will not offer repentance in order to escape his sentence.

(11) Another side of the question is that if a person cannot produce witnesses in support of his accusation, it may not necessarily mean that he is a liar. Is it not possible that he be true in his accusation, yet he may fail to produce evidence? Then, how is it that he should be condemned as a sinner on account of his failure to produce witnesses not only by the people but also by Allah ? The answer is that even if a person is an eye-witness to the immorality committed by an other person, he will be considered as a sinner for publicising the act and accusing the offender without necessary evidence. The Divine Law does not want that if a person gets polluted in filth in a private place, the other person should start spreading the filth in the whole society. If he has any knowledge of the presence of the filth, there are two ways open for him: either he should let it remain where it is, or he should produce a proof of its existence, so that the officials of the Islamic State should cleanse it. There is no third way for him. If he publicises it, he will be committing the crime of spreading the filth everywhere; and if he brings the matter to the notice of the officials without satisfactory evidence, they will not be able to deal with it effectively. The result will be that the failure of the case will become a means of spreading the filth and encouraging the wicked element of society. Therefore, the one who commits *qazf* without necessary proof and evidence, will in any case be a sinner even if he be true in his accusation.

(12) The Ḥanafī jurists hold that the *qāzif* should be given a lighter punishment than the one who is convicted of *zinā*. That is, he should be given eighty stripes but flogging should be less intense, the reason being that his being a liar is not certain in the offence for which he is being punished.

(13) Majority of the jurists including the Ḥanafīs are of the view that only one punishment will be enforced on the *qāzif* no matter how often he repeats the accusation before or during the enforcement of the punishment. If after the punishment the *qazif* goes on repeating the same accusation, the punishment which he has already been awarded, will suffice. however, if after the enforcement of the prescribed punishment, he brings another charge of *zinā* against the accused, he will be tried again for the new charge of *qazf*. Abū Bakrah after getting the punishment in the case against Mughīrah bin Shū'bah, went on repeating openly that he bore witness that Mughīrah had committed *zina*. Ḥadrat 'Umar wanted to try

him again, but as he was repeating the same accusation, Ḥaḍrat 'Ali expressed the opinion that he could not be tried again and Hadrat 'Umar conceded it. After this the jurists became almost unanimous that a *qāzif* who has received the prescribed punishment for a crime, cannot he tried again unless he commits a fresh crime of *qazf*.

(14) There is a difference among the jurists with regard to *qazf* against a group. According to the Ḥanafīs, if a person accuses a number of persons in one word or in more words separately, he will be awarded only one prescribed punishment unless, of course, he commits a fresh crime of *qazf* after the enforcement of the first punishment. The words of the verse — "Those who accuse chaste woman..."—indicate that the accuser of one person or more persons deserves only one punishment. Moreover, there can be no *zinā* for which at least two persons cannot be accused, but in spite of that the Law-giver has prescribed only one punishment and not two, one for accusing the woman and the other for accusing the man. Contrary to this, Imām Shāfi'ī holds that the person who accuses a group of persons, whether in one word or in more words separately, will be awarded as many punishments as the number of the persons accused, one for each. The same is the opinion of 'Uthmān al-Battī. However, the ruling of Ibn Abī Laila, to which Sha'bi and Auzā'ī also subscribe, is that the one who accuses a group of persons of *zinā* in one word, deserves one punishment, and the one who accuses them separately in separate words, deserves separate punishments, one for each.

7. These verses were sent down some time after the preceding verses. The Law of *Qazf* prescribed the punishment for the person who accused the other man or woman of *zinā*, and did not produce witnesses to prove his charge, but the question naturally arose, what should a man do if he finds his own wife involved in *zinā?* If he kills her, he will be guilty of murder and punishable; if he goes to get witnesses, the offender might escape; if he tries to ignore the matter, he cannot do so for long. He can, of course, divorce the woman, but in this case there will be no moral or physical punishment either for the woman or her seducer; and if the illicit intercourse results in pregnancy, he will have to suffer the burden of bringing up another person's child. Initially this question was raised by Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah as an hypothetical case, who said that if he happened to see such a thing in his own house, he would not go in search of witnesses, but would settle the matter there and then with the sword. (Bukhārī, Muslim). But soon afterwards actual cases were brought before the Holy Prophet by the husbands who were eye-witnesses of this thing. According to traditions related by 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd and Ibn 'Umar, an Anṣār Muslim (probably 'Uwaimir 'Aj̱lānī) came to the Holy Prophet and said, "O Messenger of Allah, if a person finds another man with his wife, and utters an accusation, you will enforce the prescribed punishment of *qazf*

on him; if he commits murder, you will have him killed; if he keeps quiet, he will remain involved in anguish; then, what should he do?" At this the Holy Prophet prayed, "O Allah, give a solution of this problem." (Muslim, Bukhārī, Abū Da'ūd, Aḥmad, Nasā'ī). Ibn 'Abbās has reported that Hilāl bin Umayyah presented the case of his wife whom he had himself witnessed involved in the act of sin. The Holy Prophet said, "Bring your proof, otherwise you will have the prescribed punishment of *qazf* inflicted on you." At this a panic spread among the Companions, and Hilāl said, "I swear by Allah Who has sent you as a Prophet that I am speaking the truth: I have seen it with my eyes and heard it with my ears: I am sure Allah will send down a Command, which will protect my back (from the punishment). So, this verse was revealed." (Bukhārī, Ahmad, Abū Da'ūd). The legal procedure which has been laid down in this verse, is termed as the Law of *Li'ān*.

The details of the cases which the Holy Prophet judged in accordance with the Law of *Li'ān* are found in the books of *Ḥadīth* and these form the source and basis of this law.

According to the details of Hilāl bin Umayyah's case as reported in Ṣiḥāḥ Sitta, Musnad Ahmad and Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr, on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās and Anas bin Mālik, both Hilāl and his wife were presented before the Holy Prophet, who first of all apprised them of the Divine Law, and then said: "You should note it well that the punishment of the Hereafter is much severer than the punishment of this world." Hilāl submitted that his charge was absolutely correct. The woman denied it. The Holy Prophet then said: "Let us proceed according to the Law of Li'ān." So, Hilāl stood up first and swore oaths according to the Qur'ānic Command. The Holy Prophet went on reminding them again and again: "Allah knows that one of you is certainly a liar: then, will one of you repent?" Before Hilal swore for the fifth time, the people who were present there, said to him, "Fear God: the punishment of the world is lighter than of the Hereafter. The fifth oath will make the punishment obligatory on you." But Hilāl said that God Who had protected his back (from punishment) in this world, will also spare him in the Hereafter. After this he swore the fifth oath, too. Then the woman began to swear oaths. Before she swore the fifth oath, she was also stopped and counselled. "Fear God: the worldly punishment is easier to bear than the punishment of the Hereafter. This last oath will make the Divine punishment obligatory on you." Hearing this the woman hesitated a little. The people thought that she was going to make the confession. But instead of that she said: "I do not want to put my clan to disgrace for ever," and swore for the fifth time, too. At this the Holy Prophet ordered separation between them and ruled that her child after birth would be attributed to her and not to the man: that nobody after that would blame her or her child: that anybody who accused either of them would incur the punishment of

qazf; and that she had no right left to claim maintenance, etc. from Hilāl, during her legal waiting period, because she was being separated neither on account of divorce nor due to the husband's death. Then the Holy Prophet asked the people to see whether the child on birth took after Hilāl or the man who was being accused in connection with the woman. After delivery when it was seen that the child took after the other man, the Holy Prophet said: 'If there had been no swearing of the oaths (or if Allah's Book had not settled the matter before this), I would have dealt with this woman most severely."

The details of the case of 'Uwaimir 'Ajlānī have been cited in Bukhari, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Nasa'ī, Ibn Mājah and Musnad Ahmad, on the authority of Sahl bin Sa'd Sā'idī and Ibn 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both). According to these, 'Uwaimir and his wife were both summoned to the Prophet's Mosque. Before proceeding against them in accordance with the Law of *Li'an*, the Holy Prophet warned them thrice, saying: "Allah knows full well that one of you is a liar: then, will one of you repent ?" When neither repented, they were told to exercise *Li'ān*. After that 'Uwaimir said, "O Messenger of Allah, now if I keep this woman, I would be a liar" and then he divorced her thrice there and then even without the Holy Prophet's permission to do so. According to Sahl bin Sa'd, the Holy Prophet enforced the divorce to separate them, and said, "There shall be separation between the husband and the wife if they exercise *Li'ān*. "This became established as a *Sunnah* that the couple who swore against each other would separate never to marry again. Ibn 'Umar only says this that the Holy Prophet enforced separation between them. Sahl bin Sa'd, however, adds that the woman was pregnant and 'Uwaimir said that it was not due to his seed; so the child was attributed to the mother. The practice that thus became established was that such a child would inherit the mother and the mother him.

Apart from these two cases, we find several other traditions also in the books of *Hadith*, which may or may not be related to these cases, but some of these traditions mention other cases as well, which provide important components of the Law of *Li'an*.

Ibn 'Umar has reported traditions according to which the Holy Prophet ordered separation between the spouses after *Li'an* and ruled that in case of pregnancy the child would be attributed to the mother (Ṣiḥaḥ Sitta, Aḥmad). According to another tradition of Ibn 'Umar, the Holy Prophet said to a man and woman after *Li'an*: "Now your affair is with Allah: in any case one of you is a liar." Then he said to the man, "Now she is not yours: you have no right on her, nor can you treat her vindictively in any way." The man requested, "Sir, please have my dowry returned to me." The Holy Prophet said, "You have no right to have the dowry back. If you are true in your accusation: the dowry is the price of

the pleasure you had from her when she was lawful to you; and if your accusation is false, the dowry has receded farther away from you than it is from her." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd).

Dāraquṭni has quoted 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib and Ibn Mas'ūd (may Allah be pleased with them both) as saying: "The *Sunnah* that has become established is that the spouses who have exercised *Li'ān* against each other, can never re-unite in marriage." Again Dāraquṭnī has quoted Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās as saying, "The Holy Prophet himself has ruled that the two can never re-unite in wedlock."

Qabīsah bin Zu'aib has reported that a man in the time of Hadrat 'Umar alleged that his wife was pregnant by illicit intercourse, then admitted that it was by his own seed, but after delivery again denied that the child was his. The case was brought to the court of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, who enforced the prescribed punishment of *qazf* on the man and ruled that the child would be attributed to him. (Dāraquṭni, Baihaqī).

Ibn 'Abbās has reported that a man came to the Holy Prophet and said. "Sir, I have a wife for whom I have great love; but her weakness is that she does not mind if the other man touches her. (By this he might have meant *zinā* or a lesser moral evil)." The Holy Prophet replied, "You may divorce her." The man said, "But I cannot live without her." Thereupon the Holy Prophet said, "Then you should put on with her." (The Holy Prophet did not ask the man for any explanation, nor took his complaint as an accusation of *zinā*, nor applied the law of *li'ān*). (Nasā'ī)

Abū Hurairah has narrated the case of a beduin who came to the Holy Prophet and said that his wife had given birth to a dark-coloured son and he was doubtful that it was his. (That is, the child's colour had caused him the suspicion, otherwise there was no ground with him to accuse her of *zinā*). The Holy Prophet asked him, "Do you have any camels ?" The man replied in the affirmative. The Holy Prophet then asked, "What is their colour?" He said they were red. The Holy Prophet said, "Is any of them grey also?" He said, "Yes, Sir, some are grey also." The Holy Prophet asked, "What caused that colour?" He said, "Might be due to some ancestor of theirs." The Holy Prophet replied, "The same might be the cause for your child's colour." And he did not allow him to doubt and deny the child's fatherhood. (Bukhārī, Muslim, Ahmad, Abū Da'ūd).

According to another tradition of Abū Hurairah, explaining the verse of *li'ān* the Holy Prophet said: "The woman who brings a child into a family which does not actually belong to it (i.e. marries a man of the family with illicit pregnancy), has no relation with Allah. Allah will never admit her into Paradise. Similarly, the man who denies the fatherhood of his child, whereas the child looks

up towards him, will never see Allah on the Day of Judgment, and Allah will put him to disgrace in front of all mankind." (Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī, Dārimī).

Thus, the verse of *li'ān*, the traditions of the Holy Prophet, the precedents and the general principles of the *Sharī'ah* together form the basis of the Law of *Li'ān*, which the jurists have formulated a complete code with the following main clauses:

(1) There is a difference of opinion about the man who sees his wife involved in *zinā* with another man and kills him instead of having recourse to *li'ān*. One group holds that he will be put to death because he had no right to take the law in his own hand and enforce the punishment. The other group says that he will not be put to death nor will he be held accountable for his act in any way provided that it is confirmed that he killed the man (adulterer) on account of *zinā* and nothing else. Imām Aḥmad and Isḥāq bin Rāhaviyah maintain that the man will have to produce two witnesses to confirm that he killed the adulterer only on account of *zinā*. Ibn al-Qāsim and Ibn Habīb, from among the Mālikīs, attach an additional condition that the murdered person should be a married man; otherwise the murderer will be made subject to the law of retaliation for killing an unmarried adulterer. But the majority of jurists are of the opinion that the man will be exonerated from retaliation only when he produces four witnesses to establish *zinā*, or if the murdered person himself confesses before death that he committed *zinā* with the wife of the murderer, and if it is also confirmed that the murdered person was a married man. *(Nail al-Autār*, vol. IV, p. 228).

(2) The Law of *Li'ān* cannot be applied mutually at home, but in a court of law in front of the Judge.

(3) Exercise of li'ān is not the sole right of the man: the woman also has a right to demand it in a court of law if her husband accuses her of *zinā*, or denies fatherhood of her child.

(4) There is a difference of opinion among the jurists as to whether *li'an* can be resorted to between any husband and his wife, or whether they have to satisfy certain conditions. Imāmu Shāfi'ī holds that only that husband whose oath is legally reliable and who can exercise the right of divorce, can swear the oaths of *li'ān*. In other words, sanity and maturity according to him, are the sufficient conditions which entitle a husband to exercise *li'ān* no matter whether the spouses are Muslim or non-Muslim, slave or free, and whether their evidence is acceptable or not, and whether the Muslim husband has a Muslim or a *zimmi* wife. Imām Mālik and Imām Aḥmad have also given almost the same opinion. But the Ḥanafīs maintain that *li'ān* can be exercised only by free Muslim spouses, who should not have

been convicted of *qazf* previously. If both husband and wife are non-Muslim, or slaves, or convicted of *qazf* previously, they cannot exercise *li'ān* against each other. Furthermore, if the woman was ever found guilty of an illicit or doubtful relationship with another man, exercise of *li'ān* will not be valid. The Ḥanafīs have imposed these conditions, because according to them, there is no other difference between *li'ān* and *qazf* than this: —the other man commits *qazf*, he is given the prescribed punishment, but if the husband himself commits it, he can escape the punishment by exercising *li'ān*. In all other respects, *li'ān* and *qazf* are identical. Moreover, since according to the Ḥanafīs, the oaths of *li'ān* are in the nature of evidence, they do not concede this right to a person who is not legally fit to give evidence. But the truth is that in this matter the position of the Hanafīs is weak, and the opinion of Imām Shāfi'ī is correct, because the Qur'ān has not made the accusation of the wife a component part of the verse of *qazf*, but has prescribed a separate law for it. Therefore, it cannot be linked with the law of *qazf* and treated under the conditions prescribed for *qazf*. Then, the wording of the verse of *li'ān* is different from the wording of the verse of *qazf* and the two lay down separate injunctions. Therefore, the law of *li'ān* should be derived from the verse of *li'ān* and not from the verse of *qazf*. For instance, according to the verse of *qazf*, the person who accuses chaste women *(muḥsanāt)* of *zinā*, deserves to be punished. But in the verse of *li'ān*, there is no condition of the chastity of the wife. A woman might have committed sins in life, but if she repents later on and marries somebody, the husband is not authorised by the verse of *li'ān* to accuse her unjustly whenever he likes, and to deny fatherhood of her children simply because she had once lived in sin. The other equally important reason is that there is a world of difference between accusing a wife and accusing the other woman. The law cannot treat the two alike. A man has nothing to do with the other woman. He is neither attached to her emotionally, nor his honour, his family relations and rights are at stake nor his lineage. The only meaningful interest he can have in the woman's character can be his desire to see a morally pure and clean society. Contrary to this, his relationship with his wife is deep and of varied nature. She is the custodian of the purity of his race, of his property and his house; she is his life partner, sharer of his secrets, and with her he is attached in most delicate and deep feelings. If she is morally corrupt, it will deal a serious blow to his honour, his interests and his progeny. These two things, therefore, cannot be considered alike, and the law cannot treat them as equal to each other. Is an evil affair of the wife of a *dhimmī*, or a slave, or a convicted husband in any way different, or less serious, in consequences than that of the wife of a free, mature and sound Muslim? If the husband himself sees his wife involved in *zinā* with another

person, or has reasons to believe that his wife is pregnant by illicit intercourse, how can he be denied the right of *li'ān?* And if he is denied this right, what else is there in our law which can help him out of his awkward situation? The intention of the Qur'ān seems to be to open a way out of a difficult situation for married couples in which a husband may find himself placed due to the wife's immorality or illicit pregnancy, or a wife due to the husband's false accusation or unjustified denial of the fatherhood of her child. This is not particularly the need of the free and sound Muslims alone; there is in fact nothing in the Qur'ānic Text which may confine it to them only. As for the argument that the Qur'ān has described the oaths of *li'ān* as evidence *(shahādat)*, and therefore the conditions of evidence will apply here, the logical implication would be that in case a righteous and just husband whose evidence is acceptable, takes the necessary oaths, and the wife declines to take the oaths, she would have to be stoned to death, because her immorality would thus become established. But it is strange that in this case the Hanafis do not recommend stoning. This is a clear proof of the fact that they too do not regard the oaths as exactly identical with evidence. The truth is that though the Qu'ān describes the oaths of *li'ān* as evidence, it does not regard them as evidence in the technical sense, otherwise it would have required the woman to swear eight oaths and not four.

(5) *Li'ān* is not necessitated by an allusion or expression of doubt or suspicion, but only when the husband accuses his wife clearly of *zinā*, or denies in plain words that the child is his. Imām Mālik and Laith bin Sa'd impose an additional condition that the husband while exercising *li'ān* must say that he has himself seen his wife involved in *zinā*. But this is an unnecessary restriction which has no basis whatever in the Qur'an and *Hadith*.

(6) If after accusing his wife, the husband declines to swear the oaths, the verdict of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and his companions is that he will be imprisoned and shall not be released until he exercises *li'ān* or confesses the falsehood of his accusation, in which case he will be awarded the prescribed punishment of *qazf*. On the contrary, Imām Mālik, Shafi'i, Ḥasan bin Ṣāleḥ and Laith bin Sa'd express the opinion that refusal to exercise *li'ān* itself amounts to confessing one's being a liar, which makes the prescribed punishment of *qazf* obligatory.

(7) If after the swearing of oaths by the husband, the wife declines to take the oaths, the Ḥanafis give the opinion that she should be imprisoned and should not be released until she exercises *li'ān*, or else confesses her guilt of *zinā*. On the contrary, the other Imams (as mentioned in clause 6 above) say that in this case she will be stoned to death. They base their

argument on the Qur'ānic injunction: "... it shall avert the punishment from her if she swears four times by Allah." Now that she declines to swear the oaths, she inevitably deserves the punishment. But the weakness in this argument is that the Qur'ān does not specify here the nature of "punishment"; it simply mentions punishment. If it is argued that punishment here means the punishment of *zinā* only, the answer is that for the punishment of *zinā* the Qur'ān has imposed the condition of four witnesses in clear words, and this condition cannot be fulfilled by four oaths sworn by one person. The husband's oaths can suffice for him to escape the punishment of *qazf* and for the wife to face the injunction of *li'ān*, but they are not enough to prove the charge of *zinā* against her. The woman's refusal to swear the oaths in self-defense certainly creates a suspicion, and a strong suspicion indeed, but a prescribed punishment cannot be enforced on the basis of suspicions. This thing cannot be considered as analogous with the prescribed punishment of *qazf* for the man, because his *qazf* is established, and that is why he is made to exercise *li'ān*. But contrary to this, the woman's guilt of *zinā* is not established unless she herself makes a confession of it or four eye-witnesses are produced to prove it.

(8) If the woman is pregnant at the time of *li'ān* according to Imām Aḥmad, *li'ān* itself suffices to absolve the husband from the responsibility for pregnancy whether he has denied accepting it or not. Imām Shāfi'ī, however, says that accusation of *zinā* by the husband and his refusal to accept responsibility for pregnancy are not one and the same thing. Therefore, unless the husband categorically refuses to accept the responsibility for pregnancy, he will be considered as responsible for it in spite of the accusation of *zinā* by him, because the woman's being adulterous does not necessarily mean that her pregnancy is also due to *zinā*.

(9) Imām Mālik, Imām Shāfi'ī and Imām Aḥmad concede the husband's right to deny responsibility for pregnancy during pregnancy, and allow him the right of *li'ān* on that basis. But Imām Abū Ḥanīfah says that if the basis for the man's accusation is not *Zinā*, but only this that he has found pregnancy in the woman when it could not possibly be due to him, exercise of *li'an* should be deferred until after delivery because sometimes symptoms of pregnancy appear due to some disease and not actual pregnancy.

(10) If a husband denies fatherhood of a child, there is a consensus that *li'ān* becomes necessary There is also a consensus that after he has accepted the child once (whether it is in clear words or by implication, e.g. by receiving congratulatory messages on its birth, or by treating it lovingly like one's own child and taking due interest in its bringing up), he loses

his right to deny him later, and if he does so, he makes himself liable to the prescribed punishment of *qazf*. There is, however, a difference of opinion as to how long the father retains a right to deny fatherhood of the child. According to Imām Mālik, if the husband was present at home while the wife was pregnant, he can deny the responsibility from the time of pregnancy till the time of delivery; after that he will have no right. However, if he was away from home and delivery took place in his absence, he can deny the child's fatherhood as soon as it comes to his knowledge. According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, if he denies within a day or two of the child's birth, he will be absolved from the responsibility of the child after exercising *li'ān*, but if he denies after a year or two, *li'ān* will be valid, but he will not be absolved from the responsibility of the child. According to Imām Abū Yūsuf, the father has the right to deny fatherhood within 40 days of the child's birth or knowledge of its birth; after that he will have no right. But this restriction of 40 days is meaningless. The correct view is that of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah that fatherhood can be denied within a day or two of the child's birth or knowledge of its birth, unless one is hindered from doing so due to a sound and genuine reason.

(11) If a husband accuses a divorced wife of *zinā*, according to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, this will be a case of *qazf* and not of *li'ān*. *Li'ān* can be resorted to between the spouses and cannot be extended to a divorced woman unless it is a retractable divorce and the accusation is made within the period of retraction. But Imām Mālik holds that this will be *qazf* only if it does not involve the question of accepting or denying the responsibility of pregnancy or fatherhood of the child. If it is not that, the man has the right to exercise *li'ān* even after pronouncing the final divorce, because in that case he would not be having recourse to *li'ān* for the purposes of bringing infamy on the woman but to absolve himself from the responsibility of the child who, he believes, is not his. The same almost is the opinion of Imām Shāfi'ī.

(12) There is a complete consensus of opinion in respect of certain legal implications of *li'ān*, but certain others have been disputed by the jurists. The agreed ones are the following:

Neither the woman nor the man is liable to punishment. If the man denies fatherhood of the child, it will be attributed to the mother alone; it will neither be attributed to the father nor will inherit him; the child will inherit the mother and the mother him. Thereafter nobody will have the right to call the woman adulterous nor the child illegitimate, whether the people might be wholly sure of her being adulterous under the circumstances at the time of *li'ān*. Any person who

repeats the old charge against the woman or her child, will make himself liable to the punishment of *qazf*. The woman's dowry will remain intact, but she will not be entitled to claim maintenance, etc. from the man, and she will become forbidden to him for ever.

There is, however, a difference of opinion in respect of two things:

(a) After *li'ān* how will separation be effected between the husband and the wife?

(b) Is it possible for them to re-unite in marriage after they have been separated on account of *li'ān*?

As regards the first question, Imām Shāfi'ī holds the opinion that as soon as a man has exercised his *li'ān*, the woman stands automatically separated whether she refutes the man's charge by her *li'ān* or not. Imām Mālik, Laith bin S'ad and Zufar maintain that separation is effected when both a man and a woman have exercised their *li'ān* one after the other. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad hold that separation does not take place automatically after *li'ān*, but it is effected by the judge. If the husband pronounces divorce, it takes effect, otherwise the judge will announce their separation.

Regarding the second question, the opinion of Imām Mālik, Abū Yūsuf, Zufar, Sufyān Thauri, Ishāq bin Rāhaviyah, Shāfi'ī, Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal and Ḥasan bin Zaid is that the spouses who have been separated due to *li'ān*, are forbidden to each other for ever. Even if they wish to remarry, they cannot do so in any case. The same is the opinion also of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Ali and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd. Contrary to this, Sa'īd bin Musayyab, Ibrahīm Nakha'ī, Sha'bī, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Abū Ḥanīfah and Muḥammad (may Allah be pleased with them all) opine that if the husband confesses his lie, and he is awarded the prescribed punishment for *qazf*, the two can re-unite in marriage. They argue that it is *li'ān* which makes them unlawful for each other. As long as they stand by their *li'ān*, they will remain forbidden for each other, but when the husband confesses his lie and receives the punishment, *li'an* will become null and void and so will their prohibition to marry each other again.

8. This is an allusion to the slander against Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah. Allah has Himself described it as *Ifk* (false accusation, calumny) which implies its total refutation

From here begins the mention of the incident which provided the occasion of this Sūrah's revelation. We have reproduced the initial part of it in the Introduction as related by Hadrat 'Ā'ishah herself; the rest of it is reproduced below. She says:

"Rumours about this slander went on spreading in the city for about a month, which caused great distress and anguish to the Holy Prophet. I cried due to helplessness and my parents were sick with mental agony. At last one day the Holy Prophet visited us and he sat near me, which he had not done since the slander had started. Feeling that something decisive was going to happen that day, Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr and Umm Rūmān (Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah's mother) also sat near us. The Holy Prophet started the conversation, saying: 'Ā'ishah, I have heard this and this about you: if you are innocent, I expect that Allah will declare your innocence. But if you have committed a sin, you should offer repentance and ask for Allah's forgiveness; when a servant (of Allah) confesses his guilt and repents, Allah forgives him.' Hearing these words, tears dried in my eyes. I looked up to my father expecting that he would reply to the Holy Prophet, but he said, 'Daughter, I do not know what I should say.' Then I turned to my mother, but she also did not know what to say. At last I said, 'You have all heard something about me and believed it. Now if I say that I am innocent—and Allah is my witness that I am innocent—you will not believe me; and if I confess something which I never did—and Allah knows that I never did it—you will believe me.' At that time I tried to call to memory the name of Prophet Jacob but could not recall it. Therefore in view of the predicament that I was placed in, I said, "I cannot but repeat the words which the father of Prophet Joseph had spoken: *fa-sabrun jamīl*: I will bear this patiently with good grace.' (XII: 83). Saying this I lay down and turned to the other side. I was thinking that Allah was aware of my innocence, and He would certainly reveal the truth, but I could never imagine that Divine Revelation would come down in my defense, which the people will read and recite till the Last Day. What I thought probable was that the Holy Prophet would see a dream in which Allah would indicate my innocence. But in the meantime suddenly, the state of receiving Revelation appeared on the Holy Prophet, when pearl-like drops of perspiration used to gather on his face even in severe winter. We all held our breath and sat silent. As for me I was fearless, but my parents seemed to be struck with fear; they did not know what the Divine Revelation would be. When the Revelation was over, the Holy Prophet seemed to be very pleased. Overjoyed with happiness the first words he spoke were: 'Congratulations, 'Ā'ishah, Allah has sent down proof of your innocence' and then he recited these ten verses (11—21). At this my mother said to me, 'Get up and thank the Holy Prophet.' I said, 'I shall neither thank him nor you two, but thank Allah Who has sent down my absolution. You did not even so much as contradict the charge against me.' (This is not the translation of any one tradition, but the substance of many traditions which are found in the books of *Ḥadīth* in connection with the incident of the slander against Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah).

One subtle point to be underatood here is that before mentioning the absolution of Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, a full section of verses has been devoted to the Commandments pertaining to *zinā*, *qazf* and *li'ān*, by which Allah means to admonish that *zinā* is not a slight matter which may be used as a means of entertaining the people in a gathering. It is very serious. If the accuser is right in his accusation he should produce witnesses, and get a most horrible punishment inflicted upon the adulterer and the adulteress. If the accuser is false, he deserves to be given 80 stripes, so that nobody may dare to bring a false charge against the other person. And if the accuser is a husband, he will have to exercise *li'ān* in a court of law to settle the matter. So, none who utters such an accusation will have peace. The Islamic society which has been brought about for the purpose of establishing goodness and piety in the world, can neither tolerate *zinā* as a means of entertainment nor endure loose talk about it as a diversion and amusement.

9. Only a few persons have been mentioned in traditions, who were spreading the rumours. They were: 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, Zaid bin Rifā'ah (who was probably the son of Rifā'ah bin Zaid, the Jewish hypocrite), Mistah bin Uthāthah, Ḥassān bin Thabit, and Ḥamnah bint Jahsh. The first two of these were hypocrites, and the other three Muslims, who had been involved in the mischief due to misunderstanding and weakness. Names of the other People who were more or less involved in the mischief have not been mentioned in the books of *Hadīth* and life of the Holy Prophet.

10. That is, "You should not lose heart. Though the hypocrites, according to their own presumptions, have made the worst attack on you, it will eventually bring misfortune on them, and will prove to be a blessing in disguise for you."

As mentioned in the Introduction above, the hypocrites had planned to inflict a defeat on the Muslims on the moral front, which was their real field of superiority and responsible for their victory on every other front against the opponents. But Allah turned this mischief into a means of strength for the Muslims. On this occasion, the conduct and attitude adopted by the Holy Prophet, Ḥadrat Abū Bakr and his family, and the Muslims at large proved beyond any doubt that they were the purest people morally, tolerant and just in nature, noble and forbearing in character. If the Holy Prophet had wished he could have got the people responsible for the attack on his honour beheaded immediately. But he bore everything with patience for a whole month. And when Divine injunction came down from Allah, he enforced the punishment for *qazf* only on those three Muslims whose guilt was established, and even spared the hypocrites. Ḥadrat Abū Bakr's own relative, whose whole family he had been supporting all along, continued heaping disgrace on him publicly, but that noble man neither severed his family relations with him nor stopped monetary help to him and his family. None

of the wives of the Holy Prophet took the least part in the slander nor even expressed the slightest approval of it. So much so that Ḥaḍrat Zainab (a wife of the Holy Prophet), for whose sake her real sister, Ḥamnah bint Jahsh, was taking part in the slander, did not utter anything about her rival (Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah) except good words. According to Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, herself: "Zainab among the wives of the Holy Prophet was my strongest rival, but when in connection with the incident of the slander, the Holy Prophet asked her opinion of me, she said, 'O Messenger of Allah, I swear by God that I have perceived nothing in her except piety'." Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah's own nobility of character can be judged by this that though Ḥassan bin Thābit had played a prominent role in the campaign of slander against her, she continued to treat him with due honour and esteem. When the people reminded her that he was the man who had slandered her, she retorted, 'No, he it was who used to rebut the anti-Islamic poets on behalf of the Holy Prophet and Islam.' Such was the conduct and attitude of those people who were directly affected by the slander. As for the other Muslims, their attitude can be judged from one instance. When Ḥaḍrat Abū Ayyūb Anṣārī's wife mentioned before him the rumours of the slander, he said, "Mother of Ayyūb, if you had been there in place of 'Ā'ishah, would you have done that?" She replied, "By God, I would never have done it." Ḥaḍrat Ayyūb then said, "Well, 'Ā'ishah is a much better woman than you. As for myself, if I had been in place of Safwān, I could never have entertained such an evil thought and Ṣafwān is a better Muslim than I." Thus, the result of the mischief engineered by the hypocrites was contrary to what they had planned to achieve, and the Muslims emerged out of this test morally stronger than before.

Then there was more good to come from this. The incident became the cause of some very important additions to the social law and injunctions of Islam. Through these the Muslims received such Commandments from Allah by which the Muslim society can be kept clean and protected against the creation and propagation of moral evils, and if at all they arise, they can be corrected promptly.

Furthermore, there was another aspect of goodness in it also. The Muslims came to understand fully that the Holy Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) had no knowledge of the unseen. He knew only that which Allah taught him. Beside that his knowledge was the same as that of a common man. For one full month he remained in great anxiety with regard to Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah. He would sometimes make enquiries from the maid-servant, sometimes from his other wives, and sometimes from Ḥaḍrat 'Ali and Ḥaḍrat Usāmah. At last when he spoke to Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, he spoke only this: "If you have committed the sin, you should offer repentance, and if you are innocent, I expect that Allah will declare your innocence." Had he possessed any knowledge of the unseen, he would not have felt so upset, nor would have made enquiries, nor counselled repentance. However, when Divine Message revealed the truth, he received that

knowledge which he had not possessed for more than a month. Thus Allah arranged to safeguard the Muslims, through direct experience and observation, against exaggerated notions in which people generally get involved in regard to their religious leaders on account of excessive blind faith. Perhaps this was the reason why Allah withheld Revelation for a month, for if Revelation had been sent down on the very first day, it could not have had any beneficial effect.

11. That is, 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, who was the real author of the false accusation and mischief. In some traditions it has been wrongly claimed that this verse refers to Ḥaḍrat Ḥassān bin Thābit; this is actually due to a misunderstanding of the narrators themselves. As a matter of fact, Ḥaḍrat Ḥassān bin Thābit's only weakness was that he became involved in the mischief engineered by the hypocrites. Ḥāfiz Ibn Kathīr has rightly observed that if this tradition had not been included in Bukhārī, it would not have deserved any notice. The greatest falsehood, rather a calumny, in this connection is the assertion by the Umayyads that it was Ḥaḍrat 'Alī who had been referred to in this verse. A saying of Ḥishām bin 'Abdul Mālik has been cited in Bukhārī, Ṭabarānī and Baihaqī to the effect: "The one who had the greatest share of responsibility in it" refers to 'Alī bin Abī Tālib. The fact, however, is that Ḥaḍrat 'Alī had no hand whatever in this mischief. The truth is that when Ḥaḍrat 'Alī saw the Holy Prophet in a perturbed state of mind and the Holy Prophet asked for his counsel, he said: "Allah in this matter has not laid any restriction on you: suitable women are plenty: you may if you like divorce 'Ā'ishah and marry another woman." But this did not at all mean that Ḥaḍrat 'Alī had supported the accusation against Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah. His object was only to allay the Holy Prophet's mental anguish.

12. This may also be translated as: "Why did they not have a good opinion of the people of their own community and society?" The words in the Text are comprehensive and contain a subtle meaning which should be understood well. What happened concerning Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and Ṣafwān bin Mu'attal was only this: A woman belonging to the caravan (apart from the fact that she was the Holy Propher's wife) was left behind, and a man belonging to the same caravan, who was also left behind, chanced to see her and brought her on his camel to the camp. Now if a person alleges that when the two found themselves alone, they became involved in sin, the accusation would imply two other hypotheses: First, if the accuser himself (whether man or woman) had been there, he would certainly have availed of the rare opportunity and committed the sinful act, for he had never before chanced upon a person of the opposite sex in a situation like this. Second, the accuser's assessment of the moral condition of the society he belongs to is that in that society there is no man or woman who could possibly have abstained from sin in similar circumstances. This will be the case when it involves any one man and any one woman. But supposing if the man and the woman happened to belong

to the same place, and the woman who was left behind by chance was the wife, or sister, or daughter of a friend, or a relative, or a neighbour, or an acquaintance of the man, the matter would become much more serious and grave. Then it would mean that the one who utters such an accusation has a very poor and degraded opinion of himself as well as of his society, which has nothing to do with morality and good sense. No gentleman can imagine that if he finds a woman belonging to the family of a friend, or a neighbour or an acquaintance, stranded on the way, the first thing he would do would be to molest and dishonour her, and then would think of escorting her home. But here the matter was a thousand times more serious. The lady was no other than the wife of the Holy Prophet of Allah, whom every Muslim esteemed higher than his own mother, and whom Allah Himself had forbidden for every Muslim just like his own mother. The man was not only a follower of the same caravan and a soldier of the same army, and an inhabitant of the same city, but also a Muslim, who believed in the lady's husband to be the Messenger of Allah and his religious leader and guide, and had even followed him and fought in the most dangerous battle at Badr. Viewed against this background, it would seem that the person who uttered such an accusation and those who considered the accusation as probable, formed a very poor opinion not only of their moral selves but also of the whole society.

13. That is, "The accusation was not worth any consideration; the Muslims should have rejected it there and then as a lie and a falsehood." A question might be asked: Why did not the Holy Prophet and Hadrat Abū Bakr Siddīq reject it on the very first day, and why did they give it all that importance? The answer is that the position of the husband and the father is different from that of the common people. Though none else can know a woman better than her husband and a righteous husband cannot doubt the character of a virtuous and pious wife only on account of the people's accusations, but when the wife is accused, the husband is placed in a difficult situation. Even if he rejects it outright as a calumny, the accusers will not listen. They will rather say that the woman is clever and has beguiled the husband into believing that she is virtuous and pious whereas she is not. A similar situation is faced by the parents. They also cannot remove the accusers' slander regarding their daughter's chastity even if they know that the accusation is manifestly false. The same thing had afflicted the Holy Prophet, Ḥadrat Abū Bakr and Umm Rūmān, otherwise they did not entertain any doubt about Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah's character. That is why the Holy Prophet had declared in his sermon that he had neither seen any evil in his wife nor in the man who was being mentioned in the slander.

14. " .... in the sight of Allah": in the Law of Allah, or according to the

[Contd. on p. 350

يَأْتَلِ أُولُوا الْفَضْلِ مِنْكُمْ وَالسَّعَةِ أَنْ يُؤْتُوا أُولِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينَ
وَالْمُهَاجِرِينَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَلْيَعْفُوا وَلْيَصْفَحُوا ۗ أَلَا تُحِبُّونَ أَنْ يَغْفِرَ
اللَّهُ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٢٢﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَرْمُونَ الْمُحْصَنَاتِ الْغَافِلَاتِ
الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ لُعِنُوا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ يَوْمَ تَشْهَدُ
عَلَيْهِمْ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ وَأَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ يَوْمَئِذٍ
يُوَفِّيهِمُ اللَّهُ دِينَهُمُ الْحَقَّ وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٢٥﴾
الْخَبِيثَاتُ لِلْخَبِيثِينَ وَالْخَبِيثُونَ لِلْخَبِيثَاتِ ۚ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلطَّيِّبِينَ وَالطَّيِّبُونَ
لِلطَّيِّبَاتِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ مُبَرَّءُونَ مِمَّا يَقُولُونَ ۖ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٢٦﴾
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَدْخُلُوا بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ بُيُوتِكُمْ حَتَّىٰ تَسْتَأْنِسُوا وَتُسَلِّمُوا
عَلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا ۖ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَإِنْ لَمْ تَجِدُوا فِيهَا
أَحَدًا فَلَا تَدْخُلُوهَا حَتَّىٰ يُؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ ۖ وَإِنْ قِيلَ لَكُمُ ارْجِعُوا فَارْجِعُوا
هُوَ أَزْكَىٰ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَدْخُلُوا
بُيُوتًا غَيْرَ مَسْكُونَةٍ فِيهَا مَتَاعٌ لَكُمْ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا
تَكْتُمُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ قُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ يَغُضُّوا مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِمْ وَيَحْفَظُوا فُرُوجَهُمْ ۚ
ذَٰلِكَ أَزْكَىٰ لَهُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ خَبِيرٌ بِمَا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَقُلْ لِلْمُؤْمِنَاتِ يَغْضُضْنَ
مِنْ أَبْصَارِهِنَّ وَيَحْفَظْنَ فُرُوجَهُنَّ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا مَا ظَهَرَ
مِنْهَا وَلْيَضْرِبْنَ بِخُمُرِهِنَّ عَلَىٰ جُيُوبِهِنَّ ۖ وَلَا يُبْدِينَ زِينَتَهُنَّ إِلَّا لِبُعُولَتِهِنَّ
أَوْ آبَائِهِنَّ أَوْ آبَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَائِهِنَّ أَوْ أَبْنَاءِ بُعُولَتِهِنَّ أَوْ إِخْوَانِهِنَّ
أَوْ بَنِي إِخْوَانِهِنَّ أَوْ بَنِي أَخَوَاتِهِنَّ أَوْ نِسَائِهِنَّ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُنَّ أَوِ

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Those among you, who are bountiful and persons of means, should not swear on oath that they would withhold their help from their relatives, the indigent and those who have left their homes for the cause of Allah: they should forgive and forbear. Do you not wish that Allah should forgive you? and Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.[20] 22

Those who charge with slander those Believing women, who are chaste but simple souls,[21] are accursed in this world and in the Hereafter: there is a great punishment for them. They should not forget the Day when their own tongues and their own hands and feet will bear testimony in regard to their misdeeds.[21a] On that Day Allah will give them the full recompense they deserve, and they will realize that Allah is the very Truth, Who makes the Truth manifest. 23-25

Impure women are for impure men and impure men for impure women, and pure women are for pure men and pure men for pure women. They are free from those scandals which the slanderers utter.[22] There is forgiveness for them and honourable provision. 26

O Believers,[23] do not enter other houses than your own until you have the approval of the inmates[24] and have wished them peace; this is the best way for you: it is expected that you will observe it.[25] Then, if you do not find anyone therein, do not enter until you have been given permission,[26] and if you are told to go back, you should go back. This is a purer way for you;[27] and Allah has full knowledge of what you do. There is, however, no harm if you enter houses which are not dwelling places, but contain something useful for you ;[28] Allah knows what you disclose and what you conceal. 27-29

And O Prophet, enjoin the Believing men to restrain their gaze[29]and guard their private parts.[30] This is a more righteous way for them: Allah has knowledge of what they do. 30

O Prophet, enjoin the Believing men to restrain their gaze[31] and guard their private[32] parts.[33] and not to display their adornment[34] except that which is displayed of itself,[35] and to draw their veils over their bosoms[36] and not to display their adornment except before their husbands,[37] their fathers, the fathers of their husbands,[38] their sons and the sons of their husbands[39] (from other wives), their brothers,[40] 31

their brothers' sons,[41] their sisters' sons,[42] their female associates[43] and those in their possession[44] (contd. on p. 369)

Contd. from p.347]

Law of Allah. Obviously, in Allah's knowledge, the accusation was by itself false and its falsehood was in no way dependent on the production of witnesses by the accusers.

Here nobody should have the misunderstanding that failure to bring witnesses is being regarded as the basis and argument to prove that the accusation was false, and that the Muslims are also being told to regard it as a manifest calumny only because the accusers did not bring four witnesses. This misunderstanding can arise if one does not keep in view the background of the actual incident. As a matter of fact, none of the accusers had actually witnessed the thing which they were uttering with their tongues. The only basis of their accusation was that Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah had been left behind from the caravan and afterwards Ṣafwān had brought her to the camp on his camel. From this nobody with a little common sense could conclude that Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah's being left behind was intentional. These are not the ways of those who do these things. It cannot happen that the wife of the army commander quietly stays back with a man, and then the same man makes her ride on his camel and makes haste to catch up with the army at the next halting place in the open daylight at noon. The situation itself warranted that they were innocent. There could, however, be some justification in the charge if the accusers had seen something with their own eyes, otherwise the circumstances on which the accusers had based their accusation did not contain any ground for doubt and suspicion.

15. These verses, especially verse 12, wherein Allah says: "Why did not the Believing men and the Believing women have a good opinion of themselves ?" provide the general principle that all dealings in the Islamic society must be based on 'good faith'. The question of a bad opinion should arise only when there is a definite and concrete basis for it. Every person should, as a matter of principle, be considered as innocent unless there are sound reasons to hold him guilty or suspect. Every person should be considered as truthful unless there are strong grounds for holding him as unreliable

16. The direct interpretation of the verse, in the context in which it occurs, is this: "Those who cast aspersions, propagate evil, publicise it and bring Islamic morality into disrepute, deserve punishment." The words in the Text, however, comprehend all the various forms that can be employed for the propagation of evil. These include actual setting up of brothels, production of erotic stories, songs, paintings, plays and dramas as well as all kinds of mixed gatherings at clubs and

hotels, which induce the people to immoralities. The Qur'ān holds all those who resort to such things as criminals, who deserve punishment not only in the Hereafter but in this world as well. Accordingly it is the duty of an Islamic government to put an end to all such means of propagating immorality. Its penal law must hold all those acts as cognizable offences which the Qur'ān mentions as crimes against public morality and declares the offenders punishable.

17. "You do not know...": "You do not visualise the full impact of individual acts on society as a whole: Allah knows best the number of people who are affected by these acts and their cumulative effect on the collective life of the community. You should accordingly trust in Him and do all you can to eradicate and suppress the evils pointed out by Him. These are not trivial matters to be treated lightly; these have very serious repercussions and the offenders must be dealt with severely."

18. 'Satan' is bent upon involving you in all kinds of pollutions and indecencies: had it not been for the mercy and kindness of Allah Who enables you to differentiate between good and evil and helps you to educate and reform yourselves, you would not have been able to lead a pure and virtuous life on the strength of your own faculties and initiative alone.

19. It is Allah's Will alone which decides whom to make pious and virtuous. His decisions are not arbitrary but based on knowledge. He alone knows who is anxious to live a life of virtue and who is attracted towards a life of sin. Allah hears a person's most secret talk, and is aware of everything that passes in his mind. It is on the basis of this direct knowledge that Allah decides whom to bless with piety and virtue and whom to ignore.

20. Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has stated that after the revelation of verses 11—21 absolving her from the accusation, Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr swore that he would no longer support Miṣṭaḥ bin Uthātha. This was because the man had shown absolutely no regard for the relationship nor for the favours that Abū Bakr had all along been showing him and his family. At this verse 22 was revealed and Ḥaḍrat Abu Bakr, on hearing it, immediately said: "By God! we do want that Allah should forgive us." Consequently he again started to help Mistah and in a more liberal manner than before. According to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, some other Companions besides Hadrat Abū Bakr, also had sworn that they would discontinue helping those who had taken an active part in the slander. After the revelation of this verse, all of them revoked their oaths and the ill-will that had been created by the mischief was gone.

Here a question may arise as to whether a person, who swears for something and later on revokes the oath on finding that there was no good in it and

adopts a better and more virtuous course, should offer expiation for breaking the oath or not. One group of the jurists is of the opinion that adoption of the virtuous course itself is the expiation and nothing more needs to be done. They base their argument on this verse where Allah commanded Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr to revoke his oath but did not require him to atone for it. They also cite a Tradition of the Holy Prophet in support of their argument, saying: "If anybody takes an oath for something and later on finds that another course is better and adopts it, his adoption of a better course by itself is the atonement for breaking the oath."

The other group is of the view that there is a clear Commandment in the Qur'ān concerning the breaking of oath (II: 225, V: 89), which has neither been abrogated by this verse nor clearly amended. Therefore the earlier Commandment stands. No doubt, Allah commanded Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr to revoke his oath but He did not tell him that expiation was not necessary. As regards the Tradition of the Holy Prophet, it only means this that the sin of taking an oath for a wrong thing is wiped out when the right course is adopted; it does not absolve one from making expiation for the oath itself. Another Tradition of the Holy Prophet clarifies this view. He said: "Whoso swears for something and then finds that another course is better than the one he had sworn for, he should adopt the better course and atone for his oath." This shows that expiation for breaking one's oath and expiation of the sin for not doing good are different things. The expiation for the first is to adopt the right course, and for the second the same as has been laid down in the Qur'ān. For further explanation, see E.N. 46 of Sūrah Sād.

21. The word *ghāfilāt* as used in the Text means the women who are simple, unpretentious souls, who do not know any artifice, who have pious hearts and have no idea of immorality. They cannot even imagine that their names could ever be associated with any slander. The Holy Prophet has said: "To slander chaste women is one of the seven 'deadly' sins." According to another Tradition cited by Ṭabarānī from Ḥaḍrat Ḥuzaifah, the Holy Prophet said: "To slander a pious woman suffices to ruin the good deeds of a hundred years."

21 (a). For explanation, see E.N. 55 of Sūrah Yā Sīn and E.N. 25 of Ḥā Mīm Sajdah.

22. This verse enunciates a fundamental principle: Impure men are a fit match for impure women and pious men are a fit match for pious women. It never happens that a man is good in all other aspects but is addicted to a solitary vice. As a matter of fact, his very habits, manners and demeanour, all contain a number of evil traits, which sustain and nourish that single vice. It is impossible that a man develops a vice all of a sudden without having any trace of its existence in his demeanour and way of life. This is a psychological truth which everybody experiences in the daily lives of the people. How is it then possible that a man who

has all along lived a pure and morally clean life, will put up and continue to live for years in love with a wife who is adulterous? Can a woman be imagined who is an adulteress, but she does not manifest her evil character through her talk, gait, manners and deportment? Is it possible for a virtuous man of high character to live happily with a woman of this type? What is being suggested here is that people in future should not credulously put their belief in any rumour that reaches them. They should carefully see as to who is being accused and on what account and whether the accusation fairly sticks on the person or not. And when there exists no trace of evidence to support the accusation, people cannot believe it just because a foolish or wicked person has uttered it.

Some commentators have interpreted this verse to mean that evil things are for the evil people and good things for the good people: the good people are free from the evil things which the wicked people utter about them. Some others have interpreted it to mean that evil deeds only go with evil people and good deeds with good people: the pious people are free from the evil deeds which the wicked people ascribe to them. Still others interpret it to mean that evil and filthy talk is indulged in only by the evil and filthy people and good and pious talk only by the good and pious people: the pious people are free from the sort of talk that these mischievous people are indulging in. The words of the verse are comprehensive and can be interpreted in any of the three ways, but the first meaning that strikes the reader is the one that we have adopted above, and the same fits in more meaningfully with the context than others.

23. The Commandments given in the beginning of the Sūrah were meant to help eradicate evil when it had actually appeared in society. The Commandments being given now are meant to prevent the very birth of evil, to reform society and root out the causes responsible for the creation and spread of evil. Before we study these Commandments, it will be useful to understand two things clearly:

First, the revelation of these Commandments immediately after the Divine appraisal of the incident of the "slander" clearly indicates that permeation of a calumny against the noble person of a wife of the Holy Prophet in the society, was the direct result of the existence of a sexually charged atmosphere, and in the sight of Allah there was no other way of cleansing society of the evil than of prohibiting free entry into other people's houses, discouraging free mixing of the sexes together, forbidding women to appear in their make up before the other men, excepting a small circle of close relatives, banning prostitution, exhorting men and women not to remain unmarried for long, and arranging marriages even of the slaves and slave-girls. In other words, the movement of the women without purdah and the presence of a large number of unmarried persons in society were, in the

knowledge of Allah, the real causes that imperceptibly give rise to sensuality in society. It was this sexually charged atmosphere which kept the ears, eyes, tongues and hearts of the people ever ready to get involved in any real or fictitious scandal. Allah in His wisdom did not regard any other measure more suitable and effective than these Commandments to eradicate this evil; otherwise He would have enjoined some other Commandments.

The second important thing to remember is that Divine Law does not merely forbid an evil or only prescribe a punishment for the offender, but it also puts an end to all those factors which provide occasions for the evil, or incite or force a person to commit it. It also imposes curbs on the causes, incentives and means leading to the evil so as to check the wrongdoer much before he actually commits the crime. It does not like that people should freely approach and loiter about near the border lines of sin and get caught and punished all the time. It does not merely act as a prosecutor but as a guide, reformer and helper, too. So it uses all kinds of moral, social and educational devices to help the people to safeguard themselves against evil and vice.

24. The Arabic word *tasta'nisū* in the Text has been generally interpreted to mean the same as *tasta'zinū*. There is, however, a fine difference between the two words which should not be lost sight of. Had the word in the Text been *tasta'zinū*, the verse would have meant: "Do not enter other people's houses until you have taken their permission". Allah has used *tasta'nisū* which is derived from the root *uns*, meaning fondness, affection, regard, etc. According to this, the verse would mean: "Do not enter other people's houses until you are sure of their affection and regard for yourself." In other words, you should make sure that your entry in the house is not disagreeable to the inmates and you are sure of a welcome. That is why we have translated the word into 'approval' of the inmates instead of 'permission' of the inmates, because the word 'approval' expresses the sense of the original more precisely.

25. According to the Arab custom of the pre-Islamic days, people would enter each other's house freely without permission just by pronouncing 'good morning' or 'good evening'. This unannounced entry sometimes violated the privacy of the people and their women folk. Allah enjoined the principle that everybody has a right to privacy in his own house and no one is entitled to force his entry unannounced and without permission of the inmates. The rules and regulations enforced by the Holy Prophet in society on receipt of the above Commandment are given below serially:

(1) The 'right of privacy' was not merely confined to the question of entry in the houses, but it was declared as a common right according to which it is forbidden to peep into a house, glance from outside, or even read the other

person's letter without his permission. According to Thaubān, who was a freed slave of the Holy Prophet, the Holy Prophet said: "When you have already cast a look into a house, what is then the sense in seeking permission for entry?" (Abū Da'ūd). Ḥaḍrat Huzail bin Shurahbīl has reported that a man came to see the Holy Prophet and sought permission for entry while standing just in front of the door. The Holy Prophet said to him: "Stand aside: the object of the Commandment for seeking permission is to prevent casting of looks inside the house." (Abū Da'ūd). The practice of the Holy Prophet was that whenever he went to see somebody, he would stand aside, to the right or the left of the door, and seek permission as it was not then usual to hang curtains on the doors. (Abū Da'ūd). Ḥaḍrat Anas, the attendant of the Holy Prophet, states that a man glanced into the room of the Holy Prophet from outside. The Holy Prophet at that time was holding an arrow in his hand. He advanced towards the man in a way as if he would thrust the arrow into his belly. (Abū Da'ūd). According to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, the Holy Prophet said: "Whoever glances through the letter of his brother without his permission, glances into fire." (Abū Da'ūd). According to Muslim and Bukhārī;, the Holy Prophet is reported to have said: "If someone peeps into your house, it will be no sin if you injure his eye with a piece of stone." In another Tradition, he has said: "The inmates of a house, who injure the eye of the man peeping into their house, are not liable to any punishment." Imām Shāfi'ī has taken this Commandment literally and permits smashing of the eye of the one who casts a glance like this. The Hanafīs, however, do not take the Command in the literal sense. They express the opinion that it is applicable only in that case where an outsider forces his entry into a house in spite of the resistance from the inmates and has his eye or some other limb smashed in the scuffle. In such a case, no penalty will lie on the inmates. *(Aḥkām'al-Qur'ān*, Al-Jaṣṣān, Vol. III, p. 385).

(2) The jurists have included 'hearing' also under 'glancing'. For instance, if a blind man enters a house without permission, he will not be able to see anybody, but he will certainly be able to hear whatever is going on in the house. This also amounts to violation of the other person's right of privacy.

(3) The Command to seek permission is not only applicable in cases where a person wants to enter the other people's houses, but it also applies to entry in the house of one's own mother or sister. A man asked the Holy Prophet: "Sir, should I seek permission to enter my mother's house also?" The Holy Prophet replied that he should. The man stated that there was nobody beside him to look after her, and asked whether it was necessary to get permission every time he wanted to go in. The Holy Prophet

replied: "Yes; would you like that you should see your mother in a naked state" (Ibn Jarīr quoting from 'Aṭā bin Yasār). According to a saying of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, one should seek permission even when going to see one's own mother or sister. (Ibn Kathīr). He has suggested that even when a person goes to visit one's wife in one's own house, he should announce his arrival by coughing, etc. It is related by his wife Zainab that 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd would always announce his arrival by coughing, etc. and never liked that he should enter the house unannounced all of a sudden. (Ibn Jarīr).

(4) The only exception to the general rule is that no permission is needed in case of an emergency or a calamity like theft, fire, etc. One can go for help without permission in such cases.

(5) In the beginning when the system of seeking permission was introduced, people did not know the exact procedure to be followed. Once a man came to the Prophet's house and shouted at the door, "Should I be in ?" The Holy Prophet said to his maid servant, Roudah, "Go and instruct him about the correct way. He should say: *Assalām-o-'alaikum* (peace be upon you): May I come in?" (Ibn Jarīr, Abū Da'ūd). Jābir bin 'Abdullah says that once he went to the Holy Prophet's house in connection with certain liabilities of his father and knocked at the door. The Holy Prophet asked: "Who is it?" I replied, "It's me." The Holy Prophet thereupon repeated twice or thrice: "It's me, it's me!" That is, how can one understand from this who you are? (Abū Da'ūd).

A man named Kaladah bin Hanbal went to see the Holy Prophet and got seated without the customary salutation. The Holy Prophet told him to go out and come in again after calling: *Assalām-o-'alaikum* (peace be upon you). (Abū Da'ūd). Thus, the correct method of seeking permission was to disclose one's identity first and then ask for permission. It is related that whenever Hadrat 'Umar went to see the Holy Prophet, he would say: "*Assalām-o-'alaikum yā Rasūl-Allah*, I am 'Umar: May I enter!" (Abū Da'ūd). The Holy Prophet enjoined that permission should be asked thrice at the most. If there is no reply even at the third call, one should come back. (Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū D'ūd). The same was his own practice. Once he went to the house of Hadrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah and sought permission twice after greeting with: *Assalām-o-'alaikum wa Rahmatullah* (peace be upon you and mercy of Allah), but there was no response. After calling for the third time when he received no response, he turned back. Sa'd came out running from the house, and said, "O Messenger of Allah, I was hearing you all right, but I desired to have Allah's peace and mercy invoked upon me through your sacred tongue as often as possible; therefore, I was replying to you in a low voice." (Abū D'ūd, Aḥmad). The three calls as enjoined above should not be made in quick

succession, but at suitable intervals so as to allow sufficient time to the inmates to make the response in case they are not free to do so.

(6) The permission for entry should come from the master of the house himself or from some other reliable inmate like a servant or a responsible person, who gives permission on behalf of the master. One should not enter the house on the word of a mere child.

(7) Undue insistence for permission to enter or to keep standing at the door obstinately even after refusal, is not permissible. If no entry is permitted even after three calls, or the master refuses to see, one should go back.

26. Entry into an empty house is not allowed unless permitted as such by the master of the house. One may, for instance, have told a visitor or sent him a message to wait in his room till his arrival. The mere fact that there is nobody in the house or the call is not answered does not entitle anybody to enter without permission.

27. That is, nobody should mind if entry is refused, for everybody has a right to refuse to meet another person, or offer a plea if otherwise busy. The Command "Go back", according to the jurists, means going back in the literal sense and moving away from the door. Nobody has any right to compel the other person for a meeting or to embarrass him by standing obstinately at his door.

28. "Houses which are not dwelling place" are the hotels, inns, guest houses, shops, staging bungalows, etc. which are generally open to all people.

29. The word *ghaḍḍ* means to reduce, shorten or lower down something. Accordingly, *ghaḍḍ baṣar* is generally translated as 'lowering the gaze' or 'keeping it lowered'. But the Command of *ghaḍḍ baṣar* does not imply that the gaze should always be kept lowered. It only means to imply that one should restrain one's gaze and avoid casting of looks freely. That is, if it is not desirable to see a thing, one should turn the eyes away and avoid having a look at it. The restriction of a 'restrained gaz' is applicable only in a limited sphere. The context in which the words occur shows that this restriction applies to the men's gazing at women, or casting looks at the *satar* of the other persons, or fixing the eyes at indecent scenes.

The details of this Divine Commandment as explained in the *Sunnah* of the Holy Prophet are given below:

(1) It is not lawful for a man to cast a full gaze at the other women except at his own wife or the *maḥram* women of his family. The chance look is pardonable but not the second look which one casts when one feels the lure of the object. The Holy Prophet has termed such gazing and glancing as wickedness of the eyes. He has said that man commits adultery with all

his sensory organs. The evil look at the other woman is the adultery of the eyes; lustful talk is the adultery of the tongue; relishing the other woman's voice is adultery of the ears; and touching her body with the hand or walking for an unlawful purpose is adultery of the hands and feet. After these preliminaries the sexual organs either bring the act of adultery to completion or leave it incomplete. (Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd).

According to a Tradition related by Hadrat Buraidah, the Holy Prophet instructed Ḥadrat 'Alī: "O 'Alī, do not cast a second look after the first look. The first look is pardonable but not the second one." (Ṭirmizī;, Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd). Hadrat Jarīr bin 'Abdullah Bajalī says that he asked the Holy Prophet, "What should I do if I happen to cast a chance look?" The Holy Prophet replied, "Turn your eyes away or lower your gaze." (Muslim, Aḥmad, Ṭirmizī, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī). Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd quotes the Holy Prophet as having said: "Allah says that the gaze is one of the poisonous arrows of Satan. Whoever forsakes it, out of His fear, he will be rewarded with a faith whose sweetness he will relish in his own heart." (Ṭabarānī). According to a Tradition related by Abū Umāmah, the Holy Prophet said: "If a Muslim happens to glance at the charms of a woman and then turns his eyes away, Allah will bless his worship and devotion and will make it all the more sweet." (Musnad Aḥmad). Imām Ja'far Sādiq has quoted from his father, Imām Muhammad Bāqir, who has quoted Ḥadrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah Ansārī as saying: "On the occasion of the Farewell Pilgrimage, Faḍal bin'Abbās, who was a young cousin of the Holy Prophet, was riding with him on the camelback during the return journey from Mash'ar al-Harām. When they came to a few women passing on the way, Fadal started looking at them. Thereupon the Holy Prophet put his hand on his face and turned it to the other side." (Abū Da'ūd). On another occasion during the same Pilgrimage, a woman of the clan of Khath'am stopped the Holy Prophet on the way and sought clarification about a certain matter pertaining to Ḥajj. Faḍal bin 'Abbās fixed his gaze at her, but the Holy Prophet turned his face to the other side. (Bukhārī, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmizī).

(2) Nobody should have the misunderstanding that the Command to restrain the gaze was enjoined because the women were allowed to move about freely with open faces, for if veiling of the face had already been enjoined, the question of restraining or not restraining the gaze would not have arisen. This argument is incorrect rationally as well as factually. It is incorrect rationally because even when veiling of the face is the usual custom, occasions can arise where a man and a woman come face to face with each other suddenly, or when a veiled woman has to uncover her face under necessity. Then even if the Muslim women observe purdah, there will be non-Muslim women who will continue to move about unveiled. Thus, the Commandment to lower the gaze or restrain the eyes, does not

necessarily presume existence of a custom allowing the women to move about with unveiled faces. It is incorrect factually because the custom of purdah which was introduced after the revelation of the Commandments in Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb included veiling of the face, and this is supported by a number of Traditions relating to the time of the Holy Prophet himself. Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah in her statement relating to the incident of the "slander", which has been narrated on the authority of reliable reporters, has said: "When I came back to the camp, and found that the caravan had left, I lay down and was overpowered by sleep. In the morning when Safwān bin Mu'attal passed that way he recognised me because he had seen me before the Commandment of purdah had been sent down. On recognising me he exclaimed: *Innā lillāhi wa innā ilaihi rāji'ūn:* 'To Allah we belong and to Him we shall return'; and I awoke and covered my face with my sheet." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Hishām). Abū Da'ūd contains an incident that when the son of Umm Khallād was killed in a battle, she came to the Holy Prophet to enquire about him and was wearing the veil as usual. It was natural to presume that on such a sad occasion one is liable to lose one's balance and ignore the restrictions of purdah. But when questioned she said, "I have certainly lost my son but not my modesty." Another Tradition in Abū Da'ūd quoted on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah relates that a woman handed an application to the Holy Prophet from behind a curtain. The Holy Prophet enquired: "Is it a man's hand or a woman's?" She replied that it was a woman's. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: "If it is a woman's hand, the nails at least should have been coloured with henna!" As regards the two incidents relating to the occasion of Ḥajj, which we have mentioned above, they cannot be used as an argument to prove that the veil was not in vogue in the time of the Holy Prophet. This is because wearing of the veil is prohibited in the state of *iḥrām*. However, even in that state pious women did not like to uncover their faces before the other men. Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has stated that during the Farewell Pilgrimage when they were moving towards Makkah in the state of *iḥrām*, the women would lower down their head sheets over their faces whenever the travellers passed by them, and would uncover their faces as soon as they had passed by. (Abū Da'ūd).

There are certain exceptions to the Command of lowering the gaze or restraining the look. These exceptions relate to occasions when it is really necessary to see a woman, for instance, when a man intends to marry her. It is not only permissible to see the woman in such a case but even commendable. Mughirah bin Shu'bah has stated, "I wanted to marry in a certain family. The Holy Prophet asked me whether I had seen the girl or not. When I replied in the negative, he said: 'Have a look at her; this will enhance harmonious relationship between you two'." (Aḥmad, Tirmizi,

Nasā'i, Ibn Mājah, Dārimī). According to a Tradition related by Abū Hurairah, a man wanted to marry in a family of the Anṣār. The Holy Prophet asked him to have a look at the girl, for the Anṣār usually had a defect in their eyes. (Muslim, Nasā'i, Aḥmad). According to Jābir bin 'Abdullah, the Holy Prophet said: "When a person from among you wants to marry a woman, he should have a look at her to satisfy himself that there is some quality in the woman which induces him to marry her." (Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd). According to another Tradition emanating from Abū Ḥumaidah and quoted in Musnad Aḥmad, the Holy Prophet said that there was no harm in such a procedure. He also permitted that the girl may be seen without her being aware of it. From this the jurists have concluded that there is no harm in looking at a woman when it is really necessary. For instance, there is no harm in looking at a suspect woman when investigating a crime, or in the judge's looking at a female witness, who appears in the court, or in the physician's looking at a female patient, etc.

(4) The intention of the Command to restrain the gaze also implies that no man or woman should look at the private parts of the other man or woman. The Holy Prophet has said: "No man should look at the *satar* of another man nor a woman at the *satar* of another woman." (Ahmad, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmizī). Ḥadrat 'Alī has quoted the Holy Prophet as saying: "Do not look at the thigh of another person, living or dead". (Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah).

30. "Guard their private parts": Abstain from illicit sexual gratification and from exposing their *satar* before others. For males, the *satar* is the part of the body from the navel to the knee, and it is not permissible to expose that part of the body intentionally before anybody except one's own wife. (Dāraqutnī, Baihaqī). Ḥadrat Jarhad Aslamī states that once he was sitting in the company of the Holy Prophet with his thigh exposed. The Holy Prophet said: "Do you not know that the thigh has to be kept concealed." (Tirmizī, Abū Da'ūd, Mu'attā). Ḥadrat 'Alī reports that the Holy Prophet said: "Do not expose your thigh." (Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah). Not only is the *satar* to be kept concealed before others but even when alone. The Holy Prophet has warned: "Beware, never remain naked, for with you are those (that is, the angels of goodness and mercy), who never leave you alone except when you ease yourself or you go to your wives. So feel shy of them and give them due respect." (Tirmizī). According to another Tradition, the Holy Prophet said: "Guard your *satar* from everybody except from your wife and your slave-girl." The questioner asked, "Even when we are alone?" The Holy Prophet replied, "Yes, even when alone, for Allah has a greater right that you should feel shy of Him." (Abū Da'ūd, Tirmizī, Ibn Mājah).

31. The Commandments of restraining the gaze for women are the same as for men. They should not glance intentionally at the other men, and if they happen to cast a chance look, they should turn their eyes away; and they should abstain from looking at the *satar* of others. However, the Commandments relating to the men's looking at women are a little different from those relating to the women's looking at men. On the one hand, there is an incident related in a Tradition saying that Hadrat Umm Salamah and Ḥadrat Umm Maimūnah, wives of the Holy Prophet, were sitting with him when Ibn Umm Maktūm, a blind Companion, made his appearance. The Holy Prophet said to his wives: "Conceal your faces from him." The wives said, "O Messenger of Allah: Is he not a blind man ? Neither will he see us nor recognize us." Thereupon the Holy Prophet remarked: "Are you two also blind? Do you not see him?" Ḥadrat Umm Salamah has clarified that this incident occurred at a time when the Commandments about the observance of purdah had already been sent down. (Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmizī. This is also supported by a Tradition in Mu'attā saying that a blind man came to see Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah and she observed purdah from him. When asked as to why she observed purdah when the man could not see her, she replied: "But I do see him." On the other hand, there is a different Tradition from Hadrat 'Ā'ishah. In 7 A.H. a deputation of the negroes came to Al-Madīnah and they gave a performance of physical skill in the compound of the Prophet's Mosque. The Holy Prophet himself showed their performance to Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah. (Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad). In another case, we find that when Fātimah bint Qais was irrevocably divorced by her husband, the question arose as to where she should pass her *'Iddah* (the prescribed waiting term after divorce or death of husband). The Holy Prophet first told her to stay with Umm Sharīk Ansārī, but then instructed her to stay in the house of Ibn Umm Maktūm, where she could stay with greater freedom as he was a blind man. He did not approve of her staying in the house of Umm Sharīk because she was a rich lady and her house was frequented by the Companions whom she entertained generously. (Muslim, Abū Da'ūd). Read together these Traditions show that the restrictions about the women's looking at men are not so hard as about the men's looking at women. While it is forbidden for women to sit face to face with men, it is not unlawful if they cast a look at men while passing on the way or see a harmless performance by them from a distance. There is also no harm for women to see the other men in case of real need if they are living in the same house. Imām Ghazzālī; and Ibn Ḥajar 'Asqalānī have also reached almost the same conclusion. Shaukānī in his *Nail al-Auṭār* has quoted Ibn Ḥajar as saying: "Such a permission in respect of women is also supported by the fact that they have always enjoyed this type of freedom in outdoor duties While they came out veiled when visiting the mosques, or moving in the streets, or during the journey, so that men may not gaze at them, the men were never commanded to use the veil so that women may not gaze at them. This shows that

the Commandments in respect of the two sexes are different." (Vol. VI, p. 101). However, it is not at all permissible that women should gaze leisurely at men and draw pleasure of the eye in doing so.

32. That is, they should abstain from illicit gratification of their sex desire as well as from exposing their *satar* before others. Though the commandments for men in this respect are the same as for women, the boundaries of *satar* for women are different from those prescribed for men. Moreover, the female *satar* with respect to men is different from that with respect to women

The female *satar* with respect to men is the entire body, excluding only the hand and the face, which should not be exposed before any other man, not even the brother and father, except the husband. The woman is not allowed to wear a thin or a tight fitting dress which might reveal the skin or the outlines of the body. According to a Tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, once her sister Asmā' came before the Holy Prophet in a thin dress. The Holy Prophet immediately turned his face away and said: "O Asmā', when a woman has attained her maturity, it is not permissible that any part of her body should be exposed except the face and the hand." (Abū Da'ūd). Ibn Jarīr has related a similar incident from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah saying that once the daughter of 'Abdullah bin Ṭufail, who was her mother's son from her former husband, came to her house on a visit. When the Holy Prophet (Allah's peace be upon him) entered the house, he saw her but turned his face to the other side. Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah said: "O Messenger of Allah, she is my niece." Thereupon the Holy Prophet remarked: "When a woman reaches the age of puberty, it is not lawful for her to display her body except the hand and the face. (Then he indicated what he meant by the hand by gripping his own hand from the wrist so that there was hardly a breadth left between his grip and the palm of the hand)." The only relaxation permitted in this connection is that a woman can uncover only that much of her body before her close relatives (for example, her brother, father, etc.) as is absolutely necessary for attending to the household duties. For instance, she can roll up her sleeves while kneading the flour, or tuck up her trousers while washing the floor.

The boundaries of female *satar* with respect to women are the same as the boundaries of the male *satar* with respect to men, which is the part of the body from the navel to the knee. This does not, however, mean that a woman should appear half naked before other women. It only means that while it is obligatory to keep the part of body from the navel to the knee duly covered, it is not so in case of other parts.

33. It should be carefully noted that the demands that Divine Law makes from women are not only those it has made from men, that is restraining of looks and guarding of the private parts, but it makes some other demands from them

also, which it has not made from men. This shows that men and women are not identical in this respect.

34. "Adornment" includes attractive clothes, ornaments and other decorations of the head, face, hand, feet, etc. which the women usually employ, and is expressed by the modern word 'make-up'. The injunction that this 'make-up' should not be displayed before others is discussed in detail in the following Notes.

35. Different interpretations given by different commentators of this verse have greatly confused its real meaning. All that is obviously meant is that "women should not display their make-up and adornment" except that "which is displayed of itself" and is beyond their control. This clearly means that women should not purposely and intentionally display their make-up, but there is no accountability if the make-up becomes displayed without any purpose or intention on their part; for instance, the head-wrapper's being blown aside by the wind thus exposing the adornment, or the outer-garment itself which cannot be concealed but which nevertheless has attraction being a part of the female dress. This very interpretation of this verse has been given by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Ibn Sīrīn and Ibrahim Nakha'ī. On the contrary, some other commentators have interpreted the verse to mean "all those parts of the body which usually remain exposed or uncovered" and in this they include the hands and the face with all their adornments. This is the view of Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās and his followers, and a large number of the Ḥanafī jurists have accepted it. (*Aḥkām-ul-Qur'ān*, Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, Vol. III, pp. 388-389). Thus, according to them, it is permissible for a woman to move out freely with the uncovered face in full make-up and adornment of the hands

We are, however, unable to subscribe to this view. There is a world of difference between "displaying something" and "its becoming displayed of itself." The first implies 'intention' and the second 'compulsion' and a state of helplessness. Moreover, such an interpretation also goes against the traditions which state that the women never moved out with open and uncovered faces in the time of the Holy Prophet after the Commandments of purdah had been sent down. These Commandments implied veiling of the face as well, and the veil had become a part of the female dress except during *Ḥajj* when one has to be in the prescribed state of *iḥrām* and keep the face uncovered. Another argument that is advanced in support of this view is that the hands and the face are not included in the *satar* of the woman, whereas *satar* and purdah are two entirely different things. Sanctity of *satar* is such that it cannot be violated even before the *maḥram* males like the father, brother, etc. As for purdah it is over and above *satar* which is meant to segregate women from non *maḥram* males; the discussion here relates to the Commandments of purdah and not to *satar*.

36. In the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, women used to wear a sort of head-band, which was tied in a knot at the rear of the head. The slit of the shirt in the front partly remained open exposing the front of the neck and the upper part of the bosom. There was nothing except the shirt to cover the breasts, and the hair was worn in a couple or two of plaits hanging behind like tails. *(Al-Kashshāf,* Vol. II, p. 90, and *Ibn Kathīr,* Vol. III, pp. 283-284). At the revelation of this verse, the head-wrapper *(dopatta)* was introduced among the Muslim women, which was meant to cover the head, the breasts, and the back, completely. The way the Muslim women responded to this Command has been described by Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah in a vivid manner. She states that when Sūrah An-Nūr was revealed and the people learnt of its contents from the Holy Prophet, they immediately went back to their houses and recited the verses before their wives, daughters and sisters. There was an instantaneous response. The Anṣār women, one and all, immediately got up and made wrappers from whatever piece of cloth that was handy. The next morning all the women who came to the Prophe's Mosque for prayers were dressed in wrappers. In another tradition Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah says that thin cloth was discarded and the women selected only coarse cloth for the purpose. *(Ibn Kathīr,* Vol.III, p. 284, Abū Da'ūd).

The very nature and object of the Command demanded that the wrapper should not be made out of fine and thin cloth. The Anṣār women immediately understood the real object and knew what type of cloth was intended to be used. The Law-Giver himself clarified this and did not leave it to be interpreted by the people. Diḥyā Kalbī states: "Once a length of fine Egyptian muslin was presented to the Holy Prophet. He gave a piece of it to me and said, 'Use one part of it for your shirt, and give the rest of it to your wife for a wrapper, but tell her that she should stitch another piece of cloth on the inner side so that the body may not be displayed through it." (Abū Da'ūd).

37. This verse describes the circle in which a woman can move freely with all her make-up and adornment. Outside this circle she is not allowed to appear with make-up before the other people, whether they are relatives or strangers. The Commandment implies that she should not display her embellishments outside this limited circle, intentionally or through carelessness. However, what becomes displayed incidentally, in spite of care and concern, or what cannot be concealed, it is excused by Allah.

38. 'Fathers' include grandfathers and great grandfathers as well, both paternal and maternal. Accordingly a woman can appear before her own and her husband's grandfathers just as she can appear before her own father and father-in-law.

39. 'Sons' include grandsons and great grandsons from the male or female offspring. No distinction is to be made between the real sons and the step-sons.

40. 'Brothers' include real and stepbrothers.

41. 'Sons of brothers and sisters' include sons, grandsons and great grandsons of all the three kinds of brothers and sisters.

42. After the relatives the other people are now being mentioned. But before we proceed further, it would be useful to understand three things in order to avoid confusion.

First, some jurists hold that the freedom of movement and display of adornment by a woman is restricted to the circle of relatives mentioned in this verse. All others, even the real paternal and maternal uncles, are excluded from this list and a woman should observe purdah from them because they have not been mentioned in the Qur'ān. This is, however, not a correct view. Let alone the real uncles, the Holy Prophet disallowed Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah to observe purdah even from her foster uncles. A tradition quoted in Ṣiḥāḥ Sitta' and Musnad Aḥmad on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says that once Aflaḥ, brother of Abul Qu'ais, came to see her and sought permission to enter the house. But since the Commandment of purdah had been received, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah refused him permission. On this Aflaḥ sent back the word saying, "You are my niece: you were suckled by my brother Abul Qu'ais's wife." But Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah still was hesitant whether it was permissible to appear unveiled before such a relative or not. In the meantime the Holy Prophet arrived and he ruled that he could see her. This shows that the Holy Prophet himself did not interpret the verse in the way these jurists do that it was lawful to appear unveiled only before those relatives who have been mentioned in the verse and not before others. He interpreted it to mean that purdah need not be observed from those relatives with whom marriage is prohibited, for instance, paternal and maternal uncles, son-in-law and foster relatives. Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣri from among the followers has expressed the same opinion and the same has been supported by 'Allāma Abū Bakr al-Jassās in his *Aḥkam-ul-Qur'ān.* (Vol. III, p. 390).

Secondly, there is the question of those relatives with whom marriage is not permanently prohibited; they neither fall in the category of *maḥram* relatives (that women may freely appear before them with adornment) nor in the category of complete strangers that they should observe full purdah from them as from others. What should be the right course between the two extremes has not been determined by the *Sharī'ah* for such a course cannot possibly be determined. The observance of purdah or otherwise in such cases will inevitably depend on the mutual relationship, age of the woman and of men, family relations and contacts and other circumstances (e.g. residence in the same house or in different houses). The

personal example of the Holy Prophet himself in this matter gives us the same guidance. A large number of traditions confirm that Ḥaḍrat Aṣmā', daughter of Abū Bakr, who was a sister-in-law of the Holy Prophet, appeared unveiled before him and no purdah, at least of the face and hands, was observed by her. This same position continued till the Farewell Pilgrimage which took place just a few months before the death of the Holy Prophet. (Abū Da'ūd). Similarly Ḥaḍrat Umm Hāni', daughter of Abū Ṭālib and a first cousin of the Holy Prophet, appeared before him till the end without ever observing purdah of the face and hands. She herself has narrated an incident pertaining to the conquest of Makkah, which confirms the same. (Abū Da'ūd). On the contrary, we see that Ḥaḍrat 'Abbās sends his son Faḍal, and Rabī'ah bin Ḥārith bin 'Abdul Muṭṭalib (a first cousin of the Holy Prophet) his son 'Abdul Muttalib before the Holy Prophet with the request for a job, as they could not be married till they became earning members of the family. They both see the Holy Prophet in the house of his wife Zainab, who is a first cousin of Faḍal and is similarly related to the father of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib bin Rabī'ah. But she does not appear before them and talks to them from behind a curtain in the presence of the Holy Prophet. (Abū Da'ūd). Taking the two kinds of precedents together we come to the same conclusion as we have stated above.

Thirdly, in cases where the relationship itself becomes doubtful, purdah should be observed even from the *maḥram* relatives. Bukhārī, Muslim and Abū Da'ūd have related a case where Saudah, a wife of the Holy Prophet, had a brother born of a slave woman. 'Utbah, the father of Saudah and the boy, left a will enjoining his brother, Sa'd bin Abī Waqqās, to look after the boy as a nephew for he was from his own seed. When the case came before the Holy Prophet, he rejected the claim of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd, saying: "The boy belongs to him on whose bed he was born; as for the adulterer, let stones and pebbles be his lot." But at the same time he told Ḥaḍrat Saudah to observe purdah from the boy because it was doubtful whether he was really her brother.

43. The Arabic word *nisā-i-hinna* means "their female associates". Before we consider what women are exactly meant, it is worth noting that the word used here is not *an-nisā*, which merely means "women", but *nisā i-hinna* which means "their female associates". In the former case, it would be quite permissible for a Muslim woman to appear unveiled before all sorts of women and display her adornment. The use of *nisā-i-hinna*, however, has circumscribed her freedom within a specific circle. As to what specific circle of women is implied, the commentators and jurists have expressed different opinions.

According to one group, the "female associates" mean only the Muslim women; as for the non-Muslim women, whether *zimmīs* or otherwise, they are excluded and purdah should be observed from them as from men. Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid and Ibn Juraij hold this opinion and cite the following incident in support

thereof: Caliph 'Umar wrote to Ḥadrat Abū 'Ubaidah: "I hear that some Muslim women have started going to public baths along with the non-Muslim women. It is not permissible for a woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day that she should expose her body before the women other than of her own community." On receipt of this letter Hadrat Abū 'Ubaidah was much upset, and he cried out: "May the face of the woman who goes to the public baths to whiten her complexion be blackened on the Last Day!" (Ibn Jarīr, Baihaqī, Ibn Kathīr).

Another group, which includes Imām Rāzī, is of the view that "female associates" are all women without exception. But it is not possible to accept this view as in that case *an-nisā* should have sufficed and there was no need to use *nisā-i-hinna*.

The third opinion, and this appears to be reasonable and nearer the Qur'ānic Text, is that "their female associates" mean those familiar and known women with whom a woman usually comes into contact in her daily life and who share in her household chores, etc. whether they are Muslim or non-Muslim. The object here is to exclude those women from the circle who are either strangers whose cultural and moral background is not known or whose antecedents are apparently doubtful, which make them unreliable. This view is also supported by the authentic Traditions which state that *zimmī* women used to visit the wives of the Holy Prophet. The real thing to be considered in this connection would be the moral character and not the religious belief. Muslim women can meet and have intimate social contacts with noble, modest and virtuous women, who come from well-known and reliable families even if they are non-Muslim. But they must observe purdah from immodest, immoral and vulgar women even if they happen to be "Muslims". Their company from the moral viewpoint is as dangerous as of other men. As for contacts with un-known, unfamiliar women, they may at the most be treated like *non-maḥram* relatives. A woman may uncover her face and hands before them but she must keep the rest of her body and adornments concealed.

44. There is a good deal of difference of opinion among the jurists about the correct meaning of this injunction. One group holds that this refers only to the slave girls owned by a lady. Accordingly they interpret the Divine Command to mean that the Muslim woman can display her adornment before a slave girl, whether she is an idolatress or a Jew or a Christian, but she cannot appear before a slave man even if he is legally owned by her; for purposes of purdah, he is to be treated just like a free male stranger. This is the view of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Mujāhid, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Ibn Sīrīn, Sa'īd bin Musayyab, Tā'ūs and Imām Abū

[Contd. on p.370

التّٰبِعِيْنَ غَيْرِ اُولِى الْاِرْبَةِ مِنَ الرِّجَالِ اَوِ الطِّفْلِ الَّذِيْنَ لَمْ يَظْهَرُوْا عَلٰى
عَوْرٰتِ النِّسَآءِ ۪ وَلَا يَضْرِبْنَ بِاَرْجُلِهِنَّ لِيُعْلَمَ مَا يُخْفِيْنَ مِنْ زِيْنَتِهِنَّ ؕ
وَتُوْبُوْٓا اِلَى اللّٰهِ جَمِيْعًا اَيُّهَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿۳۱﴾ وَاَنْكِحُوا الْاَيَامٰى
مِنْكُمْ وَالصّٰلِحِيْنَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَاِمَآئِكُمْ ؕ اِنْ يَّكُوْنُوْا فُقَرَآءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللّٰهُ
مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿۳۲﴾ وَلْيَسْتَعْفِفِ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَجِدُوْنَ نِكَاحًا
حَتّٰى يُغْنِيَهُمُ اللّٰهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَبْتَغُوْنَ الْكِتٰبَ مِمَّا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُكُمْ
فَكَاتِبُوْهُمْ اِنْ عَلِمْتُمْ فِيْهِمْ خَيْرًا ۖ وَّاٰتُوْهُمْ مِّنْ مَّالِ اللّٰهِ الَّذِيْٓ اٰتٰىكُمْ ؕ
وَلَا تُكْرِهُوْا فَتَيٰتِكُمْ عَلَى الْبِغَآءِ اِنْ اَرَدْنَ تَحَصُّنًا لِّتَبْتَغُوْا عَرَضَ الْحَيٰوةِ
الدُّنْيَا ؕ وَمَنْ يُّكْرِهْهُّنَّ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اِكْرَاهِهِنَّ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ﴿۳۳﴾ وَ
لَقَدْ اَنْزَلْنَآ اِلَيْكُمْ اٰيٰتٍ مُّبَيِّنٰتٍ وَّمَثَلًا مِّنَ الَّذِيْنَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ وَ
مَوْعِظَةً لِّلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿۳۴﴾ اَللّٰهُ نُوْرُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ مَثَلُ نُوْرِهٖ كَمِشْكٰوةٍ فِيْهَا
مِصْبَاحٌ ؕ اَلْمِصْبَاحُ فِيْ زُجَاجَةٍ ؕ اَلزُّجَاجَةُ كَاَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ يُّوْقَدُ مِنْ
شَجَرَةٍ مُّبٰرَكَةٍ زَيْتُوْنَةٍ لَّا شَرْقِيَّةٍ وَّلَا غَرْبِيَّةٍ ۙ يَّكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيْٓءُ وَلَوْ
لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ ؕ نُوْرٌ عَلٰى نُوْرٍ ؕ يَهْدِى اللّٰهُ لِنُوْرِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ وَيَضْرِبُ
اللّٰهُ الْاَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿۳۵﴾ فِيْ بُيُوْتٍ اَذِنَ اللّٰهُ اَنْ
تُرْفَعَ وَيُذْكَرَ فِيْهَا اسْمُهٗ ۙ يُسَبِّحُ لَهٗ فِيْهَا بِالْغُدُوِّ وَالْاٰصَالِ ﴿۳۶﴾ رِجَالٌ ۙ
لَّا تُلْهِيْهِمْ تِجَارَةٌ وَّلَا بَيْعٌ عَنْ ذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ وَاِقَامِ الصَّلٰوةِ وَاِيْتَآءِ الزَّكٰوةِ ۙ
يَخَافُوْنَ يَوْمًا تَتَقَلَّبُ فِيْهِ الْقُلُوْبُ وَالْاَبْصَارُ ﴿۳۷﴾ لِيَجْزِيَهُمُ اللّٰهُ اَحْسَنَ مَا
عَمِلُوْا وَيَزِيْدَهُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يَرْزُقُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿۳۸﴾ وَ

and male attendants incapable of sex desire[45]and those boys who have not yet attained knowledge of sex matters concerning women;[46] also forbid them to stamp their feet on the ground lest their hidden ornaments should be displayed.[47] 31

O Believers, turn all together towards Allah :[48] it is expected that you will attain true success.[49]

Arrange marriages between the single men and women among you[50] and between your slave men and slave women, who are righteous,[51,52] if they be indigent, Allah will provide means for them out of His bounty:[53] Allah has boundless resources and He is All-Knowing. And those, who cannot find a match, should observe continence till Allah provides them with means out of His bounty[54] 32-33

And if those who are in your possession, ask for a deed of emancipation, execute the deed of emancipation with them,[56] provided that you find some good in them ;[57] and give them something out of the means Allah has given you.[58]

And do not force your slave-girls into prostitution for your own worldly gains when they themselves want to keep chaste;[59] and if anyone forces them into it, after such a compulsion Allah will be forgiving and merciful for them.

We have sent down to you Revelations giving clear guidance and cited examples of the peoples who went before you to serve as warning and We have imparted admonitions for the God-fearing.[60] 34

Allah[61] is the light of the heavens and the earth:[62] His light (in the universe) may be likened (to the light of) a lamp in a niche: the lamp is in a glass shade: the glass shade is like a glittering star and lamp is lit with the olive oil of a blessed tree[63] which is neither eastern nor western:[64] its oil is (so fine) as if it were going to shine forth by itself though no fire touched it (as though all the means of increasing) light upon light (were provided[65]); Allah guides to His light whomever He wills.[66] He cites parables to make the Message clear to the people; He has perfect knowledge of everything.[67] (Those who obtain guidance to His light are found) in the houses which He has enjoined to raise up and to mention His name therein.[68] In them such people glorify Him morning and evening as are not diverted by trade and merchandise from 35-38

remembering Him and from establishing *Salāt* and paying *Zakāt*, for they fear the Day when the hearts will be overturned and the eyes will become petrified. (And they behave like this) so that Allah may reward them for their excellent deeds and, in addition to it, show His favour to them out of His bounty: Allah provides without stint[69] for anyone He pleases.

Contd. from p. 367]

Ḥanīfah, and a saying of Imām Shafi'ī also supports this. They argue that the slave is not a *maḥram* to the lady; if he is freed, he can marry his former owner. Therefore the mere fact of his being a slave cannot by itself entitle him to be treated like the male *maḥrams* and allow the lady to appear freely before him. The question, why should the words" those in their possession" which are general and applicable to both slaves and slave girls, be restricted to mean only slave girls, is answered by these jurists like this: Though the words are general, the context and background in which they occur make them specifically applicable to slave girls only. The , words "those in their possession" occur just after "their female associates" in the verse; therefore one could understand that the reference was to a woman's relatives and other associates; this could lead to the misunderstanding that the slave girls perhaps were excluded; the words "those in their possession" therefore were used to clarify that a woman could display her adornments before the slave girls as before her free female associates.

The other group holds that the words "those in their possession" include both the slaves and the slave girls. This is the view of Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, Umm Salamah and some learned scholars of the house of the Holy Prophet and also of Imam Shāfi'ī. They do not argue merely on the basis of the general meaning of the words, but they also cite precedents from the *Sunnah* in support of their view. For instance, the incident that the Holy Prophet went to the house of his daughter, Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah, along with his slave 'Abdullah bin Musa'dah al-Fazārī. She was at that time wearing a 'sheet which would leave the feet exposed if she tried to cover the head, and the head exposed if she tried to cover the feet. The Holy Prophet felt her embarrassment and said: "No harm: there are only your father and your slave!" (Abū Da'ūd, Ahmad, Baihaqī on the authority of Anas bin Malik). Ibn 'Asākir has stated that the Holy Prophet had given that slave to Ḥaḍrat Fāṭimah, who brought him up and then freed him. (But the man turned out to be an ungrateful wretch; in the battle of Siffīn, he was the bitterest opponent of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and a zealous supporter of Amir Mu'awiyah). They also quote the following words of the Holy Prophet in support of their stand: "When any of you agrees to a deed of emancipation with her slave, and the slave has the necessary means to buy

his freedom, she (the owner) should observe purdah from him." (Abū Da'ūd, Tirmizī, Ibn Mājah on the authority of Umm Salamah).

45. The literal translation of the Text would be: "those from among the men who are your subordinates and have no desire." The obvious meaning is that apart from the *maḥram* males, a Muslim woman can display her adornment only before the man who satisfies two conditions; firstly, he should be in a subordinate capacity, and secondly, he should be free from sexual urges either due to advanced age, impotence, mental weakness, poverty or low social position, so that he cannot cherish the desire or have the boldness to think evilly of his master's wife, daughter, sister or mother. Anybody who studies this injunction in the right spirit with a view to obeying it, and not for the sake of finding ways and means of escaping from or violating it, will readily appreciate that the bearers, cooks, chauffeurs and other grown up servants employed these days in the houses do not fall in this category. The following clarifications given by the commentators and the jurists of this point would show the type of men envisaged in the verse:

Ibn 'Abbās: This implies a man who is a mere simpleton and has no interest in women.

Qatadah: A poor man who is attached to you merely for his sustenance.

Mujāhid: A fool who only needs food and has no desire for women.

Sha'bi: The one who is a subordinate, entirely dependent on his master, and cannot have the boldness to cast an evil look at the women-folk of the house.

Ibn Zaid: The one who remains attached to a family for such a long time that he is regarded as a member brought up in that house, and who has no desire for the women of the house. He is there merely because he gets his sustenance from the family.

Tā'ūs & Zuhrī: An idiot who does not cherish the desire for the women nor has the courage to do so. (*Ibn Jarīr*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 95-96, *Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. III, p. 285).

The best explanation in this regard is the incident that happened in the time of the Holy Prophet, which has been quoted by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'ī and Aḥmad on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and Umm Salamah. There was a certain eunuch in Madīnah who was allowed free access to the wives of the Holy Prophet and the other women of the city, on the assumption that he being incapable of sex was free from the sexual urge. One day when the Holy Prophet went to the house of his wife, Umm Salamah, he heard him talking to her brother, 'Abdullah bin Abī Umayyah. He was telling 'Abdullah that if Ṭā'if was taken the following day, he should try to have Badia, daughter of Ghailan Thaqafī. And then

he started praising Bādia's beauty and her physical charms and even went to the extent of describing her private parts. On hearing this the Holy Prophet said: "O enemy of Allah! you seem to have seen her through." Then he ordered that the women should observe purdah from him and he should not be allowed to enter the houses in future. After this he turned him out of Madīnah and forbade the other eunuchs also to enter the houses, because the women did not mind their presence, while they would describe the women of one house before the other men of other houses in the society. This shows that the word "incapable of sex desire" do not merely imply physical impotence. Anyone who is physically unfit but cherishes sex desire in the heart and takes interest in women, can become the cause of many mischiefs.

46. That is, the children who do not yet have their sex feelings aroused. This may apply to boys of 11 to 12 at the most. Older boys start having sex feelings though they may still be immature otherwise.

47. The Holy Prophet did not restrict this injunction to the jingle of the ornaments, but has derived from it the principle that besides the look, anything which tends to excite any of the senses, is opposed to the objective for which Allah has forbidden the women to display their adornment. Therefore he ordered the women not to move out with perfumes. According to Ḥaḍrat Abū Ḥurairah, the Holy Prophet said: "Do not stop the bondmaids of Allah from coming to the mosques, but they should not come with perfumes." (Abū Da'ūd, Aḥmad). According to another tradition, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah passed by a woman who was coming out of the mosque and felt that she had perfumed herself. He stopped her and said: "O bondmaid of Allah, are you coming from the mosque?" When she replied in the affirmative, he said: "I have heard my beloved Abul Qasim (Allah's blessings and peace be upon him) say that the prayer of the woman who comes to the mosque with perfumes, is not accepted till she purifies herself with a complete bath as is done after a sexual intercourse." (Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, Aḥmad, Nasā'i). Abū Musa Ash'arī has quoted the Holy Prophet as saying: "A woman who passes on the way with perfumes so that people may enjoy her perfumes, is such and such: he used very harsh words for her." (Tirmizī, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'i). His instruction was that women should use scents with bright colours but light odours. (Abū Da'ūd).

Similarly the Holy Prophet disapproved that feminine voices should enter the ears of men unnecessarily. In case of genuine need the Qur'ān itself has allowed women to speak to men, and the Holy Prophet's wives themselves used to instruct people in religious matters. But where there is no necessity, nor any moral or religious objective, the women have been discouraged to let their voices be heard by men. Thus if the Imām happens to commit a mistake during a

congregational prayer, and he is to be warned of the lapse, the men have been taught to say *Subhān-Allah* (Glory be to Allah), while the women have been instructed to tap their hands only. (Bukhari, Muslim, Aḥmad, Tirmizī, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'i, Ibn Mājah).

48. "Turn towards Allah": Repent of the lapses and errors that you have been committing in this regard so far, and reform your conduct in accordance with the Commands given by Allah and His Prophet.

49. It would be useful to give here a resume of the other reforms which the Holy Prophet introduced in the Islamic society after the revelation of these Commandments.

(1) He prohibited the other men (even if they are relatives) to see a woman in privacy or sit with her in the absence of her *maḥram* relatives. Ḥadrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "Do not visit the women whose husbands are away from home, because Satan circulates in one of you like blood." (Tirmizī). According to another Tradition from Ḥadrat Jābir, the Holy Prophet said: "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should never visit a woman when alone unless she has a mahram relative also present, because the third one would be Satan." (Aḥmad). Imām Aḥmad has quoted another Tradition from 'Āmir bin Rabī'ah to the same effect. The Holy Prophet himself was extremely cautious in this regard. Once when he was accompanying his wife Hadrat Ṣafiyyah to her house at night, two men of Ansar passed by them on the way. The Holy Prophet stopped them and said: "The woman with me is my wife Ṣafiyyah." They said: "Glory be to Allah! O Messenger of Allah, could there be any suspicion about you?" The Holy Prophet said: "Satan circulates like blood in the human body; I was afraid lest he should put an evil thought in your minds." (Abū Da'ūd).

(2) The Holy Prophet did not approve that a man's hand should even touch the body of a non-maḥram woman. That is why while administering the oath of allegiance, he would take the hand of the men into his own hand, but he never adopted this procedure in the case of women. Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah has stated that the Holy Prophet never touched the body of any other woman. He would administer the oath verbally to them; when this was done, he would say: "You may go, Your allegiance is complete." (Abū Da'ūd).

(3) He strictly prohibited the woman from proceeding on a journey alone without a *maḥram* or in company with a non-*maḥram*. A Tradition from Ibn 'Abbās has been quoted in Bukhārī and Muslim saying that the Holy Prophet gave a sermon and said: "No man should visit the other woman when she is alone unless she has a *maḥram* also present, and no woman should travel alone unless accompanied by a *maḥram*." A man stood up

and said: "My wife is going for Ḥajj, while I am under orders to join a certain expedition." The Holy Prophet said: "You may go for Hajj with your wife." Several other Traditions on the subject, emanating from Ibn 'Umar, Abū Sa'īd Khudrī and Abū Hurairah, are found in authentic books of Traditions, which concur that it is not permissible for a Muslim woman who believes in Allah and the Last Day that she should go on a journey without a *maḥram*. There is, however, a variation with regard to the duration and the length of the journey. Some Traditions lay down the minimum limit as 12 miles and some lay down the duration as one day, a day and night, two days or even three days. This variation, however, neither renders the Traditions unauthentic nor makes it necessary that we should accept one version as legally binding in preference to others. For a plausible explanation for the different versions could be that the Holy Prophet gave different instructions at different occasions depending on the circumstances and merit of each case. For instance, a woman going on a three-day journey might have been prohibited from proceeding without a *maḥram*, while another going on a day's journey might also have been similarly prohibited. Here the real thing is not the different instructions to the different people in different situations, but the principle that a woman should not go on a journey without a *maḥram* as laid down in the Tradition quoted above from Ibn 'Abbās.

(4) He not only took practical measures to stop free mixing of the sexes together but prohibited it verbally as well. Everyone knows the great importance of the congregational and the Friday prayers in Islam. The Friday Prayer has been made obligatory by Allah Himself; the importance of the congregational prayer can be judged from a Tradition of the Holy Prophet, which says: "If a person does not attend the mosque without a genuine reason and offers his prayer at home, it will not be acceptable to Allah." (Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah, Dāraqutnī, Ḥākim on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās). But in spite of this, the Holy Prophet exempted the women from compulsory attendance at the Friday Prayer. (Abū Da'ūd, Dāraqutnī, Baihaqī). As for the other congregational prayers, he made the women's attendance optional, saying: "Do not stop them if they want to come to the mosque." Then at the same time, he made the clarification that it was better for them to pray in their houses than in the mosques. According to Ibn 'Umar and Abū Hurairah, the Holy Prophet said: "Do not prohibit the bondmaids of Allah from coming to the mosques of Allah." (Abū Da'ūd). Other Traditions from Ibn 'Umar are to the effect: "Permit the women to come to the mosques at night." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmizī, Nasā'ī, Abū Da'ūd). And: "Do not stop your women-folk from coming to the mosques though their houses are better for them than the mosques." (Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd). Umm Ḥumaid Sā'idiyyah states that once she said to the Holy

Prophet, "O Messenger of Allah, I have a great desire to offer my prayer under your leadership." He replied: "Your offering the prayer in your room is better than your offering it in the verandah, and your offering the prayer in your house is better than your offering it in the neighbouring mosque, and your offering the prayer in the neighbouring mosque is better than offering it in the principal mosque (of the town)." (Aḥmad, Ṭabarānī). A Tradition to the same effect has been reported from 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd in Abū Da'ūd. According to Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah, the Holy Prophet said: "The best mosques for women are the innermost portions of their houses." (Aḥmad, Ṭabarānī). But when Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah saw the conditions that prevailed in the time of the Umayyads, she said: "If the Holy Prophet had witnessed such conduct of the women, he would certainly have stopped their entry into the mosques as was done in the case of the Israelite women," (Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd). The Holy Prophet had appointed a separate door in his Mosque for the entry of women, and Ḥaḍrat 'Umar in his time had given strict orders prohibiting men to use that door. (Abū Da'ūd). In the congregational prayers the women were instructed to stand separately behind the men; at the conclusion of the prayer, the Holy Prophet and his followers used to remain sitting for a while so that the women could leave the mosque before the men. (Aḥmad, Bukhārī). The Holy Prophet would say: "The best row for the men is the front row and the worst the last one (nearest to the women's row); and the best row for the women is the rearmost row and the worst the front one (just behind the men's). (Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmizī, Nasā'i, Aḥmad). The women joined the 'Īd congregational prayers but they had a separate enclosure from men. After the sermon the Holy Prophet used to address them separately (Abū Da'ūd, Bukhārī, Muslim). Once outside the Mosque the Holy Prophet saw the men and women moving side by side in the crowd. He stopped the women and said: It is not proper for you to walk in the middle of the road; walk on the sides." On hearing this the women immediately started walking along the walls. (Abū Da'ūd). All these Commandments clearly show that mixed gatherings of the men and women are wholly alien to the temper of Islam. It cannot therefore be imagined that Divine Law which disallows the men and women to stand side by side for prayers in the sacred houses of Allah, would allow them to mix together freely in colleges, offices, clubs and other gatherings.

(5) He permitted the women to make modest use of the make-ups, even instructed them to do so, but strictly forbade its overdoing. Of the various types of make-up and decoration that were prevalent among the Arab women in those days, he declared the following as accursed and destructive of communities:

(a) To add extra hair to one's own artificially with a view to make them appear longer and thicker.

(b) To tattoo various parts of the body and produce artificial moles.

(c) To pluck hair from the eye-brows to give them a special shape, or to pluck hair from the face to give it a cleaner look.

(d) To rub the teeth to make them sharp, or to produce artificial holes in them.

(e) To rub the face with saffron or other cosmetic to produce an artificial complexion.

These instructions have been reported in Sihāh Sitta and in Musnad Ahmad on the authority of Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah, Asmā' bint Abū Bakr, Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and Amīr Mu'āwiyah through reliable narrators.

After having the knowledge of these clear Commandments from Allah and His Prophet, a Muslim has only two courses open before him. Either he should follow these Commandments practically and purify himself, his family life and the society at large of the moral evils for the eradication of which Allah and His Prophet have given such detailed Commandments, or if due to some weakness he violates one or more of these Commandments, he should at least realize that he is committing a sin, and regard it as such, and should abstain from labelling it as a virtue by misinterpretation. Apart from these alternatives, the people who adopt the Western ways of life against the clear injunctions of the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and then try their utmost to prove them Islam itself, and openly claim that there is no such thing as purdah in Islam, not only commit the sin of disobedience but also display ignorance and hypocritical obstinacy. Such an attitude can neither be commended by any right-thinking person in this world, nor can it merit favour with Allah in the Hereafter. But among the Muslims there exists a section of modern hypocrites who are so advanced in their hypocrisy that they repudiate the Divine injunctions as false and believe those ways of life to be right and based on truth, which they have borrowed from the non-Muslim communities. Such people are not Muslims at all, for if they still be Muslims, the words 'Islam' and 'un-Islam' lose all their meaning and significance. Had they changed their Islamic names and publicly declared their desertion of Islam, we would at least have been convinced of their moral courage. But in spite of their wrong attitudes, these people continue to pose themselves as Muslim. There is perhaps no meaner class of people in the world. People with such character and morality cannot be unexpected to indulge in any forgery, fraud, deception or dishonesty.

50. The word *ayāmā* is the plural of *ayyim* which means a single person, and is applicable to every man who is without a wife and to every woman who is without a husband.

51. That is, those who show the right attitude in their dealings with you and in whom you find the capability of discharging the responsibilities of married life. The owner whose slave does not show the right attitude nor seems to possess the necessary capability and temper to lead a reasonably happy married life, has not been required to arrange his or her marriage. For in that case he would become the cause of ruining another person's life. This condition, however, has not been imposed on free persons because in their case the people who promote marriages are no more than mere advisers, associates and introducers. The actual marriage depends on the mutual willingness of the bride and the bridegroom. In the case of a slave, however, the entire responsibility lies on the owner, and if he makes the mistake of marrying a poor person with an ill-natured, ill-mannered spouse, the responsibility for the consequences will be entirely his.

52. The imperative mood of the verb in "Arrange marriages .... the right attitude", has led some scholars to assume that it is obligatory to arrange such marriages; whereas the nature of the problem indicates that it cannot be so. Obviously it cannot be obligatory for somebody to arrange the marriage of the other person. Marriage is not a one-sided affair; it needs another party also. If it were obligatory, what would be the position of the person who is going to be married? Should he willingly accept to be married wherever others arrange it? If so, it would mean that he or she had absolutely no choice in the matter. And if the one has a right to refuse, how are the others going to discharge their responsibility? Taking all these aspects into account the majority of the jurists have held that the Commandment is not obligatory but recommendatory. The intention is that the Muslims should ensure that none in the society should remain unmarried. The people of the house, friends and neighbours, all should take necessary interest in the matter, and where no such help is available, the state should make necessary arrangements.

53. This does not mean that Allah will certainly bestow wealth on anybody who marries. The intention is to discourage a calculative approach. This instruction is both for the parents of the girl and of the boy. The former should not reject a pious and virtuous suitor merely because he happens to be poor. Similarly the boy's parents should not go on postponing his marriage because he is not yet a full earning member or is not yet earning sufficiently. Young men have been advised not to go on postponing their marriage unnecessarily waiting for better times. Even if the income is not yet sufficient, one should marry with full faith in Allah. Very often the marriage itself becomes the cause of improving straitened

circumstances. The wife helps to control the family budget, or the husband starts to exert himself more to meet the new challenges and responsibilities. The wife can also earn to supplement the family budget. Then, who knows what the future holds in store for him. Good times can change into bad times and bad into good. One should therefore refrain from being too calculative in this regard.

54. The best commentary on these verses are the Traditions which have been reported from the Holy Prophet in this connection. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has related that the Holy Prophet once said: "O young men, whoso among you can afford to marry, he should marry, because this will be a means of restraining the eyes from casting the evil look and of keeping one pure and chaste, and the one who cannot afford, should fast, because fasting helps cool down the passions." (Bukhārī, Muslim). According to Hadrat Abū Hurairah, the Holy Prophet said: "Allah has taken upon Himself to succour three men: (a) the one who marries with a view to guarding his chastity, (b) the slave who works to earn his freedom, and (c) the one who goes out to fight in the way of Allah." (Tirmizī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ahmad) For further explanation, see Sūrah An-Nisā: 25.

55. *Mukātabat* as a term means a deed of emancipation between the owner and the slave entitling the latter to earn his or her freedom after payment of an agreed sum of money in a certain period. This is one of the methods laid down in Islam for the slaves to attain their freedom. It is not essential that the slave must always pay in cash; he can also earn his freedom by rendering some special service to the owner, provided that both the parties agree. Once the agreement is signed, the owner is not entitled to put any obstacles in the way of the slave's freedom. He will have to provide opportunities to enable him to earn for his emancipation and shall have to free him when the agreed amount has been paid in time. In the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, a slave entered into such an agreement with his lady owner, but managed to collect the amount in advance of the time limit. When the amount was offered to the lady, she refused to accept it on the ground that she would like to have it in monthly and yearly instalments. The slave complained to Ḥaḍrat 'Umar who ordered that the amount be deposited in the state treasury and the slave be set free. The lady was informed that her money lay in the treasury and she had the option to take it in a lump sum or in yearly or monthly instalments. (Dāraquṭnī).

56. A group of jurists have interpreted the words "execute the deed of emancipation with them" to mean that it is obligatory for the owner to accept the offer of a slave to earn his emancipation. This is the view of 'Atā', 'Amr bin Dinar, Ibn Sirīn, Masrūq, Ḍaḥḥāk, 'Ikrimah, the Zahiriyyah and Ibn Jarir Ṭabari, and Imām Shafi'ī also favoured it in the beginning. The other group holds that it is not obligatory but only recommendatory and commendable. This group includes jurists like Sha'bi, Muqātil bin Ḥayyān, Ḥasan Baṣri, 'Abdul Raḥmān bin Zaid,

Sufyān Thaurī, Abū Ḥanīfah and Mālik bin Anas and Imām Shafi'ī later on also had adopted this view. The first view is supported by two things:

(a) The imperative mood of the verb in "execute the deed...." suggests that it is a Command from Allah.

(b) Authentic Traditions contain the incident that when Sīrīn, father of Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad bin Sīrīn, the great jurist and traditionalist, made a request to his master, Ḥaḍrat Anas, for a deed of emancipation, the latter refused to accept it. Sīrīn took the matter before Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, who whip in hand turned on Anas, saying: "Allah's Command is that you execute the deed." (Bukhārī). From this it has been argued that it was not a discretionary and personal decision of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar but it was taken in the presence of the Companions and none expressed any difference of opinion. This therefore should be taken as an authentic interpretation of the verse.

The other group argues that Allah does not merely say: "Execute the deed of emancipation with them", but adds: ". . . provided that you find some good in them." This condition of finding some good in them" lies entirely on the owner, and there is no fixed standard or means by which the question of "finding good in them" be got adjudicated through a court. Legal Injunctions are never couched in such language. As such this injunction can only be regarded as recommendatory and not as legally mandatory. As regards the precedent of the case of Sirin, the jurists say that there was not one slave who asked for a deed of emancipation but thousands of them in the time of the Holy Prophet and the rightly-guided Caliphs, and a large number of them earned their freedom in that way. But apart from Sirin's there is no case where an owner was forced by a judicial verdict to execute a deed of emancipation. Accordingly this decision of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar cannot be taken as a judicial decision. All that can be said is that Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, apart from his position of a judge, was like a father to the Muslims and might have used his paternal authority in a matter where he could not intervene as a judge.

57. "Good" implies three things:

(a) The slave must be capable of earning his emancipation money through hard work and labour. The Holy Prophet has said: "Execute the deed when you are sure that the slave can earn the required amount of money: do not let him go about begging the people for it." (Ibn Kathir).

(b) He should be honest, truthful and reliable for the purposes of the agreement. He should make the best of the opportunities and should not waste his earnings.

(c) The owner should make sure that the slave has no immoral trends and does not harbour feelings of enmity against Islam or the Muslims, nor should there be any apprehension that his freedom might prove harmful to the interests of the Muslim society. In other words, he should prove to be a loyal and faithful member of the Muslim society and not a fifth columnist. It should be noted that such precautions were absolutely necessary in the case of the prisoners of war taken as slaves.

58. This Command is general and is addressed to the owners, the common Muslims and the Islamic government.

(a) The owner is instructed that he should remit a part of the emancipation money. There are traditions to confirm that the Companions used to remit a sizeable amount of the emancipation money to their slaves. Ḥaḍrat 'Ali used to remit a quarter of the amount and exhorted others also to do the same. (Ibu Jarīr).

(b) The common Muslim is instructed that he should extend liberal help to all such slaves who asked for help in this regard. One of the heads of *Zakāt* expenditure as laid down in the Qur'ān is "the ransoming of slaves". (IX: 60) In the sight of Allah "freeing of slaves" is a great act of virtue. (XC :13). According to a Tradition, a Bedouin came to the Holy Prophet and requested him to instruct him what he should do to earn Paradise. The Holy Prophet replied "You have asked about the most important thing in a most concise way. You should free the slaves and help them to earn their freedom, If you present a head of cattle to somebody, present such a one as gives plenty of milk. Treat your relatives kindly even if they treat you unjustly. If you cannot do all this, you should feed the poor, give water to the thirsty, exhort the people to do good and forbid them to do evil. If you cannot do even this, you should restrain your tongue: if you have to speak, speak something good, otherwise keep quiet". (Baihaqī).

(c) The Islamic government is advised to spend a part of the *Zakāt* collections on the emancipation of slaves.

Here it should be noted that slaves in the ancient times were of three kinds: (i) Prisoners of war, (ii) Free men who were captured and traded as slaves, (iii) Hereditary slaves who did not know when their ancestors became slaves and to which of the above categories they originally belonged. Before the advent of Islam, Arabia as well as the outside world abounded in all kinds of slaves. The entire social and economic structure of society depended more on slave labour than on servants and wage-earners. The first question before Islam was to tackle the problem of the hereditary slaves, and secondly, to find a solution to the entire problem of slavery for all times to come. In tackling the first problem, Islam did

not abruptly abrogate the ownership rights in respect of the hereditary slaves as it would have completely paralysed the entire social and economic system, and involved Arabia in a far more destructive civil war than the one fought in America, leaving the problem where it was as it is in America, where the Negroes are still facing humiliation and disgrace. Islam did not follow any such foolhardy policy of reform. Instead it generated a great moral movement for the emancipation of slaves and employed inducements, persuasions, religious injunctions and legal enactments to educate and motivate the people to free the slaves voluntarily for earning their salvation in the Hereafter, or as expiation of their sins as enjoined by Islam, or by accepting monetary compensation. To set the pace the Holy Prophet himself freed 63 slaves. One of his wives, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, alone freed 67 slaves. The Holy Prophet's uncle, Ḥaḍrat 'Abbās, freed 70 slaves. Among others, Ḥakīm bin Hizām freed 100 slaves, 'Abdullah bin 'Umar 1,000; Zulkal'a Himyari 8,000, and 'Abdur Rehmān bin 'Auf 30,000. The other Companions among whom Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr and Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān were prominent also set a large number of slaves free. The people, in order to win Allah's favour, not only emancipated their own slaves, but also bought them from others and then set them free. The result was that in so far as hereditary slaves were concerned, almost all of them had been freed even before the righteous Caliphate came to an end.

As for the future, Islam completely prohibited free men from being kidnapped and traded as slaves. As for the prisoners of war, it was permitted (not commanded) that they might be kept as slaves so long as they were not exchanged for Muslim prisoners of war, or freed on payment of ransom. Then, on the one hand, the slaves were also allowed to earn their freedom through written agreements with their masters, and on the other, the masters were exhorted to set them free just like the hereditary slaves, as an act of virtue, to win Allah's approval, or as expiation of sins, or by willing that a slave would automatically gain his freedom on the master's death, or that a slave girl would be free on the master's death if she had borne him children, whether he had left a will or not. This is how Islam solved the problem of slavery. Ignorant people raise objections without trying to understand this solution, and the apologists offer all sorts of apologies and have even to deny the fact that Islam had prohibited slavery absolutely.

59. This does not mean that if the slave girls do not want to lead a chaste and virtuous life they can be forced into prostitution. It only means this that if a slave girl commits an immoral act of her own free will, she herself is responsible for it and the law will be applied against her alone. But if the owner forces her into it, it will be entirely his responsibility, and the law will proceed against him. Obviously the question of force arises only when someone is compelled to act

against his own will. As for the words "for your own worldly gains", these have not been used in a conditional or restrictive sense that if the owner is not sharing the immoral earnings of the slave girl, he is not an offender if he forces her into prostitution. The intention is to declare all such money unlawful as has been earned through illegal and immoral ways.

It is, however, not possible to comprehend the full import of this injunction merely from the words of the text. For this it is necessary to understand the entire background and circumstances prevalent at the time of its revelation. Prostitution in Arabia existed in two forms: Domestic prostitution and open prostitution in the brothel.

(a) 'Domestic' prostitution was carried out by freed slave girls who had no guardians, or by free women who had no family or tribal support. They would take residence in a house and enter into an agreement with a number of men simultaneously for financial help in return for sexual gratification. Whenever a child was born, the mother would name whomsoever she liked as its father and the man was accepted in society as the father of the child. This was an established custom in the pre-Islamic days, which was considered almost analogous to "marriage". When Islam came, it recognised only that contract as legal marriage where a woman had only one husband. Thus all other forms of sexual gratification came to be regarded as adultery and punishable offences as such. (Abū Da'ūd).

(b) Open prostitution which was carried out entirely through slave girls was of two kinds. First, the slave girls were obliged to pay a fixed heavy amount every month to the owner, which they could only earn through prostitution. The owner knew fully well how the money was earned, and in fact there was no other object of imposing a heavy demand on the poor slave girl, especially when it was much higher than the usual wages for work or labour. Secondly, beautiful and young slave girls were made to stay in the brothel and a flag was put at the door to indicate that a "needy person" could satisfy his lust there. Such women were called *"qaliqiyāt"* and their houses were well known as "*mawākhir*". All prominent men of the day owned and maintained such houses of prostitution. 'Abdullah bin Ubayy (the chief of the hypocrites of Madīnah, who had been nominated as king of Madīnah before the Holy Prophet's arrival there and who was in the forefront of the campaign to slander Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah) himself owned a regular house of prostitution in Madīnah, which had six beautiful slave girls. Not only did he earn money through them but also used them to entertain his respectable and important guests who came to see him from different parts of Arabia. He employed the illegitimate children thus born to enhance the splendour and strength of his army of slaves. When one of these prostitutes, named Mu'āzah, accepted Islam and wanted to

offer repentance for her past sins, Ibn Ubayy subjected her to torture. She complained of it to Hadrat Abū Bakr, who brought it to the notice of the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet ordered that the woman be taken away from the cruel man. (*Ibn Jarīr*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 55 -58, and 103-104; Al-Istī'āb Vol. II, p. 762; p. 762; *Ibn Kathīr*, Vol. III, pp. 288-289). Such were the conditions when this verse was revealed. If these conditions are kept in view, it will become obvious that the real object was not merely to stop the slave girls from being forced into prostitution but to ban prostitution itself as illegal within the boundaries of the Islamic state. Simultaneously there was a declaration of general pardon for those who had been forced into this business in the past.

After the revelation of this Divine Command the Holy Prophet declared: "There is no place for prostitution in Islam." (Abū Da'ūd). The second Command that he gave was that the earnings made through adultery were unlawful, impure and absolutely forbidden. According to a tradition reported by Rāfi' bin Khadīj, the Holy Prophet described such earnings as impure, product of the worst profession and most filthy income. (Abū Da'ūd, Tirmizī, Nasā'ī). According to Abū Ḥujaifah, he termed the money earned through prostitution as unlawful. (Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad). Abū Mas'ūd 'Uqbah bin 'Amr says that the Holy Prophet forbade the people to take prostitution earnings. (Ṣiḥāḥ Sitta and Aḥmad). The third Command was that the slave girl could be employed for lawful manual labour, but the owner had no right to impose or receive any money from her about which he was not sure how it had been earned. According to Rāfi' bin Khadīj, he prohibited accepting any earnings from the slave girl unless it was known how she had earned it. (Abū Da'ūd). Rāfi' bin Rifā'ah Anṣārī has reported the same Command in clearer words. He says: "The Prophet of Allah prohibited us from accepting anything from the earnings of a slave girl except that which she earned through manual labour, such as (and he indicated this with his hand) baking bread, spinning cotton or carding wool or cotton." (Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd). Another tradition quoted from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah in Abū Da'ūd and Musnad Aḥmad says that taking of money earned by a slave girl through unlawful means is prohibited. Thus the Holy Prophet in accordance with the intention of this verse, banned by religious injunction and law all kinds of prostitution prevalent in Arabia in those days. Over and above this, the decision he gave in the case of Mu'āzah, the slave girl of 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, shows that an owner who forces his slave girl into prostitution loses his rights of ownership over her. This is a tradition from Imam Zuhri, which Ibn Kathīr has quoted on the authority of Musnad 'Abdur Razzaq.

60. This verse is not only connected with the verse immediately preceding it but with the entire discourse right from the beginning. "Revelations giving clear

guidance" are those verses which: (1) state the law concerning *Zinā, Qazf* and *Li'ān.* (2) forbid the believers to marry impure men or women, (3) prohibit the slandering of chaste people and propagating indecencies in society, (4) lay stress on men and women to restrain their gaze and guard their private parts, (5) prescribe the limits of purdah for women, (6) disapprove of the marriageable people's remaining unmarried, (7) lay down the rule for slaves to earn their freedom through written agreements, and (8) ban prostitution to purify society. After all these commands and instructions, a warning is being given that now if the people violated these instructions it would only mean that they wanted to meet with the same doom as had been the lot of the wretched communities before them, whose stories have been related in the Qur'ān itself. There could probably be no severer warning at the end of an edict. But it is a pity that a people who profess to be believers, and recite the holy edict and hold it sacred, yet continue to defy and violate its provisions in spite of the severe warning.

61. From here the discourse is directed towards the hypocrites, who were bent upon starting mischief in the Islamic community, and were as active from within as the unbelievers were from without to harm the Islamic movement and the body politic of Islam. As these people professed belief, and apparently belonged to the Muslim community, and had blood relationships with the Muslims, especially with the Anṣār, they were better placed to start and spread mischief. The result was that even some sincere Muslims, due to simplicity or weakness, became tools in their hands and even their supporters. But in spite of their profession of faith, the lure of worldly gains had utterly blinded them to the light that was spreading in the world through the teachings of the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). The indirect address to the hypocrites here has three things in view: Firstly, to admonish them, for the first and foremost demand of Allah's providence and His mercy is to go on admonishing the misguided and the erring one till the last in spite of his persistence in mischief and wickedness. Secondly, to differentiate clearly between belief and hypocrisy so that every right thinking person from the Muslim community should be able to distinguish between a true believer and a hypocrite. Then if anybody, in spite of this differentiation, falls a prey to the machinations of the hypocrites or supports them, he should himself be responsible for his conduct.

Thirdly, to warn the hypocrites clearly and plainly that Allah's promises for the believers are meant only for those who sincerely believe and then fulfil the demands and requirements of their Faith. These promises are not meant for anybody who poses himself as a Muslim. The hypocrites and the sinful people therefore should not cherish any hope that they will have any share in these.

62. The phrase "heavens and the earth" in the Qur'ān is generally used for the "universe". Thus the verse would also mean: "Allah is the light of the whole universe".

Light is something which makes things visible; which is itself manifest and helps make other things manifest. The human mind conceives light in this very sense. Absence of light is termed darkness, invisibility and obscurity. On the other hand, when there is visibility and things become exposed to view, man says there is light. Allah has been called 'Light' in this basic sense, and not in the sense of a beam of light which travels at the speed of 186,000 miles per second and stimulates the optic nerve through the retina. This conception of light has nothing to do with the reality of the meaning for which human mind has coined this word; rather the word light is used for all those lights which we experience in this physical world. All human words used for Allah are used in their basic sense and meaning, and not with reference to their physical connotation. For instance, when the word "sight" is used with respect to Allah, it does not mean that Allah has an eye like men and animals with which He sees. Similarly when we say that Allah 'hears' or 'grips' or 'grasps', it does not mean that He hears through ears, or grips or grasps with the hand like us. These words are used in a metaphorical sense and only a man of very poor intelligence would have the misconception that hearing or seeing or grasping is not possible except in the limited and specific sense in which we experience it. Similarly it will be shortsightedness to interpret the word 'light' in the sense of physical light rays emanating from a luminous body and affecting the retina. This word is not applicable to Allah in its limited sense, but in its absolute sense. That is, He alone in this universe is the real and prime "Cause of manifestation", otherwise there is nothing but darkness here. Everything which gives light and illuminates other things has got its light from Him; it has no light of its own.

The word light is also used for knowledge, and ignorance is termed as darkness. Allah is the Light of the universe in this sense too, because the knowledge of Reality and of right Guidance can be obtained from Him alone: without having recourse to His 'Light', there will be nothing but darkness of ignorance and the resultant vice and wickedness in the world.

63. "Blessed": yielding multiple benefits.

64. ".... which is neither eastern nor western": which grows in an open plane or on a hill, where it gets sunshine from morning till evening. Such an olive tree yields fine oil which gives a bright light. On the other hand, a tree which gets sunlight only from the east or only from the west, yields thick oil which gives weak light.

65. In this parable, Allah has been likened to the Lamp and the universe to the Niche. The glass shade is the veil behind which Allah has concealed Himself from His creation. This veil is not a physical veil for concealment, but a veil caused by the intensity of Divine manifestation. The human eye is unable to see Him not because of the intervening darkness but because of the intensity of the all-pervading, all-embracing Light radiating through the transparent veil. The human vision which is limited in nature cannot comprehend it. It can only comprehend and perceive limited physical lights which vary in brightness, which disappear and reappear, and which can be perceived only by contrast to existing darkness. But the 'Absolute Light' has no confronting darkness: it does not vanish, it shines forth and pervades all around with ever-existing glory; it is beyond human perception and comprehension.

As for "the lamp which is lit with the oil of a blessed olive tree, which is neither eastern nor western", this is a metaphor to give an idea of the perfect light of the lamp and its brilliance. In antiquity the source for brilliant light were the olive lamps, and the most superior oil for the purpose was that obtained from a tree standing in an open and elevated place. The epithet of Lamp for Allah in the parable does not mean that Allah is deriving His energy from some external source. It only means that the Lamp of the parable is not an ordinary lamp but the most brilliant lamp that can be imagined. Just as a brilliant lamp illuminates the whole house, so has Allah illuminated the whole universe.

Again, the words " .... its oil is (so fine) as if it were going to shine forth by itself though no fire touched it", are also meant to emphasize the brilliance of the light of the lamp, which is being fed by the finest and most readily combustible oil. The 'olive' and 'its being neither eastern nor western', and 'high combustibility of its oil by itself (without fire)' are not the essential elements of the parable, but attributes of the lamp, which is the primary element of the parable. The essential elements of the parable are only three: the Lamp, the Niche and the transparent Glass Shade.

The sentence, "His light may be likened.....", dispels the possible misunderstanding that one could have from the words: "Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth." This shows that the use of the word "light" for Allah does not at all mean that the essence of His Being is nothing but 'light'. In essence, He is a Perfect Being, Who is All-Knowing, All-Powerful, All-Wise etc. and also possessing all 'Light'. He has been called 'Light' itself because of His Perfection as a Source of Light, just as somebody may be called 'Grace' on account of his being highly gracious and beneficent and 'Beauty' because of his being highly beautiful and attractive.

66. That is, although Allah's Light is illuminating the whole world, everybody does not and cannot perceive it. It is Allah alone Who blesses whomsoever He wills with the capacity for perceiving His Light and benefiting by it. Just as the day and night are alike to a blind man, so is the case of a man without the gift of inner perception: he may see the electric light, the sunlight, the moonlight and the light from stars, but he cannot perceive the Light of Allah. For him, there is nothing but darkness in the universe. Just as a blind man cannot see the stone in his way unless he stumbles over it, so is the man without the gift of inner perception, who cannot perceive even those realities around him which may be all brilliance and shining by Allah's Light. He will perceive them only when he is overtaken by the consequences of his own misdeeds.

67. This means two things: First, He knows what parable can best explain a certain reality, and secondly, He knows who is entitled to receive this bounty and who is not. Allah has no need to show His Light to the one who has no desire or longing for it and who is utterly lost in worldly pursuits and in seeking material pleasures and gains. This bounty can be bestowed only on the one who in the knowledge of Allah has a sincere desire for it.

68. Some commentators have interpreted these "houses" to mean the mosques, and 'raising them' to mean constructing and reverencing them. Some others, however, take them to mean the houses of the believers and 'raising them' to mean raising their moral status. The words "to mention His name therein" seem to refer to the mosques and support the first interpretation, but if we look deeper, we see that they support the second interpretation equally well. This is because Divine Law does not confine worship to mosques alone as is the case with the priest-ridden religions where the rituals can only be performed under the leadership of a clergy. In Islam a house is also a place of worship like the mosque and every man is his own priest. As this Sūrah mostly contains instructions for ennobling domestic life, we feel that the second interpretation is more in keeping with the context though there is no reason for rejecting the first interpretation. There will be no harm if both the mosques and the houses of the believers are implied here.

69. Here those characteristics have been described which are necessary for the true perception of Allah's Absolute Light and for benefiting from His bounties. Allah does not bestow His bounties without reason. He bestows them on the deserving ones alone. He only sees this that the recipient has sincere love for Him, stands in awe of Him, seeks His favours and avoids His wrath; he is not lost in material pursuits but in spite of his worldly engagements keeps his heart warm with God's remembrance. Such a person does not rest content with low spiritual

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الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اَعْمَالُهُمْ كَسَرَابٍۢ بِقِيْعَةٍ يَّحْسَبُهُ الظَّمْاٰنُ مَآءً ؕ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا
جَآءَهٗ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْـًٔا وَّوَجَدَ اللّٰهَ عِنْدَهٗ فَوَفّٰىهُ حِسَابَهٗ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ سَرِيْعُ
الْحِسَابِ ﴿39﴾ اَوْ كَظُلُمٰتٍ فِيْ بَحْرٍ لُّجِّيٍّ يَّغْشٰىهُ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ فَوْقِهٖ مَوْجٌ مِّنْ
فَوْقِهٖ سَحَابٌ ؕ ظُلُمٰتٌۢ بَعْضُهَا فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ ؕ اِذَآ اَخْرَجَ يَدَهٗ لَمْ يَكَدْ يَرٰىهَا ؕ
وَمَنْ لَّمْ يَجْعَلِ اللّٰهُ لَهٗ نُوْرًا فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ نُّوْرٍ ﴿40﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يُسَبِّحُ لَهٗ
مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَالطَّيْرُ صٰٓفّٰتٍ ؕ كُلٌّ قَدْ عَلِمَ صَلَاتَهٗ وَتَسْبِيْحَهٗ ؕ
وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿41﴾ وَلِلّٰهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۚ وَاِلَى اللّٰهِ
الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿42﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يُزْجِيْ سَحَابًا ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهٗ ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهٗ
رُكَامًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلٰلِهٖ ۚ وَيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مِنْ جِبَالٍ
فِيْهَا مِنْۢ بَرَدٍ فَيُصِيْبُ بِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَصْرِفُهٗ عَنْ مَّنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ يَكَادُ سَنَا
بَرْقِهٖ يَذْهَبُ بِالْاَبْصَارِ ﴿43﴾ يُقَلِّبُ اللّٰهُ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ؕ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ
لَعِبْرَةً لِّاُولِي الْاَبْصَارِ ﴿44﴾ وَاللّٰهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَآبَّةٍ مِّنْ مَّآءٍ ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ
يَّمْشِيْ عَلٰى بَطْنِهٖ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّمْشِيْ عَلٰى رِجْلَيْنِ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّمْشِيْ
عَلٰٓى اَرْبَعٍ ؕ يَخْلُقُ اللّٰهُ مَا يَشَآءُ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿45﴾ لَقَدْ اَنْزَلْنَآ اٰيٰتٍ
مُّبَيِّنٰتٍ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿46﴾ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ اٰمَنَّا
بِاللّٰهِ وَبِالرَّسُوْلِ وَاَطَعْنَا ثُمَّ يَتَوَلّٰى فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ ذٰلِكَ ؕ وَمَآ
اُولٰٓئِكَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿47﴾ وَاِذَا دُعُوْٓا اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ اِذَا
فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْهُمْ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿48﴾ وَاِنْ يَّكُنْ لَّهُمُ الْحَقُّ يَاْتُوْٓا اِلَيْهِ مُذْعِنِيْنَ ﴿49﴾
اَفِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ اَمِ ارْتَابُوْٓا اَمْ يَخَافُوْنَ اَنْ يَّحِيْفَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَ

(On the other hand,) the deeds of those who disbelieved,[70] may be likened to a mirage in a waterless desert, which the thirsty one took for water; but when he reached there he found nothing to drink; nay, he found there Allah Who settled his full account, and Allah is very swift at reckoning.[71] Or (their efforts may be likened to those of a man trying to swim in) a deep dark ocean, covered with billows, one over the other, and above it a cloud: darkness upon darkness: so much so that if he stretches out his hand, he cannot see[72] it. There is no light for the one whom Allah does not give light.[73] 39-40

Do[74] you not observe that all those who are in the heavens and the earth, and the birds with outspread wings, glorify Allah ? Each one knows the mode of its prayer and glorification, and Allah has full knowledge of all they do. The kingdom of the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah alone, and all shall have to return to Him 41-42

Do you not observe that Allah makes the cloud move gently: then joins its pieces together: then gathers it into a mass of thick cloud: then you see that rain-drops fall down from its midst: and He sends down hail out of the high up mountains in the heaven:[75] then He smites with it whom He wills and turns it away from whom He pleases: then a flash of lightning from it dazzles the eyes. He alternates the day and the night: there is indeed a lesson in it for those who have observing eyes. 43-44

And Allah created every creature from a sort of water: of them some one crawls upon its belly: another walks on two legs and still another on four; Allah creates whatever He wills for He has power over everything. 45

We have sent down Revelations that make the reality quite plain; however, Allah guides to the straight path whomsoever He pleases. 46

These people say "We have believed in Allah and the Messenger and we have submitted"; but soon after this, some of them turn away (from obedience): such people are not true Believers.[76] When they are called to Allah and His Messenger so that the Messenger may judge between them,[77] a party of them turns away.[78] However, if the truth be on their side, they come towards the Messenger in all obedience.[79] Are their hearts afflicted with the disease (of hypocrisy)? 47-50

Or, are they in doubt? Or, do they fear that Allah and His Messenger will be unjust to them ? In fact, they themselves are unjust.[80]

Contd. from p. 387]

levels, but actively endeavours to attain the heights towards which his Master may guide him. He does not go for the paltry gains of this transitory world, but has his gaze constantly fixed on the everlasting life of the Hereafter. These are the things which determine whether or not a person should be granted the favour to benefit from Allah's Light. Then, when Allah is pleased to bestow His bounties, He bestows them without measure; and it will be man's own incapacity if he does not receive them in full.

70. That is, they refused to accept sincerely the Divine Message which was brought by the Prophets, and which at that time was being given by the Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). These verses clearly show that the truthful and righteouse believers only can benefit from Allah's Light. In contrast to them, the state of those people is being described here, who refused to believe and obey the Holy Prophet, who was the real and sole means of attaining the Light of Allah.

71. This parable describes the condition of those people who, in spite of disbelief and hypocrisy, practise some good deeds and also believe, among other things, in the life after death, in the hope that their good deeds will be of some help to them in the Hereafter even if they did not believe and follow the Prophet and lacked the qualities of true believers. In this parable they are being told that their expectations of reaping benefits of their ostentatious deeds of virtue in the Hereafter are no more than a mirage. Just as a traveller in the desert takes the glittering sands for a surging pool of water and runs towards it for quenching his thirst, so are these people travelling on the road to death cherishing false hopes on account of their good deeds. But just as the one running towards a mirage does not find anything there to quench his thirst, so will these people find nothing to avail them when they enter the state of death. On the contrary, they will find Allah there, Who will require them to account for their disbelief, hypocrisy and misdeeds, which they committed along with their ostentatious deeds of virtue, and will deal with them in full justice.

72. This parable describes the condition of all the disbelievers and the hypocrites including those who perform good deeds for ostentation. It is being stated that such people are passing their life in a state of absolute and complete ignorance, whether otherwise they are the most learned people in the world and leaders in their respective fields of learning. They are like the man who is lost in complete darkness where no ray of light can reach him. They think that knowledge

merely consists in producing atom bombs, hydrogen bombs, supersonic planes and moon rockets, or in attaining excellence in economics and finance and law and philosophy. But they little understand that real knowledge is something entirely different and they have no idea of it. Thus considered they are just ignorant, and an illiterate peasant who has gained some acquaintance of the Divine Truth is wiser than they.

73. Here is stated the real object of the discourse which began with: "Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth." When in fact there is no light in the universe except the Light of Allah and all manifestation of reality is due to that Light, where from can the one whom Allah does not give light have light? There exists no other source of light from where he can receive a ray.

74. As has been explained above, Allah is the Light of the whole universe, but His Light can be perceived and comprehended by the righteous believers only. All other people grope about in the dark like the blind in spite of the all-pervading, all-embracing Light. Here a few of the countless signs which guide to the Light are being mentioned by way of example. If a person whose eyes of the heart are open, sees them, he can perceive Allah working everywhere around him at all times. But those who are blind of the heart, and can only see with the head's eyes, can see Biology and Zoology and other sciences working in the world, but they fail to perceive and recognize Allah's signs anywhere working in the world.

75. This may mean frozen clouds which have been called 'mountains in the heavens' metaphorically. It may also mean the mountains of the earth which stand high in the heavens and whose snow-capped peaks cause condensation in the clouds which results in hailstorms.

76. That is, their turning away from obedience itself belies their claim that they are believers and their conduct clearly shows that their profession of faith and submission was absolutely false.

77. These words clearly state that the judgement of the Prophet is the judgement of Allah and the Command of the Prophet is the Cammand of Allah. Therefore, the invitation to obey the Prophet is an invitation to obey both Allah and His Prophet. (Also see An-Nisā: 59-61, and the E.N.'s thereof).

78. This does not only apply to the cases which came up before the Holy Prophet for a decision in his lifetime, but this continues valid even today. Thus, a summon from the court of a judge in an Islamic government, who judges a case in accordance with the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet, is actually a summon from the Court of Allah and His Prophet and the one who repudiates the

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رَسُوْلَهٗ ؕ بَلْ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ اِنَّمَا كَانَ قَوْلَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ اِذَا دُعُوْٓا
اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ لِيَحْكُمَ بَيْنَهُمْ اَنْ يَّقُوْلُوْا سَمِعْنَا وَاَطَعْنَا ؕ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ
الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَمَنْ يُّطِعِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ وَيَخْشَ اللّٰهَ وَيَتَّقْهِ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ
الْفَآئِزُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَاَقْسَمُوْا بِاللّٰهِ جَهْدَ اَيْمَانِهِمْ لَئِنْ اَمَرْتَهُمْ لَيَخْرُجُنَّ ؕ قُلْ لَّا
تُقْسِمُوْا ۚ طَاعَةٌ مَّعْرُوْفَةٌ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ خَبِيْرٌۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ قُلْ اَطِيْعُوا اللّٰهَ وَ
اَطِيْعُوا الرَّسُوْلَ ۚ فَاِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَاِنَّمَا عَلَيْهِ مَا حُمِّلَ وَعَلَيْكُمْ مَّا حُمِّلْتُمْ ؕ وَاِنْ
تُطِيْعُوْهُ تَهْتَدُوْا ؕ وَمَا عَلَى الرَّسُوْلِ اِلَّا الْبَلٰغُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا مِنْكُمْ وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَيَسْتَخْلِفَنَّهُمْ فِى الْاَرْضِ كَمَا اسْتَخْلَفَ
الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۪ وَلَيُمَكِّنَنَّ لَهُمْ دِيْنَهُمُ الَّذِى ارْتَضٰى لَهُمْ وَلَيُبَدِّلَنَّهُمْ
مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ خَوْفِهِمْ اَمْنًا ؕ يَعْبُدُوْنَنِىْ لَا يُشْرِكُوْنَ بِىْ شَيْـًٔا ؕ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ
ذٰلِكَ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْفٰسِقُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَاَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ وَاَطِيْعُوا
الرَّسُوْلَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ لَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مُعْجِزِيْنَ فِى الْاَرْضِ ۚ
وَمَاْوٰىهُمُ النَّارُ ؕ وَلَبِئْسَ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿٥٧﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لِيَسْتَاْذِنْكُمُ الَّذِيْنَ
مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُكُمْ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَمْ يَبْلُغُوا الْحُلُمَ مِنْكُمْ ثَلٰثَ مَرّٰتٍ ؕ مِنْ قَبْلِ
صَلٰوةِ الْفَجْرِ وَحِيْنَ تَضَعُوْنَ ثِيَابَكُمْ مِّنَ الظَّهِيْرَةِ وَمِنْۢ بَعْدِ صَلٰوةِ
الْعِشَآءِ ۚ ثَلٰثُ عَوْرٰتٍ لَّكُمْ ؕ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَا عَلَيْهِمْ جُنَاحٌۢ بَعْدَهُنَّ ؕ طَوّٰفُوْنَ
عَلَيْكُمْ بَعْضُكُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمُ الْاٰيٰتِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٥٨﴾
وَاِذَا بَلَغَ الْاَطْفَالُ مِنْكُمُ الْحُلُمَ فَلْيَسْتَاْذِنُوْا كَمَا اسْتَاْذَنَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ؕ
كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ اٰيٰتِهٖ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ عَلِيْمٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَالْقَوَاعِدُ مِنَ النِّسَآءِ

As regards the Believers, when they are called towards Allah and His Messenger so that the Messenger may judge between them, they say, "We have heard and obeyed"; such are the people who attain true success, and only those attain true success who obey Allah and His Messenger and fear Allah and refrain from His disobedience. 51-52

They (the hypocrites) solemnly swear by Allah and say, "If you order us, we will leave our homes." Say to them, "Do not swear oaths for your 'obedience' is well known;[81] Allah is fully aware of what you are doing."[82] Say, "Obey Allah and obey the Messenger, but if you turn away, you should note it well that the Messenger is responsible for the duty entrusted to him and you are responsible for the duty entrusted to you. If you obey him, you will be rightly guided, for the responsibility of the Messenger is only to convey the Message clearly to you." 53-54

Allah has promised to those among you who believe and do righteous deeds, that He will make them successors in the land just as He made those who passed away before them, and that He will establish their religion, which He has approved for them, on strong foundations and will change their (present) state of fear into peace and security. Let them worship Me and associate none with Me;[83] and the one who disbelieves after this,"[84] shall be of those who are perverse transgressors. Therefore, establish *Ṣalāt,* pay the *Zakāt* dues and obey the Messenger; it is expected that you will be shown mercy. Do not think about those who have disbelieved that they will be able to frustrate Allah in the land; their abode is Hell and it is a very evil abode. 55-57

O Believers,[85] your slaves [86] and those of your children, who have not yet become sex conscious,[87] must ask your permission before coming in to see you on three occasions: before the Fajr Prayer and at noon when you put off your clothes and after the 'Ishā' Prayer. These are your three times of privacy.[88] There is no sin for you or for them[89] if they come without permission at other times than these, for you have to visit one another over and over again.[90] In this way Allah makes His Commandments clear to you for He is All-Knowing, All-Wise. And when your children have grown sex conscious,[91] they should receive your permission for this just as their elders get permission. In this way 58-59

Allah makes His Revelations plain to you for He is All-Knowing, All-Wise.

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judge indeed repudiates both Allah and His Prophet. This thing has been explained in a tradition related by Ḥasan Baṣrī thus: "Whosoever is summoned to appear before a judge from among the judges of the Muslims but fails to appear before him, he is a transgressor and forfeits his rights." (Al-Jaṣṣāṣ, *Aḥkam-ul-Qur'ān,* Vol. III, p. 405). In other words, such a person not only renders himself punishable but also guilty and liable to be proceeded against.

79. This verse states that a person who willingly accepts only that part of the Divine Law which serves his advantage, but rejects that which goes against his interests and desires, and prefers the worldly laws instead, is not a believer but a hypocrite. His profession of Faith is false for he does not in fact believe in Allah and His Prophet but in his own interests and desires. With this attitude even if he believes in and follows a portion of the Divine Law, his belief has no value whatever in the sight of Allah.

80. That is, there can be only three reasons for such a conduct. First, a person may not have believed at all but may only be posing as a Muslim in order to enjoy the benefits of belonging to the Muslim community. Secondly, he might have believed but may still be having doubts about the reality of the Prophethood, Revelations, life-after-death, and even the existence of Allah Himself. Thirdly, he may be a believer but might at the same time be apprehending injustice from Allah and His Prophet and considering their Commands disadvantageous to him personally in one way or the other. There can be no doubt that the people belonging to any of these categories are themselves unjust. A person who, having such doubts and suspicions, enters the Muslim community and enjoys undeserved benefits posing himself as a member thereof, is indeed a deceiver, cheat and forger. He is not only doing injustice to himself, practising constant falsehood and developing the meanest traits of character, but he is being unjust to the Muslim people as well, who look upon him as one of themselves merely on the basis of his verbal profession of the Faith and let him enjoy all sorts of social, cultural, political and moral relations with them as such.

81. The verse may also mean that the obedience expected of the believers is of recognised and well known type, which is above every kind of suspicion, and not such as may need swearing of oaths to convince others of its sincerity. Their conduct is manifest and everybody who comes into contact with them feels that they are truly obedient to Allah and His Prophet.

82. That is, "You might succeed in deceiving the people, but you cannot deceive Allah, Who is aware of everything, open or hidden, even of your innermost motives and intentions."

83. As has been hinted in the beginning of this discourse, this means to warn the hypocrites that the promise of Allah to bestow successorship in the land is not meant for those people who are Muslims only in name, but for those who are true in faith, pious in character, sincere in devotion and who follow Allah's religion in letter and spirit eschewing every tinge of *shirk*. Those who lack these qualities and pay mere lip service to Islam are neither worthy of this promise nor its addressees. Therefore they should entertain no hope of having any share in it.

Some people interpret *Khilafat* (successorship in the land) to mean political power and authority, and conversely conclude that whosoever possesses power and authority in the land is necessarily a true believer and a follower of Allah's approved religion and His devotee, free from all traces of *shirk*. Then in order to get support for their wrong conclusion, they even change the very meanings of Faith, virtue, Divine Creed, Allah's worship, idolatry, etc. to suit their interpretation. This is the worst distortion of the meaning of the Qur'ān, even worse than what the Jews and Christians did with their Scriptures. This interpretation of the verse tends to destroy the very message of the Qur'ān. If 'successorship in the land' were to mean mere power and authority in the land, then all those people who wielded power and authority in the world, or wield it today, would fit in with the description contained in the verse, even if they denied Allah, Revelations, Prophethood, life in the Hereafter, and were involved in all kinds of major sins like usury, adultery, drinking and gambling. Now if all such people are regarded as pious believers and considered worthy of holding the high offices because of their qualities as such, then 'Faith' would imply simple obedience to physical laws and 'Virtue' would mean making use of those laws effectively and successfully. Allah's approved religion would mean making maximum progress in the fields of industry and trade, commerce and politics by achieving excellence in the physical sciences; devotion to Allah would mean abiding by the rules and procedures which are naturally useful and essential for success in individual and collective enterprises; and *shirk* would mean adopting a few harmful methods also along with the useful procedures and rules. But the question is: Would a person who has studied the Qur'ān with an open heart and mind ever believe that the terms 'Faith', 'Righteous deeds', 'True Religion', 'Devotion to Allah', *Tauḥīd* and *Shirk* as used in the Qur'ān really mean this ? As a matter of fact, such a meaning can be understood either by the one who has never made an intelligent study of the Qur'ān as a whole, but has picked up verses from here and there and given them his own biased meaning according to pre-conceived notions and theories, or by the one who has read the Qur'ān through but

has all along been holding all those verses as wrong and absurd, which invite people to accept Allah as the One and only Lord, His Revelations as the only source of Guidance, His Messengers as the only true Guides worthy of absolute obedience, and which demand not only belief in the life-after-death, but also state that the people who would consider success in the worldly life as their sole and ultimate objective, without any idea of their accountability in the Hereafter, would be deprived of real success. The Qur'ān has repeated these themes so frequently in diverse ways and in such clear and plain language that it is difficult to believe that anybody who studies it honestly can ever be involved in those misunderstandings in which the modern interpreters of this verse have been involved. The fact is that they have misconstrued *Khilāfat* and *Istikhlāf* (successorship) after their own notions, which cannot be held as correct by anybody who has some knowledge of the Qur'ān.

The Qur'ān has used *Khilāfat* and *Istikhlāf* in the following three meanings and the context determines in which particular meaning it has been used in a particular place:

(a) "To bear the authority delegated by Allah". The whole human race is Allah's *Khalīfah* (successor) on the earth in this sense.

(b) "To acknowledge Allah as the Supreme Sovereign and to use His delegated powers and authority in accordance with His Law." In this sense only a pious and righteous believer can be a *Khalīfah*, because he alone can discharge the responsibilities of *Khilāfat* truly. On the other hand, a disbeliever and sinner cannot be *Khalīfah*: he is rather a rebel against Allah, because he abuses the power and authority delegated by Allah in disobedience to Him in the land bestowed by Him.

(c) "The succession of one ruling nation in the land after the fall of another nation." The meanings (a) and (b) imply vicegerency while (c) implies successorship. Both these meanings of *Khilāfat* are well known and recognised in the Arabic lexicon.

Now anybody who reads this verse in this context cannot have any doubt that the word *Khilāfat* has been used here for the government which discharges the responsibilities of Allah's Vicegerency strictly in accordance with Allah's Law, and not in accordance with mere physical laws of the world. That is why, not to speak of the disbelievers, even the hypocrites, who professed faith in Islam, are being excluded from the purview of Allah's promise. That is why it is being stated that true and righteous believers only are worthy of this promise. That is why it is being averred that the establishment of *Khilāfat* will result in the establishment of Islam, Allah's approved religion, on strong foundations; and that is why the condition being put forward for earning this favour is that the believers should

remain steadfast in their faith and devotion to Allah avoiding every tinge of *shirk*. To remove this promise from its right context and apply it on the international scene to the case of America and Russia, or any other power that be, is sheer absurdity and nonsense. (For further details, see E. N. 99 of Al-Anbiyā' also).

Another thing that needs to be mentioned here is that the direct addressees of this promise were the Muslims living in the time of the Holy Prophet though indirectly it applies to the future generations of Muslims as well. When in the beginning this promise was held out by Allah, the Muslims were living in a state of fear and Islam had not yet taken firm roots even in Ḥejāz. A few years later this state of fear not only gave way to peace and equanimity but Islam also spread outside Arabia to large parts of Africa and Asia, and it became firmly established not only in its own land of birth but outside it as well. This is a historical proof of the fact that Allah fulfilled His promise in the times of Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān (may Allah be pleased with them all). No right thinking person, therefore, can have any doubt that the *Khilafat* of the first three Caliphs has been authenticated by the Qur'ān itself and Allah Himself has testified to their being pious Believers. If anybody still has a doubt, he should read the address of Hadrat 'Ali in Nahjal Balāghah, which was meant to dissuade Ḥaḍrat 'Umar from going personally to fight against the Iranians. He said:

"Our success in this work is not dependent on numerical strength; it is the religion of Allah for which He Himself has opened ways. We are grateful to Him for His help and succour which has enabled us to serve its cause till it has been raised to its present glory. Allah Himself has said: 'Allah has promised to those among you, who believe and do righteous deeds that He will make them successors in the land .... ' Allah will certainly fulfil this promise and will help the armies of Islam. The position of the Caliph in Islam is like that of the string in a necklace of pearls. If the string breaks, the pearls scatter away and the order is destroyed. Once scattered and dispersed, it becomes difficult to collect them again. No doubt the Arabs are small in number, but they have been increased by Islam and strengthened by unity. You should therefore stick to Madīnah like the pivot and make the grindstone of Arabia rotate about you and guide the war-machine from here. Once you leave this place, your entire organisation will begin to crumble, then you will start feeling more worried about the dangers behind than the enemies in front. Moreover, the Iranians will concentrate their whole attention on you, and will like to exterminate you, taking you as the main and only hurdle in their way to victory. As for your apprehension that they have come out in much greater strength, I would say that hitherto we have been fighting them not merely on the strength of numbers, but have been putting them to rout on the strength of Allah's help and succour."

[Contd. on p. 400

الّٰتِیْ لَا یَرْجُوْنَ نِكَاحًا فَلَیْسَ عَلَیْهِنَّ جُنَاحٌ اَنْ یَّضَعْنَ ثِیَابَهُنَّ غَیْرَ
مُتَبَرِّجٰتٍۭ بِزِیْنَةٍ ؕ وَ اَنْ یَّسْتَعْفِفْنَ خَیْرٌ لَّهُنَّ ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ سَمِیْعٌ عَلِیْمٌ ﴿۶۰﴾ لَیْسَ
عَلَى الْاَعْمٰى حَرَجٌ وَّ لَا عَلَى الْاَعْرَجِ حَرَجٌ وَّ لَا عَلَى الْمَرِیْضِ حَرَجٌ وَّ لَا
عَلٰۤى اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَنْ تَاْكُلُوْا مِنْۢ بُیُوْتِكُمْ اَوْ بُیُوْتِ اٰبَآىِٕكُمْ اَوْ بُیُوْتِ اُمَّهٰتِكُمْ اَوْ
بُیُوْتِ اِخْوَانِكُمْ اَوْ بُیُوْتِ اَخَوٰتِكُمْ اَوْ بُیُوْتِ اَعْمَامِكُمْ اَوْ بُیُوْتِ عٰمّٰتِكُمْ اَوْ
بُیُوْتِ اَخْوَالِكُمْ اَوْ بُیُوْتِ خٰلٰتِكُمْ اَوْ مَا مَلَكْتُمْ مَّفَاتِحَهٗۤ اَوْ صَدِیْقِكُمْ ؕ لَیْسَ
عَلَیْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ اَنْ تَاْكُلُوْا جَمِیْعًا اَوْ اَشْتَاتًا ؕ فَاِذَا دَخَلْتُمْ بُیُوْتًا فَسَلِّمُوْا عَلٰۤى
اَنْفُسِكُمْ تَحِیَّةً مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ مُبٰرَكَةً طَیِّبَةً ؕ كَذٰلِكَ یُبَیِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمُ الْاٰیٰتِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿۶۱﴾ اِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَ رَسُوْلِهٖ وَ اِذَا كَانُوْا
مَعَهٗ عَلٰۤى اَمْرٍ جَامِعٍ لَّمْ یَذْهَبُوْا حَتّٰى یَسْتَاْذِنُوْهُ ؕ اِنَّ الَّذِیْنَ یَسْتَاْذِنُوْنَكَ
اُولٰٓىِٕكَ الَّذِیْنَ یُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَ رَسُوْلِهٖ ۚ فَاِذَا اسْتَاْذَنُوْكَ لِبَعْضِ شَاْنِهِمْ فَاْذَنْ
لِّمَنْ شِئْتَ مِنْهُمْ وَ اسْتَغْفِرْ لَهُمُ اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِیْمٌ ﴿۶۲﴾ لَا تَجْعَلُوْا دُعَآءَ
الرَّسُوْلِ بَیْنَكُمْ كَدُعَآءِ بَعْضِكُمْ بَعْضًا ؕ قَدْ یَعْلَمُ اللّٰهُ الَّذِیْنَ یَتَسَلَّلُوْنَ مِنْكُمْ لِوَاذًا ۚ
فَلْیَحْذَرِ الَّذِیْنَ یُخَالِفُوْنَ عَنْ اَمْرِهٖۤ اَنْ تُصِیْبَهُمْ فِتْنَةٌ اَوْ یُصِیْبَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
اَلِیْمٌ ﴿۶۳﴾ اَلَاۤ اِنَّ لِلّٰهِ مَا فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ ؕ قَدْ یَعْلَمُ مَاۤ اَنْتُمْ عَلَیْهِ ؕ وَ یَوْمَ
یُرْجَعُوْنَ اِلَیْهِ فَیُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوْا ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ بِكُلِّ شَیْءٍ عَلِیْمٌ ﴿۶۴﴾

(۸) ع ۱۴ — (۹) ع ۱۵

There is no sin for such elderly women as are past the age of marriage,[92] if they lay aside their outer graments[93] provided that they do not mean to display their adornment.[94] Nevertheless, if they behave modestly, it would be better for them: for Allah hears everything and knows everything. 60

There is no harm if a blind or a lame or a sick person (takes a meal at another's house): nor is there any harm for yourselves if you take meals at your own houses or at the houses of your fathers and grandfathers or at the houses of your mothers and grandmothers or at your brothers' houses or at your sisters' houses or at the houses of your paternal uncles or at the houses of your paternal aunts or at the houses of your maternal uncles or at the houses of your maternal aunts or from the houses whose keys are in your possession or at the houses of your friends.[95] There is no harm if you take your meals together or separately;[96] however, when you enter the houses, you should send greetings of peace on your people, for the prayer of greetings prescribed by Allah is blessed and pure. Thus Allah makes His Revelations clear to you. It is expected that you will use your common sense to grasp these. 61

True Believers[97] are those who sincerely believe in Allah and His Messenger and who do not leave him without permission when they are with the Messenger for some common good;[98] only those who ask your permission sincerely believe in Allah and His Messenger. Therefore, when they ask your permission for a private business,[99] you may give permission to whomever you like,[100] and ask Allah's forgiveness for such people:[101] Allah is indeed Forgiving and Merciful. 62

O Believers, do not consider the summoning by the Messenger like the summoning among you by one another.[102] Allah knows well those of you who steal away, concealing themselves behind others.[103] Let those who disobey the order of the Messenger beware lest they should be involved in some affliction,[104] or are visited by a woeful scourge. Beware! whatever is in the heavens and the earth belongs to Allah. He knows whatever you are doing. On the Day you shall return to Him, He will let you know what you have done: He has full knowledge of everything. 63-64

Contd. from p. 397]

Any discerning reader can see for himself as to which side is being held by Hadrat 'Alī as worthy of Allah's promise with regard to successorship in the land.

84. *Kufr* (disbelief) here may also mean ingratitude or denial of the truth. In the first case, the verse will refer to those people who deviate from the right path after Allah has favoured them with successorship, and in the second, to the hypocrites, who do not give up their hypocritical attitude even after hearing this promise of Allah.

85. From here again, the Commandments for social life are being resumed. It is just possible that this portion of Sūrah An-Nūr was sent down at a later date.

86. According to the majority of commentators and jurists, this refers to both male and female slaves. Ibn 'Umar and Mujāhid, however, have expressed the opinion that it refers to the male slaves only. But in view of the Commandment that follows there appears to be no reason for making this distinction. Violation of one's privacy by one's children is as undesirable as by one's female slaves. All jurists are agreed that the Commandment given in this verse is applicable both to the minor and to the grown up slaves.

87. Another translation can be: "who have not yet reached the age of seeing wet dreams." From this the jurists have deduced the principle that in case of boys puberty starts when they begin having nocturnal emissions. But the translation that we have adopted is preferable because the injunction is meant both for boys and for girls. If nocturnal emission is taken as the sign of attaining puberty, the injunction would be confined to boys only, because in the case of girls it is the menstrual discharge, and not noctural emission, which marks the beginning of puberty. In our opinion the intention is that the children of the house should follow this procedure till the time that they become sex conscious. After they have become sex conscious they have to follow the injunction that follows.

88. Literally, *'aurat'* is a place of danger and trouble; it also means a private part of the body, which one would not like to expose before others, and something which is not fully secured. All these meanings are close to each other and all are implied in the meaning of this verse. The verse means to say that these are your times of privacy when you are either alone or with your wives in a state when it is not proper for your children and servants to come in to see you unannounced. Therefore, they should be instructed that they must take your permission before coming in to see you in your places of privacy at these three times.

89. That is, at other times than these, there is no restriction on the entry of minor children and slaves in your private rooms without permission. If on such an occasion you are not properly dressed and they enter without permission, you will have no right to take them to task. For in that case, it will be your own folly to have kept yourself in an improper state at a time when you should have been properly dressed for the day's business. However, if they enter without permission during the times of privacy, the blame will lie with them provided they have been taught the necessary etiquette.

90. This is the reason for the general permission for children and slaves to come without permission at other times than those mentioned above. This throws light on a fundamental *Fiqh* principle that every religious injunction is based on some wisdom or good reason, whether it has been explained or not.

91. That is, when they have reached the age of puberty. As has been explained in E.N. 87 above, the signs of puberty in the case of boys and girls are nocturnal emission and menstrual discharge respectively. There is, however, a difference of opinion among the jurists regarding the beginning of puberty in those boys and girls who for some reason do not show these physical signs for an unduly long time. According to Imám Shafi'ī, Imām Abū Yūsuf, Imām Muḥammad and Imām Aḥmad, a boy or a girl of 15 years will be considered to have attained puberty, and a saying of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah also supports this view. But the well-known view of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah is that in such cases the age of puberty will be 17 years for girls and 18 years for boys. Both these opinions are the result of juristic reasoning and neither is based on any injunction of the Qur'ān or Sunnah. It is therefore not necessary that the age limits of 15 or 18 years be accepted as marking the beginning of puberty everywhere in the world in abnormal cases. In different countries and ages there are different conditions of physical development and growth. The age of puberty in a certain country can be determined by means of the law of averages in normal cases. As for abnormal cases, the mean difference of ages may be added to the upper age limit to determine the age of puberty. For instance, if in a country, the minimum and maximum ages for noctural discharge are normally 12 and 15 years respectively, the mean difference of one and a half years may be added to the maximum limit of 15 years to determine the beginning of puberty for abnormal cases. The same principle can be used by the legal experts of various countries to fix the age of puberty keeping in view their peculiar local conditions.

There is a tradition quoted from Ibn 'Umar in support of the age of 15 years for puberty. He says: "I was 14, when I presented myself before the Holy Prophet to ask his permission to join the Battle of Uhud, but he declined permission. Then on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench, when I was 15, I

was again presented and he permitted me to join." (Sihāh Sitta, Musnad Aḥmad). This tradition, however, does not stand scrutiny for the following two reasons:

(a) The Battle of Uḥud took place in Shawwāl, 3 A.H., and the Battle of the Trench in Shawwāl, 5 A.H. according to Ibn Isḥāq, and in Zil-Qa'd, 5 A.H., according to Ibn Sa'd. There is an interval of two years or more between the two events. Now if Ibn 'Umar was 14 at the time of the Battle of Uḥud, he could not be 15 at the time of the Battle of the Trench. It may be that he mentioned 14 years for 13 years and 11 months and 15 years for 15 years and 11 months.

(b) It is a different thing to be regarded as an adult for the purposes of war and quite different to be legally adult for social affairs. They are not necessarily interconnected. Therefor the correct view is that the age of 15 for an abnormal boy has been fixed on the basis of analogous and juristic reasoning and not on the basis of anything in the Qur'ān or Sunnah.

92. Literally, "the seated women". This means those women who are no longer capable of bearing children, who no longer cherish sexual desires, and who cannot excite the passions of men.

93. Literally, "if they lay aside their clothes". Obviously it cannot mean that they should strip themselves naked. That is why all the jurists and commentators are agreed that it implies the outer garments which are used to hide the adornments as enjoined in Al-Aḥzāb: 59.

94. *"Tabarruj"* is display and exhibitionism. When used with regard to a woman, it would imply the one who displays her charms and adornments before other men. The permission to lay aside the outer garments is being given to those old women who are no longer interested in personal embellishments and whose sex desires are gone. But if they still have a hidden desire smouldering in their hearts and an urge to display, they cannot avail of this permission.

95. Three things are necessary to understand this verse:

(a) The verse consists of two parts: the first part relates to the sick, the lame, the blind and other handicapped people, and the second part to the other People.

(b) The moral teachings of the Qur'ān had so thoroughly changed the Arab mind that they had become highly sensitive with regard to the distinction between the lawful and the unlawful. According to Ibn 'Abbās, when Allah commanded them "not to devour one another's property by unlawful ways" (IV: 29), the people became unduly cautious and would not eat freely at each other's house; so much so that unless a formal invitation was extended, they considered it unlawful even to dine in the house of a relative or a friend

(c) The mention of "taking meals at your own houses" only means to impress that taking meals at the house of a relative or a friend is just like taking meals at one's own house, where no permission is required.

With these three things in mind, one can easily understand the meaning of the verse. It says that the handicapped person can have his meal anywhere and at any house in order to satisfy his hunger, because the society as a whole owes to him this privilege on account of his handicap. As for the other people, for them their 'own houses' and the houses of the relatives mentioned in the verse are equally good for the purpose. No formal invitation or permission is needed to have the meals at their houses. In the absence of the master, if his wife or children offer something, it can be taken without hesitation. In this connection, it should be noted that the houses of one's children are just like one's own house, and the friends imply close friends.

96. In ancient Arabia, some tribes had the tradition that each member sat and ate separately. Eating together in one place was considered bad as the Hindus do even today. On the contrary, some other tribes considered it bad to eat alone individually: so much so that they would even go without food if they did not have company at meals. This verse means to abolish such customs and restrictions.

97. These are the final instructions being given to tighten the discipline of the Muslim Community and make it more organised than before:

98. This Commandment is also applicable in respect of the successors of the Holy Prophet after him and other leaders of the Muslims. When the Muslims are called upon to get together for a common cause, whether relating to war or peace, it is not permissible for them to retreat or disperse without due permission of the leader.

99. This contains a warning that it is absolutely unlawful to ask permission without any genuine need.

100. That is, it depends upon the Prophet or his successor after him to grant or not to grant permission even in case of a genuine need. If he deems the collective cause to be more important than the individual need of the person, he may refuse permission, and a believer will not mind it.

101. This again contains a warning: If in asking permission there is even a tinge of excuse making, or of placing individual interests above collective interests, it would be a sin. Therefore the Prophet or his successor should also pray for the forgiveness of the one whom he gives permission.

102 *Duā''* means 'to summon', 'to pray' and 'to call'. *Duā'-ar-Rasūl*, therefore, may mean 'summoning or praying by the Messenger' or 'calling the

Messenger'. The verse can thus have three meanings which would all be equally correct:

(a) "The Prophet's summons should not be treated as a common man's summons", for the Prophet's summon is of extraordinary importance, which you cannot ignore, because if you fail to respond to it, or feel hesitant about it, you will be doing so at the very risk of your faith

(b) "Do not consider the Prophet's prayer as a common man's prayer". If he is pleased with you and prays for you, there can be no greater good fortune for you. But if he is displeased with you and curses you, there can be no greater misfortune for you.

(c) "Calling the Prophet should not be like calling among yourselves of each other." That is, you should not call or address the Prophet just as you call and address other people aloud by their names. You should have full respect for him, because the slightest disrespect in this regard will call for Allah's reckoning in the Hereafter.

Though all the three meanings quite fit in with the context, the first meaning is more in keeping with the theme which follows.

103. This is yet another trait of the hypocrites. When they are summoned to gather together for a collective cause, they do respond to the call, because they want to be counted among the Muslims. But they grudge their presence, and steal away somehow as soon as they find an opportunity.

104. According to Imām Ja'far Sādiq, "affliction" means "rule of the unjust". That is, if the Muslims will disobey the Commands of the Prophet, they will be put under tyrants. Besides this, there can be many other forms of affliction also; for instance, sectarian differences, civil war, moral degradation, disruption of community life, internal chaos, disintegration of political and material power, subjugation by others, etc.



XXV
AL-FURQĀN
سُورَةُ الفُرقَان

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXV
AL-FURQĀN
سورة الفرقان

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name "Al-Furqān" from the first verse. Though it is symbolic like the names of many other Sūrahs, it has a close relation to its subject-matter.

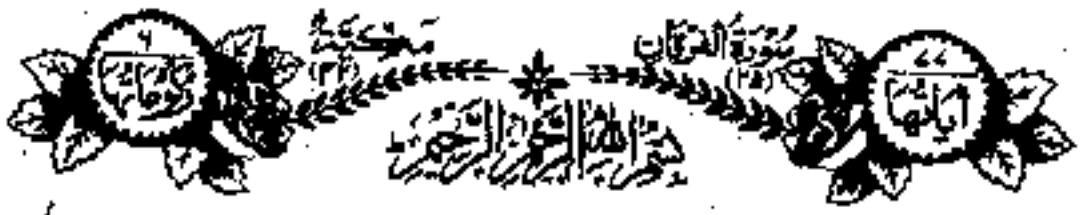
Period of Revelation

It appears from its style and subject-matter that, like Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn, it was also revealed during the third stage of Prophethood at Makkah. Ibn Jarīr and Imām Rāzī have cited a tradition of Dahhāk bin Muzāhim that this Sūrah was revealed eight years before Sūrah An-Nisā. This also confirms our opinion as to its period of revelation. *(Ibn Jarīr*, Vol. XIX, pp. 28-30, and *Tafsīr Kabīr*, Vol. VI, p. 358).

Subject-Matter and Topics

The Sūrah deals with the doubts and objections that were being raised against the Qur'ān, the Prophethood of Muhammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and his teachings by the disbelievers of Makkah. Appropriate answers to each and every objection have been given and the people have been warned of the consequences of rejecting the Truth. At the end of the Sūrah, a clear picture of the moral superiority of the Believers has been depicted as in the beginning of Sūrah Al-Mu'minūn, as if to say, "Here is the criterion for distinguishing the genuine from the counterfeit. This is the noble character of those people who have believed in and followed the teachings of the Holy Prophet and this is the kind of people that he is

trying to train. You may yourselves compare and contrast this type of people with those Arabs, who have not as yet accepted the Message, and who are upholding "ignorance" and exerting their utmost to defeat the Truth. Now you may judge for yourselves as to which you would like to choose." Though this question was not posed in so many words, it was placed before every one in Arabia in a tangible shape. It may be noted that during the next few years, the practical answer given to this question by the whole nation, with the exception of a small minority, was that they chose Islam.



تَبٰرَكَ الَّذِيْ نَزَّلَ الْفُرْقَانَ عَلٰى عَبْدِهٖ لِيَكُوْنَ لِلْعٰلَمِيْنَ نَذِيْرَا ۝١ الَّذِيْ

XXV
AL-FURQĀN
سُوْرَةُ الْفُرْقَانِ

Verses: 77 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Highly blessed[1] is He, Who has sent down *Al-Furqān* [2,3] to His servant so that it may be a warner to all mankind :[4] 1

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1. The Arabic word *tabāraka* is very comprehensive, and cannot be understood fully and completely by "highly blessed", not even by a sentence. However, its meanings may be grasped by keeping in view the remaining portion of vv. 1-2. Here it has been used to convey the following meanings:

(1) He is the most Beneficent: that is why He has bestowed the great blessing of *Al-Furqān* by degrees on His servant so that he may admonish all mankind.

(2) He is the most Exalted and Great: for the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth belongs to Him.

(3) He is the most Holy, Pure and Perfect: He is free from every tinge of *shirk* and has neither a partner in His Godhead, nor needs a son to succeed Him; for He is Ever-Lasting.

(4) He is the Highest and the Most Supreme in rank: the Kingdom and the Dominion wholly and solely belong to Him, and there is none who has any share in His Authority and Powers.

[Coutd. on p.412

لَهٗ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَلَمْ يَتَّخِذْ وَلَدًا وَّلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهٗ شَرِيْكٌ فِي
الْمُلْكِ وَخَلَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ فَقَدَّرَهٗ تَقْدِيْرًا ۝٢ وَاتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اٰلِهَةً لَّا
يَخْلُقُوْنَ شَيْـًٔا وَّهُمْ يُخْلَقُوْنَ وَلَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ لِاَنْفُسِهِمْ ضَرًّا وَّلَا نَفْعًا وَّ
لَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ مَوْتًا وَّلَا حَيٰوةً وَّلَا نُشُوْرًا ۝٣ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اِنْ هٰذَآ
اِلَّآ اِفْكُ ِۨافْتَرٰىهُ وَاَعَانَهٗ عَلَيْهِ قَوْمٌ اٰخَرُوْنَ ۚ فَقَدْ جَآءُوْ ظُلْمًا وَّزُوْرًا ۝٤
وَقَالُوْٓا اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ اكْتَتَبَهَا فَهِيَ تُمْلٰى عَلَيْهِ بُكْرَةً وَّاَصِيْلًا ۝٥ قُلْ
اَنْزَلَهُ الَّذِيْ يَعْلَمُ السِّرَّ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ۝٦
وَقَالُوْا مَالِ هٰذَا الرَّسُوْلِ يَاْكُلُ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشِيْ فِي الْاَسْوَاقِ ۭ لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ
اِلَيْهِ مَلَكٌ فَيَكُوْنَ مَعَهٗ نَذِيْرًا ۝٧ اَوْ يُلْقٰٓى اِلَيْهِ كَنْزٌ اَوْ تَكُوْنُ لَهٗ جَنَّةٌ
يَّاْكُلُ مِنْهَا ۭ وَقَالَ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ اِنْ تَتَّبِعُوْنَ اِلَّا رَجُلًا مَّسْحُوْرًا ۝٨ اُنْظُرْ كَيْفَ
ضَرَبُوْا لَكَ الْاَمْثَالَ فَضَلُّوْا فَلَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ سَبِيْلًا ۝٩ تَبٰرَكَ الَّذِيْٓ اِنْ شَاۗءَ
جَعَلَ لَكَ خَيْرًا مِّنْ ذٰلِكَ جَنّٰتٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ ۙ وَيَجْعَلْ لَّكَ
قُصُوْرًا ۝١٠ بَلْ كَذَّبُوْا بِالسَّاعَةِ ۣ وَاَعْتَدْنَا لِمَنْ كَذَّبَ بِالسَّاعَةِ سَعِيْرًا ۝١١
اِذَا رَاَتْهُمْ مِّنْ مَّكَانٍۢ بَعِيْدٍ سَمِعُوْا لَهَا تَغَيُّظًا وَّزَفِيْرًا ۝١٢ وَاِذَآ اُلْقُوْا مِنْهَا
مَكَانًا ضَيِّقًا مُّقَرَّنِيْنَ دَعَوْا هُنَالِكَ ثُبُوْرًا ۝١٣ لَا تَدْعُوا الْيَوْمَ ثُبُوْرًا وَّاحِدًا
وَّادْعُوْا ثُبُوْرًا كَثِيْرًا ۝١٤ قُلْ اَذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ اَمْ جَنَّةُ الْخُلْدِ الَّتِيْ وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُوْنَ ۭ
كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَزَاۗءً وَّمَصِيْرًا ۝١٥ لَهُمْ فِيْهَا مَا يَشَاۗءُوْنَ خٰلِدِيْنَ ۭ كَانَ عَلٰي رَبِّكَ
وَعْدًا مَّسْـُٔوْلًا ۝١٦ وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ وَمَا يَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ فَيَقُوْلُ ءَاَنْتُمْ
اَضْلَلْتُمْ عِبَادِيْ هٰٓؤُلَاۗءِ اَمْ هُمْ ضَلُّوا السَّبِيْلَ ۝١٧ قَالُوْا سُبْحٰنَكَ مَا كَانَ يَنْۢبَغِيْ

He to Whom belongs the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth:[5] Who has begotten no son:[6] Who has no partner in His Sovereignty:[7] Who created each and every thing and then ordained its destiny.[8] Yet the people have set up, besides Him, deities, who do not create anything but are themselves created :[9] who can neither harm nor help even themselves: who have no power over life or death, nor can they raise up the dead.[10] 2-3

Those who have rejected the Message of the Prophet, say, "This (Al-Furqān) is a forgery which this man himself has devised, and some others have helped him at it." What a cruel injustice[11] and an impudent lie! They say, "These things are the writings of the ancients which he has got copied down for himself, and then these are recited to him in the morning and evening." O Muhammad, say to them, "This has been sent down by Him, Who knows the secret of the heavens and the earth."[12] The fact is that He is very Forgiving and Merciful.[13] 4-6

They say, "What sort of a Messenger is he that he eats food and moves about in the streets?[14] Why has not an angel been sent down to accompany him and threaten (the disbelievers)?[15] Or why has not at least a treasure been sent down for him or a garden given to him for (easy) sustenance?"[16] And the wicked people say, "You are following a man bewitched."[17] Just see what strange arguments they bring forward with regard to you! They have gone so far astray that they cannot charge any thing against you.[18] Highly blessed[19] is He, Who, if He wills, could give you much more and better things than what they propose for you: (Not one but) many gardens, beneath which rivers flow; and big castles. 7-10

The fact of the matter is that these people have denied "the Hour"[20,21]—And for the one who denies the coming of the Hour, We have prepared a blazing Fire. When it will see[22] them from afar, they will hear the sounds of its raging and roaring. And when they are chained together and flung into a narrow space therein, they will begin to call for death. (Then it will be said to them:) "Do not call for one death today, but call for many deaths." 11-14

Ask them "Is this (Fire) better or the everlasting Garden which has been promised to the God-fearing righteous people ?" which will be the recompense of their good deeds and the final destination of their journey wherein they will get everything they desire and wherein they 15-16

will dwell for ever. This is a promise which your Lord has taken upon Himself to fulfil.[23]

And on that Day (your Lord) will gather all these people together as well as their deities,[24] whom they worship besides Allah. Then He will ask them, "Did you mislead these servants of Mine, or did they themselves go astray?"[25]

Contd. from p. 409]

(5) He is the sole Creator of the universe and has created each and everything in it and predetermined its destiny. For further details, see E.N. 14 of Al-Mu'minūn and E.N. 19 of Al-Furqān.

2. *Al-Furqān:* The Criterion. The Qur'ān has been called Al-Furqān because it is the Criterion for judging right and wrong virtue and vice, truth and falsehood.

3. The word *nazzala* implies revelation of the Qur'ān piecemeal by degrees. The wisdom of this introductory remark will be explained in the study of verse 32, where the objection of the disbelievers of Makkah — as to why the Qur'ān has not been sent down all at once—has been dealt with.

4. "..... warner to all mankind": To warn all mankind of the evil consequences of their heedlessness and deviation. The warner may be Al-Furqān or the Holy Prophet to whom it was revealed. In fact, both were the warners because they were both sent for one and the same purpose. The message of the Qur'ān and Prophethood of Muḥammad (Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) were not meant for any particular country but for the whole world; and not for their own time, but for all times to come. This has been stated at several places in the Qur'ān; for instance: "O Muḥammad, say, O mankind, I am a Messenger to all of you from Allah ....." (Al-A'rāf: 158); "..... and this Qur'ān has been revealed to me so that I should thereby warn you all and whom it may reach." (Al-An'ām: 19); "We have sent you only as a bearer of good news and as a warner to all mankind." (Sabā: 28); and "We have sent you as a mercy to all mankind." (Al-Anbiyā': 107). The Holy Prophet himself has stated this clearly in the Hadīth; for instance, he said: "I have been sent to all men—the red and the black." "Before me a Prophet was sent only to his own people, but I have been sent to all mankind." (Bukhari, Muslim). "I have been sent to all mankind, and I am the Last of the Prophets." (Muslim).

5. Another translation may be: "To Him belongs the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth." That is, He alone has an exclusive right to it, and no one else has any right to it nor any share in it.

6. That is, "He has neither any relation of direct parenthood to anyone, nor has He taken anyone as a son. Therefore, none else in the universe is entitled to worship. He is Unique and there can be no partner in His Godhead. Thus all those who associate with Him angels or jinns or saints as His offspring, are ignorant. Likewise, those who believe that some one, is His "son", are also ignorant. They have no true conception of the Greatness of Allah and consider Him to be weak and needy like human beings, who require some one to become their inheritor. It is sheer ignorance and folly." For further details, see E.N.'s 66 to 68 of Sūrah Yūnus.

7. The Arabic word *mulk* means Sovereignty, Supreme Authority, and Kingship. Thus the sentence will mean: "Allah is the Absolute Ruler of the whole universe and there is none other who may have any right to authority; therefore He alone is God." For whenever a man takes anything else as his lord, he does so under the presumption that his deity has the power to do good or bring harm and make or mar his fortune; nobody will like to worship a powerless deity. Now when it is recognized that none but Allah has the real power and authority in the universe, nobody will bow before anyone other than Him in worship, nor will sing anybody else's hymns, nor commit the folly of bowing in worship before any thing else except his real God, or recognize any other as his ruler, because "To Allah belongs the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth and to Him alone."

8. There may be other translations of this also: "He has ordained it in due proportion"; or "He has appointed an exact measure for everything." But no translation can convey its real meaning, which is: "Allah has not only created everything in the universe but also determined its shape, size, potentialities, characteristics, term of existence, the limitations and extent of its development and all other things concerning it. Then, He has created the means and provisions to enable it to function properly in its own separate sphere."

This is one of the most comprehensive verses of the Qur'ān with regard to the Doctrine of *Tauhīd*. According to Traditions, the Holy Prophet himself taught this verse to every child of his family as soon as it was able to speak and utter a few words. Thus, this verse is the best means of impressing the Doctrine of *Tauhīd* on our minds, and every Muslim should use it for educating his children as soon as they develop understanding.

9. The words are comprehensive and cover all the false gods whom the *mushriks* worship whether they are angels, jinns, Prophets, saints, the sun, the moon, the stars, trees, rivers, animals etc., which have been created by Allah, or those which have been created by man, as the idols of stone, wood, etc.

10. That is, "Allah has sent down *Al-Furqān* on His servant so that he may invite the people to the Truth, which they have forsaken due to heedlessness and waywardness, and warn them of the evil consequences of their folly. The *Furqān* is being revealed piecemeal so that he may distinguish right from wrong and the genuine from the counterfeit."

11. Another translation may be: "a great injustice."

12. This is the same objection which the modern orientalists have raised against the Qur'ān, but strange as it may seem, no contemporary of the Holy Prophet ever raised such an objection against him. Nobody, for instance, ever said that Muḥammad (Allah's peace be upon him) as a boy had met Buḥairah, the monk, and had attained religious knowledge from him, nor did anybody claim that he had obtained all that information from the Christian monks and Jewish rabbis during the trade journeys in his youth. In fact, they knew that he had never travelled alone but in the caravans and if they said such a thing, it would be refuted by hundreds of their own people from the city.

Then, one could ask, if he had gained all that knowledge from Buhairah when he was about 12, and during trade journeys when he was 25, why did he keep it secret from the people till he became 40? whereas he did not leave his country even for a single day, but lived for years among his own people in the same city. That is why the people of Makkah dared not bring such an impudent and baseless charge against him. Their objections related to the time when he claimed to be a Prophet of Allah and not to the time preceding that claim. Their argument was like this: "This man is illiterate and cannot obtain any knowledge through books. He has lived among us for forty years, but we have never heard from him anything that might have shown that he had any acquaintance with what he is preaching; therefore he must have had the help of other people who copied these things from the writings of the ancients for him: he learns these things from them and recites them as Divine Revelations: this is a fraud." So much so that according to some traditions, they named some of his "helpers", who were the people of the Book, were illiterate and lived in Makkah. They were: (1) Addās, a freed slave of Ḥuvaitib bin 'Abdul 'Uzzā(2) Yasār, a freed slave of 'Alā bin Al-Hadramī, and (3) Jabr, a freed slave of 'Āmir bin Rabbī'ah.

Apparently this is a weighty argument. For there can be no greater proof of the "fraud" of Prophethood than to specify its source. But it looks strange that no argument has been put forward to refute this charge except a mere denial, as if to say, "Your charge is an impudent lie: you are cruel and unjust to bring such a false charge against Our Messenger; for the Qur'ān is the Word of Allah Who knows all the secrets in the heavens and the earth." Had their charge been based on facts, it would not have been rejected with contempt, for in that case the

disbelievers would have demanded a detailed and clear answer. But they realized the strength of the arguments and did not make such a demand. Moreover, the fact that the "weighty" argument failed to produce any doubt in the minds of the new Muslims, was a clear proof that it was a lie.

The enigma is clearly explained if we keep in view the prevalent circumstances:

(1) The disbelievers of Makkah did not take any decisive steps to prove their charge, although they could, had there been any truth in their charge. For instance, they could have made raids on the houses of the alleged helpers and on the house of the Holy Prophet himself and taken hold of the whole "material" which was being used in this "fraud", and made it public to expose his Prophethood. And this was not difficult for them because they never hesitated to resort to anything to defeat him, including persecution, as they were not bound by any moral code.

(2) The alleged helpers were not strangers. As they lived in Makkah, everyone knew it well how learned they were. The disbelievers themselves knew that they could never have helped to produce a unique and sublime Book like the Qur'ān which had the highest literary excellence and merit. That is why none of them challenged the answer to the charge. That is why even those people, who did not know them, considered this frivolous. Then if the alleged helpers were such geniuses, why did they not claim to be prophets themselves?

(3) Then, all the alleged helpers were freed slaves who were attached to their former masters even after their freedom according to the customs of Arabia; therefore they could not have become willing accomplices of the Holy Prophet in this "fraud" of false prophethood because their former masters could have coerced them to expose it. The only reason for them to help the Holy Prophet in his claim could have been some greed or interest which, under the circumstances, could not even be imagined. Thus, apparently there was no reason why they should have offended those whose protection and patronage they needed and enjoyed, and become accomplices in the "fraud".

(4) Above all, all these alleged helpers embraced Islam. Could it be possible that those very persons, who had helped the Holy Prophet to make his "fraud" successful, could have possibly become his devoted followers? Moreover, if, for the sake of argument, it be admitted that they helped him, why was not any of them raised to a prominent rank as a reward of his help? Why were not 'Addās and Yasār and Jabr exalted to the same status as were Abū Bakr and 'Umar and Abu 'Ubaidah?

Another odd thing is that if the "fraud" of prophethood was being carried on with the help of the alleged helpers, how could it remain hidden from Zaid bin Hārithah, 'Ali bin Abī Tālib, Abū Bakr and other people, who were the Holy Prophet's closest and most devoted Companions? Thus the charge was not only frivolous and false, but it was also below the dignity of the Qur'ān to give any answer to it. The charge has been cited merely to prove that those people had been so blinded by their opposition to the Truth that they could say anything.

13. "... He is very Forgiving and Merciful" is very meaningful here. It means that Allah is giving full respite to the enemies of the Truth, for He is "Forgiving and Merciful"; otherwise He would have sent down a scourge to annihilate them because of the false charges they were bringing against the Messenger. It also contains an admonition, as if to say, "O unjust people! if even now you give up your enmity and obduracy and accept the Truth, We shall forgive your previous misdeeds."

14. That is, "He cannot be a Messenger of Allah because he is a human being like us. Had Allah willed to send a Messenger, He would have sent an angel, and if at all a human being was to be sent, he should have been a king or a millionaire, who would have resided in a castle and been guarded by attendants. A Messenger could not be an ordinary person who has to move about in the market-places like the common people, for it is obvious that such a human Messenger cannot attract the attention of the people. In other words, they thought that a Messenger was not meant to guide the people to the right path but to coerce them to obedience by show of worldly power and grandeur. For further details, see E.N. 26 of Al-Mu'minūn.

15. That is, "If a human being was to be sent as a Messenger, an angel should have been appointed to accompany him to proclaim: 'If you do not believe in him, I will scourge you.' But what sort of a Messenger is he, who has to suffer from abuse and persecution?"

16. That is, "If nothing else, Allah should at least have made extraordinary arrangements for his livelihood. But this man has no treasure and no gardens; yet he claims to be a Messenger of the Lord of the universe."

17. The disbelievers of Makkah made the false propaganda against the Holy Prophet that he had been bewitched by some jinn or by the sorcery of an enemy or by the curse of some god or goddess for his insolence. But it is strange that they also admitted that he was a clever man who could make use of extracts from the ancient writings for the sake of his "prophethood", could practise sorcery and was also a poet.

18. As these objections were frivolous and meaningless like others, the Qur'ān has ignored them, saying, "Your objections are irrelevant, unreasonable

and void of sense. You bring no sound argument to prove your doctrine of *shirk*, or to refute the Doctrine of *Tauḥīd* put forward by him, whereas the Messenger gives such proofs of the Doctrine of *Tauḥīd* that you cannot refute them except by saying, 'He is bewitched'. The same is true of the doctrine of the life-after-death and of the moral system of the Qur'ān, which has produced men of high character. You cannot deny these things; you reject them, saying, "He is a human being like us, etc. etc."

19. Here again the word *tabāraka* has been used and in the context it means: "Allah has full control over everything and has unlimited powers: if he wills to favour somebody, He can do so as and when He wills without let or hindrance.".

20. The word *As-Sā'at*, meaning the Time or the Hour, has been used in the Qur'ān as a term for the promised Hour of Resurrection, when all human beings of all ages will be raised from the dead and gathered together before Allah Almighty to account for their beliefs and deeds, right or wrong, and rewarded or punished accordingly.

21. That is, "The objections they are raising are not due to the reason that they doubt the authenticity of the Qur'ān on some rational ground, or that they do not believe in you for the reason that you eat food and walk about in the streets like the common people, or that they did not accept your Message of Truth only because you were not escorted by an angel, or were not given a treasure. But the real reason why they are putting forward all sorts of absurd arguments to reject your Message, is that they do not believe in the life-after-death, and this denial has made them free from all moral obligations. For when one denies the life-after-death, there remains no need for him to consider and decide what is true or false, or what is right or wrong, etc. Their argument is like this: 'There is going to be no life after this one on the earth when we will be called to account for our deeds before God. Death will be the end of everything, and it will therefore make no difference whether one was a worshipper of God or a disbeliever or a *mushrik* or an atheist. When the ultimate end is to become one with the dust, there is no need of judging what is right and what is wrong except by the criterion of "success" and "failure" in this life'. Those who deny the Hereafter also see that worldly success or failure does not entirely depend upon one's faith or conduct; nay, they very often see that the righteous and the wicked persons meet with the same end irrespective of their faith for which there is no ordained punishment or reward in this life; one righteous person may be living a life of hardship while another enjoying all the good things of life; one wicked person may be suffering for his misdeeds while the other enjoying a life of pleasure and plenty. As such, as far as the worldly consequences of adopting a particular moral attitude are concerned,

(Contd. on p.420

لَنَآ اَنْ نَّتَّخِذَ مِنْ دُوْنِكَ مِنْ اَوْلِيَآءَ وَلٰكِنْ مَّتَّعْتَهُمْ وَاٰبَآءَهُمْ حَتّٰى
نَسُوا الذِّكْرَ ۚ وَكَانُوْا قَوْمًۢا بُوْرًا ﴿١٨﴾ فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوْكُمْ بِمَا تَقُوْلُوْنَ ۙ فَمَا تَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ
صَرْفًا وَّلَا نَصْرًا ۚ وَمَنْ يَّظْلِمْ مِّنْكُمْ نُذِقْهُ عَذَابًا كَبِيْرًا ﴿١٩﴾ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَا
قَبْلَكَ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ اِلَّآ اِنَّهُمْ لَيَاْكُلُوْنَ الطَّعَامَ وَيَمْشُوْنَ فِى الْاَسْوَاقِ ۗ
وَجَعَلْنَا بَعْضَكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ فِتْنَةً ۗ اَتَصْبِرُوْنَ ۚ وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ بَصِيْرًا ﴿٢٠﴾ ع

وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَرْجُوْنَ لِقَآءَنَا لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْنَا الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ اَوْ نَرٰى

رَبَّنَا ۗ لَقَدِ اسْتَكْبَرُوْا فِىْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَعَتَوْ عُتُوًّا كَبِيْرًا ﴿٢١﴾ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ
لَا بُشْرٰى يَوْمَئِذٍ لِّلْمُجْرِمِيْنَ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ حِجْرًا مَّحْجُوْرًا ﴿٢٢﴾ وَقَدِمْنَآ اِلٰى
مَا عَمِلُوْا مِنْ عَمَلٍ فَجَعَلْنٰهُ هَبَآءً مَّنْثُوْرًا ﴿٢٣﴾ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ يَوْمَئِذٍ خَيْرٌ
مُّسْتَقَرًّا وَّاَحْسَنُ مَقِيْلًا ﴿٢٤﴾ وَيَوْمَ تَشَقَّقُ السَّمَآءُ بِالْغَمَامِ وَنُزِّلَ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ
تَنْزِيْلًا ﴿٢٥﴾ اَلْمُلْكُ يَوْمَئِذِ الْحَقُّ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ ۗ وَكَانَ يَوْمًا عَلَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَسِيْرًا ﴿٢٦﴾
وَيَوْمَ يَعَضُّ الظَّالِمُ عَلٰى يَدَيْهِ يَقُوْلُ يٰلَيْتَنِى اتَّخَذْتُ مَعَ الرَّسُوْلِ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٢٧﴾
يٰوَيْلَتٰى لَيْتَنِىْ لَمْ اَتَّخِذْ فُلَانًا خَلِيْلًا ﴿٢٨﴾ لَقَدْ اَضَلَّنِىْ عَنِ الذِّكْرِ بَعْدَ اِذْ
جَآءَنِىْ ۗ وَكَانَ الشَّيْطٰنُ لِلْاِنْسَانِ خَذُوْلًا ﴿٢٩﴾ وَقَالَ الرَّسُوْلُ يٰرَبِّ اِنَّ قَوْمِى
اتَّخَذُوْا هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ مَهْجُوْرًا ﴿٣٠﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِىٍّ عَدُوًّا مِّنَ
الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ۗ وَكَفٰى بِرَبِّكَ هَادِيًا وَّنَصِيْرًا ﴿٣١﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَوْلَا
نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الْقُرْاٰنُ جُمْلَةً وَّاحِدَةً ۚ كَذٰلِكَ ۚ لِنُثَبِّتَ بِهٖ فُؤَادَكَ وَرَتَّلْنٰهُ
تَرْتِيْلًا ﴿٣٢﴾ وَلَا يَاْتُوْنَكَ بِمَثَلٍ اِلَّا جِئْنٰكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَاَحْسَنَ تَفْسِيْرًا ﴿٣٣﴾
اَلَّذِيْنَ يُحْشَرُوْنَ عَلٰى وُجُوْهِهِمْ اِلٰى جَهَنَّمَ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا وَّاَضَلُّ

They will answer, "Glory be to Thee! We dared not take any guardian besides Thee: (they were misled because) Thou didst give them and their forefathers all the good things of life till they forgot the Admonition, and incurred the punishment."[26] Thus will your gods deny all that you are professing today.[27] Then you shall neither be able to repel your punishment nor shall get any help from anywhere; and whoso is guilty of iniquity[28] among you, We shall make him taste a severe torment. 18-19

O Muḥammad, all the Messengers whom We sent before you also ate food and moved about in the streets.[29] In fact, We have made you all a means of test for one another.[30] Will you show patience?[31] for your Lord sees everything.[32] 20

Those people, who have no fear of coming before Us, say, "Why should not the angels be sent down to us?[33] Or else we should see our Lord."[34] Great arrogance have they assumed in regard to themselves,[35] and have transgressed all limits in their rebellion. The Day, when they will see the angels, will not be a day of rejoicing for the criminals ;[36] they will cry out, "May Allah save us!" Then We shall turn to what they had done and render it vain like scattered dust.[37] (On the contrary) only those who have deserved the Garden, will have a good abode on that Day and a cool place for midday rest.[38] On that Day, a cloud will appear rending the sky and the angels will be sent down rank after rank. The real Kingdom on that Day will belong only to the Merciful,[39] and it will be a very hard Day for the disbelievers. The unjust man will bite at his hand and say, "Would that I had stood by the Messenger! O, woe to me ! Would that I had not chosen so and so for a friend! For it was he, who had deluded me to reject the Admonition which had come to me. Satan has proved very treacherous to man."[40] And the Messenger will say, "O my Lord, my people had made this Qur'ān the object of their ridicule."[41] 21-30

O Muḥammad, in this very way We have made the criminals the enemies of every Prophet,[42] but your Lord suffices for you as your Guide and Helper.[43] 31

The disbelievers say, "Why has not the entire Qur'an been sent down to this man all at once?"[44]—Well, this has been done to impress it deeply on your mind,[45] and (for the same object) We have sent it 32-34

down piecemeal by degrees. And (there is another wisdom in this :) whenever they brought to you an odd thing (or a strange question), We sent its right answer to you in time and explained it all in the best manner,[46] those who are going to be driven to Hell upon their faces, have taken an utterly wrong stand and their way is most erroneous ![47]

Contd. from p.417]

the disbelievers in the Hereafter cannot be satisfied whether it is right or wrong. In view of this, those who deny the Hereafter, do not see any need to consider an invitation to faith and morality even if it is presented in a most forceful way."

22. "The Fire will see them" The words used in the Text may be metaphorical, or they may mean that the Fire of Hell will be endowed with the faculties of seeing, thinking and judging.

23. Literally: "It is a promise whose fulfilment can be demanded (from Allah)".

Here one may ask the question: How can the promise of the Garden and the threat of the Fire produce any effect on the attitude of a person who denies Resurrection and the existence of Paradise and Hell? In order to understand the wisdom of this method of admonition, one should keep in view that it is meant to appeal to the self-interest of an obdurate person, who does not otherwise listen to such arguments. This is, as if to say, "Even if, for the sake of argument, there is no proof of the reality of the life-after-death, there is also no proof that such an event will not occur at all, and there is a possibility for both. In the latter case, the Believer and the disbeliever both will be in one and the same position, but if there is life in the Hereafter, as the Prophet asserts, then the disbelievers will be doomed to utter ruin". Therefore, such an approach breaks the stubbornness of the disbelievers and proves to be highly effective when the entire scene of Resurrection, gathering of the people, their accountability and of Hell and Heaven is presented in a vivid manner as if the Prophet had himself seen it with his own eyes. For further explanation, see Ḥa Mīm Sajdah: 52 and E. N. 69 thereof, and Al-Aḥqāf: 10.

24. Here, deities do not mean idols but the angels, the prophets, the saints, the martyrs and the pious men, whom the *mushriks* of different communities have made their deities.

25. Such dialogues between Allah and the gods of the disbelievers occur at several places in the Qur'ān. For instance, in Sūrah Sabā it has been stated: "On the day when He will gather them all together, He will ask the angels, 'Did these

people worship you?' They will answer, 'Glory be to Thee ! Thou art our Patron and not they: they in fact worshipped the jinns (that is, satans); most of these believed in them." (vv. 40-41). Similarly in Sūrah Al-Mā'idah, it is said:" And when Allah will say "O Jesus, son of Mary, did you ever say to the people: 'Make me and my mother gods instead of Allah?' He will answer, 'Glory be to Thee ! It did not behove me to say that which I had no right to say...I told them only that which Thou didst bid me: 'Worship Allah, Who is my Lord as well as your Lord'." (vv. 116, 117).

26. That is, "They were mean people: You gave them all the provisions of life so that they may show gratitude to You, but they became ungrateful and ignored all the admonitions given by the Prophets."

27. That is, "On that Day your religion, which you now believe to be true, will prove to be false and even your gods, whom you yourselves have set up, will declare it to be a lie; for none of them ever asked you to make them your deities and worship them as such. Consequently, instead of interceding on your behalf; they will bear witness against you."

28. "... who will be guilty of iniquity ...": " .... who will be unjust to the Reality and the Truth and guilty of disbelief and *shirk*." The context shows that those who reject the Prophet and set up other deities instead of Allah and deny life in the Hereafter, are guilty of *zulm* (iniquity),

29. This is an answer to the objection of the disbelievers of Makkah that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) could not be a Messenger of Allah because he ate food and moved about in the streets. They have been told that all the Messengers of Allah who came before Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) like Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Moses and many others whom they knew and acknowledged as Prophets and Messengers of Allah also ate food and walked about in the streets. Nay, even Prophet Jesus, son of Mary, himself, whom the Christians had made the son of God (and whose image had also been placed in the Ka'bah by the disbelievers of Makkah) ate food and walked about in the streets like a common man even according to the Gospels themselves.

30. It is obvious that the Messenger and the Believers were a test for the disbelievers as to whether they would believe even after hearing the Divine Message and seeing their pure character. On the other hand, the disbelievers were a test for the Messenger and his followers in the sense that they were a means of proving and trying their true Faith by their persecution. For it is this test alone which helps to discriminate the true Believers from the hypocrites. That is why, at first, only the poor and the helpless but sincere people embraced Islam. Had there

been no persecution and hardships but prosperity, wealth and grandeur, the worshippers of the world and the selfish people would have been the first to embrace Islam.

31. That is, "Now when you have understood the wisdom of the test by persecution, it is hoped that you will endure all kinds of hardships without complaint, and willingly undergo the persecutions that are inevitable."

32. It probably means two things: First, the way your Lord is conducting your affairs, is according to His will and nothing that happens is without His knowledge. Second, He is fully aware of your sincerity and righteousness in serving His cause under all kinds of hardships. You should therefore rest assured that you will have your full reward. He also sees the persecution and iniquity of the disbelievers; therefore they will not escape the consequences of their wickedness.

33. That is, "If Allah had really intended to convey His Message to us, He would not have chosen a prophet and sent an angel only to him, but to each one of us individually with the guidance, or He should have sent a deputation of angels to appear before the people with the Message". The same objection has been stated in Sūrah Al-An'ām thus: "When a Revelation comes before them; they say, 'We will not believe in it unless we are given the like of what has been given to the Messengers of Allah.' Allah knows best whom to entrust with His Mission and how it should be enforced." (v. 124)

34. That is, "Allah Himself should appear before us and make the appeal."

35. Another translation could be: "They have formed a very high opinion of their own selves."

36. This very theme has been expressed in much greater detail in Al-An'ām: 8, Al-Ḥijr: 7-8 and 51-64, and also in Banī Isrā'īl: 90-95.

37. For explanation, see Ibrāhīm: 18 and E. N.'s 25, 26 thereof.

38. In contrast to the miserable plight of the disbelievers on the Day of Resurrection, the Believers will be protected from the hardships of that Day; they will be treated with honour and will have a blissful place for midday rest. According to a Tradition, the Holy Prophet said: "I declare on oath by Allah, in Whose hand is my life, that the long, horrible Day of Resurrection will be made very short and light for a Believer, as short and light as the time taken in offering an obligatory Prayer." (Musnad Aḥmad)

39. That is, "On that Day all other kingdoms, which deluded man in the world, will come to an end, and there will be only the Kingdom of Allah, Who is

the real Sovereign of the universe. In Sūrah Mu'min: 16, the same thing has been stated thus: "On that Day when all the people will stand exposed, and nothing of them will be hidden from Allah, it will be asked, 'Whose is the Sovereignty today?' The response from every side will be: 'Of Allah, the Almighty'." According to a Tradition, the Holy Prophet said, "Allah will take the heavens in one hand and the earth in the other, and will declare: 'I am the Sovereign: I am the Ruler. Where are the other rulers of the earth? Where are those tyrants? Where are the arrogant people?" (Musnad Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, and Abū Da'ūd, with slight variations).

40. "Satan has proved very treacherous to man" may also be a part of the disbelievers' lament, or it may be a remark by Allah, in which case the meaning will be: "And Satan is indeed the one who always deceives man."

41. The Arabic word *mahjūr* is capable of several meanings. As such, the sentence may mean: "These people did not regard the Qur'ān as worthy of their consideration: they neither accepted it nor followed it"; or "They considered it to be a nonsense or the delirium of insanity: or "They made it the target of their ridicule and mockery."

42. That is, "It is not a new thing that the disbelievers have become your enemies, for it has always been so with all the former Prophets and Messengers. (See also Al-An'ām: 112-113). This is inevitable because it is Our Law that the criminals will always oppose the Truth. You should, therefore, pursue your mission with full confidence and determination without expecting any immediate results."

43. "Guidance" does not only imply bestowing of the knowledge of the Truth, but it also means giving the right guidance at the right time to guide the Islamic Movement on the right lines and to defeat the strategy and scheme of the enemies of Islam. "Help" means all kinds of moral, spiritual and material help to the followers of the Truth in their conflict against falsehood. Thus, Allah is All-Sufficient for the righteous people and they need no other support provided they have full faith in Allah and fight falsehood with all their energies and strength.

This meant to encourage the Holy Prophet, otherwise the previous assertion would have been very discouraging without this. It meant to say, "Even if the unbelievers have become your enemies, you should continue your mission, for We shall guide you in every stage and situation and help you against them. We shall defeat all the schemes of your enemies and help you in every way in your conflict with falsehood. We shall provide you with material means also, but you should trust in Us and exert your utmost against falsehood."

Contd. on p. 426

سَبِيْلًا ﴿٣٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ وَجَعَلْنَا مَعَهٗۤ اَخَاهُ هٰرُوْنَ وَزِيْرًا ﴿٣٧﴾
فَقُلْنَا اذْهَبَاۤ اِلَى الْقَوْمِ الَّذِيْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا ۚ فَدَمَّرْنٰهُمْ تَدْمِيْرًا ﴿٣٨﴾ وَقَوْمَ نُوْحٍ
لَّمَّا كَذَّبُوا الرُّسُلَ اَغْرَقْنٰهُمْ وَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ لِلنَّاسِ اٰيَةً ۚ وَاَعْتَدْنَا لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ
عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ﴿٣٩﴾ وَّعَادًا وَّثَمُوْدَا وَاَصْحٰبَ الرَّسِّ وَقُرُوْنًا بَيْنَ ذٰلِكَ كَثِيْرًا ﴿٤٠﴾
وَكُلًّا ضَرَبْنَا لَهُ الْاَمْثَالَ ۖ وَكُلًّا تَبَّرْنَا تَتْبِيْرًا ﴿٤١﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَتَوْا عَلَى الْقَرْيَةِ الَّتِيْۤ
اُمْطِرَتْ مَطَرَ السَّوْءِ ۭ اَفَلَمْ يَكُوْنُوْا يَرَوْنَهَا ۚ بَلْ كَانُوْا لَا يَرْجُوْنَ نُشُوْرًا ﴿٤٢﴾ وَ
اِذَا رَاَوْكَ اِنْ يَّتَّخِذُوْنَكَ اِلَّا هُزُوًا ۭ اَهٰذَا الَّذِيْ بَعَثَ اللّٰهُ رَسُوْلًا ﴿٤١﴾ اِنْ كَادَ
لَيُضِلُّنَا عَنْ اٰلِهَتِنَا لَوْلَاۤ اَنْ صَبَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا ۭ وَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ حِيْنَ يَرَوْنَ
الْعَذَابَ مَنْ اَضَلُّ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٤٢﴾ اَرَءَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰهَهٗ هَوٰىهُ ۭ اَفَاَنْتَ تَكُوْنُ
عَلَيْهِ وَكِيْلًا ﴿٤٣﴾ اَمْ تَحْسَبُ اَنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ يَسْمَعُوْنَ اَوْ يَعْقِلُوْنَ ۭ اِنْ هُمْ اِلَّا كَالْاَنْعَامِ
بَلْ هُمْ اَضَلُّ سَبِيْلًا ﴿٤٤﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلٰى رَبِّكَ كَيْفَ مَدَّ الظِّلَّ ۚ وَلَوْ شَاۗءَ لَجَعَلَهٗ
سَاكِنًا ۚ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنَا الشَّمْسَ عَلَيْهِ دَلِيْلًا ﴿٤٥﴾ ثُمَّ قَبَضْنٰهُ اِلَيْنَا قَبْضًا يَّسِيْرًا ﴿٤٦﴾
وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ لِبَاسًا وَّالنَّوْمَ سُبَاتًا وَّجَعَلَ النَّهَارَ نُشُوْرًا ﴿٤٧﴾
وَهُوَ الَّذِيْۤ اَرْسَلَ الرِّيٰحَ بُشْرًۢا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهٖ ۚ وَاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاۗءِ مَاۗءً
طَهُوْرًا ﴿٤٨﴾ لِّنُحْيِيَ بِهٖ بَلْدَةً مَّيْتًا وَّنُسْقِيَهٗ مِمَّا خَلَقْنَآ اَنْعَامًا وَّاَنَاسِيَّ كَثِيْرًا ﴿٤٩﴾
وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنٰهُ بَيْنَهُمْ لِيَذَّكَّرُوْا ۡ فَاَبٰٓى اَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ اِلَّا كُفُوْرًا ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَوْ شِئْنَا
لَبَعَثْنَا فِيْ كُلِّ قَرْيَةٍ نَّذِيْرًا ﴿٥١﴾ فَلَا تُطِعِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ وَجَاهِدْهُمْ بِهٖ جِهَادًا
كَبِيْرًا ﴿٥٢﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ هٰذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ وَّهٰذَا مِلْحٌ اُجَاجٌ ۚ
وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخًا وَّحِجْرًا مَّحْجُوْرًا ﴿٥٣﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ مِنَ الْمَاۗءِ بَشَرًا

We gave Moses the Book[48] and appointed his brother Aaron as his counsellor: then We said to them, "Go to the people who have treated Our Revelations as false."[49] So We annihilated those people utterly. The same was the case with the people of Noah when they charged the Messenger with imposture:[50] We drowned them and made them a sign of warning for entire mankind, and We have prepared a painful chastisement for the unjust.[51] Likewise were destroyed the 'Ād and the Thamūd and the people of the Rass,[52] and many a generation in between. We admonished each one of them by citing the examples (of those who were destroyed before them) and ultimately annihilated all of them. Surely, these people have passed by that habitation on which was rained an evil rain:[53] have they not seen its ruins ? But they do not expect another life in the Hereafter.[54] 35-40

When these people see you, they scoff at you, (saying), "Is this the man whom Allah has sent as His Messenger? He had almost led us astray from our gods, had we not remained firm in our faith with regard to them."[55] The time is not far when they will see the torment and realize who had strayed far from the truth. 41-42

Have you ever considered the case of the person who has made his lust his god?[56] Can you take the responsibility of guiding such a one aright ? Do you think that most of them hear or understand ? They are only like the cattle; nay, even worse than the cattle.[57] 43-44

Have you not seen how your Lord lengthens out the shadow? Had He willed, He would have made it constant, but We have made the sun its pilot;[58] then (as the sun climbs up), We roll it up little by little towards Ourselves.[59] 45-46

And it is Allah Who has ordained the night as a garment[60] for you, and the sleep as a repose of death, and the day as the time of return to life.[61] 47

And it is He, Who drives the winds to be the harbingers of His mercy: then He sends down pure water[62] from the sky so that He may revive the dead land, and quench the thirst of many of His creatures from among beasts and men.[63] We present the same phenomenon over and over again before them[64] so that they may learn a lesson from it; but most people decline to adopt any other attitude than of disbelief and ingratitude.[65] 48-50

52 Had We willed, We would have raised up a separate Warner in each habitation.[66] So, O Prophet, do not yield to the disbelievers, but wage a *Jihād* against them with this Qur'ān.[67]

And it is He, Who has let loose the two seas, one palatable and sweet, the other bitter and saltish, and there is a partition between them, which is an insurmountable barrier.[68]

And it is He, Who created man from water: then from him He caused two kinds of kindred, by blood and by marriage :[69] your Lord is All-Powerful.

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44. As the disbelievers of Makkah considered this objection to be very strong, they repeated it over and over again. The Qur'ān also has cited it with its answer at several places; for instance, see E.N.'s 101-106 of Sūrah An-Naml and E.N. 119 of Banī Isrā'īl. Their question implied: "Had the Qur'ān been really the Word of Allah, it would have been sent as a complete book all at once; for Allah has the knowledge of everything and every human affair. Thus it is obvious that nothing is being sent down from above; but this man himself fabricates all its themes or gets these from other people or other books."

45 Another translation can be: "So that by it We may strengthen your heart and imbue it with courage." The words are comprehensive and imply both the meanings. This concise sentence contains the following explanation why the Qur'ān was revealed piecemeal by degrees:

(1) So that the Holy Prophet may commit it to memory perfectly and recite it to his people, who are illiterate, rather than present it in a written form.

(2) So that its teachings and messages may be impressed deeply on the minds.

(3) So that the way of life it teaches, may be followed with complete conviction, which would not be possible if all the Commandments and the whole system of life had been sent down all at once.

(4) So that the hearts of the Prophet and his followers may be imbued with courage during the conflict between the Truth and falsehood. This required that the Divine Guidance and messages of encouragement should be revealed as and when needed according to the practical situation. Obviously, this could not have been possible if these had been sent down all at once. This also showed that Allah had not left His Messenger alone amidst persecution to counter all sorts of resistance and opposition after appointing him to the mission, but He Himself was watching the struggle

with concern and guiding His Prophet through every difficulty by direct communion in every critical situation.

46. This is yet another point of wisdom of sending down the Qur'ān by degrees. Allah did not intend to produce a book on "Guidance" and spread its teachings through the agency of His Prophet. Had it been so the disbelievers would have been justified in their objection as to why the Qur'ān had not been sent down as a complete book all at once. The real object of the revelation of the Qur'ān was that Allah intended to start a Movement of faith, piety and righteousness to combat disbelief, ignorance and sin, and He had raised a Prophet to lead and guide the Movement. Then, on the one hand, Allah had taken it upon Himself to send necessary instructions and guidance to the leader and his followers as and when needed, and on the other, He had also taken the responsibility to answer the objections and remove the doubts of opponents and give the right interpretation of things which they misunderstood. Thus the Qur'ān was the collection of the different discourses that were being revealed by Allah; it was not merely meant to be a code of laws or of moral principles, but a Book, which was being sent down piecemeal to guide the Movement in all its stages to suit its requirements on different occasions. (See also Introduction: The Meaning of the Qur'ān, Vol. I, pp. 9-18).

47. That is, "They will be driven towards Hell upon their faces because of their perversion and their perverted thinking."

48. Here by "the Book" is not meant the Torah, which was given to Prophet Moses after the exodus from Egypt, but it implies that Divine Guidance which was given to him after his appointment as a Prophet up to the Exodus. It included the orations delivered by him in the court of Pharaoh and also the instructions given to him during his conflict with Pharaoh as mentioned in the Qur'ān here and there. Most probably, these things were not included in the Torah; the Torah began with the Ten Commandments which were given to Moses engraved on stone tablets on Mount Sinai after the Exodus.

49. "Revelations": The Divine teachings which had reached them through Prophets Jacob and Joseph, and which had been preached to them by the righteous people of Israel for centuries.

50. They did not charge only Prophet Noah with imposture because he was a man, but, in fact, charged all the Prophets with imposture because they were all human beings.

51. That is, a painful chastisement in the Hereafter.

52. There is no definite knowledge about "the people of the Rass". Different commentators have said different things about them, but nothing is

convincing. The only thing that may be said about them is that they were a people who had killed their Prophet by throwing him into or hanging him down a *"Rass"* (an old or dry well).

53. The habitation referred to was that of the people of Prophet Lot, which was destroyed by a rain of stones. The people of Ḥijāz while traveling to Palestine and Syria, passed by its ruins and heard the horrible tales of its destruction.

54. As the disbelievers did not believe in the Hereafter, they looked at these ancient ruins as mere spectators and did not take any warning from them. Incidentally, this is the difference between the observation of a disbeliever and of a Believer in the Hereafter: the former looks at such things as a mere spectator or at the most as an archaeologist whereas the latter learns moral lessons from the same and obtains an insight into the realities beyond this worldly life.

55. Obviously there is a contradiction between the question posed by the disbelievers and the assertion made by them about their deities. The question was meant to bring the Holy Prophet into contempt, as if to say, "You are making a claim that is far above your low position." On the other hand, their assertion shows that they indirectly admitted the force of the arguments and the high character of the Holy Prophet and were even afraid of the effectiveness and success of his Message, because, according to them, it was going to turn them away from their false gods.

56. "...the person who makes his lust his god" is the one who becomes the slave of his lusts and desires. As he serves his lust like the one who worships his deity, he becomes as much guilty of *shirk* as the one who worships an idol. According to a Tradition, related by Ḥadrat Abū Hurairah, the Holy Prophet said, "Of all the false gods being worshipped and served, instead of Allah, the worst in the sight of Allah is one's own lust." (Ṭabarānī). For further explanation, see E.N. 50 of Al-Kahf,

The man who keeps his desires under control, and uses his common sense to make decisions, can be expected to come to the right path by making an appeal to his reason even though he might have been involved in *shirk* or disbelief; for if he decides to follow the right way he will remain firm and steadfast on it. On the other hand, the man who is the slave of his own lust, is like a ship without an anchor, who wanders about on any path where his lust leads him. He is least bothered about the distinction between the right and the wrong, the true and the false, and has no desire to choose one against the other. And, if at all, such a person is persuaded to accept the message of Guidance, no one can take the responsibility that he will observe any moral laws.

57. "They are only like the cattle" because they follow their lusts blindly. Just as the sheep and cattle do not know where their driver is taking them, to the meadow or to the slaughter house, so are these people also following their leaders blindly without knowing or judging where they are being led—to success or to destruction.. The only difference between the two is that the cattle have no intelligence and will not be accountable as to the place where they are being taken by the driver. But it is a pity that human beings who are endowed with reason, should behave like cattle; therefore their condition is worse than that of cattle.

Incidentally, it should be noted that this passage (vv . 43, 44) is not meant to dissuade the Holy Prophet from conveying the Message to such people, but it is an indirect warning to the disbelievers of the consequences if they continued to behave like cattle.

58. The word *dalīl* has been used in the sense of the "pilot", who is a person trained to take ships safely in or out of a harbour, or along a waterway. The sun has been made the pilot of the shadow because the lengthening out of the shadow and its being rolled up depends on the rising, declining and setting of the sun.

59. "We roll it up .....Ourselves": "We annihilate it or cause it to disappear", for everything which is annihilated returns to Allah, because everything comes from Him and returns to Him.

The Qur'ān has used the phenomenon of the shadow caused by the sun for two purposes. If it is taken literally, it is meant to warn the disbelievers that they should learn a lesson from this and should not behave like cattle, as if to say, "If you had considered the benefits of the shadow in regard to your everyday experience, you would have accepted without any hesitation the Doctrine of *Tauḥīd*. Had the shadow been constant, there would have been no life on earth, for life depends on the light and heat of the sun. On the other hand, if there had been no shadow at all, the constant heat and light of the sun would have made life impossible. Besides this, if there had been sudden changes in the sun and the shadow, they would not have been able to endure it for long; therefore you should reflect on this phenomenon and understand it well that it has been so ordained by the All-Wise and the All-Powerful Creator so that it always increases or decreases gradually in accordance with fixed natural laws. Thus it is obvious that it could not have come into existence by itself nor produced by blind mechanisms nor functioned so regularly and continuously under many independent gods."

But if it is taken in the metaphorical sense, there is between the lines a subtle suggestion, and it is this: Just as the shadow does not remain in one and the

same state, likewise the shadow of disbelief and *shirk*, which appears to have spread far and wide, will begin to shorten as the "Sun" of Guidance gradually rises; but it requires patience, for Allah never brings about sudden changes.

60. The night is a "garment" in the sense that it covers and hides things.

61. This verse has three objects:

(1) It provides a proof of *Tauḥīd*,

(2) It furnishes a proof of the possibility of life-after-death from everyday human experience, and

(3) It bears the good news that the night of ignorance has come to an end and now the bright day of Knowledge and Guidance has dawned. It is therefore inevitable that those who were sleeping the sleep of ignorance, will sooner or later wake up, but those who have slept the sleep of death, will not wake up and will themselves be deprived of life, while the business of the day will go on thriving even without them.

62. That is, such water as is pure and free from all sorts of impurities, germs and poison, which cleanses and washes away filth and becomes a source of life for men, beasts as well as all kinds of plant life.

63. This verse also gives proofs of the Doctrine of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter. Besides, it contains a subtle suggestion that the period of the "drought" of ignorance has been replaced through Allah's mercy by the "blessed rain" of Prophethood, which is showering the life-giving knowledge of Revelation from which many servants of Allah will certainly benefit, if not all.

64. "We present...before them" may have three meanings:

(1) "We have cited the phenomenon of rainfall over and over again in the Qur'ān in order to make plain to them the Reality."

(2) "We are time and again showing them the wonderful phenomenon of the heat and drought, seasonal winds and clouds, rainfall and its life-producing effects."

(3) "We go on changing the system of the distribution of rainfall throughout the world year after year, so that the same place does not receive the same amount of rainfall every time; sometimes a place is left completely dry, another has more or less of rainfall than usual, while some other is flooded with rain water. They see all these different phenomena with their countless different results in their daily life."

65. The verse means to impress that the wonderful system of rainfall is by itself a proof of the existence of Allah, of One Lord of the universe, and of His attributes. Its wonderful distribution during the year and over different parts of the earth is a clear proof that there is an All-Wise Designer. But the obdurate disbelievers do not learn any lesson from it, and persist in their ingratitude, though this has been cited in the Qur'ān repeatedly for this purpose.

It is also a proof of the life-after-death, for the disbelievers themselves see it time and again that rainfall brings to life dead land year after year. This clearly proves that Allah has the power to bring the dead back to life, but the disbelievers do not learn any lesson from it and persist in their irresponsible ways.

If verse 48 is taken in the metaphorical sense, the "pure water" of rain will mean the blessings of Prophethood. Human history shows that whenever this blessing has been sent down, ignorance has been replaced by knowledge, injustice by justice and wickedness by righteousness. The coming of Prophets has always proved to be the harbinger of a moral revolution. But only those who accepted their guidance benefited from it. This is the lesson of history, yet the disbelievers reject it because of their ingratitude.

66. That is, "If We had willed, We could have sent a separate Prophet to every habitation but We did not do so, because like the sun, Our Last Prophet suffices to enlighten the whole world."

67. The Arabic words *Jihād-I-Kabīr* imply three meanings:

(1) To exert one's utmost for the cause of Islam,

(2) To dedicate all one's resources to this cause, and

(3) To fight against the enemies of Islam on all possible fronts with all one's resources in order to raise high the "Word of Allah". This will include *Jihād* with one's tongue, pen, wealth, life and every other available weapon.

68. This phenomenon has been perceived in many places in the sea and on the land that sweet water and bitter water has existed side by side. Turkish Admiral Syedī Alī Ra'īs, in his book *Mir'āt-al-Mamālik*, written in the 16th century, has mentioned a place in the Persian Gulf, where springs of sweet water exist under the bitter waters of the sea, where he could get drinking water for his fleet. The American Oil Company at first obtained water from the same springs in the Persian Gulf, before they dug up wells near Dhahran for supply of drinking water. Near Bahrain also there exist springs of sweet water at the sea bed from which people have been taking water until quite recently.

[Contd. on p.434

فَجَعَلَهٗ نَسَبًا وَّصِهْرًا ؕ وَكَانَ رَبُّكَ قَدِيْرًا ﴿۵۴﴾ وَيَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا
لَا يَنْفَعُهُمْ وَلَا يَضُرُّهُمْ ؕ وَكَانَ الْكَافِرُ عَلٰى رَبِّهٖ ظَهِيْرًا ﴿۵۵﴾ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ اِلَّا
مُبَشِّرًا وَّنَذِيْرًا ﴿۵۶﴾ قُلْ مَآ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ اِلَّا مَنْ شَآءَ اَنْ يَّتَّخِذَ اِلٰى
رَبِّهٖ سَبِيْلًا ﴿۵۷﴾ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْحَيِّ الَّذِيْ لَا يَمُوْتُ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِهٖ ؕ وَكَفٰى بِهٖ
بِذُنُوْبِ عِبَادِهٖ خَبِيْرًا ﴿۵۸﴾ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِيْ سِتَّةِ ع
اَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ۛ اَلرَّحْمٰنُ فَسْـَٔلْ بِهٖ خَبِيْرًا ﴿۵۹﴾ وَاِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمُ
اسْجُدُوْا لِلرَّحْمٰنِ قَالُوْا وَمَا الرَّحْمٰنُ اَنَسْجُدُ لِمَا تَاْمُرُنَا وَزَادَهُمْ نُفُوْرًا ﴿۶۰﴾
تَبٰرَكَ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ فِي السَّمَآءِ بُرُوْجًا وَّجَعَلَ فِيْهَا سِرٰجًا وَّقَمَرًا مُّنِيْرًا ﴿۶۱﴾ وَهُوَ
الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ خِلْفَةً لِّمَنْ اَرَادَ اَنْ يَّذَّكَّرَ اَوْ اَرَادَ شُكُوْرًا ﴿۶۲﴾
وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمٰنِ الَّذِيْنَ يَمْشُوْنَ عَلَى الْاَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَّاِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجٰهِلُوْنَ
قَالُوْا سَلٰمًا ﴿۶۳﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَبِيْتُوْنَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَّقِيَامًا ﴿۶۴﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ
رَبَّنَا اصْرِفْ عَنَّا عَذَابَ جَهَنَّمَ ۖ اِنَّ عَذَابَهَا كَانَ غَرَامًا ﴿۶۵﴾ اِنَّهَا سَآءَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا
وَّمُقَامًا ﴿۶۶﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اِذَآ اَنْفَقُوْا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوْا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوْا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذٰلِكَ
قَوَامًا ﴿۶۷﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يَدْعُوْنَ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ وَلَا يَقْتُلُوْنَ النَّفْسَ الَّتِيْ
حَرَّمَ اللّٰهُ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا يَزْنُوْنَ ۚ وَمَنْ يَّفْعَلْ ذٰلِكَ يَلْقَ اَثَامًا ﴿۶۸﴾ يُّضٰعَفْ
لَهُ الْعَذَابُ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ وَيَخْلُدْ فِيْهٖ مُهَانًا ﴿۶۹﴾ اِلَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَاٰمَنَ وَ
عَمِلَ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا فَاُولٰٓئِكَ يُبَدِّلُ اللّٰهُ سَيِّاٰتِهِمْ حَسَنٰتٍ ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا
رَّحِيْمًا ﴿۷۰﴾ وَمَنْ تَابَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَاِنَّهٗ يَتُوْبُ اِلَى اللّٰهِ مَتَابًا ﴿۷۱﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ
لَا يَشْهَدُوْنَ الزُّوْرَ ۙ وَاِذَا مَرُّوْا بِاللَّغْوِ مَرُّوْا كِرَامًا ﴿۷۲﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اِذَا ذُكِّرُوْا

Yet they worship, instead of Allah, those who can neither benefit them nor harm them: more than this, the disbeliever has become a helper of every rebel against his Lord.[70] 55

O Muhammad, We have sent you only to proclaim good tidings and to give warning.[71] Tell them, "I do not ask of you any recompense for this work: I only ask of the one, who will, to adopt the way of his Lord."[71a] 56-57

O Muhammad, trust in that Allah Who is Ever-Living and will never die: Glorify Him with His praise, for He alone is sufficient to be aware of the sins of His servants. In six days He created the earth and the heavens and all that is between them; then He established Himself on the "Throne" (of the Kingdom of the universe).[72] (He is) the Merciful: as to His Glory, ask the one who knows. 58-59

When it is said to them, "Prostrate yourselves before the Merciful," they retort, "What is the Merciful? Would you have us prostrate ourselves before whomsoever you will?"[73] And this invitation only helps to increase their hatred all the more.[74] 60

Highly blessed is He, Who has made fortified spheres[75] in the heavens and has set in it a "lamp"[76] and a shining moon. He it is Who caused the night and the day to succeed each other so that everyone who desires may learn a lesson or become grateful.[77] 61-62

The (true) servants of the Merciful are those[78] who walk humbly on the earth ;[79] who, when the ignorant people behave insolently towards them, say, "Peace to you";[80] who pass their nights in prostrating themselves and standing before their Lord:[81] who pray, "Our Lord, save us from the torment of Hell, for its torment is killing: it is an evil abode and an evil resting place":[82] who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor miserly but keep the golden mean between the two (extremes);[83] who do not invoke any god but Allah nor kill a soul, which Allah has forbidden, unjustly, nor commit adultery.[84] —He who does this shall be punished for his sin, and his torment shall be doubled on the Day of Resurrection,[85] and he shall abide in a state of ignominy, except the one who may have repented (after those sins) and have believed and done righteous works,[86] for then Allah will change his evil deeds into good deeds, and He is very Forgiving and Merciful. In fact, the one who repents and does righteous deeds, returns to Allah 63-73

as one rightly should.[88]—(And the servants of the Merciful are those:) who do not bear witness to falsehood[89] and who, if they have ever to pass by what is vain, pass by like dignified people:[90] who do not behave like the blind and the deaf, when the Revelations of their Lord are recited to them for admonition :[91]

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Besides this apparent meaning which gives a rational proof of Allah's being the One and the only Lord of the universe, the verse contains a subtle suggestion as well: When Allah wills, He can raise up a righteous community from among a large wicked society just as He can cause springs of palatable and sweet water to gush out from under the salty waters of the sea.

69. Here the miracle of the birth of man from a mere sperm drop and the procreation of his offspring from man and woman have been cited as a proof of *Tauhíd*. Though both man and woman belong to the same genus, they are two species, having important common human characteristics but different physical structures and psychological traits. It is a proof of *Tauhíd* that the All-Powerful Allah has used this "difference" for making the two as complements and not antagonists. It is also the design of the All-Powerful Creator that He is creating sons and daughters in the world in due proportion Then the sons marry and create blood relationships, and the daughters are married and become means of forming new relationships. This process goes on widening to produce families, tribes and nations belonging to the same race and bound by the same civilization.

The verse has also a subtle suggestion: The whole of life is being run on the principle of "difference", for example, the difference between the night and the day, the summer and the winter, etc. Therefore, "O Muslims, you should patiently endure the differences you are having with your opponents for these are certain to produce good results."

70. This is a characteristic of the typical disbeliever: he is a helper and defender of all those who are rebels against Allah and an enemy of all those who may be striving to raise Allah's Word and enforce His Law in the world; he is associated directly or indirectly with all the works of Allah's disobedience and opposes and resists in one way or the other every effort that is made to bring people to the path of Allah's obedience and service.

71. This verse (56) was meant to comfort the Holy Prophet and to warn the disbelievers who opposed him and obstructed his work, as if to say, "Your duty is only to convey the Message of good news to the people and to warn them

of the consequences of disbelief: you are not responsible as to whether they accept your Message or reject it, or to reward the Believers and punish the disbelievers."

Such words occur in the Qur'ān at other places also and are obviously directed to the disbelievers, as if to say, "The Message of the Prophet is meant to reform the people without any tinge of selfishness. As he does not force the people to accept his Message, there is no reason why you should feel offended. If you accept the Message, it will be for your own good, and if you reject it, you will be harming yourselves alone. For after conveying the Message, he is relieved of his duty and responsibility; then the matter will be between you and Us."

Although this is a very simple and clear interpretation of verse 56 (and of similar other verses), yet some people erroneously conclude from it that the only duty and responsibility of the Prophet is to convey the Message and nothing else. They forget that the Qur'ān has stressed over and over again that the Prophet is not only a giver of good news to the Believers but he is also their teacher, their law-giver, judge and guide, a purifier of their morals and a model of life for them, and that every word which he utters is law which they have to obey and follow willingly in all walks of life and for all times to come.

71a. For explanation, see E.N. 70 of Al-Mu'minūn.

72. For explanation of "Throne", see E.N.'s 41, 42 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 4 of Yūnus, and E.N. 7 of Hūd.

It is difficult to say what exactly is meant by "six days" Here a "day" may mean a period of time or an ordinary day of this world. For explanation of the "day", see E.N.'s 11 to 15 of Sūrah Ḥā Mīm Sajdah.

73. This they said due to their arrogance and stubbornness just as Pharaoh had said to Prophet Moses: "What is the Lord of the universe?" For the disbelievers of Makkah were not unaware of the Merciful *(Raḥmān)*, nor was Pharaoh unaware of the "Lord of the universe". The wording of the verse itself shows that their question about the "Merciful" was not the result of their ignorance of Him but was due to their rebelliousness; otherwise Allah would not have punished them for this but would have informed them politely that He Himself is "Merciful". Besides this, it is well known historically that the word *Raḥmān* (Merciful) for Allah had been in common usage in Arabia since the ancient times. Please see also E.N. 5 of As-Sajdah and E.N. 35 of Sabā.

74. All scholars are agreed that here a 'Prostration of Recital' *(Sajdah Tilāwat)* has been enjoined, which means that every reader and every hearer must prostrate himself on reciting or hearing the recital of this verse. According to traditions, the one who hears this verse being recited should say: *Zādan Allahu,*

khudā'an-ammā zada ill-ā'dā-i nufūra: "May Allah increase us in humility even as the enemies are increased in their hatred."

75. See E.N.'s 8 to 12 of Al Ḥijr.

76. That is, the sun, as mentioned clearly in Sūrah Nūḥ: 16: "... and made the sun a lamp."

77. The observation and deep consideration of the wonderful phenomenon of the alternation of the day and night is a proof of *Tauḥīd* and His Providence so that man may feel grateful to Him and prostrate himself before Him in all humility.

78. That is, "Though all human beings are by birth the servants of the Merciful before Whom you have been invited to prostrate yourselves, and which you disdain, his true servants are those who adopt the way of His obedience consciously and develop such desirable characteristics. Then the natural consequences of the prostration are those found in the lives of the Believers and the evil results of rejecting the invitation, those found in your lives." Here attention is being drawn to the two patterns of character and life: first of those who had accepted the Message of the Holy Prophet and were following it, and the second of those who persisted in the ways of ignorance. Here only the prominent characteristics of the true Believers have been cited, and for contrast, the characteristics of the disbelievers have been left to every discerning eye and mind which could see them all around in society and make its own decision.

79. That is, "They do not walk haughtily and arrogantly like the tyrants and mischief-makers, but their "gait" is of a gentle, right-thinking and good-natured person." "Walking humbly" does not mean walking like a weak or sick person, nor does it imply the gait of a hypocrite who walks ostentatiously to show humility or fear of God. According to Traditions, the Holy Prophet himself used to walk with firm, quick steps. One day Caliph 'Umar saw a young man walking slowly like a weak, sick person, and asked him, "Are you ill?" When the man replied in the negative, the Caliph raised his whip, rebuked him and told him to walk like a healthy man. This shows that the "humble gait" is the natural gait of a noble and gentle person and not a gait which shows weakness and undue humility.

In this connection, the first characteristic of the true servants of Allah to which attention has been drawn, is their "gait" This is because the gait indicates the character of an individual. If a man walks in a humble and dignified way, as opposed to a haughty, vain and proud manner, it shows that he is a noble and gentle person. Thus the different "gaits" of the different types of people show what sort of characters they possess. The verse means to imply that the true servants of the Merciful can be easily recognized by their "gait" among the people. Their

attitude of Allah's worship and obedience has changed them so thoroughly that it can be seen at first sight from their "gait" that they are noble, humble and good natured people, who cannot be expected to indulge in any mischief. For further explanation, see E.N.43 of Banī Isrā'īl and E.N. 33 of Luqmān.

80. "Ignorant people": Rude and insolent people and not uneducated and illiterate ones. The true servants of the "Merciful" do not believe in "vengeance", even though they may have to deal with the ignorant people who behave rudely and insolently towards them. If they happen to come across such people, they wish them peace and turn away. The same thing has been expressed in Al-Qasas: 55, thus: "And when they hear something vain and absurd they turn away from it, saying, 'Our deeds are for us and your deeds are for you: peace be to you: we have nothing to do with the ignorant'." For details see E.N.'s 72 to 78 of Al-Qaṣaṣ.

81. That is, they neither spend their nights in fun and merry-making nor in gossips and telling tales, nor in doing wicked deeds, for these are the ways of the ignorant people. The true servants of Allah pass their nights in worshipping and remembering Him as much as they can. This characteristic of theirs has been brought out clearly at several places in the Qur'ān, thus: "their backs forsake their beds and they invoke their Lord in fear and in hope." (As-Sajdah: 16). "These people (of Paradise) slept but little at night, and prayed for their forgiveness in the hours of the morning." (Az-Zāriyāt: 17, 18). And: "Can the end of the one, who is obedient to Allah, prostrates himself and stands before Him during the hours of the night, fears the Hereafter and places his hope in the mercy of his Lord, be like that of a *mushrik?*" (Az-Zumar: 9).

82. That is, their worship has not made them vain and proud to presume that they are the beloved ones of Allah and that the Fire of Hell will not touch them. On the other hand, in spite of all their worship and good deeds, they are so filled with the fear of the torment of Hell that they pray to their Lord to save them from it, for they do not depend upon their own work for success in the Hereafter but upon the mercy of Allah.

83. The true servants of Allah adopt "the golden mean" between the two extremes in spending their money. They neither go beyond prudence and necessity in expenditure nor live in wretched circumstances in order to save and hoard money but are frugal. This was the characteristic of the followers of the Holy Prophet, which distinguished them from the well-to-do people of Arabia, who were either spend-thrifts in regard to the gratification of their own lusts or niggardly in spending their money on good works.

According to Islam extravagance is: (1) To spend even the smallest amount of money in unlawful ways, (2) to go beyond one's own resources in expenditure even in lawful ways, or to spend money for one's own pleasure, and (3) to spend money in righteous ways not for the sake of Allah but for mere show. On the other hand, one is miserly if one does not spend money for one's own needs and requirements and those of one's family in accordance with one's resources and position, or if one does not spend money for good works. The way taught by Islam is the golden mean between the two extremes. The Holy Prophet has said, "It is a sign of wisdom to adopt the "golden mean" in one's living." (Aḥmad, Ṭabarānī).

84. The true servants refrain from three great sins: *Shirk*, murder and adultery. The Holy Prophet himself warned of their gravity. According to 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, when some one asked him about the worst sins, he replied, (1) "It is to set up someone as equal in rank with Allah, Who has created you, (2) to kill your own child for fear of its sustenance, and (3) to commit adultery with the wife of your neighbour." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmizī, Nasā'ī, Aḥmad). Obviously this is not a complete list of the "heinous sins". But these three instances have been cited because they were most prevalent in the Arab society of those days.

As regards the inclusion of refraining from *shirk* among the excellences of the true servants, one may ask why it should be presented as virtue before the disbelievers who did not regard *shirk* as a vice. It is because the Arabs had doubts about the doctrine of *shirk*, even though they appeared to be deeply involved in it. This is amply supported by their history. For instance, when Abraha invaded Makkah, the Quraish did not invoke their idols to save the Ka'bah from him, but they begged Allah to save it. Their contemporary poetry bears sufficient evidence that they regarded the destruction of the "people of the elephant" due to Allah's power and supernatural interference and not due to any help of their idols. The Quraish and the polytheists of Arabia had also come to know that when Abraha reached Ṭā'if on his way to Makkah, the people of Tā'if had offered him their services to destroy the Ka'bah and had even provided him guides to take him safely to Makkah through the hills, for fear that he might also destroy the temple of "Lāt", their chief deity. This event so much offended the Arabs that for years after this they continued pelting the grave of the chief guide with stones for retaliation. Moreover, the Quraish and the other Arabs attributed their creed to Prophet Abraham and looked upon their religious and social customs and their Ḥajj rites as part of Abraham's religion. They knew that Prophet Abraham was a worshipper of Allah and not of idols. They also had traditions to show as to when they had started idol-worship, and which idol had been brought from where, when

and by whom. The fact is that the common Arab did not have much of reverence for his idols. He would even speak insultingly of it and withheld his offerings when it failed to fulfil his wishes and prayers. For instance, there is the story of an Arab who wanted to avenge the murder of his father. He went to the temple of his idol, Zul-Khalaṣah, and wanted to take an omen. The response came that he should abandon his intention. At this the Arab became furious and cried out: 'O Zul-Khalaṣah! Had you been in my place, and your father was murdered, you would not have said that the murderers should not be punished." Another Arab took his herd of camels to the shrine of his god, named Sa'd, for seeking its blessings. It was a tall idol which had been smeared with sacrificial blood. On seeing it, the camels became terrified and started running in all directions. The Arab was so filled with rage that he started pelting the idol with stones, shouting, "May God destroy you ! I had come to you to seek blessings for my camels, but you have deprived me of all of them." There were certain idols about whose origin filthy stories were current. For instance, the story about Asāf and Nā'ilah whose images had been placed at Ṣafā and Marwa, was that they were actually a man and a woman, who had committed adultery inside the Holy Ka'bah and had been turned into stone by God as a punishment. When the deities had such reputation, no worshipper could cherish any reverence for them in his heart. From this one can easily understand that the Arabs did recognize the value of true God-worship deep in their hearts, but, on the one hand, it had been suppressed by ancient customs and ways of ignorance, and on the other, the priestly class among the Quraish had vested interests, who were busy creating prejudices against it among the people. They could not give up idol-worship because such a step would have brought to an end their supremacy in Arabia. That is why, refraining from *shirk* and worship of One Allah has been mentioned as a mark of superiority of the followers of the Holy Prophet without any fear of contradiction by the disbelievers, for even they in their heart of hearts knew that it was a weighty argument against them.

85. This can have two meanings: (1) His punishment will never come to an end, but it will continue being inflicted relentlessly over and over again; and (2) the person who in addition to the sins of disbelief, *shirk* and atheism, would have committed murders, adultery and other sins, will get separate punishment for rebellion and for each other sin. He will be accountable for each of his major and minor sins none of which will be pardoned. For instance, for each murder and for each act of adultery he will be given a separate punishment, and likewise, there will be a separate punishment for every sin committed by him.

86. This is a good news for those people who repented and reformed

[Contd. on p. 440

بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَمْ يَخِرُّوْا عَلَيْهَا صُمًّا وَّعُمْيَانًا ﴿٧٣﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ رَبَّنَا هَبْ
لَنَا مِنْ اَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيّٰتِنَا قُرَّةَ اَعْيُنٍ وَّاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ اِمَامًا ﴿٧٤﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ
يُجْزَوْنَ الْغُرْفَةَ بِمَا صَبَرُوْا وَيُلَقَّوْنَ فِيْهَا تَحِيَّةً وَّسَلٰمًا ﴿٧٥﴾ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا
حَسُنَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَّمُقَامًا ﴿٧٦﴾ قُلْ مَا يَعْبَؤُا بِكُمْ رَبِّيْ لَوْلَا دُعَآؤُكُمْ فَقَدْ
كَذَّبْتُمْ فَسَوْفَ يَكُوْنُ لِزَامًا ﴿٧٧﴾

74-76 who pray, Our Lord, bless us with wives and children, who may be the comfort of our eyes[92], and make us leaders of the righteous."[93]—Such are the people who will be rewarded with high palaces for their fortitude,[94,95] wherein they will be welcomed with due respect, honour and salutations and wherein they will live for ever: what an excellent abode and what an excellent resting place!

77 O. Muhammad, tell the people, "My Lord does not care at all if you do not invoke Him.[96] Now that you have denied (His Revelations), you will soon be awarded such a punishment which you will never be able to avoid."

Contd. from p.439]

themselves, for they will have the benefit of the "general amnesty" contained in verse 70. This was regarded as a great blessing by the true servants because very few of those who embraced Islam had been free from those vices during their 'ignorance', and were terrified by the threat contained in vv. 68-69, but this amnesty not only redeemed them but filled them with hope.

Many instances of such people, who sincerely repented and reformed their lives, have been related in the traditions. For instance, Ibn Jarīr and Tabarānī have related an incident from Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, who says, "One day when I returned home after offering the 'Ishā prayer in the Prophet's Mosque, I saw a woman standing at my door. I saluted her and walked into my room, closed the door and busied myself in voluntary worship. After a while she knocked at the door. I opened the door and asked what she wanted. She said that she had come with a problem: She had committed *zinā*, had become pregnant, given birth to a child and then killed it. She wanted to know if there was any chance of her sin being forgiven. I replied in the negative. She went back grief-stricken, exclaiming, "Ah! this beautiful body was created for the fire!" The next morning, after the prayer, when I related the night's incident before the Holy Prophet, he said, "You

gave a very wrong answer, Abū Hurairah: Haven't you read the Qur'ânic verse which says: '(Those) who do not invoke any other deity than Allah...except the one who may have repented (after those sins) and have believed and done righteous deeds' ?" Hearing this from the Holy Prophet, I went out in search of the woman, and had her traced again at the 'Ishā time. I gave her the good news and told her what the Holy Prophet had said in reply to her question. She immediately fell prostrate on the ground and thanked Allah, Who had opened a way for her forgiveness. Then she offered repentance and set a slave-girl, along with her son, free." A similar incident about an old man has been related in the Traditions. He came before the Holy Prophet and said, "O Messenger of Allah, all my life has passed in sin: there is no sin which I have not committed; so much so that if my sins were to be distributed over the people of the whole world, they would all be doomed. Is there any way out for my forgiveness?" The Holy Prophet asked him, "Have you embraced Islam?" He said, "I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah." The Holy Prophet said, "Go back, Allah is All-Forgiving and has the power to change your evil deeds into good deeds." He asked,"Is it about all my crimes and errors?" The Holy Prophet replied, "Yes, it is about all your crimes and errors." (Ibn Kathīr).

87. It has two meanings: (1) When he has repented sincerely, he will start a new life of belief and obedience to Allah and by His grace and help will start doing good deeds instead of evil deeds that he used to do in his life of unbelief, and his evil deeds will be replaced by good deeds; and (2) Not only will his evil deeds done in the past be written off, but it will also be recorded in his conduct register that he was the servant who gave up rebellion against his Lord and adopted the way of His obedience. Then, as he will feel more and more sorry for his past sins and offer repentance, more and more good deeds will be credited to him; for repenting of one's wrong doing and seeking forgiveness is in itself a good deed. Thus, good deeds will supersede all his evil deeds in his conduct register, and he will not only escape punishment in the Hereafter but, in addition, he will also be blessed with high favours by Allah.

88. That is, ultimately everyone has to return to Allah for Allah alone is man's last and real refuge: He alone can reward one for his good deeds or punish one for his evil deeds: He alone is All-Merciful and All-Compassionate, Who receives the penitent with forgiveness and Who does not rebuke him for his past errors provided that he has repented sincerely, and adopted the right attitude and reformed himself.

89. This also has two meanings: (1) They do not give evidence (in a law court etc.) in regard to a false thing in order to prove it right, when in fact it is a

falsehood, or at best a doubtful thing; and (2) they have no intention to witness any thing which is false, evil or wicked as spectators. In this sense, every sin and every indecency, every sham and counterfeit act is a falsehood. A true servant of Allah recognizes it as false and shuns it even if it is presented in the seemingly beautiful forms of "art".

90. The Arabic word *laghv* implies all that is vain, useless and meaningless and it also covers "falsehood". The true servants pass by in a dignified manner if ever they come across "what is vain", as if it were a heap of filth. They do not tarry there to enjoy the "filth" of moral impurity, obscenity or foul language, nor do they intentionally go anywhere to hear or see or take part in any sort of "filth". For further details, see E.N. 4of Al-Mu''minūn.

91. The true servants of Allah do not behave like the blind and the deaf towards the Revelations of Allah, when they are recited to them for their admonition. They do not turn a deaf ear to their teachings and Message and do not deliberately close their eyes to the Signs that they are asked to observe, but are deeply moved by them. They follow and practise what they are enjoined and refrain from what is forbidden.

92. The most distinctive characteristic of the true servants is their eagerness for prayer to Allah. In verse 65 their "prayer" for their own salvation and in verse 74 their prayer for their wives and children have been cited: "Our Lord, make our wives and children true believers so that they should practise righteousness and become a source of comfort for us." Their prayer shows that the true servants of Allah are more concerned about the salvation of their beloved ones in the Hereafter than the enjoyment of the world.

It should be noted that this characteristic has been cited here to show that the true servants had sincerely believed in the Message. That is why they were so concerned about the "Faith" of their beloved ones. It should also be kept in mind that many of the near and dear ones of the Believers had not as yet embraced Islam. If a husband had embraced Islam, the wife was still an unbeliever, and if a youth had accepted Islam, his parents and brothers and sisters were still involved in disbelief, and *vice versa*. Therefore, the true servants wept and prayed for them, whenever the picture of their horrible state in Hell came before their mind's eyes.

93. That is, "We should excel in piety, righteousness and good works; nay, we should become the leaders of the pious people so that we may lead them in the propagation of virtue and piety in the world." Incidentally, this characteristic of the true servants was in great contrast to that of the disbelievers, who strove in competition and rivalry with one another for superiority in worldly power and

wealth. But it is a pity that some people in our time have misinterpreted this verse as containing sanction for seeking candidature for political leadership. According to them, the verse means: "Our Lord, make us rulers over the pious people."

94. The word *sabr* (fortitude) has been used here in its most comprehensive sense. The true servants courageously endured their persecution by the enemies of the Truth; they remained firm and steadfast in their struggle to establish Allah's way in the land; they carried out their duties enjoined by Allah sincerely and fearlessly without any concern for the worldly losses and deprivation; and they withstood all temptations held out by Satan and all the lusts of the flesh.

95. *"Ghurfah"* is a high mansion and the word is generally used for the "upper chamber" of a double-storeyed house. But the reality is that the highest buildings made by man in this world, even the Taj Mahal of India and the sky-scrapers of New York, are an ugly imitation of the "excellent abodes" in Paradise. They are so magnificent, grand and beautiful that human imagination cannot form any picture of their grandeur.

96. This warning to the disbellevers has been given in order to contrast it with the great rewards that have been promised to the true servants of Allah, as if to say, "If you do not invoke Allah for help and protection, and do not worship Him, you will have no value and importance in His sight, and He will not care at all for you because He does not stand in need of any help from you. It is indeed for your own sake that He has given you the opportunity to invoke Him so that He may turn in mercy towards you; otherwise there is no difference between you and the rest of creation."



XXVI
ASH-SHU'ARĀA'
اَلشُّعَرَاءُ

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXVI
ASH-SHU'ARĀA'

اَلشُّعَرَاءُ

INTRODUCTION

Name.

The Sūrah takes its name from verse 224 in which the word *Ash-Shu'arâa'* occurs.

Period of Revelation.

The subject-matter and the style show, and the traditions confirm, that it was revealed during the middle Makkan period. According to Ibn 'Abbās, Sūrah Ṭā Hā was revealed first, then Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah, and then Sūrah Ash-Shu'arāa'. *(Rūḥ-ul-Maā'nī,* Vol. XIX, p. 64). About Sūrah Ṭā Hā it is well known that it had been revealed before Ḥaḍrat 'Umar embraced Islam.

Subject-Matter and Topics

The background of the Sūrah is that the disbelievers of Makkah were persistently refusing, on one pretext or the other, to accept the message of Islam given by the Holy Prophet. Sometimes they would say that he did not show them any sign to convince them of his Prophethood; sometimes they would brand him as a poet or a sorcerer and mock his message; and sometimes they would ridicule his Mission, saying that his followers were either a few foolish youth, or the poor people and slaves—whereas, they argued, if his Mission had really some value for the people, the nobles and the elders would have accepted it first. Thus, while on the one hand, the Holy Prophet was becoming wearied by his

efforts to show them rationally the errors of their creeds and prove the truth of the Doctrines of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter, the disbelievers, on the other, were never tired of adopting one kind of obduracy after the other. This state of affairs was causing great anguish and grief to the Holy Prophet.

Such were the conditions when this Sūrah was revealed. It begins with words of consolation to the Holy Prophet, implying, "Why do you fret for their sake? If these people have not believed in you, it is not because they have not seen any Sign, but because they are obdurate. They will not listen to reason; they want to see a Sign which makes them bow their heads in humility. When this Sign is shown in due course of time, they will themselves realize that what was being presented to them was the Truth."

After this introduction, till verse 191, one and the same theme has been presented continuously, and it is said: "The whole earth abounds in such Signs as can guide a seeker after truth to Reality, but the stubborn and misguided people have never believed even after seeing the Signs, whether these were the Signs of the natural phenomena or the miracles of the Prophets. These wretched people have stubbornly adhered to their erroneous creeds till the Divine scourge actually overtook them." It is to illustrate that the history of seven of the ancient tribes has been told, Who persisted in disbelief just like the disbelievers of Makkah. In this connection, the following points have been stressed:

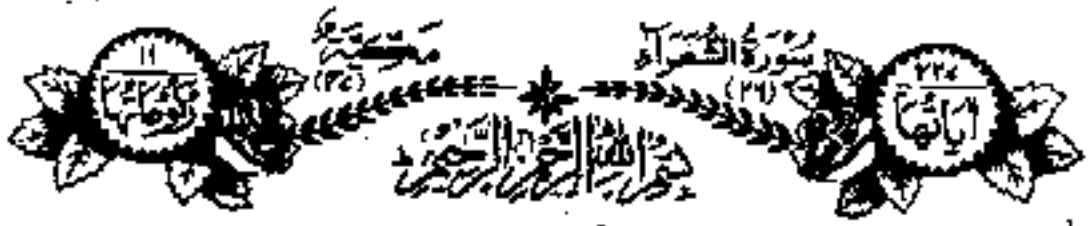
(1) The Signs are of two kinds: (a) Those which are scattered all over the earth, and by seeing which an intelligent person can judge for himself whether what the Prophet is presenting is the Truth or not; and (b) those which were seen by Pharaoh and his people, Noah's people, the 'Ad and the Thamūd, Lot's people and the people of Aiykah. Now it is for the disbelievers to decide which kind of the Signs they are eager to see.

(2) The mentality of the disbelievers has been the same throughout the ages; their arguments and their objections, and their excuses and subterfuges for not believing have been similar and ultimately the fates that they met have also been the same. Likewise, the Prophets in every age presented the same teachings, their personal character and their reasoning and

arguments against their opponents were the same, and they were all similarly blessed with mercy by Allah Almighty. Both these patterns of behaviour and conduct are found in history, and the disbelievers could themselves see as to which respective patterns they and the Holy Prophet belonged.

(3) Allah is All-Mighty, All-Powerful and All-Merciful at the same time. History contains instances of His Wrath as well as of His Mercy. Now, therefore, it is for the people to decide whether they would like to deserve Allah's Mercy or His Wrath.

(4) Lastly, the discussion has been summed up, saying: "O disbelievers, if at all you want to see the Signs, why should you insist on seeing those horrible Signs that visited the doomed communities of the past? Why don't you see the Qur'ān which is being presented in your own language ? Why don't you see Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and mercy) and his Companions? Can the revelations of the Qur'ān be the work of a satan or a jinn? Does the recipient of the Qur'ān appear to be a sorcerer? Are Muḥammad and his Companions no different from a poet and his admirers ? Why don't you give up disbelief and search your hearts for their judgment? When in the heart of your hearts you yourselves believe that the Revelations of the Qur'ān have nothing in common with sorcery and poetry, then you should know that you are being cruel and unjust, and will certainly meet the doom meant for the cruel and unjust."



طٰسٓمٓ ﴿١﴾ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ ﴿٢﴾ لَعَلَّكَ بَاخِعٌ نَّفْسَكَ اَلَّا يَكُوْنُوْا مُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٣﴾
اِنْ نَّشَاْ نُنَزِّلْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ اٰيَةً فَظَلَّتْ اَعْنَاقُهُمْ لَهَا خٰضِعِيْنَ ﴿٤﴾ وَمَا
يَاْتِيْهِمْ مِّنْ ذِكْرٍ مِّنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ مُحْدَثٍ اِلَّا كَانُوْا عَنْهُ مُعْرِضِيْنَ ﴿٥﴾ فَقَدْ كَذَّبُوْا
فَسَيَاْتِيْهِمْ اَنْۢبٰٓؤُا مَا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اِلَى الْاَرْضِ كَمْ اَنْۢبَتْنَا فِيْهَا
مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ كَرِيْمٍ ﴿٧﴾ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ۭ وَمَا كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٨﴾ وَ
اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٩﴾ وَاِذْ نَادٰى رَبُّكَ مُوْسٰٓى اَنِ ائْتِ الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٠﴾
قَوْمَ فِرْعَوْنَ ۭ اَلَا يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١١﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ اَنْ يُّكَذِّبُوْنِ ﴿١٢﴾ وَيَضِيْقُ صَدْرِيْ
وَلَا يَنْطَلِقُ لِسَانِيْ فَاَرْسِلْ اِلٰى هٰرُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَلَهُمْ عَلَيَّ ذَنْۢبٌ فَاَخَافُ اَنْ يَّقْتُلُوْنِ ﴿١٤﴾
قَالَ كَلَّا ۚ فَاذْهَبَا بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اِنَّا مَعَكُمْ مُّسْتَمِعُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ فَاْتِيَا فِرْعَوْنَ فَقُوْلَآ اِنَّا رَسُوْلُ
رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ اَنْ اَرْسِلْ مَعَنَا بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ ﴿١٧﴾ قَالَ اَلَمْ نُرَبِّكَ فِيْنَا وَلِيْدًا وَّ
لَبِثْتَ فِيْنَا مِنْ عُمُرِكَ سِنِيْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَفَعَلْتَ فَعْلَتَكَ الَّتِيْ فَعَلْتَ وَاَنْتَ مِنَ
الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ قَالَ فَعَلْتُهَآ اِذًا وَّاَنَا مِنَ الضَّاۗلِّيْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ فَفَرَرْتُ مِنْكُمْ لَمَّا خِفْتُكُمْ

XXVI
ASH-SHU'ARĀA'
اَلشُّعَرَآءُ

Verses: 227 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Tā Sīn Mīm. These are the verses of the lucid Book[1] 1-2

O Muhammad, you will perhaps consume yourself with grief because these people do not believe.[2] If We will, We can send down from the sky a Sign before which they will bend down their necks in submission.[3] Whatever new admonition comes to them from the Merciful, they turn away from it. Now that they have rejected it, they will soon come to know (in various forms) the reality of what they have been mocking[4]. 3-6

And have they never looked at the earth (and seen) how We have created in it a variety of fine vegetation in abundance ? This surely has a Sign,[5] but most of them would not believe. The fact is that your Lord is Mighty as well as Merciful.[6] 7-9

Relate to them the story of the time when your Lord called Moses,[7] saying: "Go forth to the wicked people—the people of Pharaoh.[8] Do they not fear ?"[9] Moses answered, "My Lord, I am afraid that they will treat me as a liar. My breast straitens and I am not eloquent of tongue: so appoint Aaron to Prophethood.[10] And they have the charge of a crime against me, too; therefore, I fear that they will put me to death."[11] Allah said: "No, never! Go, both of you, with Our Signs:[12] We shall be with you, hearing everything. Go to Pharaoh and tell him, 'We have been sent by the Lord of all Creation (with the message) that you should let the Israelites go with us'."[13] 10-17

18-19 Pharaoh said. "Did we not bring you up as a child in our house?[14] You lived quite a few years of your life among us, and then you did what you did, [15] you are indeed an un grateful man."

20-21 Moses answered, "I did it inadvertently;[16] then I fled from you out of fear; then my Lord bestowed wisdom and knowledge upon me,"[17] and included me among the Messengers.

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1. That is, the verses being presented in this Sūrah are of that Book, which presents and explains its subject-matter clearly and plainly so that every reader and listener may easily understand what it invites to, what it enjoins and what it forbids, and what it regards as true and what as false. To believe or not to believe is a different matter; but no one can have the excuse that he could not understand the teachings of the Book and its injunctions and prohibitions.

"Al-Kitāb-ul-Mubīn" also has the meaning that the Qur'ān is, beyond any doubt, a Divine Book. Its language, its diction and themes, the facts presented by it and the background of its revelations, all testify to the fact that this is indeed the Book of the Master of all Creation. In this sense, its every sentence is a Sign and a miracle. As such, any person who has common sense has no need of any other Sign than the verses of this Book for believing in the Prophethood of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

This brief introductory sentence, which covers both these meanings, has a close connection with the subject-matter of this Sūrah. The disbelievers of Makkah demanded a miracle from the Holy Prophet so as to be convinced that the message he gave was really from Allah. In answer to that, it has been said that if some one really wanted a Sign for believing in the Prophet, he should study the verses of this Book. Then, the disbelievers accused the Holy Prophet of being a sorcerer. This charge has been refuted by saying that the Qur'ān has nothing ambiguous or mysterious in it; but it plainly puts forward all its teachings which cannot be the creation of a poet or a sorcerer's imagination.

2. The words *bākhi'un-nafsaka* literally mean: "You would kill yourself." The verse in fact describes the extreme anguish, anxiety and grief of the Holy Prophet over the Makkan disbelievers' ways of deviation, moral degradation, and obduracy and opposition to his message of reform. Sometimes it seemed as if his grief and mental suffering for their sake would cause his death. This state of the Holy Prophet has been referred to at other places in the Qur'ān as well, for instance in Al-Kahf: 6, thus: "Well, O Muḥammad, it may be that you will consume your life for their sake out of sorrow if they do not believe in this message." And in Al-Fāṭir: 8, thus:" ....let not your life be consumed in grief for their sake."

3. That is, "It is not at all difficult for Allah to send down a Sign which would make all the disbelievers yield and submit. If, however, He does not send one, it does not mean that such a thing is beyond His powers, but the reason is that belief under compulsion is not acceptable to Him. Allah wants that people should use their common-sense and recognize the Truth through the verses of the Divine Book and the Signs which are scattered all over the universe and are found even in their ownselves. Then, when their hearts are satisfied that the message of the Prophets contains the Truth, and the beliefs and the creeds which are opposed to it, are false, they should willingly give up falsehood and adopt the Truth. This voluntary belief, acceptance of the Truth and rejection of falsehood, is what Allah demands from man. It is for this reason that Allah has bestowd upon man choice and free will, and freedom to follow any way, right or wrong, that he pleases. For the same reason He has placed in his nature both the tendencies, towards good and towards evil, and opened up before him both the ways, to piety and to sin. For the same purpose He has given Satan the freedom and respite to mislead him and has made arrangements of Prophethood, Revelation and invitation to goodness to guide him to the right way, and has placed man on trial to see whether he adopts the way of belief and obedience or of disbelief and sin. On the other hand, if Allah had adopted a method of coercing people to believe and obey, it would have defeated the very purpose of the trial and test. Then there was no need to send down the Signs for the purpose, but He would have created man with a pure nature, without any inclination for evil, disbelief and sin, and made him obedient by birth like the angels. This has been referred at several places in the Qur'ān, for instance in Yūnus: 99: ' Had your Lord willed all the dwellers of the earth would have believed in Him;" and in Hūd: 118: "Your Lord could have made mankind one community had He so willed, but now they will continue to follow different ways, but only those on whom Allah has His mercy (escape wrong ways). It will be so because He has created them for this (very freedom of choice and action)." For further explanation, see E.N.'s 101,102 of Yūnus and E.N. 116 of Hūd.

4. That is, the people who show lack of feeling and interest for every rational attempt made to bring them to the right way, cannot be made to believe forcibly by sending down Signs from heaven. They only deserve to be shown their evil end after they have been duly warned and shown guidance, which they not only treated with indifference but rejected scornfully. This evil end can be shown to them in several ways:

(1) The Truth which they have bitterly opposed and scoffed at should prevail in the world in front of their very eyes in spite of their antagonism. (2) They should be visited by a painful torment and eliminated from the world. (3) After a few years of misguided life they should meet death and see for themselves that what they had been following wholeheartedly

throughout their lives was nothing but falsehood and what the Prophets had been presenting was the very Truth, which they had been scoffing at. Thus the evil end can take place differently for different people as it happened in the past.

5. That is, the seeker after truth does not have to look far for a Sign. If only he sees with open eyes the phenomena of vegetation around him, he will be able to judge for himself whether the reality about the system of the world *(i.e., Tauhīd)* which was being presented by the Prophets is true, or the speculations of the polytheists and atheists. From the variety and abundance of creation found on the earth, the various elements and factors supporting it, the laws of nature causing it to grow and flourish, and the accord and harmony existing between its characteristics and the countless needs and demands of innumerable creatures, only a fool will conclude that all this is happening automatically without the wisdom, knowledge, power and design of an All-Mighty, All-Powerful Creator. Obviously, many masters and gods could not have by any device arranged and produced the perfect harmony and accord between the soil, the sun and the moon, and the animal and plant life produced with their help and the needs of a great variety of creatures living on the earth. A sensible person, unless he is prejudiced and biased, cannot help feeling convinced that these are the clear signs and proofs of the existence of One God, and there is no further need of a miracle to convince him of the reality of *Tauhīd*.

6. That is, "He has the power and ability to annihilate completely anyone whom He wills to punish, but it is His mercy that He does not hasten to punish the wrong-doer, but gives him respite for years and centuries to allow him time to think, understand and mend his ways, and is ever ready to forgive the sins of a lifetime if the sinner offers repentance but once."

7. After a brief introduction, historical events have been presented beginning with the story of Prophet Moses and Pharaoh, and attention has been drawn specifically to the following points:

(1) The conditions under which Prophet Moses had to work were much harsher and more severe than those faced by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). Prophet Moses belonged to a slave community very much suppressed by Pharaoh and his people. In contrast to them, the Holy Prophet was a member of the clan of Quraish and his family enjoyed an equal status with the other clans. Then Prophet Moses had been bred and brought up in the house of Pharaoh and after remaining a fugitive for ten years due to a charge of murder, he was commanded to go before the same king from whom he had fled for life. The Holy Prophet did not have to face any such situation. Then the empire of

Pharaoh was the most extensive and powerful empire of the time and the meagre power of the Quraish had no comparison with it. In spite of that Pharaoh could not do any harm to Prophet Moses and ultimately perished in the conflict. From this Allah wanted the Quraish to learn this lesson: "None can defeat the one who has Allah to help him? When Pharaoh with all his might became helpless against Moses, how can you, O poor Quraish, succeed against Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings)?"

(2) There could not be clearer and more manifest Signs (miracles) than those which were shown to Pharaoh through Moses. Then in an open contest with the magicians before a gathering of hundreds of thousands of people to meet the challenge of Pharaoh himself, it had been conclusively demonstrated that what was presented by Moses, was not magic. The skilful magicians who were themselves Egyptians and had been summoned by Pharaoh himself bore witness to the fact that turning of Moses' staff into a serpent was a real change of nature, which could only happen through a Divine miracle, and not by any trick of magic. Then the magicians' believing in Moses immediately, even at the risk of life, proved beyond any doubt that the Sign presented by Moses was a miracle and not magic. Yet the disbelievers were not inclined to believe in the Prophet. Now how can you, O Quraish, say that you will believe only when you are shown a perceptible miracle and a physical Sign ? As a matter of fact, if a person is free from prejudice, false sense of prestige and vested interest, and has an open mind to appreciate the distinction between truth and falsehood, and is prepared to give up falsehood for the truth, he does not stand in need of any other signs than those found in this Book, in the life of the one presenting it and in the vast universe around him. On the contrary, an obstinate person, who is not interested in the truth, and who because of selfish motives is determined not to recognize and accept any such truth as may clash with his interests, will not be prepared to believe after seeing any sign whatever, even if the earth and the heaven are turned upside down in front of his eyes.

(3) The tragic end of such obstinacy as met by Pharaoh is not something for which other people should become so impatient. Those who do not believe even after seeing with their own eyes the Signs of Divine power have inevitably to meet a similar fate. Therefore, instead of learning a lesson why do you insist on seeing such a dreadful sign? For comparison, see Al-A'rāf: 103-137, Yūnus: 75-92, Banī Isrā'īl: 101-104, and Ṭā Hā: 9-79.

8. The epithet of "the wicked people" describes the extremely wicked character of the people of Pharaoh.

9. That is, "O Moses! Just see how these people are perpetrating crime and injustice presuming that they are all-powerful in the land having no fear of God, Who will call them to account in the Hereafter".

10. The sentence, "My breast straitens", shows that Prophet Moses was somewhat hesitant of going alone on such a difficult mission, and also had the feeling that he was not eloquent in speech. That is why he begged Allah to appoint Aaron too, as messenger to assist him who, being more vigorous in speech, could support and strengthen him as and when the need arose. It is just possible that in the beginning, the Prophet Moses might have begged that Aaron be appointed to Prophethood instead of him, but later when he felt that Allah willed him to be appointed to that position, he might have appealed that Aaron should at least be made his counsellor and assistant. We say this because here Prophet Moses is not praying for Aaron to be made his counsellor, but says, "Appoint Aaron to Prophethood." On the other hand, in Sūrah Ṭā Hā, he says, "Appoint for me a counsellor from my family—(let it be) my brother Aaron." Then in Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ, he says, "My brother Aaron is more vigorous in speech than myself, so send him as an assistant with me to confirm (and support) me." From this it appears that these two requests were made later, but originally Prophet Moses had begged Allah to appoint Aaron to Prophethood instead of himself.

The Bible has a different story to tell. According to it, Prophet Moses, fearing that he would be rejected by the people of Pharoah, and putting forward the excuse of his faltering speech, had declined to accept his appointment to prophethood on the pretext that he lacked vigour and eloquence in speech : "O my Lord, send, I pray Thee, by the hand of him *whom* thou wilt send." (Exodus, 4: 13). Then Allah, of His own will, appointed Aaron to be his assistant and persuaded them to go together before Pharaoh. (Exodus, 4: 1-13). For further details, see E.N. 19 of Ṭā Hā.

11. The allusion is to the incident of Prophet Moses' giving a blow to an Egyptian, who was fighting with an Israelite, and thus causing his death. Then as soon as Moses came to know that the report had reached Pharaoh and his people and they were planning to take revenge, he fled the country and took refuge in Midian. (See Al-Qaṣaṣ: 15-21) Now when after a period of almost ten years of hiding he was suddenly called upon and commanded to go before Pharaoh, who had already a charge of murder against him, with the message, Prophet Moses rightly felt apprehensive that he would immediately be involved in the murder case even before he was able to convey the message as commanded by Allah.

12. Here by "Signs" are meant the miracles of the staff and the shining hand, which were given to Moses. For details see Al-A'rāf: 106-117, Tā Hā: 17-23, An-Naml: 7-14, and Al-Qaṣaṣ: 31-32).

13. The Mission of the Prophets Moses and Aaron was twofold: First, to invite Pharaoh to the worship and obedience of Allah which has been the foremost aim of the Mission of every Prophet, and secondly, to liberate the Israelites from the bondage of Pharaoh, which was specifically assigned to them. The Qur'ān has mentioned sometimes only the first part of their Mission (as in Sūrah An-Nāzi'āt) and sometimes only the second.

14. This remark of Pharaoh shows that he was not the same Pharaoh who had brought up Moses in his house, but his son. Had he been the same Pharaoh, he would have said, "I brought you up." But, on the contrary, he says, "You were brought up among ourselves." For a detailed discussion, see E.N.'s 85-93 of Al-A'rāf.

15. The allusion is to the incident of murder committed by Moses accidentally.

16. The word *ḍalālat* does not always mean "straying away", but it is also used in the sense of ignorance, folly, error, forgetfulness, inadvertence, etc. As mentioned in Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ, Prophet Moses had only given a blow to the Egyptian (Copt) when he saw him treating an Israelite cruelly. A blow does not cause death, nor is it given with the intention of causing death. It was only an accident that the Egyptian died. As such, it was not a case of deliberate murder but of accidental murder. A murder was committed but not intentionally, nor was any weapon used, which is usually employed for murder, or which can cause murder.

17. The word *ḥukm* means wisdom, knowledge or authority, which is granted by Allah to a Prophet so that he may speak with confidence and power.

فَوَهَبَ لِيْ رَبِّيْ حُكْمًا وَّجَعَلَنِيْ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَتِلْكَ نِعْمَةٌ تَمُنُّهَا عَلَيَّ اَنْ
عَبَّدْتَّ بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ ﴿٢٢﴾ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ وَمَا رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قَالَ رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۭ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّوْقِنِيْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ قَالَ لِمَنْ حَوْلَهٗٓ اَلَا تَسْتَمِعُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالَ
رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ اٰبَاۗىِٕكُمُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ قَالَ اِنَّ رَسُوْلَكُمُ الَّذِيْٓ اُرْسِلَ اِلَيْكُمْ لَمَجْنُوْنٌ ﴿٢٧﴾
قَالَ رَبُّ الْمَشْرِقِ وَالْمَغْرِبِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۭ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ قَالَ لَىِٕنِ اتَّخَذْتَ
اِلٰهًا غَيْرِيْ لَاَجْعَلَنَّكَ مِنَ الْمَسْجُوْنِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالَ اَوَلَوْ جِئْتُكَ بِشَيْءٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ قَالَ
فَاْتِ بِهٖٓ اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ فَاَلْقٰى عَصَاهُ فَاِذَا هِيَ ثُعْبَانٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَ
نَزَعَ يَدَهٗ فَاِذَا هِيَ بَيْضَاۗءُ لِلنّٰظِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ قَالَ لِلْمَلَاِ حَوْلَهٗٓ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَسٰحِرٌ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾
يُّرِيْدُ اَنْ يُّخْرِجَكُمْ مِّنْ اَرْضِكُمْ بِسِحْرِهٖ ۤ فَمَاذَا تَاْمُرُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ قَالُوْٓا اَرْجِهْ وَاَخَاهُ
وَابْعَثْ فِي الْمَدَاۗىِٕنِ حٰشِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ يَاْتُوْكَ بِكُلِّ سَحَّارٍ عَلِيْمٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ فَجُمِعَ السَّحَرَةُ
لِمِيْقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُوْمٍ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَّقِيْلَ لِلنَّاسِ هَلْ اَنْتُمْ مُّجْتَمِعُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ لَعَلَّنَا نَتَّبِعُ السَّحَرَةَ
اِنْ كَانُوْا هُمُ الْغٰلِبِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاۗءَ السَّحَرَةُ قَالُوْا لِفِرْعَوْنَ اَىِٕنَّ لَنَا لَاَجْرًا اِنْ كُنَّا
نَحْنُ الْغٰلِبِيْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ قَالَ نَعَمْ وَاِنَّكُمْ اِذًا لَّمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِيْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ قَالَ لَهُمْ مُّوْسٰٓى
اَلْقُوْا مَآ اَنْتُمْ مُّلْقُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ فَاَلْقَوْا حِبَالَهُمْ وَعِصِيَّهُمْ وَقَالُوْا بِعِزَّةِ فِرْعَوْنَ
اِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْغٰلِبُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ فَاَلْقٰى مُوْسٰى عَصَاهُ فَاِذَا هِيَ تَلْقَفُ مَا يَاْفِكُوْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾
فَاُلْقِيَ السَّحَرَةُ سٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ قَالُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ رَبِّ مُوْسٰى وَهٰرُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾
قَالَ اٰمَنْتُمْ لَهٗ قَبْلَ اَنْ اٰذَنَ لَكُمْ ۭ اِنَّهٗ لَكَبِيْرُكُمُ الَّذِيْ عَلَّمَكُمُ السِّحْرَ ۚ
فَلَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۭ لَاُقَطِّعَنَّ اَيْدِيَكُمْ وَاَرْجُلَكُمْ مِّنْ خِلَافٍ وَّلَاُوصَلِّبَنَّكُمْ
اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ قَالُوْا لَا ضَيْرَ ۭ اِنَّآ اِلٰى رَبِّنَا مُنْقَلِبُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ اِنَّا نَطْمَعُ اَنْ يَّغْفِرَ لَنَا

As for the favour of which you have reminded me, the fact is 22
that you had reduced the Israelites to bondsmen."[18]

Pharaoh said,[19] "And what is this Lord of all Creation?"[20] 23

Moses answered, "The Lord of the heavens and the earth and 24
of all that is between them, if only you care to believe!"[21]

Pharaoh said to those around him, "Do you hear?" 25

Moses said, "Your Lord as well as Lord of your forefathers 26
who have gone before."[22]

Pharaoh said (to all those present), "This messenger of yours, 27
who has been sent to you, seems to be utterly mad."

Moses said, "(He is) Lord of the east and the west and of all 28
that is between them, if only you people have any common-sense"[23]

Pharaoh said, "If you take any one other than me as a deity, I 29
will cast you among those who are rotting in the prisons."[24]

Moses said, "Even if I bring forth a convincing thing?"[25] 30

Pharaoh replied, "Well, bring it if you are truthful."[26] 31

(No sooner had he uttered these words than) Moses cast down 32-33
his staff, and suddenly it became a serpent.[27] Then he drew out his hand (from the armpit) and it was shining bright for all the spectators.[28]

Pharaoh said to the chiefs around him, "This fellow is certainly 34-35
a skilled magician: he wants to drive you out of your land by means of his magic.[29] Now, what is your command ?"[30]

They said, "Detain him and his brother for a while, and send 36-37
forth heralds to the cities to summon every skilled magician into your presence."

So, the magicians were gathered together on an appointed day 38-40
and time,[31] and the people were asked, "Would you come to the gathering?[32] We may perhaps still follow the magicians' way if they are dominant."[33]

When the magicians arrived for the contest, they said to 41
Pharaoh, "Shall we have rewards if we win ?"[34]

42 He replied, "Of course, and then you will be included among those nearest to me."[35]

43 Moses said, "Cast down what you have to cast down."

44-48 They forthwith cast down their cords and staffs and said, "By Pharaoh's honour, we shall surely win"[36] Then Moses cast down his staff, and lo ! it started devouring up their false devices. At this, all the magicians fell down in prostration, and cried out, "We have believed in the Lord of all creation the Lord of Moses and Aaron !"[37]

49 Pharaoh said, "You have believed in Moses even before I should have permitted you ! He must be your chief who has taught you magic[38] Well, you shall soon come to know: I shall have your hands and feet cut off on opposite sides and shall crucify you all"[39]

50-51 They replied, "We care not: we shall pass into our Lord's presence, and we expect that our Lord will forgive us our sins because we are the first to believe."[40]

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18. That is, "If you had not been unjust and cruel to the Israelites, I should not have been brought to your house for upbringing. It was only on account of your barbarism that my mother put me in a basket and cast it into the river. Had it not been so, I should have been happily brought up in my own house. Therefore, it does not behove you to remind me of your favour of bringing me up in your house."

19. Here the details that Prophet Moses went before Pharaoh as the Messenger of the Lord of the universe and conveyed to him His message, have been omitted, and only the conversation that took place between them has been related.

20. This question of Pharaoh concerned the assertion of Moses that he had been sent by the Lord, Master and Ruler of all Creation with the message that he should let the Israelites go with him. This was a political message. It implied that the One, Whom Moses claimed to represent, possessed authority and sovereign rights over all the people of the world including Pharaoh and that he was not only encroaching upon his sphere of sovereignty as Supreme Ruler, but was also sending him the Command that he should hand over a section of his subjects to the representative appointed by Him, so that he should take them out of his kingdom. That is why Pharaoh asked, "Who is this Master and Ruler of all Creation who is sending such a command to the king of Egypt through an ordinary subject of his kingdom?"

21. That is, "I have not been sent by any mortal king ruling in the world, but I come from Him Who is the Owner of the heavens and the earth. If you believe that there is a Creator and Master and Ruler of this universe, it should not be difficult for you to understand who is the Lord of all Creation."

22. These words were addressed to the chiefs of Pharaoh, whom he had asked, "Do you hear?" Prophet Moses said: "I do not believe in the false gods who exist today, but did not exist yesterday, or who existed yesterday but do not exist today. This Pharaoh, whom you worship as your lord today, did not exist yesterday, and the Pharaohs whom your elders worshipped yesterday, do not exist today; whereas I believe in the sovereignty and authority of that Lord Who is both your Lord and Pharaoh's Lord as much today as He was your elders' Lord before this."

23. That is, "You regard me as a mad person, but if you think you are wise people, you should yourself decide as to who is the real lord: this wretched Pharaoh who is ruling over a small piece of earth, or He Who is the Owner of the east and the west and of everything bounded by the east and the west including the land of Egypt. I believe in His sovereignty alone and have been sent to convey His message to a creature of His."

24. To understand and appreciate this conversation fully, one should bear in mind the fact that as it is today, in the ancient times too, the concept of "deity" was confined to its religious sense only. The deity was meant to be worshipped and presented offerings and gifts, and because of its "supernatural powers" and authority the people were to pray to it for help and fulfilment of their desires. But a deity's being supreme legally and politically also and his right to enjoin anything he pleased in the mundane affairs and man's duty to submit to his commands as to superior law, has never been recognized by the socalled worldly rulers. They have always claimed that in the mundane affairs, they alone possess absolute authority and no deity has any right to interfere in the polity and law prescribed by them. This very thing has been the real cause of the conflict between the Prophets and their righteous followers, on the one hand, and the worldly kingdoms and governments on the other. The Prophets have been trying their utmost to make the worldly rulers acknowledge the sovereign and absolute rights of the Lord of the Worlds, but they in return have not only been claiming sovereign powers and rights for themselves, but have been considering every such person as a criminal and rebel, who has held someone else as a deity in the political and legal sphere. With this background one can easily understand the real significance of Pharaoh's words. Had it been a question of mere worship and offerings, he would have least bothered that Moses, forsaking all gods, regarded only Allah, the Lord of all Creation, as worthy of those rights. If Moses had invited him to serve Allah alone,

he would not have felt provoked and offended. At the most he would have refused to give up the creed of his forefathers, or would have challenged Moses to have a debate with his own religious scholars. But what caused him provocation was that Prophet Moses was presenting himself as the representative of the Lord of all Creation and was conveying to him a political command as if he was a subordinate ruler and the representative of the superior authority was demanding obedience from him to the command. In this sense, he was not prepared to acknowledge any other political or legal authority, nor allow any of his subjects to acknowledge anybody instead of himself as the supreme ruler. That is why he challenged the term "Lord of all Creation", for the message sent by Him clearly reflected sovereignty in the political and not in the mere religious sense. Then, when Prophet Moses explained over and over again what he meant by the "Lord of all Creation", Pharaoh threatened that if he held any one other than him as sovereign in the land of Egypt, he would be cast into prison.

25. That is, "Will you still deny me and send me to prison, even if I present a convincing Sign to prove that I am really the Messenger of God, Who is Lord of all Creation, Lord of the heavens and the earth and Lord of the east and the west?"

26. This reply of Pharaoh shows that he was not in any way different from the common polytheists of the ancient and modern times. Like all other polytheists he believed in Allah's being the highest Deity in the supernatural sense. Who wielded greater power and authority than all other gods and goddesses. That is why Prophet Moses said to him, "If you do not believe that I have been appointed by Allah, I can present such clear Signs as will prove that I have really been sent by Him", and that is why Pharaoh said, "If you are true in your claim, come out with your Sign", otherwise if he had any doubt about the existence of Allah or His being Master of the universe, he would not have asked for the Sign.

27. *Thub'ān* means a serpent. At other places, the Qur'ān has used *ḥayyatun* (snake) and *jānn* (a small snake) to describe the snake of the staff. The interpretation given by Imām Rāzī is that the snake of the staff looked like a serpent from its big size and has been called *jānn* on account of its swift movement which is characteristic of small snakes.

28. Some commentators under the influence of the Israelite traditions have translated *baiḍā'* as white and have taken it to mean that the healthy hand when drawn out of the armpit became white as if struck by leprosy. But commentators like Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Kathīr, Zamakhsharī, Rāzī, Abul Sa'ūd 'Imādī, Ālūsī and others are agreed that *baiḍā'* here means shining and bright. As soon as Prophet Moses took out his hand from the armpit, it made the whole place bright as if by the sun. For further explanation, see E.N. 13 of Ṭā Hā.

29. The impact of the two miracles can be judged from the fact that a moment before this Pharaoh was calling Moses a mad man, because he had claimed to be a Prophet and had had the boldness to openly demand release of the Israelites. He was also threatening Moses that if he took somebody else as Lord instead of him, he would cast him into the prison for life. But, after he had seen the Signs, he became so terror-stricken that he felt his kingdom to be at stake, and in his confusion he did not realize that he was talking meaninglessly to his servants in the court. Two men from the oppressed community of the Israelites were standing before the most powerful ruler of the time: they had no military force with them, they belonged to a weak and lifeless community, and there was no sign of any rebellion in any corner of the country, nor did they have the support of any foreign power, yet as soon as the miracles of the snake of the staff and the shining hand were shown, the tyrant desperately cried out: "These two men want to seize power and deprive the ruling class of their sovereign rights!" His apprehension that Moses would do so by force of his magic again reflected a confused state of mind, for nowhere in the world has a political revolution been ever brought about, nor a country taken, nor a war won merely by force of magic. There were many magicians in Egypt, who could perform masterly tricks of magic, but Pharaoh knew it well that they were nonentities because they performed magic only for the sake of rewards.

30. This sentence further shows Pharaoh's perplexed state of mind. A moment before he was the deity of his courtiers and, now, struck by awe, the deity is asking his servants as to what he should do to meet the dangerous situation.

31. As already mentioned in Sūrah Ṭā Hā (v. 59), the day fixed for the purpose was the day of the national festivities of the Egyptians so that large crowds of people coming to the festivals from every part of the country should also witness the grand "contest" which was to be held in the broad daylight so that the spectators could see the performances clearly.

32. That is, besides proclamation heralds were sent to urge the people to come and see the contest. It appears that the news of the miracle shown by Prophet Moses before the packed court had reached the common people also, and Pharaoh fearing that the people at large might be influenced, wanted that they should come together in large numbers so that they could see for themselves that turning a staff into a snake had nothing extraordinary in it because such a trick could be performed by every common magician of their own country as well.

33. This sentence confirms the idea that those who had witnessed the miracle of Moses in the royal court and those who had heard of it reliably outside were losing faith in their ancestral religion, and now the strength of their faith depended on this that their own magicians also should give a performance similar

to that of Moses. That is why Pharaoh and his chiefs themselves regarded this contest as a decisive one, and their heralds were busy moving about in the land, impressing on the people that if the magicians won the day, they would yet be secured against the risk of being won over to Moses' religion, otherwise there was every possibility of their creed's being exposed and abandoned for ever.

34. Such was the mentality of the supporters of the polytheistic creed of the land, whose only ambition was to win rewards from the king if they won the day.

35. This was then the highest honour that the king could confer on those who served the creed best. Thus, at the very outset, Pharaoh and his magicians manifested by their conduct the great moral distinction that exists between a Prophet and a magician. On the one side, there stood that embodiment of courage and confidence, who in spite of belonging to the suppressed community of the Israelites and having remained in hiding for ten long years on account of a charge of murder, had suddenly appeared in Pharaoh's court to proclaim fearlessly that he had been sent by the Lord of all Creation and demanded release of the Israelites. He did not even feel the least hesitation in starting a discussion face to face with Pharaoh not caring in the least for his threats. On the other side, there were the wretched magicians wholly lacking in moral fibre, who had been summoned by Pharaoh himself to help secure the ancestral religion, and yet they were begging for rewards in return for the services. And when they are told that they will not only be given rewards but will also be included among the royal courtiers, they feel greatly overjoyed. These two types of characters clearly bring out the difference between the grand personality of a Prophet and that of a mere magician. Unless a man loses all sense of modesty and decency, he cannot have the audacity to call a Prophet a magician.

36. As soon as they cast down their cords and staffs, these started moving like so many snakes towards Moses. This has been described in greater detail at other places in the Qur'ān. According to Al-A'rāf: 116: "When they threw down their devices, they bewitched the eyes of the people and terrified their hearts: for they had indeed produced a great magic." And according to Ṭā Hā: 66, 67: "Suddenly it so appeared to Moses that their cords and staffs were running about by the power of their magic, and Moses' heart was filled with fear."

37. This was not merely an acknowledgment of their defeat at the hands of Moses as though he was a greater magician, but their falling prostrate in submission to Allah, Lord of the universe, was an open declaration before thousands of Egyptians that what Moses had brought about was no magic at all, but a manifestation of the powers of Allah, Almighty.

38. This only shows the extreme obstinacy and obduracy of Pharaoh, who even after witnessing a clear miracle and the testimony of the magicians on it, was still insisting that it was magic. But according to Al-A'rāf: 123, Pharaoh said, "Indeed it was a plot you conspired in the capital to deprive the rightful owners of their power." Thus he tried to make the people believe that the magicians had yielded to Moses not because of the miracle but due to a conspiracy with Moses before they entered the contest, so that they might seize political power and enjoy its fruits together.

39. This horrible threat was held out by Pharaoh to justify his thinking that the magicians had entered a conspiracy with Moses. He thought that the magicians, in order to save their lives, would confess the plot and thus the effect produced by their falling prostrate and believing in Moses in front of thousands of spectators would be gone.

40. That is, "We have to return to our Lord in any case. If you kill us now, we shall present ourselves before Him just today, and we have nothing to worry in this. We rather expect that we shall be forgiven our sins and errors because out of this entire gathering we were the first to believe as soon as reality became known to us."

This reply of the magicians made two things absolutely clear to the people who had been gathered together by Pharaoh heralds:

First, that Pharaoh was a dishonest obdurate and deceitful person. When he saw that Moses had come out successful in the contest which he himself had arranged to be decisive, he concocted a plot and forced the magicians to confess it by coercion and threats. Had there been any truth in it, the magicians would not have readily offered to have their hands and feet cut off on opposite sides and get crucified. The fact that the magicians remained steadfast and firm in their belief even in the face of such a horrible threat, proves that the accusation of plotting a conspiracy against Pharaoh was baseless. The fact was that the magicians being experts in their art had realized that what Moses had displayed was no magic, but surely a manifestation of the powers of Allah, Lord of the universe.

Secondly, thousands of the people who had gathered together from all corners of the land had themselves witnessed the great moral change that had occurred in the magicians as soon as they professed belief in the Lord of the universe. The same magicians who had been summoned to strengthen and secure the ancestral creed by means of their magic and who, a minute before, were humbly begging Pharaoh for rewards had now become so bold and ennobled spiritually that they would not take any notice of Pharaoh's powers and his threats

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رَبُّنَا خَطٰيٰنَآ اَنْ كُنَّآ اَوَّلَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ وَاَوْحَيْنَآ اِلٰى مُوْسٰٓى اَنْ اَسْرِ بِعِبَادِيْٓ
اِنَّكُمْ مُّتَّبَعُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ فَاَرْسَلَ فِرْعَوْنُ فِى الْمَدَآئِنِ حٰشِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ اِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ لَشِرْذِمَةٌ
قَلِيْلُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَاِنَّهُمْ لَنَا لَغَآئِظُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَاِنَّا لَجَمِيْعٌ حٰذِرُوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَاَخْرَجْنٰهُمْ مِّنْ
جَنّٰتٍ وَّعُيُوْنٍ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَّكُنُوْزٍ وَّمَقَامٍ كَرِيْمٍ ﴿٥٨﴾ كَذٰلِكَ ۖ وَاَوْرَثْنٰهَا بَنِىْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ ﴿٥٩﴾
فَاَتْبَعُوْهُمْ مُّشْرِقِيْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ فَلَمَّا تَرَآءَ الْجَمْعٰنِ قَالَ اَصْحٰبُ مُوْسٰٓى اِنَّا لَمُدْرَكُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾
قَالَ كَلَّا ۚ اِنَّ مَعِىَ رَبِّىْ سَيَهْدِيْنِ ﴿٦٢﴾ فَاَوْحَيْنَآ اِلٰى مُوْسٰٓى اَنِ اضْرِبْ بِّعَصَاكَ
الْبَحْرَ ۖ فَانْفَلَقَ فَكَانَ كُلُّ فِرْقٍ كَالطَّوْدِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَاَزْلَفْنَا ثَمَّ الْاٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾
وَاَنْجَيْنَا مُوْسٰى وَمَنْ مَّعَهٗٓ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ ثُمَّ اَغْرَقْنَا الْاٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ
لَاٰيَةً ۖ وَمَا كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٦٨﴾
وَاتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَاَ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ ﴿٦٩﴾ اِذْ قَالَ لِاَبِيْهِ وَقَوْمِهٖ مَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالُوْا
نَعْبُدُ اَصْنَامًا فَنَظَلُّ لَهَا عٰكِفِيْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ قَالَ هَلْ يَسْمَعُوْنَكُمْ اِذْ تَدْعُوْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ اَوْ
يَنْفَعُوْنَكُمْ اَوْ يَضُرُّوْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ قَالُوْا بَلْ وَجَدْنَآ اٰبَآءَنَا كَذٰلِكَ يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ قَالَ
اَفَرَءَيْتُمْ مَّا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ اَنْتُمْ وَاٰبَآؤُكُمُ الْاَقْدَمُوْنَ ﴿٧٦﴾ فَاِنَّهُمْ عَدُوٌّ لِّىْٓ
اِلَّا رَبَّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَنِىْ فَهُوَ يَهْدِيْنِ ﴿٧٨﴾ وَالَّذِىْ هُوَ يُطْعِمُنِىْ
وَيَسْقِيْنِ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَاِذَا مَرِضْتُ فَهُوَ يَشْفِيْنِ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَالَّذِىْ يُمِيْتُنِىْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيْنِ ﴿٨١﴾ وَ
الَّذِىْٓ اَطْمَعُ اَنْ يَّغْفِرَ لِىْ خَطِيْٓـَٔتِىْ يَوْمَ الدِّيْنِ ﴿٨٢﴾ رَبِّ هَبْ لِىْ حُكْمًا وَّ
اَلْحِقْنِىْ بِالصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَاجْعَلْ لِّىْ لِسَانَ صِدْقٍ فِى الْاٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَاجْعَلْنِىْ
مِنْ وَّرَثَةِ جَنَّةِ النَّعِيْمِ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَاغْفِرْ لِاَبِىْٓ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ مِنَ الضَّآلِّيْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَلَا تُخْزِنِىْ
يَوْمَ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَّلَا بَنُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾ اِلَّا مَنْ اَتَى اللّٰهَ بِقَلْبٍ

We inspired Moses with this:[41] "Set off with My servants by night, for you will be pursued."[42] At this, Pharaoh sent out heralds to the cities (for mobilization, saying): "These are but a handful of people, who have provoked us much; and we are a host who are always on our guard."[43] Thus did We draw them out from their gardens and their water-springs and their treasure-houses and fine dwellings.[44] This is how they were dealt with, while (on the other hand) We made the Children of Israel inherit all these things.[45] 52-59

In the morning these people set out in pursuit of them. When the two hosts came face to face with each other, the companions of Moses cried out: "We are overtaken !" Moses said, "No, never! With me indeed is my Lord: He will surely guide me."[46] We inspired Moses with the Command: "Smite the sea with your staff." The sea parted forthwith and its each part stood like a mighty mountain.[47] And We led to the same place the other host, too. We saved Moses and all his companions, and drowned the others. 60-66

There is indeed a Sign in this,[49] but most of these people would not believe. The fact is that your Lord is Mighty as well as Merciful. 67-68

And tell them the story of Abraham[50] when he asked his father and his people: "What are these things that you worship?"[51] They answered, "These are idols which we worship and we serve them devotedly."[52] Abraham asked, "Do they hear you when you call on them? Or do they bring any good or harm to you?" They replied, "No, but we have found our elders doing the same."[53] At this, Abraham said, "Have you ever seen (with open eyes) the things which you and your elders have been worshipping ?[54] They are all enemies to me,[55] except One Lord of the worlds,[56] Who created me,[57] then He it is Who guides me, Who gives me food and drink, and Who gives me health when I am ill,[58] Who will cause me to die and then will give me life again, and of Whom I expect that He will forgive me my errors on the Day of Judgment."[59] (After this Abraham prayed:) "My Lord, bestow upon me knowledge and wisdom[60] and join me with the righteous,[61] and grant me true renown among posterity,[62] and include me among the inheritors of the blissful Garden, and forgive my father, for indeed he is from among those who have strayed,[63] and do not disgrace me on the Day when everybody will be raised back to life,[64] when neither wealth will avail 69-89

anybody, nor children, except that one should appear before Allah with a sound heart."[65]

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and were even prepared to face death and extreme physical torture for the sake of their Faith. Thus psychologically there could not be a better occasion to expose the polytheistic creed of the Egyptians in their own eyes and help impress the truth of Moses' religion in the minds of the people.

41. The mention of migration here does not mean that Prophet Moses and the Israelites were immediately ordered to leave Egypt. The history of the intervening period has been related in Al-A'rāf: 127-135 and Yūnus: 83-89, and a part of it has been mentioned in Al-Mu'min: 23-46 and Az-Zukhruf: 46-56. Here the story is being cut short and only the final phase of the conflict between Pharaoh and Prophet Moses is given to show the tragic end of Pharaoh who had remained obdurate even after witnessing clear Signs and the ultimate success of Moses who had Divine support behind his message.

42. The warning that "you will be pursued" shows the wisdom of the instruction to set off during the night. The idea was that before Pharaoh came out with his hosts to pursue them, they should have gone far enough so as to be out of reach of him. It should be borne in mind that the Israelites were not settled in one place in Egypt but were scattered in cities and habitations all over the country and lived in large numbers especially in the land between Memphis and Rameses called Goshen. (See map in Vol. III, p. 31, on the Exodus of the Israelites). It appears that when Prophet Moses was commanded to leave Egypt, he must have sent instructions to the Israelite habitations telling the people to make necessary preparations for migration and he must have also fixed a night for them to leave their homes for the exodus.

43. All this shows that Pharaoh in fact was terror-stricken, but was trying to hide his fear under cover of fearlessness. On the one hand, he was mobilizing forces to face the situation; on the other, he wanted to show that he was undaunted and undeterred, for a despotic ruler like Pharaoh could have no danger from a suppressed and slave community which had been living in disgrace for centuries. That is why his heralds made the people believe that the Israelites were just a handful of people, who could do them no harm, but had to be punished for the provocation they had caused. As for mobilization, it was only a precautionary measure which had been taken to meet any eventuality in time.

44. The general mobilization ordered by Pharaoh was aimed to crush the Israelites completely, but God's device turned the tables on him and drew out all his chiefs and courtiers from their dwelling places and drove them to the place

where they and their hosts were to be drowned all together. Had they not pursued the Israelites, nothing would have happened save that a community would have left the country quietly and they would have continued to enjoy life in their fine dwellings as before. But they in fact had cleverly planned not to allow the Israelites go away peacefully, but to attack the migrating caravans suddenly to finish them completely. For this very purpose the princes and the high chiefs and the nobles came out of their palaces and joined Pharaoh in the campaign, but their cleverness did not avail them anything. Not only did the Israelites succeed in escaping from Egypt, but also at the same time the elite of Pharaoh's tyrannical kingdom perished in the sea.

45. Some commentators have interpreted this verse to mean that Allah made the Children of Israel to inherit the gardens, water-springs, treasure-houses and fine dwellings vacated and left behind by Pharaoh and his people. This would inevitably mean that after the drowning of Pharaoh, the Israelites returned to Egypt and took possession of the wealth and properties of Pharaoh's people. This interpretation, however, is neither supported by history nor by other verses of the Qur'ān. The relevant verses of Sūrahs Al-Baqarah, Al-Mā'idah, Al-A'rāf and Tā Hā confirm that after the destruction of Pharaoh in the sea, the Israelites did not return to Egypt but proceeded towards their destination (Palestine) and then, till the time of Prophet David (973-1013 B.C.) all the major events of their history took place in the lands which are now known as the Sinai Peninsula, northern Arabia, Transjordan and Palestine. As such, in our opinion the verses mean this: On the one hand, Allah deprived the people of Pharaoh of their wealth, possessions and grandeur, and on the other, He bestowed the same on the Children of Israel in Palestine, and not in Egypt. This same meaning is borne out by vv. 136-137 of Al-A'rāf: "Then We took Our vengeance on them and drowned them in the sea because they had treated Our Signs as false and grown heedless of them. And after them We gave as heritage to those who had been abased and kept low, the eastern and the western parts of that land, which had been blessed bountifully by Us." The epithet of "the blessed land" has generally been used for Palestine in the Qur'ān as in Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl: 1, Al-Anbiyā': 71-81, and Sabā': 18.

46. That is, "He will show me the way out of this calamity"

47. Literally, *tawd* is a high mountain. It appears that as soon as Prophet Moses struck the sea with his staff, it tore the sea asunder and the waters stood like two mighty mountains on the sides and remained in that condition for so long that, on the one hand, the Israelite caravans consisting of hundreds of thousands of the migrants were able to pass through safely, and on the other, Pharaoh and his hosts stepped in and reached the middle of the sea. In the natural course, a phenomenon like this has never occurred that due to a windstorm, however strong, the sea

should have parted and stood like mighty mountains on either side for such a long time. According to verse 77 of Ṭā Hā, Prophet Moses was commanded by Allah "to make for them (the Israelites) a dry path across the sea." This shows that the smiting of the sea did not only result in dividing the waters into two parts, which stood like mighty mountains on either side, but it also created a dry path in between without any mud or slush. In this connection, one should also consider verse 24 of Sūrah Dukhān, which says that after Moses had crossed the sea along with his people, he was commanded by Allah "to let the sea remain as it is because Pharaoh is to be drowned in it." This implies that if after crossing the sea, Moses had again struck it with his staff, the two sides would have rejoined, but he was forbidden to do so. Obviously, this was a miracle, and the view of those who try to interpret it as a natural phenomenon, is belied. For explanation, see E.N. 53 of Ṭā Hā.

48. That is, Pharaoh and his army.

49. That is, the Quraish have this lesson to learn from this: "The obdurate people like Pharaoh, his chiefs and followers had not believed even though they had been shown clear miracles for years. They had been so blinded by obduracy that even on the occasion of their drowning in the sea although they had seen the sea parting asunder in front of their very eyes, the waters standing like high mountains on either side, and the dry path in between for the Israelite caravans to pass, yet they failed to understand that Moses had Divine succour and support with him which they had come out to fight. At last when they came to their senses, it was too late, because they had been overtaken by the wrath of Allah and the sea waters had covered them completely. It was on this occasion that Pharaoh had cried out "I have believed that there is no god but the real God in Whom the Children of Israel have believed and I am of those who surrender." (Yūnus: 90).

On the other hand, there is a Sign in this for the believers, too. They should understand how Allah by His grace causes the Truth to prevail in the long run and the falsehood to vanish even though the forces to evil may appear to be dominant for the time being.

50. This part of the life-history of Prophet Abraham relates to the time when after his appointment to Prophethood, a conflict had started between him and his people on the questions of *shirk* and *Tauḥīd*. In this connection, the reader should also see Al-Baqarah: 258-260, Al-An'ām: 75-83, Maryam: 41-50, Al-Anbiyā': 51-70, As- Ṣāffāt: 83-113, and Al-Mumtaḥanah: 4-5.

The Qur'ān has specially repeated this part of Prophet Abraham's life-story over and over again because the Arabs in general and the Quraish in particular regarded themselves as his followers and professed his way and creed.

Besides them, the Christians and the Jews also claimed that Abraham was their religious leader and guide. That is why the Qur'ān admonishes them over and over again that the creed brought by Abraham was Islam itself, which is now being presented by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), and which they are opposing tooth and nail. Prophet Abraham was not a *mushrik*, but an antagonist against *shirk*, and for the same reason he had to leave his home and country and live as a migrant in Syria, Palestine and Hejāz. Thus he was neither a Jew nor a Christian, because Judaism and Christianity appeared centuries after him. This historical argument could neither be refuted by the *mushriks*, nor by the Jews or the Christians, because the *mushriks* themselves admitted that idol-worship in Arabia had started several centuries after Prophet Abraham, and the Jews and the Christians also could not deny that Prophet Abraham had lived long before the beginning of Judaism and Christianity. This obviously meant that the special beliefs and customs which those people thought formed the basis of their religion, were not part of the original religion taught by Prophet Abraham. True religion was the one which had no tinge of those impurities, but was based on those worship and obedience of One Allah alone. That is why the Qur'ān says:

"Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a Muslim, sound in the Faith, and he was not of those who set up partners with Allah. Surely only those people who follow Abraham are entitled to claim a relationship with him. Now this Prophet and the believers are better entitled to this relationship." (Al-An'ām: 67, 68).

51. Obviously the object of this question was to remind the people that the deities which they worshipped were false and absolutely powerless. In Sūrah Al-Anbiyā', the same question has been posed thus: "What are these images to which you are so devoted ?" (V. 52).

52. Though everybody knew that they worshipped idols, their answer implied that they were firm in faith and their hearts were satisfied with it, as if to say, "We also know that these are idols of stone and wood, which we worship, but our faith demands that we should serve and worship them devotedly."

53. That is, "We do not worship and serve them because they hear our prayers and supplications, or that they can harm and benefit us, but because we have seen our elders worshipping and serving them." Thus, they themselves admitted that the only reason of their worshipping the idols was the blind imitation of their forefathers. In other words, they meant this: "There is nothing new in what you are telling us. We know that these are idols of stone and wood, which do not hear anything, nor can harm or do good; but we cannot believe that our elders who have been worshipping them since centuries, generation after generation,

were foolish people. They must have had some good reason for worshipping these lifeless images, so we are doing the same as we have full faith in them."

54. That is, "Is it enough to say that a religion is true only because it has been held as such by their ancestors ? Should people, generation after generation, go on following their ancestors in their footsteps blindly without ever caring to see whether the deities they worship possess any divine attribute or not, and whether they have any power to influence their destinies?"

55. That is, "When I consider them, I see that if I worship them, I shall ruin myself both in this world and in the Hereafter. As their worship is clearly harmful, worshipping them is worshipping one's enemy." These words of Prophet Abraham bear a close connection with verses 81, 82 of Sūrah Maryam, which say: "These people have set up other gods than Allah so that they may become their supporters. But they will have no supporter; all of them will not only disown their worship but also become their opponents (on the Day of Judgment)."

It should be noted that Prophet Abraham did not say, "They are enemies to you", but said, "They are enemies to me." In the first case, there was every chance that the people would have felt offended and provoked, because it would have been difficult for them to understand how their own gods could be their enemies. As a matter of fact, Prophet Abraham appealed to the natural feeling of man that he is his own well-wisher and cannot wish ill of himself deliberately. This would inevitably have led the addressees to think whether what they were doing was really for their good and was in no way harmful.

56. That is, "Of all the deities who are being worshipped in the world, there is only One Allah alone, Lord of the universe, in whose worship I find any good for myself, and Whose worship is the worship of one's own Cherisher and Supporter, and not of one's enemy." Then Prophet Abraham briefly gives the arguments, which nobody could refute, as to why Allah alone is worthy of man's worship and indirectly suggests that his addressees (the idol-worshippers) had no rational basis for worshipping deities other than Allah except in blind imitation of their forefathers.

57. This is the first reason for which Allah, and One Allah alone, is worthy of man's worship. The people also knew and believed that Allah alone was their Creator without any partner. Not only they but all the polytheists of the world also have always held the belief that even the deities they worshipped were the creation of Allah, and except for the atheists none have ever denied that Allah is the Creator of the whole universe. This argument of Prophet Abraham implied that being a creature, he could only worship his Creator, Who was alone worthy of his worship, and none else, because none besides Allah had any share in His creation.

58. The second reason for worshipping Allah and Allah alone is that Allah had not become unconcerned with man after creating him and let him alone to see

other supporters for help, but had also taken the responsibility of making arrangements for his guidance, protection and fulfilment of his needs. The moment a human child is born, milk is produced for it in the breasts of its mother, and some unseen power teaches it the way to suck it and take it down the throat. From the first day of his life till his death, the Creator has provided in the world around him all necessary means required for every stage of his life for his development and guidance, sustenance and survival. He has also endowed him with all those powers and abilities which are needed to use the means with advantage and given him all necessary guidance for every sphere of life. Then for the protection of human life against all sorts of disease, germs and poisons, He has created such effective antidotes that they have not yet been fully encompassed by human knowledge. If these natural arrangements had not been made, even a thorn-prick would have proved fatal. When this all-pervading mercy and providence of the Creator is supporting and sustaining man at all times in every way, there could be no greater folly and ingratitude on the part of man than this that he should bow down before others than Allah and seek their help in need and trouble.

59. The third reason for worshipping none but Allah is that man's relation with his God is not merely confined to this worldly life, which will end at death, but extends to life-after-death also. The same God Who brought him into existence, recalls him and there is no power which can stop his return from the world. No remedy, no physician no god or goddess has ever been able to catch the hand which takes man out of this world. Even all those men who were made deities and worshipped, could not ward off their own deaths. Only Allah judges and decides when a particular person is to be recalled from the world, and whenever somebody is recalled by Him, he has to leave this world in any case. Then it is Allah alone Who will decide as to when He should raise back to life all those people who were born in this world and died and buried here, and ask them to account for their worldly lives. Then also nobody will have the power to stop resurrection of himself or others. Every human being will have to rise on the Command of Allah and appear in His Court. Then Allah alone will be the Judge on that Day, and nobody else will be a partner in his judgment in any degree. To punish or to forgive will be entirely in Allah's hand. Nobody will have the power to get somebody forgiven if Allah would want to punish him, and punished if Allah would want to forgive him. All those who are regarded as intercessors in the world, will themselves be hoping for Allah's mercy and grace for their forgiveness. In view of these facts anybody who worships others than Allah, is in fact preparing for his own doom. There can be no greater misfortune than this that man should turn away from Allah Who controls his life here as well as in the Hereafter, and should turn for help and support to those who are utterly powerless in this regard.

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سَلِيْمٍ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَ اُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٩٠﴾ وَ بُرِّزَتِ الْجَحِيْمُ لِلْغٰوِيْنَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَ قِيْلَ
لَهُمْ اَيْنَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ هَلْ يَنْصُرُوْنَكُمْ اَوْ يَنْتَصِرُوْنَ ﴿٩٣﴾
فَكُبْكِبُوْا فِيْهَا هُمْ وَ الْغَاوٗنَ ﴿٩٤﴾ وَ جُنُوْدُ اِبْلِيْسَ اَجْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٩٥﴾ قَالُوْا وَ هُمْ فِيْهَا
يَخْتَصِمُوْنَ ﴿٩٦﴾ تَاللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنَّا لَفِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٩٧﴾ اِذْ نُسَوِّيْكُمْ بِرَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٩٨﴾
وَ مَاۤ اَضَلَّنَاۤ اِلَّا الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿٩٩﴾ فَمَا لَنَا مِنْ شَافِعِيْنَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ وَ لَاۤ صَدِيْقٍ حَمِيْمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾
فَلَوْ اَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ؕ وَ مَا كَانَ
اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١٠٤﴾ كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ نُوْحِ
الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ اِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ اَخُوْهُمْ نُوْحٌ اَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٠٦﴾ اِنِّيْ لَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ
اَمِيْنٌ ﴿١٠٧﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَ اَطِيْعُوْنِ ﴿١٠٨﴾ وَ مَاۤ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ ۚ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ
اِلَّا عَلٰى رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَ اَطِيْعُوْنِ ﴿١١٠﴾ قَالُوْۤا اَنُؤْمِنُ لَكَ وَ
اتَّبَعَكَ الْاَرْذَلُوْنَ ﴿١١١﴾ قَالَ وَ مَا عِلْمِيْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١١٢﴾ اِنْ حِسَابُهُمْ
اِلَّا عَلٰى رَبِّيْ لَوْ تَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿١١٣﴾ وَ مَاۤ اَنَا بِطَارِدِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١١٤﴾ اِنْ اَنَا اِلَّا نَذِيْرٌ
مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١١٥﴾ قَالُوْا لَئِنْ لَّمْ تَنْتَهِ يٰنُوْحُ لَتَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْمَرْجُوْمِيْنَ ﴿١١٦﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اِنَّ
قَوْمِيْ كَذَّبُوْنِ ﴿١١٧﴾ فَافْتَحْ بَيْنِيْ وَ بَيْنَهُمْ فَتْحًا وَّ نَجِّنِيْ وَ مَنْ مَّعِيَ مِنَ
الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١١٨﴾ فَاَنْجَيْنٰهُ وَ مَنْ مَّعَهٗ فِي الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُوْنِ ﴿١١٩﴾ ثُمَّ اَغْرَقْنَا بَعْدُ
الْبٰقِيْنَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ؕ وَ مَا كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٢١﴾ وَ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ
لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١٢٢﴾ كَذَّبَتْ عَادُ ِۨ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ اِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ اَخُوْهُمْ
هُوْدٌ اَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٢٤﴾ اِنِّيْ لَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ اَمِيْنٌ ﴿١٢٥﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَ اَطِيْعُوْنِ ﴿١٢٦﴾ وَ
مَاۤ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ ۚ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلٰى رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ اَتَبْنُوْنَ

___(On that Day)[66] Paradise will be brought close to the righteous, and Hell will be set open before the straying ones,[67] and they will be asked: "Where are those whom you worshipped instead of Allah? Are they of any help to you, or even to themselves ?" Then these deities and those erring people, and the hosts of Satan, all will be hurled into it, one upon the other.[68] Therein they will dispute with one another, and these erring people will say (to their deities): "By God ! We had certainly strayed when we held you equal in rank with the Lord of the worlds, and they were criminals indeed who led us astray.[69] Now we have neither any intercessor[70] nor any true friend.[71] Would that we were given a chance to return (to the world) so that we became believers."[72] 90-102

Indeed there is a great Sign in this,[73] but most of these people would not believe. The fact is that your Lord is Mighty as well as Merciful. 103-104

Noah's people[74] rejected the Messengers.[75] Remember the time when their brother Noah said to them: "Do you not fear?[76] I am a Messenger to you worthy of full trust:[77] so fear Allah and obey me:[78] I do not ask of you any reward for this duty, for my reward is with the Lord of the worlds;[79] therefore, you should fear Allah and obey me (without hesitation)."[80] They replied, "Should we believe in you, whereas the meanest of the people have become your followers?"[81] Noah said, "I have no knowledge of what they do: their account is the concern of my Lord : would that you had used some common-sense ![82] I am not here to drive away those who believe; I am only a plain Warner."[83] They said, "O Noah, if you do not desist from this, you will surely become one of the accursed."[84] Noah prayed: "My Lord, my people have treated me as a liar:[85] now settle the accounts between us, and deliver me and the believers with me to safety."[86] At last, We rescued him and his companions in a laden Ark,[87] and then drowned all the others. 105-120

Indeed there is a Sign in this, but most of these people would not believe. The fact is that your Lord is Mighty as well as Merciful. 121-122

'Ād rejected the Messengers.[88] Remember the time when their brother Hūd said to them,[89] "Do you not fear? I am a Messenger to you worthy of full trust: so fear Allah and obey me. I do not ask of you any 123-127

reward for this duty, for my reward is with the Lord of the worlds.

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60. *Hukm* here does not mean "Prophethood", because at the time this prayer was made, Prophet Abraham had already been appointed a Prophet. Even if this prayer was made before that, Prophethood is not bestowed on request, but it is something which Allah Himself bestows on those He wills. That is why, *hukm* has been translated wisdom, knowledge, right understanding and power of judgment. The Holy Prophet is also reported to have made a similar prayer:

ارنا الاشياء كما هي *Arinal-ashyāa' Kamā hiya:* "O Allah, give us the power to see and understand a thing as it really is and to form an opinion about it according to its reality."

61. "Join me with the righteous": "Give me a righteous society to live in in this world and raise me along with the righteous in the Hereafter." To be raised back to life with the righteous and to attain one's salvation have one and the same meaning. Therefore, this should be the prayer of every person who believes in the life-after-death and in reward and punishment. Even in this world a pious man cherishes the desire that God should save him from living a life in an immoral and wicked society and should join him with the righteous people. A pious and righteous person will remain ill at ease and restless until either his own society should become clean and pure morally, or he leaves it to join another society which is practising and following the principles of truth and honesty

62. "Grant me true renown among posterity": "Grant me the grace that posterity should remember me as a good and pious man after my death and not as one of the unjust people, who were not only wicked themselves, but who left nothing but wickedness behind them in the world. Enable me to perform such high deeds that my life should become a source of light for others for all times to come, and I should be counted among the benefactors of humanity."

This is not a prayer for worldly greatness and renown, but for true greatness and renown, which can be achieved only as a result of solid and valuable services. A person's achieving such true renown and glory has two good aspects:

(1) The people of the world get a good example to follow, as against bad examples, which inspires them with piety and encourages them to follow the right way; and

(2) The righteous person will not only get the rewards of works done by posterity who were guided aright by the good example left and set by him, but in addition to his own good works, he will have the evidence of the

millions of people in his favour that he had left behind him in the world fountains of guidance, which went on benefiting people, generation after generation, till the Day of Resurrection.

63. Some commentators have interpreted this prayer of Prophet Abraham for his father's forgiveness to imply that he had prayed to God to grant his father the favour to accept Islam because forgiveness in any case is inter-linked with and dependent upon Faith. But this interpretation is not borne out by the other verses of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān says that when Prophet Abraham left his home at the tyrannical treatment of his father, he said, "I bid farewell to you; I shall pray to my Lord to forgive you for He is very kind to me." (Maryam: 47) To fulfill this promise, he not only prayed for the forgiveness of his father, but for both his parents: "Lord, forgive me and my parents..." (Ibrāhīm: 41). But afterwards he himself realized that an enemy of the Truth, even if he be the father of a believer, does not deserve a prayer of forgiveness. Thus according to verse 114 of At-Taubah: "The prayer of Abraham for his father was only to fulfil a promise he had made to him, but when he realized that he was an enemy of Allah, he disowned him."

64. That is, "Do not put me to disgrace on the Day of Judgement by inflicting punishment on my father in front of all mankind, when I myself shall be witnessing his punishment helplessly."

65. It cannot be said with certainty whether vv. 88, 89 are a part of Prophet Abraham's prayer, or they are an addition by Allah. In the first case, they will mean that Prophet Abraham while praying for his father had a full realization of these facts. In the second case, they will be a comment by Allah on Abraham's prayer, as if to say, "On the Day of Judgement, only a sound heart, sound in faith and free from disobedience and sin, will be of any avail to man and not wealth and children, for wealth and children can be useful only if one possesses a sound heart. Wealth will be useful if one would have spent it sincerely and faithfully for the sake of Allah, otherwise even a millionaire will be a poor man there. Children also will be of help only to the extent that a person might have educated them in Faith and good conduct to the best of his ability; otherwise even if the son is a Prophet, his father will not escape punishment, if he died in the state of unbelief, because such a father will have no share in the goodness of his children."

66. Verses 90-102 do not seem to be a part of Prophet Abraham's speech, but they are Allah's words.

67. That is, on the one hand, the righteous people will be shown the countless blessings which they will enjoy in Paradise by Allah's grace, and on the other, Hell will be set open with all its dreads and horrors before the straying people, when they will still be in the Plain of Resurrection.

68. *Kubkibū* in the Text has two meanings: (1) They will be hurled into Hell one upon the other; and (2) they will go on rolling down into the depths of Hell.

69. This is how the followers will treat their religious leaders and guides, whom they served and revered like deities in the world, whose words and patterns of behaviour they took as authoritative and before whom they presented all sorts of offerings in the world. In the Hereafter when the people will find that their guides had misled them and caused their ruin as well as their own, they will hold them responsible for it and will curse them. The Qur'ān has presented this horrible scene of the Hereafter at several places so as to admonish the blind followers to see and judge carefully whether their guides in this world were leading them on the right path or not. For instance: "As each generation will be entering Hell, it will curse its preceding generation till all generations shall be gathered together there; then each succeeding generation will say regarding the preceding one, 'O Lord, these were the people who led us astray; therefore give them a double chastisement of the Fire.' Allah will reply, 'There is a double chastisement for every one but you know it not'." (Al-A'rāf: 38). "And the disbelievers will say, 'Our Lord, bring those jinns and men before us, who led us astray so that we may trample them under our feet and put them to extreme disgrace'." (Ḥā Mīm Sajdah: 29). "And they will say, 'Our Lord, we obeyed our chiefs and our great men and they misled us from the right path; our Lord, give them a double chastisement and curse them with a severe curse'." (Al-Aḥzāb: 67-68).

70. That is, "Those whom we regarded as our intercessors in the world and who, we believed, would take us safely into Paradise, are utterly helpless today and of no avail to us."

71. That is, "We have no sympathizer either who could feel for us and console us." The Qur'ān says that in the Hereafter only the believers will continue to be friends; as for the disbelievers, they will turn enemies of one another even though they had been sworn friends in the world. Each will hold the other as responsible for the doom and try to get him maximum punishment. "Friends on that Day will become enemies of one another except the righteous (who will continue to be friends)." (Az-Zukhruf: 67).

72. That Qur'ān has given an answer to this kind of longing and desire as well: "... even if they be sent back to the earthly life, they would do all that they had been forbidden to do." (Al-An'ām: 28). As for the reasons why they will not be allowed to return to the world, please see E.N.'s 90-92 of Al-Mu'minūn above.

73. There are two aspects of the Sign in the story of Prophet Abraham: (1) On the one hand, the *mushriks* of Arabia, especially the Quraish, claimed that they

were the followers of Prophet Abraham and were proud of being his descendents, but on the other, they were involved in *shirk* against which Prophet Abraham had been engaged in a relentless struggle throughout his life. Then these people were opposing and treating the Prophet who was inviting them towards the religion brought by Prophet Abraham in the like manner as Prophet Abraham himself had been opposed and treated by his people. They have been reminded that Abraham was an enemy of *shirk* and an upholder of *Tauḥīd*, which they themselves admitted, and yet they persisted in their obduracy to follow the creed of *shirk*. (2) The people of Abraham were eliminated from the world: if any of them survived, it was the children of Prophet Abraham and his sons, Ishmael and Isaac (may Allah's peace be upon them). Though the Qur'ān does not mention the torment that descended on Abraham's people after he had left them, it has included them among the tormented tribes: "Has not the story reached them of those who had gone before them: the people of Noah, the tribes of 'Ād and Thamūd, the people of Abraham, and the inhabitants of Midian and of the overturned cities ?" (At-Taubah: 70).

74. For comparison, see Al-A'rāf: 59-64, Yūnus: 71-73, Hūd: 25-48, Banī Isrā'īl: 3, Al-Anbiyā' 76-77, Al-Mu'minūn:: 23-30, and Al-Furqān: 37. For the details of the story of Prophet Noah, see Al-'Ankabūt: 15, Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 75-82, Al-Qamar: 9-15 and Sūrah Nūḥ itself.

75. Though they had rejected only one Messenger, it amounted to rejecting all the messengers because all of them had brought one and the same message from Allah. This is an important fact which the Qur'ān has mentioned over and over again in different ways. Thus, even those people who rejected just one Prophet have been regarded as unbelievers though they believed in all other Prophets, for the simple reason that the believer in the truth of one Messenger cannot deny the same truth in other cases unless he does so on account of racial prejudice, imitation of elders, etc.

76. The initial address of Prophet Noah to his people, as mentioned at other places in the Qur'ān, was as follows: "O my people, worship Allah alone: you have no other deity than Him. Are you not afraid (of Him)?" (Al-Mu'minūn: 23); and "Worship Allah and fear Him and obey me." (Nūh: 3). That is, "Are you not afraid of the consequences of adopting an attitude of rebellion against Allah and worshipping others than Him?"

77. It has two meanings: (1) "I present before you nothing but what Allah reveals to me;" and (2) "I am a Messenger whom you have already known to be a trustworthy and honest and righteous man. When I have been honest and true in my dealings with you, how can I be dishonest and untrustworthy in conveying the

Message of God? Therefore, you should rest assured that whatever I am presenting is the Truth."

78. That is, "When I am a truthful and trustworthy Messenger, you are duty-bound to obey me alone as against all other patrons, and carry out my commands and instructions, because I represent the will of God: obedience to me is in fact obedience to God and disobedience to me is disobedience to Him." In other words, the people are not only required to accept a Messenger as a true Messenger sent by Allah, but it inevitably implies that they have to obey him and follow his Law against all other laws. To reject a Prophet, or to disobey him after accepting him as a Prophet, is tantamount to rebellion against God, which inevitably leads to His wrath. The words "fear Allah" are, therefore, a warning that every hearer should clearly understand the consequences of rejecting the message of a Messenger or of disobeying his commands.

79. This is the second of the two arguments of Prophet Noah about the truth of his message, the first being that they had known him as a trustworthy man during his earlier life, which he had lived among them. This second argument implies this: "I do not have any selfish motive or personal interest in conveying the message which I am propagating day and night in spite of all sorts of opposition and antagonism from you. At least you should understand this that I am sincere in my invitation, and am presenting honestly only that which I believe to be the truth and in following which I see the true success and well-being of humanity at large. I have no personal motive in this that I should fabricate falsehood to fool the people."

These two arguments are among the most important arguments which the Qur'ān has advanced repeatedly as proofs of the truthfulness of the Prophets, and which it presents as criterion for judging Prophethood. A man who before Prophethood has lived a life in a society and has always been found to be honest, truthful and righteous, cannot be doubted even by a prejudiced person that he would suddenly start fabricating falsehood in the name of Allah and making people believe that he has been appointed a Prophet by Him, whereas he has been not. More important than that: such a lie cannot be fabricated with a good intention unless somebody has a selfish motive attached to this kind of fraud. And even when a person indulges in this sort of fraud, he cannot hide it completely from the people. The foul means and devices adopted by him to promote his "business" become known and all the various selfish interests and gains become all too apparent. Contrary to this, the personal life of a Prophet is full of moral excellencies: it has no trace of the employment of foul means and devices. Not to speak of any personal interest, he expends whatever he has for the cause of a mission which to all appearances is fruitless. No person who possesses any

common sense and also has a sense of justice, can ever imagine that a sensible man who was leading a perfectly peaceful life, would come out all of a sudden with a false claim, when such a false claim does not do him any good, but on the contrary, demands all his money, time and energy and earns him nothing in return but the antagonism and hostility of the whole world. Sacrifice of personal interests is the foremost proof of a man's sincerity; therefore, doubting the intentions and sincerity of a person who has been sacrificing his personal interests for years and years can only be the pastime of the one who himself is selfish and insincere. Please also see E.N. 70 of Al-Mu'minūn above.

80. Repetition of this sentence is not without reason. In the first case (v. 108), it implied this: "You should fear Allah if you treat as false a true and trustworthy Messenger from Him, whom you yourselves have been regarding as a true and trustworthy man in the past." Here it means: "You should fear Allah if you doubt the intention of a person who is working sincerely only for the reformation of the people without any personal interest." This thing has been stressed because the chiefs of Prophet Noah's people, in order to find fault with his message of Truth, accused him of struggling merely for his personal superiority: "He merely intends to obtain superiority over you." (Al-Mu'minūn: 24).

81. This answer to Prophet Noah's message of Truth was given by the chiefs, elders and nobles of his people as mentioned in Hūd: 27: "In answer to this, those chiefs of his people, who had rejected his message, said, 'We see that you are no more than a mere man like ourselves, and we also see that only the meanest from among us have become your followers without due consideration, and we find nothing in you that might give you superiority over us'." This shows that those who believed in Prophet Noah were mostly the poor people, and ordinary workmen, or some youth who enjoyed no position in society. As for the influential and rich people, they had become his bitter opponents, and were trying by every trick and allurement to keep the common man behind them. One of the arguments they advanced against Prophet Noah was this: "Had there been some weight and substance in Noah's message, the rich people, scholars, religious divines, nobles and wise people of the community should have accepted it, but none of them has believed in him; the only people to follow him are the foolish people belonging to the lowest stratum of society, who have no common-sense. Now how can the noble and high ranking people like us join the company of the common people?"

Precisely the same thing was being said by the unbelieving Quraish about the Holy Prophet and his followers. Abū Sufyān in reply to the questions asked by Heraclius had said: "Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) has been followed by the poor and weak of our people." What they seemed to be thinking was that Truth was that which was considered as Truth by the chiefs and elders of the

community, for only they had the necessary common-sense and power of judgment. As for the common people, their being common was a proof that they lacked sense and judgment. As such, if a thing was accepted by them but rejected by the chiefs, it meant that the thing itself was without worth and value. The disbelievers of Makkah even went further. They argued that a Prophet could not be a common man: if God had to appoint a Prophet, He would have appointed a great chief to be a Prophet: "They say: why has not the Qur'ān been sent down to a prominent man of our two cities (Makkah and Tā'if)?" (Az-Zukhruf: 31).

82. This is the first answer to their objection, which was based on the assumption that the poor people belonging to the working classes and lower social strata who performed humble duties, did not possess any mental maturity and were without intelligence and common sense. Therefore, their belief was without any rational basis, and so unreliable, and their deeds were of no value at all. To this Prophet Noah replies, "I have no means of judging the motives and assessing the worth of the deeds of the people who accept my message and act accordingly. This is not my concern but the responsibility of God".

83. This is the second answer to their objection, which implied that since those who were gathering around Noah as believers, belonged to the lowest social strata, none of the nobles would like to join them, as if to say, "O Noah, should we believe in you in order to be counted among the low-ranking people like the slaves and servants and workmen?" To this Prophet Noah answers, "How can I adopt this irrational attitude that I should attend earnestly to those who do not like to listen to me, but drive away those who have believed and followed me? I am simply a warner, who has declared openly that the way you are following is wrong and will lead you to ruin, and the way that I am inviting to is the way of salvation for all. Now it is up to you whether you heed my warning and adopt the right path, or go on following blindly the way to your ruin. It does not behove me that I should start inquiring into the castes and ancestry and trades of the people who have heeded my warning and adopted the right path. They might be "mean" in your sight, but I cannot drive them away and wait to see when the "nobles" will give up the path of destruction and adopt the way of salvation and success instead."

Precisely the same thing was going on between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers of Makkah when these verses were revealed, and one can fully understand why the dialogue between Prophet Noah and the chiefs of his people, has been related here. The chiefs of the disbelievers of Makkah thought exactly the same way. They said how they could sit side by side with the slaves like Bilāl, 'Ammār and Ṣuhaib and other men of the working class, as if to say, "Unless these poor people are turned out, there can be no possibility that the nobles may consider to become believers; it is impossible that the master and the slave should

stand shoulder to shoulder with each other." In answer to this the Holy Prophet was commanded by Allah to tell the vain and arrogant disbelievers plainly that the poor believers could not be driven out of Islam just for their sake: "O Muhammad, you attend earnestly to him who has shown indifference (to your message), whereas you have no responsibility if he does not reform himself; and the one who comes to you earnestly, fearing Allah, to him you pay no attention. Nay! this indeed is an Admonition, so let him who wills, accept it." ('Abasa :5-12).

"And do not drive away those who invoke their Lord morning and evening and are engaged in seeking His favour. You are not in any way accountable for them, nor are they in any way accountable for you: so, if you should drive them away, you shall be counted among the unjust. As a matter of fact, in this way We have made some of them a means of test for others, so that, seeing them, they should say, 'Are these the people from among us upon whom Allah has showered His blessings?' --Yes: does not Allah know His grateful servants better than they?" (Al-An'ām: 52-53)

84. The words in the Text may have two meanings: (1) "You will be stoned to death"; and (2) "You will be showered with abuses from all sides, and cursed and reviled wherever you go."

85. That is, "They have rejected me completely and absolutely and now there is no hope of their becoming believers." Here nobody should have the misunderstanding that just after this conversation between Prophet Noah and the chiefs of his people, and the rejection of his message by them, the Prophet submitted a report to Allah that his people had rejected him and now He should settle the accounts between them. The Qur'ān has mentioned at different places the details of the long struggle that went on for centuries between Prophet Noah and his people, who persisted in unbelief. According to verse 14 of Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt, the struggle continued for 950 years: "He (Noah) remained among them for a thousand years save fifty years." Prophet Noah during this long period studied their collective behaviour, generation after generation, and came to the conclusion that they had no inclination to accept the Truth, and formed the opinion that in their future generations also there was no hope of anybody's becoming a believer and adopting the righteous attitude: "My Lord, if You should leave them, they will lead Your servants astray, and they will bear as children none but sinners and disbelievers." (Nūḥ: 27). Allah Himself confirmed this opinion of Noah, saying, "No more of your people will believe in you now than those who have already believed. So do not grieve at their misdeeds." (Hūd: 36).

86. "Deliver me and the believers with me to safety": "You should not only give Your judgment as to who is in the right and who is in the wrong, but

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بِكُلِّ رِيْعٍ اٰيَةً تَعْبَثُوْنَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَتَتَّخِذُوْنَ مَصَانِعَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَخْلُدُوْنَ ﴿١٢٩﴾ وَاِذَا
بَطَشْتُمْ بَطَشْتُمْ جَبَّارِيْنَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيْعُوْنِ ﴿١٣١﴾ وَاتَّقُوا الَّذِيْٓ اَمَدَّكُمْ
بِمَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ اَمَدَّكُمْ بِاَنْعَامٍ وَّبَنِيْنَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ وَجَنّٰتٍ وَّعُيُوْنٍ ﴿١٣٤﴾ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ
عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿١٣٥﴾ قَالُوْا سَوَآءٌ عَلَيْنَآ اَوَعَظْتَ اَمْ لَمْ تَكُنْ مِّنَ
الْوٰعِظِيْنَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا خُلُقُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٣٧﴾ وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِيْنَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ فَكَذَّبُوْهُ
فَاَهْلَكْنٰهُمْ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ۭ وَمَا كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٣٩﴾ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ
لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١٤٠﴾ كَذَّبَتْ ثَمُوْدُ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٤١﴾ اِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ اَخُوْهُمْ
صٰلِحٌ اَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٤٢﴾ اِنِّيْ لَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ اَمِيْنٌ ﴿١٤٣﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيْعُوْنِ ﴿١٤٤﴾ وَ
مَآ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ ۚ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلٰي رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٤٥﴾ اَتُتْرَكُوْنَ فِيْ
مَا هٰهُنَآ اٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٤٦﴾ فِيْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّعُيُوْنٍ ﴿١٤٧﴾ وَّزُرُوْعٍ وَّنَخْلٍ طَلْعُهَا هَضِيْمٌ ﴿١٤٨﴾
وَتَنْحِتُوْنَ مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوْتًا فٰرِهِيْنَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيْعُوْنِ ﴿١٥٠﴾ وَلَا
تُطِيْعُوْٓا اَمْرَ الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ ﴿١٥١﴾ الَّذِيْنَ يُفْسِدُوْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَا يُصْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١٥٢﴾
قَالُوْٓا اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ مِنَ الْمُسَحَّرِيْنَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ مَآ اَنْتَ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا ۡ فَاْتِ بِاٰيَةٍ اِنْ
كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ قَالَ هٰذِهٖ نَاقَةٌ لَّهَا شِرْبٌ وَّلَكُمْ شِرْبُ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُوْمٍ ﴿١٥٥﴾
وَلَا تَمَسُّوْهَا بِسُوْٓءٍ فَيَاْخُذَكُمْ عَذَابُ يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿١٥٦﴾ فَعَقَرُوْهَا فَاَصْبَحُوْا
نٰدِمِيْنَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ فَاَخَذَهُمُ الْعَذَابُ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ۭ وَمَا كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٥٨﴾
وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿١٥٩﴾ كَذَّبَتْ قَوْمُ لُوْطِ ِۨالْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٦٠﴾ اِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ
اَخُوْهُمْ لُوْطٌ اَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٦١﴾ اِنِّيْ لَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ اَمِيْنٌ ﴿١٦٢﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَاَطِيْعُوْنِ ﴿١٦٣﴾
وَمَآ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ ۚ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلٰي رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٦٤﴾ اَتَاْتُوْنَ

What! you erect for mere pleasure, a monument on every high spot,[90] and build huge castles as if you were immortal;[91] and when you seize somebody, you seize him like a tyrant.[92] So fear Allah and obey me. Fear Him Who has bestowed on you all that you know: He gave you cattle and children and gardens and water-springs. I fear the torment of a dreadful Day for you." They replied, "Whether you admonish us or not, it is the same for us: such things have been said in the past as well,[93] and we are certainly not going to be chastised." At last, they rejected him, and We destroyed them.[94] 128-139

Indeed there is a Sign in this, but most of these people would not believe. The fact is that your Lord is Mighty as well as Merciful. 139-140

Thamūd rejected the Messengers.[95] Remember the time when their brother Ṣāliḥ said to them, "Do you not fear? I am a Messenger to you worthy of full trust:[96] so fear Allah and obey me. I do not ask of you any reward for this duty, for my reward is with the Lord of the worlds. Will you be left in security amidst all that is around you here?[97] —in the gardens and the water-springs? ——in the corn-fields and the date-groves laden with juicy fruit?[98] You proudly carve out dwellings in the hills.[99] Fear Allah and obey me, and do not follow the transgressors who spread mischief in the land and reform nothing."[100] They replied, "You are only an enchanted person :[101] you are no more than a man like us: bring forth a sign if you are truthful."[102] Ṣāliḥ said, "Here is a she-camel.[103] One day will be for her to drink, and one day for you all to take water.[104] Do not at all molest her; otherwise you will be overtaken by the torment of a dreadful day." Yet they hamstrung her,[105] and then became regretful, for the torment overtook them.[106] 141-158

Indeed there is a Sign in this, but most of these people would not believe; and the fact is that your Lord is Mighty as well as Merciful 158-159

The people of Lot rejected the Messengers.[107] Remember the time when their brother Lot said to them, "Do you not fear? I am a Messenger to you worthy of full trust: so fear Allah and obey me. I do not ask of you any reward for this duty, for my reward is with the Lord of the worlds. 160-164

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deliver Your Judgment in such a manner that the followers of the Truth are saved

and the followers of falsehood are completely annihilated from the earth."

87. "Laden Ark", because the Ark became full with the believers and the pairs of animals from every species. For further details, see Hūd: 40.

88. For comparison, see Al-A'rāf: 65-72, Hūd: 50-60; and for further details of this story, see Ḥā Mīm Sajdah: 13-16, Al-Aḥqāf: 21-26, Az-Zāriyāt: 41-45, Al-Qamar :18-22, Al-Ḥāqqah: 4-8, and Al-Fajr: 6-8.

89. In order to understand this discourse of Prophet Hūd fully, we should keep in mind the various details about the people of 'Ād which the Qur'ān has given at different places. For instance, it says:

(1) After the destruction of the people of Noah, the 'Ād were given power and prominence in the world: "Do not forget that after Noah's people your Lord made you the successors." (Al-A'rāf: 69).

(2) Physically they were very robust and powerful people: " .... and made you very robust." (Al-A'rāf: 69).

(3) They had no parallel as a nation in the world: "The like of which was not created in the lands." (Al-Fajr: 8).

(4) They were civilized and were well-known in the world for their great skill and art in erecting lofty buildings with tall columns: "Have you not seen what your Lord did with 'Ād Iram, of lofty columns?" (Al-Fajr: 6, 7).

(5) This material progress and physical power had made them arrogant and vain: "As for 'Ād, they deviated from the right path and adopted an arrogant attitude in the land and said, 'who is mightier than we in power'?" (Ḥā Mīm Sajdah: 15).

(6) Their political power was in the hands of a few tyrants before whom none could dare raise his voice: "....and they followed and obeyed every tyrannous enemy of the Truth." (Hūd: 59).

(7) They were not disbelievers in the existence of Allah, but were involved in *shirk*; they only denied that Allah alone should be worshipped and none else: "They said (to Hūd), 'Have you come to us (with the demand) that we should worship Allah alone and discard those whom our elders have been worshipping?" (Al-A'rāf: 70).

90. That is, "You build grand buildings merely to show off your wealth and power, whereas they have no use and purpose except that they stand as monuments to your grandeur and glory."

91. That is, "Though you have built other buildings also for dwelling purposes, in order to make them grand, beautiful and strong, you expend your

wealth and mental and physical abilities in a manner as if you were going to live for ever, and there was no purpose of life except seeking of comfort and pleasure and nothing beyond this worldly life which might deserve your attention."

In this connection, one should bear in mind the fact that extravagance in architecture is not a solitary vice in a people. This happens as a result of a people's becoming affluent and then crazy for selfish gains and materialistic pursuits. When a people reach such a stage, their whole social system becomes corrupted and polluted. Prophet Hūd's criticism of his people's extravagant and luxurious architecture was not simply aimed at the high castles and monuments, but he was actually criticising their corrupt civilization and social system, whose glaring symptoms could be seen everywhere in the land in the shape of castles and monuments.

92. That is, "In order to meet the demands of your ever rising standards of life, you do not rest content with small living quarters but you build castles and fortresses, and yet being unsatisfied you erect lofty edifices unnecessarily just for ostentation. But as human beings you have become so depraved that there is no mercy in your hearts for the weak, no justice for the poor, and all people of lower social strata, living inside or around your land, are being oppressed tyrannically and none is safe from your barbarities."

93. This can have two meanings: (1) "Whatever we are doing is not new but has been happening from the time of our elders since centuries: they had the same creed, the same way of life, the same morality and the same kind of dealings and yet they remained unharmed and safe from every calamity. If there was any evil in this way of life, we should have met the doom with which you are threatening us." (2) "The things you are preaching have been preached and said before also by religious maniacs and so-called moralists, but they could not change the ways of the world. It has never happened that the world suffered a disaster only because people refused to listen to preachers like you."

94. According to the Qur'ān, the people of 'Ād were destroyed by a violent windstorm. When they saw it advancing towards their valleys, they rejoiced with the hope that those were dense clouds which would bring much rain for them, but in reality it was Allah's scourge. The windstorm continued to rage for eight days and seven nights and destroyed everything. The people were swept away like straw and everything on which the hot, dry wind blew was left rotting. The storm did not abate until the last man of the wicked tribe had met his doom. Only ruins of their habitations remained to tell the tale of their terrible fate, and today even the ruins have become extinct. The whole territory of Aḥqāf has turned into dreadful desert dunes. For details, see E.N. 25 of Al-Aḥqāf.

95. For comparison, see Al-A'rāf: 73-79, Hūd: 61-68, Al-Ḥijr: 80-84, Banī Isrā'īl: 59; and for further details, see An-Naml . 45-53, Az-Zāriyāt: 43-45, Al-Qamar: 23-31, Al-Ḥāqqah: 4-5, Al-Fajr: 9, and Ash-Shams: 11.

Thamūd achieved power and glory after the destruction of 'Ād and as far as progress in civilization is concerned, they followed in the footsteps of their predecessors. In their case, too, the standards of living went on rising higher and higher and the standards of humanity continued to fall lower and lower, suffering one deterioration after the other. On the one hand, they erected large edifices on the plains and hewed beautiful houses out of the hills like those in the caves of Ellora and Ajanta in India, and on the other, they became addicted to idol-worship and the land was filled with tyranny and oppression. The worst men became leaders and rulers in the land. As such, Prophet Ṣāliḥ's message of Truth only appealed to the weak people belonging to the lower social strata and the people of the upper classes refused to believe in him.

96. According to the Qur'ān, the people of Prophet Sālih themselves admitted that he was a man of great integrity and extraordinary calibre: "They said, 'O Ṣāliḥ, till now you were such a person among us of whom we had great expectations." (Hūd: 62).

97. That is, "Do you consider that your life of indulgence and pleasure is everlasting, and you will never be asked to account for Allah's favours to you and for your own misdeeds?"

98. *Hadīm:* heavy bunches of ripe, juicy and soft date-palm fruit hanging from trees.

99. Just as the most prominent feature of the 'Ād civilization was that they built large edifices with high pillars, so the most prominent feature of the Thamūd civilization for which they were known among the ancient peoples was that they carved out dwellings in the hills. That is why in Sūrah Fajr, the 'Ād have been referred to as "(people) of the pillars", and the Thamūd as "those who hewed rocks in the valley". These people also built castles on the plains, the purpose and object of which was nothing but display of wealth and power and architectural skill as there was no real necessity for them. These are, in fact, the ways of the perverted people: the poor among them do not have proper shelters, and the wealthy members not only have sufficient fine dwellings but over and above those they raise monuments for ostentation and display.

Some of these Thamūdic works exist even today, which I have seen in December, 1959. (See pictures. This place is situated between Al-Madīnah and Tabūk, a few miles to the north of Al-'Ulā (Wād-il-Qurā of the Holy Prophet's time) in Hejāz. The local inhabitants call it Al-Ḥijr and Madā'in Ṣāliḥ even today.

Al-'Ulā is still a green and fertile valley abounding in water springs and gardens, but Al-Ḥijr appears to be an abandoned place. It has thin population, little greenery and a few wells one of which is said to be the one at which Prophet Ṣāliḥ's she-camel used to drink water. This well is now dry and located within a deserted military post of the time of the Turks. When we entered this territory and approached Al-'Ulā, we found hills which seemed to have been shattered to pieces from top to bottom as if by a violent earthquake. (See pictures on the opposite pages). We saw the same kind of hills while travelling to the east, from Al-'Ulā to Khaibar, for about 50 miles, and towards the north inside Jordan, for about 30 to 40 miles. This indicated that an area, stretching well over 300 to 400 miles in length and 100 miles in width, had been devastated by the terrible earthquake.

A few of the Thamūdic type monuments that we saw at Al-Ḥijr were also found at Madyan along the Gulf of 'Aqabah and at Petra in Jordan. At Petra specially the Thamūdic and Nabataean works stand side by side, and their styles and architectural designs are so different that anyone who examines them will find that they were neither built in the same age nor by the same nation. (See pictures for contrast). Doughty, the British orientalist, in his attempt to prove the Qur'ān as false, has claimed that the works found at Al-Ḥijr were not carved out by Thamūd but by the Nabataeans. I am of the view that the art of carving houses out of the rocks started with the Thamūd, and thousands of years later, in the second and first centuries B.C., it was considerably developed by the Nabataeans and it reached perfection in the works of the caves of Ellora, which were carved out about 700 years after Petra.

100. That is, "You should give up obedience to your chiefs, guides and rulers under whose leadership you are following an evil way of life. These people have transgressed all bounds of morality: they cannot bring about any reforms and they will corrupt every system of life that they adopt. The only way for you towards success and well-being is that you should inculcate fear of God, give up obedience to the misguides and obey me, because I am God's Messenger: you are fully aware of my honesty and integrity: I have no personal interest and motive for undertaking the work of reform."

This was in short the manifesto which Prophet Ṣāliḥ presented before his people: it not only contained the religious message but invitation to cultural, moral and political revolution as well.

101. "Enchanted person": Mad and insane person who has lost reasoning power. According to the ancient conceptions, madness was either due to the influence of a jinn or magic. That is why a mad person was either called *majnūn* (one under the influence of a jinn) or one enchanted by magic.

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الذُّكْرَانَ مِنَ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿165﴾ وَتَذَرُوْنَ مَا خَلَقَ لَكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ مِّنْ اَزْوَاجِكُمْ ۭ بَلْ
اَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ عٰدُوْنَ ﴿166﴾ قَالُوْا لَىِٕنْ لَّمْ تَنْتَهِ يٰلُوْطُ لَتَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْمُخْرَجِيْنَ ﴿167﴾
قَالَ اِنِّىْ لِعَمَلِكُمْ مِّنَ الْقَالِيْنَ ﴿168﴾ رَبِّ نَجِّنِىْ وَاَهْلِىْ مِمَّا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿169﴾ فَنَجَّيْنٰهُ
وَاَهْلَهٗٓ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿170﴾ اِلَّا عَجُوْزًا فِى الْغٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿171﴾ ثُمَّ دَمَّرْنَا الْاٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿172﴾ وَاَمْطَرْنَا
عَلَيْهِمْ مَّطَرًا ۚ فَسَآءَ مَطَرُ الْمُنْذَرِيْنَ ﴿173﴾ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ۭ وَمَا كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ
مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿174﴾ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿175﴾ كَذَّبَ اَصْحٰبُ لْـَٔيْكَةِ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿176﴾
اِذْ قَالَ لَهُمْ شُعَيْبٌ اَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿177﴾ اِنِّىْ لَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ اَمِيْنٌ ﴿178﴾ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَ
اَطِيْعُوْنِ ﴿179﴾ وَمَآ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ اَجْرٍ ۚ اِنْ اَجْرِىَ اِلَّا عَلٰى رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿180﴾
اَوْفُوا الْكَيْلَ وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا مِنَ الْمُخْسِرِيْنَ ﴿181﴾ وَزِنُوْا بِالْقِسْطَاسِ الْمُسْتَقِيْمِ ﴿182﴾ وَ
لَا تَبْخَسُوا النَّاسَ اَشْيَآءَهُمْ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ مُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿183﴾ وَاتَّقُوا الَّذِىْ
خَلَقَكُمْ وَالْجِبِلَّةَ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿184﴾ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّمَآ اَنْتَ مِنَ الْمُسَحَّرِيْنَ ﴿185﴾ وَمَآ اَنْتَ اِلَّا
بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا وَاِنْ نَّظُنُّكَ لَمِنَ الْكٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿186﴾ فَاَسْقِطْ عَلَيْنَا كِسَفًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ اِنْ
كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿187﴾ قَالَ رَبِّىْٓ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿188﴾ فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَاَخَذَهُمْ
عَذَابُ يَوْمِ الظُّلَّةِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿189﴾ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً ۭ وَمَا
كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ مُّؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿190﴾ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿191﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لَتَنْزِيْلُ
رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿192﴾ نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوْحُ الْاَمِيْنُ ﴿193﴾ عَلٰى قَلْبِكَ لِتَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُنْذِرِيْنَ ﴿194﴾
بِلِسَانٍ عَرَبِيٍّ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿195﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لَفِىْ زُبُرِ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿196﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُمْ اٰيَةً اَنْ
يَّعْلَمَهٗ عُلَمٰٓؤُا بَنِىْٓ اِسْرَآءِيْلَ ﴿197﴾ وَلَوْ نَزَّلْنٰهُ عَلٰى بَعْضِ الْاَعْجَمِيْنَ ﴿198﴾ فَقَرَاَهٗ
عَلَيْهِمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ مُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿199﴾ كَذٰلِكَ سَلَكْنٰهُ فِىْ قُلُوْبِ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿200﴾ لَا

Do you go to the males from the creatures of the world,[108] and leave that which your Lord has created for you in your wives ?[109] You have indeed transgressed all limits."[110] They said, "O Lot, if you do not desist from this, you will surely be included among those who have been expelled from our towns."[111] He said, "I am certainly one of those who abhor your wickedness. My Lord, deliver me and my people from their wicked deeds."[112] At last, We delivered him and all his people except an old woman who was of those who were left behind.[113] Then We destroyed all the rest of them, and rained on them a horrible rain, which fell on those who had been warned.[114] 165-173

Indeed there is a Sign in this, but most of these people would not believe. The fact is that your Lord is Mighty as well as Merciful. 174-175

The people of Aiykah rejected the Messengers.[115] Remember the time when Shu'aib said to them, "Do you not fear? I am a Messenger to you worthy of full trust: so fear Allah and obey me. I do not ask of you any reward for this duty, for my reward is with the Lord of the worlds. Give full measure and do not give people less than what is due to them; weigh with even balance and do not cheat people of their goods; and do not spread evil in the land, and fear Him Who has created you and those who have gone before you." They said, "You are only an enchanted person and are no more than a man like us: we consider you to be an utter liar. However, if you are truthful, cause a fragment of the sky to fall down upon us." Shu'aib said, "My Lord knows whatever you are doing."[116] They treated him as a liar. At last, the torment of the Day of Canopy overtook them,[117] and it was the torment of an extremely dreadful day. 176-189

Indeed there is a Sign in this, but most of these people would not believe. The fact is that your Lord is Mighty as well as Merciful. 190-191

This[118] (Book) has been revealed by the Lord of the worlds.[119] The trustworthy Spirit[120] has come down with it upon your heart so that you may become one of those who are (appointed by God) to warn (the people) in plain Arabic language;[121] and this is also contained in the Scriptures of the former people.[122] Is it not a Sign for the people (of Makkah) that the learned men of the Children of Israel know it ?[123] (But they are obdurate to the extent) that even if We had sent it down to some non Arab, and he had recited this (discourse in 192-200

lucid Arabic) before them, they would still not have believed in it.[124] Likewise, We have caused this (Qur'ān) to pass through the hearts of the criminals:[125]

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102. That is, "We cannot believe you to be a Messenger from God because you are just like us and we see no distinction in you. However, if you are true in your claim that God has appointed you as His Messenger, you should present such a clear miracle as should make us believe that you have really been sent by the Creator and Master of the universe.".

103. From the context it appears that it was not a common she-camel, but it was brought about in a supernatural manner because it was presented in response to the demand for a miracle. Prophet Ṣāliḥ could not have produced before the people an ordinary she-camel as a proof of his Prophethood because that would not have satisfied them. At other places in the Qur'ān it has been clearly referred to as a miracle. In Sūrah Al-A'rāf and Hūd it has been said: "....here is Allah's she camel, a Sign for you." (VII: 73) In Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl the same thing has been stated more emphatically: "And nothing has hindered Us from sending Signs except that the former people refused to acknowledge them as such. (For example) We sent the she-camel as an open Sign to Thamūd but they treated her with cruelty; whereas We send Signs only by way of warning." (v. 59) Moreover, the challenge given to the wicked people of Thamūd, after presenting the she-camel before them, was such that it could only be given after presenting a miracle.

104. That is, "One day the she-camel will drink water all alone at your wells and springs, and one day you and your animals will take water, and this arrangement will not be violated in any way." There could hardly be a greater challenge for the people of Arabia, for taking of water had been the foremost cause of feuds and fights among them, which mostly resulted in bloodshed, even loss of life. As such, the challenge given by Prophet Ṣāliḥ was indeed a challenge to the whole nation, which could not be acceptable unless the people were sure that the challenger had a great power at his back. But Prophet Ṣāliḥ threw this challenge all by himself without any worldly power behind him, and the whole nation not only received it quietly, but also abided by it submissively for quite some days.

In Sūrahs Al-A'rāf and Hūd there is an addition to this: "Here is Allah's she-camel, a Sign for you. So let her graze at will in Allah's land, and do not touch her with an evil intention." (XI: 64) That is, the challenge was not only this that the she-camel would drink water all alone every alternate day, but, in addition, she would freely move about and graze at will in their fields and gardens and palm groves and pastures and was not to be touched with an evil intention.

105. This does not mean that as soon as they heard the challenge, they attacked the she-camel at once and hamstrung her. Actually, when the she-camel became a problem for the whole nation, the hearts of the people were filled with rage, and they began to hold lengthy consultations as to how to get rid of her. At last, a haughty chief undertook the task of putting an end to her, as mentioned in Sūrah Ash-Shams thus: "When arose the most villainous of the people.. ." (v. 12) and in Sūrah Al-Qamar thus: "They appealed to their companion, so he took up the responsibility and hamstrung (her)." (v. 29).

106. As stated at other places in the Qur'ān, when the she-camel was killed, Prophet Sālih declared: "You have only three more days to enjoy yourselves in your houses." (Hūd: 65) When this time limit came to an end, a shocking explosion took place in the night at about dawn, followed by a violent earthquake, which destroyed the whole nation completely. In the morning their dead bodies lay scattered here and there like dry pieces of bush trampled down by animals around an enclosure. Neither their stony castles nor their rock-hewn caves could protect them against the calamity. "We sent against them a single blast and they became as the trampled twigs of the fence of a fold-builder." (Al-Qamar: 31). "Consequently a shocking catastrophe overtook them and they lay lifeless in their dwellings" (Al-A'rāf: 78). "At last a violent blast overtook them with the approach of the morning, and all that they had achieved proved of no avail to them." (Al-Ḥijr: 83, 84).

107. For comparison, see Al-A'rāf: 80-84, Hūd: 74-83, Al-Ḥijr: 57-77, Al-Anbiyā': 71-75, An-Naml; 54-58, Al-'Ankabūt: 28-35, As-Ṣāffāt: 133-138 and Al-Qamar: 33-39.

108. This can have two meanings: (1) Of all the creatures you have chosen males only for the purpose of gratifying your sex desires, whereas there are plenty of women in the world; and (2) You alone are the people in the whole world, who go to men to satisfy the sex desires; even the animals do not resort to this. This second meaning has been explained in Sūrahs Al-A'rāf and Al- 'Ankabūt thus: "Have you become so shameless that you commit such indecent acts as no one committed before you in the world?" (Al-A'rāf: 80).

109. This can also have two meanings: (1) "You leave your wives whom God has created for you to satisfy your sex desire and adopt unnatural ways with the males for the purpose." (2) "Even with respect to your wives you do not follow the natural way but adopt unnatural ways for the gratification of your lust?" This they might have been doing with the intention of family planning.

110. That is, "This is not the only vice in you; your whole lives have become corrupted and perverted, as stated in An-Naml: 54 thus : "Do you commit

indecent acts openly and publicly?" And in Al-'Ankabūt: 29 thus: "Have you become so perverted that you gratify your lust with the males, you rob travellers, and you commit wicked deeds publicly in your assemblies?" For further details, see E.N. 39 of Al-Ḥijr.

111. That is, "You know that whosoever has spoken against us, or protested against our doings, or opposed us in any way, he has been turned out of our habitations. If you also behave like that, you too will be treated likewise." It has been stated in Sūrahs Al-A'rāf and An-Naml that before giving this warning to Prophet Lot, the wicked people had decided to "turn out these people of your habitations for they pose to be very pious." (VII: 82).

112. This may also mean: "My Lord, deliver us from the evil consequences of their misdeeds," and also this: "Protect the children of the believers from the evil effects of the immoral acts of the wicked people."

113. This refers to the Prophet Lot's wife as stated in verse 10 of Sūrah Taḥrīm about the wives of Prophets Noah and Lot: "These two women were in the houses of Our two pious servants but they acted treacherously towards them." That is, they did not believe, and sided with the unbelievers instead of their righteous husbands. Therefore, when Allah decreed to send a torment on the people of Lot, He commanded Lot to leave the place along with his people but to leave his wife behind: "So depart from here with the people of your household in the last hours of the night. And look here: none of you should turn round to look behind; but your wife (who will not accompany you) shall meet the same doom as they." (Hūd: 81).

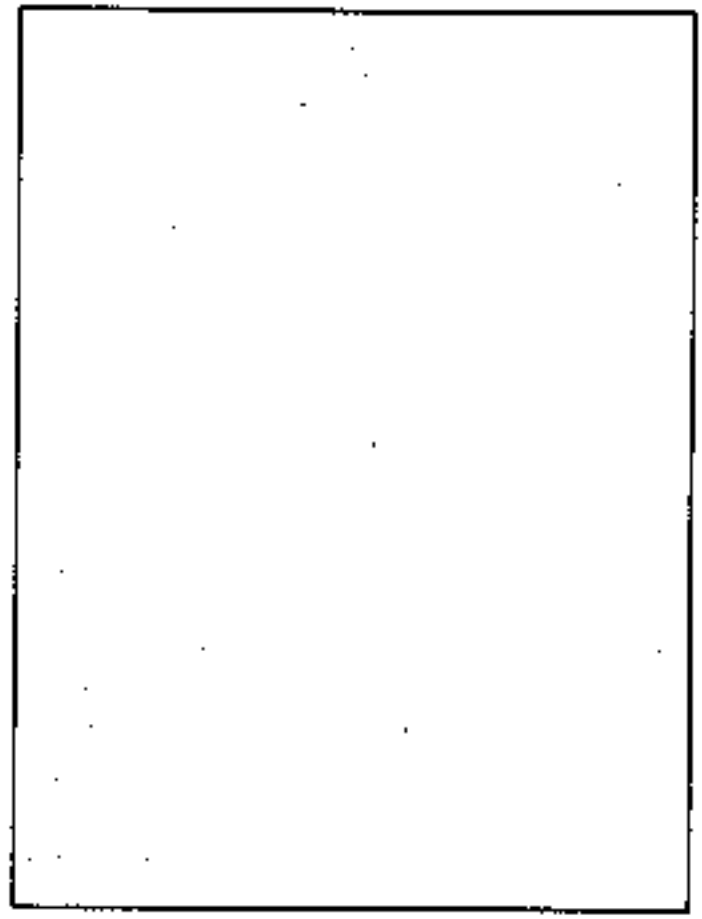
114. This was not a rain of water but a rain of stones. According to the details given at other places in the Qur'ān, when Prophet Lot had left the place along with the people of his household in the last hours of the night, there occurred a terrible explosion at dawn and a violent earthquake, which turned all their habitations upside down and rained on them stones of baked clay as a result of a volcanic eruption and a strong blast of wind.

Below we give a resume of the Biblical account and of ancient Greek and Latin writings and modern geological researches and archaeological observations about the torment and the place where it occurred:

The hundreds of ruins found in the waste and uninhabited land lying to the south and east of the Dead Sea indicate that this must have been a prosperous and thickly populated area in the past. The archaeologists have estimated that the age of prosperity of this land lasted between 2300 and 1900 B.C. According to historians, Prophet Abraham lived about 2000 B C. Thus the archaeological evidence

confirms that this land was destroyed in the time of Prophet Abraham and his nephew Prophet Lot.

The most populous and fertile part of the area was "the vale of Siddim" as mentioned in the Bible: "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt" (Gen. 13 :10) The present-day scholars are of the opinion that that valley is now under the Dead Sea and this opinion is supported by firm archaeological evidence. In the ancient times the Dead Sea did not so much extend to the south as it does today. Opposite and to the west of the present Jordanian city of Al-Karak, there is a small peninsula called Al-Lisān. This was the end of the sea in ancient days. The area to the south of it, which is now under sea water (the shaded portion in the map) was a fertile valley, "the vale of Siddim", in which were situated Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, Zoar, the famous cities of the people of Lot. In about 2000 B.C. this valley sank as a result of a violent earthquake and was submerged in sea water. Even today this is the most shallow part of the Sea. In the Roman period it was more so and was fordable from Al-Lisān to the western coast. One can still see submerged jungles along the southern coast and there might as well be submerged buildings.



According to the Bible and the ancient Greek and Latin writings, the region abounded in pits of petroleum and asphalt and at places inflammable gas also existed. It appears from the geological observations that with the violent earthquake shocks, petroleum, gases and asphalt were thrown up and ignited, and the whole region exploded like a bomb. The Bible says that when Prophet Abraham got the news and went from Hebron to see the affected valley, he saw that "the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." (Gen. 19: 28).

115. The people of Aiykah have been briefly mentioned in vv. 78-84 of Sūrah Al-Hijr. More about them here. There is a difference of opinion among the commentators as to whether the Midianites and the people of Aiykah were two different tribes or one and the same people. One group holds that they were different tribes and gives the argument that in Sūrah Al-A'rāf Prophet Shu'aib has been called "brother of the Midianites" (v. 85), whereas here, with regard to the people of Aiykah, he has not been called so.

The other group holds that they were one and the same people on the ground that the moral diseases and characteristics mentioned of the Midianites in Sūrahs Al-A'rāf and Hūd are the same as of the people of Aiykah mentioned here. Then the message and admonition of Prophet Shu'aib to both the tribes was the same, and the two tribes also met the same end.

Research in this regard has shown that both the views are correct. The Midianites and the people of Aiykah were doubtless two different tribes but branches of the same stock. The progeny of Prophet Abraham from his wife (or slave girl) Keturah, is well known in Arabia and in the history of the Israelites as the children of Keturah. Their most prominent branch was the one which became famous as the Midianites, after their ancestor, Midian, son of Abraham. They had settled in the territory between northern Arabia and southern Palestine, and along the coasts of the Red Sea and the Gulf of 'Aqabah. Their capital city was Madyan, which was situated, according to Abul Fidā, on the western coast of the Gulf of 'Aqabah at five days' journey from Aiylah (present-day 'Aqabah). The rest of the children of Keturah, among whom the Dedanites are comparatively better known, settled in the territory between Taimā' and Tabūk and Al-'Ulā in northern Arabia, their main city being Tabūk, the Aiykah of the ancient times. (Yaqūt in his *Mu'jam al-Buldān,* under Aiykah, writes that this is the old name of Tabūk, and the natives of Tabūk confirm this).

The reason why one and the same Prophet was sent to the Midianites and the people of Aiykah was probably that both the tribes were descendants of the same ancestors, spoke the same language and had settled in the adjoining areas. It is just possible that they lived side by side in the same areas and had marriage and other social relations between them. Then, these two branches were traders by profession and had developed similar evil practices and social and moral

weaknesses. According to the early books of the Bible, these people worshipped Baal-peor. When the Children of Israel came out of Egypt and entered their territory, they also became infected with the evils of idolatry and adultery. (Numbers, 25: 1-5, 31: 16-17). Then those people had settled on the two main international trade routes, the one joining Yaman with Syria and the other the Persian Gulf with Egypt. Due to their advantageous position they had started big scale highway robbery and would not let any caravan pass till it had paid heavy taxes. They had thus rendered these trade routes highly unsafe. Their characteristic of highway robbery has been mentioned in the Qur'ān, for which they were admonished through Prophet Shu'aib, thus: "And do not lie in ambush by every path (of life) as robbers in order to frighten the people" (Al-A'rāf: 86). These were the reasons why Allah sent to both the tribes the same Prophet, who conveyed to them the same teachings and message. For the details of the story of Prophet Shu'aib and the Midianites, see Al-A'rāf: 85-93, Hūd: 84-95, Al-'Ankabūt: 36-37

116. That is, "It is not in my power to bring down the torment; it is in Allah's power, and He is fully aware of your misdeeds. He will send down the torment as and when He wills." In this demand of the people of Aiykah and the answer of Prophet Shu'aib to them there was an admonition for the Quraish as well. They also demanded from the Holy Prophet to bring down the torment on them: "Or.... you cause the sky to fall down on us in fragments, as you threaten us." (Banī Isrā'īl: 92). As such the Quraish are being told that the people of Aiykah had also demanded a similar thing from their Prophet, and the answer that they got from their Prophet is the answer of Muhammad (Allah's peace be on him) to you.

117. The details of this torment are neither found in the Qur'ān nor in any authentic Tradition. What one can learn from the Text is this: As these people had demanded a torment from the sky, Allah sent upon them a cloud which hung over them like a canopy and kept hanging until they were completely destroyed by the torment of continuous rain. The Qur'ān clearly points out that the nature of the torment sent upon the Midianites was different from that sent upon the people of Aiykah. The people of Aiykah, as mentioned here, were destroyed by the torment of the Canopy, while the torment visiting the Midianites was in the form of a terrible earthquake: "It so happened that a shocking catastrophe overtook them and they remained lying prostrate in their dwellings." (Al-A'rāf: 91). And: "A dreadful shock overtook them and they lay lifeless and prostrate in their homes." (Hūd: 94). Therefore, it is wrong to regard the two torments as identical. Some commentators have given a few explanations of "the torment of the Day of Canopy", but we do not know the source of their information. Ibn Jarīr has quoted Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās as saying: "If somebody from among the scholars

gives you an explanation of the torment of the Day of Canopy, do not consider it as correct."

118. At the end of the historical account, the same theme, with which the Sūrah began, is resumed. For reference, see vv. 1-9.

119. That is, "This lucid Book whose verses are being recited to you, and this 'Admonition' from which the people are turning away, is not the product of the whims of a man; it has not been written and compiled by Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself, but it consists of the Revelations of the Lord of this universe."

120. That is, Angel Gabriel, as mentioned in Al-Baqarah: 97: "Say to them, 'Whoever is the enemy to Gabriel, he should understand that he has, by Allah's Command, revealed to your heart the Qur'ān'." Here the object of using the title of "the trustworthy Spirit" for Gabriel implies that the Qur'ān is not being sent down by Allah through some material agency, which is subject to change and vacillation; but through a pure Spirit, having no tinge of materialism, and who is perfectly trustworthy. This Spirit conveys the Messages of Allah precisely in the same form and with the same content as they are entrusted to him: it is not possible for him to tamper with the Messages, or to make his own additions to them in any way.

121. This sentence may be related to: "... the trustworthy Spirit has come down" and also to: "..., who are (appointed by God) to warn." In the first case, it will mean that the trustworthy Spirit has brought it down in plain Arabic language, and in the second case, it will mean that the Holy Prophet is included among those Prophets who were appointed to warn the people in the Arabic language, i.e., Hūd, Ṣāliḥ, Ishmael and Shu'aib (Allah's peace be upon them). In both cases the object is the same: the Divine Message has not been sent down in a dead or mysterious language, or in a language of riddles and enigmas, but in such clear and lucid Arabic, which can be understood easily by every Arab and every non-Arab who has learnt Arabic. As such, the people who are turning away from it, cannot have the excuse that they could not understand the message of the Qur'ān. The only reason of their denial and aversion is that they are afflicted with the same disease with which Pharaoh, the people of Abraham the people of Noah, the people of Lot, the 'Ād and the Thamūd, and the people of Aiykah were afflicted.

122. That is, this very Admonition and Divine Message and teachings are contained in the former Scriptures also. The same message of submission to One God, the same belief in the Hereafter and the same invitation to follow the Prophets has been given in all those Books. All the Books sent down by God condemn *shirk* and the materialistic philosophy of life and invite people to accept

the true and sound philosophy of life, which is based on the concept of man's accountability before God, and demands that man should give up his independence in deference to Divine Commands brought and preached by the Prophets. None of these things is new, which the Qur'ān may be presenting for the first time, and none can blame the Holy Prophet of saying something which had never been said before by the former Prophets.

Among other arguments this verse also is quoted in support of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah's early opinion that if a person recites the translation of the Qur'ān in the prayer, his prayer will be in order and valid, whether he is able to recite the Qur'ān in Arabic or not. According to 'Allāma Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣās, the basis of this argument is: "Allah says that the Qur'ān was contained in the former Scriptures also; obviously this could not be in Arabic words, As such, if translated and presented in another language, it will still be the Qur'ān." *(Aḥkam-ul-Qur'ān,* Vol. III, p. 429). But the weakness of this argument is obvious. The Qur'ān, or any other Divine Book, was never revealed in a manner that Allah inspired the Prophet with its meaning and then he presented it before the people in his own words. The fact is that every Book, in whatever language it came, was revealed in Divine words and meanings together. As such, the teachings of the Qur'ān were contained in the former Scriptures in Divine words and not in human, and none of their translations could be considered as the Divine Book or its representation. As regards the Qur'ān, it has been stated over and over again that it was literally revealed in the Arabic language: "We have sent it down as Qur'ān in Arabic". (Yūsuf: 2). "We have sent this Command in Arabic to you." (Ar-Ra'd: 37). "An Arabic Qur'ān without any crookedness." (Az-Zumar: 28). Then just before this verse, it has been said that the trustworthy Spirit has brought it down in Arabic. Now how can it be said that the translation of the Qur'ān made into another language will also be the Qur'ān and its words will represent the words of Allah? It appears that later the Imām himself felt this weakness in the argument and, according to authentic traditions, gave up his earlier opinion, and adopted the opinion of Imāms Abū Yūsuf and Muḥammad, who held that a person who could not recite Arabic words, could recite the translation of the Qur'ān in his prayer till he was able to pronounce Arabic words. However, the prayer of a person, who was able to recite the Qur'ān in Arabic, would not be valid if he recited its translation. The fact is that the two Imāms had proposed this concession only for those non-Arab converts who were not able to offer their prayer in Arabic immediately after embracing Islam. In this the basis of their argument was not that the translation of the Qur'ān was the Qur'ān itself, but that just as a person unable to perform *Rukū'* and *Sajdah* was allowed to offer his prayer by making signs, so a person unable to pronounce Arabic words could recite the translation. Then just as the prayer of a person who offered it by making signs could not be valid as soon as

the cause of inability was removed, so the prayer of a person who recited the translation would not be valid as soon as he became able to pronounce Arabic words. (For a detailed discussion, see *Al-Mabsūt* by Sarkhasi, Vol. I, p. 37; *Fatḥ ul-Qadīr* and *Sharḥ 'Ināya 'alal-Hedāya*, Vol. I. pp. 190-201).

123. That is, "The learned men of the Israelites know that the teachings of the Qur'ān are the same as of the former Scriptures. Though the people of Makkah themselves are un-initiated in the knowledge of the Book, there are many scholars among the Israelites living in the surrounding areas, who fully understand that the Qur'ān did not bring a novel "message", which was being presented by Muḥammad bin 'Abdullah for the first time, but it was the same message which had been brought and preached by Prophets of Allah one after the other since thousands of years. Is it not then a convincing proof of the fact that the Qur'ān has been sent down by the same Lord of the universe, Who sent down the former Books ?"

According to Ibn Hishām's Life of the Holy Prophet, a little before the revelation of these verses a deputation of 20 men, who had been influenced by the preaching of Ḥadrat Ja'far, came to Makkah from Ḥabash. They met the Holy Prophet in Masjid al-Ḥarām and asked him in the presence of the unbelieving Quraish what his teachings were. In response, the Holy Prophet recited a few verses of the Qur'ān, whereupon tears came down from their eyes and they believed in him there and then to be a true Messenger of Allah. When they took leave of the Holy Prophet, Abū Jahl met them along with a few other men of the Quraish and rebuked them, saying, "Never has a more stupid company come here before: O foolish men, you were sent here by your people with a view to inquiring about this man, but no sooner did you meet him than you gave up your own faith!" Those gentle people did not like to have a dispute with Abū Jahl, so they left him, saying, "We have no wish to enter an argument with you: you are responsible for your faith and we are for ours: we adopted something in which we saw some good for ourselves." (Vol II, p. 32). This same incident has been mentioned in Sūrah Qasas, thus: "Those to whom We had given the Book before this, believe in the Qur'ān and when it is recited to them, they say, 'We have believed in it: this is the very Truth from our Lord: we were even before this followers of Islam'. And when they heard vain and meaningless talk, they refrained from entering an argument, saying, 'For us are our deeds and for you yours: peace be to you: we do not like the ways of the ignorant!'" (vv. 52-55).

124. That is, "Now when a man from among themselves is reciting to them this Divine Revelation in lucid Arabic, they say that he himself has composed it, and therefore it cannot be from Allah. But if the same Revelation in eloquent Arabic had been sent down by Allah to a non-Arab as a miracle, and he had

recited it before them in perfect Arabic accent, they would have invented some other excuse for not believing in him. They would have said that he is under the power and influence of a jinn, who speaks Arabic through a non-Arab." As a matter of fact, a lover of the truth considers the thing presented before him coolly and forms an opinion about it after due thought. But an obdurate person who is unwilling to believe, pays no attention to it at all, but instead seeks all sorts of excuses to reject it, and will, in any case, invent an excuse for his denial. This obduracy of the unbelieving Quraish has been exposed over and over again in the Qur'ān, and they have been clearly told that even if a miracle were shown to them, they would certainly have found an excuse to deny it because they are not inclined to believe: "O Messenger, even if We had sent down to you a Book written on paper, and even if they had touched it with their own hands, the disbelievers would have said, 'This is nothing but manifest sorcery'." (Al-An'ām: 7). "Even if We had opened a gate for them in heaven, and they had begun to ascend through it, they would have said, 'Our eyes have been dazzled; nay, we have been bewitched'" (Al-Hijr: 14-15).

125. That is, unlike the truth-loving people to whom the Qur'ān brings peace of the mind and heart, it passes like a hot iron rod through the hearts of the disbelievers, which sets them ill at ease, and they, instead of pondering over its themes, start looking for subterfuges to deny it.

يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهٖ حَتّٰى يَرَوُا الْعَذَابَ الْاَلِيْمَ ﴿201﴾ فَيَاْتِيَهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿202﴾
فَيَقُوْلُوْا هَلْ نَحْنُ مُنْظَرُوْنَ ﴿203﴾ اَفَبِعَذَابِنَا يَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَ ﴿204﴾ اَفَرَءَيْتَ اِنْ مَّتَّعْنٰهُمْ
سِنِيْنَ ﴿205﴾ ثُمَّ جَآءَهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿206﴾ مَآ اَغْنٰى عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يُمَتَّعُوْنَ ﴿207﴾
وَمَآ اَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ اِلَّا لَهَا مُنْذِرُوْنَ ﴿208﴾ ذِكْرٰى ۛ وَمَا كُنَّا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿209﴾ وَمَا
تَنَزَّلَتْ بِهِ الشَّيٰطِيْنُ ﴿210﴾ وَمَا يَنْۢبَغِيْ لَهُمْ وَمَا يَسْتَطِيْعُوْنَ ﴿211﴾ اِنَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّمْعِ
لَمَعْزُوْلُوْنَ ﴿212﴾ فَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ فَتَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُعَذَّبِيْنَ ﴿213﴾ وَاَنْذِرْ
عَشِيْرَتَكَ الْاَقْرَبِيْنَ ﴿214﴾ وَاخْفِضْ جَنَاحَكَ لِمَنِ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿215﴾
فَاِنْ عَصَوْكَ فَقُلْ اِنِّيْ بَرِيْٓءٌ مِّمَّا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿216﴾ وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى الْعَزِيْزِ الرَّحِيْمِ ﴿217﴾
الَّذِيْ يَرٰىكَ حِيْنَ تَقُوْمُ ﴿218﴾ وَتَقَلُّبَكَ فِي السّٰجِدِيْنَ ﴿219﴾ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿220﴾
هَلْ اُنَبِّئُكُمْ عَلٰى مَنْ تَنَزَّلُ الشَّيٰطِيْنُ ﴿221﴾ تَنَزَّلُ عَلٰى كُلِّ اَفَّاكٍ اَثِيْمٍ ﴿222﴾
يُّلْقُوْنَ السَّمْعَ وَاَكْثَرُهُمْ كٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿223﴾ وَالشُّعَرَآءُ يَتَّبِعُهُمُ الْغَاوٗنَ ﴿224﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ
اَنَّهُمْ فِيْ كُلِّ وَادٍ يَّهِيْمُوْنَ ﴿225﴾ وَاَنَّهُمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ مَا لَا يَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿226﴾ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَذَكَرُوا اللّٰهَ كَثِيْرًا وَّانْتَصَرُوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا
ظُلِمُوْا ۭ وَسَيَعْلَمُ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْٓا اَيَّ مُنْقَلَبٍ يَّنْقَلِبُوْنَ ﴿227﴾

they do not believe in it until they see the painful torment.[126] Then, when it overtakes them unawares, they say, "May we be given some respite ?"[127] 201-203

Are these people clamouring for Our torment to be hastened ? Have you considered that even if We grant them the respite to enjoy life for years, and then there comes down on them that with which they are being threatened, the provisions of life that they have got, will not avail them anything ?[128] 204-207

(Note it that) We have never destroyed a habitation unless it had its warners to administer admonition; and We have never been unjust.[129] 208-209

This (lucid Book) has not been brought down by satans,[130] nor does this work behove them,[131] nor are they able to do it.[132] They have indeed been kept out of its hearing.[133] 210-212

So, O Muhammad, do not invoke any other deity besides Allah lest you should also be included among those who will be chastised.[134] Warn your nearest kinsfolk[135] and treat with kindness those of the believers who follow you, but if they disobey, tell them: "I am not responsible for what you do."[136] And put your trust in the Mighty and Merciful One,[137] Who watches you when you get up,[138] and when you move about among those who prostrate themselves in worship.[139] He is indeed All-Hearing, All-Knowing. 213-220

O people, shall I tell you upon whom the satans come down? They come down upon every sinning forgerer:[140] they whisper hearsay into ears, and most of them are liars.[141] 221-223

As for the poets, they have the erring people to follow them.[142] Do you not see that they stray aimlessly in every valley?[143] and say that which they do not practise themselves.[144] save those who believed and did good works and remembered Allah much, and when they were treated unjustly, they only defended themselves (and did not show vindictiveness)[145].—And the iniquitous people will soon come to know what punishment awaits them.[146] 224-227

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126. The kind of torment with which the tribes and communities mentioned above were punished.

Contd. from p.501]

127. That is, "Until the criminals are actually overtaken by the torment, they do not believe in the Prophet. Then they feel remorse and desire to be given some respite when it is too late."

128. There is a subtle gap between this and the preceding sentence, which the reader himself can fill with a little thinking. They were asking for the torment to be hastened because they were not sure that it would ever come. They were confident that they would continue living a life of ease and indulgence as they had been living till then. On account of the same confidence they challenged the Holy Prophet, as if to say, "If you are a Messenger of Allah, and we deserve to be chastised by Allah because we have treated you as a liar, then you should hasten that torment on us, with which you threaten us." At this it is being said, "Well, even if they be right in their confidence, and the torment is not sent upon them immediately, and they are allowed a long respite to enjoy life as they expect, the question is: What will these few years of worldly pleasure and comfort avail them when the inevitable scourge from Allah overtakes them suddenly as it overtook the 'Ād and the Thamūd, or the people of Lot and of Aiykah, or if they are visited by death which nobody can escape ?"

129. That is, "We could not be blamed for any injustice when they did not heed the warning and admonition of the warners and were destroyed. It would have been injustice if no effort had been made to admonish them and guide them aright prior to their destruction."

130. After the positive aspect as stated in vv. 192-193, the negative aspect is being stated that the Qur'ān has not been brought down by satans as the enemies of the Truth allege. The unbelieving Quraish in their campaign to spread lies and slander against the Holy Prophet were facing a real difficulty. They did not know how to account for the wonderful discourses which were being presented before the people in the form of the Qur'ān and which were moving their hearts deeply. They could not stop the Qur'ān from reaching the people. The only thing they could do to counteract its effect and influence was to create doubts and suspicions about it in their minds and hearts. Therefore, in their desperation they charged that Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him) was a sorcerer, who was being inspired by the satans, and they considered this charge of theirs to be the most effective because it could neither be easily verified nor refuted.

131. That is, these revelations and themes do not at all suit the satans. Any person who has a little common sense can well understand that the sublime discourses being presented in the Qur'ān cannot be inspired by the satans. Never has it happened that the satans might have taught the people through the sorcerers to worship God and fear Him, or forbidden them from *shirk* and idol-worship, or warned them of the accountability of the Hereafter, or prohibited them from

tyranny and sexual and moral evils, and exhorted them instead to act righteously and do good to others. Such works cannot behove the satans. Their only pastime can be to sow the seeds of discord among the people and to arouse them to mischief and vice. The common observation is that people visit the sorcerers to find out whether they will succeed in their love affairs or not, what move would suit them in gambling, what trick and stratagem would be helpful against the enemy, or who had stolen the camel of so and so. Apart from such affairs and problems, the sorcerers and their patron-saints cannot be expected to worry themselves about matters like reforming the people, teaching them morals and cleansing their lives of vice and evil.

132. That is, even if the satans wanted they could not impart Truth and Goodness to the people like a true teacher and reformer as the Qur'ān does. Even if to deceive the people, they came out under the guise of a benefactor, their work would not be free from blemishes, which would betray their ignorance and their hidden satanic nature. Similarly the life and the teachings of a person who poses to be a religious guide, under the influence and inspiration of satans, would inevitably reflect the wickedness of intention and design. Thus the satans can neither inspire others with piety and goodness, nor can those, who have any relation with the satans, become pious and righteous themselves. Then in addition to its high and noble teachings, the Qur'ān is a lucid and eloquent Book, which contains the knowledge of Reality. That is why it has over and over again put forward the challenge that human beings and jinns would never be able to produce a book like the Qur'ān even if they collaborated with all their energies and capacities. "Declare this: Even if human beings and jinns should cooperate with one another to bring forth a book like the Qur'ān, they will never be able to bring anything like it, even though all of them help one another" (Banī Isrā'īl: 88).

"Tell them: if what you say be true, then produce one Sūrah like this, and you may call to your assistance anyone you can other than Allah." (Yūnus: 38).

133. That is, "Not to speak of interfering with the revelation of the Qur'ān, the satans are not even given a chance to hear the Qur'ān any moment from the time Angel Gabriel receives it from Allah till he reveals it to the heart of the Holy Prophet. They are so kept out of its hearing that they cannot get any hint as to its words and contents so as to tell their friends that the Holy Prophet was going to give such and such a message to his followers, or that his address would contain such and such a thing that day. For further details see E. N.'s 8 to 12 of Al-Ḥijr, E.N.'s 5 to 7 of As -Sāffāt and Sūrah Jinn: 8-9-27.

134. This does not mean that the Holy Prophet was going to be involved in *shirk* from which he was to be admonished to desist. The object was to warn the disbelievers and polytheists to the effect: "As the message of the Qur'ān is based

on pure Truth revealed by the Almighty Ruler of the universe, and there is no tinge of any satanic impurity in it, there could be no question of showing a favour to somebody in regard to the Truth. Even if the Holy Messenger himself, who is nearest to Allah and His most beloved servant, deviated a little from the path of His obedience and invoked any other deity than Allah, he could not escape the punishment." When it was so in the case of the Holy Prophet, who else could have the hope that after committing *shirk* with regard to Allah, he would be able to escape the punishment or help others to escape it.

135. Just as there could be no concession or favour for the person of the Prophet in a matter concerning Allah's religion, so there could be no question of a favour being shown to the Prophet's family or his nearest kinsfolk. Here the case of everybody will be judged on merit, and nobody will be shown any favour on account of his ancestry or relation with somebody else. The accountability of the Hereafter and punishment for deviation and misdeeds are the same for everybody and even the Prophet's nearest kinsfolk are no exception. Therefore, the Holy Prophet was commanded to warn his relatives and kindred to attain the right belief and to act righteously because they would not escape punishment only by virtue of being his relations.

There are authentic Traditions to show that after the revelation of this verse, the Holy Prophet first of all addressed the sons and daughters of his grandfather. Calling each one of them by name, he said: "O children of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, O 'Abbās, O Ṣafiah, paternal aunt of Allah's Messenger, O Fāṭimah, daughter of Muḥammad! You are warned to beware and save yourselves from the torment of the Hell-Fire: I cannot protect you from Allah's punishment; you may, however, demand whatever you like from my worldly property." Then as was the custom in Arabia, to warn the people of an impending calamity, he stood on top of Mount Ṣafā one morning and called out: "O people of Quraish, O children of Ka'b bin Luayy, O children of Murrah, O children of Qaṣayy, O children of 'Abd Manāf, O children of 'Abd Shams, O children of Hāshim, O children of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib....", and in this way he called out each branch and clan of the Quraish by name. When all the people had got together, he said, "O People, if I tell you that on the other side of this hill, there is a huge army ready to attack you, will you believe my word?" With one voice they replied in the affirmative, saying that they had never heard a lie from him in the past. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said, "Well, I warn you of the impending scourge of Allah: save yourselves from His punishment: I cannot be of any help to you against Him. On the Day of Resurrection, the righteous only will be nearest to me. Let it not happen that others should come forth with good deeds and you should appear with the burden of sins on your heads. Then you will call me for help, but I shall be constrained to turn my face away from you. Of course, here in this world, I am bound to you by

blood relations, and I shall treat you with all possible politeness as a good relation should." (Several Traditions on this subject have been reported in Bukhāri, Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmizī, Ibn Jarīr on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Abu Huraīrah, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat Zubair bin 'Amr and Ḥaḍrat Qabīsah bin Makhāriq).

The matter was not simply this that on receipt of the Command to "warn your nearest kinsfolk", the Holy Prophet called together all his relatives and complied with it. In fact, the principle it meant to stress was that in the matter of religion the Prophet and his relations enjoyed no special privilege of which the other people might be deprived. What was harmful for one man, was harmful for everybody. The Prophet was supposed to first protect himself from this and then warn his nearest kinsfolk and the common people of its fatal consequences. On the other hand, what was good and beneficial for one man, was good and beneficial for all. As such, the Prophet should first adopt it himself and then exhort his relatives also to adopt it, so that everybody may see that the Prophet does not only preach his message to others but practises it himself also sincerely. The Holy Prophet followed this principle throughout his life. On the conquest of Makkah, when he entered the city, he declared: "Every kind of interest payable from the people during the age of ignorance, is trampled under my feet, and first of all, I remit the interest payable to my uncle 'Abbās." (It should be noted that before the prohibition of interest, Ḥaḍrat 'Abbās traded money on interest, and a substantial amount of interest payable to him at that time was outstanding against the people). Once the Holy Prophet ordered cutting off of the hand of a Quraishite woman, named Fāṭimah, on the charge of theft. Ḥaḍrat Usāmah bin Zaid came to intercede for her, whereupon the Holy Prophet said: "By God, even if Fatimah, daughter of Muḥammad, had committed the theft, I would have ordered amputation of her hand, too."

136. This can have two meanings: (1) "Treat those of your relatives with kindness, who have believed in you and followed your teachings practically; as for those who have not accepted your message, you may declare that you are not responsible for what they do." (2) "You should treat with kindness every such person, who believes in and obeys you, and you should warn every unbeliever that you take no responsibility for his actions."

This verse shows that at that time there were some people among the Quraish and the neighbouring Arabs, who had believed in the truth of the Holy Prophet's message; but they had not as yet started obeying his teachings practically. They were still, as usual, living the same life of unbelief among their people as were the other unbelievers. Allah set apart such believers from those true Believers who after belief had adopted total obedience of the Holy Prophet. The

Command "to treat with kindness" was meant only for the latter group. As for those who had turned away from his obedience, and who included both those who believed in the truth of his message and those who rejected it, the Holy Prophet was instructed to disown them, and tell them plainly that they themselves were responsible for their deeds, and that after giving them the warning he was not at all responsible for what they did.

137. That is, "You should not care at all for any worldly power, howsoever big and strong, but should continue to perform your mission with complete trust in that Being Who is Mighty as well as Merciful. He is Mighty and, therefore, anybody enjoying His support, cannot be overcome by any other power; He is Merciful and, therefore, He will not let go waste the sacrifices and efforts of the one who struggles for the sake of raising His Word in the world."

138. "Getting up" may mean getting up for the Prayers during the night, or coming out for the purpose of performing the Prophetic Mission.

139. This can have several meanings: (1) Allah watches you when in the congregational Prayers you stand and sit and perform *Rukū'* and *Sajdah* with your followers behind you. (2) He watches you when you get up in the night to see what your Companions (whose mark of distinction is that "they prostrate themselves in worship") are doing for their own well-being in the Hereafter. (3) He is fully aware of how you and your Companions are endeavouring to reform the people. (4) He is fully aware of all your efforts to revolutionise the lives of the people who "prostrate themselves in worship"; He knows what sort of training you are giving them to reform them; how you have purified their lives and transformed them into the best people.

These characteristics of the Holy Prophet and his Companions have a special significance in the context here. In the first place, the Holy Prophet deserves Allah's Mercy and His Support for Allah, being All-Hearing and All-Knowing, is fully aware of the struggle he is waging for His cause and of the efforts he is making to reform his Companions; Secondly, when a person is living such a noble life as Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is actually living, and the characteristics of his followers are those which Muhammad's Companions have, only an idiot can have the boldness to say that he is inspired by the satans, or that he is a poet. People are fully aware of the lives of the sorcerers who are inspired by the satans and also of the poets and their admirers living among them. Can anybody honestly say that there is no difference whatever between the noble life being led by Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his Companions and the sort of life being led by the poets and the sorcerers? Then, what is it if not sheer impudence that the former are openly being branded as poets and sorcerers without any shame?

140. This implies the sorcerers, astrologers, fortune-tellers and conjurers who pose as knowers of the unseen and tell the people their future, or as wise men who have control over jinns and spirits and can make the destinies of the people through them.

141. This may have two meanings: (1) The satans somehow get a little hint of the truth and inspire their agents with it, mixing it with all kinds of falsehood; and (2) the deceitful, unscrupulous sorcerers hear something from the satans and then mixing it with falsehood, whisper it into the people's ears. This has been explained in a Tradition which Bukhārī has quoted on the authority of Hadrat 'Ā'ishah. She says that when some people asked the Holy Prophet about sorcerers, he replied that they were nothing. They said, "O Messenger of Allah, they, sometimes, tell the right thing" The Holy Prophet answered, "That right thing is overheard by the jinns who whisper it into their friend's ear, who concocts a story by mixing a lot of falsehood in it."

142. That is, the people who follow and accompany the poets, are wholly different in their characteristics, habits and temper from those who follow and accompany Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). The difference between the two groups is so obvious that one group can be easily distinguished from the other. On the one side, there are the people who are characterised by the high seriousness, civilized and gentle behaviour, righteousness and fear of God, sense of responsibility and a high regard for the rights of others; people who are fair and just in their dealings, who do not utter a word except in the cause of goodness, who have a high and pure ideal before them, which they pursue with single-minded devotion and for whose attainment they expend all their energies and capabilities. On other side, there are the people whose only pastime is to portray erotic scenes of love and wine-drinking, mocking and jesting, satirizing and eulogizing, or to arouse feelings of hatred and enmity and vengeance against others, or to describe charms of unchaste women to the brothel or of chaste ladies in the houses, only for the sake of pleasing the people and winning their applause. From the crowds who throng the poetic sessions and follow the "famous" poets, one cannot help forming the impression that those people are free from every moral restriction, who have no object in life except to gratify the lusts of the flesh like animals, and who have no idea whatever of the higher and nobler ideals and ends of life. The person who cannot see the obvious difference between the two types is indeed blind. But if in spite of seeing and knowing the difference, only for the purpose of suppressing the Truth, he says that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his Companions are no different from the poets and their followers, he is not only a liar but has also transgressed all bounds of modesty and decency.

143. That is, they follow no fixed pattern for their thought and speech, but wander aimlessly in every valley. Every new impulse makes them take up a new theme regardless as to whether it has any truth in it or not. Under one momentary impulse they would start uttering wise things; under another they would give expression to filthy and base feelings. If they felt pleased with somebody, they would exaggerate his praises, and if they felt offended by him, they would condemn him and run him down to hell. If they had a selfish motive, attached with somebody, they would feel no hesitation in giving preference to a miserly person over a generous person and to a cowardly person over a gallant person. On the contrary, if they felt displeased with somebody, they would not feel any shame in blotting his character and ridiculing him and his ancestors. That is why, one can find God-worship and atheism, materialism and spiritualism, morality and immorality, piety and filthiness, seriousness and jesting, eulogy and satire expressed side by side in the poetry of one and the same poet. A person who is aware of these well known characteristics of the poets cannot reconcile himself to charging the recipient of the Qur'ān with poetry, whose every discourse and word is clear and precise, whose objective is clearly defined, and who has never in his life uttered a word deviating in any way from the path of truth, righteousness and virtue.

At another place in the Qur'ān, it has been stated that poetry is not suited to the temperament of the Holy Prophet: "We have not taught him poetry, nor does it suit him." (Yā Sīn: 69). And this fact was fully known to the people who had any personal acquaintance with the Holy Prophet. Authentic Traditions show that he could not recite a complete verse from memory. If ever during conversation he remembered of a good verse of some poet, he would recite it without much care and regard for its metre and order of words.

Once Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah was asked whether the Holy Prophet ever made use of poetic verses in his discourses. She replied that he hated poetic verses the most, though sometimes he would recite a verse of a poet of Banī Quais, but in so doing he would unconsciously change the order of its words. When Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr corrected him, he would say, "Brother, I am not a poet, nor composing poetry is my object." Arabic poetry abounded in themes of sex and love romances, wine-drinking, tribal hatreds and feuds, ancestral pride and vanity and made little or no mention of pure and noble themes. It was so saturated with falsehood, exaggeration, false accusations, undue praises, vanity, satiric invectives, jesting and polytheistic obscenities that the Holy Prophet once remarked: "It is better that the interior of one of you be filled with pus than with poetic verses" However, if there was something good in a verse, he would appreciate it, and say, "Some verses are based on wisdom." When he heard the verses of Umayyah bin Abi-Salt, he said, "His verse is a believer but his heart a disbeliever." Once a Companion

recited a hundred or so good verses before him, and he went on urging him to recite more.

144. This characteristic of the poets was just the antithesis of the Holy Prophet's conduct and practice. Everybody knew that the Holy Prophet said what he practised and practised what he said. The fact that there was complete conformity between his word and deed, could not be denied by anybody. On the contrary, everyone was well aware that the poets said one thing and practised just the opposite of it. For instance, they would express noble themes of generosity, indifference to worldly wealth, contentment and self-respect in their poetry, but, in practical life, they would turn out to be extremely stingy and cowardly, avaricious and selfish. They would find fault with others on trifles, but would themselves be involved in grave moral weaknesses.

145. Here those poets have made an exception from the general reproach, who possess the following four characteristics:

(1) They should be believers in Allah, His Prophets, His Books and the Hereafter.

(2) They should be pious in practical life and not sinners, nor free from moral restrictions to say whatever they like.

(3) They should be remembering Allah much in their day to day lives as well as in their literary work. It should not be so that their personal lives reflect God-consciousness and piety, but their poetry is replete with themes of debauchery and lusts of the flesh, or that their poetry is full of serious themes of wisdom and God-consciousness, but their personal lives are devoid of any trace of the remembrance of Allah. As a matter of fact, both these states are equally despicable. A good poet is he who is God-conscious in his personal life and whose poetic talent and skills also are devoted to the advancement of the way of life followed by the God-conscious, God-fearing and God-worshipping people.

(4) They should not satirize others for personal reasons, nor take vengeance on others on account of personal, racial and national prejudices, but when they are required to support the truth, they should use their literary powers like weapons of war against the unjust and treacherous people. It does not behove the believers to adopt a humble, supplicating attitude against injustice and oppression. Traditions show that when the unbelieving and *mushrik* poets raised a storm of false accusations against Islam and the Holy Prophet and spread the poison of hatred against the Muslims, the Holy Prophet urged and encouraged the poets of Islam to counter attack them. Once he said to Ka'b bin Mālik, "Satirize them, for, I swear by God in Whose hand is my soul, your verse will be more effective and

damaging for them than the arrow." Likewise he said to Ḥassān bin Thābit, "Deal with them and Gabriel is with you". And, "Say and the Holy Spirit is with you." Once he said, "The believer fights with the sword as well as with the tongue."

146. "The iniquitous people": The people who out of sheer obduracy calumniated the Holy Prophet of being a sorcerer, poet and a mad and enchanted man, in order to defeat Islam, and to confuse the other people and distract them from his message and invitation.



XXVII

AN-NAML

اَلنَّمل

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXVII
AN-NAML
سورة النمل

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the phrase *wād-in-namel* which occurs in verse 18, implying that it is a Sūrah in which the story of An-Naml (the Ant) has been related.

Period of Revelation

The subject-matter and the style bear full resemblance with the Sūrahs of the middle Makkan period and this is supported by traditions as well. According to Ibn 'Abbās and Jābir bin Zaid, "First the Sūrah Ash-Shu'arāa' was sent down, then the Sūrah An-Naml and then Al-Qaṣaṣ."

Theme and Topics

The Sūrah consists of two discourses, the first from the beginning of the Sūrah to the end of verse 58, and the second from verse 59 to the end of the Sūrah.

The theme of the first discourse is that only those people can benefit from the guidance of the Qur'ān and become worthy of the good promises made in it, who accept the realities which this Book presents as the basic realities of the universe, and then follow up their belief with obedience and submission in their practical lives as well. But the greatest hindrance for man to follow this way is the denial of the Hereafter. For it makes him irresponsible, selfish and given to worldly life, which in turn makes it impossible for him to submit himself before God and to accept the moral restrictions on his lusts and desires. After this introduction three types of character have been presented.

The first type is characterised by Pharaoh and the chiefs of Thamūd and the rebels of the people of Lot, who were all heedless of the accountability of the Hereafter and had consequently become the slaves of the world. These people did not believe even after seeing the miracles. Rather they turned against those who invited them to goodness and piety. They persisted in their evil ways which are held in abhorrence by every sensible person. They did not heed the admonition even until a moment before they were overtaken by the scourge of Allah.

The second type of character is of the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him), who had been blessed by God with wealth and kingdom and grandeur to an extent undreamt of by the chiefs of the disbelievers of Makkah. But, since he regarded himself as answerable before God and had the feeling that whatever he had was only due to Allah's bounty, he had adopted the attitude of obeisance before Him and there was no tinge of vanity in his character.

The third type is of the queen of Sheba, who ruled over a most wealthy and well-known people in the history of Arabia. She possessed all those means of life, which could cause a person to become vain and conceited. Her wealth and possessions far exceeded the wealth and possessions of the Quraish. Then she professed *shirk*, which was not

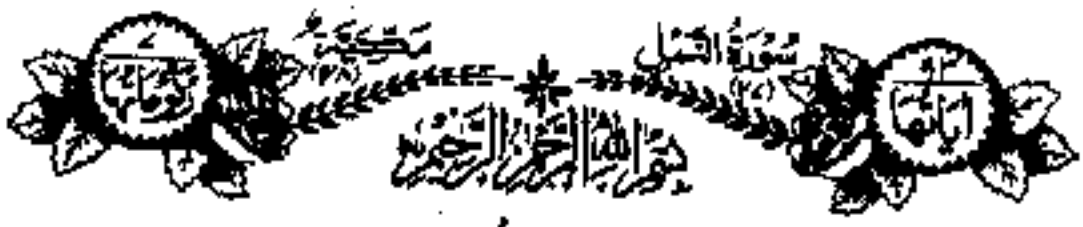
only an ancestral way of life with her, but she had to follow it in order to maintain her position as a ruler. Therefore, it was much more difficult for her to give up *shirk* and adopt the way of *Tauḥīd* than it could be for a common *mushrik*. But when the Truth became evident to her, nothing could stop her from accepting it. Her deviation was, in fact, due to her being born and brought up in a polytheistic environment and not because of her being a slave to her lusts and desires. Her conscience was not devoid of the sense of accountability before God.

In the second discourse, at the outset, attention has been drawn to some of the most glaring and visible realities of the universe, and the disbelievers of Makkah have been asked one question after the other to the effect: "Do these realities testify to the creed of *shirk* which you are following, or to the truth of *Tauḥīd* to which the Qur'ān invites you?" After this the real malady of the disbelievers has been pointed out, saying, "The thing which has blinded them and made them insensitive to every glaring reality is their denial of the Hereafter. This same thing has rendered every matter and affair of life non-serious for them. For, when according to them, everything has to become dust ultimately, and the whole struggle of life is purposeless and without an object before it, the truth and falsehood are equal and alike. Therefore, the question whether one's system of life is based on the right or wrong foundations, becomes meaningless for him."

But the discourse, as outlined above, is not meant to dissuade the Prophet and the Muslims from calling the obdurate and heedless people to the way of *Tauḥīd;* it is, in fact, intended *to* arouse them from their slumber. That is why in vv. 67-93 certain things have been said repeatedly in order to produce in the people a sense of the Hereafter, to warn them of the consequences of being heedless of it, and to convince them of its coming, like an eye witness of something, who convinces the other person of it, who has not seen it.

In conclusion, the real invitation of the Qur'ān, that is, the invitation to serve One Allah alone, has been presented in a concise but forceful manner, and the people warned that accepting it would be to their own advantage and rejecting it to their own disadvantage. For if

they deferred their faith until they saw those Signs of God after the appearance of which they would be left with no choice but to believe and submit, they should bear in mind the fact that that would be the time of judgement and believing then would be of no avail.



طٰسٓ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْقُرْاٰنِ وَكِتَابٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ۙ هُدًى وَّ بُشْرٰى لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۙ
الَّذِيْنَ يُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَهُمْ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوْقِنُوْنَ ۚ
اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ زَيَّنَّا لَهُمْ اَعْمَالَهُمْ فَهُمْ يَعْمَهُوْنَ ۗ

XXVII

AN-NAML

النمل

Verses: 93

Revealed at Makkah

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

Ṭā. Sīn. These are the verses of the Qur'ān and the lucid Book,[1] a guidance and good news[2] for those believers who establish the *Ṣalāt* and pay the *Zakāt*,[3] and they are the ones who fully believe in the Hereafter.[4] The fact is that We have made the misdeeds of those who deny the Hereafter seem fair to them; therefore, they stray about blindly.[5] 1-4

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1. *Kitāb-i-mubīn* has three meanings: (1) This book presents its teachings and instructions and injunctions plainly; (2) it distinguishes between the Truth and falsehood clearly; and (3) its being a Divine Book is obvious: whoever studies it with open eyes will realize that it has not been composed and forged by the Holy Prophet himself.

2. That is, the verses themselves are a "guidance" and "good news", because they give guidance and convey good news in a most excellent manner.

3. That is, "These verses of the Qur'ān give guidance and convey the good news of a good end only to those people who possess these two qualities: (1) They should affirm faith, that is, accept the invitation of the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), believe in One

[Contd. on p.522

أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ لَهُمْ سُوءُ الْعَذَابِ وَهُمْ فِي الْآخِرَةِ هُمُ الْأَخْسَرُونَ ﴿٥﴾ وَ
إِنَّكَ لَتُلَقَّى الْقُرْآنَ مِن لَّدُنْ حَكِيمٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿٦﴾ إِذْ قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِأَهْلِهِ إِنِّي
آنَسْتُ نَارًا ۖ سَآتِيكُم مِّنْهَا بِخَبَرٍ أَوْ آتِيكُم بِشِهَابٍ قَبَسٍ لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُونَ ﴿٧﴾
فَلَمَّا جَاءَهَا نُودِيَ أَن بُورِكَ مَن فِي النَّارِ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا ۖ وَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ
رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٨﴾ يَا مُوسَىٰ إِنَّهُ أَنَا اللَّهُ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٩﴾ وَأَلْقِ عَصَاكَ ۚ فَلَمَّا
رَآهَا تَهْتَزُّ كَأَنَّهَا جَانٌّ وَلَّىٰ مُدْبِرًا وَلَمْ يُعَقِّبْ ۚ يَا مُوسَىٰ لَا تَخَفْ ۖ إِنِّي
لَا يَخَافُ لَدَيَّ الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ إِلَّا مَن ظَلَمَ ثُمَّ بَدَّلَ حُسْنًا بَعْدَ سُوءٍ
فَإِنِّي غَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿١١﴾ وَأَدْخِلْ يَدَكَ فِي جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضَاءَ مِنْ غَيْرِ
سُوءٍ ۖ فِي تِسْعِ آيَاتٍ إِلَىٰ فِرْعَوْنَ وَقَوْمِهِ ۚ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا فَاسِقِينَ ﴿١٢﴾ فَلَمَّا
جَاءَتْهُمْ آيَاتُنَا مُبْصِرَةً قَالُوا هَٰذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِينٌ ﴿١٣﴾ وَجَحَدُوا بِهَا وَاسْتَيْقَنَتْهَا
أَنفُسُهُمْ ظُلْمًا وَعُلُوًّا ۚ فَانظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا
دَاوُودَ وَسُلَيْمَانَ عِلْمًا ۖ وَقَالَا الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ الَّذِي فَضَّلَنَا عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ مِّنْ عِبَادِهِ
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَوَرِثَ سُلَيْمَانُ دَاوُودَ وَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ عُلِّمْنَا مَنطِقَ الطَّيْرِ
وَأُوتِينَا مِن كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۖ إِنَّ هَٰذَا لَهُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٦﴾ وَحُشِرَ لِسُلَيْمَانَ
جُنُودُهُ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ وَالطَّيْرِ فَهُمْ يُوزَعُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَتَوْا عَلَىٰ
وَادِ النَّمْلِ ۙ قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ ادْخُلُوا مَسَاكِنَكُمْ ۖ لَا يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ
سُلَيْمَانُ وَجُنُودُهُ ۙ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكًا مِّن قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ
رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ
أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَ

They are the ones for whom there is an evil chastisement,[6] and in the Hereafter they shall be the worst losers. And (O Muhammad), you are most surely receiving this Qur'ān from the One, Who is All-Wise, All-Knowing.[7] 5-6

(Tell them the story of the time) when Moses said to the people of his house,[8] "I have seen a fire: I may either bring some information from there or a burning brand so that you may warm yourselves."[9] When he came to it, a voice called out:[10] "Blessed is He Who is in the fire and the one who is around it. Glorified is Allah, Lord of the worlds.[11] O Moses, this is I, Allah, the Almighty, the All-Wise: Just cast down your staff." No sooner did Moses see the staff writhing like a snake[12] than he turned about and fled, without even looking behind. "O Moses, fear not: the Messengers never feel afraid in My Presence,[13] unless, of course, someone has committed an offence.[14] Then, if after the evil, he changed (his act) into a good one, I am indeed All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.[15] And just put your hand into your bosom: it will come out shining, without any hurt. These (two Signs) are from among the nine Signs (you will take)[16] to Pharaoh and his people: they are indeed a very wicked people." 7-12

But when Our clear Signs came before those people, they said, "This is plain magic." They rejected those Signs out of sheer injustice and vanity, whereas in their heart of hearts they were convinced.[17] See, then, what fate those mischief-makers met. 13-14

(On the other hand,) We gave knowledge to David and Solomon,[18] and they said, "Praise is for Allah Who exalted us above many of His believing servants."[19] And Solomon succeeded David,[20] and he said, "O people, we have been taught the speech of the birds,[21] and we have been granted all sorts of things.[22] This is indeed a great favour (of Allah)." For Solomon were gathered hosts of jinn and men and birds,[23] which were kept under strict discipline. (Once he was marching in an expedition with them) until when they came to the valley of the ants, an ant said, "O ants, get into your holes lest Solomon and his hosts should trample you down without even knowing it."[24] Hearing its words, Solomon laughed smilingly and said "O My Lord, restrain[25] me so that I may render thanks to Thee for Thy favours which Thou hast bestowed upon me and my parents, and (enable me) to 15-19

do such good works as may please Thee; and admit me, by Thy mercy, among Thy righteous servants."[26]

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God as their only Deity and Lord, accept the Qur'ān as the Book of Allah, acknowledge the Holy Prophet as a true Prophet and their Leader, and also adopt the belief that after this life there is another life, in which man has to render his full account of deeds and be rewarded or punished accordingly. (2) They should not only profess faith verbally, but should also be inclined to follow and obey the Divine Commands practically, and the first indication of this inclination is that they should establish the *Ṣalāt* and pay the *Zakāt*. The verses of the Qur'ān will show the right way of life only to those people who fulfil these two conditions; they will explain to them the difference between the right and the wrong at every stage on the way, protect them against the wrong ways at every turn of the way, and bless them with the satisfaction that whatever be the consequences of following the Right Way in the world, in the Hereafter they will certainly attain the eternal and everlasting success and the goodwill of Allah only through it. For in order to derive full benefit from the teaching of a teacher, one has first to have faith in him, then accept to be his student, and then work according to his instructions. Similarly, a patient who wants to be benefited by a doctor has first to accept him as a physician, and then follow his instructions with regard to medical dosage, prevention, etc. Then only he can assure the patient of the desired results.

Some people have interpreted the words *yu'tūn-az-zakāt* in this verse to mean that they should adopt moral purity. But, wherever in the Qur'ān the word *ītā-i-zakāt* has occurred along with the word *iqāmat-i-ṣalāt*, it means payment of the *Zakāt*, which is the second pillar of Islam after the *Ṣalāt*. Moreover, the Qur'ān has used the word *tazakkā* for adopting piety and purity and not *ītā'* which is specifically used for the payment of the *Zakāt*. In fact, what is meant to be impressed here is this: In order to benefit fully by the guidance of the Qur'ān, it is imperative that one should adopt the attitude of submission and obedience in practical life as well after the affirmation of the Faith, and the establishment of the *Ṣalāt* and the payment of the *Zakāt is* the first indication that one has actually adopted such an attitude. If there is no such indication, it will become obvious that one is rebellious: he might have acknowledged a ruler as such, but he is not inclined to carry out his commands.

4. Although belief in the Hereafter is an article of the Faith, and a believer will also believe in it along with believing in *Tauḥīd* and the Prophethood, here it has been specially mentioned separately in order to bring out its unique importance. The object is to impress that for those people who do not believe in

the Hereafter, it is impossible to follow, even tread, the way taught by the Qur'ān. For the people of this way of thinking naturally determine their criterion of good and evil by the results that appear, in this world. For them it is not possible to accept any admonition or guidance which seeks to determine the good and evil by the criterion of the gain and loss in the Hereafter. Such people in the first instance do not at all heed the teachings of the Prophets, but if for some reason, they also get included among the believers, they find it difficult to take even the initial steps on the way of the Faith and Islam because of the lack of faith in the Hereafter. For as soon as they will encounter the first situation where the demands of the worldly gains and the losses of the Hereafter will pull them in opposite directions, they will freely allow themselves to be pulled towards the worldly gains without caring in the least for the losses of the Hereafter, even though they may be making all sorts of claims to be the believers.

5. That is, "This is God's Law of Nature and the natural logic of human psychology that when man thinks that the results of his life's struggle are confined to this world only, when he does not believe in the existence of any court where his life's work has to be scrutinized and judged finally for good and evil, and when he does not believe in any life hereafter when he will be requited strictly in accordance with the real worth of his life's deeds, he will inevitably develop in himself a material outlook on life, and every kind of conflict between the Truth and falsehood, good and evil, morality and immorality, will appear utterly meaningless to him. Then, whatever earns him pleasure and enjoyment, material progress and prosperity, power and authority, will be the good for him, no matter it be any philosophy of life, any way of life and any system of morality. He will have no concern for truth and reality. His real ambition will be to win successes and earn adornments only of this worldly life, and their pursuit will lead him astray into every valley. Then, whatever he does with this object in view, will be a thing of beauty for him, and he will regard all those others as foolish, who are not absorbed like him in seeking the world, and doing anything and everything without any moral qualm and inhibition.

6. Nothing definite has been said about the form, time and place of this "evil chastisement." For it is imposed in this world also on different persons and groups and nations in countless different ways; a part of it is also experienced by the wicked when they are about to leave the world; man experiences it also in the intermediary state between death and Resurrection; and then after Resurrection it will become endless and everlasting.

7. That is, the things being mentioned in the Qur'ān are not imaginary nor are they based on the presumptions and opinions of a man, but they are being revealed by the One Who is All-Wise and All-Knowing, Who is perfect in Wisdom

and Knowledge, Who has full knowledge of the affairs of His creation and of its past and present and future, and Whose Wisdom devises the best schemes for the reform and guidance of His servants.

8. This happened at the foot of Mount Ṭūr when the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was travelling along with his family in search of a suitable place for settlement, after passing eight to ten years in Madyan (Midian). From Madyan, whose territory lay on both sides of the Gulf of 'Aqabah, on the sea-shores of Arabia and the Sinai Peninsula, he reached the place called Mt. Sinai and Jabal Mūsa in the southern part of the Peninsula, which at the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān was well known as Tūr. (See also *The Meaning of Qur'ān*, Vol. VIII Ash-Shu'arāa', E.N. 115). The details of this story have already been given in Sūrah Ṭā Hā: 9-24 above and will follow in Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ: 29-36 below.

9. The context shows that it was a cold wintry night and the Prophet Moses was passing through unfamiliar land. Therefore, he said to his family, "Let me go and find out what habitation it is where a fire is alight, and get some information about the travelling routes and the nearby habitations. I shall at least bring a few embers for you to light a fire and warm yourselves."

The place where the Prophet Moses had seen a burning bush is situated at about 5,000 ft. above sea level at the foot of Mt. Ṭūr. Constantine, the first Christian Emperor of the Roman Empire, had a church built in about 365 A.D. right at the spot where this event had occurred. Two hundred years later Emperor Justinian had a monastery built which included the church built by Constantine as well. Both the monastery and the church stand even today and are under the control of the monks of the Greek Orthodox Church. Some photographs of it are given on the opposite page.

10. According to Al-Qaṣaṣ: 30, the voice was calling out from a tree. What one understands from this is this: A sort of a fire was alight on the ground on the edge of the valley, but neither was anything burning nor any smoke arising. In the midst of the fire there stood a lush green tree from which a voice started calling out this all of a sudden.

This is a strange thing which the Prophets of Allah have been experiencing. When the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him) was first blessed with Prophethood, an Angel appeared before him in the solitude of the Cave of Hirā' and started delivering Allah's Message. A similar thing happened with the Prophet Moses also. A journeying person has halted at a place, sees a fire at a distance, approaches it in order to get some information about the route, or to pick a burning ember, and suddenly Allah, Lord of the Worlds, the Infinite, the Inconceivable Being, starts speaking to him. On such

occasions, there exists externally as well as within the Prophets' own selves an extraordinary state which fills them with the assurance that it is not a jinn or a satan or an illusion of their own mind, nor are their senses being deceived, but it is the Lord of the universe, or His Angel, who is speaking to them. (For further explanation, see E.N. 10 of An-Najm).

11. Here the use of the words *Subḥān-Allah* (glorified is Allah) is meant to warn the Prophet Moses to this effect: "You should never think that Allah, Lord of the universe, is sitting in the tree, or has entered into it, or that His absolute Light has concentrated itself into the limited sphere of your sight, or some tongue is functioning in some mouth to produce speech, but it is Allah, Who is Pure and Free from all such limitations, Who is Himself speaking to you."

12. In Sūrahs Al-A'rāf and Ash-Shu'arāa', the snake has been called thu'bān (a large serpent) but here *jāānn*, a small snake. The reason is that in physical size it was a serpent but in movement it was swift like a small snake. The same thing has been expressed by *ḥayyatun tas'ā* (a running snake) in Ṭā Hā: 20.

13. That is, "In My Presence there is no danger of any harm to the Messenger. When I call someone into My Presence to appoint him to the high office of Prophethood, I Myself become responsible for his safety. Therefore, the Messenger should remain fearless and confident in every kind of unusual situation: it will never harm or hurt him in any way."

14. This exception can be contiguous as well as remote. In the first case it will imply that there can be a genuine cause of fear if the Messenger has committed an offence; in the second case it will mean: "None should have any cause of fear in My Presence, unless, of course, someone has committed an offence."

15. That is, "If even an offender repents and reforms himself and does good instead of evil, I will pardon him." This implied both a warning and a good news. The Prophet Moses had killed a Copt inadvertently and fled from Egypt. This was an offence to which a subtle reference was made. When this offence was committed un-intentionally by the Prophet Moses, he had immediately offered repentance to Allah, saying, "O my Lord ! I have sinned against myself, so forgive me." So, "Allah forgave him" there and then. (Al-Qaṣaṣ: 16). Here the good news of the same forgiveness has been given him, as if to say, "O Moses, there could be a genuine cause for you to feel afraid in My Presence, because you had committed an offence, but when you have changed the evil into good, I have nothing but forgiveness and mercy for you. I have not called you here at this time to punish you, but I am going to send you on a great mission with wonderful miracles."

16. According to Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl:101, the Prophet Moses had been granted nine clearly visible Signs, which according to the details given in Al-A'rāf were the following: (1) The staff's turning into a serpent, (2) the shining hand when it was drawn out of the armpit, (3) public triumph over the magicians, (4) occurrence of a widespread famine in the land as foretold by the Prophet Moses; (5) the storm, (6) the locusts, (7) the incidence of weevils in the grain stores and of lice among human beings and animals, (8) the frogs, and (9) the rain of blood. (For explanation, see E.N. 43 of Az Zukhruf).

17. As mentioned at other places in the Qur'ān, whenever a plague befell Egypt as foretold by the Prophet Moses, Pharaoh would say, "O Moses, pray to your Lord to remove this plague; then we shall submit to what you say." But as soon as the plague was removed, Pharaoh would break his promise. (Al-A'rāf: 134, Az-Zukhruf: 49-50). The Bible also has mentioned it (Exod., chs. 8 to 10), and otherwise also it could not be imagined that the occurrence of a famine throughout the country and the coming of a violent storm and the incidence of the locusts and the frogs and the weevils in such abundance could be due to any trick of magic. The miracles were so manifest that even a stupid person could not help realizing that the occurrence of the plagues on such a large scale and their removal at the Prophet's prayer could be only due to Allah, Lord of all Creation's power and authority. That is why the Prophet Moses had told Pharaoh plainly: "You know it full well that none but the Lord of the heavens and the earth has sent down these Signs." (Banī Isrā'īl:102). But the reason why Pharaoh and his chiefs rejected Moses knowingly was: "What! should we believe in these two men who are human beings like ourselves and whose people are our bondsmen?" (Al-Mu'minūn: 47)

18. That is, the knowledge of the Reality, the knowledge that whatever they have is not theirs but the gift of Allah and whatever rights they have been granted over those things should be used strictly according to Allah's will, for they will be held answerable before Allah, the real Owner, for the right and wrong use of those rights. This knowledge is the opposite of the ignorance in which Pharaoh was involved. The type of character built on the ignorance has been presented in the preceding verses. Now, in the following verses, the model of the character built on the knowledge is being presented. The sort of kingdom, wealth, power and grandeur were common on both the sides. The Pharaoh had been given these as well as the Prophets David and Solomon. But the distinction of the ignorance and the knowledge built and moulded them into entirely different personalities.

19. That is, "There were other believing servants as well, who could be blessed with vicegerency. But it is only Allah's favour, not due to any special quality in ourselves, that He has chosen us to be rulers over this kingdom."

20. Succession here does not mean inheritance of wealth and properties, but the succession to the Prophet David in the Prophethood and vicegerency. For the wealth and possessions, if at all transferred, could not be transferred to the Prophet Solomon only, because Prophet David had other children also. Therefore, this verse cannot be cited to refute the *Hadīth* reported from the Holy Prophet, saying, "The inheritance left by us, the Prophets, is not divided as such: whatever we leave behind is charity." *(Bukhārī)* And: "There is no heir to a Prophet. Whatever he leaves behind, is divided among the needy and the indigent of the Muslims." *(Musnad Aḥmad:* Traditions from Abū Bakr, *Aḥādīth* No. 60 and 78).

The Prophet Solomon was the youngest son of the Prophet David. His Hebrew name Solomon is a synonym of *Salīm* (right-minded, affable). He succeeded the Prophet David in 965 B.C. and ruled his kingdom for forty years, till 926 B.C. For other details of his life and works, see E. N.'s 74-75 of Al-Anbiyāa in *The Meaning of the Qur'ān,* Vol. VII). Our commentators have greatly exaggerated the vastness of his kingdom, and have held that he ruled over a large part of the world. The fact, however, is that his kingdom comprised only the present Palestine and Transjordan and a part of Syria. (See Map: Kingdom of the Prophets David and Solomon, *The Meaning of the Qur'ān,* Vol. II, Banī Isrāel E.N. 7).

21. There is no mention in the Bible that the Prophet Solomon had been taught speech of the birds and animals, though the Israelite traditions contain a reference to it. *(Jewish Encyclopedia,* Vol. XI.p. 598)

22. That is, "Allah has bestowed on us all sorts of things." This, however, should not be understood literally; it only means the abundance of the wealth and the means of life granted by Allah. This was not said proudly by Prophet Solomon but only to express his gratitude to Allah for His grace and bounty and favours.

23. The Bible does not either make any mention that there were jinns also in the Prophet Solomon's armies, and he took service from them; but the Talmud and the rabbinical traditions contain details of this. *(Jewish Encyclopedia,* Vol. XI, p. 440). Some of the present-day writers have strained every nerve to prove that the words *jinn* and *ṭair* do not refer to the jinns and birds but to men who performed different duties in the Prophet Solomon's army. They say that the *jinn* imply the people of the mountain tribes whom Prophet Solomon had subdued and who performed feats of great strength and skill under him; and *ṭair* implies cavalry which could move much faster than the infantry. But these are indeed the worst examples of misinterpreting the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān here mentions three distinct kinds of the army consisting of the men, the jinns and the birds, and all the three have been qualified by the prefix *al (alif-lām)* to denote a class. Therefore, *al-jinn*

and *al-ṭair* could not be included in *al-ins* (the men), but could be two separate and different classes from the men. Moreover, a person who has a little acquaintance with Arabic cannot imagine that in this language the mere word *al-jinn* could ever imply a group of the men, or *al-ṭair* troops mounted on horses, nor could any Arab understand these meanings from these words. Calling a man a jinn only figuratively because of some supernatural feat of his, or a woman a fairy because of her beauty, or a fast moving person a bird does not mean that the words *jinn* and fairy and bird will henceforth be taken to mean a powerful man and a beautiful woman and a fast moving person respectively. These are only the metaphoric and not the real meanings of these words. In a discourse, a word is used in its figurative instead of its real meaning, and the listeners also will take it in that meaning, only when there exists in the context a clear pointer to its being figurative. What, after all, is the pointer in the context here from which one may understand that the words *jinn* and *ṭair* have been used not in their real and lexical meaning but in their figurative meaning? Contrary to this, the work and the state of a member each of the two groups that have been mentioned in the following verses, fall entirely against the purport of this interpretation. If a person does not want to believe in something stated in the Qur'ān, he should frankly say that he does not believe in it. But it would be moral cowardice and intellectual dishonesty if one should force the clear words of the Qur'ān to give the meaning that he wants them to give, and tell the world that he believes in what the Qur'ān says, whereas he does not, in fact, believe in it but believes in his own distorted meaning.

24. This verse also has been greatly misconstrued by some commentators of the present day. They say that *wād-in-naml* does not mean "valley of the ants", but it is the name of a valley that was in Syria, and *namlah* does not mean an ant but it is the name of a tribe. Thus, according to them, the verse means this: "When the Prophet Solomon reached the valley of the ants, a Namilite said, 'O people of the Naml tribe ....." But this also is an interpretation which is not supported by the words of the Qur'ān. Even if we took *wād-in-naml* to be the name of a valley and supposed that it was inhabited by the tribe of Banī an-Naml, it would be against the Arabic idiom and usage to speak of a member of the tribe as *namlah*. Although there are many Arab tribes which have been named after the animals, e.g. *Kalb* (dog), *Asad* (lion), etc"., yet no Arab would ever say in respect of a member of the Kalb or the Asad tribe: "A dog said, or a lion said, etc." Therefore, it would be against the Arabic idiom to say in respect of a member of the Naml tribe: "A *namlah* (ant) said this." Then a member of the Naml tribe's warning the people of his tribe, saying, "O Namilites, get into your houses lest Solomon's hosts should trample you down without even knowing it," becomes meaningless. It has never happened that an army of men should have trampled down a group of men without knowing it. If the army has come with the intention

of an attack, it would be useless for the other side to get into their houses, for in that case the invaders would follow them into their houses, and trample them more ruthlessly. And if the army is only on the routine march, it is just enough to clear off the way for it. Human beings may be harmed by the marching columns, but it can never happen that the soldiers on the march would trample down other men without knowing it. Therefore, if Banī an-Naml were a tribe of human beings, and one of its members were to warn his people, then in case of an attack, he would have said, "O Namilites, flee your houses and take refuge in the mountains lest Solomon's armies should destroy you." And in case there was no danger of an attack, he would have said, "O Namilites, clear off the way lest one of you should be harmed by the marching columns of Solomon's armies."

This error in the interpretation is on account of the Arabic idiom and the subject-matter. As for the name of the valley and the tribe of Banī an-Naml inhabiting it, it is a mere hypothesis for which there exists no scientific proof. Those who hold that *wād-in-naml* was the name of a valley have themselves pointed out that it had been so named because of the abundance of ants in it. Qatādah and Muqātil say, "It is a valley in the land of Syria where ants are found in abundance." But in no book of history and geography and in no archaeological research it is mentioned that it was inhabited by a tribe called Banī an-Naml. Thus, it is merely a concoction that has been invented to support one's own interpretation.

This story is also found in the Israelite traditions but its latter portion falls against the Qur'ān as well as against the regal dignity of the Prophet Solomon. According to it, when the Prophet Solomon was passing through a valley which abounded in ants, he heard an ant calling out to the other ants to say, "Get into your holes, otherwise you will be trampled down by Solomon's hosts." At this, Prophet Solomon displayed great vanity before the ant to which the ant rejoined, "What are you?—the product of a mere sperm-drop!" Hearing this the Prophet Solomon felt greatly ashamed. (*Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. XI, p. 440). This shows how the Qur'ān corrects the wrong traditions of the Israelites, and cleanses the filthy spots with which they had themselves branded the characters of their Prophets. It is these traditions about which the Western orientalists shamelessly claim that the Qur'an has plagiarized them for its narratives.

Rationally also it is not at all inconceivable that an ant should warn members of its own species of an impending danger and tell them to get into their holes. As for the question as to how the Prophet Solomon heard it, the answer is: It is not all difficult to understand the crude speech of an ant for a person whose senses can comprehend and receive a subtle message like the Word of Revelation.

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تَفَقَّدَ الطَّيْرَ فَقَالَ مَا لِيَ لَآ أَرَى الْهُدْهُدَ ۖ أَمْ كَانَ مِنَ الْغَآئِبِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾
لَأُعَذِّبَنَّهُۥ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا أَوْ لَأَاذْبَحَنَّهُۥٓ أَوْ لَيَأْتِيَنِّي بِسُلْطَٰنٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢١﴾ فَمَكَثَ
غَيْرَ بَعِيدٍ فَقَالَ أَحَطتُ بِمَا لَمْ تُحِطْ بِهِۦ وَجِئْتُكَ مِن سَبَإٍۭ بِنَبَإٍ يَقِينٍ ﴿٢٢﴾
إِنِّي وَجَدتُّ ٱمْرَأَةً تَمْلِكُهُمْ وَأُوتِيَتْ مِن كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَلَهَا عَرْشٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾
وَجَدتُّهَا وَقَوْمَهَا يَسْجُدُونَ لِلشَّمْسِ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ ٱلشَّيْطَٰنُ
أَعْمَٰلَهُمْ فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ ٱلسَّبِيلِ فَهُمْ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ أَلَّا يَسْجُدُوا۟ لِلَّهِ ٱلَّذِي
يُخْرِجُ ٱلْخَبْءَ فِي ٱلسَّمَٰوَٰتِ وَٱلْأَرْضِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُخْفُونَ وَمَا تُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾
ٱللَّهُ لَآ إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ رَبُّ ٱلْعَرْشِ ٱلْعَظِيمِ ﴿٢٦﴾ قَالَ سَنَنظُرُ أَصَدَقْتَ أَمْ كُنتَ
مِنَ ٱلْكَٰذِبِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ ٱذْهَب بِّكِتَٰبِي هَٰذَا فَأَلْقِهْ إِلَيْهِمْ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ فَٱنظُرْ
مَاذَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ قَالَتْ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلْمَلَؤُا۟ إِنِّيٓ أُلْقِيَ إِلَيَّ كِتَٰبٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ إِنَّهُۥ مِن
سُلَيْمَٰنَ وَإِنَّهُۥ بِسْمِ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلرَّحِيمِ ﴿٣٠﴾ أَلَّا تَعْلُوا۟ عَلَيَّ وَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾
قَالَتْ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلْمَلَؤُا۟ أَفْتُونِي فِيٓ أَمْرِي مَا كُنتُ قَاطِعَةً أَمْرًا حَتَّىٰ تَشْهَدُونِ ﴿٣٢﴾
قَالُوا۟ نَحْنُ أُو۟لُوا۟ قُوَّةٍ وَأُو۟لُوا۟ بَأْسٍ شَدِيدٍ ۖ وَٱلْأَمْرُ إِلَيْكِ فَٱنظُرِي مَاذَا
تَأْمُرِينَ ﴿٣٣﴾ قَالَتْ إِنَّ ٱلْمُلُوكَ إِذَا دَخَلُوا۟ قَرْيَةً أَفْسَدُوهَا وَجَعَلُوٓا۟ أَعِزَّةَ
أَهْلِهَآ أَذِلَّةً ۖ وَكَذَٰلِكَ يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَإِنِّي مُرْسِلَةٌ إِلَيْهِم بِهَدِيَّةٍ فَنَاظِرَةٌۢ بِمَ
يَرْجِعُ ٱلْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَ سُلَيْمَٰنَ قَالَ أَتُمِدُّونَنِ بِمَالٍ فَمَآ ءَاتَىٰنِۦَ ٱللَّهُ
خَيْرٌ مِّمَّآ ءَاتَىٰكُم ۖ بَلْ أَنتُم بِهَدِيَّتِكُمْ تَفْرَحُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ ٱرْجِعْ إِلَيْهِمْ فَلَنَأْتِيَنَّهُمْ بِجُنُودٍ
لَّا قِبَلَ لَهُم بِهَا وَلَنُخْرِجَنَّهُم مِّنْهَآ أَذِلَّةً وَهُمْ صَٰغِرُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ قَالَ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلْمَلَؤُا۟
أَيُّكُمْ يَأْتِينِي بِعَرْشِهَا قَبْلَ أَن يَأْتُونِي مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٣٨﴾ قَالَ عِفْرِيتٌ مِّنَ ٱلْجِنِّ

(On another occasion) Solomon reviewed his birds[27] and said, "How is it that I do not see the hoopoe? Has he disappeared somewhere? I will punish him severely, or even slaughter him, unless he presents before me a reasonable excuse."[28] The bird did not take long when it came and said, "I have obtained knowledge of things of which you have no knowledge. I have brought sure information about Sabā.[29] There I have seen a woman ruling over her people: she has been given all sorts of provisions, and she has a splendid throne. I saw that she and her people prostrate themselves before the sun, instead of Allah."[30] ---- Satan[31] made their deeds seem fair to them,[32] and hindered them from the highway: therefore, they do not find the right path that they may prostrate themselves before that God Who brings to light the hidden things of the heavens and the earth[33] and knows all that you conceal and reveal.[34] Allah: none but He is worthy of worship: He is the Owner of the glorious Throne.[35] 20-26

Solomon said, "We shall just now see whether what you say is true, or that you are a liar. Take this letter of mine and cast it before them; then get aside and see what reaction they show."[36] 27-28

The queen said, "O chiefs, a very important letter has been cast before me. It is from Solomon, and it begins with the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate. It says, 'Do not adopt a rebellious attitude against me and present yourselves as Muslims before me'."[37] 29-31

(Having read out the letter) the queen said, "O chiefs, counsel me in this matter; I do not take a decision in any matter without (consulting) you."[38] They replied, "We are a powerful people, and good fighters. The decision, however, rests with you. You may yourselves consider as to what command you should give." The queen said, "When the kings enter a land, they ruin it and debase its honourable people;[39] they do just the same.[40] I shall send to them a gift, and then wait to see with what reply my envoys return." 32-35

When (the envoy of the queen) came to Solomon, the king said, "Do you want to help me with wealth? What God has given me is much more than what He has given you.[41] May you yourselves rejoice in your gift! (O messengers,) go back to your people; we shall bring against them such forces[42] which they will not be able to withstand, and we shall drive them out (of their land) humbled and disgraced." 36-37

Contd. from p.529]

25. "Restrain me...thanks to Thee" means this: "O my Lord! the wonderful powers and abilities that You have given me are such that if I become even a little forgetful and heedless, I might transgress the bounds of service and be puffed up with pride and go astray. Therefore, O my Lord, restrain me so that I may remain grateful to You for all Your blessings instead of being ungrateful."

26. "Admit me..righteous servants" probably implies this: "I should be included among the righteous in the Hereafter and should enter Paradise along with them." For a person who does righteous acts will automatically be righteous, but one's entry into Paradise in the Hereafter cannot come about merely on the strength of one's good works, but it will depend on Allah's mercy. According to a *Hadīth,* the Holy Prophet once said, "Merely the deeds of any one of you will not enable him to enter Paradise." It was asked, "In your case too, O Messenger of Allah?" He replied, "Yes, I also shall not enter Paradise only on the strength of my deeds, unless Allah Almighty covers me with His mercy."

This prayer of the Prophet Solomon on this occasion becomes irrelevant if *an-Naml is* taken to mean a tribe of human beings and *namlah* a member of that tribe. After all, there could be nothing extraordinary in the warning given by a member of a human tribe to the people of his tribe about the approaching troops of a powerful king that it should have induced the king to make such a prayer to Allah. However, a person's having such a wonderful power of comprehension that he may hear the speech of an ant from a distance and also understand it, is certainly something extraordinary, which can involve a person in self-conceit and vanity. In such a case only the prayer of the Prophet Solomon can be relevant.

27. That is, the birds whose troops, as mentioned above, were included in the armies of Prophet Solomon like the troops of the men and jinns. It is just possible that the Prophet Solomon had employed them for communicating messages, hunting and performing other such services.

28. Some people of the modern time say that the *hud-hud* (hoopoe) does not mean the bird commonly known by this name, but is the name of a man who was an officer in the army of Solomon. This claim is not based on any historical research in which they might have found a person named *hud-hud* included in the list of the officers of the government of the Prophet Solomon, but they base their claim on the argument that the custom of naming human beings after animals is prevalent in Arabic as in other languages and was also found in Hebrew. Moreover, the work that has been ascribed to the *hud-hud* in the following verses and its conversation with the Prophet Solomon, can, according to them, be only performed by a human being. But if one keeps in view the context in which this

thing occurs in the Qur'an, it becomes evident that this is no commentary of the Qur'ān but its distortion. After all, why should the Qur'ān put the intellect and intelligence of man to the test by using enigmatic language ? Why should it not clearly say that a soldier of the Prophet Solomon's cavalry, or platoon, or communication department, was missing, whom he ordered to be searched out, and who came and gave this news and whom he despatched on such and such a mission? Instead, it uses such language that the reader, from the beginning to the end, is compelled to regard it as a bird. Let us, in this connection, consider the facts in their sequence as presented in the Qur'ān.

First of all, the Prophet Solomon expresses his gratitude to Allah for His this bounty: "We have been taught the speech of the birds." In this sentence, firstly, the word *ṭair* has been used absolutely which every Arab and scholar of Arabic will take in the meaning of a bird, because there is nothing in the context that points to its being figurative; secondly, if *ṭair* implied a group of men and not a bird, the word language or tongue would have been used concerning it and not speech. Then, a person's knowing the tongue of another people is not so extraordinary a thing that it should be specially mentioned. Today there are among us thousands of men and women, who can speak and understand many foreign languages. This is in no way an unusual achievement which may be mentioned as an extraordinary gift of God.

Then the Qur'ān says, "For Solomon were gathered hosts of jinns and men and birds." In this sentence, firstly, the words *jinn* and *ins* (men) and *ṭair* have been used as names for three well-known and distinct species denoted by these words in Arabic. Then they have been used absolutely and there is nothing in the context that may point to any of them being used metaphorically, or as a simile, because of which one may take them in another meaning than their well-known lexical meaning. Then the word *ins* has occurred between the words *jinn* and *ṭair*, which does not allow taking it in the meaning that the *jinn* and the *ṭair* were, in fact, two groups included in the species of *ins* (men). Had this been meant the words would have been: *al-jinn wal-ṭair min-al-ins* and not *min-al-jinn wal-ins wal-ṭair*.

A little further on the Qur'an says that the Prophet Solomon said this when during his review of the birds he found the *hud-hud* missing. If the *ṭair* were human beings and *hud-hud* also was the name of a man, a word or two should have been there to indicate this so that the poor reader should not have taken the word for a bird. When the group being mentioned is clearly of the birds and a member of it is called *hud-hud*, how can it be expected that the reader will of his own accord understand them to be human beings?

Then the Prophet Solomon says, "I will punish him severely, or even slaughter him, unless he presents before me a reasonable excuse." A man is killed, or hanged, or sentenced to death, but never slaughtered. Some hard-hearted person may even slaughter another person out of vengeance, but it cannot be expected of a Prophet that he would sentence a soldier of his army to be slaughtered only for the offence of desertion, and Allah would mention this heinous act of the Prophet without a word of disapproval.

A little further on we shall again see that the Prophet Solomon sends the same *hud-hud* with a letter to the queen of Sheba and tells him "to cast it before her". Obviously, such an instruction can be given to a bird but not at all to a man when he is sent as an envoy or messenger. Only a foolish person will believe that a king would send his envoy with a letter to the queen of another country and tell him to cast or throw it before her. Should we suppose that the Prophet Solomon was not aware of the preliminary social etiquette which even common people like us also observe when we send our servant to a neighbour? Will a gentleman tell his servant to carry his letter to the other gentleman and throw it before him?

All these things show that the word *hud-hud* here has been used in its lexical meaning, showing that he was not a man but a bird. Now, if a person is not prepared to believe that a *hud-hud* can speak those things that have been ascribed to it in the Qur'ān, he should frankly say that he does not believe in this narrative of the Qur'ān. It is sheer hypocrisy to misconstrue plain and clear words of the Qur'ān according to one's own whims only in order to cover up one's lack of faith in it.

29. Sabā' were a well-known commercial people of southern Arabia, whose capital city of Mā'rib lay about 55 miles to the north-east of Ṣan'ā', the present capital of Yaman. They rose to power after the decline of the Minaean Kingdom in about 1100 B.C. and flourished for a thousand years in Arabia. Then in 115 B.C. they were replaced by the Himyarites, the other well-known people of southern Arabia, who ruled Yaman and Ḥadramaut in Arabia and Ḥabash in Africa. The Sabaeans controlled the whole trade that passed between eastern Africa, India, the Far East and Arabia itself, on the one hand, and Egypt, Syria, Greece and Rome on the other. That is why they were famous for their wealth in the ancient times; so much so that according to the Greek historians they were the richest people of the world. Besides trade and commerce, another great reason for their prosperity was that they had built dams here and there in their country to store rainwater for irrigation purposes, which had turned their whole land into a veritable garden. The Greek historians have made mention of the unusual greenery of their country; and the Qur'ān also refers to it in Sūrah Sabā': 15.

The statement of the *hud-hud*, "I have obtained knowledge of things of which you have no knowledge", does not imply that the Prophet Solomon was wholly unaware of Sabā'. Obviously, the ruler of Syria and Palestine whose kingdom extended to the northern shores of the Red Sea (Gulf of 'Aqabah), could not be unaware of a people who ruled the southern shores (Yaman) of the same Red Sea, and who also controlled an important part of the international trade. Moreover, according to Psalms, Solomon's father, Prophet David, knew Sabā' We find the following words of his prayer in Psalms:

> "Give the king thy judgement, O God, and thy righteousness unto the king's son (i.e. Solomon)... The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba (i.e. of Yaman's and Habash's branches) shall offer gifts." (72: 1-2, 10-11).

Therefore, what the hud-hud means to say is this: "The knowledge of the things I have seen with my eyes in the central city of the Sabaeans. has not yet reached you."

30. This shows that the people of Sabā' at that time followed the religion of sun-worship, which is also supported by the ancient traditions of Arabia. Ibn Ishāq has cited the genealogists' saying to the effect that Sabā' have in fact descended from an ancestor whose name was 'Abd Shams (slave of the sun, or sun-worshipper) and title Sabā'. This is supported by the Israelite traditions as well. According to these when the *hud-hud* arrived with the Prophet Solomon's letter, the queen of Sheba was going for the worship of the sun-god, and it threw the letter on the way before the queen.

31. The style shows that the sentences from here to the end of the paragraph are not a part of the *hud-hud's* speech but its speech ended with: "they prostrate themselves before the sun", and these words are an addition by Allah to its speech. This opinion is supported by the sentence: "He knows all that you conceal and reveal." These words give the impression that the speaker and the addressees here are not the *hud-hud* and the Prophet Solomon and his courtiers respectively, but the Speaker is Allah and the addressees the *mushriks* of Makkah, for whose admonition this story has been related. From among the commentators, 'Allāmah Ālūsi;, the author of *Rūh-al-Ma'ānī*, also has preferred the same opinion.

32. That is, Satan has made them believe that earning the worldly wealth and making their lives more and more grand and pompous is the only real and fit use of their mental and intellectual and physical powers. Apart from these, they need not think seriously on anything else: they need not bother themselves to see whether there was any factual reality behind the apparent life of the world or not, and whether the basis of their religion, morality, culture and system of life accorded with that Reality or went utterly against it. Satan satisfied them that when

they were making adequate progress in respect of wealth and power and worldly grandeur, they had no need to see whether their beliefs and philosophies and theories were correct or not, for the only proof of their being correct was that they were earning wealth and enjoying life to their hearts content.

33. That is, He is bringing continuously into existence those things which before their birth were hidden here and there: He is bringing out continuously countless kinds of vegetation and minerals from the bowels of the earth: He is manifesting from upper space such things as could not even be conceived by human mind before their manifestation.

34. That is, His knowledge embraces everything; the open and hidden are alike for Him; He is aware of everything.

By citing these two attributes of Allah the object is to impress that if they had not been deluded by Satan, they could have seen the right way clearly: they could have perceived that the hot burning sphere of the sun which has no sense of its own existence, did not deserve to be worshipped but worship was due to Him alone Who is the All-Knowing and the All-Wise Being, and Whose power is bringing into existence new and ever new phenomena every moment.

35. This is one of those verses of the Qur'ān, whose recital makes it obligatory for one to perform a *Sajdah* (prostration), and there is a consensus on this of the Muslim jurists. The object of performing a *Sajdah* here is that a believer should set himself apart from the sun-worshippers and should decalre by his action that he does not regard the sun but Allah Almighty alone as his Deity and Lord.

36. Here ends the role of the *hud-hud* (hoopoe). The rationalists deny its being a bird for the reason that a bird could not possibly be endowed with such powers of observation, discrimination and expression that it should pass over a country and should come to know that it is the land of Sabā', it has such and such a system of government, it is ruled by a certain woman, its religion is sun-worship, that it should have worshipped One God instead of having gone astray, and then on its return to the Prophet Solomon it should so clearly make a report of all its observations before him. Due to these very reasons the open atheists object that the Qur'ān is a book of fables and legends; then those who try to interpret the Qur'ān rationally misconstrue its clear words in order to prove that the hud-hud was not at all a bird but he was a man. But the question is: What scientific information have these gentlemen got by which they could tell with absolute certainty what powers and abilities the different species of animals and their different individuals have got? The information that they possess only consists of the results inferred from the grossly insufficient observation made cursorily by them of the life and behaviour of the animals. In fact, man has not so far been able to know through any certain means what different animals know and what they see

and hear, and what they feel and think and understand, and how the mind of each one of them works. Yet, whatever little observation has been made of the life of the different species of animals, it has revealed some of their wonderful abilities. Now, when Allah, Who is the Creator of these animals, tells us that He had taught the speech of the birds to one of His Prophets and blessed him with the ability *to* speak to them, and the Prophet's taming and training had so enabled a *hud-hud* that it could make certain observations in the foreign lands and could report them to the Prophet, we should, in fact, be prepared to revise our little knowledge about the animals in the light of Allah's statement. But, instead, we commit the folly of taking our this insufficient knowledge as the criterion and belie this statement of Allah or distort it out of its true meaning.

37. That is, "The letter is important for several reasons: (1) It has reached me in an unusual way. Instead of an envoy it has been brought and dropped at me by a bird. (2) It is from Solomon, the great ruler of Palestine and Syria. (3) It has been begun with the name of Allah, the Compassionate, and Merciful, which is an unusual way of correspondence and is not followed by any kingdom in the world. (4) Then, it is also unusual that a letter should be written only in the name of Allah, the Exalted, apart from all other gods and goddesses. (5) The most important thing in it is that it quite clearly and plainly invites us to give up rebellion and adopt obedience and present ourselves before Solomon in submission (or as Muslims)."

"Present yourselves as Muslim" can have two meanings: (I) "Present yourselves in submission"; and (2) "present yourselves as Muslims (after embracing Islam)." The first meaning is in accordance with the Prophet Solomon's position as a ruler, and the second with his position as a Prophet. Probably this comprehensive word was used in order to convey both the meanings through the letter. The same sort of invitation has always been extended by Islam to independent nations and governments that they should either accept Islam and become equal partners in the Islamic system of life, or surrender political independence and submit to the system of Islam and pay *Jizyah*.

38. The words used in the Text are: *hattā tash-hu-dūn* (unless you are present, or unless you bear witness). That is: "I regard your presence necessary when I take a decision in important matters, and also that whatever decision I take you should be there to testify that it is right and correct." This shows that though the system of government among Sabā' was kingship, it was not tyrannical; but the ruler of the time decided matters in consultation with the important people in the government.

39. In this one sentence a thorough criticism has been made of imperialism. The kings' invasion of the other countries and the victorious nations'

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39
أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ تَقُومَ مِنْ مَقَامِكَ ۚ وَإِنِّي عَلَيْهِ لَقَوِيٌّ أَمِينٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ قَالَ
الَّذِي عِنْدَهُ عِلْمٌ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ أَنَا آتِيكَ بِهِ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَرْتَدَّ إِلَيْكَ طَرْفُكَ ۚ فَلَمَّا
رَآهُ مُسْتَقِرًّا عِنْدَهُ قَالَ هَٰذَا مِنْ فَضْلِ رَبِّي لِيَبْلُوَنِي ءَأَشْكُرُ أَمْ أَكْفُرُ ۖ وَمَنْ
40
شَكَرَ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ رَبِّي غَنِيٌّ كَرِيمٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ قَالَ نَكِّرُوا لَهَا
41
عَرْشَهَا نَنْظُرْ أَتَهْتَدِي أَمْ تَكُونُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ لَا يَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٤١﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاءَتْ قِيلَ
42
أَهَٰكَذَا عَرْشُكِ ۖ قَالَتْ كَأَنَّهُ هُوَ ۚ وَأُوتِينَا الْعِلْمَ مِنْ قَبْلِهَا وَكُنَّا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾
43
وَصَدَّهَا مَا كَانَتْ تَعْبُدُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۖ إِنَّهَا كَانَتْ مِنْ قَوْمٍ كَافِرِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾
قِيلَ لَهَا ادْخُلِي الصَّرْحَ ۖ فَلَمَّا رَأَتْهُ حَسِبَتْهُ لُجَّةً وَكَشَفَتْ عَنْ سَاقَيْهَا ۚ
قَالَ إِنَّهُ صَرْحٌ مُمَرَّدٌ مِنْ قَوَارِيرَ ۗ قَالَتْ رَبِّ إِنِّي ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِي وَأَسْلَمْتُ
مَعَ سُلَيْمَانَ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا إِلَىٰ ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا
45
أَنِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ فَإِذَا هُمْ فَرِيقَانِ يَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ لِمَ تَسْتَعْجِلُونَ
46
بِالسَّيِّئَةِ قَبْلَ الْحَسَنَةِ ۖ لَوْلَا تَسْتَغْفِرُونَ اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾ قَالُوا
اطَّيَّرْنَا بِكَ وَبِمَنْ مَعَكَ ۚ قَالَ طَائِرُكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ تُفْتَنُونَ ﴿٤٧﴾
48
وَكَانَ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ تِسْعَةُ رَهْطٍ يُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا يُصْلِحُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾ قَالُوا
تَقَاسَمُوا بِاللَّهِ لَنُبَيِّتَنَّهُ وَأَهْلَهُ ثُمَّ لَنَقُولَنَّ لِوَلِيِّهِ مَا شَهِدْنَا مَهْلِكَ أَهْلِهِ
وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَمَكَرُوا مَكْرًا وَمَكَرْنَا مَكْرًا وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ فَانْظُرْ
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ مَكْرِهِمْ أَنَّا دَمَّرْنَاهُمْ وَقَوْمَهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٥١﴾ فَتِلْكَ بُيُوتُهُمْ
خَاوِيَةً بِمَا ظَلَمُوا ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَأَنْجَيْنَا الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا وَكَانُوا يَتَّقُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ وَلُوطًا إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ أَتَأْتُونَ الْفَاحِشَةَ وَأَنْتُمْ

To his courtiers Solomon[43] said, "Which of you can fetch me her throne before those people come to me in submission?"[44] A mighty one from among the jinns submitted, "I shall fetch it to you even before you rise from your place[45]: I possess the necessary power for it and am trustworthy."[46] He who possessed knowledge of the Book, spoke out, "I will fetch it to you in the twinkling of an eye."[47] As soon as Solomon saw the throne placed before him, he exclaimed: "This is by the Grace of my Lord so that He may test me (to see) whether I am grateful or ungrateful![48] And the one who is grateful is grateful only for the good of his own self; as for the one who is ungrateful, my Lord is All-Sufficient and Self-Exalted."[49] 38-40

Solomon said,[50] "Set her throne before her casually; let us see whether she reaches the truth, or she is one of those who are not guided aright."[51] When the queen arrived, she was asked, "Is your throne like this?" She replied, "It is just the same.[52] We had already known this and we had surrendered (or we had become Muslims)."[53] The worship of the deities whom she served instead of Allah had hindered her (from believing), for she came of an unbelieving people.[54] 41-43

She was asked to enter the palace. When she saw it, she thought it was a pool of water, so she tucked up her skirt to enter it. Solomon said, "It is the glossy floor of glass."[55] At this she exclaimed, "O my Lord! I have (hitherto) been unjust to myself; now I submit myself, with Solomon, to Allah, Lord of the worlds."[56] 44

And[57] to Thamūd We sent their brother Sālih (with the message) that they should worship Allah, but they divided themselves forthwith into two wrangling groups.[58] Sālih said, "O my people, why do you hasten for the evil in preference to the good?[59] Why don't you ask forgiveness of Allah? Maybe that you are shown mercy." They said, "We regard you and your companions as a sign of bad omen."[60] Ṣāliḥ said, "Your good and bad omens issue forth from Allah. The fact is that you are a people on trial."[61] 45-47

Therewere in that city nine ring-leaders of the men,[62] who spread mischief in the land and reformed nothing. They said to one another, "Let us pledge on an oath by Allah that we shall attack Ṣāliḥ and his household by night, and then tell his guardian[63] that we were not even present at the time his family were killed: we are telling the 4853

truth."[64] They plotted thus, and We too devised a plot of which they were unaware.[65] Just see how their plot ended. We annihilated them and all their people together. There, their houses lie desolate in consequence of their wicked deeds. There is a lesson in this for those who have knowledge;[66] and We saved those who had believed and avoided disobedience.

Contd. from p.537]

violence against the oppressed nations has never been for the sake of reform and goodwill. The object has been to control and exploit the means and resources of sustenance granted to the other nation by God, and make it so helpless that it should never be able to rise in resistance and demand its share. For this purpose they block up all its means of prosperity, power and honour, crush down all self-respecting elements, instil in its members attitudes of slavery, flattery, treachery and spying against one another, imitation of the conqueror and respect for his civilization, contempt of their own civilization and other such mean qualities of character. Thus, gradually they bring them down to such a low level of character where they may not hesitate even to sell off any of their most sacred objects of heritage and be ready to perform any wretched service on payment.

40. This sentence has two meanings and both are equally probable: (1) It may be a part of the queen of Sheba's speech, which she might have added in order to emphasize her foregoing words; and (2) it may be Allah's Words which have been added as a parenthesis in support of the queen's speech.

41. This sentence is not meant to express pride and vanity. What it means to say is this: "I have no desire for your wealth; I only desire that you should believe, or at least submit to a righteous system. If you agree to neither of these alternatives, it is not possible for me to accept the bribes of wealth and leave you free in the matter of a polytheistic and wicked system of life. What my Lord has given me is enough for me to cherish any desire for your wealth."

42. There is a subtle gap between this and the previous sentence, which one can easily fill up by a careful study of the discourse. It means this: "O Messengers, take this gift back to the people who have sent you. They will either have to yield to our first proposal, i. e. they should come before us as Muslims, or we shall bring forces against them."

43. The details of the story that have been omitted are to the effect: The envoys returned to the queen with the gift and made a report of what they had seen and heard; the queen decided on the basis of what she heard about the Prophet Solomon to make a visit to Jerusalem to see him personally; she left Sabā' for

Palestine accompanied by her royal entourage and sent a message to Solomon's court that she was herself coming to personally hear the invitation from the king himself and to have a direct talk with him. Here, the story is resumed from the time when the queen had reached near Jerusalem and was going to appear before Solomon in a day or two.

44. That is, the same throne about which the hoopoe *(hud-hud)* had reported, "She has a splendid throne." Some commentators have given a strange interpretation here. They say that the Prophet Solomon wanted to have the throne before him before the queen's arrival because he wanted to take possession of it. For he feared that if the queen became a Muslim, it would be unlawful to take possession of her property without her approval; therefore, he made haste to have the queen's throne with him even before her arrival in Jerusalem because at that time it was lawful to take it into his possession. May Allah pardon us! This is a strange concept about the intention of a Prophet. Why should one not understand the verse in the light that Prophet Solomon wanted to show a miracle also to the queen and her courtiers besides preaching his message so that she might know what extraordinary powers Allah, Lord of the worlds, had granted His Prophet so that she might be convinced that Solomon was surely a Prophet of Allah? Some modern commentators have put an even more strange meaning on this verse. They translate the verse thus: "Which of you can bring me a throne for the queen?" whereas the Qur'ān has used the word *bi-'arshi-hā* which means "her throne', and not *bi-'arshi,-lahā*, "a throne for her". They mistranslate the verse in order to get rid of what the Qur'ān has stated that the Prophet Solomon wanted the queen's own throne to be brought from Yaman to Jerusalem and that too before the queen's arrival.

45. From this it becomes obvious whether the jinns under the Prophet Solomon were, according to the interpretation of some rationalist commentators of the modern times, from among mankind or from among the hidden creation commonly known as jinns. Obviously, the sitting of the Prophet Solomon's court would at the most be of three to four hours, and the distance of Ma'rib, capital of Sabā', from Jerusalem was, even as the crow flies, not less than 1500 miles. To fetch a splendid throne of a queen from such a distant place in such a short time could not be possible for a man, even if he be a very strong and robust person. This task cannot be performed even by a jet plane of today. The throne was not lying in a jungle from where it had just to be fetched. It lay in a queen's palace, which must have been well-guarded, and in the absence of the queen it must have been kept in a secure place. If a man had gone to fetch it, he should have been accompanied by a commando force so that he could overwhelm the guards and snatch away the throne. How could all this be accomplished before the rising of the court ? This thing can be conceived only in connection with a real *jinn !*

46. That is, "You can trust me in that I will not carry it away, nor steal any valuable thing from it."

47. Nothing is known with certainty as to who this person was, what special knowledge he had and what Book is referred to here, whose knowledge he had. No explanation of these things has been given either in the Qur'ān or in any authentic *Ḥadīth*. Some of the commentators say that it was an angel; others say that it was a man. Then they differ as to the identity of the man. Someone mentions the name of Āsaf bin Barchiah, who, according to the rabbinical traditions, was the Prince of Men. Someone says that he was Khidr; someone mentions some other name; and Imām Rāzī insists that it was the Prophet Solomon himself. But none of these has any reliable source for his information, and Imam Rāzī's opinion does not even fit in with the Qur'ānic context. Likewise, about the Book also the commentators differ. Someone says that it refers to *Lauḥ-i-Maḥfūz* (the Preserved Tablet) and some other takes it for the Book of Law. But all this is mere guess-work. Similar guesses have been made about the knowledge the man had from the Book. We only know and believe what has been said in the Qur'ān, or what becomes evident from its words. In any case the person was not from among the jinns, and possibly he was a man. He possessed some extraordinary knowledge, which had been derived from some Divine Book *(al-Kitāb)*. The jinn had claimed to fetch the throne within a few hours by means of his physical strength; this man fetched it in a moment by the power of his knowledge.

48. The words of the Qur'ān are very clear in this regard. This person's claim did not remain a claim like the jinn's, but, in fact, as soon as he made the claim the throne was seen placed before the Prophet Solomon the next moment. Just consider these words:

"The person said, 'I will bring it to you in the twinkling of an eye.' As soon as Solomon saw the throne placed before him...."

Anyone who reads these words, regardless of the extraordinary nature of the event, will surely understand that no sooner did the person utter these words than the event as claimed by him took place forthwith. There is, therefore, no need to make far-fetched interpretations of this plain matter. Then, on seeing the throne, the Prophet Solomon's exclaiming, "This is by the Grace of my Lord so that He may test me (to see) whether I am grateful or ungrateful!" can be relevant only if the event be extraordinary; otherwise if only a skilful craftsman of the king had hurriedly made or arranged a throne for the queen, it could not be so novel an event at which the Prophet Solomon should have spontaneously exclaimed: "This is by the Grace of my Lord!..." and feared that the prompt arrangement of a throne for the honourable guest might cause him to become ungrateful to Allah instead of being grateful. After all, there could be no question of a believing

ruler's becoming involved in vanity and self-conceit on this small achievement, especially when he was not merely an ordinary believer but a Prophet of Allah

As for the question as to how a royal throne was fetched over a distance of 1,500 miles in the twinkling of an eye, it can be briefly answered thus: "The concepts of time and space, and matter and movement, that we have formed on the basis of our experiments and observations, are only applicable to us. These concepts are not correct in respect to God, nor is He bound by these. Not to speak of an ordinary throne, His power can make the sun, and even much larger stars, travel millions of millions of miles in the matter of moments. The God Who by His one Command brought this huge universe into being, had the power to have moved the throne of the queen of Sheba at a speed greater than the speed of light. In this very Qur'ān it has been stated that Allah, by His powers, took his servant Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him) from Makkah to Jerusalem and also brought him back in the same night.

49. That is. He does not stand in need of somebody's gratefulness. His Godhead is neither enhanced by an iota by somebody's gratefulness nor diminished by that amount by somebody's ingratitude or thanklessness. He is a Sovereign in His own right. His Sovereignty is not dependent on His creation's acknowledgement or rejection. The same thing has been expressed in the Qur'ān through the Prophet Moses: "If you prove thankless, you and all the dwellers of the earth, (you should know that) Allah is All-Sufficient and worthy of all praise by Himself." (Ibrāhīm: 8). The same theme is contained in a *Ḥadīth Qudsī* related in Muslims saying:

"Allah says: O My servants, if you all men and jinns, from the beginning to the end, together become like the heart of the most righteous person among you, it will not cause any increase in My Kingdom; and O My servants, if you all men and jinns, from the beginning to the end, together become like the heart of the most sinful person among you, it will not cause any decrease in My Kingdom. O My servants, it is your own deeds which I credit to your account, and then fully recompense you for them. So, whoever receives something good, let him be grateful to Allah, and whoever receives something else, let him curse his own self only".

50. As to how the queen reached Jerusalem and how she was received, has been omitted. The story is resumed from the time when she had arrived at the palace to see Prophet Solomon.

51. This is a meaningful sentence, which means: (1) "Whether she understands or not that it is her own throne which has been fetched in no time from her capital to distant place like Jerusalem;" and also (2) "whether she is

guided aright after seeing this wonderful miracle, or persists in her error." This refutes the wrong idea of the people who say that the Prophet Solomon intended to take possession of the throne. Here he himself clearly says that he had done this in order to help the queen see Guidance.

52. This also refutes the speculations of those people who depict the event in a manner as though the Prophet Solomon wanted to have a throne made for the queen; and for this purpose he invited tenders and a strong, robust artisan offered to make him a throne in the matter of a few hours, but an expert craftsman submitted that he could make and produce it in no time. This whole guess-work is destroyed by the fact that Solomon himself ordered the throne to be fetched before him (v. 38), and when it had been fetched, ordered his servants to set it before the queen casually (v. 41), and then when she arrived, she was asked whether her throne was like that (v. 42), and she answered, "It is just the same." Obviously, there could be no room for the absurd interpretations in the face *of* such a clear statement of facts. If there is still any doubt left, it can be satisfied by the next sentence.

53. That is, "Even before we saw this miracle we had been convinced by what we had heard of Solomon (peace be upon him) that he was a Prophet of Allah, and not merely a ruler of a kingdom." After seeing the throne and saying, "It is just the same", what could be the relevance of adding this sentence if it is supposed that the Prophet Solomon had got a throne manufactured and set the same before her? Even if it is supposed that no effort was spared to have a throne manufactured closely resembling the queen's what special excellence it could have to make a sun-worshipping queen exclaim: "We had already known this and we had become Muslims!"

54. This sentence has been added by Allah to clarify the queen's position, saying that she was not obdurate and stubborn. She had been an unbeliever till then mainly because she came of an unbelieving people. As she had become accustomed to bowing down before a false deity since her childhood, it had become a hindrance for her to the right way. As soon as she came in contact with the Prophet Solomon, she discerned the right way and the hindrance was removed forthwith.

55. This was the last thing that opened the queen's eyes. The first thing was Solomon's letter that had been begun with the name of the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful Allah, a way different from the common custom prevalent among the kings. The second was his rejection of her gifts, which made the queen understand that he was a different kind of king. The third was the report made by the queen's envoys from which she came to know about Solomon's pious life, his wisdom and his message of the Truth. This very thing had induced her to travel to

Jerusalem herself to personally meet the Prophet Solomon, and to this she had referred when she said, "We had already known this and we had become Muslims." The fourth thing was the removal of her throne from Mā'rib to Jerusalem in no time, from which the queen realized that he had Allah's power at his back. Now this was the last thing that removed every doubt from her mind regarding the unique and great personality of the Prophet Solomon. When she saw that in spite of possessing every means of comfort and ease and a grand palace for a dwelling, he was so free from every conceit, so God-fearing and righteous and so grateful to God that he bowed before Him for every small favour and his life so different from the life of those who were enamoured of the world, she exclaimed the words that follow.

56. This story of the Prophet Solomon and the queen of Sheba has been related in the Old and the New Testaments and the Israelite traditions in different ways, but the Qur'ānic narration differs from all others. A resume of the story as given in the Old Testament is as follows:

"And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to prove Solomon with hard questions at Jerusalem, with a very great company ..... when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was in her heart. And Solomon told her all her questions ..... And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cupbearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the king, It was a true report which I heard in mine own land of thine acts, and of thine wisdom: Howbeit I believed not their words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the one half of the greatness of thy wisdom was not told me: for thou exceedest the fame that I heard. Happy *are* thy men, and happy *are* these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom. Blessed be the Lord thy God, which delighted in thee to set thee on his throne ..... And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold, and of spices great abundance and precious stones: neither was there any such spice as the queen of Sheba gave king Solomon ..... And king Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatever she asked ..... So she turned, and went away to her own land, she and her servants." (2 Chronicles, 9: 1-12. A similar account is also found in I Kings, 10: 1-13).

In the New Testament, the following sentence only has been reported from a discourse of the Prophet Jesus about the queen of Sheba.

"The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgement with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the

earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here." (Matthew, 12: 42; Luke, 11: 31).

The story of the Prophet Solomon and the queen of Sheba as given in the rabbinical traditions resembles in most parts with the Qur'ānic version. The hoopoe's absence, then its arrival and reporting about Sheba and its queen, the Prophet Solomon's sending her a letter through it, the hoopoe's dropping the letter in front of the queen right at the time when she was going for sun-worship, the queen's calling for her ministers' council, then her sending of valuable gifts to Solomon, her travelling to Jerusalem and meeting him personally, her arrival in the palace and thinking that Prophet Solomon was sitting in the midst of a pool of water, tucking up her skirt in order to enter it-all this has been mentioned in these traditions as in the Qur'ān. But there is no mention whatsoever in these traditions of the Prophet Solomon's reply on receipt of the gift, having the queen's throne fetched from Mā'rib, his bowing down before God in thankfulness for every favour of His, and the queen's embracing the Faith ultimately, at his hand, his belief in the oneness of God, etc. And worst of all, these wicked people have accused Prophet Solomon of having committed adultery, God forbid, with the queen of Sheba, giving rise to an illegitimate race, which gave birth to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, who destroyed Jerusalem. *(Jewish Encyclopedia,* Vol. XI, p. 443). The fact of the matter is that n section of the Jewish learned men have been highly critical of the Prophet Solomon. They have accused him of heinous crimes like violating the Commandments of the Torah, of pride of government, pride of wisdom, of being a hen-pecked husband, and of luxurious living, polytheism and idol-worship. (Jewish *Encyclopedia,* Vol. XI, pp. 439-441). It is due to this propaganda that the Bible presents him only as a king instead of a Prophet, a king who was lost in the love of polytheistic women against the Divine Commandments, whose heart was turned away from God, and was turned to other gods and goddesses. (I Kings, 11: 1-11). As against this it can be seen what great favour has the Qur'ān done to the Israelites by cleansing the personalities of their elders of the filth thrown at them by themselves, and yet the Israelites, ungrateful as they are, look upon the Qur'ān and him who brought it as their enemies.

57. For comparison. see Al-A'rāf: 73-79, Hūd: 61-68, Ash-Shu'arā': 141-159, Al-Qamar: 23-32, Ash-Shams: 11-15.

58. That is, as soon as the Prophet Ṣāliḥ embarked on his mission, his people were divided into two groups, the believers and the disbelievers, and a conflict started between them as stated elsewhere in the Qur'ān:

"The chiefs of his tribe, who were full of pride, said to those who had believed from among the oppressed people, 'Do you know it for certain that Ṣāliḥ

is a Messenger from his Lord?' They replied, 'Indeed, we believe in the message with which he has been sent.' But those who had arrogant assumption of superiority, said, 'We deny that which you believe'." (Al-A'rāf: 75-76).

One should note that precisely the same situation arose in Makkah at the advent of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him). The nation was divided into two factions and a conflict started between them. Therefore, this story fully applied to the conditions in which these verses were revealed.

59. That is, "Why do you hasten in asking for a torment instead of some good from Allah?" The following saying of the chiefs of the Prophet Ṣāliḥ's people has been related at another place: "O Ṣāliḥ, bring that scourge with which you threaten us, if you really are one of the Messengers." (Al-A'rāf:77).

60. One meaning of what they said is: "Your movement has proved to be an evil omen for us. Since you and your companions have revolted against the ancestral religion, one or the other calamity is befalling us almost daily, because our deities have become angry with us. In this sense, this saying is similar to the sayings of most of those polytheistic nations who regarded their Prophets as ominous. In Sūrah Yā Sīn, for instance, a nation has been mentioned, which said to its Prophet: "We regard you as an evil omen for ourselves." (v. 18) The same thing was said by the Pharaoh's people about the Prophet Moses: "Whenever a good time came, they would say, 'This is but our due', and when there was a bad time, they would ascribe their calamities to Moses and his companions." (Al-A'rāf: 130) Almost similar things were said in Makkah about the Holy Prophet also.

The other meaning of their saying is this: "Your advent has stirred up divisions in our nation. Before this we were a united people, who followed one religion. Your ominous coming has turned brother against brother, and separated son from father." This very accusation was being brought against the Holy Prophet by his opponents over and over again. Soon after he started his mission of inviting the people to the Faith, the delegation of the chiefs of the Quraish, who went to Abū Ṭālib, had said, "Give up to us this nephew of yours: he has opposed your religion and your forefathers' religion and has sown discord among your people, and has held the whole nation as foolish." (Ibn Hishām, Vol. I. p. 285).

On the occasion of Ḥajj, when the disbelievers of Makkah feared that the visitors from outside might be influenced by the Holy Prophet, they held consultations and decided to approach the Arab tribes and tell them: "This man is a sorcerer, who by his sorcery separates son from his father, brother from his brother, wife from her husband, and man from his family." (Ibn Hishām, p. 289).

[Contd. on p.550

تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ اَئِنَّكُمْ لَتَاْتُوْنَ الرِّجَالَ شَهْوَةً مِّنْ دُوْنِ النِّسَآءِ ؕ بَلْ اَنْتُمْ
قَوْمٌ تَجْهَلُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهٖۤ اِلَّاۤ اَنْ قَالُوْۤا اَخْرِجُوْۤا اٰلَ لُوْطٍ مِّنْ
قَرْيَتِكُمْ ۚ اِنَّهُمْ اُنَاسٌ يَّتَطَهَّرُوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَاَنْجَيْنٰهُ وَ اَهْلَهٗۤ اِلَّا امْرَاَتَهٗ ۫ قَدَّرْنٰهَا
مِنَ الْغٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَ اَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ مَّطَرًا ۚ فَسَآءَ مَطَرُ الْمُنْذَرِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ
لِلّٰهِ وَ سَلٰمٌ عَلٰى عِبَادِهِ الَّذِيْنَ اصْطَفٰى ؕ آٰللّٰهُ خَيْرٌ اَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾

الجزء ٢٠

اَمَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضَ وَ اَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً ۚ فَاَنْۢبَتْنَا

بِهٖ حَدَآئِقَ ذَاتَ بَهْجَةٍ ۚ مَا كَانَ لَكُمْ اَنْ تُنْۢبِتُوْا شَجَرَهَا ؕ ءَاِلٰهٌ مَّعَ اللّٰهِ ؕ
بَلْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ يَّعْدِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ اَمَّنْ جَعَلَ الْاَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَّ جَعَلَ خِلٰلَهَاۤ اَنْهٰرًا وَّ
جَعَلَ لَهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَ جَعَلَ بَيْنَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ حَاجِزًا ؕ ءَاِلٰهٌ مَّعَ اللّٰهِ ؕ بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ
لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ اَمَّنْ يُّجِيْبُ الْمُضْطَرَّ اِذَا دَعَاهُ وَ يَكْشِفُ السُّوْٓءَ وَ يَجْعَلُكُمْ
خُلَفَآءَ الْاَرْضِ ؕ ءَاِلٰهٌ مَّعَ اللّٰهِ ؕ قَلِيْلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ اَمَّنْ يَّهْدِيْكُمْ فِيْ ظُلُمٰتِ
الْبَرِّ وَ الْبَحْرِ وَ مَنْ يُّرْسِلُ الرِّيٰحَ بُشْرًۢا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهٖ ؕ ءَاِلٰهٌ مَّعَ اللّٰهِ ؕ
تَعٰلَى اللّٰهُ عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ اَمَّنْ يَّبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ وَ مَنْ يَّرْزُقُكُمْ
مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ وَ الْاَرْضِ ؕ ءَاِلٰهٌ مَّعَ اللّٰهِ ؕ قُلْ هَاتُوْا بُرْهَانَكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾
قُلْ لَّا يَعْلَمُ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ الْغَيْبَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ ؕ وَ مَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ
اَيَّانَ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ بَلِ ادّٰرَكَ عِلْمُهُمْ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ بَلْ هُمْ فِيْ شَكٍّ مِّنْهَا ۚ بَلْ
هُمْ مِّنْهَا عَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْۤا ءَاِذَا كُنَّا تُرٰبًا وَّ اٰبَآؤُنَاۤ اَئِنَّا
لَمُخْرَجُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ لَقَدْ وُعِدْنَا هٰذَا نَحْنُ وَ اٰبَآؤُنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۙ اِنْ هٰذَاۤ اِلَّاۤ اَسَاطِيْرُ
الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ قُلْ سِيْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾

And We sent Lot.[67] Remember the time when he said to his people, "Do you commit indecency while you see it?[68] Do you leave women and seek men for the gratification of your sexual desire? The fact is that you are a people steeped in ignorance."[69] But the only reply his people gave was to say, "Expel the family of Lot from your habitation: they pose to be very pious." At last We saved him and his family except his wife about whom We had decreed that she would linger behind,[70] and rained on then a rain, an extremely evil rain for the people who had been warned. 54-58

(O Prophet)[71] say, "Praise is for Allah and peace upon those servants of His whom He has chosen." 59

(Ask them:) "Is Allah better or those deities whom they set up as His associates?"[72]

Well, Who is He Who created the heavens and the earth and sent down rainwater for you from the sky, then caused to spring up by it beautiful gardens, whose trees you had no power to cause to grow? Is there besides Allah another god (who is His associate in these works)?[73] (Nay,) but these people themselves have strayed from the right path. 60

And Who is it Who made the earth as a place of rest'[74] and caused in it rivers to flow, and set in it firm mountains and placed barriers between the two bodies of water?[75] Is there besides Allah another god (who is His associate in these works)? Nay, but most of these people have no knowledge. 61

Who is it Who listens to the oppressed one when he invokes Him, and Who relieves him of his affliction?[76] And (Who is it Who) makes you vicegerents in the earth?[77] Is there besides Allah another god (to do this)? How little you reflect! 62

And Who is it Who shows you the way in the darkness of the land and the sea,[78] and Who sends the winds as harbingers of His mercy?[79] Is there besides Allah another god (who does this)? Far exalted is Allah above what they associate with Him. 63

And Who is it Who originates the creation and then reproduces it?[80] And Who provides you sustenance from the sky and the earth?[81] Is there besides Allah another god (who is a partner in these works) ? Say, "Bring your proof if you are truthful."[82] 64

65 Tell them, "None but Allah has the knowledge of the unseen, in the heavens and the earth,[83] and they (your deities) do not even know when they will be raised back to life."[84]

66-69 But (on the contrary,) these people have lost the knowledge of the Hereafter; nay, they are in doubt about it; nay, they are blind to it.[85] The disbelievers say, "When we and our forefathers have become dust, shall we be really raised up from the graves? This news has been given to us as well as to our forefathers before us, but these are nothing but tales, which we have been hearing since the ancient times." Say to them, "Move about in the land and see what doom the criminals have met."[86]

Contd from p.547]

61. That is, "The truth is not that which you understand it to be. The fact which you have not yet realized is that my advent has put you to the test. Until my arrival you were following a beaten track in your ignorance. You could not recognize the truth from the falsehood; you had no criterion for judging the genuine from the counterfeit; your worst people were lording over your best people, who were rolling in the dust. But now a criterion has come against which you will all be judged and assessed. Now a balance has been set up publicly, which will weigh everybody according to his true worth. Now both the truth and the falsehood have been made manifest. Whoever accepts the truth will weigh heavy whether he was not being held even worth a farthing so far; and whoever persists in falsehood will not weigh a gramme even though he was being esteemed as the chief of the chiefs before this. Now the judgement will not be based on the nobility or otherwise of the family one came of, or the abundance of the means and resources that one possessed, or one's physical strength but on this whether one accepted the truth gracefully or preferred to remain attached to falsehood."

62. That is, nine chiefs of the tribes each of whom had a band of followers with him.

63. "The guardian": the chief of the Prophet Ṣāliḥ's tribe, who, according to the ancient tribal tradition and custom, could make a claim to blood vengeance. The same was the position in Makkah of the Holy Prophet's uncle, Abū Ṭālib. The Quraish were hesitant that if they attacked and killed the Holy Prophet, Abu Ṭālib, the chief of Banī Hāshim, would come out with a claim to blood vengeance on behalf of his clan.

64. This precisely was the kind of plot which the Makkan chiefs of the clans were devising against the Holy Prophet, and they devised the same ultimately

on the occasion of migration *(Hijrah)* to kill him. They decided that men from all the clans would attack him in a body so that the Banī Hāshim could not hold any one of the clans as responsible for the murder, and, therefore, would find it impossible to fight all of them at one and the same time.

65. That is, "Before they could make the night attack on the Prophet Ṣāliḥ at the appointed time Allah sent down His scourge which destroyed their whole nation completely. It appears that they made this plot after hamstringing the she-camel. According to Sūrah Hūd: 65, when they had killed the she-camel, Prophet Sālih gave them a notice to enjoy life in their houses for three more days, for then they would be seized by the torment. At this they might have thought that the torment with which Ṣāliḥ threatened them might come or might not, but they must take the vengeance on Ṣāliḥ himself. Therefore, most probably they chose the same night for the attack which Allah had appointed for sending down the torment, and thus were struck down by Allah even before they could touch the Prophet Ṣāliḥ."

66. That is, "The ignorant people will say, 'There is no link between the Prophet Ṣāliḥ and his she-camel and the earthquake which struck the people of Thamūd. These things have their natural causes. Their occurrence or otherwise has nothing to do with the piety and wickedness of the people of a place, with their high-handedness or their show of mercy. It is meaningless merely to say that such and such a city or land was filled with sin and wickedness, and therefore, it was overwhelmed by flood, or its habitation turned upside down by an earthquake, or it was ruined by a sudden disaster'." But the people who possess knowledge know that this universe is not being ruled by a deaf and blind God, but by an All-Wise, All-Knowing One Who is deciding the destinies. His decisions are not subject to physical causes, but the physical causes are subject to His will. His decisions to debase or exalt nations are not taken blindly but with wisdom and justice. In His Book of Law there is also included the principle of retribution, according to which the wicked are made to suffer for their evil deeds even in this world, on moral grounds. The people who are aware of these realities, cannot explain away the occurrence of an earthquake by citing physical and natural causes; they will rather look upon them as the scourge of warning for themselves, and they will learn lessons from it. They will try to understand those moral causes because of which the Creator annihilated a flourishing nation, which He Himself had created. They will divert their conduct and attitude from the track that brings Allah's wrath to the way that joins them to His mercy.

67. For comparison, See Al-A'rāf: 80-84; Hūd, 74-83, Al-Ḥijr: 57-77, Al-Anbiyā': 71-75, Ash-Shu'arā': 160-174, Al-'Ankabūt: 28-75, As-Ṣāffāt: 133-138, Al-Qamar: 33-39.

68. This can have several meanings and probably all are implied: (1) "That you are not unaware of this act's being wicked, but you commit it knowing it to be so"; (2) "You are also not unaware that the man has not been created for the man's sex satisfaction but the woman, and the distinction between them (man and woman) is not such as you cannot perceive, yet with open eyes you commit this abominable act." (3) "You indulge in this indecency publicly when there are people watching you", as stated in Sūrah 'Ankbūt: 29, thus: " ..... and you indulge in indecencies in your assemblies."

69. The word *jahālat* here has been used in the sense of folly and stupidity. But even if it is taken in the sense of ignorance and lack of knowledge, it will mean: "You do not know the evil consequences of your acts. You only know that you are deriving sensual pleasure, but you do not know what severe punishment awaits you for this criminal and heinous pleasure-seeking. The scourge of Allah is ready to strike you but you are engaged in a senseless, filthy game with impunity."

70. That is, "The Prophet Lot had already been instructed not to take the woman along because she had to be destroyed along with her people."

71. From here starts the second discourse, and this is its introductory sentence. This introduction teaches how the Muslims should begin a speech. That is why the truly Islamic-minded people have always been starting their speeches and discourses with the praise of Allah and salutation on His righteous servants. But now this is looked upon as characteristic of bigotry, and the present-day Muslim speakers have no idea of starting their speech with these words, or feel shy of doing so.

72. Superficially the question whether Allah is better or the false deities appears to be odd. As a matter of fact, there can be no question of goodness in the false gods and, therefore, they cannot be compared to Allah. As for the polytheists, even they had no misconception that Allah could be compared to their gods. But they were asked this question in order to be warned against their error. For obviously none in the world would do anything unless he saw some good in it. Now if the polytheists served their deities and implored them for their needs instead of Allah, and presented their offerings before them, this would be meaningless unless they perceived some good in them. That is why they have been explicitly asked to consider whether Allah is better or their deities, for they could not face and answer this forth-right question. Even the most hardened polytheist among them could not venture to say that their deities were better. But if they acknowledged that Allah is better it would demolish their whole creed, for then it would be unreasonable to adopt the inferior against the superior creed.

Thus, the Qur'ān at the very outset made the opponents helpless. After this, pointed questions have been asked, one after the other, about the manifestations of the power and creation of Allah to the effect: "Whose works are these? Is there besides Allah any other god also associated with these works? If not, why have you then set up these others as your deities?"

According to traditions, whenever the Holy Prophet recited this verse, he would immediately respond to it, saying: "Nay, but Allah is better, and He alone is the Everlasting and Exalted and High."

73. No one from among the *mushriks* could answer that someone other than Allah had done these works, or someone else was Allah's associate in doing these. The Qur'ān at other places says with respect to the pagans of Makkah and the Arab *mushrikīn*: "If you ask them, 'Who has created the heavens and the earth?' they will surely say: 'The All-Mighty, the All-Knowing One has created them'." (Az-Zukhruf: 9) "And if you ask them, Who has created them? they will surely say, 'Allah'." (Az-Zukhruf: 87), "If you ask them, 'Who sent down rain water from the sky and thereby raised the dead earth back to life ?' They will surely say, 'Allah'." (Al-'Ankabūt: 63). "Ask them: Who provides for you from the heavens and the earth? Who has power over these faculties of hearing and sight? Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living? Who controls and directs the system of the universe?' They will surely say, 'Allah'." (Yūnus: 31). Not only the polytheists of Arabia but of the whole world generally acknowledged, and acknowledge even today, that Allah is the Creator of the universe and He alone controls and directs its system. Therefore, none of them could answer this question even obstinately for the sake of the argument that their deities were Allah's associates in those works, for if he had done so, thousands of his own people would have belied him saying that, that was not their belief.

This and the other questions that follow not only contain a refutation of the creed of *shirk* (polytheism) but of atheism as well. For example, in this first very question, it has been asked, "Who has sent down rainwater and caused to spring up by it beautiful gardens?" Just consider whether the presence of the substances essential for the growth of countless kinds of plant life, in the soil or near the soil, and the existence in water of those very qualities which are in accordance with the requirements of animal and vegetable life, and the evaporation of this water again and again from the seas, and its condensation and raining regularly in different parts of the earth from time to time, and the coordination between the soil and the air, the water, the temperature, etc., conducive to proper growth of plant life and fulfilment of the countless requirements of every sort of animal life, could be just accidental, or the result of the wise scheming and planning the supreme power and will of an All-Wise Designer. And is it possible that this accident should continue

to recur constantly for millions and millions of years on end? Only an obstinate person who has been blinded by prejudice will regard it as accidental, for no truth-loving, sensible person can make such a senseless claim or accept it.

74. It is not a simple thing for the earth to be a place of rest for the countless kinds of different creations living on it. If man looks into the wise harmony and coordination with which this sphere of the earth has been established, he is simply amazed and starts feeling that these harmonies and concordances and relations could not be brought about without the grand design of an All-Wise, All-Knowing and All-Powerful God. This sphere of the earth is floating in space and is not resting on anything, yet there is no commotion and no vibration in its movement. Had there been any vibration in it, such as we experience during an earthquake, life could not exist here. This sphere comes before the sun and hides from it regularly, which causes the alternation of the day and night. Had it turned the same face perpetually towards the sun and kept the other side always hidden, no life could be possible here, for on the bright side all life would have been shrivelled up, and on the dark side all life would have been frozen to death. The sphere is enveloped by a five hundred mile thick atmosphere, which protects it against the continual bombardment of meteors, otherwise the twenty million meteors on the average, which dart towards the earth daily at 30 miles per second, would have caused such destruction as would not have allowed any man animal or tree to survive. The same atmosphere controls the temperature, raises clouds from the oceans, carries water to different parts of the earth and provides the required gases that sustain the human, animal and plant life. Without it the earth could not become a fit place of rest for any kind of animal life. Just under the earth's surface all those minerals and chemicals which are essential to the survival of vegetable and animal life have been provided in abundance. Wherever these natural resources do not exist, the land there cannot sustain any kind of life. A great store of water has been arranged on the earth in the form of oceans, rivers, lakes, springs and underground channels and snow on the mountains which melts and flows down in the form of rivers. Without such an arrangement there could be no life. Then the earth has been endowed with an appropriate gravitational pull by which it keeps the water and the air and all other things found on it attracted to it. If this pull had been a little less strong, it could not have stopped the air and the water from escaping. It would also have so much increased the temperature that life here would have become difficult. On the other hand, if the gravitational pull had been a little stronger, the atmosphere would have been denser, its pressure would have increased, evaporation would have become difficult and rains impossible; the cold would have increased and less areas on earth would have been inhabitable; men and animals would have been shorter in size but heavier in weight, which would have made movement difficult. Besides, this sphere has been

located at a suitable distance from the sun, which is most approriate for the population here. If the distance had been longer, the earth would have received less of heat, the climate would have been much colder, the seasons much longer and the earth would be hardly inhabitable. On the other hand, if the distance had been shorter, the intensity of the heat along with other factors would have rendered it unfit for the kind of life man is living here.

These are a few of those harmonies and concordances due to which earth has become a place of rest for its population. A man with a little common sense who is aware of these facts cannot imagine for a moment that these concordances have come into existence without the design of an All-Wise Creator, as a mere accident, nor can he ever conceive that a god or goddess, jinn or prophet, saint or angel, could have had any hand in the creation and bringing into operation of this grand design.

75. That is, the bodies of sweet and saline waters that exist on the earth but do not intermingle. Underground water channels mostly flow separately with sweet water and saline water side by side. Even in the middle of the bitter seas there exist at some places springs of sweet water; their current remains separate from the sea water and the sea passengers obtain their drinking water from it. (For further explanation, see, E.N. 68 of Sūrah Al-Furqān).

76. The Arab polytheists themselves knew and acknowledged that Allah alone could avert a disaster. Therefore, the Qur'ān reminds them again and again that they implore Allah alone for help when they are confronted by a calamity. But when the calamity is removed, they start invoking others besides Allah. (For details, see E.N.'s. 29 to 41 of Al-An'ām, Yūnus: 21-22, E.N. 46 of An-Nahl, and E.N. 84 of Banī Isrā'īl). And this is not only true of the Arab polytheists but of all polytheists; so much so that even the Russian atheists who are regularly campaigning against God-Worship, had to invoke God when in the Second World War they were tightly encircled by the German forces.

77. This has two meanings: (1) "He raises one generation after the other and one nation after the other"; and (2) "He gives you power and authority to rule in the earth".

78. That is, "He has made such arrangements by means of the stars that you can find your way even in the darkness of the night." This is also because of the wise planning of Allah that He has created such means by which man can determine his direction and the way to his destination in his journeys by sea and land. In the day time he is guided by different land-marks and the direction of sun-rise and sun-set, and in the dark nights by the stars. In Sūrah An-Nahl this has

been counted among the bounties of Allah: "He has placed land-marks to direct people, and by the stars, too, they are guided aright." (v. 16)

79. "Allah's mercy": the rain whose coming is promptly foretold by the winds.

80. The simple fact hat has been expressed in this one sentence is so vast in meaning and detail that as one considers it more and more deeply one goes on getting new and ever new proofs of Allah's existence and His unity. In the first place, take the question of the creation itself. Man by his knowledge has not been able to discover what is life, how and whereform it comes. So far the admitted scientific fact is that the mere arrangement of inanimate matter by itself cannot bring about life. Though the atheists assume, unscientifically, that life comes into existence automatically when all the elements essential for its creation combine together accidentally in the right proportion, yet if the mathematical law of chance is applied to it, the possibility of its occurrence comes to nought. All attempts made so far to produce animate matter out of inanimate matter experimentally in the laboratory have met with utter failure in spite of employing every possible care. At the most what has been created is DNA, which is the basic constituent of the living cell. This is the essence of life but not life itself. Life in itself even now is a miracle which cannot be explained scientifically except by saying that it is the result of a Creator's will and command and design.

Furthermore, life does not exist in a solitary form but in a limitless variety of forms. Man has so far discovered more or less a million species of animals and two hundred thousand species of plants on the earth, which in their constitution and special characteristics are so clearly and absolutely different from one another, and have been maintaining their distinctive features since the earliest known times so consistently that no Darwin could ever give any rational explanation of this great variety of life except the existence of the creative design of One God. Not a link has so far been discovered between any two species, which might have broken up the form of the characteristics and constitution of one species and might be struggling to attain the characteristics and constitution of another species. The whole record of the fossils is without such a precedent, and among the existing animals also there is no such "eunuch" in its physical form. Any member of any species that exists is found with the distinctive features of its own species, and every story that is invented and announced from time to time about the discovery of some missing link is destroyed by the facts themselves. Therefore, the inevitable fact is that it is the All-Wise Designer, the Planner of creation, its Enforcer and its Fashioner, Who has endowed life with all its countless different forms.

This was about the beginning of the creation. Now let us consider its reproduction. The Creator has placed in the constitution and make-up of every

animal and vegetable species such a wonderful mechanism, which goes on producing through its countless members an endless race exactly with its own distinctive form and nature and characteristics, and it never has happened even by mistake that in these millions and millions of tiny sex workshops a certain workshop of a species may have turned out a specimen of a different species. The observations of modern Genetics in this connection present wonderful facts. Every plant has been so endowed with the capability of procreating its species that the new generation should possess all the distinctive characteristics of its own species and its every member should be distinguished in its special features from the members of all other species. This element for the survival of the species and its procreation is contained in a part of a cell of every plant, which can be seen with effort only through a most powerful microscope. This tiny engineer directs the whole development the plant precisely and definitely on the way which is the way of its own distinctive species. That is why all the plants that have emerged from a grain of wheat any where in the world have in turn produced only wheat. In no climate and in no region has it ever happened that from the whole race of a grain of wheat even a single grain of barley might have emerged. The same is the case with animals and men. None of them has been created just for once, but on an inconceivably high scale a huge factory of reproduction is functioning every where, which is constantly bringing into existence, from the members of every species, countless other members of the same species. If one considers the microscopic germ of procreation which along with all the distinctive features and hereditary characteristics of its species is found in a small portion of its tiny self and then looks at the extremely delicate and complex physiological system and the subtle, intricate processes by which the procreative seed of every member of every species produces a member of the same species, one cannot conceive for a moment that such a fine and subtle system could come into being by itself, and then keep on functioning by itself in millions and millions of the members of different species. This thing stands in need of an All-Wise Designer not only for its beginning but for its proper and perpetual functioning also it needs an Administrator Who is at once Wise and Ever-Living and Self-Subsistent, Who is ever watching and guiding the work of these workshops.

These facts destroy the very basis of an atheist's denial of God as also of a polytheist's creed of polytheism. A foolish person only can think that an angel or a jinn or a prophet or a saint has any hand in this work of God, but no unbiased person possessed of a little common sense can ever say that this huge workshop of production and reproduction with all its underlying wisdom and order started working just accidentally and has since been working so automatically.

81. The question of the provision of sustenance also is not so simple as a person may feel it to be from a cursory study of this brief sentence. There exist on

this earth millions of animal and vegetable species, each comprising billions of members having different food requirements. The Creator has arranged the means of sustenance for each species in such abundance and so within easy reach that members of no species ever go without food. Then the agencies of the earth and sky which combine and work together in this system are varied and countless. Unless there is the right kind of coordination and harmony between the heat, light, air, water and the diverse substances of the earth, not a single particle of food can be produced.

Can anyone conceive that this wise system could come about just accidentally, without the intelligent planning and design of an All-Wise Creator? And can anybody in his senses imagine that in this system there could be any hand of a *jinn* or an angel or the spirit of a pious man?

82. That is, "You should either bring a proof to show that someone else is an associate of Allah in these works, or, if that is not possible, you should at least explain by an argument why you should worship and serve any other god beside Allah, when One Allah alone has done, and is doing, all these works."

83. In the preceding verses, arguments have been given to prove that Allah is the One and only Deity when considered from the viewpoint of creation, design and provision of the means of sustenance. Now in this verse it is being told that from the viewpoint of knowledge too, which is an important attribute of Godhead, Allah is Unique and without associate. Whatever creations are therein the heavens and the earth, whether angels or jinns, prophets and saints, or other men and other creatures, they have only limited knowledge. Something is hidden from all of them. The All-Knowing One is only Allah, from Whom nothing whatever of this universe is hidden, and Who knows every thing of the past and the present and the future.

The word *ghaib* means something hidden and covered. As a term it implies everything which is unknown, and beyond one's sphere of knowledge and information. There are many things in the world which individually are known to some human beings and unknown to others. And there are many others which taken as a whole have never been known to any of mankind, nor are known at present, nor will be known in the future. The same is the case with the *jinns* and the angels and other kinds of creation: certain things are known to some of them and hidden from others, and many things hidden from all of them and known to none. All kinds of hidden things are only known to One Being, the All-Knowing Allah. For Him nothing is unknown everything is known and evident.

In order to bring out this reality the method of the question as employed above with regard to creation, design and sustenance of the universe has not been

adopted here. The reason is that the manifestations of those attributes are clear and evident which everyone sees, and which even the pagans and polytheists acknowledged, and do even today, that they are the works of Allah. So, the argument adopted above was: When all these works, as you admit, are being done by Allah, and no one else is His partner in these, why have you then made others His associates in Divinity, and in His worship? However, the attribute of knowledge has no perceptible manifestation which may be referred to and pointed out. It can be comprehended only by thought and reflection. Therefore, it has been put forward as an assertion instead of a question. Now it is for every intelligent person to think and consider for himself whether it is reasonable to believe that there should be any other than Allah, who is all-knowing, i.e. who knows all those conditions and things and realities which existed in the universe in the past; or exist now, or will exist in the future. And if there is none other who is all-knowing, and cannot be, then is it reasonable to believe that any of those who are not aware fully of the realities and conditions and circumstances can become the answerer of the people's prayers, fulfiller of their needs and remover of their hardships ?

There is a subtle relationship between Divinity and the knowledge of the unseen and hidden. Since the earliest times in whatever being has man imagined the presence of an attribute of Godhead, he has taken it for granted that it knows everything and nothing is hidden from it. In other words, it is self-evident for man to believe that making or marring the destinies, answering the prayers, fulfilling the needs and helping everyone in need of help, can be the work of the being who knows everything and from whom nothing is hidden. That is why whomever man has regarded as possessor of the powers and authority of Godhead he has necessarily regarded him as the knower of all hidden things as well. For his intellect testifies rightly that knowledge and authority are inter-dependent. Now if it is a fact that none but God is the Creator and the Designer and the Answerer of the prayers and the Providence, as has been proved in the foregoing verses, then it is also a self-evident reality that none but God is the Knower of the hidden things. After all, who in his senses could imagine that an angel or a jinn or a prophet or a saint or any other creature would be knowing where and what kinds of animals existed in the oceans and in the atmosphere and under the layers of the earth and upon its surface? And what is the correct number of the planets in the heavens? And what kinds of creatures exist in each of them? And where is each one of these creatures living and what are its requirements? All this should necessarily be known to Allah, because He has created them and He alone has to watch over their conditions and control their affairs and arrange for their sustenance. But how can some one else with his limited self have this vast and all-embracing knowledge and

what has he to do with the functions of creation and sustenance that he should know these things?

Then this quality is also not divisible in the sense that a person, for instance, may be the knower of everything on the earth, or the knower of everything concerning human beings only, on the earth. It is in the same way indivisible as are God's Creativity and His Providence and His Self-Subsistence indivisible. After all, how can it be possible for one to know all the affairs and all the conditions and states of all human beings who have been born in the world since the beginning of creation, and will be born till Resurrection, from the time their mothers conceived them till the time they will breathe their last ? And how and why will he know all this ? Is he the creator of these countless multitudes ? Did he create their seed in their fathers' sperm-drop ? Did he mould and shape them in their mother's womb? Did he arrange for their normal birth? Did he make the destiny of each one of them? Is he responsible for taking decisions with regard to their life and death, their health and ill-health, their prosperity and adversity, and their rise and fall in the world ? And since when did he become responsible for it? Since before his own birth or since after it ? And how can these responsibilities remain confined only to human beings? This is only a part of the universal administration of the heavens and the earth. The Being Who is controlling the whole universe is the Being Who alone can be responsible for the creation and death of men, for restricting and extending their provisions and for making and marring their destinies.

That is why it is a fundamental article of Islam that none other than Allah is the Knower of the hidden and unseen things. Allah may disclose whatever of His information He wills to whomsoever of His servants He pleases and bless him with the knowledge of one or more of the hidden things as a whole. Being the Knower of all hidden and unseen things is the attribute only of Allah, Who is the Lord of all creation "He alone has the keys of the 'unseen' of which none has the knowledge ,but He." (Al-An'ām: 59) "Allah alone has the knowledge of the Hour: He alone sends down the rain and He alone knows what is (taking shape) in the wombs of the mothers. No living being knows what he will earn the next day, nor does anybody know in what land he will die." (Luqmān 34) "He knows what is before the people and also what is hidden from them; and they cannot comprehend anything of His knowledge save whatever He Himself may please to reveal." (Al-Baqarah: 255).

The Qur'ān does not rest content with this general and absolute negation of the knowledge of the hidden and unseen for the different forms of creation, but about the Prophets in particular, and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself it clearly says that they do not possess the knowledge of the

hidden and unseen, and that they were given only that much knowledge of the hidden by Allah as was necessary to enable them to carry out the duties of Prophethood. Sūrah Al-An'ām.: 50, Al-A'rāf: 187, At-Taubah: 101, Hūd: 31, Al-Aḥzāb: 63, Al-Aḥqāf: 9, At-Taḥrīm: 3 and Al-Jinn: 26-28 do not leave any room for doubt in this regard.

All these elucidations of the Qur'ān support and explain the verse under discussion after which there remains no doubt that looking upon another than Allah as the knower of the hidden and unseen and believing that someone else also possesses the knowledge of all the past and future events, is an absolutely un-Islamic belief. Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhi, Nasā'ī, Imām Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abū Ḥātim have cited this saying of Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah through authentic reporters: "Whoever claimed that the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) knew what was going to happen the next day, accused Allah of lying, for Allah says: O Prophet, say, 'None in the heavens and the earth has the knowledge of the hidden and unseen but Allah'." Ibn al-Mundhir has reported this on the authority of 'Ikrimah, the well-known pupil of Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās: "A person asked the Holy Prophet: O Muḥammad, when will Resurrection be? And our territory is suffering from famine: when will it rain ? And my wife is pregnant: what will she deliver, a boy or a girl? And I know what I have earned today; but what shall I earn tomorrow? And I know where I was born, but where shall I die?" In reply, the Holy Prophet recited verse 34 of Sūrah Luqmān as cited above. Then the well-known Tradition as reported in Bukhārī; and Muslim and other works of *Ḥadīth* also supports the same. According to it one of the questions asked by Angel Gabriel from the Holy Prophet when he sat among the Companions in human shape before him, was: "When will Resurrection be?" The Holy Prophet replied: "The one being questioned knows no better than the one questioning." Then added, "This is one of those five things whose knowledge is possessed by none but Allah," and then he recited the above-cited verse of Sūrah Luqmān .

84. That is "Those others about whom it is thought that they possess the knowledge of the hidden and, therefore, are regarded as partners in Divinity, are themselves unaware of their future. They do not know when will Resurrection be when Allah will raise them up again.

85. After warning the people about their basic errors with regard to Divinity, it is being said that the reason why these people are involved in these errors is not that they have reached this conclusion after serious thought and deliberation that there exist other beings also who are Allah's associates in His Divinity, but the actual reason is that they have never considered this matter seriously. As they are unaware of the Hereafter, or are in doubt about it, or are

[Contd. on p.564

وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُنْ فِيْ ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مَتٰى هٰذَا
الْوَعْدُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ قُلْ عَسٰٓى اَنْ يَّكُوْنَ رَدِفَ لَكُمْ بَعْضُ الَّذِيْ
تَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُوْ فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾
وَاِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَيَعْلَمُ مَا تُكِنُّ صُدُوْرُهُمْ وَمَا يُعْلِنُوْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَمَا مِنْ غَآئِبَةٍ فِي
السَّمَآءِ وَالْاَرْضِ اِلَّا فِيْ كِتٰبٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٧٥﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَقُصُّ عَلٰى بَنِيْٓ
اِسْرَآءِيْلَ اَكْثَرَ الَّذِيْ هُمْ فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لَهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾
اِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِيْ بَيْنَهُمْ بِحُكْمِهٖ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللّٰهِ ۭ اِنَّكَ
عَلَى الْحَقِّ الْمُبِيْنِ ﴿٧٩﴾ اِنَّكَ لَا تُسْمِعُ الْمَوْتٰى وَلَا تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ الدُّعَاۗءَ اِذَا
وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِيْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَمَآ اَنْتَ بِهٰدِ الْعُمْيِ عَنْ ضَلٰلَتِهِمْ ۭ اِنْ تُسْمِعُ اِلَّا مَنْ
يُّؤْمِنُ بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَهُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَاِذَا وَقَعَ الْقَوْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ اَخْرَجْنَا لَهُمْ دَاۗبَّةً
مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ تُكَلِّمُهُمْ ۙ اَنَّ النَّاسَ كَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا لَا يُوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ
مِنْ كُلِّ اُمَّةٍ فَوْجًا مِّمَّنْ يُّكَذِّبُ بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَهُمْ يُوْزَعُوْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَاۗءُوْ
قَالَ اَكَذَّبْتُمْ بِاٰيٰتِيْ وَلَمْ تُحِيْطُوْا بِهَا عِلْمًا اَمَّا ذَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَوَقَعَ
الْقَوْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِمَا ظَلَمُوْا فَهُمْ لَا يَنْطِقُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ اَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّا جَعَلْنَا الَّيْلَ
لِيَسْكُنُوْا فِيْهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَيَوْمَ
يُنْفَخُ فِي الصُّوْرِ فَفَزِعَ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا مَنْ شَاۗءَ
اللّٰهُ ۭ وَكُلٌّ اَتَوْهُ دٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَتَرَى الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَّهِيَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ
السَّحَابِ ۭ صُنْعَ اللّٰهِ الَّذِيْٓ اَتْقَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۭ اِنَّهٗ خَبِيْرٌۢ بِمَا تَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾ مَنْ
جَاۗءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهٗ خَيْرٌ مِّنْهَا ۚ وَهُمْ مِّنْ فَزَعٍ يَّوْمَىِٕذٍ اٰمِنُوْنَ ﴿٨٩﴾ وَمَنْ

O Prophet, do not grieve for them nor feel distressed at their machinations.[87]—They say, "When will this threat be carried out if you are truthful?"[88] Say, "No wonder that a part of the torment you wish to be hastened, may well have approached you."[89] The fact is that your Lord is highly Gracious to the people, but most of them are not grateful.[90] No doubt your Lord knows fully well what they keep hidden in their breasts and what they reveal.[91] There is no secret thing in the heavens and the earth, which is not recorded in a clear Book.[92] 70-75

The fact is that this Qur'ān tells the children of Israel the reality of most of those things in which they differ;[93] and this is a Guidance and a Mercy for the believers.[94] (Likewise) your Lord will surely judge between these people[95] as well by His Command, and He is the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing.[96] Therefore, O Prophet, put your trust in Allah: you are certainly on the manifest Truth. You cannot make the dead to hear you,[97] nor can convey your call to the deaf, who have turned their backs and are running away from you,[98] nor can guide the blind against their errors.[99] You can only make those people to listen to you, who believe in Our Revelations and then submit (to Us) completely. 76-81

And when the time of the fulfilment of Our Decree approaches them,[100] We shall bring forth a beast for them from the earth, which will speak to them (about this) that the people did not believe in Our Revelations.[101] And imagine the Day when We shall gather together from every community a host of those people who used to treat Our Revelations as false; then they will be arranged (according to their classification and merit) until when all of them will have arrived, (their Lord) will ask them, "Did you treat My Revelations as false whereas you did not comprehend them by knowledge?[102] If not this, what else were you doing?"[103] And the threat of the torment will be carried out on them in consequence of their wicked deeds; then they will not be able to utter a word. Did they not perceive that We had ordained the night for them to have rest in it, and made the day bright?[104] Surely in this there were many Signs for those who believed.[105] 82-86

And on the Day when the Trumpet will be blown, all those who are in the heavens and the earth, shall be struck with terror[106]— except those whom Allah shall be pleased to protect.—And all shall 87-90

present themselves before Him in submission. Today, you see the mountains and think that they are firmly set, but on that Day they will be flying about like the clouds; this will be a manifestation of the powers of Allah, Who has ordered everything with wisdom. He is fully aware of what you do.[107] He who will bring good deeds, will have a reward better than that,[108] and such people shall be secure from the terror of that Day.[109] And the one who will come with evil deeds, all such people shall be flung upon their faces into the Fire. Can you be rewarded except in accordance with your deeds?[109a]

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blind to it, their heedlessness of the Hereafter has developed in them an utterly irresponsible attitude. They are not at all serious about the universe and the real problems of their own lives. They do not bother to know what reality is and whether their philosophy of life accords with that reality or not. For, according to them, in the end the polytheist and the atheist, the monotheist and the agnostic, all will become one with the dust after death, and nothing will bear any fruit.

The theme of the Hereafter is contained in this sentence of the preceding verse: "They do not know when they will be raised back to life." In that sentence it was said that those who are made deities—the angels, jinns, prophets, saints, etc., do not themselves know when will Resurrection be. Here three things have been said about the common polytheists and the atheists: (1) They do not at all know whether there will be any Hereafter or not; (2) this lack of information on their part is not due to the reason that they were never informed of this, but because they did not believe in the information given to them and doubted its authenticity; and (3) they never bothered to consider with due thought and seriousness the arguments that were advanced about the coming of the Hereafter, but they preferred to remain blind to it.

86. This brief sentence contains two strong arguments for the Hereafter as well as admonition:

Firstly, those communities who rejected the Hereafter could not help becoming criminals: they lived irresponsibly; they committed cruelties and all kinds of sin; and ultimately their moral depravity led them to utter ruin. This continuous experience of human history which is testified by the doomed communities all over the world, clearly shows that belief and unbelief in the Hereafter has a deep relationship with the soundness or the unsoundness of human behaviour. Belief in it generates sound behaviour and denial of it unsound behaviour. This is a clear proof of the fact that belief in it is in accordance with the

reality; that is why belief helps life to follow the right path. And rejection of it is against the reality; that is why rejection leads life into crooked alleys.

Secondly, the destruction of the communities, which became criminals, one after the other, in the long experience of history is a clear pointer to the fact that this universe is not being ruled by the deaf and blind and senseless forces, but this is a wise system which is functioning according to the unalterable law of retribution, which is dealing with the human communities only on moral grounds, in which no community is given long enough rope to commit whatever evil it likes and continue to enjoy life and commit injustices after it has once risen to power and prosperity. But when a wicked community happens to reach a certain stage, a mighty hand topples it from power and hurls it into the abyss of ignominy. Anyone who realizes this fact can have no doubt that the same law of retribution calls for the establishment of a new world after this world, where all individuals and nations and the whole mankind collectively should be rewarded and punished for their deeds. For the requirements of justice cannot be fulfilled only by the destruction of a wicked nation; this does not in any way redress the grievances of the oppressed people; this does not punish those who had enjoyed life and left the world before the coming down of the scourge; this does not also take to task those wicked people who went on leaving behind them legacies of immoralities and deviations for the coming generations. The torment that visited the nation only put a stop to the further tyrannies of its last generation. The court has not yet started working, to punish every wicked person for the evil done, to compensate every oppressed person for the losses incurred, and to reward all those who stood by the right against the onslaught of evil, endeavoured to reform things and faced persecutions in this way throughout their lives. All this should necessarily happen at some time. For the continuous operation in the world of the law of retribution clearly points to the temperament and technique of the ruling government of the universe that it judges human deeds by moral standards and punishes and rewards them accordingly.

Besides these two arguments, the aspect of admonition in this verse is: "Learn lessons from the fate of the guilty people of the past, and do not persist in the foolish belief of the denial of the Hereafter, which, in fact, was responsible for making them criminals."

87. That is, "You have done full justice to your mission of preaching. Now if they do not listen to you, and wish to persist in their folly and deserve the Divine torment, you should not consume yourself by being distressed and grieved at their condition. Then, why should you feel vexed at their mean machinations that they are devising in order to fight the truth and to frustrate your movement of

reform ? You have Allah's power at your back. If they do not listen to you, they will only be harming themselves, not you."

88. The same threat which is implied in the preceding verse. What they meant was: "When will the scourge with which you threaten us overtake us? Why are we not being punished when we have not only rejected you but have also done whatever we could to frustrate your mission?"

89. This is a royal way of saying a thing. When words like "perhaps", "no wonder", etc. occur in the Divine discourse, they do not contain any sense of doubt, but express Allah's Independence and Self-Sufficiency. Allah's power is so great that His willing a thing and its happening is one and the same thing. It is inconceivable that He should will a thing and it should not happen. Therefore, when He says, "No wonder it may well be so", it means, "It will certainly be so if you do not mend your ways."

90. That is, "It is Allah's mercy that He does not seize the culprit immediately after his commission of a crime but gives him respite to reform himself. But most people are not grateful for this, and do not utilize the period of respite for their reformation. On the contrary, when they see that they have not been taken to task immediately, they form the idea that there is none to call them to account. Therefore, they are free to do whatever they like and they should not listen to any word of admonition".

91. That is, "He is not only aware of their open misdeeds but is also fully aware of the malice and spite which they are concealing in their hearts and the evil plots which they are making secretly. Therefore, when the time comes to call them to account, they will be taken to task for everything done and thought."

92. Here by "Book" is not meant the Qur'ān, but the Divine Record in which everything has been registered.

93. This sentence is connected with the foregoing theme as well as with what follows. In the first case, it means that it is a manifestation of the knowledge of the All-Knowing God that He is explaining through a gentile (non-Jew) in this Qur'ān the reality of those events which are a part of the Israelite history, and which are being disputed by the learned men of the Israelites themselves. (The examples of this have been given in the early part of this Sūrah as explained in our Notes). In the second case, it means that just as Allah has decided those disputes, so He will decide this dispute also which is going on between the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him) and his opponents as to who is following the truth and who the falsehood. So, a few years after the revelation of these verses the Decision came before the whole world. In the same land of Arabia and in the same clan of the Quraish there was not left a single person who was not convinced that it was Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) who was

following the Truth and not Abū Jahl and Abū Lahab. Even the children of these people admitted that their fathers were in the wrong.

94. That is, "It is Mercy and Guidance for those who accept the message of the Qur'ān and believe in what it presents. Such people will be saved from the errors in which their own people are involved. They will find the right way of life by means of the Qur'ān and they will be blessed with such favours by Allah, which the disbelievers among the Quraish cannot even imagine today." This shower of Allah's mercy was also witnessed by the world after a few years. The same people who were living unknown lives in a corner of the Arabian desert and could at the most become successful raiders in the state of unbelief, suddenly emerged after their belief in the Qur'ān as the guides of the world, leaders of the nations, makers of human civilization and rulers over a vast part of the world.

95. "Between these people": Between the disbelievers of the Quraish and the believers.

96. That is, "Neither can any power withhold His judgement from being enforced, nor is there any chance of an error in His judgement."

97. "The dead": the ones whose consciences are dead and whose stubbornness, obstinacy and love of the usage and custom have deprived them of the sense of discrimination between the Truth and falsehood.

98. That is, "Who not only close their ears against what you say, but slink away from the place where they fear they might hear what you say.

99. That is, "It is none of your job to pull them forcibly to the right way and drag them along with you. You can only tell them by the word of mouth and by your example that this is the right way and the way they are following is the wrong way. But how can you guide the one who has closed his eyes and is not at all inclined to see anything?"

100. That is, "...when Resurrection which they are being promised will approach."

101. According to Ibn 'Umar, this will happen when there remains no one in the world to command the people to do good and forbid them to do evil. Ibn Mardūyah has reported a *Hadīth* on the authority of Abu Sa'id Khudrī; according to which the latter heard the same thing from the Holy Prophet himself. This shows that when man gives up the duty of exhorting others to do good and forbidding them to do evil, Allah will bring forth a beast to serve as the final warning just before Resurrection. This, however, is not clear whether it will be just one beast, or a particular species of beasts, who will spread all over the earth. The words *dābbat-an-min-al-ard* might contain both the meanings. In any case, what it will say will be: "The people did not believe Allah's Revelations in which

Resurrection was foretold. Now the same Resurrection is about to come; let everyone know that what Allah said was true". The sentence, "The people did not believe in Our Revelations", is either a part of the beast's own speech, or Allah's narration of its words. If these are its own words, the word "Our" will be understood in the style of an official who speaks on behalf of his government and not on his personal behalf. In the second case, since Allah is narrating the beast's words, He has used "Our Revelations" in the normal sense.

As to the time and occasion of the appearance of this beast, the Holy Prophet has said: "The sun will rise in the west and the beast will suddenly appear in the open daylight. Whichever of these signs appears first, it will be closely followed by the other." (Muslim) In the other traditions related in Muslim, Ibn Mājah, Tirmidhi, Musnad Ahmad, etc. the Holy Prophet foretold that the signs of Resurrection—emergence of the Anti-Christ *(Dajjāl)*, appearance of the beast, smoke and the rising of the sun in the west -will appear one after the other.

As for the nature, general appearance, place of appearance and other details about the beast, contradictory traditions have been reported, which only cause confusion and are not relevant to the object for which this thing has been mentioned in the Qur'ān.

As regards the beast's speaking to human beings in a human language, this will be a manifestation of the power of Allah, Who can give the power of speech to anything He pleases. He will give this power only to a beast before the event of Resurrection, but when Resurrection will have taken place, each limb of man—his ears, his eyes, even his skin—will speak out and give evidence in the Court of Allah, as has been clearly stated in Hā Mīm As-Sajdah: 20-21: "Then, when all will have reached there, their ears and their eyes and their very skins will bear witness against them concerning what they had been doing in the world. They will say to their skins, "Why have you borne witness against us?' They will reply, 'The same God Who has given speech to everything has given us speech'."

102. That is, "You did not deny My Revelations on the basis of some scientific investigation, which might have proved them to be false, but you denied them without any sound reason."

103. That is, "If it is not so, can you then prove that you treated them as false only after a thorough scientific investigation through which you came to know that the reality was not that which was being presented in these verses?"

104. That is, "Two out of the countless signs were such which they were observing at all times, whose benefits they were enjoying every moment, and which were not hidden even from a blind or deaf or dumb person. While they benefited by the rest at night and the opportunities afforded by the day, why did they not think that it is a system devised by an All-Wise Being, Who has

established the relationship between the sun and the earth precisely to meet their requirements and needs ? This cannot be a mere accident, for it clearly manifests purposefulness, wisdom and planning, which cannot be the characteristic of the blind forces of nature, nor the work of many gods. It can only be a system established by the One Creator and Master and Disposer, Who is ruling over the earth, the moon, the sun and all other planets. From the observation of this single phenomenon they could judge that the alternation of the day and night testified to the truth that We have conveyed through Our Messenger and Our Book."

105. That is, "It was not something incomprehensible either. There were among their own relatives, their own clan and their own brotherhood people like themselves, who had seen the same very Signs and believed that the creed of God-worship and *Tauḥid* towards which the Prophet was inviting them was precisely in accordance with the truth and reality."

106. For a detailed discussion of the blowing of the Trumpet, see E.N. 47 of Al-An'ām, E.N. 57 of Ibrāhīm, E.N. 78 of Ṭā Hā, E.N. I of Al-Ḥajj, E.N.'s. 46, 47 of Yā Sīn and E.N. 79 of Az-Zumar.

107: That is, "From such God you should not expect that after giving you the powers of intellect and discrimination and control over things, He will remain unaware of your deeds and actions and will not see how you have been using the delegated authority in the earth."

108. The reward will be better in two ways: (1) It will be higher than what a person will actually deserve for his good deeds; and (2) it will be everlasting and for ever though the good act was temporary and its influence confined to a limited period only.

109. That is, "Though the terrors of Resurrection will stun and confound the disbelievers, the believers will remain safe and secure from them, for everything in the Hereafter will be according to their expectations. They had already known from the messages brought by the Messengers of Allah that Resurrection will take place, and a new World will be established when everyone will be called to account for his deeds. Therefore, they will neither be bewildered nor alarmed, which will be the case with those who had denied this Day and remained heedless of it, till their last breath in the world. They will also be satisfied because they had worked for this Day and had brought necessary provisions from the world for their success here. Therefore, they will not be stupefied and confounded as will be those who had invested all their energies and capabilities in their struggle for achieving worldly successes only, and had never thought that there would be life hereafter also for which they should make some provision. Contrary to them, the believers will be satisfied that the Day for the

[Contd. on p.570

جَآءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَكُبَّتْ وُجُوهُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ ۖ هَلْ تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٠﴾
إِنَّمَا أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ رَبَّ هَٰذِهِ الْبَلْدَةِ الَّذِي حَرَّمَهَا وَلَهُ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ ۖ وَأُمِرْتُ
أَنْ أَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٩١﴾ وَأَنْ أَتْلُوَ الْقُرْآنَ ۖ فَمَنِ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي
لِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَن ضَلَّ فَقُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُنذِرِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾ وَقُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ سَيُرِيكُمْ
آيَاتِهِ فَتَعْرِفُونَهَا ۚ وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِغَافِلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾

91-93 (O Muḥammad, say to them:) "What I have been commanded is that I should worship the Lord of this City, Who has made it sacred, and Who is the Owner of every thing.[110] I have been commanded to live as a Muslim and to recite the Qur'ān." Now whosoever follows the guidance, will follow it for his own good, and to him who goes astray, say, "I am only a warner." Say to them, "Praise is only for Allah; very soon He will show you His Signs, which you shall recognize; and your Lord is not unaware of what you do."

Contd. from p.569]

sake of which they had given up the unlawful benefits and pleasures of life and had undergone hardships and toil, had at last come, and they will not be deprived of the rewards of their works."

109a. At several places in the Qur'ān it has been stated clearly that an evil will be punished in the Hereafter only to the extent of the evil committed, but a good act will be rewarded much more generously by Allah than what the doer will actually deserve for it. For more examples of this, see Sūrah Yūnus: 26-27, Al-Qaṣaṣ: 84. Al-'Ankabūt: 7, Sabā': 37-38, Al-Mu'min: 40.

110. As this Sūrah was sent down at a stage when the message of Islam was confined to Makkah and its addressees were the people of that City only, it was said, "I have been commanded that I should worship the Lord of this City." And the characteristic of the Lord was stated to be that He had made that City sacred. This was meant to warn the disbelievers of Makkah, as if to say, " You may if you so like prove thankless to that God Who has done you the great favour of making this City of yours a haven of peace in the strife-ridden land of Arabia, and Who by His grace has made it the centre of spiritual affiliation for the whole of Arabia, but I have been commanded to be grateful to Him and bow down before Him. None of your deities had the power to make this City a sanctuary and make the quarrelsome and plundering tribes of Arabia have respect for it. I cannot abandon my real Benefactor and bow down before those who have done me no favour at all."



XXVIII

AL-QAṢAṢ

اَلقَصَصُ

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXVIII
AL-QASAS

الْقَصَص

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from verse 25 in which the word Al-Qaṣaṣ occurs. Lexically, *qaṣaṣ* means to relate events in their proper sequence. Thus, from the viewpoint of the meaning too, this word can be a suitable title for this Sūrah, for in it the detailed story of the Prophet Moses has been related.

Period of Revelation

As already mentioned in the Introduction to Sūrah An-Naml, according to Ibn 'Abbās and Jābir bin Zaid, Sūrahs Ash-Shu'arāa.', An-Naml and Al-Qaṣaṣ were sent down one after the other. The language, the style and the theme also show that the period of the revelation of these three Sūrahs is nearly the same. Another reason for their close

resemblance is that the different parts of the Prophet Moses' story as mentioned in these Sūrahs together make up a complete story. In Sūrah Ash-Shu'arāa', excusing himself for not accepting the office of Prophethood, the Prophet Moses submits, "The people of Pharaoh have the charge of a crime against me; therefore, I fear that they will put me to death." Then, when he goes before Pharaoh, the latter says, "Did we not bring you up as a child in our house? You lived quite a few years of your life among us, and then you did what you did." Nothing more of this has been mentioned there, but in this Sūrah the other details have been supplied. Similarly, in Sūrah An-Naml the story starts abruptly from the time when the Prophet Moses was journeying with his family and suddenly saw a fire at a distance. In that Sūrah nothing has been said about the nature of his journey, or the place he was coming from, or his destination, but this Sūrah supplies all the necessary details. Thus, the three Sūrahs read together complete the story of the Prophet Moses (Allah's peace be upon him).

Theme and Topics

The main theme is to remove the doubts and objections that were being raised against the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and to invalidate the excuses which were being offered for not believing in him.

For this purpose, first the story of the Prophet Moses has been related, which, by analogy with the period of revelation, impresses the following points in the listener's mind automatically:

First, Allah provides the means and motives of whatever He wills to do, in imperceptible ways. Thus, Allah so arranged things that the child through whom Pharaoh had to be removed from power, was bred and brought up in his own house, and he could not know whom he was fostering. Who can then fight God and frustrate Him by his machinations?

Secondly, Prophethood is not granted to a person amid festivities by issuing a proclamation from the earth and heavens. You wonder how Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) has been blessed with prophethood unexpectedly, all of a sudden, but Moses whom you

yourselves acknowledge as a Prophet (v. 48) had also become a Prophet unexpectedly, while on a journey, and nobody had known what event had occurred in the desolation at the foot of Mt. Sinai. Even Moses himself did not know a moment before what he was going to be blessed with. He, in fact, had gone to bring a piece of the fire but had returned with the gift of Prophethood.

Thirdly, the person from whom Allah wants to take some service comes out without any army and armour and without an apparent helper or force at his back, yet he puts to rout much stronger and better equipped opponents. The contrast that existed between the strengths of Moses (peace be upon him) and Pharaoh was much more prominent and glaring than that which existed between Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and the Quraish; yet the world knows who had come out victorious in the end and who had been routed.

Fourthly, you refer to Moses again and again and say, "Why has Muḥammad not been given the same which was given to Moses?—i.e. miracles of the staff, the shining hand, etc.—as if to suggest that you would readily believe only if you were shown the kind of the miracles that were shown by Moses to Pharaoh. But do you know what sort of response was made by those who were shown those miracles ? They had not believed even after seeing the miracles, and had only said, "This is magic", for they were involved in stubbornness and hostility to the Truth. The same malady afflicts you today. Will you believe only when you are shown the same kind of miracles? Then, do you know what fate the disbelievers had met even after seeing the miracles ? They were annihilated by Allah. Do you now wish to meet the same doom by asking for the miracles in your obstinacy?

These were the things which were automatically impressed in the mind of every listener who heard this story in the pagan environment of Makkah, for a similar conflict was going on at that time between the Holy Prophet and disbelievers of Makkah as had already taken place between the Prophet Moses and Pharaoh before. This was the background against which the story of the Prophet Moses was narrated so that a perfect analogy was established automatically in every detail

between the conditions prevailing then in Makkah and those existing in the time of the Prophet Moses. Then, from verse 43 onward the discourse turns to the real theme.

In the first place, the narration of a two thousand year old historical event by the Holy Prophet with such accuracy and detail, is presented as a proof of his Prophethood although he was un-lettered and the people of his city and clan knew full well that he had no access to any source of such information as they could point out.

Then his appointment as a Prophet is put forward as Allah's mercy to them, for they were heedless and Allah had made this arrangement for their guidance. Then their oft-repeated objection, "Why has not this Prophet brought the miracles which Moses had brought?" has been answered. It is said to them, "How can you be justified in demanding miracles from this Prophet when you did not believe in Moses either, who, as you yourselves acknowledge, had brought miracles from God ? You can still see the truth only if you do not serve your lusts and whims. But if you remained afflicted with this malady, you would never see it even though you were shown any kind of miracles."

Then the disbelievers of Makkah have been warned and put to shame for an event that occurred in those very days. Some Christians had come to Makkah and embraced Islam when they heard the Qur'ān from the Holy Prophet. Instead of learning any lesson from this the Makkans were so upset at this that their leader, Abu Jahl, disgraced those people publicly.

In conclusion, the excuse that the disbelievers put forward for not believing in the Holy Prophet has been dealt with. What they feared was this: "If we give up the polytheistic creed of the Arabs and accept the doctrine of *Tauḥīd* instead, this will put an end to our supremacy in the religious, political and economic fields, which, in turn, will destroy our position of the most influential tribe of Arabia and we shall be left with no refuge anywhere in the land." As this was the real motive of the chiefs of the Quraish for their antagonism towards the Truth, and their doubts and objections were only the pretences, which they invented to

deceive the common people, Allah has dealt with these fully till the end of the Sūrah, considered each aspect of these in a wise manner and offered the remedy for their basic ailment due to which those people judged the Truth and falsehood only from the viewpoint of their worldly interests.



طٰسٓمٓ ﴿١﴾ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ ﴿٢﴾ نَتْلُوْا عَلَيْكَ مِنْ نَّبَاِ مُوْسٰى وَفِرْعَوْنَ
بِالْحَقِّ لِقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ اِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ عَلَا فِى الْاَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ اَهْلَهَا شِيَعًا
يَّسْتَضْعِفُ طَآئِفَةً مِّنْهُمْ يُذَبِّحُ اَبْنَآءَهُمْ وَيَسْتَحْىٖ نِسَآءَهُمْ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ مِنَ
الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿٤﴾ وَنُرِيْدُ اَنْ نَّمُنَّ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ اسْتُضْعِفُوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ وَنَجْعَلَهُمْ
اَئِمَّةً وَّنَجْعَلَهُمُ الْوٰرِثِيْنَ ﴿٥﴾ وَنُمَكِّنَ لَهُمْ فِى الْاَرْضِ وَنُرِىَ فِرْعَوْنَ وَ
هَامٰنَ وَجُنُوْدَهُمَا مِنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَحْذَرُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾ وَاَوْحَيْنَآ اِلٰٓى اُمِّ مُوْسٰٓى اَنْ
اَرْضِعِيْهِ ۚ فَاِذَا خِفْتِ عَلَيْهِ فَاَلْقِيْهِ فِى الْيَمِّ وَلَا تَخَافِىْ وَلَا تَحْزَنِىْ ۚ اِنَّا
رَآدُّوْهُ اِلَيْكِ وَجَاعِلُوْهُ مِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿٧﴾ فَالْتَقَطَهٗٓ اٰلُ فِرْعَوْنَ لِيَكُوْنَ لَهُمْ
عَدُوًّا وَّحَزَنًا ؕ اِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامٰنَ وَجُنُوْدَهُمَا كَانُوْا خٰطِـِٕيْنَ ﴿٨﴾ وَقَالَتِ
امْرَاَتُ فِرْعَوْنَ قُرَّتُ عَيْنٍ لِّىْ وَلَكَ ؕ لَا تَقْتُلُوْهُ ۖ عَسٰٓى اَنْ يَّنْفَعَنَآ اَوْ نَتَّخِذَهٗ
وَلَدًا وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾ وَاَصْبَحَ فُؤَادُ اُمِّ مُوْسٰى فٰرِغًا ؕ اِنْ كَادَتْ لَتُبْدِىْ
بِهٖ لَوْلَآ اَنْ رَّبَطْنَا عَلٰى قَلْبِهَا لِتَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَقَالَتْ لِاُخْتِهٖ قُصِّيْهِ

XXVIII
AL-QAṢĀṢ
اَلْقَصَص

Verses: 88 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Ṭā. Sīn. Mīm. These are the verses of the lucid Book. We narrate to you accurately some of the history of Moses and Pharaoh[1] for the benefit of those who believe.[2] 1-3

The fact is that Pharaoh adopted an attitude of rebellion in the land[3] and divided its dwellers into groups,[4] one of which he debased, putting their sons to death, and letting their daughters live:[5] indeed he was one of the mischief-makers. And it was Our will to show favour to those who had been oppressed in the land to make them leaders and to make them the heirs; to give them power in the land and to show Pharaoh and Hāmān[8] and their hosts, at their hands, the same which they feared. 4-6

We[9] inspired the mother of Moses, saying, "Suckle him, and when you see any danger for him, cast him into the river, and fear not nor grieve, for We shall restore him to you and shall include him among the Messengers."[10] Consequently, Pharaoh's household picked him up (from the river) so that he may become their enemy and cause of grief for them.[11] Really, Pharaoh and Hāmān and their hosts were misguided (in their scheming). Pharaoh's wife said (to him), "He is a comfort of the eyes for me and for you! Do not kill him: maybe that he proves useful to us, or we may adopt him as a son."[12] And they were unaware (of the ultimate result). 7-9

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1. For comparison, see Al-Baqarah: 47-59, Al-A'rāf: 100-141, Yūnus: 75-92, Hūd: 96-109, Banī Isrā'īl: 101-111, Maryam: 51-53, Ṭā Hā: 1-89, Al-

Mu'minūn: 45-49, Ash-Shu'arāa: 10-68, An-Naml: 7-14, Al-'Ankabūt: 39-40, Al-Mu'min: 23-50, Az-Zukhruf: 46-56, Ad-Dukhān: 17-33, Adh-Dhāriyāt: 38-40, An-Nāziyāt: 15-26.

2. That is, "For the benefit of those who are not obstinate and stubborn, for it would be useless to address those who are not at all inclined to listen to you."

3. The words *'alā fil-arḍ* in the Text are comprehensive and mean that he adopted a rebellious attitude in the land, assumed independence and godhead and superiority instead of behaving like a servant and a subordinate, and started oppressing his subjects like a tyrannical and haughty ruler.

4. That is, "He did not rule his subjects with an even hand giving equal rights to all of them, but he had adopted the polity of dividing them into groups. He bestowed privileges and preferential rights on some to be made the ruling class and reduced others to serfs to be oppressed and exploited."

Here, nobody should have the doubt that an Islamic government also discriminates between its Muslim and *dhimmī* subjects, and does not allow them equal rights and privileges in every way. This doubt is misplaced because this distinction, contrary to Pharaonic discrimination, is not based on any distinction owing to race, colour, language or class, but on the distinction of ideology and way of life. In the Islamic system there is absolutely no difference between the legal rights of the Muslims and the *dhimmīs*. The only difference is in their political rights, for the simple reason that in an ideological state the ruling class can only be the one which believes in its basic ideology. Every person who accepts this ideology can enter that class, and anyone who rejects it quits it. Thus, there can be no element of resemblance between this discrimination and the Pharaonic discrimination according to which no member of the oppressed race can ever enter the ruling class, under which the people of the oppressed race do not even enjoy the basic human rights, not to speak of their political and economic rights; so much so that they are even deprived of their right to live and survive, and denied security of any right whatever, all special privileges and benefits and high of offices and good things of life being reserved for the ruling class and for every such person who happens to have been born in it.

5. The Bible elucidates this as follows:

"Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them: lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and *so* get them up out of the land. Therefore they

did set over them task masters to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure cities, Pithom and Ra'amses ....And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigour; And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour .... And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives .... And he said, When ye do the office of a midwife to Hebrew women, and see *them* upon the stools; if it *be* a son, then ye shall kill him: but if it *be* a daughter, then she shall live." (Exod. 1: 8-16).

This shows that after the passing away of the Prophet Joseph a nationalist revolution took place in Egypt, and when the Copts regained power the new nationalist government employed every means to subdue the Israelites. They did not only humiliate and disgrace them and took mean services from them, but, over and above this, they adopted the policy of reducing their population, by killing their sons and allowing their daughters to live so that their women should gradually pass into the Copts' hands and produce the Coptic instead of the Israelite race. The Talmud adds that this revolution had taken place a little over a hundred years after the death of the Prophet Joseph. According to it, the new government, in the first instance, deprived the Israelites of their fertile lands and houses and possessions, and then removed them from the government jobs and offices. Even after this whenever the Coptic rulers felt that the Israelites and their Egyptian co-religionists were becoming formidable they would disgrace them and employ them in rigorous jobs on little or no wages at all. This is the explanation of the Qur'ānic verse: "He debased a section of the Egyptian population", and of verse 49 of Al-Baqarah: "They had inflicted a dreadful torment on you."

However, neither the Bible nor the Qur'ān mentions that the Pharaoh was told by an astrologer that a boy would be born among the Israelites, who would become a cause of his deposition from power and to meet this danger he had issued orders to kill the male children born in the Israelite homes, or that Pharaoh himself had seen a dreadful dream and the explanation given was that a son would be born among the Israelites, who would cause his downfall. Our commentators have taken this "legend" from the Talmud and other Israelite traditions. (See *Jewish Encyclopedia*, under ;"Moses", and *The Talmud Selections*, pp. 123-24).

6. That is, "Make them leaders and guides of the people in the world."

7. That is, "Bestow on them inheritance of the land so that they should be rulers over it."

8. The Western orientalists have been very critical of this. They say that Hāmān was a courtier of the Persian King Xerxes, who reigned hundreds of years after the Prophet Moses, from 486 to 465 B.C., but the Qur'ān has made him a

minister of Pharaoh in Egypt. This is nothing but an instance of sheer prejudice. After all, what historical evidence have these orientalists got to prove that there never lived any other person called Hāmān before Xerxes' courtier Hāmān? If an orientalist has been able to discover, through authentic means, a complete list of all the ministers and chiefs and courtiers of the Pharaoh under discussion which does not contain the name of Hāmān he should make it public, or publish a photostat of it, because there could be no better or more effective instrument than this of the refutation of the Qur'ān.

9. That a son was born in the same period to an Israelite parents who was later known by the name of Moses to the world, has been omitted. According to the Bible and the Talmud, the family descended from Levi, a son of the Prophet Jacob, and the name of the Prophet Moses' father was Amram, which has been pronounced as Imrān by the Qur'ān. They already had two children before Moses, the elder a daughter, named Miriam, and the younger her brother, Aaron. Probably the proclamation that every male child born in an Israelite home would be killed, had not yet been issued when the Prophet Aaron was born; therefore, he was saved. The third child was born when the proclamation was in full force.

10. That is, "She was not commanded to cast the child into the river immediately after birth, but to suckle it till she felt a real danger for it. For instance, if she felt that the secret had been exposed and the enemies had come to know of the child's birth through some means, or through some wretched informer from among the Israelites themselves, she should place the child in a box and cast it into the river, without any hesitation. According to the Bible, the Prophet Moses' mother kept him hidden for three months after his birth. The Talmud adds that the Pharaoh's government had appointed Egyptian women who carried infants into the Israelite homes, and would make these babies cry, so as to make any hidden Israelite infants also cry and be thus discovered. This new method of spying worried Moses' mother and in order to save her child's life, she cast him into the river three months after his birth. Upto this point the version given by these Books is the same as the Qur'ān's, and the event of casting the box into the river has also been described just as the Qur'ān has described it. In Sūrah Ṭā Hā it has been said: Put this child in a box and place the box in the river." (v.39). The same has been said by the Bible and the Talmud. According to these, the Prophet Moses' mother made a basket of reeds and covered it with slime (tar) and with pitch to make it watertight. Then she laid the child in it and placed it in the river Nile. But the most important thing, which the Qur'ān mentions, has found no mention anywhere in the Israelite traditions, that is, that the Prophet Moses' mother had done all this according to an inspiration from Allah, and Allah had already assured her that by following that device not only would her child remain safe and secure but the child

would ultimately be restored to her, and that her child would become Allah's Messenger in the future.

11. This was not their aim, but the ultimate destiny of their act. They picked up the child through whom they were to be destoyed in the end.

12. What one understands from this is briefly so: "When the ark or the basket was carried by the river to the place where Pharaoh's palaces were situated, the servants of Pharaoh picked it up and took it before the king and the queen. It is just possible that the king and the queen were at that time strolling along the river bank and might have noticed the basket and ordered it to be picked up. When they saw a child in it, they could easily guess that it belonged to an Israelite family. For it came from the quarters inhabited by the Israelites, whose sons were being put to death in those days. It was understood that somebody had hidden the child for some time but when it could not be hidden any longer, it was cast to the river in the hope that it might be picked up and rescued from death. With this in view the most obedient servants submitted that the king order the child to be killed forthwith, for it might prove dangerous for him. But the Pharaoh's wife was a woman and might even be childless. Then it was a lovely child, as Allah has reminded Moses in Ṭā Hā: 39, thus: "I had cast on you love from Myself." That is "I had made you such a lovely child that the beholders could not help regarding you with love." Therefore, the woman could not help feeling for him, and said to the king, "Do not kill him, but let us adopt him. When he grows up in our house as our son, he will not know that he was an Israelite: he will rather think he is one of Pharaoh's own kinsfolk, and he will be useful for us as against the Israelites."

According to the Bible and the Talmud, the woman who had counselled adoption of Moses was Pharaoh's daughter, but according to the Qur'ān his wife *(imra'at-u-Fir'aun)*. Obviously, the direct Word of Allah is more reliable than the verbal traditions which were compiled centuries afterwards. Therefore, it is absolutely needless to translate *imra'at-u-Fir'aun* as a woman of Pharaoh's family" against the Arabic idiom and usage only for the sake of seeking conformity with the Israelite traditions.

فَبَصُرَتْ بِهٖ عَنْ جُنُبٍ وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ۙ وَحَرَّمْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَرَاضِعَ مِنْ
قَبْلُ فَقَالَتْ هَلْ اَدُلُّكُمْ عَلٰٓى اَهْلِ بَيْتٍ يَّكْفُلُوْنَهٗ لَكُمْ وَهُمْ لَهٗ نٰصِحُوْنَ ۝١٢
فَرَدَدْنٰهُ اِلٰٓى اُمِّهٖ كَيْ تَقَرَّ عَيْنُهَا وَلَا تَحْزَنَ وَلِتَعْلَمَ اَنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ وَّ
لٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝١٣ وَلَمَّا بَلَغَ اَشُدَّهٗ وَاسْتَوٰٓى اٰتَيْنٰهُ حُكْمًا وَّعِلْمًا ؕ
وَكَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِى الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ۝١٤ وَدَخَلَ الْمَدِيْنَةَ عَلٰى حِيْنِ غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ اَهْلِهَا
فَوَجَدَ فِيْهَا رَجُلَيْنِ يَقْتَتِلٰنِ ۗ هٰذَا مِنْ شِيْعَتِهٖ وَهٰذَا مِنْ عَدُوِّهٖ ۚ
فَاسْتَغَاثَهُ الَّذِىْ مِنْ شِيْعَتِهٖ عَلَى الَّذِىْ مِنْ عَدُوِّهٖ ۙ فَوَكَزَهٗ مُوْسٰى فَقَضٰى
عَلَيْهِ ۗ قَالَ هٰذَا مِنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطٰنِ ؕ اِنَّهٗ عَدُوٌّ مُّضِلٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝١٥ قَالَ رَبِّ
اِنِّىْ ظَلَمْتُ نَفْسِىْ فَاغْفِرْ لِىْ فَغَفَرَ لَهٗ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ۝١٦ قَالَ رَبِّ
بِمَآ اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَىَّ فَلَنْ اَكُوْنَ ظَهِيْرًا لِّلْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ۝١٧ فَاَصْبَحَ فِى الْمَدِيْنَةِ خَآئِفًا
يَّتَرَقَّبُ فَاِذَا الَّذِى اسْتَنْصَرَهٗ بِالْاَمْسِ يَسْتَصْرِخُهٗ ؕ قَالَ لَهٗ مُوْسٰٓى اِنَّكَ
لَغَوِىٌّ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝١٨ فَلَمَّآ اَنْ اَرَادَ اَنْ يَّبْطِشَ بِالَّذِىْ هُوَ عَدُوٌّ لَّهُمَا ۙ قَالَ يٰمُوْسٰٓى
اَتُرِيْدُ اَنْ تَقْتُلَنِىْ كَمَا قَتَلْتَ نَفْسًۢا بِالْاَمْسِ ۚ اِنْ تُرِيْدُ اِلَّآ اَنْ تَكُوْنَ
جَبَّارًا فِى الْاَرْضِ وَمَا تُرِيْدُ اَنْ تَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُصْلِحِيْنَ ۝١٩ وَجَآءَ رَجُلٌ
مِّنْ اَقْصَا الْمَدِيْنَةِ يَسْعٰى ۙ قَالَ يٰمُوْسٰٓى اِنَّ الْمَلَاَ يَاْتَمِرُوْنَ بِكَ لِيَقْتُلُوْكَ
فَاخْرُجْ اِنِّىْ لَكَ مِنَ النّٰصِحِيْنَ ۝٢٠ فَخَرَجَ مِنْهَا خَآئِفًا يَّتَرَقَّبُ ۙ قَالَ رَبِّ
نَجِّنِىْ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۝٢١ وَلَمَّا تَوَجَّهَ تِلْقَآءَ مَدْيَنَ قَالَ عَسٰى رَبِّىْٓ
اَنْ يَّهْدِيَنِىْ سَوَآءَ السَّبِيْلِ ۝٢٢ وَلَمَّا وَرَدَ مَآءَ مَدْيَنَ وَجَدَ عَلَيْهِ اُمَّةً مِّنَ
النَّاسِ يَسْقُوْنَ ۙ وَوَجَدَ مِنْ دُوْنِهِمُ امْرَاَتَيْنِ تَذُوْدٰنِ ۚ قَالَ مَا خَطْبُكُمَا

On the other hand, the heart of Moses' mother was sorely distressed. She would have disclosed his secret, had We not strengthened her heart so that she might have faith (in Our promise). She said to his sister, "Follow him up." So, she watched him from a distance in a manner that (the enemies) did not notice it.[13] And We had already forbidden the breasts of the nurses for the child.[14] (On seeing this) the girl said to them, "Shall I tell you of a house whose people will bring him up for you and look after him well?"[15] Thus We restored Moses[16] to his mother so that her eyes might be cooled and she might not grieve and she might know that Allah's promise was true.[17] But most people do not know this. 10-13

When Moses had reached his full maturity and become full-grown,[18] We gave him judgement and knowledge;[19] thus do We reward the righteous. (One day) he entered the city at a time when the people were heedless.[20] There he saw two men fighting, the one of his own people, the other of his enemies. The one belonging to his own people asked his help against the one belonging to the enemy. Moses gave him a blow[21] and killed him. (On seeing what had happened) Moses said, "This is the work of Satan: he is a deadly enemy (of man) and an open misleader."[22] Then he said, "O my Lord, I have sinned against myself, so forgive me." So, Allah forgave him: He is the All-Forgiving, the All-Merciful.[24] Moses promised, "O my Lord, after this favour that You have shown me,[25] I shall never again be a helper of the criminals."[26] 14-17

The next morning, as he was walking in a state of fear and caution in the city, suddenly he saw the same man who had asked his help the day before, again calling him for help. Moses said, "You are certainly a misguided man."[27] Then, when Moses was about to assault the man, who was their enemy,[28] he cried out,[29] "O Moses! would you kill me today just as you killed a person yesterday? You certainly wish to become a tyrant in the land and reform nothing." Then, a man came running from the other end of the city,[30] who said, "O Moses, the chiefs are holding consultations to kill you, so leave this place: I am your well-wisher." Hearing this, Moses left the place, in a state of fear and vigilance, and prayed, "O my Lord, save me from the wicked people." 18-21

22-23 (Leaving Egypt) when Moses set his direction towards Madyan[31] he said "I expect that my Lord will guide me to the right path."[32] And when he arrived at the well of Madyan[33] he saw a multitude of people watering their animals and apart from them two women keeping their animals back. Moses asked the women "What is your worry?" They said "We cannot water our animals until these shepherds have taken away their animals; and our father is a very old man."[34]

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13. That is, the girl walked along and watched the floating basket in such a manner that the enemies could not know that she had anything to do with the child in it. According to the Israelite traditions, this sister of the Prophet Moses was 10 to 12 years old. She followed up her brother intelligently and cleverly and ascertained that he had been picked up by the Pharaoh's household.

14. That is, "The child would not take to any nurse whom the queen would call for suckling him."

15. This shows that the sister did not go and sit back at home when she found that her brother had reached Pharaoh's palace, but cleverly hung about the palace to watch every new development. Then, when she found that the child was not taking to any nurse, and the queen was anxious to get a nurse who would suit it, the intelligent girl went straight into the palace, and said, "I can tell you the whereabouts of a nurse, who will bring him up with great affection." Here it should be borne in mind that in old days the well-to-do and noble families of these countries generally used to entrust their children to nurses for bringing up. We know that in the time of the Holy Prophet also nurses from the suburbs used to visit Makkah from time to time in order to get infants from the well-to-do families for suckling and nursing on rich wages. The Holy Prophet himself was brought up by Ḥalīmah Sa'diyah in the desert. The same custom was prevalent in Egypt. that is why the Prophet Moses' sister did not say that she would bring a suitable nurse, but said that she would tell them of a house whose people would take up the responsibility of bringing him up with care and affection.

16. According to the Bible and the Talmud, the child was named "Moses" in Pharaoh's house. It is not a Hebrew but a Coptic word, which means, "I drew him out of the water", for in Coptic *mo* meant water and *oshe* rescued.

17. Another good thing that resulted from this wise device by Allah was that the Prophet Moses could not become a real prince in Phoraoh's house, but grew up among his own people and became fully aware of his family and community traditions and his ancestral religion. Thus, instead of growing up as a member of Pharaoh's class and people he arose sentimentally and intellectually as a full-fledged Israelite.

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In a *Ḥadīth* the Holy Prophet has said: "He who works to earn his livelihood and keeps in view Allah's goodwill also, has a likeness with the Prophet Moses' mother, who suckled her own son as well as received her wages for the service, too." That is, although such a person works to earn a living for his children, since he works honestly with a view to pleasing God he is just and upright in his dealings with others, seeks lawful provisions for himself and his children in the spirit of God's worship he does deserve a reward from Allah even for earning his own livelihood.

18. That is, when he had attained his full mental and physical development. In this connection, different ages of the Prophet Moses have been mentioned in the Jewish traditions. Some say he was 18, others have mentioned 20 years and still others 40 years. According to the New Testament, he was 40 years old. (Acts, 7: 23). But the Qur'ān does not mention any age. For the purpose of the incident being mentioned in the following verses, it is enough to know that he had attained his full maturity at that time.

19. *Ḥukm* implies wisdom, understanding and power of judgement, and *'Ilm* is both religious and worldly knowledge. The Prophet Moses became familiar with the teachings of his forefathers the Prophets Joseph, Jacob, Isaac and Abraham (peace be upon all of them) through his contact with his parents, and with the sciences prevalent in Egypt by virtue of his training as a prince in the king's palace. Here the gift of *Ḥukm* (wisdom) and *'Ilm* (knowledge) does not refer to the gift of Prophethood, because Prophethood was bestowed on Moses several years afterwards, as is mentioned below, and has already been mentioned in Ash-Shu'arāa: 21 above.

Regarding his education and training while as a prince the New Testament says: "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds." (Acts, 7: 22). The Talmud says: Moses grew up, a handsome lad, in the palace of the king: he dressed royally, was honoured by the people, and seemed in all things of royal lineage. He visited the land of Goshen daily, observing the rigour with which his brethren were treated.... Moses urged the king of Egypt to grant the men of Goshen one day of rest from the labour, in each week, and the king acceded to his request. Moses said, "If you compel them to labour steadily their strength will fail them; for your benefit and profit allow them at least one day in the week for rest and renewal of strength", And the Lord was with Moses, and his fame extended through all the land." (H. Polano: *The Talmud Selection* pp. 128-29).

20. It might be the early morning, or midday in summer, or night in winter, when the roads were deserted and there was all quiet in the city. The words "entered the city" indicate that the royal palaces were situated outside the

capital, away from the common population. The words used are "entered the city" and not "came out in the city", because the Prophet Moses lived in the royal palace.

21. The word *wakaza* in the original means both giving a slap and giving a blow. We have adopted "Moses gave a blow" for the reason that a blow can cause death but not so a slap.

22. One can imagine the state of utter remorse and confusion in which the Prophet Moses uttered these words when he saw the Egyptian fall down after receiving the blow and breathe his last. He had no intention to murder, nor is a blow struck to kill, nor can one expect that a healthy person would die on receiving a blow. That is why the Prophet Moses exclaimed: "This is the work of Satan! He has made me do this in order to work some great mischief, so that I am accused of killing an Egyptian while defending an Israelite, and a violent storm of anger and indignation is aroused in the whole of Egypt not only against me but the whole Israelite community." In this connection, the Bible gives a different version from the Qur'ān. It declares the Prophet Moses to be guilty of wilful murder. It says that when Moses saw an Egyptian and an Israelite fighting, "He (Moses) looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, He slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand." (Exod. 2: 12). The same is the version of the Talmud also. Now anybody can see how the Israelites brand the characters of their elders with infamy and how the Qur'ān exonerates them. The verdict of common sense also is that a wise and discreet person, who was to become a great Prophet in the future, and who had to give man a great code of law and justice, could not be such a blind nationalist that seeing a member of his own community fighting with a man of the other community he would be so infuriated that he would kill the other person wilfully. Evidently, it could not be lawful to kill the Egyptian only for the sake of rescuing an Israelite from his tyranny.

23. What the Prophet Moses meant by this prayer was: "O my Lord, forgive this sin of mine, which you know I have not committed wilfully, and also cover and conceal it from the people."

24. This has two meanings and both are implied here: Allah pardoned Moses' error as well as concealed his sin from the people so that neither any Egyptian nor any official of the Egyptian government passed that way at that time that he might witness the incident. So, the Prophet Moses got an opportunity to escape undetected from the place of the occurrence of murder.

25. That is, "The favour of concealing my 'act' from my enemies and enabling me to escape unharmed from Egypt."

26. This pledge of the Prophet Moses is in very comprehensive words. What he meant by this was that he would neither become a helper of an individual nor of those who perpetrated cruelty and tyranny in the world. Ibn Jarīr and several other commentators have rightly understood this to mean that on that very day the Prophet Moses pledged to sever his relations with Pharaoh and his government, for it was a tyrannical government, which had set up a wicked system on God's earth. He realized that it was not for any honest person to continue as a functionary of a tyrannical kingdom and become an instrument of increasing its power and grandeur.

The Muslim scholars in general have deduced from this pledge of the Prophet Moses that a believer should completely refrain from helping a tyrant, whether the tyrant is an individual or a group, or a government or kingdom. Somebody asked Ḥadrat 'Atā' bin Abī Rabāḥ, the well-known follower of the Companions, "My brother is secretary to the governor of Kūfah, under the Umayyids. Though he does not decide the disputes of the people, the decisions, however, are issued through his pen. He has to continue in this service because this is his only source of income." Ḥadrat 'Atā' recited this verse, and said, "Your brother should throw away his pen: the Providence is Allah.

Another secretary asked 'Āmir Sha'bī, "O Abū 'Amr, I am only responsible for writing down and issuing the judgements: I have nothing to do with passing them. Is it lawful provision for me ?" He replied, "It is just possible that a sentence of murder is passed against an innocent person and it is issued under your pen; or a person's property is confiscated unjustly; or somebody's house is ordered to be pulled down, and the orders are issued under your pen." Then the said Imam recited this verse, hearing which the secretary said, "After this day my pen will not be used for issuing judgements of the Umayyids." The Imām said, "Then Allah also will not deprive you of your daily bread."

'Abdur Rehmān bin Muslim had only asked Ḍaḥḥak to go to Bukhāra and distribute the salaries of the officials there, but he declined even this. When his friends said there was nothing wrong in it, he replied, "I do not want to be a helper of the unjust in any way." *(Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī,* Vol. XX, p. 49)

All of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah's authentic biographers including Al-Muwaffaq al-Makkī, Ibn al-Bazzāz al-Karvarī, Mullā 'Alī Qārī, etc., have related that Ḥasan bin Qaḥtubaḥ, the commander-in-chief of Manṣūr, had tendered his resignation only on his instruction, saying, "Whatever I have done to support your kingdom until today, is enough for me if it was in the cause of Allah, but if it was for injustice and tyranny, then I do not want to add to my crimes in my conduct-book.

27. That is, "You seem to be a quarrelsome man: you have daily a new quarrel with one or the other person."

28. Here, the Biblical version is different from the Qur'ānic. The Bible says that the fight on the next day was between two Israelites, but according to the Qur'ān this fight also was between an Israelite and an Egyptian. This second version seems to be credible, for the manner in which the secret of the murder of the first day became known, as is being mentioned below, could be possible only if a member of the Coptic community had come to know of the matter. An Israelite's knowledge of it could not be so treacherous: he could not have gone to inform the Pharaonic government of such a heinous crime committed by the prince, who was a great supporter of his own community.

29. The one who cried out was the same Israelite whom the Prophet Moses wanted to help against the enemy. When after scolding and rebuking him, he turned to assault the Egyptian, the Israelite thought that Moses was going to strike him; therefore, he raised a hue and cry and disclosed the secret of the previous day's murder by this own folly.

30. This happened when in the second day's fight, the secret of the murder became known and the Egyptian informed the authorities about the case accordingly.

31. Both the Bible and the Qur'ān agree that after leaving Egypt the Prophet Moses had gone to live in Madyan (Midian). But the Talmud tells the absurd story that Moses fled to Ethiopia and became a great favourite with the king there. After the king's death the people made Moses their king and leader and gave him the widow of the king for a wife, but during the 40 years of his reign there he never had intercourse with his negro wife. Then the queen of Ethiopia, who was a wife to Moses in name only, said to the people, "Why should this stranger continue to rule over you ? He has never worshipped the gods of Ethiopia." At this the people of Ethiopia deposed him and made him many rich presents and dismissed him with great honours. Then he came to Midian and met with the events being mentioned below. At this time he was 67 years old.

A clear proof of this story's being absurd is that according to it Assyria (northern Iraq) in those days was under Ethiopia, and the Prophet Moses and the Ethiopian king, his predecessor, had led military campaigns to crush the Assyrian revolts. Now anybody who has a little acquaintance with the history and geography can have a look at the map and see things for himself. Assyria could be under Ethiopian domination and have been attacked by the Ethiopian army only in case Egypt and Palestine and Syria had been under its subjugation, or the whole of Arabia under its sway, or, at least the Ethiopian navy so powerful as to have conquered 'Irāq across the Indian ocean and the Persian Gulf. History, however, does not support the view that the Ethiopians ever held sway over these countries, or their naval force was ever so powerful. This indicates how imperfect was the

Israelites' knowledge of their own history, and how the Qur'ān corrects their errors and presents the true facts in their pure form. Nevertheless, the Christian and the Jewish orientalists are never ashamed of asserting that the Qur'ān has plagiarized the Israelite traditions for its narratives.

32. The right path: "The path that may take me to Midian safely." It should be borne in mind that Midian in those days was outside Pharaoh's empire. Egypt did not have control over the whole of the Sinai Peninsula but only on its western and southern parts. The Midianites who inhabited the eastern and western coasts of the Gulf of 'Aqabah were free from Egyptian influence and authority. That is why the Prophet Moses had headed for Midian after leaving Egypt, because that was the nearest free and inhabited land. But to reach Midian he had to pass through Egyptian territories; avoiding the Egyptian police and military posts on the way. That is why he prayed to God to put him on the right track which should take him to Midian safely.

33. This place where the Prophet Moses had arrived was situated, according to the Arab tradition, on the western coast of the Gulf of 'Aqabah, a few miles to the north of Maqnā . Today it is called Al-Bid, and is a small habitation. I visited this place in December, 1952, when I was travelling from Tabūk to 'Aqabah. The natives told me that, as they had heard from their elders, Midian was situated there. From Josephus to Burton, all ancient and modern explorers and geographers, have generally confirmed this very place as the location of ancient Midian. Nearby there is the place now called Maghā'ir Shu'aib or Maghārāt Shu'aib. There are some Thamūdic monuments here. A mile or so away, There are some ancient ruins, where we saw two dry wells, one of which was said to be the well where the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) had watered the goats. The same has been related by Abū Fidā' (d. 732 A.H.) in *Taqvīm al-Buldān* and Yāqūt in *Mu'jam al-Buldān,* on the authority of Abu Zaid Anṣārī; (d. 216 A.H.), that the natives point to the same well there as the well of Moses. This indicates that the tradition is being handed down since centuries among the people, and therefore, it can be confidently asserted that this is the same place which has been mentioned in the Qur'ān. See some photographs of this on the opposite page.

34. That is, "We are women: it is not possible for us to water our animals by resisting these shepherds. Our father is too old to perform this rigorous duty. There is no other male member in the house either. Therefore we, the womenfolk, have to come out to perform these chores, and until all the shepherds have watered their animals and left, we have to wait." This whole meaning was conveyed by the ladies in a brief sentence, which is indicative of their modesty. They did not want to have a lengthy conversation with a stranger, but at the same time, they did not

[Contd. on p. 594]

قَالَتَا لَا نَسْقِيْ حَتّٰى يُصْدِرَ الرِّعَآءُ ؕ وَ اَبُوْنَا شَيْخٌ كَبِيْرٌ ﴿۲۳﴾ فَسَقٰى لَهُمَا ثُمَّ
تَوَلّٰۤى اِلَى الظِّلِّ فَقَالَ رَبِّ اِنِّيْ لِمَاۤ اَنْزَلْتَ اِلَيَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيْرٌ ﴿۲۴﴾ فَجَآءَتْهُ
اِحْدٰىهُمَا تَمْشِيْ عَلَى اسْتِحْيَآءٍ ۫ قَالَتْ اِنَّ اَبِيْ يَدْعُوْكَ لِيَجْزِيَكَ اَجْرَ مَا
سَقَيْتَ لَنَا ؕ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهٗ وَ قَصَّ عَلَيْهِ الْقَصَصَ ۙ قَالَ لَا تَخَفْ ۫ نَجَوْتَ
مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿۲۵﴾ قَالَتْ اِحْدٰىهُمَا يٰۤاَبَتِ اسْتَاْجِرْهُ ۫ اِنَّ خَيْرَ مَنِ اسْتَاْجَرْتَ
الْقَوِيُّ الْاَمِيْنُ ﴿۲۶﴾ قَالَ اِنِّيْۤ اُرِيْدُ اَنْ اُنْكِحَكَ اِحْدَى ابْنَتَيَّ هٰتَيْنِ عَلٰۤى اَنْ
تَاْجُرَنِيْ ثَمٰنِيَ حِجَجٍ ۚ فَاِنْ اَتْمَمْتَ عَشْرًا فَمِنْ عِنْدِكَ ۚ وَ مَاۤ اُرِيْدُ اَنْ
اَشُقَّ عَلَيْكَ ؕ سَتَجِدُنِيْۤ اِنْ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ مِنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿۲۷﴾ قَالَ ذٰلِكَ بَيْنِيْ وَ بَيْنَكَ ؕ
اَيَّمَا الْاَجَلَيْنِ قَضَيْتُ فَلَا عُدْوَانَ عَلَيَّ ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى مَا نَقُوْلُ وَكِيْلٌ ﴿۲۸﴾ فَلَمَّا
قَضٰى مُوْسَى الْاَجَلَ وَ سَارَ بِاَهْلِهٖۤ اٰنَسَ مِنْ جَانِبِ الطُّوْرِ نَارًا ۚ قَالَ
لِاَهْلِهِ امْكُثُوْۤا اِنِّيْۤ اٰنَسْتُ نَارًا لَّعَلِّيْۤ اٰتِيْكُمْ مِّنْهَا بِخَبَرٍ اَوْ جَذْوَةٍ مِّنَ النَّارِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَصْطَلُوْنَ ﴿۲۹﴾ فَلَمَّاۤ اَتٰىهَا نُوْدِيَ مِنْ شَاطِئِ الْوَادِ الْاَيْمَنِ فِي الْبُقْعَةِ
الْمُبٰرَكَةِ مِنَ الشَّجَرَةِ اَنْ يّٰمُوْسٰۤى اِنِّيْۤ اَنَا اللّٰهُ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿۳۰﴾ وَ اَنْ اَلْقِ
عَصَاكَ ؕ فَلَمَّا رَاٰهَا تَهْتَزُّ كَاَنَّهَا جَآنٌّ وَّلّٰى مُدْبِرًا وَّ لَمْ يُعَقِّبْ ؕ يٰمُوْسٰۤى
اَقْبِلْ وَ لَا تَخَفْ ۫ اِنَّكَ مِنَ الْاٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿۳۱﴾ اُسْلُكْ يَدَكَ فِيْ جَيْبِكَ تَخْرُجْ بَيْضَآءَ
مِنْ غَيْرِ سُوْٓءٍ ۫ وَّ اضْمُمْ اِلَيْكَ جَنَاحَكَ مِنَ الرَّهْبِ فَذٰنِكَ بُرْهَانٰنِ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ
اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ وَ مَلَا۟ئِهٖ ؕ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا قَوْمًا فٰسِقِيْنَ ﴿۳۲﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اِنِّيْ قَتَلْتُ
مِنْهُمْ نَفْسًا فَاَخَافُ اَنْ يَّقْتُلُوْنِ ﴿۳۳﴾ وَ اَخِيْ هٰرُوْنُ هُوَ اَفْصَحُ مِنِّيْ لِسَانًا
فَاَرْسِلْهُ مَعِيَ رِدْاً يُّصَدِّقُنِيْۤ ۫ اِنِّيْۤ اَخَافُ اَنْ يُّكَذِّبُوْنِ ﴿۳۴﴾ قَالَ سَنَشُدُّ

Hearing this Moses watered their animals for them, then turned and sought a shady place and said, "Lord, I stand in need of any good that You may send down to me." (Not long afterwards) one of the two women came bashfully towards him,[35] and said, "My father calls you so that he may reward you for watering our animals for us."[36] When Moses went to him and narrated to him his whole story he said, "Have no fear for you have now escaped from the wicked people." 24-25

One of the two women said to her father, "Dear father, employ this man as a servant, for the best man for you to employ as a servant can be the one who is strong and trustworthy."[37] Her father said (to Moses),[38] "I wish to give you one of my daughters in marriage provided that you serve me for eight years; and if you wish you may complete ten. I do not want to be harsh to you; if God wills, you will find me a righteous man." Moses replied, "Be it an agreement between me and you. Whichever of the two terms I complete, let there be no injustice to me after that; and Allah is a witness to what we have agreed upon."[39] 26-28

When Moses completed the term[40] and he was travelling with his family, he saw a fire in the direction of Ṭūr.[41] He said to his family, "Stay a while: I have seen a fire: I may bring some information from there, or a burning brand with which you may warm yourselves." When he reached there, a voice called out from a tree in the blessed ground[42] on the right side[43] of the valley: "O Moses, I am Allah, Lord of the universe." And (it was commanded), "Cast down your staff." When Moses saw that the staff was writhing like a snake, he turned about and fled and did not even look behind. (It was said,) "Moses, come back and have no fear: you are quite safe. Put your hand into your bosom: it will come out shining, without any harm to you ;[44] and fold back your arm to ward off fear.[45] These are two clear Signs from your Lord to be shown to Pharaoh and his courtiers: they are very disobedient people indeed."[46] Moses submited, "My Lord, I have killed a man of theirs: I fear that they will put me to death;[47] and my brother Aaron is more eloquent of tongue than I: send him with me as a helper so that he may support me; I fear that they will treat me as a liar." Allah said, "We shall strengthen your hand with your brother and shall give both of you such authority that they will not be able to harm you 29-35

in any way. With Our Signs you and your followers only shall triumph."[48]

Contd .from p.591]

to have a lengthy conversation with a stranger, but at the same time, they did not like that he should form a wrong impression about their family, thinking how lethargic were the manfolk who sat back in their homes and sent the women to perform outdoor duties.

About the father of these ladies traditions that have become current among the Muslims are that he was the Prophet Shu'aib (peace be upon him), but the Qur'ān makes no allusion to this, although Prophet Shu'aib is a prominent character of the Qur'ān. If he were really the father of the ladies, it would have been clearly mentioned here. No doubt there are some traditions in which his name has been mentioned, but both 'Allāma Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Kathīr concur that none of them has been authentically reported. That is why great commentators like Ibn 'Abbās, Ḥasan Baṣri, Abū 'Ubaidah and Sa'īd bin Jubair have relied on the Israelite traditions and mentioned the same names of this personage which appear in the Talmud. etc. Evidently, if the name of Shu'aib had actually been reported from the Holy Prophet these scholars would not have mentioned any other name.

The Bible mentions him as Re'uel in one place and Jethro in another (Exod. 2: 16-18, 3: 1, 18: 5), and says that he was the priest of Midian. In the Talmudic literature he has been variously called as Re'uel, Jethro and Hobab. The present-day Jewish scholars are of the view that Jethro was a synonym for "his excellency' and his real name was Re'uel or Hobab. Similarly, they differ about the meaning of the word Kohen. Some regard it as a synonym of priest and others of prince.

According to the Talmud Re'uel used to visit Pharaoh from time to time before the birth of Prophet Moses, and Pharaoh relied on his knowledge and good counsel and mature opinion. But when the royal council of Egypt started consultations for the subduing of the Israelites and it was decided that their male children be killed on their birth, he did his best to stop Pharaoh from enforcing this wrong decision, warned him of its evil consequences and counselled that if he found the Israelites unbearable, he should let them go to Canaan, the land of their forefathers. These words of Re'uel angered Pharaoh, and he sent him in shame from his presence. Re'uel then left Egypt for his country. Midian, and settled there ever afterwards.

As to his religion it is commonly believed that, like the Prophet Moses, he was a follower of Prophet Abraham's Faith, for just as the Prophet Moses was a descendant of Isaac, son of Abraham (peace be upon both of them), so was he a

descendant of Midian, son of Abraham. Probably due to this relationship he tried to prevent Pharaoh from persecuting the Israelites and angered him. Nisābūrī, the commentator, writes on the authority of Ḥasan Baṣri: "He was a Muslim: he had embraced the religion of the Prophet Shu'aib." The Talmud says that he publicly condemned the idol-worship of the Midianites as a folly. Due to this the people of Midian had turned his opponents,

35. Ḥadrat 'Umar has explained this sentence, thus: "She came walking modestly, with her face covered with a part of her outer garment, unlike those immodest women, who go about wherever they like, and enter wherever they like without any hesitation." Several traditions bearing on this subject have been reported by Sa'īd bin Mansūr, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ibn al-Mundhir from Ḥadrat 'Umar through authentic chains of athorities. This shows that the Islamic concept of modesty which the Companions of the Holy Prophet had understood from the Qur'ān and the teaching and training of the Holy Prophet was absolutely opposed to keeping the face exposed to the other men and moving about immodestly. outside the house. Ḥadrat 'Umar has clearly regarded covering of the face as a symbol of modesty and exposing it to the other men as an immodesty and shamelessness.

36. She said this also out of modesty, for she had to give a sound reason for her coming to another man all alone; otherwise it was not at all necessary that a gentleman should have been rewarded if he had rendered some service to the (helpless) women in trouble. And then, in spite of hearing of a reward, the Prophet Moses' willingness to follow her forthwith to her house indicates the state of extreme helplessness in which he found himself at that time. He had left Egypt empty-handed and might have taken at least eight days to reach Midian. He must be hungry and worn out by journey. And, above all, he must be anxious to find a shelter in the unfamiliar land and a sympathetic person to give him refuge. Under this very compulsion, in spite of hearing that he was being called to be rewarded for a small service he had rendered, the Prophet Moses felt no hesitation in going with the woman. He must have thought that the prayer he had just made to God was being answered thus by God Himself. Therefore, he did not think it was right to turn down the means of hospitality provided by his Lord by an unnecessary show of self-respect.

37. It is not necessary that the girl said this to her father in his very first meeting with Moses. Most probably her father made the traveller stay with him for a couple of days, and the girl counselled him thus during that time. What she meant by this counsel was: "Father, you are old, and therefore, we girls have to go out to perfom outdoor duties. We have no brother either, who could take up these chores. You may, therefore, employ this man as a servant: he is strong and

will be able to face all kind of rigours, and he is also trustworthy. He helped us only due to his noble nature when he found us standing helpless, but he never raised his eyes at us."

38. It is also not necessary that the father should have said this to Moses immediately at the daughter's counsel. One feels that he must have formed this opinion after due consideration. He must have thought: "No doubt he is a noble person, but employing a healthy and strong young man like him as a servant in a house where there are grown up daughters would not be the right thing. When he is a gentle, educated and civilized man of a noble family (as he must have come to know from the story told by Moses), why shouldn't he be kept as a son-in-law in the house?" After reaching such a decision, he might have spoken to Moses at a suitable time.

Here again the Israelites have done a grave injustice to their illustrious Prophet, greatest benefactor and national hero. The Talmud says, "Moses lived with Re'uel, and he looked with favour upon Ziporah, the daughter of his host, and married her." Another Jewish tradition related in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* is to the effect: When Moses related his story to Jethro, the latter understood that he was the person at whose hand the kingdom of Pharaoh was to be destroyed according to prophecies. Therefore, he immediately imprisoned Moses so that he should hand him over to Pharaoh and get a reward. He remained imprisoned for seven or ten years in a dark underground cell, but Jethro's daughter, Ziporah, whom he had first met at the well of water, kept visiting him in the cell secretly and providing him with food and drink;. They had even decided to marry. After seven or ten years Ziporah said to her father, "Years ago you put a man in the cell and then forgot him altogether. He should have died by now. But if he is still alive, he must be a godly person." Hearing this when Jethro went to the prison, he found Moses alive and was convinced that he had miraculously remained so. Then he married Ziporah to him.

Have the Western orientalists who are ever on the lookout for the sources of the Qur'ānic narratives ever cared to see this manifest difference that exists between the Qur'ānic version and the Israelite traditions?

39. Some people have taken this conversation between the Prophet Moses and the girl's father for a contract of marriage, and have started the dispute whether service under the father can be looked upon as a dower of the daughters marriage, and whether such external conditions can be laid down for the marriage contract; whereas the words of the verses under discussion themselves indicate this was not the contract of marriage but the initial proposal that is generally made before the execution of the marriage contract itself. After all, how can this be taken for a contract of marriage when it had not yet been decided which of the two

girls was to be given away in marriage. The purport of the conversation was that the girl's father said, "I am prepared to marry one of my daughters to you provided that you promise that you will stay in my house for eight to ten years and help me in performing household chores, for I am old and have no son either, who could manage my properties. I have only daughters whom I have to send to perform outdoor duties. I want you to strengthen me as my would-be son-in-law. If you are willing to accept this responsibility, and do not intend to take away your wife soon after marriage, I will marry one of my daughters to you." The Prophet Moses himself was in search of a shelter at that time, so he accepted the proposal. Evidently, it was a sort of contract that had been agreed upon between the two parties before the marriage. After this the actual marriage must have taken place according to the law and the dower also settled. There could be no question of including the condition of service in the marriage bond itself.

40. According to Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan bin 'Alī bin Abī Ṭālib, the Prophet Moses had completed the ten years term instead of the eight years. According to Ibn 'Abbās, this has been related on the authority of the Holy Prophet himself. He has said, "Moses (peace be upon him) completed the term which was more perfect and more agreeable to his father-in-law, i.e. ten years."

41. That the direction of the journey was towards Mt. Ṭūr shows that the Prophet Moses might be travelling to Egypt with his family, for Ṭūr lies on the way from Midian to Egypt. Probably Prophet Moses thought that he had stayed away from home for ten long years and the Pharaoh in whose reign he had left Egypt had also died, if he quietly went back and stayed with his people, nobody would know it.

The Biblical version of the sequence of events is different from the Qur'ān's. It says that the Prophet Moses 'led the flocks (of his father-in-law) to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb." There God spoke to him, and appointed him to Prophethood and commanded him to go to Egypt. Then Moses went back to Jethro, his father-in-law, took his permission and went to Egypt with his family. (Exod. 3: 1, 4: 18) Contrary to this, the Qur'ān says that the Prophet Moses left Midian with his family after completing the term and during this journey Allah spoke to him and appointed him to Prophethood.

Both the Bible and the Talmud agree that the Pharaoh in whose house Prophet Moses had been brought up had died during his stay in Midian, and now another Pharaoh was the king of Egypt.

42. That is, in the ground which was being lit up by Divine Light.

Contd. on p. 599

عَضُدَكَ بِاَخِيْكَ وَنَجْعَلُ لَكُمَا سُلْطٰنًا فَلَا يَصِلُوْنَ اِلَيْكُمَا ۚ بِاٰيٰتِنَآ ۚ اَنْتُمَا
وَمَنِ اتَّبَعَكُمَا الْغٰلِبُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ مُّوْسٰى بِاٰيٰتِنَا بَيِّنٰتٍ قَالُوْا مَا هٰذَآ
اِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّفْتَرًى وَّمَا سَمِعْنَا بِهٰذَا فِيْٓ اٰبَآئِنَا الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَقَالَ مُوْسٰى
رَبِّيْٓ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ جَآءَ بِالْهُدٰى مِنْ عِنْدِهٖ وَمَنْ تَكُوْنُ لَهٗ عَاقِبَةُ
الدَّارِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُفْلِحُ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْمَلَاُ مَا
عَلِمْتُ لَكُمْ مِّنْ اِلٰهٍ غَيْرِيْ ۚ فَاَوْقِدْ لِيْ يٰهَامٰنُ عَلَى الطِّيْنِ فَاجْعَلْ لِّيْ
صَرْحًا لَّعَلِّيْٓ اَطَّلِعُ اِلٰٓى اِلٰهِ مُوْسٰى ۙ وَاِنِّيْ لَاَظُنُّهٗ مِنَ الْكٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَاسْتَكْبَرَ
هُوَ وَجُنُوْدُهٗ فِي الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَظَنُّوْٓا اَنَّهُمْ اِلَيْنَا لَا يُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾
فَاَخَذْنٰهُ وَجُنُوْدَهٗ فَنَبَذْنٰهُمْ فِي الْيَمِّ ۚ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾
وَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ اَىِٕمَّةً يَّدْعُوْنَ اِلَى النَّارِ ۚ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ لَا يُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ وَ
اَتْبَعْنٰهُمْ فِيْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا لَعْنَةً ۚ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ هُمْ مِّنَ الْمَقْبُوْحِيْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾
وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَآ اَهْلَكْنَا الْقُرُوْنَ الْاُوْلٰى بَصَاۗىِٕرَ
لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَمَا كُنْتَ بِجَانِبِ الْغَرْبِيِّ
اِذْ قَضَيْنَآ اِلٰى مُوْسَى الْاَمْرَ وَمَا كُنْتَ مِنَ الشّٰهِدِيْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَلٰكِنَّآ اَنْشَاْنَا
قُرُوْنًا فَتَطَاوَلَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْعُمُرُ ۚ وَمَا كُنْتَ ثَاوِيًا فِيْٓ اَهْلِ مَدْيَنَ تَتْلُوْا
عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتِنَا ۙ وَلٰكِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِيْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَمَا كُنْتَ بِجَانِبِ الطُّوْرِ اِذْ نَادَيْنَا
وَلٰكِنْ رَّحْمَةً مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ لِتُنْذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّآ اَتٰىهُمْ مِّنْ نَّذِيْرٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَلَوْلَآ اَنْ تُصِيْبَهُمْ مُّصِيْبَةٌۢ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ اَيْدِيْهِمْ
فَيَقُوْلُوْا رَبَّنَا لَوْلَآ اَرْسَلْتَ اِلَيْنَا رَسُوْلًا فَنَتَّبِعَ اٰيٰتِكَ وَنَكُوْنَ مِنَ

Then, when Moses came to those people with Our clear Signs, they said, "This is nothing but false magic,[49] and we have never heard of such things in the time of our forefathers."[50] Moses replied, "My Lord is fully aware of the person who has brought guidance from Him and He alone knows who will fare best in the end; the truth is that the unjust never attain true success."[51] 36-37

And Pharaoh said, "O chiefs, I do not know of any other god of yours than myself.[52] Burn for me bricks of clay, O Hāmān, and build me a high tower so that I may climb it to see the God of Moses for I consider him to be an utter liar."[53] 38

He and his hosts assumed haughtiness in the land unjustly, without any right,[54] and they thought they had never to return to Us.[55] Consequently, We seized him and his hosts and cast them into the sea.[56] Now behold what fate the wicked people met! We made them leaders who invited the people to Hell-fire,[57] and on the Day of Resurrection they will not be able to get any help from anywhere. We set a curse to follow them in this world and on the Day of Resurrection, they shall be involved in an awkward predicament.[58] 39-42

After We had destroyed the former generations, We gave Moses the Book, which We made a means of enlightenment for the people, and a Guidance and a Mercy, so that they may learn lessons.[59] (O Muḥammad,) you were not present on the western side[60] when We gave Moses the Law, nor were you among the witnesses,[61] but after him (until your time) We have raised up many a generation, and a long time has passed over them.[62] You were also not present among the Midianites that you might have recited to them Our Revelations,[63] but it is We Who are sending to you (this news of that time). And you were also not present at the side of Ṭūr when We had called out (to Moses for the first time), but this is your Lord's Mercy (that you are being given this information[64]) so that you should warn those to whom no warner had come before you:[65] may be they take heed. (This We have done) lest, when a calamity befalls them in consequence of their own misdeeds, they should say, "Our Lord, had You sent a messenger to us, we would have obeyed Your Revelations and been among the believers."[66] 43-47

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43. That is, on that side of the valley which lay to the right of the Prophet Moses.

44. These two miracles were shown to the Prophet Moses at that time so that, firstly, he himself is fully convinced that the same Being Who is speaking to him is, in fact, the Creator and Master and Ruler of the whole system of the universe and secondly, he should have full satisfaction that he was not going unarmed before Pharaoh, to perform the dangerous mission assigned to him, but would go well armed with the two powerful weapons.

45. That is, "Whenever you experience the fear of any danger, fold back your arm to yourself: this will strengthen your heart and will deliver you completely from every feeling of fear and dread."

The arm probably implies the right arm. The arm can be folded back in two ways: either by bringing the arm and pressing it against the side, or by pressing one hand under the armpit of the other. Probably the first way was implied, for in that case the other person cannot perceive that one is specially doing so in order to ward off fear.

The Prophet Moses was taught this device because he was being sent to counter a tyrannical government without any army and worldly equipment. He was going to meet with many a dreadful situation when a great Prophet also could not remain safe from fear and terror. Allah said to him, "Whenever you face such a situation, just do this, and Pharaoh will not be able to shake your heart in spite of all the power of his mighty kingdom."

46. The words by themselves imply: "Go to Pharaoh with these Signs and present yourself as Allah's Messenger, and invite him and his chiefs to the obedience and worship of Allah, Lord of the worlds." That is why his appointment has not been specified here, though at other places it has been clearly stated, thus: 'Go to Pharaoh for he has become rebellious' "(Ṭā Hā: 24) And: "When your Lord called Moses, saying: "Go forth to the wicked people--the people of Pharaoh'." (Ash-Shu'arāa: 10).

47. It did not mean that he was hesitant to go there because of the fear, but it meant this: "Kindly make some such arrangement that I am not apprehended on the charge of murder just on arrival even before I may convey to them Your message, for in that case the very object for which I am being sent will be defeated." The next verse makes it plain that the Prophet Moses, by this submission, did not at all mean to reject the office of Prophethood and refuse to go before Pharaoh because of the fear.

48. This meeting of the Prophet Moses with Allah and the mutual conversation has been described in much greater detail in Sūrah Ṭā Hā (vv. 9-48). Anyone possessed of fine taste, who compares this Qur'ānic version with the story given in the Bible (Exod., chs. 3, 4), will be himself able to judge which of the

two is Divine Revelation and which the result of human story-telling. Besides, he will also be able to judge whether the Qur'ānic version is, God forbid, a plagiarism of the Bible and Israelite traditions, or that God Himself is describing the actual event, Who had honoured Moses by calling him up into His Presence. (For further explanation, see E.N. 19 of Sūrah Ṭā Hā).

49. The words of the Text mean "Fabricated or forged magic." If fabrication is taken to mean falsehood, it would mean, "The staff's turning into a serpent and the shining of the hand is not any real change in the nature of the thing itself, but a mere illusion, which this man calls a miracle in order to deceive us." And if it is taken to mean a forgery it will imply: "This person has forged something which appears to be a staff; but when it is thrown on the ground, it moves like a snake. As for the hand, he has rubbed something on it so that when he draws it out of the armpit, it shines. He himself works these magical tricks but tries to make us believe that these are miracles which God has granted him."

50. The reference is to the teachings which the Prophet Moses had presented while conveying this message of *Tauḥīd*. The details have been given at other places in the Qur'ān. For example, according to Sūrah An-Nāziyāt: 18-19, he said to Pharaoh: "Will you mind to purify yourself, that I may guide you to your Lord so that you may have fear (of Him)?" And in Sūrah Ṭā Hā: 47-48: "We have come to you with Signs from your Lord; peace is for him who follows the Right Way. We have been informed by Revelation that there is punishment for him who rejects it and turns away." And: "We are Messengers from your Lord: so let the Israelites go with us." It was about these things that Pharaoh said, "Even our forefathers had never heard that there was a Being more powerful than Pharaoh of Egypt, Who was authorised to command him, to punish him, to send a man to his court to convey His instructions to him, and to warn the king of Egypt to fear Him. These are strange things which we are hearing today from a man like you."

51. That is, "You think I am a magician and a forger, but my Lord is well aware of me. He knows what sort of a man is the person whom He has appointed as a Messenger; and the final judgement rests with Him. If I am a liar, I shall meet an evil end; and if you are a liar, you should know that your end will not be good. In any case, the inevitable fact is that the unjust will not attain true success. He who is not Allah's messenger but falsely presents himself as a messenger for selfish motives, is also unjust and will not attain success. And the one who rejects a true Messenger by false accusations and suppresses the Truth by deceit and fraud, is also unjust and will never attain success."

52. By this Pharaoh did not, and could not, mean that he was the creator of his people and the earth and the heavens, for such a thing be uttered only by a madman. Likewise, he also did not mean that they had no other deity besides him,

for the Egyptians worshipped many gods, and the Pharaoh himself had been made the incarnation of the sungod. The Qur'ān testifies that the Pharaoh himself worshipped many gods: "The chiefs of Pharaoh's people said, 'Will you leave Moses and his followers free to spread disorder in the land, and to discard you and your deities?" (Al-A'rāf: 127) Therefore, inevitably, the Pharaoh had not used the word "god" here for himself as a creator and deity, but as an absolute and supreme sovereign. What he meant was this: "I am the owner of this land of Egypt: I alone will rule here: My law will be the law of the land; I alone shall be accepted as the fountainhead of all commands and prohibitions here. None else is entitled to give commands in this country. Who is this Moses, who has appeared as the delegate of the Lord of the universe and is conveying orders to me as though he is the ruler and I am his subordinate?" That is why he addressed his courtiers, thus: "O people: Is not the kingdom of Egypt mine? And are not these canals flowing beneath me?" (Az-Zukhruf: 51) And that is why he said to Moses again and again, "Have you come to turn us away from the faith of our forefathers so that you too may dominate over the land?" (Yūnus: 78) "O Moses, have you come to drive us out of our land by the power of your sorcery?" (Ṭā Hā: 57) "I fear he will change your religion, or cause mischief to appear in the land." (Al-Mu'min: 26)

If the matter is considered from this angle it will become evident that the position of Pharaoh was no different from the position of those states which claim political and legal sovereignty independent of Divine Law brought by the Prophets. Whether they accept a king as the fountainhead of law and commands and prohibitions, or the will of the nation, in any case as long as they stick to the position that the country will be ruled by their law and not by the Law of Allah and His Messengers, there will be no fundamental difference between their position and that of Pharaoh. It is, however, a different thing that the ignorant people curse Pharaoh but approve these as lawful. A person who understands reality will look for the spirit and sense and not merely for words and terminology. Pharaoh had used the word "god" for himself but these states use the term "sovereignty" in the same sense. (For further explanation, see E.N. 21 of Ṭā Hā

53. This was the same kind of mentality as the Russian communists of today are displaying. They launch Sputniks and Lunics and tell the world that these balls have not found God anywhere above. That stupid man of yore wanted to see God from the top of a tower. This shows that the extent of the imagination of the straying people during the past 3,500 years has remained where it was. They have not advanced even an inch. It is not known who told them that the Being Whom the God-worshippers acknowledge as the Lord of the universe resided some where above according to their belief. And if they do not see Him a

few thousand feet or a few lakh miles above the earth's surface in this limitless universe, it will be a proof that He exists nowhere.

The Qur'ān does not specify whether Pharaoh actually got such a tower built and tried to see God from the top of it, but it only relates what he said. Apparently, he did not commit the folly. He only meant to befool the people.

This also is not clear whether Pharaoh was, in actual fact, a disbeliever in the Being of the Lord of the universe, or talked atheism only due to stubbornness. In this regard his sayings point to the same mental confusion which one finds in the statements of the Russian Communists. Sometimes he wanted to climb into the sky and come back to tell the world that he had nowhere seen the God of Moses, and sometimes he would say, "Why were not bracelets of gold sent down on him, or a company of angels as attendants?" (Az-Zukhruf: 53) These things are not much different from what a former Prime Minister of Russia, Khrushchev, said. He sometimes rejected God and sometimes invoked Him and swore by Him. We are of the opinion that after the passage of the period of the Prophet Joseph and his successors when Egypt was dominated by the Coptic nationalism and a political revolution took place in the country owing to the racial and nationalistic prejudice, the new leaders, in their nationalistic enthusiasm, revolted against the God also towards Whom the Prophet Joseph and his followers, the Israelites and the Egyptian Muslims, had been calling the people. They thought that if they believed in God, they would never be able to shed the influence and impact of the civilization brought about by the Prophet Joseph. For if that civilization remained, they would never be able to consolidate their political influence. For them belief in God and Muslim sovereignty were inseparable and inter-dependent. Therefore, to get rid of the one it was necessary to reject the other, although they could not root out belief in One God from the depths of their hearts.

54. That is, Allah, Lord of the worlds, alone is entitled to the right to greatness, but Pharaoh and his hosts assumed greatness when they attained a little power in a small territory on the earth.

55. That is, "They thought they were answerable to none and with this assumption they started behaving absolutely independently in their day to day life."

56. Allah in these words has depicted their worthlessness and insignificance as against their false pride. They thought they were big people, but when the respite Allah had granted them to reform themselves came to an end, they were thrown into the sea like so much rubbish.

57. That is, "They have set a precedent for the later generations as to committing injustices, rejecting the Truth and persistence in their rejection till the last, and using all sorts of devices to defend falsehood against the Truth." They

showed these ways to the people and have gone to Hell, and now their descendants are following in their footsteps and rushing towards the same doom.

58. The words in the Text mean: "On the Day of Resurrection they will be among the *maqbūḥīn*", which has several meanings: (1) They will stand rejected and repulsed; (2) they will be wholly deprived of Allah's mercy; and (3) they will be severely beaten up and their faces will become distorted.

59. That is, "When the former generations met with the evil consequences of turning away from the teachings of the Prophets, and they met the doom that was experienced by Pharaoh and his hosts, then Moses was granted the Book so as to usher in a new era for mankind."

60. "Western side": Mount Sinai, which lies to the west of the Ḥijāz and on which the Prophet Moses was given the Divine Law.

61. "The witnesses": the seventy of the elders of Israel who had been summoned along with Moses for the covenant to follow the Law. (For reference, see Al-A'rāf: 155 and Exod., ch. 24)

62. That is, "You had no direct means of obtaining this information. All this is being revealed to you by Allah. That is how you have been enabled to relate these two-thousand-year old events, in a manner as if you were an eye-witness."

63. That is, "You did not exist at the time when the Prophet Moses reached Midian, passed ten years of his life there, and then left for Egypt. You were not preaching in the habitations of Midian that which you are preaching in the streets of Makkah. You are not relating those events as an eye-witness, but because you have been given the knowledge of these by Us through Revelation."

64. These things have been presented as a proof of the Holy Prophet's Prophethood. At the time when these were cited all the chiefs of Makkah and the common disbelievers were bent upon somehow proving him as a non-prophet, and, God forbid, a false claimant to Prophethood. To help and assist them in their campaign there were the Jewish scholars and the Christian monks also, who were living in the habitations of the Ḥijāz. Besides, the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him) had not appeared all of a sudden from somewhere and started reciting the Qur'ān to the people, but he was a resident of the same city of Makkah, and no aspect of his life was hidden from the people of his city and clan. That is why when these three things were presented like an open challenge as a proof of his Prophethood, not a single person from Makkah and Ḥijāz and the entire land of Arabia could stand up to say the absurd thing which the modern orientalists say, although those people were no less efficient in fabricating falsehood than these so-called scholars. But how could they utter an unprofitable

lie that could not survive for a single moment? How could they say, "O Muḥammad, you have attained this information from such and such a Jewish scholar and a Christian monk?" For, this purpose, they could not mention any name in the entire land. For whatever name they mentioned, it would become manifest there and then that the Holy Prophet had not obtained any information from him. How could they say, "O Muḥammad, you possess a full-fledged library containing all sorts of books on ancient history and sciences and literature, from which you take help to prepare all your discourses?"' For not to speak of a library, no one could seize even a scrap of paper from his house containing such information. Everyone in Makkah knew that Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him) was un-lettered and no one could also say that he had had some translators at his disposal, who supplied him with translations from Hebrew and Assyrian and Greek books. Then, none of them could be so shameless as to dare claim that he had obtained this information during the trade journeys to Syria and Palestine, for he had not performed those journeys alone, but had travelled in company with trade caravans of Makkah. Had somebody made any such assertion, hundreds of living witnesses would have refuted this and testified that he had received no such instruction from anyone there. Then, within two years of the Holy Prophet's death war had started between the Romans and the Muslims. If he had any sort of discussion anywhere in Syria and Palestine with any Christian monk or Jewish rabbi, the Roman Empire would not have hesitated to launch a propaganda campaign, saying, that Muḥammad (peace be upon him), God forbid, had learnt everything from them and gone back to Makkah and proclaimed himself a Prophet. In short, at that time when the challenge of the Qur'ān was the knell of the disbelieving Quraish and the polytheists and the need of those people to refute it was far greater then of the modern orientalists, no one could discover any material by which he could prove that the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) had some other means than Revelation for obtaining that information.

One should also know that the Qur'ān has not given this challenge only here, but at several other places also in connection with different stories. After narrating the story of the Prophet Zacharias and Mary, it was said: "These are of the 'unseen' things We are revealing to you: you were not present there when the priests of the Temple were casting lots by throwing their quills to decide which of them should be the guardian of Mary: nor were you there with them when they were arguing about it." (Āl-i-'Imrān: 44) At the end of the Prophet Joseph's story it was said: "This story which We are revealing to you is of those things that were

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الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿47﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ عِنْدِنَا قَالُوْا لَوْلَآ اُوْتِيَ مِثْلَ مَآ
اُوْتِيَ مُوْسٰى ؕ اَوَلَمْ يَكْفُرُوْا بِمَآ اُوْتِيَ مُوْسٰى مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ قَالُوْا سِحْرٰنِ تَظٰهَرَا ۫
وَقَالُوْٓا اِنَّا بِكُلٍّ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿48﴾ قُلْ فَاْتُوْا بِكِتٰبٍ مِّنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ هُوَ اَهْدٰى مِنْهُمَآ
اَتَّبِعْهُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿49﴾ فَاِنْ لَّمْ يَسْتَجِيْبُوْا لَكَ فَاعْلَمْ اَنَّمَا يَتَّبِعُوْنَ
اَهْوَآءَهُمْ ؕ وَمَنْ اَضَلُّ مِمَّنِ اتَّبَعَ هَوٰىهُ بِغَيْرِ هُدًى مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿50﴾ وَلَقَدْ وَصَّلْنَا لَهُمُ الْقَوْلَ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿51﴾
اَلَّذِيْنَ اٰتَيْنٰهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ هُمْ بِهٖ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿52﴾ وَاِذَا يُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ قَالُوْٓا
اٰمَنَّا بِهٖٓ اِنَّهُ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّنَآ اِنَّا كُنَّا مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ مُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿53﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ يُؤْتَوْنَ
اَجْرَهُمْ مَّرَّتَيْنِ بِمَا صَبَرُوْا وَيَدْرَءُوْنَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ السَّيِّئَةَ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ
يُنْفِقُوْنَ ﴿54﴾ وَاِذَا سَمِعُوا اللَّغْوَ اَعْرَضُوْا عَنْهُ وَقَالُوْا لَنَآ اَعْمَالُنَا وَلَكُمْ
اَعْمَالُكُمْ ۫ سَلٰمٌ عَلَيْكُمْ ۫ لَا نَبْتَغِي الْجٰهِلِيْنَ ﴿55﴾ اِنَّكَ لَا تَهْدِيْ مَنْ اَحْبَبْتَ وَ
لٰكِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۚ وَهُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِيْنَ ﴿56﴾ وَقَالُوْٓا اِنْ نَّتَّبِعِ
الْهُدٰى مَعَكَ نُتَخَطَّفْ مِنْ اَرْضِنَا ؕ اَوَلَمْ نُمَكِّنْ لَّهُمْ حَرَمًا اٰمِنًا يُّجْبٰٓى
اِلَيْهِ ثَمَرٰتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ رِّزْقًا مِّنْ لَّدُنَّا وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿57﴾ وَكَمْ
اَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ بَطِرَتْ مَعِيْشَتَهَا ۚ فَتِلْكَ مَسٰكِنُهُمْ لَمْ تُسْكَنْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ
اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ؕ وَكُنَّا نَحْنُ الْوٰرِثِيْنَ ﴿58﴾ وَمَا كَانَ رَبُّكَ مُهْلِكَ الْقُرٰى حَتّٰى
يَبْعَثَ فِيْٓ اُمِّهَا رَسُوْلًا يَّتْلُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتِنَا ۚ وَمَا كُنَّا مُهْلِكِي الْقُرٰٓى اِلَّا وَ
اَهْلُهَا ظٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿59﴾ وَمَآ اُوْتِيْتُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا وَزِيْنَتُهَا ۚ وَ
مَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ خَيْرٌ وَّاَبْقٰى ؕ اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿60﴾ اَفَمَنْ وَّعَدْنٰهُ وَعْدًا حَسَنًا فَهُوَ

النصف

But when the Truth came to them from Us, they said, "Why has he not been given the same which was given to Moses?"[67] Have they not rejected that which had been given to Moses before?[68] They said, "Both are works of magic,[69] which assist each other." And they said, "We believe in neither." (O Prophet,) say to them, "Well, bring a book from Allah, which may give better guidance than these two, if you are truthful; I shall follow the same."[70] Now, if they do not meet this demand of yours, you should know that they are, in fact, the followers of their own lusts. And who could go farther astray than the one who follows his own lusts, without guidance from Allah ? Allah does not at all guide such wicked people. And We have conveyed to them the admonition over and over again so that they may take heed.[71] 48-51

The people whom We gave the Book before this, believe in this (Qur'ān),[72] and when it is recited to them, they say, "We have believed in it: this is indeed the Truth from our Lord: we were Muslims even before this."[73] These are the people who shall be given their reward twice[74] for the fortitude they showed;[75] they repel evil with good[76] and spend out of what We have provided them with.[77] And when they heard vain talk,[78] they withdrew from it, saying, "Our deeds are for us and your deeds are for you: peace be on you: we do not seek the way of the ignorant." O Prophet, you cannot give guidance to whom you please, but Allah gives guidance to whom He pleases, and He best knows those who would accept guidance.[79] 52-56

They say, "If we follow this guidance with you, we shall be snatched away from our land."[80]

Is it not a fact that We have made a safe Sanctuary a dwelling-place for them, to which fruits of every kind are drawn, as a provision from Ourself ? But most of them do not know this.[81] 57

And how many habitations have We destroyed whose people exulted in their means of subsistence ! Just see those dwellings of theirs only a few of which have been inhabited after them. At last, We alone became the heirs.[82] 58

And your Lord would never destroy habitations until He had sent in their central place a Messenger, who recited to them Our Revelations; and We would not destroy Habitations until their dwellers had become wicked.[83] 59

60-61 Whatever you have been given, is merely a provision for this worldly life and its adornment; and that which is with Allah is better and more lasting. Do you not use common sense? Can the person to whom We have made a good promise, which he would certainly meet, be ever like the one, whom We have only given the provisions of the worldly life, and who, on the Day of Resurrection, would be presented for punishment.[84]

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not known to you: for you were not with the brothers (of Joseph), when they had conspired together a plot against Joseph." (Yūsuf: 102) Similarly, after relating the full story of the Prophet Noah, it was said: "These are some of the tidings of the 'unseen' which We are revealing to you. You did not know these before nor did your people." (Hūd: 49) That this thing has been reiterated several times shows that this was one of the main arguments that the Qur'ān gave to prove its being Allah's Word and the Holy Prophet's being a Messenger of Allah. For there was no perceptible means of knowledge available to the Holy Prophet who was an unlettered person, apart from Revelation, through which he could narrate so accurately the events that had happened hundreds and thousands of years in the past. And this was one of the important reasons why the contemporaries of the Holy prophet were coming to believe, in larger and still larger numbers, that he was really a Prophet of Allah and received Allah's Revelations. Now one can easily imagine how important it must have been for the opponents of the Islamic movement at that time to meet this challenge, and what efforts they must have made to collect arguments and proofs against it. One can also see that if, God forbid, there was the slightest weakness in this challenge, it would not have been at all difficult for the contemporary people to provide evidence for its refutation.

65. No prophet had been born especially in Arabia after the Prophets Ishmael and Shu'aib (peace be upon them both), during the past two thousand years or so, though teachings of the Prophets like Moses and Solomon and Jesus (peace be upon all of them) had reached the people of that land.

66. This very thing has been presented at several places in the Qur'ān as the reason for sending the Messengers, but it will not be correct to conclude from this that a Messenger should be sent on every occasion at every place for this purpose. As long as the message of a Prophet remains intact in the world and the means of conveying it to others exist, there is no need for a new Prophet, unless need arises to supplement the previous message, or to supplant it by a new message. Nevertheless, when the teachings of the Prophets are forgotten, or become mixed up with errors and deviations and can no longer be relied upon as

means of guidance, then the people do get a chance to make the excuse that there existed no arrangement whatever to make them aware of the distinction between the Truth and the untruth and guide them to the right way: so they could not be guided aright. To meet such an excuse Allah sends the Prophets in such conditions so that any one who follows a wrong way after that may himself be held responsible for his going astray.

67. That is, "Why has not Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) been given all those miracles which had been given to the Prophet Moses? He also should have shown us the miracle of the staff; his hand also should have shone like the sun; his deniers also should have been struck with storms and plagues from the earth and heaven; and he also should have brought them Commandments written on stone tablets."

68. This is a reply to their objection, which implies: "The disbelievers of Makkah had not believed in Moses either, nor followed his teachings. Therefore they had no right to say: Why has the Prophet Muhammad not been given the same miracles that were given to the Prophet "Moses?" In Sūrah Sabā': 31, this saying of the disbelievers of Makkah has been related: "We shall never believe in this Qur'ān, nor in any other Book which came before it."

69. That is, the Qur'ān and the Torah both.

70. That is, "I have to follow the guidance in any case, provided that it is not forged but is real guidance from God. If you possess a Divine Book which gives better guidance than the Qur'ān and the Torah, you should produce it: I shall follow it without any hesitation."

71. That is, "As far as conveying of the admonition is concerned, we have done full justice to it in the Qur'ān in the best way. But guidance is attained only by him who gives up stubbornness and frees his heart from prejudices and is inclined to accept the Truth willingly and sincerely."

72. This does not mean that all the people of the Book (the Jews and the Christians) affirm faith in it. This, in fact, contains an allusion to the event that occurred during the period when this Sūrah was revealed, and was meant to put to shame the people of Makkah, as if to say, "You are denying and rejecting a blessing that has been sent in your own city, whereas the people from far off places, when they hear of it, come to recognize its worth and benefit from it."

This event has been related by Ibn Hishām, Baihaqī and others on the authority of Ibn Isḥāq, thus: "After the migration to Habash when the news about the Holy Prophet's advent and message spread in that land, a deputation of about twenty Christians came to Makkah to find out the truth, and they met the Holy Prophet in the *Masjid-al-Harām* A crowd of the Quraish also gathered around them

to watch what happened. The members of the deputation asked the Holy Prophet some questions, which he answered. Then he invited them to accept Islam and recited some verses of the Qur'ān before them. When they heard the Qur'ān, tears came down from their eyes and they confirmed its being Allah's Word and believed in the Holy Prophet. When the meeting was over and the people left, Abu Jahl and some of his men overtook them on the way, and rebuked them severely, saying, "Never has a more stupid company come here before: O foolish men you were sent here by your people with a view to inquiring about this man, but no sooner did you meet him than you gave up your own faith!" Those gentle people answered, "Peace be to you! We have no wish to enter all argument with you: you are responsible for your faith and we are for ours: we cannot afford to deprive ourselves knowingly of goodness." *(Ibn Hishām,* Vol. II, p. 32; *Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihayah,* Vol. III, p. 82. For further details, see E.N. 123 of Ash-Shu'arāā).

73. That is, "Even before this we were believers in the Prophets and the Divine Books. Therefore, we had no other Faith than Islam and we have believed in that Book too, which this Prophet has brought from Allah. Thus, no change has occurred in our religion: we were Muslims before even as we are Muslims now."

This saying clearly indicates that Islam is not the name of the Faith brought by the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and the term "Muslim" is not only applicable to his followers, but Islam has been the Faith of all the Prophets since the very beginning and their followers were Muslims in every age. These Muslims became disbelievers only when they refused to acknowledge a true Prophet who came afterwards. But no interruption occurred in the Islam of those people who believed in the former Prophet and also affirmed faith in the Prophet who succeeded him. They continued to be Muslims as they had been Muslims before.

It is strange that even some learned men also have failed to comprehend this fact, and this clear verse also could not satisfy them. 'Allāma Suyūṭī wrote a treatise on the subject that the term "Muslim" was only reserved for the followers of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him). Then, as he himself says, when this verse came before him he was stunned: he prayed to God that He guide him in the matter. At last, instead of revising his opinion he stuck to it even more firmly and gave several interpretations of the verse, each to which is more meaningless than the other. For example, one of his interpretations is: *"We were Muslims even before this"* means: We intended to become Muslims even before the revelation of the Qur'ān, because we had been foretold by our Scriptures that it would come, and we had the intention that when it came we would accept Islam." Another interpretation is: "In this sentence, the word *bi-hi* (بِهٖ) after *muslimin* is omitted, implying: We believed in the Qur'ān beforehand,

because we expected it would come, and had believed in it in anticipation. Therefore, we were Muslims, not because we believed in the Torah and the Gospels, but because we had believed in the Qur'ān as Allah's Word even before its revelation." The third interpretation is: "It had been divinely destined for us that we would accept Islam on the advent of the Holy Prophet and the revelation of the Qur'ān; therefore, we were Muslims even before this." None of these interpretations bears any impress that Divine help had become available for the right understanding of this verse.

The fact is that the Qur'ān has expressed this fundamental principle not only here, but at scores of other places also that the real Way of life is only Islam (submission to Allah), and in God's universe there can be no other way of life than this for His creatures. Since the beginning of the creation every Prophet who came for the guidance of mankind brought this very Way of Life: the Prophets themselves have always been Muslims, and they impressed upon their followers also to live as Muslims, and all their followers who submitted to the Divine Command brought by the Prophets, were also Muslims in every age. Consider the following few verses for instance:

(1) Indeed, Islam is the only right way of life in the sight of Allah." (Āl-i-'Imrān: 19)

(2) "Whoever adopts any other than this way of submission (Islam), it will not be accepted from him." (Āl-i-'Imrān: 85)

(3) "My reward is with Allah, and I have been commanded to believe like a Muslim." (Yūnus: 72)

About Prophet Abraham and his descendants it has been said:

(4) "When his Lord said to him, 'Surrender', he promptly responded, 'I have surrendered to the Lord of the universe (and become a Muslim)'. He also enjoined on his children to follow the same way. Jacob also did the same and his last will to his sons was: 'O my children, Allah has chosen the same way of life for you. Hence, remain Muslims up to your last breath.' (Dare you deny this?) Were you present at the time when Jacob was on the point of death ? He asked his children, 'Whom will you worship after me?' They all answered, 'We will worship the same One Allah Whom you, your forefathers Abraham, Ishmael and Isaac acknowledged as their Allah and to Him we all surrender as Muslims'." (Al-Baqarah: 133)

(5) "Abraham was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but he was a Muslim, sound in the Faith." (Āl-i-'Imrān: 67) Prophets Abraham and Ishmael themselves prayed:

(6) "Lord, make us Thy Muslims and raise from our offspring a community which should also be Muslim (submissive to Thy will)." (Al-Baqarah: 128). In connection with the story of the Prophet Lot it has been said:

(7) "We did not find in it any house of the Muslims except one." (Adh-Dhāriyāt: 36)

The Prophet Joseph prayed to Allah:

(8) "Let me die as a Muslim, and join me with the righteous in the end." (Yūsuf: 101)

Prophet Moses says to his people:

(9) "O my people, if you sincerely believe in Allah, put your trust in Him, if you are Muslims." (Yūnus: 84)

The real religion of the Israelites was not Judaism but Islam as was known to their friends and foes alike. That is why the last words that Pharaoh said while drowning were:

(10) "I have believed that there is no god but the real God in Whom the children of Israel have believed, and *I* am of the Muslims." (Yūnus:90)

Islam was the Way of life of all the Israelite Prophets:

(11) "Indeed, We sent down the Torah wherein was Guidance and Light: thereby all the Prophets, who were Muslims, judged the cases of those who had become Jews." (Al-Mā'idah: 44).

The same was the Prophet Solomon's way of life. So when the queen of Sheba believed in him, she said.

(12) "I submit myself (as a Muslim) with Solomon to Allah, Lord of the worlds." (An-Naml: 44).

And the same was the religion of the disciples of the Prophet Jesus:

(13) "And when I inspired the disciples to believe in Me and My Messenger, they said: 'We believe and bear witness that we are Muslims'." (Al-Mā'idah: 111).

In this connection, if somebody expresses the doubt that the Arabic words "Islam" and "Muslims" could not have been used in different languages and countries, it would obviously be a foolish objection. For the real thing is not the Arabic words but the meaning in which they are used in Arabic. In fact, what has been stressed in the above-cited verses is that the real Way of life sent by God was neither Christianity nor Mosaicism nor Muhammadanism, but to surrender to the Divine Commands taught by the Prophets and the Scriptures, and whoever adopted

this Way anywhere and at any time in the world, is the follower of the same universal, eternal and everlasting true Way of Life. For those who have adopted this Way consciously and sincerely, it is no change of the faith to believe in Jesus after Moses and in Muḥammad after Jesus(may Allah's peace be upon all of them), but a natural and logical demand following the same real Way of life (Islam). Contrary to this, those people who got into the Prophets' communities without due understanding or were born in them, and for whom nationalistic and racial and tribal prejudices were the religion, became mere Jews or Christians, and on the advent of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) their ignorance was exposed. For by refusing to believe in the Last Prophet of Allah, they not only refused to remain Muslims in the future but also proved that they were not "Muslims" even before: they had been charmed by the personality of a Prophet or Prophets, or had taken blind conformity to their forefathers for religion.

74. That is, one reward for affirming faith in the Prophet Jesus (Allah's peace be upon him) and the second for affirming faith in Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him). The same thing has been expressed in the *Ḥadīth* which Bukhārī and Muslim have related on the authority of Ḥadrat Abū Mūsā Ash'arī. He says that the Holy Prophet said: "One of the three persons who will get a double reward is he who belonged to the people of the Book, had full faith in his Prophet and then affirmed faith in Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him)."

75. That is, "They will get a double reward for the reason that they avoided nationalistic, racial and tribal prejudices and remained steadfast on the way of true Faith. When, on the advent of the new Prophet, they were confronted by a hard test, they proved by their conduct that they were not Christ-worshippers but God-worshippers: they were not charmed by Christ's personality but were followers of "Islam". That is why when the new Prophet after Christ brought the same Islam that Christ had brought, they adopted the way of Islam under his leadership, without any hesitation, and gave up the way of those who remained stuck to Christianity."

76. That is, "They answer evil and falsehood with what is good and right: they repel injustice and mischief with what is just and noble; and they do not pay the other man back in the same coin."

77. That is, "They also make monetary sacrifices in the way of the truth. There might also be in it an allusion to this that those people had travelled from Habash to Makkah in search of the truth: they had no material gain in view when they undertook a toilsome journey involving a lot of expenses. When they heard that a man in Makkah had made a claim to be a Prophet, they thought it necessary to go and find out the truth, so that if a prophet had really been sent by God, they should not be deprived of affirming faith in him and being guided aright."

78. The reference is to the "vain talk" that Abū Jahl and his men had with the Christians from Ḥabash, as mentioned in E.N. 72 above.

79. The context shows that the object of addressing this sentence to the Holy Prophet, after mentioning the affirmation of the Faith by this Christians from Habash, was to put the disbelievers of Makkah to shame, as if to say, "O unfortunate people, what wretches you are! People from far off places are coming to benefit from the fountainhead of blessings that has been made available in your own city, but you are wilfully depriving yourselves of it." But the same thing has been said like this: "O Muḥammad, you wish that your clansmen and your kinsfolk; and your near and dear ones should benefit from this life-giving nectar, but your willing alone cannot avail. To give guidance is in the power of Allah: He favours with it only those whom He finds inclined to accept guidance. If your kinsfolk lack this inclination, how can they be favoured with this blessing?"

According to Bukhārī and Muslim, this verse was sent down with regard to the Holy Prophet's uncle, Abu Ṭalib. When he was about to breathe his last, the Holy Prophet tried his utmost that he should affirm faith in *Lā ilāha illallāh*, so that he might die as a Muslim, but he preferred to die on the creed of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib; that is why Allah said: "You cannot give guidance to whom you please.." But this is a well-known method of the traditionists and commentators that when they find that a particular verse applies to an event of the Prophet's time, they regard it as the occasion of the verse's revelation. Therefore, it cannot be necessarily concluded from this and the other similar traditions that have been related in Tirmidhī, Musnad Ahmad, etc. on the authority of Ḥadrat Abu Hurairah, Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, etc. that this verse of Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ was revealed on the occasion of Abū Ṭalib's death. This only shows that the truth of its meaning became most evident only on that occasion. Though the Holy Prophet sincerely wished that every man should be blessed with guidance, the person whose dying on disbelief could cause him the greatest anguish and of whose guidance he was most desirous on account of personal bonds of love and affection, was Abū Ṭalib. But when he was helpless in affording guidance even to him, it became evident that it did not lie in the power of the Prophet to give guidance to one or withhold it from another, but it lay wholly in the power of Allah. And Allah bestows this favour on whomever He wills not on account of a family or tribal relationship, but on the basis of one's sincerity, capability and inclination of the heart.

80. This was the most important excuse which the unbelieving Quraish made for not accepting Islam. To understand fully we shall have to see what was the position of the Quraish historically which they feared would be affected if they accepted Islam.

The importance that the Quraish gained initially in Arabia was due to their being genealogically the descendents of the Prophet Ishmael, and therefore, the Arabs looked upon them as the children of the Prophets. Then, when they became the custodians of the Ka'bah through Quṣayy bin Kilāb's sagacity, and Makkah became their home, their importance grew, because they were the attendants of the most sacred shrine of Arabia, and its priests too. Therefore, every Arab tribe had to have relations with them on account of the annual pilgrimage. Taking advantage of this central position the Quraish started gaining prominence as a commercial people, and to their great good fortune, the political conflict between the Eastern Roman Empire and Iran helped them to gain an important place in the international trade. Iran in those days had blocked entrance to all the trade routes between Rome, Greece, Egypt and Syria in the north and China, India, Indonesia and eastern Africa in the south-east. The only exception was the Red Sea route. This also was blocked when Yaman fell to Iran. After this no way of the transit of trade goods remained except that the Arab merchants should transport merchandise of the Roman territories to the harbours of the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf, and then lift trade goods of the eastern countries from these harbours and transport them to the Roman territories This sort of arrangement made Makkah an important center of the international trade, and the Quraish were its monopolists. But the chaotic conditions prevailing in Arabia did not allow smooth transit of the trade goods unless the Quraish had had pleasant relations with the tribes through whose territories the trade caravans passed. For this the religious influence of the Quraish was not enough; they had had to enter into treaties with the tribes concerned, pay them dividends from their profits, and make gifts to the tribal chiefs and other influential people. Besides, they traded in money-lending also on a vast scale, which had ensnared the merchants and the chiefs of almost all the neighbouring tribes.

Such were the conditions when the Holy Prophet gave his message of *Tauḥīd*. More than the prejudice of ancestral religion what caused the Quraish the greatest provocation against it was that in it they saw their own interests in jeopardy. They thought that even if polytheism and idol-worship were proved wrong and *Tauḥīd* right by rational arguments and reasoning, it was ruinous for them to accept *Tauḥīd*. For as soon as they did so the whole of Arabia would rise in revolt against them. Then, they would be ousted from the custodianship of the Ka'bah, and all their bonds and pacts of friendship with the polytheistic tribes would be severed, which alone guaranteed the safe transit of their trade caravans through their territories. Thus, the new Faith would not only put an end to their religious influence but also to their economic prosperity, and they might even be forced by the Arabs to quit Makkah.

This presents a strange phenomenon of the lack of insight on the part of the world-worshippers. The Holy Prophet tried his best to make them believe that if they accepted his Message, the whole world would yield and submit to them. (See also Introduction to Sūrah Ṣād). But they saw their death in it. They thought that the change of the Faith would not only deprive them of their wealth and prosperity and influence but would render them so completely helpless in the land that the birds of the sky would pick and eat their flesh. They could not foresee the time when a few years afterwards the whole of Arabia was going to be ruled by a central government under the Holy Prophet himself. Then even during the lifetime of their own generation Iran and 'Irāq and Syria and Egypt were going to fall, one after the other, to the same central authority and within a century of this utterance by them Caliphs from the clan of the Quraish itself were to rule over vast territories, from Sind to Spain and from Caucasus to the coasts of Yaman.

81. This is the first reply to their excuse by Allah. It means this: It is all due to the sacredness and the central position *of* this Sanctuary that the merchandise of the entire world is being drawn and attracted to this barren and uncultivated valley, for your benefit and use. You should know that you are in no way responsible for giving it the central position it enjoys and for the state of security that prevails in the areas around it. 2,500 years ago a servant of Allah came to this barren valley in the bare mountains with his wife and suckling child. Here he built a small room with stone and mud, proclaimed that Allah had made it a Sanctuary, and that the people should come to visit it and go round it in worship and adoration. Now this is only due to Allah's blessing that this Sanctuary has been the centre of Arabia for the past 25 centuries. Peace reigns here even when there is chaos all around. It is held in the highest esteem by every Arab, and thousands of people are drawn to it every year for going round it in worship. It is only by virtue of this blessing that you are looked upon as the spiritual leaders of Arabia and a large part of the international trade is under your control. Now, do you think; that if you turned and revolted against that God Who has favoured you with this blessing. you will prosper, but as soon as you followed His Faith you would be ruined?

82. This is the second answer to their excuse. It means to imply this: The worldly wealth and prosperity of which you are so proud and whose probable danger of loss makes you stick to falsehood and turn away from the Truth was also possessed once by 'Ād and Thamūd and Sabā' and the people of Lot. Then, did it save them from destruction? After all, a high standard of living is not the only aim in life that man should endeavour to pursue it regardless of every consideration for truth and falsehood, and refuse to accept the right way only because there was a risk of losing it if one did so. Do you have any guarantee that if you persisted in

the errors and evils that ruined the prosperous peoples of the past, you would remain safe and never meet the doom that they met?"

83. This is the third answer to their excuse. It means: "The nations which were destroyed before you had become wicked. To warn them finally Allah sent His Messengers, but when they took no notice of their warnings and persisted in their evil ways, they were destroyed. The same is the case with you now. You have also become wicked, and a Messenger has come to you to warn you too. Now if you persist in your disbelief and denial, you will not be safeguarding your prosperity and comforts of life but endangering them. The destruction that you are afraid of will overtake you not because of believing but on account of refusal to believe."

84. This is the fourth answer to their excuse. To understand it fully one should bear in mind two things:

First, the present life which is no more than a few years for anyone, is only the temporary phase of a journey. The real life which will be everlasting is yet to come. In this life man may amass as much provision as he may please and live the few years at his disposal as comfortably as he can, it will in any case come to an end, and man will depart from the world empty-handed. No sensible person will like to make the bad bargain of suffering the everlasting distress and affliction in the Hereafter in exchange for the pleasures and comforts of his brief sojourn in the world. As against this, he would rather prefer to face a few years of hardships here and earn the goodness that may earn him everlasting bliss and comfort in the eternal life of the Next World.

Secondly, Allah's religion does not demand that man should totally refrain from seeking and enjoying the good things of life and discard its adornments in any case. Its only demand is that he should prefer the Hereafter to the world, for the world is perishable and the Hereafter everlasting; and the pleasures of the world are inferior and of the Hereafter superior. Therefore, man must try to attain those provisions and adornments of the world that may enable him to fare well in the everlasting life of the Next World, or at least protect him from the eternal loss there. But in case there is a question of a comparison between the two, and the success of the world and of the Hereafter oppose and contradict each other, the Faith demands, and this is the demand of man's good sense too, that he should sacrifice the world to the Hereafter, and should never adopt the way of only seeking the transitory provisions and adornments of this world, which inevitably lead to his ruin in the Hereafter for ever.

[Contd. on p. 619

لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ كَمَنْ مَّتَّعْنٰهُ مَتَاعَ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ثُمَّ هُوَ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ مِنَ الْمُحْضَرِيْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيْهِمْ فَيَقُوْلُ أَيْنَ شُرَكَآءِيَ الَّذِيْنَ كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ رَبَّنَا هٰٓؤُلَآءِ الَّذِيْنَ أَغْوَيْنَا ۚ أَغْوَيْنٰهُمْ كَمَا غَوَيْنَا ۚ تَبَرَّأْنَآ إِلَيْكَ ۖ مَا كَانُوْٓا إِيَّانَا يَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَقِيْلَ ادْعُوْا شُرَكَآءَكُمْ فَدَعَوْهُمْ فَلَمْ يَسْتَجِيْبُوْا لَهُمْ وَرَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ ۚ لَوْ أَنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا يَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيْهِمْ فَيَقُوْلُ مَاذَآ أَجَبْتُمُ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ فَعَمِيَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ الْأَنْۢبَآءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ فَهُمْ لَا يَتَسَآءَلُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ فَأَمَّا مَنْ تَابَ وَاٰمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَعَسٰٓى أَنْ يَّكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُفْلِحِيْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَرَبُّكَ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ وَيَخْتَارُ ۗ مَا كَانَ لَهُمُ الْخِيَرَةُ ۗ سُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ وَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَرَبُّكَ يَعْلَمُ مَا تُكِنُّ صُدُوْرُهُمْ وَمَا يُعْلِنُوْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ وَهُوَ اللّٰهُ لَآ إِلٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۖ لَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي الْأُوْلٰى وَالْاٰخِرَةِ ۖ وَلَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قُلْ أَرَءَيْتُمْ إِنْ جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْكُمُ الَّيْلَ سَرْمَدًا إِلٰى يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ مَنْ إِلٰهٌ غَيْرُ اللّٰهِ يَأْتِيْكُمْ بِضِيَآءٍ ۖ أَفَلَا تَسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ قُلْ أَرَءَيْتُمْ إِنْ جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْكُمُ النَّهَارَ سَرْمَدًا إِلٰى يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ مَنْ إِلٰهٌ غَيْرُ اللّٰهِ يَأْتِيْكُمْ بِلَيْلٍ تَسْكُنُوْنَ فِيْهِ ۖ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَمِنْ رَّحْمَتِهٖ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ لِتَسْكُنُوْا فِيْهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيْهِمْ فَيَقُوْلُ أَيْنَ شُرَكَآءِيَ الَّذِيْنَ كُنْتُمْ تَزْعُمُوْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَنَزَعْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيْدًا فَقُلْنَا هَاتُوْا بُرْهَانَكُمْ فَعَلِمُوْٓا أَنَّ الْحَقَّ لِلّٰهِ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ إِنَّ قَارُوْنَ كَانَ مِنْ قَوْمِ مُوْسٰى فَبَغٰى عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ مِنَ الْكُنُوْزِ مَآ إِنَّ مَفَاتِحَهٗ لَتَنُوْٓأُ بِالْعُصْبَةِ أُولِي الْقُوَّةِ

And (let them not forget) the Day when He will call them and ask, "Where are those associates of Mine whom you deemed as such?"[85] Those concerning whom this Word will be true,[86] will say, "Our Lord, these are indeed the people whom we had misled: we led them astray even as we ourselves were led astray. We plead our innocence before You:[87] they did not worship us."[88] Then it will be said to them, "Call now on those whom you held as (Allah's) partners."[89] They will call them, but will get no answer, and they will see the torment. Would that they had followed the guidance! 62-64

And (let them not forget) the Day when He will call them and ask, "What answer did you give to Our Messengers?" At that time, no reply will strike them, nor will they be able to consult one another. However, the one who has repented here and believed and done good works, can expect to be among those who will attain true success there. 65-67

Your Lord creates whatever He wills; and chooses (for His work whomever He pleases). To choose is not for them.[90] Allah is Pure and Exalted far above the *shirk* that these people commit. Your Lord knows what they hide in their hearts and what they reveal.[91] He is Allah, the One: none but He is worthy of worship: to Him is all praise due, both in this world and in the Hereafter: Sovereignty is His, and to Him shall all of you be returned. O Prophet, say to them, "Have you ever considered that if Allah should make the night perpetual for you, till the Day of Resurrection, which deity, besides Allah, would bring you light? Don't you hear anything?" Ask them, "Have you ever considered that if Allah should make the day perpetual for you, till the Day of Resurrection, which deity, besides Allah, would bring you the night so that you may have rest in it? Don't you see anything?" It is His Mercy that He has made the night and the day for you so that you may have rest (in the night) and seek your Lord's bounty (in the day); maybe that you are grateful. 68-73

(They should be mindful of) the Day when He will call them and ask "Where are those associates of Mine whom you deemed as such?" And We shall bring forth from every nation a witness[92] and say, "Bring now your proof."[93] Then they will come to know that the Truth is with Allah alone, and all falsehoods that they had forged will vanish. 74-75

Contd. from p. 619]

Keeping these two things in view let us see what Allah says to the

disbelievers of Makkah in the foregoing sentences. He does not tell them to wind up their business, stop their trade and follow His Prophets and become mendicants. What He says is that the worldly wealth of which they are so enamoured, is very meager and they can utilize it only for a few days in this worldly life. Contrary to this, that which is with Allah is much better both in quality and in quantity and is also everlasting. Therefore, they would be foolish if for the sake of benefiting by the limited blessings of this transitory life, they adopted the way whose evil results they will have to suffer in the form of everlasting loss in the Next World. They should judge for themselves as to who is successful: He who exerts himself in the service of his Lord and then is blessed with His favours for ever, or he who will be produced as a culprit in His Court, only after having had an opportunity of enjoying unlawful wealth for a few days in the world.

85. This discourse is in continuation of the fourth answer, and is linked with the last sentence of the preceding verse. It means to imply this: Those who persist in the evil of *shirk* and idol-worship and refuse to believe in the Prophet only for the sake of their worldly interests, will meet with such and such evil consequences in the eternal life of the Hereafter. They should, therefore, carefully judge for themselves whether it would be a good bargain if they were to be doomed to such an end, after they had enjoyed fully the provisions and adornments of the short worldly life even if no calamity befell them in the world.

86. This implies those satans from among jinns and men, who had been set up as associates, of God in the world, whose teachings had been followed in preference to Divine Commandments, and dependence on whom had made the people give up the Right Way and adopt the wrong ways of life. Such persons may not have been called gods and lords as such, but since they were worshipped and obeyed as one should worship and obey only God, they were inevitably made partners in Godhead.

87. That is, "We did not lead them astray forcibly. We neither deprived them of their powers of seeing and hearing nor of their powers of thinking, nor there ever arose a situation when they wanted to follow the right way but we might have forcibly pulled them to the wrong way. But just as we ourselves had gone astray of our own free will, so they also of their own free will accepted the wrong way when we presented it before them. Therefore, we are not responsible for what they did: we are responsible for our acts and they are responsible for theirs."

There is a subtle point to be noted here. Allah, in fact, will question those who had set up others as associates with Him, but before they make an answer, those who had been set up as associates will speak up. The reason is: When the common polytheists will be questioned thus, their leaders and guides will feel that their doomsday had come, for their followers will certainly blame them for their

deviation. Therefore, even before the followers say something in response, the leaders will forestall them and start pleading their innocence.

88. That is, "They did not serve us but served their own selves alone."

89. That is, "Invoke them for help. In the world you had relied on them and rejected Our Commandments. So invoke them to come to your rescue here also and save you from the punishment."

90. This, in fact, is a refutation of *shirk*. Allah objects to the setting up of countless gods from among His creatures by the *mushriks* and assigning to them from themselves of attributes and ranks and offices, and says: "We Ourselves bless with whatever attributes, capabilities and powers whomever We like from among the men, angels, jinns and other servants whom We have created, and employ whomever We will for whatever service We will. But, how and wherefrom have the *mushriks* got the authority that they should make whomever they like from among My servants remover of hardships, bestower of treasures and answerer of prayers? That they should make someone the lord of rain, another the giver of jobs and children, still another bestower of health and ill-health? That they should look upon whomever they please as the ruler of a part of My Kingdom and assign to him whichever of My powers they like? Whether it is an angel or a jinn, or a prophet, or saint, or anybody else, he has been created by Us. Whatever excellences he has, have been granted by Us, and whatever service We willed to take from him, We have taken. Therefore, the selection of someone for a particular service does not mean that he should be raised from the position of a servant to godhead and worshipped instead of God, invoked for help, prayed to for fulfilment of needs, taken as maker or destroyer of destinies and possessor of divine; attributes and powers.

91. The object for which this thing has been said in this context is: A person (or persons) can make a claim before the people in this world that he is fully satisfied on rational grounds that the deviation he has adopted is sound and right, and the arguments that are given against it are not convincing; that he has adopted the deviation not due to any evil motive but with the sincerest and purest intentions; that he has never been confronted by anything that might have proved him to be in the wrong. But he cannot advance such an argument before Allah, for Allah is not only aware of the open, but also of the hidden secrets of the mind and heart: He knows directly what kind of knowledge and feelings and sentiments and desires and intentions and conscience a certain person has: He is aware of the occasions and the means and the ways through which a person was warned, through which the Truth reached him, through which falsehood was proved to be

[Contd. on p.624

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ قَوْمُهُ لَا تَفْرَحْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفَرِحِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ
اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِنْ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ
اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفَسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾
قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيتُهُ عَلَىٰ عِلْمٍ عِنْدِي ۚ أَوَلَمْ يَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَهْلَكَ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِ مِنَ الْقُرُونِ مَنْ هُوَ أَشَدُّ مِنْهُ قُوَّةً وَأَكْثَرُ جَمْعًا ۚ وَلَا يُسْأَلُ عَنْ
ذُنُوبِهِمُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَخَرَجَ عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فِي زِينَتِهِ ۖ قَالَ الَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ
الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا يَا لَيْتَ لَنَا مِثْلَ مَا أُوتِيَ قَارُونُ إِنَّهُ لَذُو حَظٍّ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَ
قَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَيْلَكُمْ ثَوَابُ اللَّهِ خَيْرٌ لِمَنْ آمَنَ وَعَمِلَ صَالِحًا
وَلَا يُلَقَّاهَا إِلَّا الصَّابِرُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾ فَخَسَفْنَا بِهِ وَبِدَارِهِ الْأَرْضَ ۖ فَمَا كَانَ لَهُ
مِنْ فِئَةٍ يَنْصُرُونَهُ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ ۖ وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُنْتَصِرِينَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَأَصْبَحَ
الَّذِينَ تَمَنَّوْا مَكَانَهُ بِالْأَمْسِ يَقُولُونَ وَيْكَأَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ
يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ وَيَقْدِرُ ۖ لَوْلَا أَنْ مَنَّ اللَّهُ عَلَيْنَا لَخَسَفَ بِنَا ۖ وَيْكَأَنَّهُ
لَا يُفْلِحُ الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿٨٢﴾ تِلْكَ الدَّارُ الْآخِرَةُ نَجْعَلُهَا لِلَّذِينَ لَا يُرِيدُونَ عُلُوًّا
فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فَسَادًا ۚ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْحَسَنَةِ فَلَهُ
خَيْرٌ مِنْهَا ۖ وَمَنْ جَاءَ بِالسَّيِّئَةِ فَلَا يُجْزَى الَّذِينَ عَمِلُوا السَّيِّئَاتِ إِلَّا مَا
كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِي فَرَضَ عَلَيْكَ الْقُرْآنَ لَرَادُّكَ إِلَىٰ مَعَادٍ ۚ قُلْ رَبِّي
أَعْلَمُ مَنْ جَاءَ بِالْهُدَىٰ وَمَنْ هُوَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَمَا كُنْتَ تَرْجُو أَنْ
يُلْقَىٰ إِلَيْكَ الْكِتَابُ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِنْ رَبِّكَ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ ظَهِيرًا لِلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَ
لَا يَصُدُّنَّكَ عَنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ بَعْدَ إِذْ أُنْزِلَتْ إِلَيْكَ وَادْعُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ وَلَا

ع ٨ ١١

The fact[94] is that Korah was of the people of Moses, but he rebelled against them;[95] and We had given him so many treasures that their very keys would have weighed down a band of strong men.[96] Once his people said to him, "Do not exult, for Allah does not like the exultant. Seek through the wealth that Allah has given you to make your abode in the Hereafter, and also do not forget your share from this world; and do good to others as Allah has done good to you; and do not strive to make mischief on the earth, for Allah does not like the mischief-makers." But he replied, "All that I have been given is by virtue of the knowledge that I possess."[97]—Did he not know that Allah had destroyed before him many such people who were mightier than him in power and strength ?[98] But the criminals are not asked as to their sins.[99] 76-78

One day he came out before his people in all his fineries. Those who sought the life of this world, said, "Would that we had the like of what Korah has been given! He is indeed a very lucky man." But those who possessed the knowledge, said, "Alas for you ! Allah's reward is better for him who believes and does good works, and this fortune is attained only by those who show patience."[100] 79-80

Consequently, We sank him and his people in all his dwelling-place underground; then he had no host of supporters, who could help him against Allah, nor was he able to help himself. Now the same people who yearned for his lot the day before, began to say, "Alas! We had forgotten that Allah extends the provisions for whom He wills of His servants and restricts it for whom He wills.[101] If Allah had not been gracious to us, He would have sunk us also underground. Alas! We did not remember that the disbelievers do never prosper."[102] 81-82

That abode of the Hereafter[103] We shall reserve for those who do not seek glory in the earth,[104] nor wish to make mischief;[105] and the ultimate good is only for the Godfearing.[106] Whoever brings a good deed shall have a better reward than that, and whoever brings an evil deed, the evil-doers will have their rewards according to their deeds. 83-84

O Prophet, be assured that the One Who has ordained this Qur'ān for you[107] will certainly bring you to the best end.[108] Tell these people, "My Lord best knows who has brought the guidance, and who is involved in obvious error." You never hoped that the Book would be 85-86

sent down to you. Only through your Lord's mercy (has it been sent own to you);[109] therefore, do not be a helper of the unbelievers. [110]

Contd. from p.621]

falsehood to him, and also the real motives for which he preferred his deviation to the Right Way.

92. "A witness": the Prophet who had warned that community, or a rightly-guided person from among the followers of the Prophets, who had performed the duty of preaching the Truth in the community, or a means through which the message of the Truth had reached the community.

93. That is, "Present a cogent argument in your defence so that you are pardoned. You should either prove that the *shirk* and the denial of the Hereafter and Prophethood in which you persisted were the correct creed and you had adopted it on rational grounds, or, if you cannot do that, you should at least prove that no arrangement had been made by God to warn you of this error and guide you to the right path."

94. This fact also is being related in continuation of the answer to the excuse which has been the theme of the discourse from verse 57 onward. In this regard, one should bear in mind the fact that the people who feared that the Holy Prophet Muḥammad's message would affect the overall national interests adversely were, in fact, the big money owners, money-lenders and capitalists of Makkah, who by virtue of their international trade and money-lending business had become the Korahs of their time. These were the people who thought that the real truth was to earn and amass maximum wealth. Anything that seemed to vitiate this object was an untruth which could not be accepted in any case. On the other hand, there were the common people who looked with longing eyes at these magnates and earnestly desired that they should also attain the same heights as those people had attained. In an atmosphere charged with the love of money, as it was, people considered it to be a weighty argument that if the invitation *of* the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) towards *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter and the moral code was accepted it would spell ruin for the Quraish not only commercially but economically too.

95. *Qārūn* who has been called Korah in the Bible and the Talmud was a first cousin of the Prophet Moses. According to the account of descent given in Exodus (6: 18-21) the fathers of the Prophet Moses and Korah were real brothers. At another place in the Qur'ān it has been stated that this man had joined with Pharaoh inspite of being an Israelite and become one of his favourites; so much so that one of the two ring-leaders of opposition to Prophet Moses after Pharaoh was this same Korah: "We sent Moses to Pharaoh and Hāmān and Korah with Our

Signs and a clear authority of appointment, but they said, 'He is a sorcerer, a liar'." (Al-Mu'min :23-24).

From this it follows that Korah had rebelled against his own people and become a supporter of the hostile forces which were bent upon wiping out the Israelites. On account of this rebellion against his own people he had attained a high place with Pharaoh and the two persons, besides Pharaoh, to whom the Prophet Moses had been sent were Pharaoh's minister, Hāmān, and this Israelite capitalist, Korah. All other chiefs and couriers were of inferior status, who were not worth mentioning. The same position of Korah has been alluded to in Al-'Ankabūt: 39.

96. In the story related of him in the Bible (Num., ch. 16), there is no mention of this man's wealth. But according to the Jewish traditions, he possessed immense wealth, so much so that three hundred mules were required to carry the keys of his treasures. *(Jewish Encyclopedia*, Vol. VII, p. 556). Though greatly exaggerated this statement shows that even according to the Israelite traditions, Korah was a very wealthy man of his time.

97. The words of the Text can have two meanings: (1) "Whatever I have obtained is by virtue of my own ability. It is not a bounty which somebody else might have given me as a favour without my deserving it as a right, and now I may have to render thanks for it by giving a portion of it to those who have not been given anything, as a favour, or give some of it in charity so that the bounty is not withdrawn from me." (2) "I think God has given me this wealth in view of my qualities and excellences Had I not been a likeable person, He would not have given me all this. That He has bestowed on me all kinds of blessings is a proof that I am His favourite and he approves of the way of life that I am following."

98. That is, "Did this person who was proud of being so knowledgeable and wise and well-informed and capable never know that people with greater wealth and grandeur and power and might than him had lived before him in the world, and Allah, at last, had annihilated them completely? If capability and skill and competence are the only factors conducive to worldly progress, then why didn't these virtues avail them when they were destroyed? And if the worldly progress of a person is a sure proof that Allah is pleased with him and approves of his deeds and qualities, then why were those people doomed to destruction at all?"

99. That is, "The criminals have always been claiming to be the best people, who are free from every evil, but their punishment is not dependent on their own confessions. Whenever they are seized; they are not seized on the basis of their own confessions of sins, etc."

100. That is, "This kind of character and the way of thinking and the bounty of Allah's reward falls to the lot of only those who stick firmly and steadfastly and patiently to the lawful ways in life, whether by so doing they are able to earn only a bare living, or are enabled to become millionaires, but are never inclined to follow the unlawful ways even if they promise all the benefits and wealth of the world. In this verse, "Allah's reward" means the bounteous provision that is gained by man in the world and the Hereafter as a result of labour and toil undertaken within the bounds set by Allah; and "patience" means to have control over one's emotions and desires, to stick to honesty and righteousness as against greed and lust, to bear the losses that one may have to incur on account of the truth and justice, to spurn the gains that might accrue from employing unlawful devices, to remain content and satisfied with the lawful earning even if it is meagre and insufficient, to eschew feelings of envy and jealousy at the splendour of the corrupt people and avoid even casting a glance at it, and to be satisfied with the thought that for an honest man the colourless purity that Allah has granted him by His grace is better than the lustrous filth of evil and corruption. As for "fortune", it implies Allah's reward as well as the pure mentality by virtue of which a believing and righteous person finds it easier to suffer hunger and starvation than become a multi-millionaire by adopting dishonest and corrupt ways and means."

101. That is, "The extension or the restriction of provisions is always according to the will of Allah, and Allah's will is determined by His own reasons and considerations. His favouring somebody with generous provisions does not necessarily mean that Allah is well pleased with him and is honouring him with gifts. Mostly it so happens that a person is under Allah's wrath, but He goes on favouring him with more and more wealth till, at last, the same wealth causes Allah's torment to descend on him. Contrary to this, if somebody is being given restricted provisons it does not necessarily mean that Allah is displeased with him and is punishing him. Mostly the righteous men live in hardship although they are Allah's favourites, and in many cases the same hardship becomes a cause of Allah's mercy for them. Consequently, a person who does not understand this reality looks with envious eyes at the prosperity of those who actually deserve Allah's wrath."

102. That is, "We had the misconception that worldly prosperity and wealth by themselves constituted real success. Therefore, we thought that Korah was highly successful, but now we have come to know that real success is an entirely different thing, and it is never attained by the disbelievers."

This moral of the story of Korah has been mentioned only in the Qur'ān. The Bible and the Talmud are without it. However, according to the details given in these books, when the Israelites left Egypt, Korah also accompanied them along

with his men, and then conspired against the Prophets Moses and Aaron and was joined in this by 250 of his followers. At last, Allah's wrath descended on him, and the earth opened up and swallowed him and his followers together with their possessions."

103. That is, Paradise which is the abode of real success.

104. "Who do not seek glory": who are not desirous of establishing their own glory in God's earth: who do not live like rebels and tyrants and arrogant people but like humble servants: who do not seek to make God's servants their personal servants.

105. "Mischief" implies the chaos that inevitably appears in human life in consequence of violating the truth. Whatever man does when he disobeys Allah and turns away from His service is nothing but mischief. Partly this mischief occurs when wealth is amassed through unlawful means and expended in unlawful ways.

106. "The Godfearing": those who refrain from His disobdience.

107. That is, "He has placed on you the responsibility of conveying the Qur'ān and teaching it to the people, and reforming the world according to the guidance contained in it."

108. The word *ma'ād* in the original means the place to which one has to return ultimately. Its use as a common noun implies that it is a place of eminence and glory. Some commentators think it refers to Paradise. But there is no reason why it should be restricted only to Paradise. Let it remain indefinite as Allah Himself has put it so that the promise become applicable both his world and to the Next World. The context also requires that it should be looked upon as a promise to bestow the highest glory and eminence on the Holy Prophet ultimately not only in the Hereafter but in this world too. In the saying of the disbelievers of Makkah, which has been the theme of the discourse from verse 57 until now, they had said, "O Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him), do you want us also to be doomed with you ? If we join you and adopt this Faith, it will become hard for us to live in Arabia." In response to this, Allah tells His Prophet: "O Muhammad, that God Who has placed the burden of conveying the message of the Qur'ān on you, will not destroy you; rather He will exalt you to the rank which these people cannot even imagine today." And, in actual fact, in a few years after this, even in this world, Allah granted the Holy Prophet complete authority over the whole of Arabia, and there was no power to resist him, and no religion to stand its ground. There had been no precedent in the history of Arabia that the whole peninsula might have come under the sway of one man so completely that no opponent might be there to challenge him and no soul to dare disobey his orders. Then it was not

only a political domination but religious too, for the whole population had been won over to Islam.

Some commentators opine that this verse of Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ was sent down on the way during the Holy Prophet's migration from Makkah to Madīnah, and in this Allah had promised His Prophet that He would again bring him back to Makkah. But, firstly, the words of the verse do not allow that *"ma'ād"* be taken to mean "Makkah". Secondly, this Sūrah, both according to the traditions and the internal evidence of its theme, was revealed some time during the time of the migration to Ḥabash, and one cannot understand that if this verse was revealed after several years on the way during the migration to Madīnah, why was it inserted in this context without any relevance? Thirdly, in this context, the mention of the Holy Prophet's return to Makkah seems quite irrelevant. For if the verse is taken to mean this, it will not be a reply to the disbelievers' excuse but would rather strengthen it. It would mean this: "No doubt, what you say, O people of Makkah, is correct. Muḥammad will be expelled from this city, but he will not remain an exile for ever, but eventually We will bring him back to this very place." Though this tradition has been reported by Bukhārī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr and other traditionists on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās, it is, in fact, Ibn 'Abbas's own opinion; it is not a tradition that might have been received direct from the Holy Prophet that one may have to accept it.

109. This thing is being presented as a proof of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad's Prophethood. Just as the Prophet Moses was wholly unaware that he was going to be appointed a Prophet, and sent on a grand mission—when he had never even expected or wished for such a thing, but had been suddenly called upon while on a journey and made a Prophet and assigned a mission which had no relevance with his previous life—so was precisely the case with the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him). The people of Makkah knew full well what kind of life he was leading till a day before the day when he came down from the Cave of Hirā' with the message of Prophethood. They were fully aware of his occupations, of the topics of his conversation, of the nature of his interests and activities. No doubt it was a life which was an embodiment of truth, honesty and righteousness, a model of nobility, peacefulness, fulfilment of obligations and rights of others and of the service to humanity, but there was nothing in it which could give somebody any idea that the righteous man was going to make a claim to Prophethood the next day. There was no one among his most intimate friends and relations and neighbours, who could say that he had already been preparing to become a Prophet. No one had ever heard a word on the themes and problems and topics from him, which became the subject of his daily conversation all of a sudden after the revolutionary moment in the Cave of Hirā'. No one had heard him employing the kind of diction and words and terms, which the people started

hearing from him in the shape of the Qur'ān. He had never stood up for preaching, had never given a message or started a movement, and none of his activities had ever indicated that he was anxious to undertake a programme for the solution of the social problems or for religious or moral reformation. Till a day before this revolutionary moment he was leading the life of a trader, who earns his living by fair and lawful means, who lives a happy life with his family, receives his guests, helps the poor and treats his relatives well, and at times retires from society into seclusion for the sake of worship. For such a person it would be a great change if he started making, all of a sudden, world-moving orations, preaching a revolutionary message, producing a sublime literature and propounding an enduring philosophy of life and a profound system of thought and morality and social life. For psychologically too, such a change is not possible through any kind of preparation and conscious effort. Any such effort and preparation, in any case, has to pass through certain evolutionary stages, which cannot remain hidden from the people among whom a person is passing his life. Had the Holy Prophet's life passed through any such stages of gradual development, hundreds of the people in Makkah would have come out to say, "Did we not tell you beforehand that this man would one day make a tall claim?" But history bears evidence that no one in Makkah ever made such an objection although the disbelievers of Makkah raised all sorts of other objections against the Holy Prophet.

Then another thing: the Holy Prophet himself never wished for or expected or awaited his appointment to prophethood, but he came across this experience all of a sudden quite unexpectedly. This is supported by the event that has been reported in the Traditions in connection with the beginning of Revelation. After his first meeting with the Angel Gabriel and the revelation of the initial verses of Sūrah Al-'Alaq he rushes back home from Hirā' trembling with fear, and says to his wife, "Cover me with a cloak! Cover me with a cloak!" After a while when he recovers a little from the state of anxiety, he relates what he had experienced to his wife and says, "I feel there is danger to my life!" She responds, "No, never! Allah will never bring you to grief: you render the rights of your kindred, you support the indigent, help the poor, treat your guests well, and are ever ready to contribute to a good cause." Then she takes him to Waraqa bin Naufal, who was her cousin and a righteous and knowledgeable person from among the people of the Book. Hearing from him what had happened, Waraqa says without any hesitation, "The one who came to you is the same *Nāmūs* (the specially appointed Divine Messenger), who used to come to Moses. I wish I were a young man and could live till the time when your people will expel you." The Holy Prophet asks, "Will my people expel me?" He replies, "Yes; no one has

[Contd. on p. 630

تَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَلَا تَدْعُ مَعَ اللّٰهِ اِلٰهًا اٰخَرَ ۘ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۭ كُلُّ
شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ اِلَّا وَجْهَهٗ ۭ لَهُ الْحُكْمُ وَاِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾

87-88 And let it never happen that the unbelievers should divert you[111] from Allah's Revelations when they are sent down to you. Invite (the people) towards your Lord and do not join the *mushriks*, nor invoke any deity other than Allah. There is no deity but He. Everything is perishable except Himself: Sovereignty is His,[112] and to Him will all of you be returned.

Contd. from p.629]

passed before, who brought same thing that you have brought, and his people did not turn hostile to him."

This whole event depicts the state which a simple man will naturally undergo when he is confronted unexpectedly by a most extraordinary experience all of a sudden. If the Holy Prophet had already been anxious to become a prophet and thinking that a man like him ought to be a prophet, and had been meditating and straining his mind and awaiting the arrival of an angel with a message, he would have been filled with delight at the experience in the Cave, and descending from the mountain would have gone straight before his people and proclaimed Prophethood. But, quite to the contrary, he is confounded at what he had seen, reaches home trembling and lies in bed fully covered up. When he is composed a little, he tells his wife quietly what had happened in the solitude of the Cave, and expresses feelings of anxiety and insecurity. How different is this state from the state of a candidate for prophethood !

Then, who can be better aware of the husband's life, his ambitions and thoughts, than the wife? If she had perceived before-hand that the husband was a candidate for prophethood and had been anxiously awaiting the arrival of the angel, her reply would have been different from what Ḥaḍrat Khadījah said. She would have answered, "Dear husband! Why are you so agitated? You have got what you have been longing since long. Now, flourish as a saint: I too shall get ready for collecting gifts and offerings." But on the basis of what she had seen of her husband during her 15-year-long companionship, she did not take more than a moment to understand that Satan could not have come to a righteous and selfless man like him, nor could Allah have put him to a severe test. Therefore, whatever he had seen was the very truth and reality.

The same is also true in the case of Waraqa bin Naufal. He was not an outsider, but a member of the Holy Prophet's own clan and a brother-in-law by a close relationship. Then being a knowledgeable Christian he could discriminate the

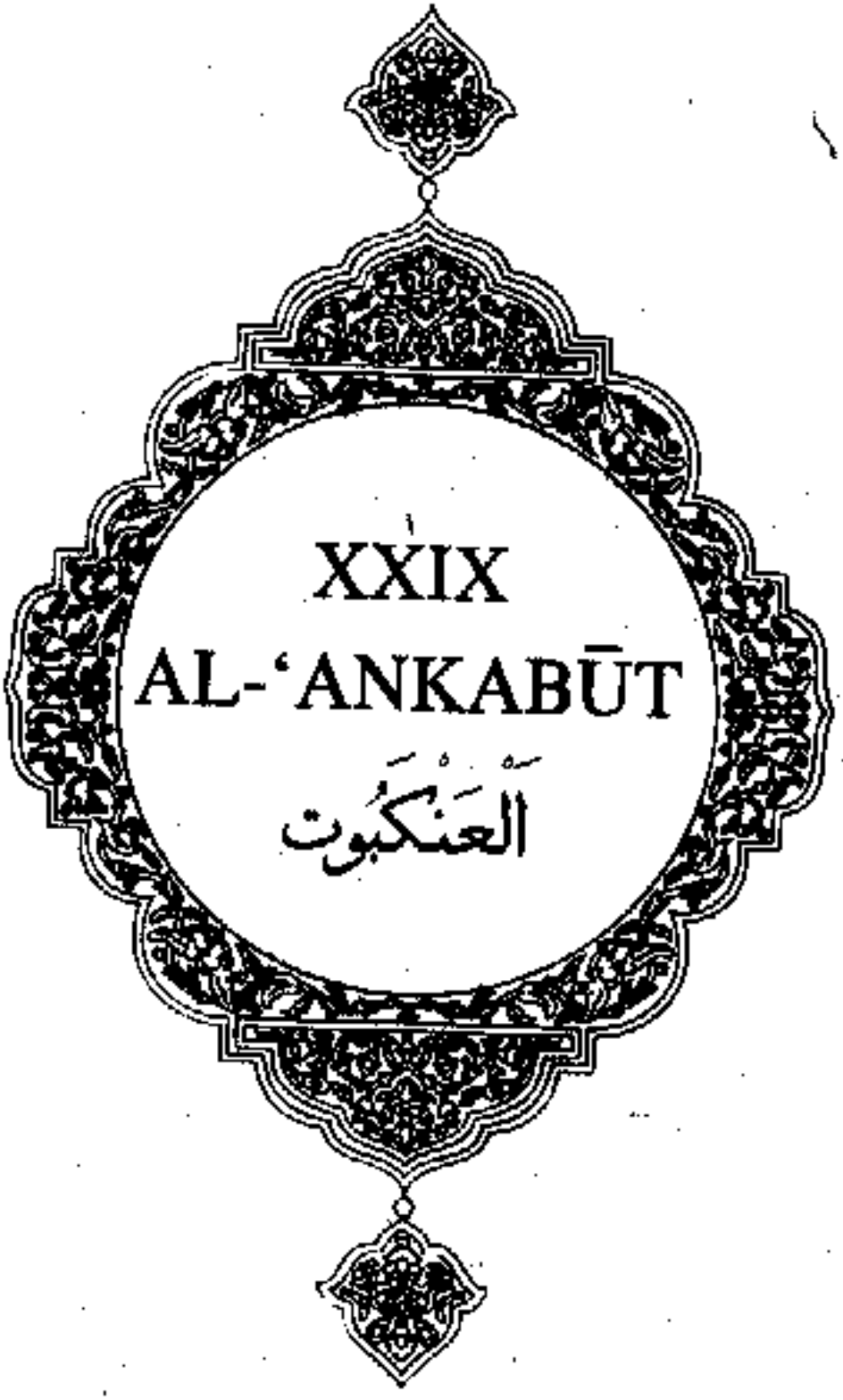
prophethood and book and revelation from fabrication and fraud. Being the Holy Prophet's senior by many years his whole life since childhood had been spent before him. Therefore, when he heard what the Holy Prophet had to say about his experience in the Cave, he at once said that it was most surely the same Angel who used to bring Divine messages to the Prophet Moses. For in this case also precisely the same thing had happened as in the case of the Prophet Moses. He also was a pure and righteous person, simple in thought and without any pre-conceived notions about prophehood, he also had experienced the same thing unexpectedly in full cousciousness similarly. Therefore, without the least hesitation, he was led to the firm conclusion that there was no self-deception or satanic insinuation involved, but whatever the truthfulman had seen, without any will or desire on his own part, was in fact, an experience of the Reality.

This is such a clear proof of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad's Prophethood that a realistic person can hardly deny it. That is why it has been presented as a proof of Prophethood at several places in the Qur'ān. For example, in Sūrah Yūnus it has been said: "O Prophet, say to them: Had Allah willed so, I would never have recited this Qur'ān to you, nor would He have told you anything (about its existence). I have already lived a lifetime among you before its revelation. Do you not use common sense?" (v. 16) And in Sūrah Ash-Shūrā it has been said: "O Prophet, you did not know at all what was the Book and what was the Faith but We made that Revelation a light by which We show the way to any of Our servants We will." (v. 52) For further explanation, see E.N. 21 of Sūrah Yūnus, E.N.'s 88 to 92 of Al-'Ankabūt, and E.N. 84 of Ash-Shu'arā.

110. That is, "When Allah has granted you this blessing without your asking for it, you are under an obligation to exercise all your energies and spend all your efforts in upholding it, conveying it to others and promoting its cause. Any slackness in this regard would mean that you helped the disbelievers. This does not mean that, God forbid, there was any chance of such slackness on the part of the Holy Prophet. Allah, in fact, is exhorting the Holy Prophet, as if to say, "You should go on doing your mission in spite of the disbelievers' opposition and their uproar, and do not at all mind what fears the enemies of the Truth express regarding your message's being harmful to their national interests."

111. "...divert you": divert you from conveying them to others and acting in accordance with them in practical life.

112. Another meaning can be: "Sovereignty is for Him, for He alone is entitled to it by right."



XXIX
AL-'ANKABŪT
ٱلْعَنْكَبُوت

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXIX
AL-'ANKABŪT
اَلعَنكَبُوت

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from verse 41 in which the word *'Ankabūt* (Spider) has occurred.

Period of Revelation

Verses 56 to 60 clearly show that this Sūrah was sent down a little before the migration to Ḥabash, and this is supported by the internal evidence of the subject-matter as well. Some commentators have opined that since it mentions the hypocrites, and hypocrisy appeared in Madīnah, the first ten verses of this Sūrah were revealed at Madīnah and the rest of it at Makkah; whereas the people whose hypocrisy has been mentioned here are those who had adopted a hypocritical way of life because they were afraid of the oppression and extreme physical torture to which the Muslims were being subjected by the disbelievers. Evidently, this kind of hypocrisy could be there only at Makkah and not at Madīnah. Similarly, some other commentators, seeing that in this Sūrah the Muslims have been exhorted to migrate, have regarded it as the last Sūrah to be revealed at Makkah, whereas the Muslims had migrated to Ḥabash even before their migration to Madīnah. These opinions are not based on any tradition but on the internal evidence of

the subject-matter, and this internal evidence, when considered against the subject-matter of the Sūrah as a whole, points to the conditions prevailing in the time of the migration to Ḥabash and not to the last stage at Makkah.

Theme and Subject-matter

A perusal of the Sūrah shows that the period of its revelation was the period of extreme persecution of the Muslims at Makkah. The disbelievers were opposing and fighting Islam tooth and nail and the new converts were being subjected to the severest oppression. Such were the conditions when Allah sent down this Sūrah to strengthen and encourage the sincere Muslims as well as to put to shame those who were showing weakness of the faith. Besides, the disbelievers of Makkah have been threatened and warned not to invite for themselves the fate that the antagonists of the Truth have been experiencing in every age.

In this connection, the questions that some young men were facing in those days, have also been answered. For instance, their parents were urging them to abandon Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him), and return to their ancestral religion, for they argued: "The Qur'ān in which you have put your faith, regards the rights of the parents as the uppermost; therefore, listen to what we say; otherwise you will be working against the dictates of your own Faith." This has been answered in verse 8.

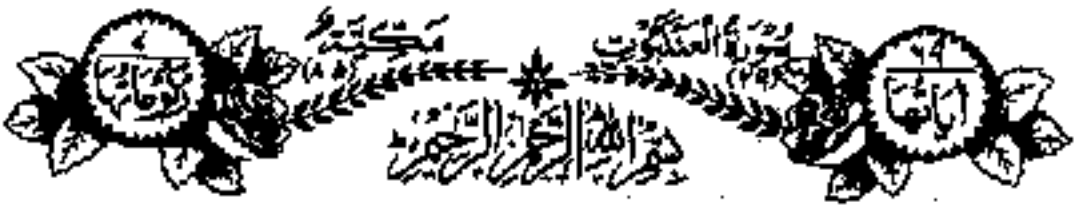
Similarly, the people of some clans said to the new converts to Islam, "Leave the question of punishments, etc., to us. Listen to us and abandon this man. If God seizes you in the Hereafter, we will come forward and say, 'Lord, these people are innocent: we had forced them to give up the Faith; therefore, seize us'." This has been dealt with in vv. 12-13.

The stories mentioned in this Sūrah also impress the same point mostly, as if to say, "Look at the Prophets of the past: they were made to suffer great hardships and were treated cruelly for long periods. Then, at last they were helped by Allah. Therefore, take heart: Allah's succour will certainly come. But a period of trial and tribulation has to be undergone." Besides teaching this lesson to the Muslims, the disbelievers also have been warned, as if to say, "If you are not being immediately seized by Allah, you should not form the wrong impression

that you will never be seized. The signs of the doomed nations of the past are before you. Just see how they met their doom and how Allah succoured the Prophets."

Then the Muslims have been instructed to the effect: "If you feel that the persecution has become unbearable for you, you should give up your homes, instead of giving up your Faith: Allah's earth is vast: seek a new place where you can worship Allah with the full peace of mind."

Besides all this, the disbelievers also have been urged to understand Islam. The realities of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter have been impressed with rational arguments, *shirk* has been refuted and drawing their attention towards the Signs in the universe, they have been told that all these Signs confirm the teachings that the Prophet is presenting before them.



الٓمّٓ ﴿١﴾ اَحَسِبَ النَّاسُ اَنْ يُّتْرَكُوْٓا اَنْ يَّقُوْلُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُوْنَ ﴿٢﴾ وَ
لَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ صَدَقُوْا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ
الْكٰذِبِيْنَ ﴿٣﴾ اَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ السَّيِّاٰتِ اَنْ يَّسْبِقُوْنَا ؕ سَآءَ مَا
يَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ مَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوْا لِقَآءَ اللّٰهِ فَاِنَّ اَجَلَ اللّٰهِ لَاٰتٍ ؕ وَهُوَ
السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٥﴾ وَمَنْ جَاهَدَ فَاِنَّمَا يُجَاهِدُ لِنَفْسِهٖ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَغَنِيٌّ
عَنِ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَنُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّاٰتِهِمْ
وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ اَحْسَنَ الَّذِيْ كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٧﴾ وَوَصَّيْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ
حُسْنًا ؕ وَاِنْ جَاهَدٰكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِيْ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهٖ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا ؕ اِلَيَّ
مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَاُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٨﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ فِي الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿٩﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّقُوْلُ اٰمَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ فَاِذَآ
اُوْذِيَ فِي اللّٰهِ جَعَلَ فِتْنَةَ النَّاسِ كَعَذَابِ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَلَئِنْ جَآءَ نَصْرٌ مِّنْ
رَّبِّكَ لَيَقُوْلُنَّ اِنَّا كُنَّا مَعَكُمْ ؕ اَوَلَيْسَ اللّٰهُ بِاَعْلَمَ بِمَا فِيْ صُدُوْرِ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٠﴾
وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ ﴿١١﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّبِعُوْا سَبِيْلَنَا وَلْنَحْمِلْ خَطٰيٰكُمْ وَمَا هُمْ بِحٰمِلِيْنَ مِنْ
خَطٰيٰهُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ ؕ اِنَّهُمْ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَلَيَحْمِلُنَّ اَثْقَالَهُمْ وَاَثْقَالًا مَّعَ

XXIX
AL-'ANKABŪT
اَلْعَنْكَبُوت

Verses: 69

Revealed at Makkah

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

Alif. Lām. Mīm. Do the people think that they will be left alone after they have once said, "We have believed," and they will not be tested?[1] The fact is that we have put to test all those who have gone before them.[2] Surely, Allah has to see[3] who are the truthful and who the liars. 1-3

And do those who are committing evil deeds[4] reckon that they will outstrip Us?[5] Evil is their judgement. 4

Whoever expects to meet Allah (should know that) Allah's appointed time is about to come,[6] and Allah hears everything and knows everything.[7] Whoever will exert will exert for his own good;[8] Allah is certainly Independent of all His creations.[9] As for those who believe and do good works, We shall wipe off their evils and reward them for the best of their deeds.[10] 5-7

We have conjoined man to do good to his parents, but if they force you to associate with Me another (deity) whom you do not know (as such), you should not obey them.[11] You have all to return to Me: then I shall tell you what you had been doing.[12] And those who will have believed and done good deeds, We shall certainly include them among the righteous. 8-9

There is among the people such a one, who says, "We have believed in Allah", but when he was persecuted in the cause *of* Allah, he deemed the persecution by the people as the punishment of Allah.[14] Now if there comes help and victory from your Lord, the same person 10-11

will say, "We were with you".[15] Is not Allah fully aware of what is in the hearts of the people of the world? And surely Allah has to see who are the believers and who the hypocrites.[16]

12-13 The disbelievers say to the believers, "Follow our way and we will bear (the burden of) your sins",[17] whereas they will not bear (the burden of) your sins:[18] they are utter liars. Of course, they shall bear their own burdens as well as many other burdens in addition to their own.[19] And on the Day of Resurrection, they will surely be questioned about their scandal mongering.[20]

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1. When this thing was said, the conditions prevailing in Makkah were extremely trying. Whoever accepted Islam was made a target of tyranny and humiliation and persecution. If he was a slave or a poor person, he was beaten and subjected to unbearable tortures; if he was a shopkeeper or artisan, he was made to suffer economic hardships, even starvation; if he was a member of an influential family, his own people would tease and harass him in different ways and make life difficult for him. This had created an atmosphere of fear and fright in Makkah, due to which most people were afraid of believing in the Holy Prophet although they acknowledged him to be a true Prophet in their hearts; and some others who believed would lose heart soon afterwards and would submit and yield to the disbelievers when they confronted dreadful persecutions. Though these trying circumstances could not shake the determination of the strong-willed Companions, naturally they also were sometimes overwhelmed by an intense feeling of anxiety and distraction. An instance of this is found in the tradition of Ḥaḍrat Khabbāb bin Arat, which has been related by Bukhārī, Abu Da'ūd and Nasā'ī. He says, "During the time when we had become sick of our persecution by the *mushriks*, one day I saw the Holy Prophet sitting in the shade of the wall of the Ka'bah. I went up to him and said, 'O Messenger of Allah, don't you pray for us !' Hearing this his face became red with feeling and emotion, and he said, 'The believers who have gone before you had been subjected to even greater persecutions. Some one of them was made to sit in a ditch in the earth and was sawed into two pieces from head to foot. Someone's joints were rubbed with ironcombs so as to withhold him from the Faith. By God, this Mission will be accomplished and the time is not far when a person will travel without apprehension from Ṣan'ā' to Ḥaḍramaut and there will be none but Allah Whom he will fear."

In order to change this state of agitation into forbearance, Allah tells the believers, "No one can become worthy of Our promises of success in the world and the Hereafter merely by verbal profession of the Faith, but every claimant to the Faith will have to pass through trials and tribulations so as to furnish proof of the truth of his claim. Our Paradise is not so cheap, nor Our special favours in the

world so low-priced, that We should bless you with all these as soon as you proclaim verbal faith in Us. The trial is a pre-requisite for them. You will have to undergo hardships for Our sake, suffer losses of life and property, face dangers, misfortunes and difficulties; you will be tried both with fear and with greed; you will have to sacrifice everything that you hold dear for Our pleasure, and bear every discomfort in Our way. Then only will it become manifest whether your claim to faith in Us was true or false. This thing has been said at every such place in the Qur'ān where the Muslims have been found placed in hardships and difficulties and obsessed by fear and consternation. In the initial stage of life at Madinah, after the migration, when the Muslims were in great trouble on account of economic hardships, external dangers and internal villainy of the Jews and the hypocrites, Allah said:

"Do you think that you will enter Paradise without undergoing such trials as were experienced by the believers before you? They met with adversity and affliction and were so shaken by trials that the Prophet of the time and his followers cried out, 'when will Allah's help come?' (Then only they were comforted with the good tidings:) "Yes, Allah's help is near!'" (Al-Baqarah: 214).

Likewise, when after the Battle of Uhud, the Muslims again confronted a period of afflictions, it was said:

"Do you think that you will enter Paradise without undergoing any trial? whereas Allah has not yet tried you to see who among you are ready to lay down their lives in His way and who will show fortitude for His sake." (Āl-i-'Imrān: 142).

Almost the same thing has been said in Āl-i-'Imrān: 179, Taubah: 16 and Sūrah Muḥammad: 31. Allah in these verses has impressed on the Muslims that trial is the touchstone by which the pure and the impure are judged. The impure is turned aside by Allah and the pure is selected so that Allah may honour them with His favours which the sincere believers only deserve.

2. That is, "This is not a new thing which you alone may be experiencing. The same has been happening before also. Whoever made a claim to the Faith was made to pass through trials and tribulations. And when the others were not given anything without the trial, you are in no way any special people that you should be favoured and rewarded merely on verbal profession of the Faith."

3. Literally, "It is necessary that Allah should find out." A question may be asked: "When Allah already knows the truth of the truthful and the untruth of the liar, why should He put the people to the test for the sake of these?" The answer is: Until a person has manifested his potential and capability to do a thing in practical terms, justice requires that he neither deserves any rewards nor any

punishment. One man, for example, is capable of being trustworthy and another man of being un-trustworthy. Unless both are tried and one manifests trustworthiness and the other the lack of it practically, it will not be justice on the part of Allah that He should reward one for trustworthiness and punish the other for the lack of it only on the basis of His knowledge of the unseen. Therefore the knowledge Allah already possesses about the capabilities of the people and about their conduct in the future is not enough to satisfy the requirements of justice until the people have manifested their potentialities in practical ways. Justice with Allah is not based on the knowledge that a person possesses a tendancy to steal and will commit a theft, but on the knowledge that he has actually committed a theft. Likewise, Allah does not bestow favours and rewards on the basis of the knowledge that a person has the potential and capability to become a great believer and fighter in His way, but on the basis of the knowledge that the person concerned has practically proved by deed and action that he is a sincere believer and a brave fighter in His way. That is why we have translated the words of the verse as: "Allah has to see..."

4. This may refer to all those people who disobey Allah's Commands but here particularly it implies those wicked chiefs of the Quraish, who were in the forefront in their antagonism to Islam and persecution of the converts to Islam, e.g. Walīd .bin Mughīrah, Abu Jahl, 'Utbah, Shaibah, 'Uqbah bin Abī Mu'aīt, Hanzatah bin Wā'il, etc. Here the context itself requires that after exhorting the Muslims to patience and fortitude against the trials and tests, those people also should be chided and scolded, who were persecuting the believers."

5. It may also mean: "...that they will escape Our grasp." The words *yasbiqūnā* in the original may have two meanings: (1)'Whatever we will (i.e. the success of the mission of Our Messenger) should meet with failure, and whatever they wish (i.e. to frustrate the mission of Our Messenger) should be accomplished;" and (2) "We may want to seize them for their excesses and they should be able to escape and get out of Our reach."

6. That is, "The case of the one who does not believe in the life hereafter and thinks he is answerable to none for his deeds and there is no accountability whatever, is different. He may remain heedless and act as he likes, for he will himself see the consequences when they appear against his expectations. But those who expect that they have to meet their Lord one day and rewarded and punished according to their deeds, should not have the misunderstanding that the time of death is yet far off. They should rather think that it is near at hand and the respite for action is about to come to an end. Therefore, whatever they can do for their well-being in the Hereafter, they should do. They should not delay self-reform on account of the baseless belief that they have yet to live a long life."

7. That is, "That God before Whom they will appear to render their accounts is not uninformed. He hears everything and knows every thing, and nothing about them is hidden from Him."

8. The word *mujāhadah* means to struggle and exert one's utmost against an opponent, and when the particular opponent force is not pointed out, the word implies an all-out, many-sided struggle. The struggle that a believer has to make in the world, is of this very nature. He has to fight against Satan, who frightens him every moment of the possible losses he may have to incur for the sake of good and allures him with the benefits and pleasures of the evil. He has to fight his own self also, which exerts to make him the slave of its lusts. He has also to fight all those men, from home to the world outside, whose ideology, trends, morality, customs way of life and social and economic principles may be in conflict with his Faith; and he has to fight that state too, which enforces its laws independent of obedience to Allah, and employs its forces to promote evil instead of the good. This struggle is not of a day or two, but of a lifetime, of every moment of the day and night. And it is not a struggle in one field only but on every front of life. It is about this that Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Baṣri has said: "Man exerts in the way of Allah even though he may not strike one sword at any time."

9. That is, "Allah is not asking you to exert your utmost because he stands in need of any help from you to establish His Godhead and keep it established and sustained. But He instructs you to enter this conflict because this opens the way to your own progress. Through this way only you can get rid of the evil and follow the way of truth; through this way alone you can develop the ability and power to rise as the standard-bearers of goodness in the world and become worthy of Allah's Paradise in the Hereafter. By waging this war you will not do any favour to Allah, but will only be helping your own selves."

10. *Imān* means to believe in and accept sincerely all those things to which the Messenger of Allah and this Book invite; and "good works" are those which are performed in accordance with the guidance of Allah and His Messenger. The good work of the heart and mind is that man's thinking and his ideas and his intentions should be right and pure. The good work of the tongue is that man should refrain from talking evil things, and whatever he says should be just and right and true; and the good work of the limbs is that man's entire life should be spent in Allah's worship and in obedience to His Commands and Law. Two results of the belief and righteous deeds have been mentioned: (1) That man's evils will be wiped off; and (2) that he will be rewarded for the best of his deeds better than what he will actually deserve.

Wiping off of evils means several things: (1) All kinds of sins that man might have committed before his affirmation of the Faith will be pardoned as soon

as he believes; (2) the errors that man might have committed after the affirmation of the faith due to human weakness, but not because of a rebellious attitude, will be overlooked in view of his good deeds; (3) man's self reform will automatically take place when he adopts a life of belief and righteousness, and most of his weaknesses will be removed from him.

The sentence, "We shall reward them for the best of their deeds", has two meanings: (1) Man will be given his rewards on the basis of the best of his deeds; and (2) he will be rewarded better and more handsomely than what he will actually deserve for his deeds. This thing has been stated at other places also in the Qur'ān. For instance, in Sūrah Al-An'ām, :160, it has been said: "He who will bring a good deed before Allah, will receive a tenfold reward for it", and in Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ :4: "Whoever brings a good deed, shall have a better reward than that", and in Sūrah An-Nisā :40: "Indeed Allah does not wrong anyone even by a jot: if one does a good deed, He increases it manifold."

11. According to Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ahmad, Abū Da'ūd and Nasā'ī, this verse was sent down in respect of Ḥadrat Sa'd bin Abī Waqqās. He was 18 or 19 years old when he embraced Islam. When his mother, Hamnah, daughter of Sufyān bin Umayyah (neice of Abu Sufyān), came to know that her son had become a Muslim, she said, "I will neither eat nor drink nor sit in shade unless you disown Muḥammad. The rights of the mother are supermost even according to Allah's Command. Therefore if you disobey me, you will be disobeying Allah too." Hadrat Sa'd was perplexed and came before the Holy Prophet and told his whole story. At this, this verse was revealed. Possibly other young men who embraced Islam in the initial stage at Makkah were also confronted with similar situations. Therefore, the same theme has been repeated forcefully in Sūrah Luqmān: 15 also.

What the verse means to impress is this: The rights of the parents, among the creation of Allah, are to be held as the supreme, but even if the parents force a person to adopt *shirk*, they should not be obeyed. The words, "If both of them force you to associate..." imply that a lesser pressure, or a pressure by either of them, deserves to be set aside much more promptly. The next sentence, ".... whom you do not know (as such)," is also noteworthy. This gives a sound reason for not obeying the parents in this regard. The parents certainly have the right that the children should serve them, respect them, and obey them in lawful things. But they do not have the right that one should obey them blindly against one's knowledge of the reality. Therefore, there is no reason why a person should go on following his parents' religion just because it is their religion. If the children come to know that their parents are following a false religion, they should give it up and adopt the right religion, and should not follow the wrong way whose falsehood has

become clear to them even if the parents use every kind of pressure for it. When this is so in the case of even the parents, it should be so with every other person, too. No one deserves to be followed and obeyed unless one is sure that the person being followed is on the right path.

12. That is, "The relationships of the world and their obligations are confined to the world. At last, the parents as well as the children have to return to their Creator, and before Him everybody will be held answerable only on the basis of his personal responsibility. If the parents have misled the children, they will be called to account. If the children have accepted deviation for the sake of the parents, they will be punished. And if the children adopted the right way, and showed no slackness in rendering the parents' lawful rights either, but the parents ill-treated them only for the reason that they did not join them in their deviation, they will not be able to escape Allah's punishment."

13. Though the speaker is a single person, he uses the plural pronoun and says, "We have believed," Imam Rāzī has pointed out a subtle point in it. He says that the hypocrite always tries to be counted among the believers and mentions his faith as though he is also a true believer like others. His case is like that of a cowardly soldier who accompanies an army to the battlefield where the soldiers have fought well and put the enemy to rout. This cowardly person might have made no contribution at all, but when he returns home, he will say, "We put up a good fight and routed the enemy", as if he was one of the heroes of the battlefield.

14. That is, "Just as one should desist from disbelief and sin due to fear of Allah's punishment, so did this man desist from faith and goodness due to fear of persecution by the people. When after belief he was confronted with threats and imprisonment and harsh treatment from the disbelievers, he thought that Allah's punishment in Hell which he will have to suffer after death in consequence of his disbelief, will be no severer than that. Therefore, he decided that he would suffer the torment of the Next World at its own time, but should give up faith and rejoin the disbelievers so that he might save himself from the torment of this world and pass an easy life."

15. That is, "Today he has joined the disbelievers in order to save his skin, and has abandoned the believers for he is not prepared even to suffer a thorn-prick in the cause of promoting Allah's religion, but when Allah will favour with success and victory those who are struggling in His cause with their lives and properties, this person will come forward to have his share of the fruits of the victory and will tell the Muslims, "Our hearts were with you: we used to pray for your success: we thought very highly of your devotion to duty and your sacrifices."

Here, one should understand that in case of an unbearable persecution and loss and extreme fear, one is permitted to disown Islam and save one's life, provided that one remains firm in one's faith with a sincere heart. But there is a big difference between the sincere Muslim who disowns Islam under compulsion in order to save his life and the time-server who ideologically believes in Islam as a true religion but joins the disbelievers when he sees the dangers and risks involved in the life of Faith. Apparently, they do not seem to be much different from each other, but the thing which sets them poles apart is this: The sincere Muslim who utters disbelief under compulsion not only remains attached to Islam ideologically, but practically also his sympathies remain with Islam and the Muslims; he feels happy over their successes and unhappy at their defeat. Even under compulsion he tries to avail himself of every opportunity to cooperate with the Muslims, and remains on the look-out for a chance to join his brethren-in-faith as soon as the grip of the enemies loosens a little. Contrary to this, when the time-server finds that the way of the Faith is difficult to follow and calculates carefully that the disadvantages of siding with Islam outweigh the advantages of re-joining the disbelievers, he turns away from Islam and the Muslims for the sake of personal safety and worldly gains, establishes friendship with the disbelievers and is prepared to carry out for his own interests any service for them, which may be utterly opposed to the Faith and harmful to the Muslims. But at the same time, he does not close his eyes to the possibility that Islam also might prosper some time in the future. Therefore, whenever he gets an opportunity to talk to the Muslims, he acknowledges their ideology and admits his faith and pays homage to their sacrifices most generously, so that his verbal admissions might be helpful as and when required. At another place in the Qur'ān this same bargaining mentality of the hypocrites has been described, thus: "The hypocrites are watching you closely to see (how the wind blows). If victory comes to you from Allah, they will say to you, 'Were we not with you?' And if the disbelievers gain the upper hand, they will say to them, 'Were we not strong enough to fight against you? Yet we defended you from the Muslims'." (An-Nisā': 141).

16. That is, "Allah provides occasions for the trial again and again so that the faith of the believers and the hypocrisy of the hypocrites become manifest, and whatever is hidden in the hearts becomes exposed. The same thing has been said in Āl-i-'Imrān: 179: "'Allah will not leave the believers in the state in which you happen to be at present: He will surely separate the pure from the impure people."

17. What they meant to say was: "In the first place, the talk about life hereafter and Resurrection and accountability is all meaningless. But supposing there is another life in which the people will be called to account for their deeds, we take the responsibility that we shall take the punishment, etc. on our own selves. You should, therefore, listen to us and give up this new Faith and return to

your ancestral religion." According to the traditions several chiefs of the Quraish used to counsel thus the people who embraced Islam in the beginning. So, when Ḥaḍrat 'Umar accepted Islam, Abu Sufyān and Ḥarab bin Umayyah bin Khalaf met him and said these very things."

18. That is, "It is not at all possible that a person should take the responsibility for another before Allah, and thus enable the actual sinner to escape the punishment of his sin, for every person will be responsible for his own deeds there. "No bearer of a burden shall bear the burden of another." (An-Najm: 38) But if at all it be so, none will have the nerve, in face of the blazing Hell got ready to punish the disbelievers, to say to Allah, only for the sake of honouring his pledge in the world, "Lord, forgive this person and send him to Paradise: he had turned apostate on my counselling: I offer myself to suffer the punishment for my own disbelief as well as for his in Hell."

19. That is, "Though they will not bear the burdens of others, they will neither escape bearing a double burden: one burden of their own selves going astray, and the burden of leading the othere astray." This can be understood by an example. A person commits theft and also asks another person to join him. Now if the other person also commits theft, no judge will let him off only because he had committed the offence on someone else's prompting. He will in any case be punished for the theft and it will not be fair according to any law of justice to let him off and punish instead of him the first thief who had prompted him to commit the theft. However, the first thief will suffer punishment for two offences: the offence of committing theft himself and the offence of turning another person into a thief along with himself. This principle has been stated at another place in the Qur'ān thus: ".....so that they should bear the full brunt of their own burdens on the Day of Resurrection together with some of the burdens of those whom they are leading astray in their ignorance." (An-Naḥl: 25) The same principle has been elucidated by the Holy Prophet in this *Ḥadīth*: "Whoever invited others to the right path will be granted a reward equal to the rewards of all those who listened to him and adopted the right path, without diminishing their rewards in any way. And whoever invited others to deviation will earn a sin equal to the sins of all those who followed him, without diminishing their sins in any way."

20. "Scandal-mongering" implies all those untruths which were hidden in this saying of the disbelievers: "Follow our way and we will bear the burden of your sins." In fact, they said this on the basis of two presumptions: (1) The creed of *shirk* they are following is based on the truth and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad's doctrine of *Tauḥīd is* false; therefore, there is nothing wrong if it is rejected; and (2) there is going to be no Resurrection, and the doctrine of the Hereafter which deters a Muslim from unbelief is baseless. With these

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أَثْقَالِهِمْ ۖ وَلَيُسْـَٔلُنَّ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا
نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ فَلَبِثَ فِيهِمْ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ إِلَّا خَمْسِينَ عَامًا ۚ فَأَخَذَهُمُ
الطُّوفَانُ وَهُمْ ظَٰلِمُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ فَأَنجَيْنَٰهُ وَأَصْحَٰبَ السَّفِينَةِ وَجَعَلْنَٰهَآ ءَايَةً
لِّلْعَٰلَمِينَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَإِبْرَٰهِيمَ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ ٱعْبُدُوا۟ ٱللَّهَ وَٱتَّقُوهُ ۖ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ
لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ إِنَّمَا تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ أَوْثَٰنًا وَتَخْلُقُونَ
إِفْكًا ۚ إِنَّ ٱلَّذِينَ تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ لَا يَمْلِكُونَ لَكُمْ رِزْقًا فَٱبْتَغُوا۟
عِندَ ٱللَّهِ ٱلرِّزْقَ وَٱعْبُدُوهُ وَٱشْكُرُوا۟ لَهُۥٓ ۖ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَإِن تُكَذِّبُوا۟
فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ أُمَمٌ مِّن قَبْلِكُمْ ۖ وَمَا عَلَى ٱلرَّسُولِ إِلَّا ٱلْبَلَٰغُ ٱلْمُبِينُ ﴿١٨﴾ أَوَ
لَمْ يَرَوْا۟ كَيْفَ يُبْدِئُ ٱللَّهُ ٱلْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُۥٓ ۚ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى ٱللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ ﴿١٩﴾
قُلْ سِيرُوا۟ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ فَٱنظُرُوا۟ كَيْفَ بَدَأَ ٱلْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ ٱللَّهُ يُنشِئُ ٱلنَّشْأَةَ
ٱلْءَاخِرَةَ ۚ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٢٠﴾ يُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَآءُ وَيَرْحَمُ مَن
يَشَآءُ ۖ وَإِلَيْهِ تُقْلَبُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَآ أَنتُم بِمُعْجِزِينَ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِى ٱلسَّمَآءِ
وَمَا لَكُم مِّن دُونِ ٱللَّهِ مِن وَلِىٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا۟ بِـَٔايَٰتِ
ٱللَّهِ وَلِقَآئِهِۦٓ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ يَئِسُوا۟ مِن رَّحْمَتِى وَأُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٣﴾
فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهِۦٓ إِلَّآ أَن قَالُوا۟ ٱقْتُلُوهُ أَوْ حَرِّقُوهُ فَأَنجَىٰهُ ٱللَّهُ
مِنَ ٱلنَّارِ ۚ إِنَّ فِى ذَٰلِكَ لَـَٔايَٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَقَالَ إِنَّمَا ٱتَّخَذْتُم مِّن
دُونِ ٱللَّهِ أَوْثَٰنًا ۖ مَّوَدَّةَ بَيْنِكُمْ فِى ٱلْحَيَوٰةِ ٱلدُّنْيَا ۖ ثُمَّ يَوْمَ ٱلْقِيٰمَةِ يَكْفُرُ
بَعْضُكُم بِبَعْضٍ وَيَلْعَنُ بَعْضُكُم بَعْضًا ۖ وَمَأْوَىٰكُمُ ٱلنَّارُ وَمَا لَكُم مِّن
نَّٰصِرِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾ فَـَٔامَنَ لَهُۥ لُوطٌ ۘ وَقَالَ إِنِّى مُهَاجِرٌ إِلَىٰ رَبِّىٓ ۖ إِنَّهُۥ هُوَ ٱلْعَزِيزُ

We sent Noah to his people[21] and he lived among them for a thousand years save fifty.[22] Consequently, the Flood overtook them while they persisted in wickedness.[23] Then We rescued Noah and those in the Ark[24] and made it an object of warning for the people of the world.[25] 14-15

And (We) sent Abraham,[26] when he said to his people "Worship Allah and fear Him:[27] this is better for you only if you know it. Those whom you worship instead of Allah are mere idols, and you are forging a lie.[28] In fact, Those whom you worship, besides Allah, have no power to give you any sustenance. Ask Allah for sustenance, and worship Him alone and be grateful to Him, for to Him you will be returned.[29] And if you deny, many a nation before you also have denied (the Truth)[30]; and the Messenger's only responsibility is to convey the message clearly. 16-18

Have[31] these people never seen how Allah originates the creation, and then repeats it ? Surely this (repetition) is easier for Allah.[32] Say to them, "Go about in the earth and see how He has begun the creation; then Allah will recreate life: surely Allah has power over everything.[33] He may punish whom He wills and show mercy to whom He wills; to Him you shall be turned back. You can neither make (Him) helpless in the earth nor in the heaven,[34] and you have no patron and helper to save you from Allah.[35] Those who have denied Allah's Revelations and their meeting with Him, have despaired of My Mercy,[36] and they will have a painful punishment. 19-23

Then[37] the only answer his people gave was to say, "Kill him or burn him."[38] At last, Allah saved him from the fire;[39] surely in this there are Signs for those who believe.[40] He said,[41] "Here in the worldly life you have made the idols, instead of Allah, a means of love among yourselves,[42] but on the Day of Resurrection, you will disown and curse one another.[43] Fire will be your abode and you shall have no helper." Then Lot believed in him,[44] and Abraham said, "I shall migrate towards my Lord:[45] He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise."[46] 24-26

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presumptions they would counsel a Muslim, saying, "Well, if you think that disbelief is really a sin, and there is going to be Resurrection when you will be called to account for this sin, then we are ready to take this sin of yours on our

selves. You leave it to us and give up the religion of Muḥammad and return to your ancestral religion." In this two other false things were also included: (a) Their belief that a person who commits an offence on someone else's prompting can be exempted from its responsibility, and the whole responsibility can be assumed by the one who had prompted the commission of the offence; and (b) their false promise that on the Day of Resurrection they will certainly assume the responsibility for those who might have turned apostates on their counselling. For when Resurrection will actually be established, and they will see Hell against their expectations, they will never be prepared to receive the punishment of their own disbelief as well as bear the whole burden of the sins of those others whom they had deceived and misled in the world.

21. For comparison, see Āl-i-'Imrān: 33-34, An-Nisā': 163, Al-An'ām: 84, Al-A'rāf: 59-64, Yūunus: 71-73, Hūd: 25-48, Al-Anbiyāā: 76-77, Al-Mu'minūn: 23-30, Al-Furqān: 37, Ash-Shu'arāa: 105-123, As-Ṣāffāt: 75-82, Al-Qamar: .9-15, Al-Ḥāāqqah: 11-12, Nūḥ (the whole of it).

One should keep the initial verses of the Sūrah in view in order to understand the relevancy of these stories in this context. There, on the one hand, it has been said to the believers, "We have put to the test all those believers who have passed before you", and, on the other, the wicked disbelievers have been warned to the effect: "You should not have the misunderstanding that you will outstrip Us and escape Our grasp." It is to impress these two things that these historical events are being related here.

22. This does not mean that the Prophet Noah lived for 950 years, but it means that after his appointment to Prophethood till the coming of the Flood, he went on making efforts for 950 years for the reformation of his wicked people, and he did not lose heart even though he suffered persecutions for such a long time. The same is the aim of the discourse here. The believers are being told: "You have been suffering persecutions and experiencing stubbornness of your wicked opponents hardly for six years or so. Just imagine the patience and resolution and firmness of Our servant who braved such afflictions and hardships continuously for nine and a half centuries."

The Qur'ān and the Bible differ about the age of the Prophet Noah. The Bible says that he lived for 950 years. He was 600 years old when the Flood came, and lived for another 350 years after the Flood. (Gen. 7: 6 and 9: 28-29). But according to the Qur'ān, he must have lived for at least a thousand years, because 950 years is the time that he spent in preaching his mission after his appointment to Prophethood till the coming of the Flood. Evidently, he must have been appointed to Prophethood after he had attained his maturity, and must have lived some life after the Flood also.

For some people such a long life is inconceivable. But in this world of God strange happenings are not rare. Wherever one may look one will see extraordinary manifestations of His power. The occurrence of certain events and things in a usual form and manner is no proof that the event or thing cannot happen in an unusual and extraordinary way. To break these assumptions there exists a long list of unusual events and things that have taken place in every kind of creation in every part of the universe. In particular, the person who has a clear concept of God's being All-Powerful, cannot be involved in the misunderstanding that it is not possible for God, Who is the Creator of life and death, to grant a life of a thousand years or so to any man. The fact is that man of his own will and wish cannot live even for a moment, but if Allah wills, He can make him live for as long as He pleases.

23. That is, the Flood came when they still persisted in their wickedness. Had they desisted from it before the coming of the Flood Allah would not have sent this torment on them.

24. That is, the people who had believed in Noah, and who had been permitted by Allah to board the Ark. This has been elucidated in Sūrah Hūd: 40, thus: "Until when Our Command came to pass and *at-Tannūr* began to boil up, We said, '(O Noah), take into Ark a pair from every species, and embark your own people—save those who have already been specifically marked—and also those who have believed; and those who had believed with Noah were only a few."

25. It can also mean this: "We made this dreadful punishment or this great event a Sign of warning for the later generations." But from the way this has been mentioned here and in Sūrah Qamar, it appears that the object of warning was the Ark itself, which remained on the top of the mountain for centuries and continued to remind the later generations that a Flood of such magnitude had once come in that land because of which the Ark had risen up to rest on the mountain. In Sūrah Qamar: 13-15, it has been said: "And We bore Noah upon a thing (Ark) made of planks and nails, which floated under Our care. This was a vengeance for the sake of him who had been slighted. And We left that Ark as a Sign. Then, is there any who would take admonition ?"

In his commentary on this verse of Sūrah Qamar, Ibn Jarīr says on the authority of Qatādah that during the period of the Companions when the Muslims went to the land of al-Jazīrah, they saw the Ark on mount Jūdī (according to another tradition, near the habitation of Bāqirwā). In the modern times also news appear from time to time in the papers that expeditions are being sent to search out the boat, because something resembling a boat has been sighted many time from aeroplanes during flights over Mount Ararat. (For further details, see E.N. 47 of Al-A'raf and E.N. 46 of Hūd).

26. For comparison, see Al-Baqarah: 122-141, 258-260; Āl-i-'Imrān: 64-71; Al-An'ām: 71-82; Hūd: 69-83; Ibrāhīm: 35-41; Al-Ḥijr: 45-60; Maryam: 41-50; Al-Anbiyāa: 51-75; Ash-Shu'arāa: 69-104; As-Ṣāffāt: 75-113; Az-Zukhruf: 26-35; Adh-Dhāriyāt: 24-46.

27. That is, "Fear disobeying Him and associating others with Him."

28. That is, "You are not forging idols but a lie. These idols are in themselves a lie. Then your beliefs that they are gods and goddesses, or they are incarnation of God, or His offspring, or His favourites, or intercessors with Him, or that someone of them is bestower of health, or giver of children or jobs, are all lies, which you have invented from your own whims and conjecture. The fact is that they are in no way more than idols—lifeless, powerless and impotent.

29. In these few sentences the Prophet Abraham has put together all rational arguments against idol-worship. There must necessarily be some reason for making somebody or something a deity. One such reason can be that somebody should be entitled to being a deity due to some personal excellence. Another, that he should be the creator of man, and man should be indebted to him for his existence. Third, that he should be responsible for man's sustenance, his food and other means of life. Fourth, that man's future should be linked up with his support and bounty, and man may be afraid that annoying him would mean bringing about his own ruin. The Prophet Abraham said that none of these four things favoured idol-worship, but they all favoured and demanded pure God-worship. Saying that they are mere idols, he demolished the first argument, for a mere idol could have no excellence to entitle it to be a deity. Then, by saying that "You are their creator", he refuted the second argument, and "they have no power to give you any sustenance" destroyed the third reason. Lastly, he said, "You have to return to Allah ultimately" and not to the idols; therefore, it was not in their power to make or mar your destiny, but in the power of God alone. Thus, after a complete refutation of *shirk*, the Prophet Abraham made it clear to them that all the reasons for which man could regard somebody as a deity only applied to Allah, Who alone should be worshipped without associating anyone else with him.

30. That is, "If you reject my invitation to *Tauhīd and* deny my message that you have to return to your Lord and render an account of your deeds, it will not be a new thing. In the history of mankind many Prophets—like Noah, Hūd, Ṣāliḥ (on whom be Allah's peace) before also have brought the same teachings, and their peoples denied them likewise. Now you may judge for yourselves as to whether they harmed the Prophets or only themselves".

31. From here to the end of verse 23 is a parenthesis, which has been interposed in the story of the Prophet Abraham and addressed to the disbelievers of

Makkah. The relevance of this interposition in the story, which is being related for the admonition of the disbelievers, is that they were basically involved in two kinds of deviation: *shirk* and idol-worship, and the denial of the Hereafter. The first of these has been refuted in the Prophet Abraham's speech as related above. Now the second is being refuted in these few sentences by Allah Himself.

32. That is, "On the one hand, countless new things come into existence from non-existence, and on the other, similar new members continue coming into existence to take the place of the dying members of every species. The polytheists ackowledged that that was all due to Allah's power of creation and invention. They never denied Allah's being a Creator, just as the polytheists of today do not do. Therefore, the argument has been based upon what they themselves acknowledged as a reality, as if to say, "How do you think that God, Who, according to your own belief, . brings things into existence from non-existence, and does not create things just once, but goes on bringing into existence similar things in place of the dying things repeatedly in front of your very eyes, will not be able to raise you back to life after death ?" (For further explanation, see E.N. 80 of Sūrah An-Naml).

33. That is, "When you yourselves are witnessing things being created in the first instance by God's competence and skill, you should understand it well that re-creation shall also take place by the same competence and skill. Such a thing is not beyond His power nor can it be."

34. That is, "You cannot escape Allah's grasp wherever you may flee. Whether you descend into the depths of the earth or climb into the heights of the sky, you will be apprehended in any case and brought before your Lord." The something has been said in Sūrah Ar-Rahmān as a challenge to the jinns and mankind: "O company of jinns and men! If you have the power to escape across the bounds of the earth and heavens, then do escape! You shall not escape, for it requires a great power." (v. 33).

35. That is,"Neither you yourselves have the power that you should escape Allah's grasp, nor is any of your guardians or patrons or supporters so powerful that he should give you refuge against Allah and save you from His punishment. None in the entire universe can dare rise as a supporter of those who have committed *shirk* and disbelief, who have refused to submit before Divine Commands, who have dared disobey Allah impudently, and raised storms of wickedness and mishief on His earth; and withhold enforcement of the Divine decree of torment against them, or have the nerve to say in God's Court: "They are my followers: therefore, whatever they might have done should be forgiven them."

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الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهٗٓ اِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوْبَ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِ النُّبُوَّةَ وَالْكِتٰبَ
وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ اَجْرَهٗ فِي الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَاِنَّهٗ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ لَمِنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَلُوْطًا اِذْ
قَالَ لِقَوْمِهٖٓ اِنَّكُمْ لَتَاْتُوْنَ الْفَاحِشَةَ ۖ مَا سَبَقَكُمْ بِهَا مِنْ اَحَدٍ مِّنَ
الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ اَىِٕنَّكُمْ لَتَاْتُوْنَ الرِّجَالَ وَتَقْطَعُوْنَ السَّبِيْلَ ۙ وَتَاْتُوْنَ فِيْ نَادِيْكُمُ
الْمُنْكَرَ ۭ فَمَا كَانَ جَوَابَ قَوْمِهٖٓ اِلَّآ اَنْ قَالُوا ائْتِنَا بِعَذَابِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ كُنْتَ
مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ انْصُرْنِيْ عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْمُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَلَمَّا جَاۗءَتْ

رُسُلُنَآ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ بِالْبُشْرٰى ۙ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّا مُهْلِكُوْٓا اَهْلِ هٰذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ ۚ اِنَّ اَهْلَهَا
كَانُوْا ظٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالَ اِنَّ فِيْهَا لُوْطًا ۭ قَالُوْا نَحْنُ اَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ فِيْهَا ۡ
لَنُنَجِّيَنَّهٗ وَاَهْلَهٗٓ اِلَّا امْرَاَتَهٗ ۡ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَلَمَّآ اَنْ جَاۗءَتْ
رُسُلُنَا لُوْطًا سِيْۗءَ بِهِمْ وَضَاقَ بِهِمْ ذَرْعًا وَّقَالُوْا لَا تَخَفْ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ ۡ
اِنَّا مُنَجُّوْكَ وَاَهْلَكَ اِلَّا امْرَاَتَكَ كَانَتْ مِنَ الْغٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ اِنَّا مُنْزِلُوْنَ عَلٰٓى
اَهْلِ هٰذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ رِجْزًا مِّنَ السَّمَاۗءِ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَفْسُقُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ تَّرَكْنَا
مِنْهَآ اٰيَةًۢ بَيِّنَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَاِلٰى مَدْيَنَ اَخَاهُمْ شُعَيْبًا ۙ فَقَالَ
يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ وَارْجُوا الْيَوْمَ الْاٰخِرَ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ مُفْسِدِيْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾
فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَاَخَذَتْهُمُ الرَّجْفَةُ فَاَصْبَحُوْا فِيْ دَارِهِمْ جٰثِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَعَادًا وَّ
ثَمُوْدَا وَقَدْ تَّبَيَّنَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ مَّسٰكِنِهِمْ ۡ وَزَيَّنَ لَهُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ اَعْمَالَهُمْ
فَصَدَّهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيْلِ وَكَانُوْا مُسْتَبْصِرِيْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَقَارُوْنَ وَفِرْعَوْنَ وَ
هَامٰنَ ۡ وَلَقَدْ جَاۗءَهُمْ مُّوْسٰى بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَمَا كَانُوْا
سٰبِقِيْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ فَكُلًّا اَخَذْنَا بِذَنْۢبِهٖ ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ اَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِ حَاصِبًا ۚ وَ

And We bestowed on him (children like) Isaac and Jacob,[47] and placed in his progeny the Prophethood and the Book,[48] and give him his reward in this world, and in the Hereafter he will surely be among the righteous.[49] 27

And We sent Lot,[50] when he said to his people, "You commit the indecency which no other people has ever committed before you in the world. What! Do you go to the males,[51] and commit robbery and indulge in indecencies in your assemblies ?"[52] Then the only answer his people gave was to say, "Bring forth the torment of Allah if you are truthful." Lot said, "O my Lord, help me against these mischief-makers." 28-30

And when Our messengers came to Abraham with the good news,[53] they said to him, "We are going to destroy the people of this habitation,[54] for its people have become very wicked." Abraham said, "There is Lot in it."[55] They replied, "We know full well who is in it we shall save him and all his household except his wife;" his wife was of those who remained behind.[56] 31-35

Then, when Our messengers came to Lot, he grew anxious for them and distressed at heart.[57] They said, "Do not fear nor grieve;[58] we shall save you and your household, except your wife, who is of those who will remain behind. We are going to bring down a torment from the sky upon the people of this habitation on account of the evil they have been committing" And We have left from the habitation a clear Sign[59] for those who use their common sense.[60] 33-37

And to Madyan, We sent their brother Shu'aib.[61] He said, "O my people, worship Allah and look forward to the Last Day,[62] and do not commit excesses in the land wickedly." But they treated him as a liar.[63] Consequently, a severe earthquake overtook them, and they lay lifeless in their dwelling-places.[64] 36-37

And We destroyed 'Ād and Thamhūd. You have seen the places where they lived.[65] Satan made their deeds seem fair to them and misled them from the right path, although they were sensible people.[66] And We destroyed Korah and Pharaoh and Hāmān. Moses came to them with clear Signs, but they assumed arrogance in the land, whereas 38-39

they could not outstrip[67] Us.

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36. That is, "They have no share in My mercy, and they should entertain no hope whatever of getting any share of My mercy. When they denied the Revelations of Allah, they themselves gave up their right to benefit by the promises Allah has made to the believers. Then, when they have denied the Hereafter and do not at all believe that one day they will have to stand before their God, it only means that they cherish no hope at all of Allah's pardon and forgiveness. After this when they will open their eyes in the-Hereafter, against their expectations, and will also see the truth of those Signs of Allah, which they had denied, there is no reason why they should expect to receive any share from Allah's mercy."

37. From here the discourse again turns to the story of the Prophet Abraham.

38. That is, they had no answer to the Prophet Abraham's rational arguments. The only answer they gave was: "Cut off the tongue that talks the truth and let not the person live, who points out our error and tells us to give it up." The words, "Kill him or burn him", indicate that the whole crowd was unanimous that the Prophet Abraham should be put to death. However, they differed about the method. Some said that he should be killed, and others said that he should be burnt alive, so that no one in future should dare say the sort of the thing he said.

39. This sentence by itself shows that they had at last decided to burn the Prophet Abraham and he was cast into the fire. Here it has only been said that Allah saved him from the fire; but in Sūrah Al-Anbiyāa it has been elucidated that Allah commanded: "O fire! Be cool and become safe for Abraham!" (v. 69) Evidently, if he was not at all cast into the fire, the Command to the fire to become cool and safe would be meaningless. This proves that properties of all things are dependent on Allah's Command and whenever He pleases He can change the property of anything He likes. Normally fire burns and every combustible thing catches fire. But this property of the fire is not of its own acquisition but given by God. And this property has in no way tied up God that He may give no Command against it. He is the Master of His fire. He can command it any time to give up the property of burning. At any time He can turn a furnace into a bed of roses. But events contrary to the course of nature occur only rarely to serve some great purpose or cause. However, the usual phenomena to which we are accustomed in our daily lives, cannot be made an argument to say that Allah's power has been tied up with these, and nothing unusual can take place even by Allah's Command.

40. "Signs ... believe": Signs for the believers in this that the Prophet Abraham did not follow the religion of his family, community and country but followed the true knowledge through which he came to know that *shirk* is falsehood and *Tauḥīd* the Reality; and in this that he went on exhorting his people to accept the Truth and to desist from falsehood in spite of their stubbornness and prejudices; and in this that he was even prepared to suffer the horrible punishment by the fire, but was not prepared to give up the Truth; and in this that Allah did not even spare the Prophet Abraham, His Friend, from the trials and tests; and in this that when the Prophet Abraham got successfully through the tests set by Allah, then did come Allah's succour, and in such a miraculous way that the bonfire was turned cool for him!

41. The Prophet Abraham must have said this after his safe deliverance from the fire.

42. That is, "You have built up your collective life on the foundation of idol-worship instead of God-worship, which can keep you bound together as a nation only to the extent of mudane life. For here in this world people can be got together around any creed, true or false, and any kind of agreement and concord on any belief, however wrong and ill-conceived, can become a means of the establishment of mutual friendships, kinships, brotherhoods, and all other religious, social, cultural, economic and political relationships."

43. That is, "The collective life that you have built on the false creed in the world cannot endure in the Hereafter. Only those relationships of love and friendship and cooperation and kinship and mutual regard and esteem will endure there, which have been based on the worship of One God and virtue and piety in the world. All relationships founded on disbelief and *shirk* and deviation will be severed, and all kinds of love will change into enmity and hatred. The son and the father, the husband and the wife, the saint and the disciple, all will curse each other, and each will blame his deviation on the other, and will say, "This wicked person led me astray: he should be given a double punishment." This thing has been stated at several places in the Qur'ān. For example, in Sūrah Zukhruf, it has been said: "Friends on that Day shall become enemies of one another, except the righteous." (v. 67) In Sūrah Al-A'rāf: "As each generation will be entering Hell, it will curse its preceding generation till all generations shall be gathered together there: then each succeeding generation will say regarding the preceding one, "O Lord, these were the people who led us astray; therefore, give them a double chastisement of the Fire." (v. 38) And in Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb: "And they will say; 'Our Lord, we obeyed our chiefs and our great men, and they led us astray from

the right path. Lord, give them a double chatisement and curse them severely." (vv. 67-68).

44. The context shows that when the Prophet Abraham came out of the fire and spoke the preceding sentences, only Prophet Lot from the entire crowd came forward to proclaim his belief and adopt his obedience. It is just possible that many other people also on this occasion might have been convinced of the Prophet Abraham's being a true Prophet, but in view of the violent reaction that had been shown openly by the entire community and the government against Abraham's Faith, no one else could muster up courage to affirm faith in such a dangerous truth and follow it. This good fortune fell to the lot of only one man, the Prophet Lot, the nephew of the Prophet Abraham, who at last accompanied his uncle and aunt (Ḥaḍrat Sarah) in their migration also.

Here, the question may arise: Was the Prophet Lot a disbeliever and a *mushrik* before this, and did he believe only after witnessing the miracle of the Prophet Abraham's emerging safe and sound from the fire? If it is so, can a person who has been a *mushrik* be appointed to Prophethood? The answer is this: Here the Qur'ān has used the words *fa-āmana la-hū Lūt*, which do not necessarily imply that the Prophet Lot disbelieved in God before this, or associated other deities with Him. They only show that after this he confirmed the Prophethood of the Prophet Abraham, and adopted his obedience. Possibly the Prophet Lot was a young boy then and this might be the first very occasion when he became acquainted with the teachings of his uncle and his Prophethood.

45. That is, "I shall leave my country for the sake of my Lord and go wherever my Lord may take me."

46. That is, "He possesses the power to help and protect me, and whatever He decides for me will be based on wisdom."

47. The Prophet Isaac was the son and the Prophet Jacob the grandson. The other sons of the Prophet Abraham have not been mentioned here, because from his Midianite descendants only the Prophet Shu'aib was appointed a Prophet, and no Prophet was born among his Ishmaelite descendants for 2500 years or so till our Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him). Contrary to this, the descendants of the Prophet Isaac (peace be upon him) continued to be blessed with the Prophethood and the Book till the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him).

48. This covers all the Prophets who were raised from all the branches of the Prophet Abraham's progeny.

49. What is meant to be said is this: The rulers and the learned men and the priests of Babylon who tried to defeat the mission of the Prophet Abraham (Allah's peace be upon him) and the polytheistic people who had followed their wicked chiefs blindly, have since been blotted out and no trace of them is to be found anywhere in the world, but the person whom they had wanted to annihilate by burning in the fire only because he had proclaimed the Word of Allah, and who eventually had to leave his country empty-handed, was so blessed by Allah that his name has been well known in the world since the past 4,000 years and will remain so till the Last Day. All the Muslims and the Christians and the Jews unanimously recognize that Friend of the Lord of the worlds as their spiritual Leader. Whatever guidance mankind has received during the past 40 centuries has been received through this one man and his righteous descendants. The unique reward that he will get in the Hereafter is assured, but the place of honour that he has gained even in this world has not been gained so far by any of those who have exerted themselves in pursuit of the worldly benefits and advantages.

50. For comparison, see Al-A'rāf: 80-84; Hūd: 69-83; Al-Ḥijr: 57-79; Al-Anbiyāa: 71-75; Ash-Shu'arāā: 160-175; An-Naml: 54 59; As-Sāffat: 133-138; Al-Qamar: 33-40.

51. That is, "You satisfy your sex desire with the males." As stated in Al-A'rāf: 81: "You gratify your lust with men instead of women."

52. That is, "You do not even hide yourself when you commit this filthy act, but commit it openly in your assemblies, in front of others." The same has been stated in Sūrah An-Naml: 54, thus: "Do you commit the indecency while you see it?"

53. According to the details given of this in Sūrah Hūd and Al-Ḥijr, the angels who had been sent to bring the torment on the people of the Prophet Lot, first came to the Prophet Abraham and gave him the good news of the birth of the Prophet Isaac and after him of the Prophet Jacob. Then they told him that they had been sent to destroy the people of Lot.

54. "This habitation" refers to the territory of the people of Lot. The Prophet Abraham at that time resided in the Palestinian city of Hebron, now called Al-Khalil. A few miles to the south-east of this city lies that part of the Dead Sea, which was once inhabited by the people of Lot and which is now under sea water. It is a low-lying area and is clearly visible from the hill country of Hebron. That is why the angels, pointing towards it, had said: "We are going to destroy this habitation." (See also E.N. 114 of Ash-Shu'arāāa).

55. According to the initial part of this story as related in Sūrah Hūd, the

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مِنْهُمْ مَّنْ اَخَذَتْهُ الصَّيْحَةُ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ خَسَفْنَا بِهِ الْاَرْضَ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ
مَّنْ اَغْرَقْنَا ۚ وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾
مَثَلُ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اَوْلِيَآءَ كَمَثَلِ الْعَنْكَبُوْتِ ۚ اِتَّخَذَتْ
بَيْتًا ۭ وَاِنَّ اَوْهَنَ الْبُيُوْتِ لَبَيْتُ الْعَنْكَبُوْتِ ۘ لَوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
يَعْلَمُ مَا يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۭ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَتِلْكَ
الْاَمْثَالُ نَضْرِبُهَا لِلنَّاسِ ۚ وَمَا يَعْقِلُهَآ اِلَّا الْعٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿٤٣﴾ خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾

اُتْلُ مَآ اُوْحِيَ اِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتٰبِ وَاَقِمِ الصَّلٰوةَ ۭ اِنَّ الصَّلٰوةَ تَنْهٰى

عَنِ الْفَحْشَاۗءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۭ وَلَذِكْرُ اللّٰهِ اَكْبَرُ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُوْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾
وَلَا تُجَادِلُوْٓا اَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ اِلَّا بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُ ۡ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مِنْهُمْ
وَقُوْلُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا بِالَّذِيْٓ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْنَا وَاُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكُمْ وَاِلٰهُنَا وَاِلٰهُكُمْ وَاحِدٌ
وَّنَحْنُ لَهٗ مُسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ اَنْزَلْنَآ اِلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ ۭ فَالَّذِيْنَ اٰتَيْنٰهُمُ
الْكِتٰبَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهٖ ۚ وَمِنْ هٰٓؤُلَاۗءِ مَنْ يُّؤْمِنُ بِهٖ ۭ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اِلَّا
الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَمَا كُنْتَ تَتْلُوْا مِنْ قَبْلِهٖ مِنْ كِتٰبٍ وَّلَا تَخُطُّهٗ بِيَمِيْنِكَ
اِذًا لَّارْتَابَ الْمُبْطِلُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ بَلْ هُوَ اٰيٰتٌۢ بَيِّنٰتٌ فِيْ صُدُوْرِ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا
الْعِلْمَ ۭ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اِلَّا الظّٰلِمُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَقَالُوْا لَوْلَآ اُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ اٰيٰتٌ
مِّنْ رَّبِّهٖ ۭ قُلْ اِنَّمَا الْاٰيٰتُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَاِنَّمَآ اَنَا نَذِيْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ اَوَلَمْ
يَكْفِهِمْ اَنَّآ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ يُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِمْ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَرَحْمَةً وَّ
ذِكْرٰى لِقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ قُلْ كَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَكُمْ شَهِيْدًا ۚ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي

Consequently, We seized each one of them on account of his sin: then against some We sent a wind to rain stones on them;[68] some others were overtaken by a terrible blast,[69] and some other We sank underground,[70] and some We drowned.[71] Allah was not unjust to them, but they were themselves being unjust to their souls.[72] 40

The likeness of those who have taken other patrons than Allah, is the likeness of a spider, which makes itself a dwelling; and the weakest of all dwellings is the dwelling of a spider. Would that these people had knowledge![73] Allah surely knows whomever they invoke instead of Him: He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.[74] These parables We cite for the instruction of the people, but only those people understand them, who have knowledge. Allah has created the heavens and the earth with the Truth.[75] Indeed there is a Sign in this for the believers.[76] 41-44

(O Prophet,) recite this Book which has been revealed to you, and establish the *Ṣalāt*:[77] surely the *Ṣalāt* restrains from indecent and evil acts,[78] and the remembrance of Allah is a thing even greater[79] than this; Allah knows whatever you do. 45

And[80] do not dispute with the people of the Book except in the best manner,[81]—save with those who are wicked among them[82]—and say to them, "We have believed in that which has been sent down to us as well as in that which had been sent down to you. Our God and your God is One, and to Him we have surrendered[83] (as Muslims). (O Prophet,) We have likewise sent down the Book to you:[84] therefore, those to whom We gave the Book before this, believe in it,[85] and so do many of these people,[86] and none but the disbelievers deny Our Revelations.[87] 46-47

(O Prophet,) you did not read any book before this, nor did you write any with your hand. If it were so, the worshippers of falsehood could have been involved in doubt.[88] These are, in fact, clear Signs in the hearts of those who have been given knowledge;[89] and none deny Our Revelations except the wicked. They say, "Why have Signs[90] not been sent down upon this person from his Lord ?" Say, "The Signs are with Allah: I am only a plain warner." Is this (Sign) not enough for these people that We have sent down to you the Book, which is recited to them?[91] Indeed, there is mercy in it and admonition for those who 48-52

believe.[92] (O Prophet,) say, "Allah suffices as a witness between me and you. He knows all that is there in the heavens and the earth. Those who believe in falsehood and deny Allah, shall be the losers."

Contd. from p. 569]

Prophet Abraham at first was perturbed to see the angels in human shape, for he knew that the coming of the angels in human shape was always a prelude to some dangerous mission. Then, when they gave him the good news, his fear was allayed and he came to know that they had been sent to the people of Lot. Then he began making entreaties of mercy for those people (Hūd: 74-75), but his entreaties were not granted, and it was said: "Do not plead for them any more: your Lord's decree has been issued, and the punishment now cannot be averted." (v. 76) After this answer, when the Prophet Abraham lost all hope of any increase in the respite of Lot's people, he became anxious about the Prophet Lot himself, and said, what has been related here: "There is Lot in it." That is, "If the torment comes down when Lot is there, how will he and his household remain safe from it?"

56. According to Sūrah Taḥrīm: 10, this woman was not faithful to the Prophet Lot. That is why it was decreed that she too, would be afflicted with the torment in spite of being a Prophet's wife. Most probably when the Prophet Lot had come to Jordan after the migration and settled there, he might have married among the people living there. But the woman did not believe even after spending a lifetime with him, and her sympathies remained with her own people. As Allah has no consideration for relationships and brotherhoods and every person's case is decided on the basis of his own faith and morality, even being a Prophet's wife did not profit her in any way and she met her doom along with her own people with whom she had remained attached in faith and morality.

57. The reason for this anxiety and distress was that the angels had come in the shape of handsome, young boys. The Prophet Lot was aware of his people's morals. Therefore, he became perturbed at their arrival. He was thinking, "If I receive these guests in my house, it will be difficult to save them from the immoral people; if I do not receive them, it will be highly uncivil and unbecoming of the noble people. Moreover, if I do not provide shelter to these travellers, they will stay the night elsewhere, which would mean that I have myself given them away to the wicked people." What happened after this has not been related here. But according to the details given in Sūrahs Hūd, Al-Ḥijr and Al-Qamar, the people of the city thronged to the Prophet Lot's house and insisted that the guests be handed over to them for immorality.

58. That is, "As for us, you should neither fear that they will in any way be able to harm us, nor be anxious about how you will protect us from them."

This was the time when the angels revealed their identity to the Prophet Lot, and said that they were not men but angels, who had been sent to bring the scourge on his people. According to the elucidation in Sūrah Hūd, when the people were rushing into Lot's house and he felt that he could in no way save his guests from them, he cried out: "I wish I had the power to set you right, or I could find some strong support for refuge."' (v. 80) At this time the angels said: "O Lot, we are messengers sent by your Lord; they will not be able to harm you at all." (v. 81).

59. "A clear Sign": the Dead Sea, which is also called Sea of Lot. The Qur'an at several places has addressed the disbelievers of Makkah, saying, "A Sign of the torment that visited this wicked people on account of their misdeeds still exists on the highway, which you see night and day during your trade journeys to Syria." (Al-Ḥijr: 76; As-Ṣāffāt: 137).

Today it is being admitted with near certainty that the southern end of the Dead Sea came into being as a result of a violent earthquake when the area in which Sodom, the central city of the people of Lot, was located sank underground. In this part there are still signs of some submerged habitations. Exploratory attempts are being made with the modern diving apparatus but the results are still awaited. (For further explanation, see E. N. 114 of Ash-Shu'arāa

60. For the Islamic punishment of sodomy, see E.N. 68 of Sūrah Al-A'rāf.

61. For comparison, see Al-'rāf: 85-93, Hūd: 84-96, Ash-Shu'arāa: 177-191.

62. This can have two meanings: (1) "Look forward to the life hereafter, and do not think that there is no life after this worldly life, when you will have to render an accout of your deeds and be rewarded or punished accordingly.'' (2) "Work righteously so as to meet a good end in the Hereafter."

63. That is, "They did not believe that the Prophet Shu'aib was a Messenger of Allah and the teachings he gave were from Allah and that if they rejected him they would be punished by a torment from Allah."

64. "Dwelling-places": the whole area and country inhabited by those people.

65. Every Arab was acquainted with the lands where these two nations had lived. The whole of southern Arabia now known as Aḥqāf, Yaman and Ḥaḍramaut, was the land of 'Ād in the ancient times, and the Arabs knew it. The whole area in the north of the Ḥijāz, from Rābigh to 'Aqabah and from Madīnah and Khaiber to Taimā' and Tabūk, still abounds with Thamūdic monuments, which

must have been more prominent than they are today in the time when the Qur'ān was being revealed.

66. That is, "They were not ignorant and foolish people, but were the most civilized people of their own times. They performed and carried out their worldly duties and chores very carefully and intelligently. Therefore, it cannot be said that Satan deluded them and pulled them on to his way by artifice and deception. Nay, they adopted the way shown by Satan with open eyes and with full understanding because it promised great pleasures and advantages; and they abandoned the way presented by the Prophets because it appeared to be colourless, tasteless and troublesome due to moral restrictions."

67. That is, "They could not have got away and escaped Allah's grasp: they had no power to frustrate and defeat Allah's plans and schemes."

68. That is, 'Ād who were subjected to a furious windstorm which blew on them for seven nights and eight days continuously.

69. That is, Thamūd.

70. That is, Korah.

71. That is, Pharaoh and Hāmān.

72. The stories that have been related in the foregoing verses, have been addressed and directed both to the believers and to the disbelievers. To the believers they have been addressed so that they do not feel discouraged and distressed at heart, and keep aloft the banner of the Truth firmly and patiently even in the face of the severe persecutions and hardships, and should have full faith in Allah that His succour shall ultimately come, and He will frustrate the designs of the wicked people and make the Word of the Truth to prevail. On the other hand, these have been addressed to those wicked people also, who in their arrogance were bent upon exterminating the Islamic movement. They have been warned to the effect: "You have formed a wrong opinion about Allah's forbearance and clemency. You think; that His is a lawless Kingdom. If you have not been seized so far for your rebellion and your tyrannies and wicked deeds and have been granted a long respite so that you may reform yourselves, you have inferred that there exists no power whatever which can call you to account, and that one can go on doing whatever one likes endlessly on this earth. This misconception will ultimately lead you to the same doom that has already been met by the peoples of Noah and Lot and Shu'aib, and experienced by 'Ād and Thamūd, and seen by Korah and Pharaoh.

73. All the above-mentioned nations were involved in *shirk*, and their belief about their deities was that they were their supporters and helpers and

guardians, and had the power to make or mar their destinies; so when they will have won their goodwill by worship and presentation of offerings they will succour them in need and protect them against calamities and afflictions. But, as shown by the historical events cited above, all their beliefs and superstitions proved to be baseless when their destruction was decreed by Allah. Then no god, and no god-incarnate, and no saint or spirit, and no jinn or angel, whom they worshipped came to their rescue, and they met their destruction with the realization that their expectations and beliefs had been false and futile. After relating these events, Allah is now warning the *mushriks* to the effect: "The reality of the toy-house of expectations that you have built on your faith in the powerless servants and imaginary deities, apart from the real Master and Ruler of the universe, is no more than the cobweb of a spider. Just as a cobweb cannot stand the slightest interference by a finger, so will the toy-house of your expectations collapse in its first clash with the scheme of Allah. It is nothing but ignorance that you are involved in the web of superstition. Had you any knowledge of the Reality you would not have built your system of life on baseless props. The fact is that none other than the One Lord of the worlds in this universe is the Owner of power and authority, and His support is the only support which is reliable. "Now whoever rejects *ṭāghūt* and believes in Allah has taken a firm support that never gives way. And Allah hears everything and knows everything." (Al-Baqarah: 256).

74. That is, "Allah knows full well the reality of those beings and things which they have taken as their deities and which they invoke for help. They are absolutely powerless. The Owner of power is only Allah, Who is controlling the system of this universe according to His own wisdom and design."

Another translation of this verse can be: "Allah knows full well that those whom they invoke, apart from Him, are nonentities, and He alone is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise."

75. That is, "The system of the universe is based on the truth and not on falsehood. Whoever ponders over this system with an unbiased mind will realize that the earth and the heavens owe their existence to reality and fact and not to superstition and fancy. Here there is no possibility that whatever a person may conceive in his mind and whatever philosophy he may invent out of his personal whim and conjecture should fit in with the system. Here only such a thing can succeed and endure, which is in harmony with the reality and actual fact. A structure that is raised on unreal presumptions and hypotheses will ultimately collapse when it clashes with the reality. The system of the universe clearly testifies that its Creator is One God, and One God alone is its Master and Disposer. If a person works against this basic Reality on the presumption that this world has no God, or that it has many gods, who devour the offerings of their

devotees and in return give them a licence to do whatever they please and a guarantee to live in peace and happiness, the Reality will not change due to his presumptions, but, on the contrary, he himself will some time meet with a grave disaster."

76. That is, "A clear evidence exists in the creation of the earth and the heavens about the truth of *Tauḥīd* and the refutation of polytheism and atheism, but this evidence is found only by those who accept the teachings of the Prophets of Allah. Those who deny them do not find it even though they see everything."

77. The address apparently is directed to the Holy Prophet but, in fact, it is meant for all the believers. Until now they were being counselled patience and reliance on Allah to brave the extreme trying conditions in which they found themselves and the persecutions they were being subjected to on account of their faith. Now they are being told to recite the Qur'ān and establish the *Ṣalāt* as a practical device, for these are the two things which endow a believer with a strong character and a wonderful capacity by which he can not only brave successfully the most violent storms of evil and falsehood but can even subdue them. But man can acquire this power from the recitation of the Qur'ān and the Prayer only when he does not remain content with the mere recital of the words but also understands well the Qur'ānic teachings and absorbs them in his soul, and his Prayer does not remain confined to physical movements but becomes the very function of his heart and the motive force for his morals and character. The desired quality of the Prayer is being mentioned by the Qur'ān itself in the next sentence. As for its recitation, one should know that the recitation which does not reach the heart beyond the throat, cannot even give man enough power to remain steadfast to his faith, not to speak of enabling him to withstand the furies of unbelief. About such people, a *Ḥadīth* says: "They will recite the Qur'ān, but the Qur'ān will not go beyond their throats; they will leave the Faith just as the arrow leaves the bow." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Mu'aṭṭā'). As a matter of fact, the recitation which does not effect any change in a man's way of thinking, and his morals and character, and he goes on doing what the Qur'ān forbids, is not the recitation of a believer at all. About such a one the Holy Prophet has said: ;'He who makes lawful what the Qur'ān has declared unlawful, has not believed in the Qur'ān at all." (Tirmidhi, on the authority of Ṣuhaib Rumi). Such a recitation does not reform and strengthen a man's self and spirit, but makes him even more stubborn against Allah and impudent before his own conscience, and destroys his character altogether. For the case of the person who believes in the Qur'ān as a Divine Book, reads it and comes to know what his God has enjoined, and then goes on violating His injunctions, is of the culprit, who commits a crime not due to ignorance but after full knowledge of the law. The Holy Prophet has elucidated this point in a brief sentence, thus: "The Qur'ān is a testimony in your favour as well as against you."

(Muslim). That is, "If you follow the Qur'ān rightly it is a testimony in your favour. Whenever you are called to account for your deeds, here or in the hereafter, you can produce the Qur'ān as a testimony in your defence, saying that whatever you did was in accordance with this Book. If what you did was precisely according to it, no jurist in the world will be able to punish you, nor will God in the Hereafter hold you accountable for it. But if this Book has reached you, and you have read it and found out what your Lord demands from you, what He enjoins and what He forbids, and then you adopt an attitude opposed to it, then this Book will be a testimony against you. It will further strengthen the criminal case against you in the Court of God. Then it will in no way be possible for you to escape the punishment, or receive a light punishment, by making the excuse of ignorance."

78. This is an important characteristic out of the many characteristics of the Prayer, which has been presented here prominently in view of its relevance to the context. To counter the severe storm of opposition and resistance that the Muslims were experiencing in Makkah, they stood in need of a moral force rather than any material power. To bring about the moral force and develop it suitably two practical devices were pointed out in the first instance, the recitation of the Qur'ān and the establishment of the *Ṣalāt*. Now they are being told that the establishment of the *Ṣalāt* is the means through which they can get rid of those evils in which they themselves had been involved before they embraced Islam and in which the non-Muslim Arabs and the non-Arab world around them were involved at that time.

With a little thinking one can easily understand why this special advantage of the Prayer has been particularly mentioned here. Evidently, getting rid of the moral evils is not only useful insofar as it is beneficial for those who attain the moral purity, both here and in the Hereafter, but its inevitable advantage is that it gives them unique superiority over those who might be involved in diverse moral evils, and who might be exerting their utmost to sustain the impure system of ignorance, which nourishes those evils, against the efforts of the morally pure people. Indecent and evil acts are those which man by nature abhors, and which have always been held as evil in principle by the people of every community and society, however depraved and perverted practically. The Arab society in the days of the revelation of the Qur'ān was no exception to this. Those people also were aware of the moral virtues and the evils: they valued the good above the evil and there might be none among them, who regarded the evil as identical with the good, or depreciated good. Under such conditions, in a perverted society like that, the emergence of a movement which revolutionised morally members of the same society itself as soon as they came into contact with it, and raised them in character high above their contemporaries, inevitably had widespread effects. The common

Arabs could not possibly fail to feel the moral impact of the movement, which eradicated evils and promoted goodness, and instead go on following those who were themselves morally corrupt and were fighting to sustain the system of ignorance, which had been nourishing those evils since centuries. That is why the Qur'ān at that time exhorted the Muslims to establish *Ṣalāt* instead of urging them to collect material resources and force and strength that could win over the people's hearts and defeat the enemy without any material force.

The virtue of the Prayer that has been mentioned here has two aspects: its essential and inseparable quality that it restrains from evil and indecent acts, and its desired quality that the one who performs it should in actual fact refrain from evil and indecent acts. As for the first quality the Prayer does restrain people from the evils. Anyone who ponders a little over the nature of the Prayer, will admit that of all the checks and brakes that can be put on man to restrain him from the evils, the Prayer can be the most effective. After all, what check could be more effective than this that man should be called upon five times a day for the remembrance of Allah and made to remind himself again and again that he is not wholly free and independent in this world but is the servant of One God, and his God is He Who is aware of his open as well as hidden acts, even of the most secret aims and intentions of his heart, and a time will surely come when he will have to account for all his deeds before his God. Then he is not only reminded of this but is given practical training at every Prayer time that he should not disobey any of his God's Commands even secretly. From the time that he stands up for the Prayer till its completion man has to perform continuously certain acts in which there is no third person, besides him and his God, who can know whether he has obeyed God's law or disobeyed it. For instance, if the man's *wuḍū* (state of ablutions) has become void and he stands up for the Prayer, there can be no one, besides him and God, who will know that he is no longer in the state of wudū. If the man has expressed no intention of the Prayer but just goes on performing all the required movements and recites poetry, for instance, instead of the prescribed texts quietly, there is none, besides him and his God who can be aware of the secret that he has not, in fact, performed his Prayer at all. Notwith standing this, if a person offers the Prayer five times a day, fulfilling faithfully all the conditions of the Divine law in respect of the cleanliness of the body and dress, and the essentials of the Prayer and its recitation, etc. it means that through this Prayer his conscience is being awakened to life several times a day, he is being helped to become a responsible and dutiful person, and he is being practically trained that he should, under his own urge of obedience, abide by the law which he has believed in openly as well as secretly, regardless whether there is any external force to make him abide by it or not, and whether the people of the world have any knowledge of his intentions and deeds or not.

Thus considered, one cannot help admitting that the Prayer not only restrains man from the evils and indecencies, but, in fact, there is no other method of training in the world, which may be so effective as the Prayer is in restraining man from the evils. As for the question whether or not man in actual fact refrains from the evils even after attendance at the Prayer, this depends upon the man himself, who is undergoing training for self-reform. If he has the intention to benefit from it, and endeavours for it, the reformatory effects of the Prayer will certainly have their impact on him. Otherwise, evidently, no reformatory device in the world can be effective with a person, who is not prepared to receive any impact of it, or tries to avoid its impact intentionally. This can be explained by an example. The essential quality of food is to nourish the body and develop it. But this advantage can be had only when food is allowed to be assimilated. If a person vomits what he eats after every meal, his food cannot profit him in any way. Just as, keeping such a person in view, one cannot say that food is not nutritious for the body, because so-and-so is becoming a skeleton in spite of eating food, so can no one present the example of an unrighteous offerer of the Prayer and say that the Prayer does not restrain from the evils, because so-and-so is unrighteous in spite of his Prayer. Just as about such a person it will be apt to say that he does not offer the Prayer at all, so about the person who vomits everything he eats, it will be apt to say that he does not eat his food at all.

Precisely the same thing has been reported from the Holy Prophet and some great Companions and their followers. 'Imrān bin Ḥusain reports that the Holy Prophet said: "He Whose Prayer did not restrain him from the evil and indecent acts, offered no Prayer at all." (Ibn Abī Ḥātim). Ibn 'Abbās has reported the Holy Prophet as saying: "The Prayer which did not restrain a person from the evil and indecent acts, led him further away from Allah." (Ibn Abī Hātim, Ṭabarānī). A *Ḥadīth* containing the same theme has been reported by Ḥasan Baṣri directly from the Holy Prophet (Ibn Jarīr, Baihaqi). Another Ḥadīth reported on the authority of Ibn Mas'ūd is to the effect: "He who did not obey the Prayer, offered no Prayer at all, and obedience to the Prayer is that one should refrain from the evil and indecent acts." (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim). Several sayings to the same effect have been reported on the authority of 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥasan Baṣri, Qatādah and A'amash, etc. Imam Ja'far Ṣādiq has said: "He who wants to know whether his Prayer has been accepted or not, should see how far his Prayer has restrained him from the evil and indecent acts. If he has been restrained from the evils, his Prayer has been accepted." *(Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī).*

79. This can have several meanings: (1) "That the remembrance of Allah (i.e. Prayer) is a thing of much higher value: it not only restrains from the evils, but, over and above that, it induces people to act righteously and urges them to

excel one another in good acts," (2) "that Allah's remembrance in itself is a great thing: it is the best of acts: no act of man is greater in value than this.' (3) "that Allah's remembrance of you is a greater thing than your remembrance of Him. Allah has said in the Qur'ān: "So remember Me: I will remember you'." (Al-Baqarah: 156). Thus, when the servant remembers Allah in the Prayer, inevitably Allah also will remember him, and the merit of Allah's remembering the servant is certainly greater than the servant's remembering Allah. Besides these three meanings, there is another subtle meaning also, which the wife of Ḥaḍrat Abud-Dardā' has explained. She says, "Allah's remembrance is not restricted to the Prayer, but, its sphere is much vaster. When a man observes a fast, or pays the *Zakāt*, or performs a righteous act, he inevitably remembers Allah. That is why the righteous act emanates from him. Likewise, when a man refrains from an evil act when an opportunity exists for it, even this also is the result of Allah's remembrance. Thus, the remembrance of Allah pervades the entire life of a believer."

80. It should be noted that a little below in this Sūrah the people are being exhorted to migrate. At that time Ḥabash was the only place of safety to which the Muslims could migrate, and Ḥabash in those days was under the domination of the Christians. Therefore, in these verses the Muslims are being instructed as to how they should argue and discuss matters concerning religion with the people of the Book when such an occasion arises.

81. That is, "The discussion should be conducted rationally, in a civilized and decent language, so that the ideas of the other person may be reformed. The preacher's chief aim should be to appeal to the addressee's heart, convey the truth to him and bring him to the right path. He should not fight like a wrestler whose only object is to defeat his opponent. He should rather conduct himself like a physician who is ever cautious not to cause the patient's ailment to worsen by any of his own mistakes, and tries to cure him with the least possible trouble. This instruction has been given here especially in connection with the conduct of a discussion with the people of the Book, but is a general instruction pertaining to the preaching of the religion and it has been given at several places in the Qur'ān. For example, "O Prophet, invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and excellent admonition and discuss things with the people in the best manner." (An-Naḥl: 125). "O Prophet, goodness and evil are not alike. Repel evil with what is best. You will see that he, with whom you had enmity, has become your closest friend.' (Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah: 34). "O Prophet, repel evil with what is best: We are fully aware of what they utter against you." (Al-Mu'minūn: 96) "O Prophet, adopt the way of leniency and forbearance; enjoin what is good and avoid useless discussions with the ignorant people. If Satan ever excites you to anger, seek refuge in Allah." (Al-A'rāf: 199-200).

82. That is, "With those who adopt an attitude of wickedness a different attitude may also be adopted according to the nature and extent of their wickedness. In other words, one cannot, and should not adopt a soft and gentle attitude towards all sorts of the people under all circumstances at all time, which might be mistaken for the weakness and meekness of the inviter to the Truth. Islam does teach its followers to be polite, gentle and reasonable, but it does not teach them to be unduly humble and meek so that they are not taken for granted by every cruel and wicked person."

83. In these sentences Allah Himself has provided guidance to the best method of discussion, which the inviters to the Truth should adopt. The method is this: "Do not make the error or deviation of the other person the basis and starting point of the discussion, but begin the discussion with those points of truth and justice which are common between you and your opponent. That is, the discussion should start from the points of agreement and not from the points of difference. Then, arguing from the agreed points, the addressee should be made to understand that, in the matter of the things in which you differ, your stand is in conformity with the agreed points whereas his stand is contradictory to them

In this connection, one should bear in mind the fact that the people of the Book did not deny Revelation, Prophethood and *Tauhīd*, like the polytheists of Arabia, but believed in these realities just like the Muslims. After agreement on these basic things, the main thing that could become the basis of difference between them could be that the Muslim would not believe in the Divine Scriptures sent down to them and would invite them to believe in the Divine Book sent down to themselves, and would declare them disbelievers if they did not believe in it. This would have been a strong basis of their conflict. But the Muslims had a different stand. They believed as true all those Books that were with the people of the Book, and then also had believed in the Revelation that had been sent down to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Allah's peace be upon him). After this it was for the people of the Book to tell the rational ground for which they believed in one Book sent by Allah and rejected the other. That is why Allah here has instructed the Muslims that whenever they have to deal with the people of the Book, they should first of all present before them this very point of view in a positive manner. Say to them: "We believe in the same God in Whom you believe and we are obedient to Him. We have submitted ourselves to all those Commands and injunctions and teachings that have come from Him, whether they were sent down to you, or to us. We are obedient servants of God and not of a country or a community or a race, that we should submit to God's Command when it is sent down in one place and reject it when it is sent down in another place. This thing has been repeated at several places in the Qur'ān and particularly in relation to the people of the Book, it has been presented forcefully. For this,see Al-Baqarah: 4,

136, 177, 285; Āl-i-'Imrān: 84; An-Nisā': 136, 150 to 152, 162 to 164; Ash-Shu'arāa: 13.

84. This can have two meanings: (1) "Just as We had sent down the Books to the former Prophets, so We have sent down this Book to you"; and (2) "We have sent down this Book with the teaching that it should be believed in not by rejecting Our former Books but by affirming faith in all of them."

85. The context itself shows that this does not imply all the people of the Book but only those who were blessed with the right understanding and the knowledge of the Divine Scriptures, and were "the people of the Book" in the true sense. When this last Book of Allah came before them, confirming His earlier Books, they did not show any stubbornness or obstinacy but accepted it sincerely as they had accepted the previous Books.

86. "These people": the people of Arabia. What it means to say is: The truth-loving people, whether they already possess a Divine Book or do not possess any, are affirming faith in it everywhere.

87. Here, "the disbelievers" imply those people who are not prepared to give up their prejudices and accept the truth, or those who reject the truth because they do not want their lusts and their unbridled freedom to be subjected to restrictions.

88. This is the same argument that has already been given in Sūrahs Yūnus and Qaṣaṣ as a proof of the Holy Prophet's Prophethood. (See E.N. 21 of Yūnus and E.N.'s 64 and 109 of Al-Qaṣaṣ. For further explanation, see E.N. 107 of An-Naḥl, E.N. 105 of Banī Isrā'īl, E.N. 66 of Al-Mu'minūn, E.N. 12 of Al-Furqān, and E.N. 84 of Ash-Shu'arāa).

The basis of the argument in this verse is that the Holy Prophet was unlettered. His compatriots and his kinsmen among whom he had spent his whole life, from birth to old age, knew fully well that he had never read a book nor ever handled a pen. Presenting this actual fact Allah says: "This is a proof of the fact that the vast and deep knowledge of the teachings of the Divine Books, of the stories of the former Prophets, of the beliefs of the various religions and creeds, of the histories of the ancient nations, and the questions of social and moral and economic life, which is being presented through this unlettered, illiterate man, could not have been attained by him through any means but Revelation. If he had been able to read and write and the people had seen him reading books and undertaking serious studies, the worshippers of falsehood could have had some basis for their doubts, that he had acquired the knowledge not through Revelation but through study and reading. But the fact of his being absolutely illiterate has left no basis whatever for any such doubt. Therefore, there can be no ground, except sheer

stubbornness, which can be regarded as rational in any degree for denying his Prophethood."

89. That is, "The presentation of a Book like the Qur'ān by an unlettered person, and the manifestation by him, all of a sudden, of extraordinary qualities of character while nobody ever noticed him making any preparation for these previously, are in fact the clearest Signs which serve as pointers to his Prophethood for those who are possessed of knowledge and wisdom." If one reviews the life-story of any great historical personage, one can always discover the factors in his environment, which moulded his personality and prepared him for the excellences and qualities that emanated from him in life. There always exists a clear relationship between his environment and the component aspects of his personality. But no source whatever can be discovered in his environment of the wonderful qualities and excellences that the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him) displayed. In his case, neither in the contemporary Arab society nor in the society of the neighbouring countries with which Arabia had any relations can one discover those factors which could have any remote relationship with the component aspects of the Holy Prophet's personality. This is the reality on whose basis it has been asserted here that the Holy Prophet Muḥammad's personality is not one Sign but a collection of many clear Signs. An ignorant person may not see any of these Signs but those who are possessed of knowledge have become convinced in their hearts by seeing these Signs that he is most certainly a true Prophet of Allah.

90. That is, miracles by seeing which one may be convinced that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is really a Prophet of Allah.

91. That is, "A Book like the Qur'ān has been sent down to you in spite of your being unlettered. Is it not by itself a great miracle which should convince the people of your Prophethood? Do they yet need another miracle after this? The other miracles were the miracles for those who witnessed them. But this miracle is ever present in front of them. It is being recited before them almost daily; they can witness it as and when they like."

Even after such an assertion and argument by the Qur'ān the audacity of those who try to prove that the Holy Prophet was literate is astonishing. The fact, however, is that the Qur'ān here has presented in clear terms the Holy Prophet's being illiterate as a strong proof of his Prophethood. The traditions which lend support to the claim that the Holy Prophet could read and write, or had learnt reading and writing later in life, stand rejected at first glance, for no tradition opposed to the Qur'ān can be acceptable. Then these traditions in themselves are too weak to become the basis for an argument. One of these is a tradition from

[Contd. on p. 676

السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِالْبَاطِلِ وَكَفَرُوْا بِاللّٰهِ ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ
الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَيَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ ۭ وَلَوْلَآ اَجَلٌ مُّسَمًّى لَّجَاۗءَهُمُ
الْعَذَابُ ۭ وَلَيَاْتِيَنَّهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَّهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ يَسْتَعْجِلُوْنَكَ بِالْعَذَابِ ۭ
وَاِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ لَمُحِيْطَةٌۢ ۙ بِالْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ يَوْمَ يَغْشٰىهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ وَ
مِنْ تَحْتِ اَرْجُلِهِمْ وَيَقُوْلُ ذُوْقُوْا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ يٰعِبَادِيَ الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْٓا اِنَّ اَرْضِيْ وَاسِعَةٌ فَاِيَّايَ فَاعْبُدُوْنِ ﴿٥٦﴾ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ ذَاۗىِٕقَةُ الْمَوْتِ ۚ
ثُمَّ اِلَيْنَا تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمْ مِّنَ الْجَنَّةِ
غُرَفًا تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۭ نِعْمَ اَجْرُ الْعٰمِلِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ الَّذِيْنَ
صَبَرُوْا وَعَلٰي رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَكَاَيِّنْ مِّنْ دَاۗبَّةٍ لَّا تَحْمِلُ رِزْقَهَا ڰ اَللّٰهُ
يَرْزُقُهَا وَاِيَّاكُمْ ۡ وَهُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَلَىِٕنْ سَاَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضَ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ لَيَقُوْلُنَّ اللّٰهُ ۚ فَاَنّٰى يُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ اَللّٰهُ
يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ وَيَقْدِرُ لَهٗ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ
عَلِيْمٌ ﴿٦٢﴾ وَلَىِٕنْ سَاَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ نَّزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاۗءِ مَاۗءً فَاَحْيَا بِهِ الْاَرْضَ مِنْۢ
بَعْدِ مَوْتِهَا لَيَقُوْلُنَّ اللّٰهُ ۭ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ ۭ بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَمَا
هٰذِهِ الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَآ اِلَّا لَهْوٌ وَّلَعِبٌ ۭ وَاِنَّ الدَّارَ الْاٰخِرَةَ لَهِيَ الْحَيَوَانُ ۘ
لَوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ فَاِذَا رَكِبُوْا فِي الْفُلْكِ دَعَوُا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ ۚ
فَلَمَّا نَجّٰىهُمْ اِلَى الْبَرِّ اِذَا هُمْ يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ لِيَكْفُرُوْا بِمَآ اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ ۙ وَلِيَتَمَتَّعُوْا ۣ
فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّا جَعَلْنَا حَرَمًا اٰمِنًا وَّيُتَخَطَّفُ النَّاسُ مِنْ
حَوْلِهِمْ ۭ اَفَبِالْبَاطِلِ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ وَبِنِعْمَةِ اللّٰهِ يَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ

وقف لازم

These people wish that you hasten the torment on them.[93] Had a time not been fixed for it, the torment would already have overtaken them. And most certainly it shall come (at the appointed time) suddenly while they would least expect it. They challenge you to hasten the torment, whereas Hell has encircled the disbelievers, (and they will know of it) on the Day when the torment will cover them from above them as well as from beneath their feet, and will say, "Now taste your own misdeeds." 53-55

O My servants, who have believed, My earth is vast: so worship Me alone.[94] Every living being has to taste death: then, ultimately you shall all be returned to Us.[95] Those who have believed and done good works, We shall lodge them in the high palaces of Paradise, beneath which canals will be flowing: therein they shall live for ever. What an excellent reward for the doers (of good)[96] for those who have shown patience[97] and put full trust in their Lord![98] How many creatures are there that do not carry their provisions with them: Allah provides for them and for you too: He hears everything and knows everything.[99] 56-60

If you ask them,[100] "Who has created the earth and the heavens and Who has subjected the moon and the sun?" they will surely say, "Allah." How are they then being deceived? Allah it is Who gives abundantly to those of His servants He pleases and sparingly to those He wills. Surely Allah knows everything. If you ask them, "Who sent down rainwater from the sky and thereby raised the dead earth back to life?" they will surely say, "Allah!" Say, "Praise be to Allah!"[101] Yet most of them do not use their common sense. 61-63

And the life of this world is nothing but a sport and a pastime![102] The home of real life is the Hereafter. Would that they knew![103] When they board the ship, they invoke Allah, making their Faith pure for Him only; then, when He brings them safe to land, they start committing *shirk* that they may show ingratitude to Him for safe deliverance and enjoy (the life of this world).[104] Well, they will soon come to know. Do they not see that We have made a safe Sanctuary, while the people are snatched away from all around them?[105] Do they yet believe in falsehood and deny the favours of Allah ? 64-67

Contd. from p.675]

Bukhārī that when the peace treaty of Ḥudaibiya was being written down, the representative of the disbelievers of Makkah objected to the word *Rasūl Allah* being added to the name of the Holy Prophet. At this the Holy Prophet ordered the writer (Ḥaḍrat 'Alī) to cross out the word *Rasūl-Allah* and write Muhammad bin 'Abdullah instead. Ḥaḍrat 'Ali refused to cross out *Rasūl-Allah*. Then the Holy Prophet took it in his own hand, struck out the word himself and wrote Muḥammad bin 'Abdullah.

But this tradition from Bāra' bin 'Āzib appears at four places in Bukhārī and at two places in Muslim and everywhere in different words:

(1) At one place in Bukhārī *(Kitāb-us-Ṣulh)* the words of this tradition are to the effect: "The Holy Prophet told Ḥaḍrat 'Alī to strike out the words. He submitted that he could not do that. At last, the Holy Prophet crossed them out with his own hand."

(2) In the same book the second tradition is to the effect: "Then he (the Holy Prophet) said to 'Alī: Cross out Rasūl-Allah. He said: By God, I shall never cross out your name. At last, the Holy Prophet took the document and wrote: This is the treaty concluded by Muḥammad bin 'Abdullah."

(3) The third tradition, again from Barā' bin 'Āzib is found in *Kitāb-ul-Jizia* in Bukhārī to the effect: "The Holy Prophet himself could not write. He said to 'Ali: Cross out *Rasūl-Allah*. He submitted: By God, I shall never cross out these words. At this, the Holy Prophet said: Show me the place where these words are written. He showed him the place, and the Holy Prophet crossed out the words with his own hand."

(4) The fourth tradition is in Bukhārī's *Kitāb-ul-Maghāzī* to the effect: "So the Holy Prophet took the document although he did not know writing, and he wrote: This is the treaty concluded by Muhammad bin 'Abdullah."

(5) Again from Barā' bin 'Āzib there is a tradition in Muslim *(Kitāb-ul-Jihād)* saying that on Ḥaḍrat 'Ali's refusal the Holy Prophet himself wiped off the words *Rasūl-Allah."*

(6) The second tradition from him in the same book says, "The Holy Prophet said to 'Alī: Show me where the word *Rasūl Allah* is written. Ḥaḍrat 'Alī showed him the place, and he wiped it off and wrote Ibn 'Abdullah.

The disparity in the traditions clearly indicates that the intermediary reporters have not reported the words of Ḥaḍrat Barā' bin 'Āzib (may Allah be pleased with him) accurately. Therefore, none of these reports can be held as perfectly reliable so that it could be said with certainty that the Holy Prophet had written the words "Muḥammad bin 'Abdullah" with his own hand. Probably when

Ḥaḍrat 'Ali refused to wipe off the word *Rasūl-Allah*, the Holy Prophet might have himself wiped it off after finding out the place where it was written, and then might have got the word Ibn 'Abdullah substituted by him or by some other writer. Other traditions show that there were two writers who were writing down the peace treaty; Ḥaḍrat 'Ali and Muḥammad bin Maslamah (*Fatḥ al-Bārī*, Vol. V, p. 217). Therefore, it is not impossible that what one writer did not do was got done by the other writer. However, if the Holy Prophet actually wrote his name with his own hand, there are plenty instances of this in the world. The illiterate people learn to write their own name although they cannot read or write anything else.

The other tradition on whose basis it has been claimed that the Holy Prophet was literate, has been reported by Ibn Abī Shaibah and 'Umar bin Shabbah from Mujāhid. It says: "The Holy Prophet had learnt reading and writing before his death." But, in the first place, it is a weak tradition on account of its links as said by Ḥāfiz Ibn Kathīr: "It is weak: it has no basis." Secondly, it is weak otherwise also, for if the Holy Prophet had really learnt reading and writing later in life, it would have become a well known fact. Many of the Companions would have reported it, and it would also have been known from which person (or persons) he had learnt this. But no one except one man, 'Aun bin 'Abdullah, from whom Mujāhid heard this, has reported it. And this 'Aun was not even a Companion,. but a follower of the Companions, who does not at all tell from which Companion (or Companions) he got this information. Evidently, on the basis of such weak traditions nothing which contradicts well known facts can become acceptable.

92. That is, "The revelation of this Book is, without any doubt, a great bounty of Allah, and it contains great admonitions for the people. But only those people can benefit by it, who believe in it."

93. That is, "They are challenging you again and again that If you are a true messenger and they are really denying the Truth, then you should not delay the torment with which you threaten them."

94. This is an allusion to the Hijrah, which implies this: if you feel that it is becoming difficult to worship God in Makkah, you may leave it and move to another place where you can live as the true servants of God, for God's earth is vast. You should serve Allah and not your nation and country." This shows that the real thing is not the nation and the home and the country but the worship of Allah. If at some time the demands of the nation and country's love clash with the demands of Allah's worship, it is the time of trial for the believer's faith. The true believer will worship Allah and spurn the nation and the country and home. The false claimant to the Faith will abandon the Faith and remain clinging to his nation

فَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ مِمَّنِ افْتَرَىٰ عَلَى اللَّهِ كَذِبًا أَوْ كَذَّبَ بِالْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاءَهُ ۚ أَلَيْسَ فِي جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٦٨﴾
وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا ۚ وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

68-69 Who would be more wicked then he who forges a lie against Allah, or denies the Truth when it has reached him?[106] Is not Hell the fit abode for such disbelievers? Those who will strive in Our cause, We shall guide them to Our own paths,[107] and surely Allah is with the righteous.

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and his country and home. This verse is clearly indicative of the fact that a true worshipper of God can be a patriot but he cannot be a worshipper of the nation and the country. For him the worship of God is the dearest thing in life for the sake of which he will sacrifice everything else, but with never be prepared to sacrifice it for anything else.

95. That is, "Do not be anxious for your life: one has to die sooner or later. No one has come to live for ever in this world. Therefore, your real problem is not how to save life, but your real problem is how to save your Faith, and fulfil the requirements of God-worship. You have ultimately to return to Us. If you lost your faith for the sake of saving your life the result in the Hereafter will be different, but if you lost your life for the sake of saving your faith the result will be just the opposite. Therefore, you should be anxious only about what you will bring when you return to Us. Will you come with a faith sacrificed for the sake of life, or a life sacrificed for the sake of the faith?"

96. That is, "Even if you remained deprived of all the worldly blessings because of your faith and righteousness and ended up as a total failure from the worldly point of view, you should rest assured that you will be compensated for it; and not only compensated but rewarded excellently."

97. "Who . . . patience": who remained steadfast in faith in the face of hardships and afflictions and losses and persecutions; who have endured the consequences of the faith and have not turned away; who have seen the advantages and benefits of abandoning the faith and have not been lured away by them; who have seen the disbelievers and the wrongdoers prosper in the world and have not cast even a stray glance at their wealth and splendour."

98. "Put . . . Lord": Who did not put their trust in their possessions and their business and their clans and tribes but in their Lord; who were prepared to fight every power and endure every danger for the sake of their faith only on the

basis of their trust in their Lord irrespective of the worldly means, and left their homes if their faith so demanded; who trusted their Lord that He would not let go waste the rewards of their faith and good works, and were sure that He would succour His believers and righteous servants even in this world and bless them with the best rewards in the Hereafter as well.

99. That is, "While migrating you should not be worried about your means of livelihood as you should not worry about your life's safety. For none of the birds and the animals of the land and the sea that you find around yourself carries its provision with it. Allah is providing for all of them; wherever they go they get their provision through Allah's bounty. Therefore, do not be disheartened by the thought that if you left your homes for the sake of your faith, you would have nothing to eat. Allah will provide for you as well from the sources from which He is providing for the countless of His other creatures."

Precisely the same thing was taught by the Prophet Jesus (may Allah's peace be upon him) to his disciples when he had said:

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." (Matt. 6: 24-34).

The background of these discourses of the Qur'ān and the Gospel is the same. There always comes a stage in the way of the propagation of the Truth when the follower of the Truth is left with no alternative but to stake his very life only with trust in Allah, regardless of the support and means of the material world. In these conditions, those who are too calculating about the possibilities of the future

and seeking guarantees of the saftey of life and assurance of provisions cannot do anything. Indeed, such conditions are changed only by the efforts and power of those who rise fearlessly in face of every danger and are even prepared to risk their very lives. It is all due to their sacrifices that ultimately the Word of Allah is raised high and all other words and creeds stand humbled and subdued before it.

100. From here the discourse is again directed to the disbelievers of Makkah.

101. Here the word *al-hamdu-lillah* (Praise be to Allah) gives two meanings: (1) "When all this is done by Allah, then He alone is worthy of all praise, and none else", and (2) "Thank God that you yourselves also admit this."

102. That is "The reality of it is no more than the children's engaging in a sport and pastime for a while, and then returning home. The one has become a king here, has not become a king in reality but is only playing the king. A time comes when his play ends, and he leaves the royal throne as empty-handed as he was when he had entered the world. Similarly, no phase of life here is enduring and lasting. Every one is playing his part only temporarily for a limited time. Those who are charmed by the short-lived triumphs of this life and are able to collect some means of enjoyment and pleasure and of glory and grandeur by losing their conscience and faith, are only engaged in a pastime. What will these toys profit them when after amusing themselves with these for a score or three score and ten years in the world they will enter through the gate of death empty-handed into the Next World of eternal life and find their same allurements to have caused them an everlasting affliction ?"

103. That is, "If these people had known the reality that the life of this world is only a period of preparation for the test, and the real life for man, which is everlasting, is the life hereafter, they would not have wasted this preparatory period in sport and merry-making, but would instead have utilized each moment of it in works conducive to better results in the eternal life of the Hereafter."

104. For explanation, see E.N.'s 29 and 41 of Sūrah Al-An'ām; E.N.'s 29 and 31 of Sūrah Yūnus and E.N. 84 of Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl.

105. That is, Has the City of Makkah, in whose surroundings they enjoy perfect saftey and security, been made a sacred place by some Lāt or Hubal? Was it possible for a god or goddess to have secured this place against all sorts of mischief and violence for 2,500 years or so, in a strife-ridden land like Arabia? Who could then keep and maintain its sacredness and sanctity except Us?"

106. That is, "The Prophet has made a claim to Prophethood, and you have denied him. Now there can be only two alternatives: If the Prophet has made

a false claim in the name of Allah, there can be no one more wicked than he, and if you have belied a true Prophet, there can be no one more wicked than you."

107. The word mujāhadah has already been explained in E.N. 8 above. There it was said that a person who exerts will exert for his own good (v. 6.). Here it is being reassured that Allah does not leave alone those who strive in His cause sincerely, even at the risk of a conflict with the entire world, but He helps and guides them and opens for them ways towards Himself. He teaches them at every step the way of winning His approval and good-will and He shows them the light at every turning point to discriminate between the Right Way and the wrong ways of life. In short, Allah helps and succours and guides them according to their sincerity and intensity of desire for goodness.



XXX
AR-RŪM
الرُّوم

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXX

AR-RŪM

الرُّوم

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name Ar-Rūm from the second verse in which the words *ghulibat-ir-Rūm* have occurred

Period of Revelation

The period of the revelation of this Sūrah is determined absolutely by the historical event that has been mentioned at the outset. It says: "The Romans have been vanquished in the neighboring land." In those days the Byzantine occupied territories adjacent to Arabia were Jordan, Syria and Palestine, and in these territories the Romans were completely overpowered by the Iranians in 615 A.D. Therefore, it can be said with absolute certainty that this Sūrah was sent down in the same year, and this was the year in which the migration to Ḥabash took place.

Historical Background

The prediction made in the initial verses of this Sūrah is one of the most outstanding evidences of the Qur'ān's being the Word of Allah and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad's being a true Messenger of Allah. Let us have a look at the historical background relevant to the verses.

Eight years before the Holy Prophet's advent as a Prophet the Byzantine Emperor Maurice was overthrown by Phocus, who captured

the throne and became king. Phocus first got the Emperor's five sons executed in front of him, and then got the Emperor also killed and hung their heads in a thoroughfare in Constantinople. A few days after this he had the empress and her three daughters also put to death. The event provided Khusrau Parvez, the Sassanid king of Iran, a good moral excuse to attack Byzantium. For Emperor Maurice had been his benefactor; with his help he had got the throne of Iran. Therefore, he declared that he would avenge his godfather's and his children's murder upon Phocus, the usurper. So, he started war against Byzantium in 603 A.D. and within a few years, putting the Phocus armies to rout in succession, he reached Edessa (modern, Urfa) in Asia Minor, on the one hand, and Aleppo and Antioch in Syria, on the other. when the Byzantine ministers saw that Phocus could not save the country, they sought the African governor's help, who sent his son, Heraclius, to Constantinople with a strong fleet. Phocus was immediately deposed and Heraclius made emperor. He treated Phocus as he had treated Maurice. This happened in 610 A.D., the year the Holy Prophet was appointed to Prophethood.

The moral excuse for which Khusrau Parvez had started the war was no more valid after the deposition and death of Phocus. Had the object of his war really been to avenge the murder of his ally on Phocus for his cruelty, he would have come to terms with the new Emperor after the death of Phocus. But he continued the war, and gave it the colour of a crusade between Zoroastrianism and Christianity. The sympathies of the Christian sects (i.e. Nestorians and Jacobians, etc.) which had been excommunicated by the Roman ecclesiastical authority and tyrannized for years also went with the Magian (Zoroastrian) invaders, and the Jews also joined hands with them; so much so that the number of the Jews who enlisted in Khusrau's army rose up to 26,000.

Heraclius could not stop this storm. The very first news that he received from the East after ascending the throne was that of the Iranian occupation of Antioch. After this Damascus fell in 613 A.D. Then in 614 A.D. the Iranians occupying Jerusalem played havoc with the Christian world. Ninety thousand Christians were massacred and the Holy Sepulchre was desecrated. The Original Cross on which, according to

the Christian belief, Jesus had died was seized and carried to Madā'in. The chief priest Zachariah was taken prisoner and all the important churches of the city were destroyed. How puffed up was Khusrau Parvez at this victory can be judged from the letter that he wrote to Heraclius from Jerusalem. He wrote: "From Khusrau, the greatest of all gods, the master of the whole world: To Heraclius, his most wretched and most stupid servant: 'You say that you have trust in your Lord. Why didn't then your Lord save Jerusalem from me?"

Within a year afterthis victory the Iranian armies overran Jordan, Palestine and the whole of the Sinai Peninsula, and reached the frontiers of Egypt. In those very days another conflict of a far greater historical consequence was going on in Makkah. The believers in One God, under the leadership of the Prophet Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him), were fighting for their existence against the followers of *shirk under* the command of the chiefs of the Quraish, and the conflict had reached such a stage that in 615 A.D., a substantial number of the Muslims had to leave their homes and take refuge with the Christian kingdom of Ḥabash, which was an ally of the Byzantine Empire. In those days the Sassanid victories against Byzantium were the talk of the town, and the pagans of Makkah were delighted and were taunting the Muslims to the effect: "Look ! the fire-worshippers of Iran are winning victories and the Christian believers in Revelation and Prophethood are being routed everywhere. Likewise, we, the idol-worshippers of Arabia, will exterminate you and your religion."

These were the conditions when this Sūrah of the Qur'ān was sent down, and in it a prediction was made, saying: "The Romans have been vanquished in the neighbouring land and within a few years after their defeat, they shall be victorious. And it will be the day when the believers will rejoice in the victory granted by Allah." It contained not one but two predictions: First, the Romans shall be victorious; and second, the Muslims also shall win a victory at the same time. Apparently, there was not a remote chance of the fulfilment of the either prediction in the next few years. On the one hand, there were a handful of the Muslims, who were being beaten and tortured in Makkah, and even till eight years after this prediction there appeared no chance of

their victory and domination. On the other, the Romans were losing more and more ground every next day. By 619 A.D. the whole of Egypt had passed into Sassanid hands and the Magian armies had reached as far as Tripoli. In Asia Minor they beat and pushed back the Romans to Bosphorus, and in 617 A.D. they captured Chalcedon (modern, Kadikoy) just opposite Constantinople. The Emperor sent an envoy to Khusrau, praying that he was ready to have peace on any terms, but he replied, "I shall not give protection to the emperor until he is brought in chains before me and gives up obedience to his crucified god and adopts submission to the fire-god." At last, the Emperor became so depressed by defeat that he decided to leave Constantinople and shift to Carthage (modern, Tunis). In short, as the British historian Gibbon says, even seven to eight years after this prediction of the Qur'ān, the conditions were such that no one could even imagine that the Byzantine Empire would ever gain an upper hand over Iran. Not to speak of gaining domination, no one could hope that the Empire, under the circumstances, would even survive.[1]

When these verses of the Qur'ān were sent down, the disbelievers of Makkah made great fun of them, and Ubayy bin Khalaf bet Hadrat Abū Bakr ten camels if the Romans became victorious within three years. When the Holy Prophet came to know of the bet, he said, "The Qur'ān has used the words *bid'i sinīn*, and the word *bid'* in Arabic applies to a number upto ten. Therefore, make the bet for ten years and increase the number of camels to a hundred." So, Ḥadrat Abu Bakr spoke to Ubayy again and bet a hundred camels for ten years.

In 622 A.D. as the Holy Prophet migrated to Madīnah, the Emperor Heraclius set off quietly for Trabzon from Constantinople via the Black Sea and started preparations to attack Iran from rear. For this he asked the Church for money, and Pope Sergius lent him the Church collections on interest, in a bid to save Christianity from Zoroastrianism. Heraclius started his counter attack in 623 A.D. from Armenia. Next year, in 624 A.D, he entered Azerbaijan and destroyed Clorumia, the

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1. Gibbon: *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Vol. II, p. 788, Modern Library, New York.

birth-place of Zoroaster, and ravaged the principal fire-temple of Iran. Great are the powers of Allah! This was the very year when the Muslims achieved a decisive victory at Badr for the first time against the *mushriks*. Thus both the predictions made in Sūrah Rūm were fulfilled simultaneously within the stipulated period of ten years.

The Byzantine forces continued to press the Iranians hard and in the decisive battle at Nineveh (627 A.D.) they dealt them the hardest blow. They captured the royal residence of Dastagerd, and then pressing forward reached right opposite to Ctesiphon, capital of Iran in those days. In 628 A.D. in an internal revolt, Khusrau Parvez was imprisoned and 18 of his sons were executed in front of him and a few days later he himself died in the prison. This was the year when the peace treaty of Hudaibiya was concluded, which the Qur'ān has termed as "the supreme victory", and in this very year Khusrau's son, Qubād II, gave up all the occupied Roman territories, restored the True Cross and made peace with Byzantium. In 628 A.D., the Emperor himself went to Jerusalem to instal the "Holy Cross" in its place, and in the same year the Holy Prophet entered Makkah for the first time after the *Hijrah* to perform the *'Umra-tul-Qadā'*.

After this no one could have any doubt about the truth of the prophecy of the Qur'ān, with the result that most of the Arab polytheists accepted Islam. The heirs of Ubayy bin Khalaf lost their bet and had to give a hundred camels to Ḥaḍrat Abu Bakr Ṣiddiq. He took them before the Holy Prophet, who ordered that they be given away in charity, because the bet had been made at a time when gambling had not yet been forbidden by the *Sharī'ah;* now it was forbidden. Therefore, the bet was allowed to be accepted from the belligerent disbelievers, but instruction given that it should be given away in charity and should not be brought in personal use.

Theme and Subject-matter

The discourse begins with the theme that the Romans have been overcome and the people the world over think that the empire is about to collapse, but the fact is that within a few years the tables will be turned and the vanquished will again become victorious.

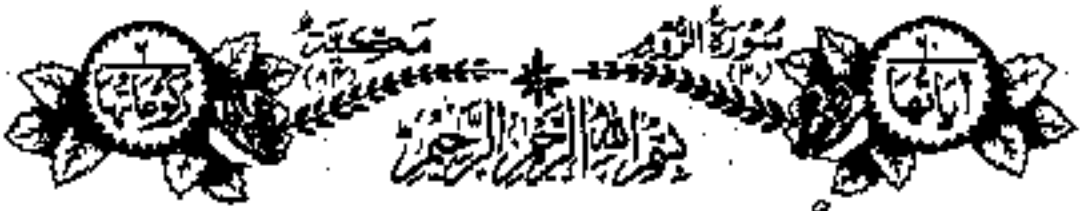
This introductory theme contains the great truth that man is accustomed to seeing only what is apparent and superficial. That which is behind the apparent and superficial he does not know. When in the petty matters of life, this habit to see only the apparent and superficial can lead man to misunderstandings and miscalculations, and when he is liable to make wrong estimates only due to lack of knowledge about "what will happen tomorrow", how stupendous will be his error if he risks his whole life-activity by placing reliance only upon what is visible and apparent with respect to his worldly life as a whole!

Then, from the question of the conflict between Byzantium and Iran the direction of the discourse turns to the theme of the Hereafter, and as far as verse 27, man has been made to understand in different ways that the Hereafter is possible as well as rational and necessary; then for the sake of keeping the system of his life also stable and balanced it is absolutely necessary that he should plan and order his present life on the faith in the Hereafter; otherwise he will commit the same error as has always been the result of placing one's reliance only upon the apparent and the visible.

In this connection, the Signs of the universe which have been presented as evidence to prove the doctrine of the Hereafter are precisely the same which support the doctrine of *Tauhīd*. Therefore from verse 28 onward, the discourse turns to the affirmation *of Tauḥīd* and the refutation of *shirk*, and it is stressed that the natural way of life for man is none else but to serve One God exclusively. *Shirk is* opposed to the nature of the universe as to the nature of man. Therefore, whenever man has adopted this deviation, chaos has resulted. Again here, an allusion has been made to the great chaos that had gripped the world on account of the war between the two major powers of the time, and it has been indicated that this chaos too, is the result of *shirk*, and all the nations who were ever involved in mischief and chaos in the history of mankind were also *mushriks.*

In conclusion, a parable has been presented to make the people understand that just as dead earth comes to life, all of a sudden, by a shower of rain sent by God and swells with vegetation and plant life, so

is the case with the dead humanity. When God sends a shower of His mercy in the form of Revelation and Prophethood, it also gives a new life to mankind and causes it to grow and develop and flourish. Therefore: "If you take full advantage of this opportunity, the barren land of Arabia will bloom by Allah's mercy and the whole advantage will be yours. But if you do not take advantage of it, you will harm only yourselves. Then no regret will avail and no opportunity will be provided to make amends.



الٓمّٓ ﴿١﴾ غُلِبَتِ الرُّوْمُ ﴿٢﴾ فِيْٓ اَدْنَى الْاَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ غَلَبِهِمْ سَيَغْلِبُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾
فِيْ بِضْعِ سِنِيْنَ ۭ لِلّٰهِ الْاَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْۢ بَعْدُ ۭ وَيَوْمَىِٕذٍ يَّفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾
بِنَصْرِ اللّٰهِ ۭ يَنْصُرُ مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ ۭ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٥﴾ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ ۭ لَا يُخْلِفُ
اللّٰهُ وَعْدَهٗ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيٰوةِ
الدُّنْيَا ۡ وَهُمْ عَنِ الْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ غٰفِلُوْنَ ﴿٧﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوْا فِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ ۭ مَا
خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَآ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۭ
وَاِنَّ كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ بِلِقَاۗئِ رَبِّهِمْ لَكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٨﴾ اَوَلَمْ يَسِيْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ
فَيَنْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۭ كَانُوْٓا اَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَّ
اَثَارُوا الْاَرْضَ وَعَمَرُوْهَآ اَكْثَرَ مِمَّا عَمَرُوْهَا وَجَاۗءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ ۭ
فَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيَظْلِمَهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ كَانُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾ ثُمَّ كَانَ عَاقِبَةَ
الَّذِيْنَ اَسَاۗءُوا السُّوْٓآٰى اَنْ كَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَكَانُوْا بِهَا يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾
اَللّٰهُ يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ ثُمَّ اِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿١١﴾ وَيَوْمَ تَقُوْمُ السَّاعَةُ
يُبْلِسُ الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُمْ مِّنْ شُرَكَاۗىِٕهِمْ شُفَعٰٓؤُا وَكَانُوْا
بِشُرَكَاۗىِٕهِمْ كٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَيَوْمَ تَقُوْمُ السَّاعَةُ يَوْمَىِٕذٍ يَّتَفَرَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ فَاَمَّا
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ فَهُمْ فِيْ رَوْضَةٍ يُّحْبَرُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَاَمَّا الَّذِيْنَ

XXX
AR-RŪM

الرُّوم

Verses: 60 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Alif. Lām. Mīm. The Romans have been overcome in the neighboring land and within a few years after their defeat, they shall be victorious.[1] Allah's is the authority before as well as afterwards.[2] And it will be the day when the believers will rejoice in the victory granted by Allah.[3] Allah helps whomsoever He wills: He is the All-Mighty, the All-Merciful. This is Allah's promise: Allah never breaks His promise; but most people do not know. 1-6

The people only know the outward aspect of the worldly life, and of the Hereafter they are heedless.[4] Have they never reflected in their own selves?[5] Allah has created the earth and the heavens and all that lies between them, with the truth, and only for an appointed term;[6] but most people disbelieve in the meeting with their Lord.[7] And have they never travelled in the earth that they could see the end of those who have gone before them?[8] They were mightier than these in strength: they tilled the land[9] and built more on it than these people have.[10] Their Messengers came to them with clear Signs;[11] then it was not Allah Who was unjust to them, but it was they who were being unjust to themselves.[12] At last, evil was the end of those who had committed evil because they had denied the Revelations of Allah and scoffed at them. 7-10

Allah originates the creation; then He it is Who will repeat it,[13] and then to Him you will be returned. And when the Hour[14] is established, the criminals will be dumb-founded;[15] none of those whom 11-16

they have set up as associates (with Allah) will intercede for them,[16] and they will even disown their associates.[17] The Day the Hour is established, (mankind) on that Day will be separated into groups.[18] Those who have believed and done good works, will be kept in a Garden,[19] happy and rejoicing;[20] and those who have disbelieved and rejected Our Revelations and the meeting of the Hereafter, will be presented for punishment.

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1. From what Ibn 'Abbās and the other Companions and their followers have said, it appears that the Muslims' sympathies in this war between Byzantium and Iran were with Byzantium and of the disbelievers of Makkah with Iran. This had several reasons. First, the Iranians had given it the colour of a crusade between Magianism and Christianity, and, apart from the object of political conquest, they were making it a means of spreading Magianism. In the letter that Khusrau Parvez wrote to the Emperor Heraclius after the conquest of Jerusalem, he had clearly mentioned his victory as a proof of the truth of Magianism. In principle, the Magian creed resembled the polytheistic creed of the people of Makkah, because the Magis too, were disbelievers of *Tauḥīd* they believed in two gods and worshipped the fire. That is why the *mushriks* of Makkah were in sympathy with them. Contrary to them, the Christians, however corrupted their monotheism might be, still regarded belief in One God as the basis of religion, believed in the Hereafter and admitted Revelation and Prophethood as the source of guidance. Thus, their religion in principle resembled Islam, and therefore, the Muslims were naturally in sympathy with them, and could not like that a polytheistic people should dominate them. Secondly, the people who believe in a previous Prophet before the advent of a new Prophet are naturally regarded and counted as Muslims until the message of the new Prophet reaches them and they clearly discard it. (Please see E.N. 73 of Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ also). At that time only five to six years had passed since the Holy Prophet's advent as a Prophet and his message had not yet reached outside Arabia. Therefore, the Muslims did not look upon the Christians as disbelievers, but they certainly regarded the Jews as disbelievers because they had rejected the Prophet Jesus (may peace be upon him) to be a Prophet. Thirdly, the Christians from the very beginning had been treating the Muslims with sympathy as already mentioned above in Al-Qaṣaṣ: 52-55, and in Al-Mā'idah: 82-85, and many of them were even accepting the message of the Truth with an open heart. Then, the way the Christian king of Ḥabash had given refuge to the Muslims on their migration there and turned down the demand of the disbelievers of Makkah to return them, also required that the Muslims should wish the Christians well as against the Magians.

2. That is, "When the Iranians became victorious first, it did not mean that the Lord of the worlds, God forbid, had been humbled and when the Romans will gain victory afterwards, it will not mean that Allah's lost kingdom will be restored to Him. Sovereignty in any case belongs to Allah. Allah gave victory to the side that became victorious first, and Allah will give victory to the side that will gain victory after wards. For no one in his Kingdom can achieve domination solely by his own power. He whom He raises, rises and he whom He causes to fall, falls."

3. Ibn 'Abbās, Abu Sa'īd Khudrī, Sufyān Thauri;, Suddī and others have stated that the Romans' victory against the Iranians and the Muslims' victory at Badr against the polytheists took place almost at the same time. The Muslims, therefore, were doubly pleased. The same is supported by the histories of Byzantium and Iran. 624 A.D. is the year in which the Battle of Badr was fought and the same is the year in which the Byzantine Emperor destroyed the birth-place of Zoroaster and ravaged the principal fire-temple of Iran.

4. That is, "Although there are plenty of Signs and evidences which point to the Hereafter, and there is no reason why one should be heedless of it, yet the people are being heedless of it due to their own short-sightedness. They only see the apparent and the outward aspect of the worldly life and are unaware of what is hidden behind it; otherwise there has been no slackness on the part of God to warn them of it."

5. This in itself is a strong argument for the Hereafter. It means this: "If these people had reflected over their own selves, apart from the external phenomena, they would have found in themselves the arguments which prove the necessity of a second life after the present life. There are three special characteristics of man which distinguish him from the other creations on the earth: (1) The earth and the countless things around it have been subjected for him, and he has been granted vast powers to exploit them. (2) He has been life free to choose a way of life for himself. He can follow the way of belief or disbelief, obedience or sin, virtue or vice, as he likes. Any way of life, right or wrong, that he chooses, he is helped to follow it and allowed to use and exploit all the means and resources provided by God, whether the way chosen is of God's obedience or of His disobedience. (3) An innate moral sense has been placed in him, by which he discriminates between the voluntary and the involuntary actions; he judges the voluntary acts as good and bad, and decides spontaneously that a good act ought to be rewarded and an evil act ought to be punished.

These three characteristics which are found in man's own self serve as a pointer to the fact that there must be a time when man should be called to account for his deeds, when he should be asked how he used the powers delegated to him over what he had been given in the world, when it should be seen whether he had

adopted the right way or the wrong way by use of the freedom of choice given to him, when his voluntary acts should be judged, and good acts be rewarded and evil acts punished. This time inevitably can come only after man's life-activity has ceased and the account-book of his actions closed, and not before it. And this time should necessarily come only when the account-book of not one man or of one nation but of all mankind has closed. For on the passing away of one man or of one nation the influence that he or it has generated by his or its acts does not cease to operate. The good or bad influence left by him should also be credited to his account. How can accountability be carried out and full rewards and punishments given with justice unless the influences are allowed to run their full course? Thus, man's own self testifies that the position he occupies in the world by itself demands that after his present life there should be another life when a Court should be established, his life-record examined justly and every person rewarded or punished according to his deeds.

6. In this sentence, two more arguments have been given for the Hereafter. It says that if man makes a deep observation of the system of the universe, he will see two things very outstanding about it: First, that the universe has been created with the truth. It is not a plaything of a child, which he might have made to amuse himself, and whose making and un-making might be meaningless. But it is a serious system whose every particle testifies that it has been created with great wisdom, its each component has a law underlying it, and everything in it has a purpose behind it. Man's whole social and economic life and all his sciences and arts are a witness that whatever man has done in the world became possible only because he was able to discover the laws working behind everything and the purpose for which it was made. Had he been placed as a puppet in a lawless and purposeless toy-house, no science and no civilization and social life could be conceived. Now, how does it stand to reason that the Wise Being Who has created this world with such wisdom and design and Who has placed in it a creation like man, who is endowed with great mental and physical capabilities, powers and authority, freedom of action and choice, moral sense and entrusted with unlimited means and resources of the world, would have created him without a purpose and design ? That man would live a full life involving both goodness and evil, justice and injustice, virtue and vice, and end up in the dust, and his good and evil acts will not bear any fruit ? That each act of man will influence his own life as well as the lives of thousands of other men like himself and countless other things in the world, for good or for evil, and the whole record of his life-activity will be just set aside after his death, without accountability?

The other thing that becomes apparent after a deep observation of the system of the universe is that nothing here is immortal. Everything has an age appointed for it after attaining which it dies and expires, and the same is the case

with the universe as a whole. All the forces that are working here are limited. They can work only till an appointed term and they have inevitably to run out in time, and this system has to end. In the ancient days the philosophers and scientists who said that the world was eternal and everlasting could have their way, due mainly to lack of knowledge. But modern science almost definitely has cast its vote in favour of the God-worshippers in the debate that had been going on since centuries between them and the atheists regarding the eternal and the temporal nature of the world. Now the atheists are left with no leg to stand on. They cannot claim on the basis of reason and knowledge that the world has existed since eternity and will exist for ever and there is going to be no resurrection. The ancient materialistic creed rested on the belief that matter was indestructible, only its form could be changed, but after every change matter remained matter and no increase or decrease occurred in its quantity. Therefore, it was inferred that this material world had neither a beginning nor an end. But now the discovery of the atomic energy has demolished the entire materialistic edifice. Now it has come to light that energy changes into matter, and matter changes back into energy with the result that nothing persists, neither form nor appearance. The Second Law of Thermodynamics has proved that this material world has neither existed since eternity nor will last till eternity. It certainly began in time and has to end in time. Therefore, it is no longer possible to deny the Hereafter even according to science. And obviously, when science has surrendered, how will philosophy stand to deny the Hereafter?

7. "Disbelieve...meeting": disbelieve that they have to appear before their Lord after death.

8. This is an historical argument for the Hereafter. It means this: "The Hereafter has not been denied only by a couple of the people in the world, but a large number of them have been involved in this disbelief in human history. Even there have been entire nations which either denied it altogether or lived heedless of it, or invented such false beliefs about life-after-death as rendered the concept of the Hereafter meaningless. Then the continuous experience of history reveals that in whatever form the Hereafter has been denied, its inevitable result has been that the people became corrupted morally, they lived irresponsible lives they transgressed all limits of tyranny and wickedness, which became the cause of the destruction of one nation after the other. Does not this experience of thousands of years of history, which has been faced by human generations successively, prove that the Hereafter is a reality whose denial is fatal to man? Man has come to believe in gravitation only because he has always experienced and seen material things falling to the ground. He has recognized poison to be poison only because whoever took poison died. Similarly, when the denial of the Hereafter has always led to the corruption of morals for man, is not this experience enough to teach the

lesson that the Hereafter is a reality, and to live one's life heedless of it is dangerous?

9. The words athār-ul- ard in the original may either mean to plough the land for cultivation, or to dig the earth for taking out canals, underground water channels, minerals, etc.

10. This contains an answer to the argument of those who regard mere material progress as the sign of a nation's being righteous. They argue like this: "How is it possible that Allah will make fuel of Hell those people who have exploited the resources of the earth on such a large scale, who have constructed wonderful works on the earth and given birth to grand civilizations?" The Qur'ān refutes this argument, thus: "Such works of construction have been built before also by many nations on a large scale. Then, have you not seen that those nations have perished along with their civilization and their grand and magnificent "works"? There is no reason why the Law of God that has so treated in the world the mere material progress of a people lacking the right belief and conduct, will not treat them likewise in the Next World and make them fuel of Hell."

11. That is, "They came with such Signs as were sufficient for anyone to be convinced of their being the true Prophets." The mention of the coming of the Prophets in this context implies this: "On the one hand, there are evidences in man's own self, and in the universe around him, and in the continuous experience of human history, and, on the other, there also came such Prophets, one after the other, who showed clear Signs of their being true Prophets and warned (the people) that the Hereafter is sure to come."

12. That is, "The destruction that overtook those nations afterwards was not due to Allah's being unjust to them but due to the injustice they had done to themselves. The person (or persons) who neither thinks rightly himself nor adopts the right attitude by listening to others, will be himself responsible for his evil end if he meets destruction. God cannot be blamed for this, for God has not only made arrangements for conveying to man the knowledge of the reality through His Books and His Prophets, but also blessed man with the intellectual resources and powers by exploiting which he can always judge the authenticity of the knowledge brought by the Prophets and the Divine Books. Had God deprived man of this guidance and these resources and he had to meet with the consequences of following a wrong way then doubtlessly could God have been blamed for injustice."

13. Though this thing has been put forward as a claim, it contains the basis of the claim too. Commonsense testifies that the One Who can originate creation, can reproduce the same creation far more easily. The origination of the creation is

an actuality, which exists before everybody, and the disbelievers and the *mushriks* also admit that this is the work of Allah alone. Now it will be clearly absurd on their part to think that God Who has originated this creation, cannot reproduce it."

14. "The Hour": the Hour of returning to Allah and appearing before Him.

15. The word *iblās* in the Text means to be dumbfounded on account of a sudden shock and despair, to be confounded on finding one-self in a hopeless situation, to stand aghast on finding no means of help and support. When this word is used for a culprit, it depicts a person who is caught red-handed, who then finds no way to escape, nor expects to save himself by offering a plea in self-defense; therefore, he stands dumb and dejected and depressed.

One should also understand that "the criminals" here does not only imply those people, who have committed murders and thefts and robberies, etc. in the world, but all those who have rebelled against God, refused to accept the guidance and teachings of His Messengers, denied the accountability of the Hereafter, or lived heedless of it, and have been worshipping others than God in the world, or their own selves, whether or not, besides this basic deviation, they also committed those acts, which are commonly called crimes. Besides, it includes those people also, who in spite of believing in God and His Messengers and the Hereafter, have knowingly disobeyed their Lord and persisted in their rebellious conduct till the end. When these people will suddenly come back to life in the Hereafter, against their expectations, and will find that they are confronted with the second life, which they had denied, or ignored, in their life-activity in the world, they will stand dumbfounded as has been depicted in the words: *yublisul-mujrimūn*.

16. "Associates" *(shurakā')* includes three kinds of beings:

(1) The angels, prophets, saints, martyrs and the righteous men, to whom the polytheists assigned divine attributes and powers in different ages and whom they worshipped as gods. On Resurrection Day, they will say to their worshippers, "You did whatever you did without our consent, rather against our teachings and guidance. Therefore, we have nothing to do with you. Do not place any hope in us that we will intercede for you before Allah Almighty."

(2) Inanimate things like the moon, the sun, the planets, trees, stones, animals, etc. The polytheists worshipped them as gods, prayed to them, but the poor things themselves were unaware that the vicegerent of Allah was worshipping them so humbly and devotedly. Evidently, none of these also will come forward to intercede for him.

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كَفَرُوْا وَكَذَّبُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا وَلِقَآءِ الْاٰخِرَةِ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُحْضَرُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾
فَسُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ حِيْنَ تُمْسُوْنَ وَحِيْنَ تُصْبِحُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ وَعَشِيًّا وَّحِيْنَ تُظْهِرُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ
الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَيُحْيِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۭ وَكَذٰلِكَ تُخْرَجُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَمِنْ
اٰيٰتِهٖٓ اَنْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ اِذَآ اَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ تَنْتَشِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖٓ
اَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا لِّتَسْكُنُوْٓا اِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَّوَدَّةً
وَّرَحْمَةً ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ خَلْقُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ اَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَاَلْوَانِكُمْ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّلْعٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَ
مِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ مَنَامُكُمْ بِالَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَابْتِغَاۗؤُكُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ
لِّقَوْمٍ يَّسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ يُرِيْكُمُ الْبَرْقَ خَوْفًا وَّطَمَعًا وَّيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ
السَّمَاۗءِ مَاۗءً فَيُحْيٖ بِهِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ
يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖٓ اَنْ تَقُوْمَ السَّمَاۗءُ وَالْاَرْضُ بِاَمْرِهٖ ۭ ثُمَّ اِذَا دَعَاكُمْ
دَعْوَةً ۖ مِّنَ الْاَرْضِ ۖ اِذَآ اَنْتُمْ تَخْرُجُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَهٗ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ
كُلٌّ لَّهٗ قٰنِتُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ يَبْدَؤُا الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيْدُهٗ وَهُوَ اَهْوَنُ عَلَيْهِ ۭ
وَلَهُ الْمَثَلُ الْاَعْلٰى فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٢٧﴾ ضَرَبَ لَكُمْ
مَّثَلًا مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ ۭ هَلْ لَّكُمْ مِّنْ مَّا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُكُمْ مِّنْ شُرَكَاۗءَ فِيْ مَا رَزَقْنٰكُمْ
فَاَنْتُمْ فِيْهِ سَوَاۗءٌ تَخَافُوْنَهُمْ كَخِيْفَتِكُمْ اَنْفُسَكُمْ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ الْاٰيٰتِ
لِقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ بَلِ اتَّبَعَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْٓا اَهْوَاۗءَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۚ فَمَنْ
يَّهْدِيْ مَنْ اَضَلَّ اللّٰهُ ۭ وَمَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ نّٰصِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَاَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّيْنِ

So,[22] glorify Allah[23] in the evening and in the morning: praise is due to Him alone in the heavens and the earth; and (glorify Him) in the afternoon and at the declining of the day.[24] He brings out the living from the dead and the dead from the living, and gives life to the earth after its death.[25] Likewise, you too, shall be taken out (of the state of death). 17-19

Of His[26] Signs is this that He has created you from dust; then behold, you are men who are multiplying (in the earth).[27] 20

And of His Signs is this that He has created for you wives from your own species[28] that you may find peace with them,[29] and created love and mercy between you.[30] Surely in this there are many Signs for those who reflect. 21

And of His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth[31] and the difference of your tongues and colours.[32] Surely in this there are many Signs for the learned. 22

And of His Signs is your sleep by night and by day and your seeking of His bounty.[33] Surely in this there are many Signs for those who pay heed. 23

And of His Signs is this that He shows you the lightning, for fear as well as for hope,[34] and He sends down rainwater from the sky and thereby gives life to the earth after its death.[35] Surely in this there are many Signs for those who use their common sense. 24

And of his Signs is this that the Heaven and the Earth stand firm by His Command ;[36] then as soon as He summons you out of the earth, you shall come out at one call.[37] Whoever exist in the heavens and the earth, are His servants; all are obedient to Him.He it is Who originates the creation; then He alone will repeat it, and this is easier for Him.[38] His are the most exalted attributes in the heavens and the earth, and He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. 25-27

He draws[39] out a comparison for you from your own selves: Are there among the slaves that you possess any such slaves also who may be sharing with you equally the wealth that We have given you, and you fear them as you fear one another among yourselves ?[40]--Thus do We present the Revelations clearly for those who use their common sense. But the wrongdoers are following their own desires, without any 28--29

knowledge. Now, who can guide the one whom Allah has led astray?[41] Such people can have no helper.

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(3) The arch-criminals, who by deception and fraud, or by use of force, compelled the servants of God to worship them, e.g. Satan, false religious guides, and tyrants and despots. They themselves will be in trouble there. Not to speak; of interceding for others, they will rather try to prove before God that their worshippers and followers were themselves responsible for their crimes, and therefore, they should not be made to bear the burden of their deviation. Thus, the polytheists there will not get any intercession from anywhere.

17. That is, "The polytaeists will themselves admit that they had wrongly held them associates of God. They will realize that none of them really had any share in Godhead. Therefore, in the Hereafter they will disown the *shirk* on which they insist in the world."

18. That is, "All communities and groups that have been formed in the world on the basis of race, country, language, tribe and clan, and economic and political interests, will break, and the people will be re-grouped on the basis of true belief, morality and character. On the one hand, all the believing and righteous people will be separated from all the nations of mankind and put in one group, and on the other, people professing every false ideology and committing every kind of crime in the world will be sorted out severally from the multitudes of mankind and put into separate groups. In other words, the thing which Islam regards as the real basis of separation and union in the world and which the worshippers of ignorance refuse to accept, will become the basis of separation and union in the Hereafter. Islam says that the real thing which joins men together or divides them is the belief and morality. Those who believe and build the system of life on Divine guidance are one community, whether they belong to any race, any country and any region. The two cannot belong to one nation. They can neither walk together on a common path of life in the world, nor can meet with the same end in the Hereafter. From the world to the Hereafter they tread separate paths and have separate destinations. Contrary to this, the worshippers of falsehood have been insisting in every age, and still insist, that mankind should be classified and grouped on the bases of race and country and language. The people who have a common race and country and language should constitute a separate nation, regardless of their religion and belief, and should offer a common front against the other similar nations. And this nation should have such a system of life which should bind the followers of *Tauhīd* and the polytheists and the atheists together. The same was the concept of Abū Jahl and Abū Lahab and the chiefs of the

Quraish. That is why they accused the Holy Prophet Muhammad (may Allah's peace be upon him) again and again of having stirred up divisions in their nation. That is why the Qur'ān is warning that the groups made in the world on wrong bases will ultimately break and mankind will be permanently divided on the basis of the belief and the philosophy of life and morality and character on which Islam wants to build it in the world. The people who do not have a common destination cannot follow a common way of life.

19. "A Garden": A garden of bliss and perfect happiness as a reward and source of everlasting joy.

20. The word *yuhbarūn* in the original implies this: "They will be lodged in it with honour, will remain happy and be provided with every kind of pleasure."

21. One thing here is noteworthy. "Good works" have been mentioned as a necessary adjunct of the "faith", which will earn one the blissful Garden, but no mention has been made of the "evil acts" while mentioning the evil end of "disbelief". This clearly indicates that disbelief by itself is enough to mar the destiny of a person, whether it is accompanied by the evil act or not.

22. "So", here, implies: "When you have come to know the good results of belief and righteous acts and the evil consequences of disbelief and denial of the Truth, you should adopt the following conduct." It also means: "By holding the life Hereafter to be impossible, the polytheists and disbelievers are, in fact, holding Allah to be helpless. Therefore, as against them, you should glorify Allah, and proclaim that He is free from this weakness." This Command has been addressed to the Holy Prophet and through him to all the believers.

23. "To glorify Allah" means to proclaim Allah's being free from and exalted above the defects and faults and weaknesses, which the *mushriks* ascribe to Him due to their *shirk* and denial of the Hereafter. The best form of this proclamation and expression is the Prayer. That is why Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, Qatādah, Ibn Zaid and other commentators say that here "to glorify" means to offer the prescribed Prayer. A clear indication in favour of this commentary is contained in the verse itself. It lays down certain definite times for the glorification of Allah. Evidently, if it was meant to instil the belief that Allah is free from all defects and weaknesses, there should be no question of the restriction of the times of the morning and evening, and the early and late afternoon, for a Muslim should always have this belief. Similarly, if it was meant to teach glorifying Allah merely verbally, it should be meaningless to specify the times, for a Muslim should express Allah's glory at all times. Therefore, inevitably the Command to glorify Allah with the restriction of the times points to its particular practical form which is none other than the Prayer.

24. This verse clearly points to the times of the *Fajr* (morning), *Maghrib (evening), 'Asr* (late afternoon) and the *Zuhr* (early afternoon) Prayers. Besides this, the other allusions made to the times of the Prayer in the Qur'ān are as follows:

"Establish the *Ṣalāt* from the declining of the sun to the darkness of the night, and be particular about the recital of the Qur'ān at dawn." (Banī Isrā'īl 78)

"Establish the *Ṣalāt* at the two ends of the day and in the early part of the night." (Hūd: 114).

"And glorify your Lord with His praise before the rising of the sun and before its setting, and glorify Him again during the hours of the night and at the extremes of the day." (Ṭā Hā: 130)

The first of these verses tells that the times of the Prayer are from the declining of the sun to the darkness of the night ('Ishā') after which is the time of the morning Prayer *(Fajr)*. In the second verse, the '"two ends of the day" imply the times of the morning *(Fajr)* and the evening *(Maghrib)* Prayers, and "in the early part of the night" implies the time of *'Ishā'*. In the third verse, "before the rising of the sun" implies the *Fajr* time and "before its setting" the *'Asr* time, and "during the hours of the night" implies the times of both the *Maghrib* and the 'Ishā' Prayers; and the "extremes of the day" are three: the morning, the declining of the sun and the evening. Thus, the Qur'ān at different places has pointed to the five Prayer times at which the Muslims the world over offer their Prayers. But, obviously, no one by merely reading these verses could have determined the Prayer times unless the divinely appointed teacher of the Qur'ān, the Holy Prophet himself, had given guidance to these by his word and deed.

Let us pause a while here and consider the boldness of the deniers of Hadīth. They make fun of "offering the Prayer", and say that the Prayer that the Muslims offer today is not at all the thing prescribed by the Qur'ān. They assert that the Qur'ānic injunction to establish the *Salāt* does not mean the offering of the Prayer but establishing the *Nizām-i-Rubūbiyat* (Order of Providence). Ask them: "What is that novel order of Providence which can either be established before the rising of the sun or after the declining of the sun till the early hours of the night? And what is that order of Providence which is required to be established especially on Fridays? ("O believers when you hear the call to the Friday Prayer, hasten to the remembrance of Allah".--(LXII: 9). And what is that special kind of the order of Providence for establishing which one has first to wash one's face and the hands up to the elbows and the feet up to the ankles and wipe one's head with wet hands, otherwise one will not establish it ? ("O believers, when you stand up to offer the *Ṣalāt,* you must wash your faces and your hands and arms up to the elbows, and

wipe your heads with wet hands."--(V: 6). And what is this peculiarity of this order of Providence that one cannot establish it unless one has completely washed oneself after sexual intercourse? ("O believers, do not offer the Prayer . . . if you are unclean until you take your bath, except when passing on the way."--(IV: 433) And what is this odd thing that if one has touched the women, one will have to strike one's hands on pure dust and wipe thereby one's face and hands in case one does not find water, for the purpose of establishing this strange order of Providence ? (" . . . or if you have touched women and you can find no water, then cleanse yourselves with pure dust: strike your palms on it and wipe your hands and faces with it."--(IV: 43). And what is this amazing order of Providence that while on a journey one should establish only half of it? ("When you go on a journey, there is no harm if you shorten the *Ṣalāt.*"--(IV: 101) Then, what an odd thing that during a war half of the soldiers should fall out, carrying their weapons, in order to establish the order of Providence behind the *Imām*, and the other half should stick to their positions and continue fighting the enemy; when the first group has performed one *sajdah* behind the *Imām* in its effort to establish the "order of Providence" it should go to relieve the other group, which should fall out and start establishing the "order of Providence" behind the *Imām*? ("And when you, O Prophet, are among the Muslims and are going to lead them in *Ṣalāt* (in a state of war), let a party of them stand behind you, carrying their weapons with them. When they have made their prostrations, they should fall back, and let another party of them, who have not yet offered their Salāt say it with you."--(IV : 102)

All these verses of the Qur'ān clearly indicate that to establish the Salāt implies the Prayer that the Muslims offer everywhere in the world today. But the deniers of *Ḥadīth* seem to be bent upon changing the Qur'ān instead of changing themselves. The fact is that unless a person becomes wholly fearless of Allah, he cannot dare play with His Word as these people do. Or, only such a person can engage in a pastime like this with respect to the Qur'ān who believes it is not Allah's Word, but intends to mislead the Muslims in the name of the Qur'ān. (See also E.N. 50 below in this connection).

25. That is ."How can that God Who is doing all this perpetually in front of your eyes, be helpless in raising man to life after death? He is causing absolutely dead matter to be discharged from living men and animals. He is ever bringing into existence countless animals and human beings by breathing life into dead matter, whereas the substances themselves which make up the bodies of the living beings are absolutely without life He is making you witness the phenomenon that wherever water becomes available, lands previously lying barren start blooming and blossoming with animal and vegetable life. In spite of witnessing all this if a person thinks that the God Who is sustaining the universe

will be helpless to raise man back to life after death, he is wholly devoid of the common sense. His mind's eyes do not see the clear realities gleaming from the manifestations which his head's eyes see."

26. It should be noted that from here to the end of verse 27, the Signs of Allah that are being mentioned point, on the one hand, to the possibility and occurrence of the life hereafter, in the context of the foregoing discourse, and on the other, the same Sings also point to the reality that this universe is neither God-less nor under many gods, but One God alone is its Creator, Disposer, Master and Ruler, except for Whom there should be no other deity of man. Thus, this section (vv.20-27) is fully well connected with the discourse preceding it and the discourse following it.

27. That is. "The stuff from which man has been created is nothing but a few dead substances which are found in the earth, like carbon, calcium, sodium and a few other elements like them. With their combination a wonderful being, called man, has been raised up, and in him have been placed great powers of sentiments, consciousness, imagination, none of which can be traced back to any of the constituent substances of his physical being. Then, not only has just one man so risen up by a mere accident, but in him has also been placed that wonderful procreative power by which millions and billions of human beings are coming continuously into being bearing the same physical structure and capabilities and possessing countless hereditary and personal characteristics. Therefore, O man! Does your intellect approve that this extremely wise creation has come into being of itself without the creative power of a Wise Creator? Can you say, being in your senses, that making a wonderful design of the creation of man and bringing it into effect and rendering the countless powers of the earth and heavens favourable and subservient to human life could be the result of the thinking and design of many gods? And will you be in your right senses when you think that the God Who has brought man into being from absolute nothingness, will not be able to raise the same man back to life after giving him death?"

28. That is, "The Creator's perfect wisdom is such that He has not created man in one sex only but in two sexes, which are identical in humanity, which have the same basic formula of their figure and form, but the two have been created with different physical structures, different mental and psychological qualities, and different emotions and desires. And then there has been created such a wonderful harmony between the two that each is a perfect counterpart of the other. The physical and psychological demands of the one match squarely with the physical and psychological demands of the other. Moreover, the Wise Creator is continuously creating the members of the two sexes in such a proportion since the dawn of the creation that in no nation and in no region has it ever happened that only boys or only girls may have been born. This is one thing in which human

intelligence has absolutely no part to play. Man cannot at all influence the course of nature according to which girls continue to be born with the feminine qualities and the boys with the masculine qualities, which are perfectly complimentary to each other, nor has he any means by which he may change the proportion in which men and women continue to be born everywhere in the world. The working of this system and arrangement so harmoniously and perpetually in the birth of millions and billions of human beings since thousands of years cannot be accidental either, nor the result of the common will of many gods. This is a clear indication of the reality that One Wise Creator and One only, in the beginning made a most appropriate design of a man and a woman by His Infinite Wisdom and Power and then made arrangements that precisely in accordance with that design countless men and countless women should be born along with their separate individual qualities in the right proportion."

29. That is, "This system has not come about by chance, but the Creator has brought it about deliberately with the object that the man should find fulfilment of the demands of his nature with the woman and the woman with the man, and the two should find peace and satisfaction in association and attachment with each other. This is the wise arrangement which the Creator has made the means of the survival of the human race, on the one hand, and of bringing the human civilization into existence, on the other. If the two sexes had been created on different patterns and designs, and the state of agitation which changes into peace and tranquillity only through union and attachment between the two had not been placed in each, the human race might have survived like sheep and goats, but there was no possibility of the birth of a civilization. Contrary to all other species of animal life, the fundamental factor that has helped create human civilization is that the Creator by His wisdom has placed a desire and a thirst and a longing in the two sexes for each other, which remains unsatisifed unless the two live in complete attachment and association with each other. This same desire for peace and satisfaction compelled them to make a home together. This same desire brought families and clans into being, and this same desire made social life possible for man. In the development of social life man's mental capabilities have certainly been helpful, but they were not its real motives. The real motivating force was the same longing with which man and woman were endowed and which compelled them to establish the "home". Can anyone possessed of common sense say that this masterpiece of wisdom has come about by chance through the blind forces of nature? Or, that it has been arranged so by many gods, and countless men and women have been continuously coming into being with the same natural longing since thousands of years? This is a Sign of the wisdom of One Wise Being, and of One only, which the people devoid of common sense only can refuse to acknowledge.

30. "Love" here means sexual love, which becomes the initial motive for attraction between man and woman, and then keeps them attached to each other. "Mercy" implies the spiritual relationship which gradually develops in the matrimonial life, by virtue of which they become kinder, affectionate and sympathetic towards each other; so much so that in old age, sexual love falls into the background and the two partners in life prove to be even more compassionate towards each other than they were when young. These two are the powerful forces which the Creator has created in man to support the initial longing of [illegible]. That longing and restlessness only seeks peace and satisfaction and brings the man and the woman into contact with each other. After that these two forces emerge and bind the two strangers brought up in different environments so intimately together that the two remain attached to each other through every thick and thin of life. Evidently, this love and mercy which is being experienced by millions and millions of people in their lives, is not anything material, which may be weighed and measured, nor can it be traced back to any of the constituent elements of human body, nor the cause of its birth and growth found out in a laboratory. The only explanation of this can be that the human self has been endowed with it by a Wise Creator, Who has done so of His own will to serve a special purpose.

31. That is, "Their coming into existence from nothingness and their being established an eternal law, and the functioning in them of innumerable forces in great harmony and equilibrium, contain many Signs of the reality that One Creator, and One only, has brought the entire universe into existence, and He alone is running this grand system. On the one hand, by reflecting over the origin of the initial energy that assumed the form of matter, then the transformation of the matter into so many elements, then the combination of the elements in a wonderful and wise proportion and coming into being of an awe-inspiring system of the universe, and then the functioning of this system since billions of centuries With such regularity and discipline, every unbiased mind will come to the conclusion that all this could not happen by mere chance, without the all-embracing will of an All-Knowing, All-Wise Creator. Then, on the other hand, if one sees that every thing from the earth to the farthest stars in the universe is made up of the same basic elements and the same law of nature is working in it, every intellect, which is not stubborn, will certainly admit that this cannot be the result of the godhead of many gods but there is One God Who is the Creator and Sustainer of this whole universe."

32. That is, "Although your vocal chords are similar, and there is no difference in the structure of the mouth, the tongue and the brains, yet people speak different languages in different regions of the world. Even in the regions where the same language is spoken different dialects are spoken from city to city and from town to town. Moreover, the accent and pronunciation and the style of

speech of every person is different from the other. Similarly, although the semen and the formula of your physical structure is the same, yet your colours are so different that, nations apart, even the colour of the two sons of the same parents is not exactly the same. In this verse, attention has been drawn only to two aspects, but if one looks around one will notice an infinite variety everywhere in the world. One will find countless differences in the species of man, animal, plants and other things in spite of the basic uniformity in their different members; so much so that no member of the species is exactly identical with the other. Even the two leaves of a tree are not exactly alike. This shows that the world is not a factory in which automatic machines might be working and turning out things in mass production bearing the stamp of their own separate species. But in this factory there is a Master-Artist at work, Who gives individual attention to everything and produces it on a new design with new embellishments and proportions and qualities, and everything thus produced is unique in its own way. His inventive genius is turning out a new model of everything every moment, and His creative power abhors repeating the same design the second time. Anyone who sees this wonderful phenomenon with open eyes, can never be involved in the foolish misconception that the Maker of the universe has gone to sleep after having made it go. This is, on the contrary, a clear proof of the fact that He is ever engaged in His creative activity, and is giving individual attention to each and everything in His creation.

33. "To seek bounty" is to seek the livelihood. Though man generally sleeps at night and works for his living in the day, this is not a law. Many people also sleep in the day and work for their livelihood at night. That is why the night and the day both have been mentioned and it has been said: "In both day and nights you sleep as well as work for your livelihood."

This also is a Sign which points to the design of the Wise Creator. Furthermore, it also points to the fact that He is not merely a Creator but also extremely Compassionate and Merciful to His creations, and is more anxious than the creation to meet its needs and requirements. Man cannot constantly labour but needs to have a rest of a few hours after every few hours of hard work so as to rebuild energy to take up work again. For this purpose, the Wise and Merciful Creator has not rested content with creating a feeling of fatigue and a desire for rest in man, but has placed in his nature a powerful urge for the "sleep", which without his will, even inspite of resistance from him, overpowers him automatically after every few hours of work and wakefulness, and compels him to have a few hours of rest, and leaves him as soon as the need has been fulfilled. Man has so far been unable to understand the naturer and real causes of the sleep. This is something wholly innate, which has been placed in the nature and structure of man. Its being precisely according to the requirements of man is enough to testify that it is not anything accidental, but has been provided by a Wise Being in

accordance with a purpose and plan. It is based on a clear wisdom and reason and purposefulness. Moreover, the sleep itself testifies that the One Who has placed this compulsive urge in man is a greater well wisher of man than man himself, otherwise man would have deliberately resisted the sleep and endeavoured to keep constantly awake and worked continuously hard and thus exhaust not only his work-power but also his vital powers.

Then, by using the word "seeking Allah's bounty" for the seeking of livelihood, allusion has been made to another series of the Signs. How could have man sought and found his livelihood if the innumerable and unlimited forces of the earth and heavens had not been put to work to provide means of the livelihood and supply countless resources for man to seek it in the earth? Not only this. Man could not have exploited these means and resources had he not been given appropriate limbs and suitable physical and mental capabilities for the purpose. Thus the ability in man to seek the livelihood and the presence of the resources of the livelihood outside of him, clearly indicate the existence of a Merciful and Beneficent God. An intellect which is not sick can never presume that all this has happened by chance, or is the manifestation of the godhead of many gods, or some merciless, blind force is responsible for these bounties and blessings.

34. That is, "Its thunder and lightning give hope that rain will come and help the crops, but at the same time they cause a fear that the lightning may strike somewhere, or heavy rain may fall, which may wash away everything."

35. This thing, on the one hand, points to the life hereafter, and on the other, proves that God exists, and there is One God alone, Who is controlling the earth and the heavens. innumerable creatures of the earth live on the products that come out from the earth. These products depend on the productivity of the earth. The productivity depends on the rain, whether it directly falls on the earth, or its water gathers together on the surface of the earth, or takes the form of underground water channels or springs or wells, or freezes on the mountains and then flows down in the form of rivers. Then the rain depends on the heat of the sun, the change of seasons, atmospheric changes in temperature, circulation of the winds, and on the lightning, which causes the rain to fall as well as mixes a kind of natural manure in the rainwater. The establishment of a harmony and proportion between different things existing from the earth to the sky, their becoming favourable and subservient to a variety of aims and objects, and their remaining continuously and constantly favourable in perfect harmony for millions of million years cannot be the product of mere chance. Has it all happened without the all-embracing will and plan and wisdom of a Fashioner and Designer? And is it not a proof of the fact that the Creator and Lord of the earth, the sun, the water, the heat and coolness is One and only One?

36. That is, "Not only have they come into being by His Command, but their continuous existence and the functioning in them of a grand workshop of life constantly is also due to His Command. If His Command does not sustain them even for a moment, the entire system should break down at once."

37. That is, "It is not at all difficult for the Creator and Controller of the universe to raise you back to life; for this He will have to make no preparation. His one call will be enough to raise and muster together from every corner of the earth all human beings who have been born since the beginning of creation and will be born in the future."

38. That is, "If it was not difficult for Him to create you in the first instance, how can it be difficult for Him to re-create you? Your first creation was not difficult for Him because your present existence is a living proof of that. Now it is simple commonsense that the re-making of a thing should be relatively easier for the one who made it for the first time .

39. In the foregoing section, arguments have been given both for *Tauḥīd* and for the Hereafter; now the discourse turns to only *Tauḥīd.*

40. The *mushriks,* even after admitting that Allah is the Creator and Master of the earth and heavens and all that they contain, held some of His creatures as associates in His attributes and powers, and prayed to them, presented offerings and performed rites of worship before them. Their belief regarding their self-made associates is found in the words of the *Talbīh* that they used to pronounce while going round the Ka'bah. They said: "Here I am, O Allah, here I am in Thy presence! Thou hast no partner except the partner who is Thy own. Thou art his owner as well as owner of what he owns." (Ṭabarānī on the authority Ibn 'Abbās) Allah has refuted this kind of *shirk* in this verse. The argument is to this effect: "When you do not make your own slaves partners in your wealth, how do you think and believe that Allah will make His creatures partners in His Godhead?" (For further details, see E.N. 62 of An-Naḥl).

41. That is, "When a person neither thinks on the right lines himself, nor is prepared to listen to a well-wisher, his intellect comes under the curse of Allah. After this everything that can help reasonable person to reach the Truth, only helps this stubborn and ignorant person to be involved more and more deeply in further deviation and error. This is what has been conveyed in the word "leading astray". When a truth-loving person invokes Allah for the grace of guidance, Allah creates for him maximum means of the guidance according to the sincerity of his invocation. And when a strayed person insists on his deviation, Allah creates for him the means which mislead him further and further away from the Truth."

[Contd on p. 714

حَنِيفًا ۚ فِطْرَتَ اللّٰهِ الَّتِيْ فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا ۚ لَا تَبْدِيْلَ لِخَلْقِ اللّٰهِ ۚ ذٰلِكَ
الدِّيْنُ الْقَيِّمُ ۙ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝ 30 مُنِيْبِيْنَ اِلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوْهُ وَ
اَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَلَا تَكُوْنُوْا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ۝ 31 مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ فَرَّقُوْا دِيْنَهُمْ وَ
كَانُوْا شِيَعًا ۚ كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُوْنَ ۝ 32 وَاِذَا مَسَّ النَّاسَ ضُرٌّ
دَعَوْا رَبَّهُمْ مُّنِيْبِيْنَ اِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ اِذَآ اَذَاقَهُمْ مِّنْهُ رَحْمَةً اِذَا فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْهُمْ
بِرَبِّهِمْ يُشْرِكُوْنَ ۝ 33 لِيَكْفُرُوْا بِمَآ اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ ۚ فَتَمَتَّعُوْا ۟ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝ 34 اَمْ اَنْزَلْنَا
عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطٰنًا فَهُوَ يَتَكَلَّمُ بِمَا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يُشْرِكُوْنَ ۝ 35 وَاِذَآ اَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ
رَحْمَةً فَرِحُوْا بِهَا ۚ وَاِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ ۢ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ اَيْدِيْهِمْ اِذَا هُمْ
يَقْنَطُوْنَ ۝ 36 اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ۚ اِنَّ فِيْ
ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ۝ 37 فَاٰتِ ذَا الْقُرْبٰى حَقَّهٗ وَالْمِسْكِيْنَ وَابْنَ
السَّبِيْلِ ۚ ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ يُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَ اللّٰهِ ۖ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ۝ 38
وَمَآ اٰتَيْتُمْ مِّنْ رِّبًا لِّيَرْبُوَا۟ فِيْٓ اَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ فَلَا يَرْبُوْا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ۚ وَمَآ اٰتَيْتُمْ
مِّنْ زَكٰوةٍ تُرِيْدُوْنَ وَجْهَ اللّٰهِ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُضْعِفُوْنَ ۝ 39 اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَكُمْ
ثُمَّ رَزَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيْتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيْكُمْ ۚ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَآئِكُمْ مَّنْ يَّفْعَلُ مِنْ ذٰلِكُمْ
مِّنْ شَيْءٍ ۚ سُبْحٰنَهٗ وَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ۝ 40 ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا
كَسَبَتْ اَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيْقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِيْ عَمِلُوْا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ۝ 41 قُلْ
سِيْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ كَانَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ
مُّشْرِكِيْنَ ۝ 42 فَاَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّيْنِ الْقَيِّمِ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَّا مَرَدَّ لَهٗ
مِنَ اللّٰهِ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَّصَّدَّعُوْنَ ۝ 43 مَنْ كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهٗ ۚ وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا

So,[42] (O Propnet and the followers of the Prophet,) set your face sincerely and truly[43] towards this Faith,[44] and be steadfast on the Nature whereupon Allah has created mankind.[45] There can be no alteration in the Nature made by Allah.[46] This is the right and true Faith,[47] but most people do not know. (Be steadfast on this) turning wholly towards Allah,[48] and fear Him,[49] and establish the *Ṣalāt,*[50] and do not be of the *mushriks* who have set up their separate creeds and divided themselves into sects, each sect rejoicing in what it has.[51] 30-32

When an affliction befalls the people, they invoke their Lord, turning penitently towards Him;[52] then when He makes them taste of His Mercy, some of them start committing *shirk*[53] *so* that they may show ingratitude for Our favours. Well, enjoy yourselves, for soon you shall know. Have We sent down to them an authority, which may testify to the truth of the *shirk* they are committing?[54] 33-35

When We make the people taste mercy, they exult at it; and when an affliction befalls them on account of their own misdeeds, they grow despondent.[55] Do they not see that it is Allah Who gives abundantly to whom He wills and sparingly (to whom He wills)? Surely in this there are many Signs for those who believe.[56] Therefore, (O believers,) give to your relative his due, and to the needy and the wayfarer (his due).[57] This is the best way for those who seek Allah's goodwill: such alone will attain true success.[58] The interest that you give in order to increase the wealth of the people, does not increase in the sight of Allah;[59] and the *Zakāt* that you pay in order to win Allah's approval, its payers do indeed increase their wealth.[60] 36-39

Allah[61] it is Who created you, then provided for you,[62] then He causes your death, and then He will bring you back to life. Is there among the associates you have set up (with Allah) anyone who can do any of these things?[63] Glorified is He and far exalted above the *shirk* these people commit. Mischief has appeared in the land and the sea on account of men's own doings that He may make them taste some of their (evil) works: maybe they mend their ways.[64] (O Prophet,) say to them, "Go about in the land and see what has been the end of those who lived before (you). Most of them were *mushriks* (idolaters)."[65] So, (O Prophet,) set your face firmly towards the true Faith before that Day 43-44

arrives of which there is no chance of being averted by Allah.[66] On that Day people will break asunder.

Contd. from 711]

42. This "so" implies that when the reality has become clear to you, and you have come to know that none but Allah is the Creator and Master and Sovereign of this universe and of man himself, then inevitably your conduct should be such as indicated in this verse.

43. "Set your face. .truly": "Do not turn your face to any other direction after you have .adopted this way of life. ' Then you should think like a Muslim and your likes and dislikes should be of a Muslim. Your values and standards should be the ones set by Islam and your character and conduct should bear the stamp of Islam, and the affairs of your individual and collective life should be ordered according to the way taught by Islam."

44. "This Faith": the Faith that the Qur'ān presents, in which none but Allah is .worthy of worship and obedience, in which none can be held as an associate of Allah in His Divinity, in His attributes and His powers and rights, in which man by his own free will chooses to order his life in accordance with the Guidance and Law of Allah.

45. That is, "All human beings have been created on the nature that none but One Allah is their Creator and Lord and Deity. You should be steadfast on this nature. If you adopt the attitude of independence, you will be following a way opposed to your nature, and if you serve and worship another besides Allah, then also you will be working against your nature."

This subject has been explained by the Holy Prophet in a number of *Aḥadīth*. According to Bukhārī and Muslim, the Holy Prophet said: "Every child who is born, is born on true human nature; it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian, etc. afterwards. Its example is of an animal which gives birth to complete and sound young ones - none is born with torn and cut off ears—but the *mushriks* tear their ears afterwards on account of their superstitions of ignorance."

According to another *Ḥadīth* reported in Musnad Ahmad and Nasā'ī, the Muslims in a war killed even the children of the enemy. When the Holy Prophet came to know of it, he became very angry, and said: "What has happened to the people that they have transgressed the limits and killed even the children?" A man said, "Sir, were they not the children of the *Mushriks?*" The Holy Prophet replied: "Even the best of your people are the children of the *mushriks!*" Then he said:

"Every living being is born on true nature: then when he becomes able to speak, his parents turn him into a Jew or a Christian."

In another *Hadīth* which has been reported by Imām Ahmad on the authority of 'Ayād bin Himār-ul-Mujāshi'ī, it has been related that one day the Holy Prophet said during an address: "My Lord says: I had created all My servants on true Faith; then the satans came and led them astray from their Faith, and made unlawful what I had made lawful for them, and commanded them to associate with Me those for whom I have sent down no authority'."

46. That is, "God has made man His servant and created him only for his own service. This natural disposition of man cannot be altered, however hard one may try. Neither can man effect a change in his position of a servant, nor can anything other than God become his God in the real sense. Man may make for himself as many gods as he may please, but the fact remains that he is the servant of none but One God alone. Man by his own folly and ignorance may regard anyone as holder of Divine attributes and powers and take any one as the maker and un-maker of his destiny, but the fact of the matter is that neither does anyone other than Allah possess Divine attributes nor His authority, nor has anyone else the power to make or mar the destiny of man."

Another translation of this verse can be: "Do not effect any alteration in the Nature made by Allah." That is, it is not right to corrupt and spoil the Nature on which Allah has created man.

47. "Right and true Faith": To remain steadfast on one's true Nature.

48. That is, "Whoever has adopted an attitude of independence and freedom and turned away from his true Lord, and whoever has adopted service of another than Allah and proved to be disloyal to his real and true Lord, should desist from this, and return to the service of the One God, Whose real servant he is by birth."

49. That is, "You should have the fear that if in spite of being a servant of Allah by birth, you adopted the way of living independently of Him, or served another beside Him, you will have to suffer a severe punishment for rebellion and ingratitude. Therefore, you should avoid every such way of life which earns you the wrath of God."

50. Both turning to Allah and having fear of His wrath are the acts of the heart. This state of the heart, for its manifestation and stability, inevitably needs a physical act, which may make it known to others in society that so-and-so has really returned to the service of One Allah alone, and which, at the same time, may go on nourishing and developing the state of piety and devotion in one's own self also by means of practical experience and discipline. That is why immediately

after giving the Command for a mental change Allah has given the Command for this physical act, i.e. establishment of the *Ṣalāt*. As long as an idea is only an idea in the mind of man, it can neither be stable nor enduring. It may fade away or even change. But when he starts practising it, the idea takes root in him and goes on increasing in stability and strength with more and more practice; so much so that when it has become a belief it can neither change nor fade away easily. Considered from this viewpoint, no act can be more effective than the offering of the Prayer regularly five times a day for strengthening piety and fear of God in oneself. The other act, whatever it be, is carried out at intervals, or in different forms on different occasions, but the Prayer is an act, which is performed every few hours in one and the same specific form permanently, in which man has to rehearse over and over again the whole lesson taught him by the Qur'ān about Islam, so that he does not forget it. Furthermore, both the believers and the disbelievers have to know who among the people has given up the way of rebellion and adopted the way of obedience to the Lord. The believers have to know this so that they can form into a community and society and can cooperate with one another in the way of Allah; then as soon as the relationship of any one of them starts showing signs of laxity with respect to the Faith and Islam, this should become known to all of them at once. The disbelievers have to know this so that the dormant nature in them wakens up when they see the people from their own kith and kin turning humbly to their real God over and over again, and till their nature wakes up they continue to be awe-stricken when they see the practical enthusiasm of the obedient servants of God. For these two objectives also the establishment of the Prayer is the most effective means.

Here, it should be noted that the Command for the establishment of the Prayer was given at Makkah at a time when a handful of the Muslims were being severely persecuted by the disbelieving Quraish, and went on being persecuted for another nine years after this. At that time there was no sign of the Islamic government yet in sight. If the offering of the Prayer was meaningless without the Islamic government, as some ignorant people think, or if the establishment of the *Ṣalat* did not mean the offering of the Prayer at all but the establishment of *Nizām-i-Rubūbiyat* (order of Providence), as the deniers of *Ḥadīth* claim, the Qur'ānic injunction at that stage would have been meaningless. The question is: How did the Holy Prophet and the Muslims carry out this Command for nine years after it had been enjoined ?

51. This is an allusion to the fact that the real way of life for mankind is the same Way of Nature as elucidated above. This way of life has not evolved from a polytheistic creed to *Tauḥīd* as thought by those who invent a philosophy of religion on the basis of speculation. But, contrary to this, all the religions found in the world today have appeared because of the corruption of the original Way of

life. This corruption occurred because different people added their different self-made creeds to the natural realities and created separate sects and every-one became a devotee of the additional thing, which was the basis of the separate sect, and gave up the original Way of life. Now the only way of attaining true guidance is that one should return to the original Reality which was the basis of the true Faith, and rid oneself of all the later additions and excrescences and their devotees. If he still keeps any kind of contact with them, he will only be harming the true Faith.

52. This is a clear proof of the fact that in the depths of their heart there still exists an evidence of *Tauḥīd*. Whenever the hopes start crumbling, their hearts cry out from within that the real Ruler of the universe is its Master and His help alone can improve their lot.

53. That is, "They again start presenting offerings before other deities, and claiming that their misfortune has been removed through the help and grace of such and such a saint and shrine."

54. That is "What authority have they got to say that the calamities are not averted by God but by the so-called saint? Does common sense approve of it? Or, is there any Divine Book which says that Allah has delegated His powers to such and such saints, and that they should now be invoked by the people to help them out of difficulties?"

55. In the preceding verse man has been censured for his ignorance, folly and ingratitude. In this verse, he has been censured for puerility and meanness When a person attains a little wealth and power and respect, and he sees that his business has started flourishing, he forgets that he has been given all this by Allah. He exults at his success and is so puffed up and conceited that he has neither any regard left for Allah nor for the people. But as soon as good luck deserts him, he loses heart and a single stroke of ill-luck so disheartens and frustrates him that he is prepared to do any mean thing, even commit suicide.

56. That is, "The believers can learn how disbelief and *shirk* affect man's morality and what is the impact of belief in Allah on his morals. The person who sincerely believes Allah and looks upon Him as the Master of the treasure-houses of provisions, can never be involved in meanness, in which those forgetful of God are involved. If he is given abundantly he will not be puffed up; he will rather be grateful to Allah, will treat his fellowmen generously and benevolently, and will expend his God-given wealth for His sake. On the other hand, he will exercise patience; he will never gamble away his honesty and self-respect, but will have hope of Allah's bounty till the last. Such a moral excellence can neither fall to the lot of an atheist nor of a polytheist."

57. It has not been said: "Give charity to the relative, the needy and the wayfarer, but their due because this is their right (due to them from you), which you must give them in any case. You will not do them any favour if you part with a part of your wealth for their sake. You should remember it well that if the real owner of the wealth has given you more than others, your extra wealth is, in fact, the right of others, which has been given to you for your trial so that your Lord may see whether you recognize the rights of others and render their rights to them or not."

Anyone who reflects over this Divine Command and its real spirit cannot help feeling that the way proposed by the Qur'ān. for man's moral and spiritual development inevitably envisages the existence of a free society and economy. This development is not possible in a social environment in which the people's rights of ownership are set aside and stifled. The system in which the state assumes ownership of all resources and the government machinery the entire responsibility of distributing provisions among the people, so much so that neither can an individual recognize the right of the other and render it, nor a person develop a feeling of goodwill for the other after he has received help, is a purely communist system. Such an economic and social system, which is being advocated in our country today under the deceptive name of the 'Qur'ānic Order of Providence" *(Nizām-i Rubūbiyat), is* entirely opposed to the Qur'ānic scheme itself, for it suppresses the development of individual morality and formation of character altogether. The Qur'ānic scheme can operate and function only in a society where the indivduals own some resources of wealth, possess rights to expend it freely, and then render willingly and sincerely the rights of God and His servants. In such a society alone there can arise the possibility that, on the one hand, the people may develop individually the virtues of sympathy, kindliness and affection, sacrifice, recognition of the rights of others and rendering those rights in the right spirit, and on the other, the beneficiaries may develop in their hearts pure feelings of well-wishing, gratitude and thankfulness for the donors. This system only can produce the ideal conditions in which the elimination of evil and the promotion of goodness does not depend on the intervention of a law-enforcing authority but the people's own purity of the self and their own good intentions take up this responsibility.

58. This does not mean that true success can be attained just by rendering the rights of the needy and the wayfarer and the relative and nothing else is needed to be done for this. But it means that those who do not recognize these rights of others nor render them, will not attain true success. It will be attained by those who render the rights sincerely only for the sake of Allah's goodwill and pleasure.

59. This is the first verse revealed in the Qur'ān that condemned interest. It only says this: "You pay interest thinking that it will cause an increase in the wealth of the money-lender. But actually, in the sight of Allah, interest does not

increase the wealth, but the wealth is increased by the payment of the *Zakāt*". Afterwards when the Commandment prohibiting interest was sent down at Madīnah, it was said: "Allah deprives interest of all blessing and develops charity." (For the later Commands, see Āl-i-'Imrān: 130, and Al-Baqarah: 275 to 281).

This verse has been given two interpretations by the commentators. One section of them says: Here *ribā'* does not mean the interest which is forbidden by the *Sharī'ah,* but it means the gift or the present which is given with the intention that the recipient will return it redoubled, or will perform some useful service for the donor, or his becoming prosperous will be beneficial for the donor himself. This is the view of Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, Dahhāk, Qatādah, 'Ikrimah, Muhammad bin Ka'b al-Qurzī and Sha'bī. Probably this comment has been made by these scholars for the reason that in this verse the only consequence mentioned of the act is that in the sight of Allah such wealth will not increase at all; if, however, it had meant the interest forbidden by the *Sharī'ah,* it would have been positively said that it will be severely punished by Allah.

The other group differs from this and says that it means the same well known *ribā'* which has been forbidden by the *Sharī'ah.* This is the opinion of Ḥasan Baṣrī and Suddī, and 'Allāma Ālūsī also has opined that the apparent meaning of the verse is the same, for ribā, in Arabic is used in the same meaning. This interpretation has been adopted by the commentator Nisābūrī also.

In our opinion also this second interpretation is correct, for the argument given in favour of the first interpretation is not enough for discarding the well known meaning of the word ribā'. In the period when Sūrah Ar-Rūm was sent down, interest had not been forbidden yet. The prohibition was made several years afterwards. The way of the Qur'ān is that it first prepares the minds for the thing that it has to prohibit at a later stage. About wine also the only thing said in the beginning was that it is not pure food. (An-Naḥl: 67). Then in Al-Baqarah: 219, it was said that the harm of its sin is greater than its benefit. Then it was enjoined that the Prayer should not be offered in the state of intoxication. (An-Nisā': 43). Then, finally, it was prohibited totally. Similarly, about interest here it has been only said that it does not increase the wealth, but the real increase is caused by the *Zakāt.* After this, the compound interest was forbidden (Āl-i-'Imrān: 130); and finally, interest itself was made absolutely unlawful. (Al-Baqarah: 275).

60. There is no limit to this increase. The greater the sincerity of intention, the deeper the sense of sacrifice, the greater the intensity of desire for Allah's pleasure with which a person spends his wealth in His way, the greater and more handsome will be the rewards that Allah will give him. According to an

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فَلِاَنْفُسِهِمْ يَمْهَدُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ
اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖٓ اَنْ يُّرْسِلَ الرِّيَاحَ مُبَشِّرٰتٍ وَّلِيُذِيْقَكُمْ
مِّنْ رَّحْمَتِهٖ وَلِتَجْرِيَ الْفُلْكُ بِاَمْرِهٖ وَلِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾
وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ رُسُلًا اِلٰى قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَآءُوْهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَانْتَقَمْنَا
مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اَجْرَمُوْا ؕ وَكَانَ حَقًّا عَلَيْنَا نَصْرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ يُرْسِلُ
الرِّيٰحَ فَتُثِيْرُ سَحَابًا فَيَبْسُطُهٗ فِي السَّمَآءِ كَيْفَ يَشَآءُ وَيَجْعَلُهٗ كِسَفًا
فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلٰلِهٖ ۚ فَاِذَآ اَصَابَ بِهٖ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖٓ اِذَا
هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَاِنْ كَانُوْا مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يُّنَزَّلَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِهٖ
لَمُبْلِسِيْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَانْظُرْ اِلٰٓى اٰثٰرِ رَحْمَتِ اللّٰهِ كَيْفَ يُحْيِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ؕ
اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ لَمُحْيِ الْمَوْتٰى ۚ وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَئِنْ اَرْسَلْنَا رِيْحًا
فَرَاَوْهُ مُصْفَرًّا لَّظَلُّوْا مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ يَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ فَاِنَّكَ لَا تُسْمِعُ الْمَوْتٰى وَلَا
تُسْمِعُ الصُّمَّ الدُّعَآءَ اِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَمَآ اَنْتَ بِهٰدِ الْعُمْيِ عَنْ ضَلٰلَتِهِمْ ؕ
اِنْ تُسْمِعُ اِلَّا مَنْ يُّؤْمِنُ بِاٰيٰتِنَا فَهُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ
ضُعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ضُعْفٍ قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضُعْفًا وَّ
شَيْبَةً ؕ يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيْمُ الْقَدِيْرُ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَيَوْمَ تَقُوْمُ السَّاعَةُ يُقْسِمُ
الْمُجْرِمُوْنَ ۙ مَا لَبِثُوْا غَيْرَ سَاعَةٍ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ كَانُوْا يُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ
اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَالْاِيْمَانَ لَقَدْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِيْ كِتٰبِ اللّٰهِ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْبَعْثِ ۚ فَهٰذَا
يَوْمُ الْبَعْثِ وَلٰكِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَيَوْمَئِذٍ لَّا يَنْفَعُ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا
مَعْذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِيْ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ

The one who has disbelieved, will bear the burden of his disbelief,[67] and those who have acted righteously, are indeed preparing the way for their own true success, so that Allah may reward with His bounty those who believed and did good works. Surely He does not like the disbelievers. 44-45

Of His Signs is this that He sends the winds to give good news[68] and to bless you with His Mercy and to make the ships sail by His Command,[69] so that you may seek His bounty[70] and be grateful to Him. And We sent before you Messengers to their peoples who came to them with clear Signs.[71] Then We took vengeance on the guilty ones[72] and it was their right on Us that We should help the believers. 46-47

It is Allah Who sends the winds, which raise the cloud; then He spreads the clouds in the sky as He pleases, and breaks them up; and then you see drops of rainwater falling from the cloud. When He showers this rain upon those of His servants He pleases, they are filled with joy, though before its coming they had lost all hope. Just see the Signs of Allah's Mercy, how He brings back to life the dead earth.[73] Likewise, He will bring back the dead to life: He has power over everything. And if We send a wind due to which they see their crops turn yellow,[74] they do become even more firm in their disbelief.[75] (O Prophet,) you cannot make the dead hear you,[76] nor can you make the deaf to hear your call, when they show their backs and turn away;[77] nor can you take the blind out of their deviation and guide them aright.[78] You can only make those people to hear you, who believe in Our Revelations and bow down in submission. 48-53

Allah it is Who originated your creation from a state of weakness; then He gave you strength after that weakness; then made you weak and old after that strength. He creates whatever He wills:[79] He knows everything and has power over everything. And when the Hour is established,[80] the criminals will swear that they had not stayed for more than an hour ;[81] thus they used to be deceived in their worldly life.[82] But those who had been given knowledge and faith, will say, "You have stayed, according to the book of Allah, till the Day of Resurrection: so this is the same Day of Resurrection, but you did not know." So, on that Day, the excuse of the wicked will not avail them anything, nor will they be asked to seek forgiveness[83] 54-57

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authentic *Ḥadīth*, even if a person gives a fig in the way of Allah, Allah will increase it to the size *of* Mount Uhud.

61. From here again the discourse turns to the theme of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter for the admonition of the disbelievers and the *mushriks*.

62. That is, "He provided all the various means in the earth for your sustenance and made such arrangements that everyone should receive something from the circulation of the provision."

63. That is, "If those whom you have set up as deities can neither create, nor provide sustenance, nor have power over life and death, nor can raise you back to life after death, then what for have you set them up as your deities?"

64. This is again an allusion to the war that was going on between Byzantium and Iran, which was telling on the whole of the Middle East. "Man's own doings" means the wickedness and oppression and tyranny, which inevitably appear in human conduct and character as a result of adopting *shirk* and atheism and ignoring the Hereafter. "Maybe they mend their ways" means that Allah shows the evil consequences of some of the acts of men in this world before the punishment of the Hereafter so that they understand the reality, feel the error of their conjectures and turn to the righteous belief, which the Prophets of Allah have been presenting before man since the earliest times, and besides adopting which there is no other way of ordering human conduct on sound foundations. This subject has been presented at several places in the Qur'ān, e.g. in At-Taubah: 126, Ar-Ra'd: 31, As-Sajdah: 21, Aṭ-Ṭūr: 47.

65. That is, "The disastrous war between Byzantium and Iran is not a new thing of its kind. The past history of mankind is full of the accounts of the destruction of great nations. The root cause of the evils that caused the destruction of those nations was *shirk* which you are today being admonished to avoid."

66. That is, "The Day which neither Allah Himself will avert nor has He given power to anyone else to avert it."

67. This is a comprehensive sentence which encompasses all those harms which can afflict a disbeliever on account of his disbelief. No list of the harms could be so comprehensive as this.

68. That is, to give good news of the rain.

69. This refers to winds, which are helpful in sailing. In ancient times, sailing boats and ships mostly depended on favourable winds and adverse winds

were disastrous for them. Therefore, the mention of these winds after the rain-bringing winds has been made as a special favour of Allah.

70. "To seek His bounty": To perform trade journeys.

71. That is, "One kind of the Signs are those which are scattered in the world around man, which he comes across at every moment of his life, one of which is the system of the circulation of winds, as mentioned in the preceding verse. The other kind of the Signs are those which the Prophets of Allah brought in the form of the miracles and Divine Revelations and the extraordinary pure characters and their healthy and life-giving influence on human society. Both kinds of the Signs point to the same Reality, which is this: The *Tauhid* which the prophets teach is based on the Truth. Each of these Signs supports the other. The Signs of the universe testify to the truth of what the Prophets say, and the Signs brought by the Prophets explain the reality being pointed out by the Signs of the universe.

72. "The guilty ones": those who remained blind to these two kinds of the Signs and persisted in their denial of Tauhid and their rebellion against God.

73. There is a subtle allusion in the mention of the Prophethood and the rain, one after the other, to the reality that the advent of a Prophet is a blessing for man's moral life even as the coming of the rain proves to be a blessing for his material life. Just as the dead earth awakens to life by a shower of the rain from the sky and starts blooming and swelling with vegetation, so is the morally and spiritually desolate human world quickened to life at the coming down of Divine Revelation and starts blossoming with moral excellences and virtues. This is the disbelievers' own misfortune that they show ingratitude, and regard the blessing of Prophethood as a portent of death for themselves instead of a good news of life.

74. That is, a frosty wind or a heat wave which ruins their crops after they started flourishing by the shower of rain.

75. That is, they start cursing God and blaming Him for all their misfortunes and troubles, whereas when God had showered His blessings on them, they had shown ingratitude instead of being grateful to Him. Here again there is a subtle allusion to the theme that when the Messengers of Allah bring the messages of Mercy to the people, they do not listen to them and reject the blessing; then when God imposes tyrants and despots upon them in consequence of their disbelief, who persecute them severely, and destroy their humanity, the same people start abusing and blaming God for creating a world full of tyranny and cruelty.

76. That is, those whose consciences have become dead, whose moral

مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ ۚ وَلَئِنْ جِئْتَهُمْ بِآيَةٍ لَّيَقُولَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا
مُبْطِلُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾ كَذَٰلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ فَاصْبِرْ
إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ ۖ وَلَا يَسْتَخِفَّنَّكَ الَّذِينَ لَا يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

30-60 We have set forth in this Qur'ân every sort of argument to make the people understand, but whatever Sign you may bring, the disbelievers will certainly say, "You are following falsehood." Thus Allah seals the hearts of those who lack knowledge. So, (O Prophet,) have patience: surely Allah's promise is true;[84] and let not those who lack (certainty of) faith find you light.[85]

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selves have become devoid of life, whose self-worship and stubbornness and obstinacy have destroyed their capacity to understand and accept the Truth.

77. "The deaf": those who have put locks on their minds and hearts so that they do not understand anything although they hear everything; then, when such people also try that the message of the Truth should not at all enter their ears, and they should avoid and keep away from the inviter, nobody can make them hear and understand anything.

78. That is, "It is not for the Prophet that he should help and guide the blind by the hand to the the right way all through the life. He can only show guidance to the right path. But guiding those whose mind's eyes have been blinded and who do not at all see the way that the Prophet tries to show them, is not within the power of the Prophets."

79. That is, "The states of childhood and youth and old age have all been created by Him. It is dependent upon His will that He may create whomever He pleases weak and whomever He pleases strong; He may give death to whomever He pleases before attaining manhood and whomever He pleases in the prime of youth; He may grant a long life and yet keep in sound health whomever He pleases and bring to a wretched, agonising old age after a brimful youth whomever He likes. Man may live in self-conceit and arrogance if he so likes, but he is so helpless in God's powerful grip that he cannot change by any artifice the state that He may place him in.

80. That is, Resurrection, which is being foretold here.

81. That is, from the time of death till Resurrection. Even if thousands of years might have elapsed since their death they will feel that they had gone to sleep a few hours earlier and then a sudden calamity had roused them from sleep.

82. That is, "They used to make similar wrong estimates in the world, too. There also they lacked the realization of Reality, and therefore, used to assert that there was going to be no Resurrection, no life-after-death, and no accountability before God."

83. Another translation can be: ".. nor it will be required of them to please their Lord", because they will have lost all opportunity for recourse to repentance and Faith and righteous acts, and wasted the time allotted for the test and reached the eve of the announcement of the result.

84. The allusion is to the promise made in verse 47 above. There, Allah has mentioned His way of taking vengeance on those criminals who denied and resisted and ridiculed the clear Signs brought by the Messengers of Allah stubbornly, and of helping the believers.

85. That is, "Let not the enemies find you so weak as to suppress you by their uproar, nor to cow you by their campaign of slander-mongering, nor to disheartren you by their jesting, taunts and derision, nor frighten you by their threats, show of power and persecution, nor allure you by offering baits, nor make you effect a compromise with them on the basis of their appeals in the name of national interests. Instead of this, they should find you so sagacious in the awareness of your objective, so firm in faith and conviction, so resolute in determination, and so strong in character that they should neither be able to cow you by threats, nor purchase you, nor lure you away by temptation, nor strike any bargain with you in the matter of the Faith. This whole theme has been compressed in a short sentence by Allah, saying: "Let not those who lack faith find you light." Now this is borne out by the firm evidence of history that the Holy Prophet proved to be as invincible and indomitable as Allah wanted His Last Prophet to be. Anyone who tried his strength with him in any field and sphere was routed, and eventually the Holy Prophet succeeded in bringing about the desired revolution in spite of every kind of opposition and resistance put up by the whole of polytheistic and unbelieving Arabia.