

XXXI

LUQMĀN

لُقْمان

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah has been named Luqmān after Luqmān the Sage, whose admonitions to his son have been related in vv. 12-19 of this Sūrah.

Period of Revelation

A perusal of the subject-matter shows that it was sent down in the period when persecution to suppress and thwart the invitation to Islam

had begun and every sort of machination had started being employed for the purpose. This is borne out by vv. 14-15, in which the young converts to Islam have been told that although the rights of the parents are the uppermost after God, they should not listen to them if they prevented them from accepting Islam, or compelled them to revert to the creed of *shirk* and polytheism. The same thing has been said in Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt, which indicates that both these Sūrahs were sent down in the same period. A study of the style and subject-matter of the two Sūrahs on the whole, however, shows that Sūrah Luqmān was sent down earlier, for one does not see any sign of the antagonism in its background though, contrary to this, while studying Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt one can clearly feel that the Muslims were being severely persecuted during the period of its revelation.

Theme and Subject-matter

In this Sūrah the people have been made to understand the meaninglessness and absurdity of *shirk* and the truth and reasonableness of *Tauhīd*, and they have been invited to give up blind imitation of their forefathers, consider with a cool mind the teachings which the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is presenting from the Lord of the worlds, and see with open eyes the manifest Signs found in the universe around them and in their own selves, which bear evidence to its truth.

In this connection, it has also been pointed out that this is not a new teaching which might have been presented in the world, or in the land of Arabia, for the first time, and with which the people might be unfamiliar. The learned and wise people of the past ages said and taught the same thing which Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is teaching today. It is as if to say, "O people: In your own country there has lived a wise man, named Luqmān, whose wisdom has been well known among you, whose proverbs and wise sayings are cited in your daily conversation and who is often quoted by your poets and orators. Now you should see for yourselves what creed and what morals he used to teach."

سُوْرَةُ لُقْمٰنَ مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

الٓمّٓ ﴿١﴾ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ الْكِتٰبِ الْحَكِيْمِ ﴿٢﴾ هُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً لِّلْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِيْنَ
يُقِيْمُوْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَهُمْ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ
عَلٰى هُدًى مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ وَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّشْتَرِيْ
لَهْوَ الْحَدِيْثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ ۖ وَّيَتَّخِذَهَا هُزُوًا ۚ اُولٰٓئِكَ
لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِيْنٌ ﴿٦﴾ وَاِذَا تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِ اٰيٰتُنَا وَلّٰى مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَاَنْ لَّمْ يَسْمَعْهَا
كَاَنَّ فِيْٓ اُذُنَيْهِ وَقْرًا ۚ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِعَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٧﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
لَهُمْ جَنّٰتُ النَّعِيْمِ ﴿٨﴾ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا ۚ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقًّا ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٩﴾
خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا وَاَلْقٰى فِي الْاَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ اَنْ تَمِيْدَ بِكُمْ
وَبَثَّ فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَآبَّةٍ ۚ وَاَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءً فَاَنْۢبَتْنَا فِيْهَا مِنْ كُلِّ
زَوْجٍ كَرِيْمٍ ﴿١٠﴾ هٰذَا خَلْقُ اللّٰهِ فَاَرُوْنِيْ مَاذَا خَلَقَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ ۚ بَلِ
الظّٰلِمُوْنَ فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿١١﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا لُقْمٰنَ الْحِكْمَةَ اَنِ اشْكُرْ لِلّٰهِ ۚ وَ
مَنْ يَّشْكُرْ فَاِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيْدٌ ﴿١٢﴾ وَاِذْ قَالَ
لُقْمٰنُ لِابْنِهٖ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهٗ يٰبُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللّٰهِ ۚ اِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿١٣﴾
وَوَصَّيْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ ۚ حَمَلَتْهُ اُمُّهٗ وَهْنًا عَلٰى وَهْنٍ وَّفِصٰلُهٗ فِيْ عَامَيْنِ

XXXI

LUQMĀN

لقمان

Verses: 34

Revealed at Makkah

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Alif. Lām. Mīm. These are the verses of the wise Book,[1] a Guidance and Mercy for the righteous people[2], who establish the *Salāt*, pay the *Zakāt* and fully believe in the Hereafter.[3] They are the ones who are on the right path enjoined by their Lord, and they are the ones who will attain true success.[4] 1-5

And there is among the men such a one also[5], who buys alluring tales[6] so that he may lead the people astray from Allah's Way, without any knowledge,[7] and make a mockery of the invitation to it.[8] For such people there is a disgraceful torment.[9] When Our Revelations are recited to him, he turns his face away disdainfully as though he did not hear them, as though his ears were deaf. Well, give him the good news of a painful torment. However, for those who believe and do good works, there are blissful Gardens[10] wherein they shall live for ever. This is a true promise of Allah: He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.[11] 6-9

He[12] created the heavens without pillars that you could see;[13] He set mountains in the earth lest it should tilt away along with you[14]; He scattered all kinds of animals in the earth, and sent down rainwater from the sky and caused a variety of bounteous vegetation to grow in it. This is Allah's creation: now, show Me what have these others created?[15] —The fact is that these wicked people are involved in manifest error.[16] 10-11

We [17] had bestowed wisdom on Luqmān that he may be grateful 12
to Allah.[18] Whoever is grateful, his gratefulness is for his own good, and whoever is ungrateful, then Allah is indeed Self-Sufficient and Self-Praiseworthy.[19]

13 Remember the time when Luqmān was admonishing his son, saying, "My son, join not another as an associate with God;[20] the truth is that joining associates (with God) is a grave iniquity".[21]

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1. That is, "verses of the Book which is full of wisdom and whose every teaching is based on wisdom."

2. That is, "These verses give guidance to the Right Way and have been sent down as a mercy from God. But the people who can profit by this mercy and guidance are only those who adopt a righteous attitude, who wish to become good, who crave for their own well-being, whose quality is that they avoid the evil when they are warned of it, and follow the good when they are shown the ways to it. As for the wicked and mischievous people, they will neither profit by this guidance nor receive any share from this mercy."

3. It does not mean that "the righteous people" bear only these three qualities. By using the common epithet of "righteous" for them, it has been pointed out that they refrain from all those evils which this Book forbids and practise all those good things which this Book enjoins. Then, the three qualities of the "righteous" have been especially mentioned in order to show that all other good acts depend on these three things. They establish the *Salāt* which engenders God-worship and piety as a permanent habit with them; they pay the *Zakāt* which strengthens the spirit of sacrifice in them, subdues the love of the world and arouses a desire for the goodwill of Allah; and they believe in the Hereafter, which instils the sense of responsibility and answerability, which does not allow them to live like an animal, which is free to graze at will in the pasture, but like a man who is fully conscious of the fact that he is not independent but the slave of a Master before Whom he is answerable for all his activities of life. Owing to these three qualities, these "righteous" people are not the kind of the righteous persons who happen to do good just by chance, who may commit evil as often and as freely as they would do good. Contrary to this, these qualities inculcate in them an enduring system of thought and morality owing to which goodness issues forth from them in a regulated and systematic manner, and the evil, if at all committed, is committed just by chance. They do not have any deep-rooted motives, which might be arising from their own system of thought and morality and leading them on to the evil way under their own nature impulse.

4. At the time when these verses were sent down, the disbelieves of Makkah thought, and said so openly, that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and those who accepted his message were wasting and ruining their lives. Therefore, it was rejoined with full force and emphasis: "...these are the ones who will attain true success." That is, "They will not ruin themselves as you seem to think in your ignorance, but they in fact are the ones who alone will attain true success, and the utter failures will be those who have refused to adopt this way."

Here the one who regards "true success" as confined to the world, in the sense of material prosperity, will be wholly missing the Qur'ānic concept of it. To understand the real concept of the true success one should study the following verses of the Qur'ān along with the relevant E.N.'s: Al-Baqarah: 2-5, Āl-'Imrān: 102, 130, 200, Al-Mā'idah: 35, 90, Al-An'ām: 21, Al-A'rāf: 7, 8, 157, At-Taubah: 88, Yūnus: 17, An-Nahl: 116, Al-Hajj: 77, Al-Mu'minūn: 117, An-Nūr: 51, Ar-Rūm: 38.

5. That is, "On the one hand, there is this Mercy and Guidance sent down by Allah, of which some people are taking full advantage, and on the other, there are also some unfortunate people living side by side with the fortunate ones, who are adopting this sort of attitude as against the Revelations of Allah."

6. The words *lahv al-hadīth* in the Text imply such a thing as may allure and absorb a listener completely and make him heedless of everything else around him. Lexically, there is nothing derogatory in these words, but in custom and usage they apply to evil and useless and vain things, such as gossip, nonsensical talk, joking and jesting, legends and tales, singing and merry-making, etc.

"To buy" alluring tales may also mean that the person concerned adopts falsehood instead of the Truth, turns away from the guidance and turns to those things which can neither benefit him in the world nor in the Hereafter. But this is the metaphorical meaning. The real meaning of the sentence is that a person should purchase an absurd and useless thing for his money, and this is supported by many traditions. Ibn Hishām has related on the authority of Ibn Ishāq that when the disbelievers of Makkah could not stop the message of the Holy Prophet from spreading in spite of their best efforts, Nadr bin Hārith said to the people of Quraish: "The way you are counteracting this man will avail you nothing. He has lived a lifetime among you. Until now he was the best of your men morally: he was the most truthful and the most trustworthy person among you. Now you say that he is a sorcerer and enchanter and a poet and a madman. Who will believe all this? Don't the people know the way the sorcerers talk? Don't they know the enchanters and the way they conduct their business? Are they unaware of poetry and of the states of madness? Which of these accusations sticks to Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) by exploiting which you would turn the people's

attention away from him? Look! I will tell you how to deal with him." Then he left Makkah for Irāq and managed to get from there legends and tales about the kings of Iran and Rustam and Isfandyar and started to arrange tale-telling parties to distract the people from the Qur'ān and to absorb them in the tales. (Ibn Hishām, vol. I, pp. 320-321). The same tradition has been cited by Vāhidi in *Asbāb un Nazūl* on the authority of Kalbī and Muqātil. And according to Ibn 'Abbās, Nadr had bought singing girls also for the purpose. Whenever he heard that someone was coming under the Holy Prophet's influence, he would impose a singing girl on him with the instruction: "Feed him and entertain him with your songs so that he is absorbed in you and distracted from the other side." This was the same device which the arch-criminals of the nations have been employing in every age. They try to get the common people so absorbed in fun and sport and musical entertainment's in the name of culture that they are left with no time and sense to attend to the serious problems of life, and in their heedlessness they do not even feel what destruction they are being driven to.

The same commentary of *lahv al-hadīth* has been reported from a large number of the Companions and their immediate followers. 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd was asked, "What does *lahv al-hadīth* mean in this verse ?" He said thrice emphatically, "By God! it means singing." (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Hākim, Baihaqī). Similar traditions have been reported from scholars like 'Abdullah bin' Abbas, Jābir bin 'Abdullah, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Hasan Basrī and Makhūl. Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hātim and Tirmidhi have related on the authority of Hadrat Abū Umāmah Bāheli that the Holy Prophet said, "It is not lawful to buy and sell and trade in singing girls nor is it lawful to take their price." In another tradition, the last sentence is to the effect: " ... it is unlawful to eat their price". Yet another tradition from Abū Umāmah is to the effect: "To teach music to slave-girls and to trade in them is not lawful and their price is forbidden." All these *Ahadīth* also elucidate that the verse containing *lahv al-hadīth* was sent down in this very connection. Qādī Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabi has related in the *Ahkam al-Qur'ān* a *Hadīth* from Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mubārak and Imam Mālik on the authority of Hadrat Anas, saying, that the Holy Prophet said: "He who hears the song of a singing-girl in a musical concert, will have molten lead poured into his ear on the Day of Judgement" (In this connection, one should also note that the "culture" of music in those days flourished almost entirely through the slave-girls. Free women had not yet become "artists". That is why the Holy Prophet spoke about trading in slave-girls, and described their wages and earnings as their price, and used the word *qaynah* for the singing-girl, which is specifically used for a slave-girl in Arabic).

7. "Without any knowledge" may be connected with "buys" and also "lead...astray". In the first case, it would mean: "The ignorant foolish person

buys this alluring thing and does not know that he is buying a ruinous thing at the cost of a highly valuable thing. On the one hand, there are the Divine verses which are full of wisdom and guidance, which he can obtain without any cost, but he turns away from them. On the other, there are these absurd things, which are disastrous for his morals and he is expending his wealth to obtain them." In the second case, it would mean: "He has come out to guide the people without any knowledge: he does not know what burden of sin he is taking on himself by trying to lead the people astray from Allah's Way."

8. That is, "This person wants to make fun of the Divine Revelations by alluring and absorbing the people in legends and tales and music. He intends that the invitation of the Qur'ān should be derided and ridiculed and laughed away. He plans to fight the Religion of God with the strategy that as soon as Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) should come out to recite Revelations of God to the people, there should be a charming, sweet-voiced damsel giving her performance in a musical concert, on the one hand, and a glib-tongued story teller telling tales and legends of Iran, on the other, and the people should become so absorbed in these "cultural activities" that they may not be in a mood to hear anything about God and the morals and the Hereafter."

9. This punishment will be in accordance with their crime. They want to debase and disgrace Go's Religion, His Revelations and His Messenger; God will take His vengeance on them by giving them a disgraceful torment.

10. Instead of saying "There are blessings of Paradise (Gardens) for them," it has been said, "there are blissful Gardens for them." In the first case, it would have meant this: "They will enjoy the blessings but the Gardens will not belong to them." In the second case, it automatically becomes evident that the whole Gardens will be handed over to them, and they will take advantage of their blessings as an owner does of his own possession, and not like the one who is allowed to use something without giving him ownership rights over it."

11. That is, "Nothing can withhold Him from fulfilling His promise, and whatever He does, He does strictly according to the demands of wisdom and justice. The object of mentioning these two attributes of Allah after saying: "This is a true promise of Allah", is to stress that Allah neither violates His promise wilfully nor is there in this universe any such power as can prevent Him from fulfilling His promise. Therefore, there can be no chance that one may not receive what Allah has promised to give as a reward for faith and righteous deeds. Moreover, Allah's open promise to bestow this reward is wholly based on His wisdom and His justice. He does not misjudge: it cannot be that He may deprive a deserving person of his reward, and reward a non-deserving one instead. The

people characterised by true faith and righteous deeds indeed deserve this reward and Allah will bestow this on them only."

12. After the above introductory sentence, the discourse now turns to the real theme, *i.e.*, the refutation of shirk and the invitation to *Tauhīd*.

13. The actual words *bi-ghair-i 'amad-in tarauna-hā* in the Text may have two meanings: (1) "You can see for yourself that they stand without pillar"; and (2) "they stand on the pillars which you cannot see" Ibn 'Abbās and Mujāhid have favoured the second meaning, and many other commentators take the first meaning. If the meaning is expressed in terms of the natural sciences of the present day, it can be said that the countless stars and planets in the heaven have been established in their positions and orbits without any visible support and prop: there are no strings and wires which might have tied them together; there are no iron bars which might be withholding them from falling on one another. It is the law of gravitation which is supporting the system. This interpretation is according to the present-day knowledge. It may be that tomorrow some new addition to our knowledge enables us to interpret the reality better.

14. For explanation, see E.N. 12 of Sūrah An-Nahl.

15. "These others" "the beings whom you have set up as your deities, whom you regard as makers and un-makers of your destinies, whom you have been worshipping as such persistently"

16. That is, "When they do not point out in this universe any creation of anyone else than Allah, and obviously they cannot, their setting up the non-creators as associates in Godhead and bowing before them in worship and invoking them for help, is nothing but mere stupidity, because their foolish conduct cannot be explained in any other way. Unless a person has taken leave of his senses he cannot commit the folly that he should himself admit before you that his deities are non-creators and that Allah alone is the Creator, and yet insist on their being the deities. If somebody has a little of the common sense, he will inevitably think how the one who has no power to create anything, and who has no share whatever in the creation of anything in the earth and heavens, can be our deity. Why should man bow before it and adore it as a deity? Does it possess any power that it could fulfil one's needs and requirements? Even if it hears one's prayers, what could it do to answer them when it did not have any power to create anything? For, evidently, afflictions can be removed only by him who can create something and not by him who can create nothing."

17. After presenting a rational argument to refute *shirk* the Arabs are being told that this rational point of view is not being presented before them for the first time, but the wise and learned people before them also have been saying

the same thing, including their own famous sage, Luqmān. Therefore, they cannot refute the Holy Prophet's message, saying, "If *shirk* was an irrational creed, why didn't it strike so to somebody else before?".

Luqmān was well known as a wise and learned man in Arabia. He has been mentioned in the poetry of the pre-Islamic poets like Imra'ul-Qais, Labid, A'ashā, Tarafa and others. Some educated Arabs also possessed a collection of the wise sayings of Luqmān. According to traditions, three years before the Hijrah the very first person of Madinah to be influenced by the Holy Prophet was Suwaid bin Sāmit. He went to Makkah for Ḥajj. There the Holy Prophet was as usual preaching Islam to the pilgrims coming from different places, at their residences. When Suwaid heard his speech, he submitted, "I have also got a thing similar to what you preach," When the Holy Prophet asked what it was, he said, "The roll of Luqmān." Then on the Holy Prophet's instance, he read out a portion of it, whereupon the Holy Prophet said, "This discourse is fine, but that which I have is better still." Then he recited the Qur'ān to him, and Suwaid admitted that that was certainly better than the wisdom of Luqmān. (Ibn Hishām, vol. II, p. 378). According to the historians, this person (Suwaid bin Sāmit) was known by the title of Kāmil (Perfect) in Madīnah on account of his ability, bravery, nobility and poetry. But when after his meeting with the Holy Prophet he returned to Madīnah, he was killed in the battle of Bu'āth, which was fought some time afterwards. His tribesmen were of the opinion that he had become a Muslim after his meeting with the Holy Prophet.

Historically, Luqmān is a disputed personage. In the dark centuries of ignorance there was no compiled history. The only source of information were the traditions that were being handed down since centuries. According to these, some people thought that Luqmān belonged to the people of 'Ād and was a king of Yaman. Relying on these traditions, Maulānā Sayyid Sulaiman Nadvī has expressed the opinion in the *Ard al-Qur'ān* that Luqmān was a descendent of the believers who remained safe with the Prophet Hūd after the destruction of the people of 'Ād by a Divine torment, and he was one of the kings of Yaman when it was ruled by the 'Ād. But other traditions which have been reported from some learned Companions and their immediate followers do not support this view. Ibn 'Abbās says Luqmān was a negro slave, and the same is the opinion of Ḥadrat Abū Hurairah, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah and Khālid ar-Rab'i. According to Ḥadrat Jābir bin'Abdullah Ansārī, he belonged to Nūbah. S'īd bin al-Musayyib says that he was an Egyptian negro. These three sayings closely resemble one another. The Arabs generally called the black people negroes (Habashīs) in those days, and Nūbah is the country south of Egypt and north of Sudan. Therefore, calling the same person an Egyptian and a Nubian and a negro, in spite of the difference in words, is one

[Contd. on p. 16

لقمٰن

أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ ۚ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٤﴾ وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُشْرِكَ
بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبْهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا ۖ وَاتَّبِعْ
سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ ۚ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٥﴾ يَا بُنَيَّ
إِنَّهَا إِنْ تَكُ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ فَتَكُنْ فِي صَخْرَةٍ أَوْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ أَوْ
فِي الْأَرْضِ يَأْتِ بِهَا اللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٦﴾ يَا بُنَيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ ۖ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ
الْأُمُورِ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا
يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ﴿١٨﴾ وَاقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاغْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ ۚ إِنَّ
أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ ﴿١٩﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ
وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَأَسْبَغَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعَمَهُ ظَاهِرَةً وَبَاطِنَةً ۗ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ
يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلَا هُدًى وَلَا كِتَابٍ مُنِيرٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ
اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَنَا ۚ أَوَلَوْ كَانَ
الشَّيْطَانُ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَىٰ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَنْ يُسْلِمْ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ
مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ ۗ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَمَنْ
كَفَرَ فَلَا يَحْزُنْكَ كُفْرُهُ ۚ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَنُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ
الصُّدُورِ ﴿٢٣﴾ نُمَتِّعُهُمْ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ نَضْطَرُّهُمْ إِلَىٰ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَلَئِنْ سَأَلْتَهُمْ
مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ اللَّهُ ۚ قُلِ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ ۚ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾ لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيدُ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَلَوْ
أَنَّ مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلَامٌ وَالْبَحْرُ يَمُدُّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ سَبْعَةُ أَبْحُرٍ

And[22] the fact is that We have Ourself enjoined on man to recognize the rights of his parents: his mother bore him in her womb with weakness upon weakness and his weaning took two years.[23] (That is why We admonished him to the effect:) "Give thanks to me and to your parents: to Me you have to return. But if they press you to join with Me another about whom you have no knowledge,[24] do not obey them at all. Treat them kindly in the world, but follow the way of him who has turned to Me. Then to Me will all of you return;[25] then I shall tell you what you had been doing.[26] 14-15

(And Luqmān[27] had said:) "My son, even if a thing be equal to a grain of mustard seed and hidden in a rock, or in the heavens, or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth.[28] He is Knower of subtleties and is All-Aware. O my son, establish the *Ṣalāt*, enjoin good, forbid evil and bear with fortitude every affliction that befalls you.[29] These are the things which have been strictly enjoined.[30] And do not speak to the people with your face turned away,[31] nor walk proudly on the earth, for Allah does not love any self-conceited, boastful person.[32] Be moderate in your gait,[33] and lower your voice, for the most disagreeable of all voices is the braying of the asses".[34] 16-19

Do you not see that Allah has subjected to you whatever is in the earth and the heavens,[35] and has bestowed on you all His favours, visible as well as invisible?[36] Yet there are some among the people who wrangle about Allah,[37] without any knowledge, or guidance, or an enlightening Book.[38] And when it is said to them, "Follow what Allah has sent down," they say, "We shall only follow that upon which we found our forefathers." What ! will they still be following them even if Satan had been calling them to the raging Fire?[39] 20-21

Whoever surrenders himself to Allah,[40] and is a doer of good,[41] he has indeed taken hold of a reliable support[42] and the ultimate disposal of all affairs is in the hand of Allah. As for the one who disbelieves, let not his disbelief grieve you.[43] To Us they have to return; then We shall tell them what they had been doing. Most surely Allah knows the hidden secrets of the breasts. We are allowing them to enjoy themselves for a while in the world; then We shall drag them to a severe torment in a helpless condition. 22-24

25-26 If you ask them, "Who has created the earth and the heavens?" they will surely say, "Allah." Say, "Praise is then only for Allah,"[44] but most of them do not know.[45] Whatever is in the heavens and the earth, is Allah's.[46] Indeed, Allah is self-Sufficient and Self Praiseworthy.[47]...

[Contd. from p. 113]

and the same thing. Then the elucidations made by Suhayli in *Raud al-Unuf* and Mas'ūdī in *Murūj adh-Dhahab* also throw some light on the question as to how the wisdom of this Sudanese slave spread in Arabia. They both agree that this person though originally a Nubian was an inhabitant of Madyan and Aylah (modern, 'Aqabah). That is why he spoke Arabic and his wisdom spread in Arabia. Besides, Suhayli also elucidates that Luqmān the Sage and Luqmān bin 'Ād were two different persons, and it is not correct to regard them as one and the same man. (*Raud al-Unuf*, vol. I, p. 266; Mas'ūdī, vol. I, p. 57).

Another thing may also be made clear here. The Arabic manuscript from the Library of Paris, which the orientalist Derenbourg has published under the title *Amthāl Luqmān Ḥakīm* (Fables De Loqman Le Sage) is a fabricated thing which has nothing to do with the Roll of Luqmān. These Fables were compiled by somebody in the 13th century A.D. Its Arabic is poor, and a perusal shows that it is, in fact, a translation of some other book in a different language, which the author or translator has himself ascribed to Luqmān the Sage. The orientalists make such researches with a special object in view. They bring out such forged and fake things in order to prove that the narratives of the Qurān are unhistorical legends and therefore unreliable. Anyone who reads B. Helle's article on "Luqmān" in the *Encyclopeadia of Islam* will not fail to understand the real motive of these people.

18. That is, "The very first demand of the wisdom and knowledge, insight and sagacity, granted by Allah was that man should have adopted the attitude of gratefulness and obedience before his Lord, and not of ingratitude and thanklessness. And this gratefulness should not have merely been lip-service but expressed and translated in thought and word and deed. One should have the conviction in the depths of one's heart and mind that whatever one has got, has been given by God. One's tongue should always be acknowledging the favours of God; and practically also one should be trying to prove by carrying out His Commands, by avoiding sins, by striving to achieve His good-will, by conveying His blessings and favours to His servants and by fighting those who have rebelled against Him that one is really a grateful servant of one's God."

19. That is, "The one who is ungrateful and unbelieving, his unbelief is harmful to his own self. Allah does not lose anything. He is Independent and does not stand in need of anyone's gratitude. The gratitude of someone does not add anything to His Godhead, nor does anyone's ingratitude and disbelief change the factual reality that whatever the servants have got, has been granted by Him. He is Self-Praiseworthy whether someone praises Him or not. Every particle in the universe bears testimony to His Perfection and Beauty, His Creativity and Providence, and every creature is paying homage to His glory perpetually."

20 This particular admonition from the wisdom of Luqmān has been cited here for two reasons: (1) He gave this admonition to his son, and obviously, no one can be insincere to one's own children. A person may deceive others, may behave hypocritically towards them, but no one, not even a most depraved person, will try to deceive and defraud his own children. Therefore, Luqmān's admonishing his son thus is a clear proof of the fact that in his sight *shirk* was indeed the most heinous sin, and for that very reason he first admonished his dear son to refrain from this iniquity. (2) The second reason for this narration is that many parents from among the disbelievers of Makkah were compelling their children to turn away from the message of *Tauḥīd* being preached by the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and remain steadfast on the creed of *shirk*, as is being stated in the following verses. Therefore, those foolish people are being told, as if to say, "The well-known sage of your own land had wished his children well by admonishing them to avoid *shirk*; now you should judge it for yourself whether you are wishing your children well or ill when you compel them to follow the same creed of *shirk*."

21. *Ẓulm* means to deprive someone of his right and to act unjustly. *Shirk* is a grave iniquity because man sets up such beings as equals with his Creator and Providence and Benefactor as have no share whatever in creating him, nor in providing for him, nor in bestowing the blessings on him, which he is enjoying in the world. There could be no greater injustice than this. The Creator's right on man is that he should worship Him alone, but he worships others and so deprives Him of His right. Then, in whatever he does in connection with the worship of others than Allah, he exploits many things, from his own mind and body to the earth and heavens, whereas, all these things have been created by Allah, the One, and man has no right to use any of them in the worship of any other than Allah. Then, the right of man's own self on him is that he should not debase and involve it in punishment. But when he worships others than his Creator, he debases his self as well as makes it deserving of the punishment. Thus, the entire life of a *mushrik* becomes *Ẓulm* in every aspect and at all times and his every breath becomes an expression of injustice and iniquity.

22. The whole passage from here to the end of the paragraph is a parenthesis, which Allah has inserted as a further explanation of the saying of Luqmān.

23. From these words, Imām Shāfe'ī, Imam Aḥmad, Imam Abū Yūsuf, and Imām Muḥammad have drawn the conclusion that the suckling period of the child is two years. If a child has been suckled by a woman within this period, they will be forbidden for each other, but if outside and beyond this period, they will not be so. A saying of Imām Mālik also supports this. But Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has proposed the period of two and a half years as a precaution, and has added that if the child has been weaned after two years, or even earlier, and it is no longer dependent upon suckling for its food, no woman would be forbidden for him if she gave him suck after that period. However, if the real food of the child is still milk, suckling during the period will render him and her forbidden for each other in spite of his eating the other food in a more or less quantity. For, the verse does not mean that the child should be suckled necessarily for two years. In Sūrah Al-Baqarah it has been said: "The mothers shall suckle their children for two whole years, if the fathers desire the suckling to be completed." (v. 233). Ibn 'Abbās from these words has concluded, and other scholars have agreed with him in this, that the shortest period of pregnancy is six months, for the Qur'ān at another place says: "His bearing (in the womb) and his weaning took thirty months." (Aḥqāf: 15) This is an important legal point which helps resolve many disputes concerning legitimate and illegitimate births.

24. That is, "About whom you have no knowledge that he is My associate."

25. "All of you": the children as well as the parents.

26. For explanation, see E. N.'s 11 and 12 of Sūrah Al-'Ankabūt.

27. The other admonitions of Luqmān are being narrated here to imply that like the basic beliefs, the teachings pertaining to morals that the Holy Prophet is presenting, are not anything new in Arabia.

28. That is, "Nothing can escape Allah's knowledge and His grasp. A seed in the rock may be hidden for you, but it is known to Allah. A particle in the heavens may be very distant for you, but for Allah it is very near. A thing lying in the layers of the earth may be lying in darkness for you but for him it is in full light. Therefore, you cannot do anything good or bad, anywhere or any time, which may remain hidden from Allah. He is not only aware of it, but when the time for accountability comes, He will place before you a full record of each act of yours."

29. In this there is a subtle allusion to this that whoever will enjoin good and forbid evil, will inevitably have to face and undergo afflictions and hardships in the world.

30. Another meaning can be: "These are things which require courage and resolution. To rise for the reformation of the people and to brave the hardships of the way cannot be the job of a mean-spirited and cowardly person."

31. *Tusa'ir* in the original is from *sa 'ar*, a disease in the camel's neck due to which it keeps its face turned to one side. The idiom implies the attitude of a person who shows arrogance and vanity, turns his face away and treats others with scant respect.

32. *Mukhtāl* in the original implies a person who has an over-high opinion of himself, and *fakhūr* is the one who boasts of his superiority over others. A man becomes haughty and arrogant and vain in his gait only when he is puffed up with pride, and wants that others should feel his superiority.

33. According to some commentators it means this: "Walk neither fast nor slow but at a moderate pace;" but the context shows that here the pace or the rate of walking is not the question. There is nothing morally wrong with a fast or a slow pace in itself, nor can there be a rule made for it. When a man is in a hurry, he has to walk fast, and there is nothing wrong if one walks slow when walking for pleasure. Even if there is a standard for the moderate pace, it cannot be made a law for every person at all times. What is actually meant by this is to reform the state of the self under which a person walks haughtily. The haughtiness and arrogance of a person inevitably manifests itself in his gait and style of walking, which shows the state of his mind and also the cause of his pride and haughtiness. Wealth, authority, beauty, knowledge, power and such other things cause a man to become proud and vain, and each of these gives him a special style of gait. Contrary to this, manifestation of humility in the gait is also the result of one or the other morbid mental state. Sometimes the hidden conceit of the self of a man takes on the form of ostentatious humility, piety and godliness and this is shown by his gait; and sometimes man really feels so embittered by the frustrations of the world that he adopts a sick man's gait. What Luqmān means to say is this: "Avoid these states of the mind and self and walk the gait of a simple, honest and noble person, which neither shows any vanity and haughtiness nor weakness nor ostentatious piety and humility."

The taste of the Holy Prophet's great Companions in this regard can be judged from a few instances. When Ḥaḍrat Umar once saw a man walking with his head hung down, he shouted out to him, saying, "walk with your head raised up. Islam is not sick." He saw another person walking like a weak, sick man, and said, "wretch! Do not sully our religion!" Both these incidents show that in the

sight of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar religious piety did not at all require that one should walk cautiously like the sick man and show undue humility by one's gait. Whenever he saw a Muslim walking such a gait, he would have the apprehension that it would misrepresent Islam and would depress the other Muslims. A similar incident was once met with by Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah. She saw a person walking as if run down and exhausted. She asked what was the matter. It was said, "He is one of the reciters of the Qur'ān (i.e. a person who remains engaged in reciting and teaching the Qur'ān and in worship)." At this she said, 'Umar was the chief of the reciters of the Qur'ān, but as it was he would walk with a firm foot, and he would speak with force and strength, and he would give a good beating if he had to." (For further explanation, see E.N, 43 of Banī Isrā'īl and E.N. 79 of Al-Furqān).

34. This does not mean that one should always speak in a low voice and should never raise one's voice. By citing the braying of the asses, it has been clearly indicated what sort of the tone and voice in speech is meant to be discouraged. One kind of lowness and loudness, roughness and softness, of the tone and voice is that which is needed under natural and genuine requirements. For example, when speaking to a man close at hand, or to a small group of the people, one would speak in a low voice, and when speaking to a man at a distance or to a large number of the people, one would inevitably have to speak loudly. Similar is inevitably the difference in tones depending on the occasion and situation. The tone of praise has to be different from the tone of condemnation, and of the expression of goodwill from that of indignation. This thing is in no way objectionable. Nor does the admonition of Luqmān imply that one should always speak in a soft and low voice and tone regardless of the occasion and requirement. What is objectionable is that one should shout oneself hoarse and produce a voice like the ass's braying in order to bully and debase and browbeat the other person.

35. A thing can be subjected to somebody in two ways: (1) The thing may be made subordinate to him and he may be authorised to use and exploit it as he likes, and (2) the thing may be subjected to a law and system so that it becomes useful for him and serves his interests accordingly. Allah has not subjected everything in the earth and heavens to man in one and the same sense, but has subjected certain things in the first sense and certain others in the second sense. For example, He has subjected the air, water, earth, fire, vegetation, minerals, cattle and many other things in the first sense, and the sun, the moon, etc. in the second sense.

36. "Visible favours" imply those favours which are perceived by man in one way or the other, or are known to him. And the "invisible favours" are those which are neither perceived by him nor are known to him. There are countless things in man's own body and in the world outside him, which are working in his interest, but man is utterly unaware of the means which his Creator has provided

for his protection and safety, for his development and provision of sustenance to him, and for his well-being and happiness. Research of man in the different branches of science is revealing many such favours of God as were hidden from him before. And the favours and blessings which have so far been revealed are insignificant as against those which still lie hidden from man.

37. "Who wrangle about Allah": Who wrangle and dispute about questions such as these: Does Allah exist or not? Is He One God alone, or are there other gods also? What are His attributes and what is their nature? What is the nature of His relationship with His creations etc.?

38. That is, "They neither have any means of knowledge by which they might themselves have observed or experienced the reality directly, nor do they have the guidance of a guide available to them, who might have guided them after observing the reality, nor do they possess a Divine Book, which might be the basis of their belief."

39. That is, "It is not at all necessary that the forefathers of every person and every family and nation should have been on the right path. The mere argument that a particular way of life had been bequeathed by the elders cannot be a proof of its being right also. No sane person can commit the folly that he should blindly go on following the way of his forefathers even if they were not rightly guided, and should never bother to find out where the way is leading him."

40. "Whoever.....Allah": Who submits himself wholly to the service of Allah, entrusts all his affairs to Him and makes His Guidance the law of his entire life.

41. That is, practically also he should adopt the attitude of an obedient servant of Allah.

42. That is, "He will neither have the apprehension that he will be misguided, nor the fear that he will meet an evil end after having served Allah."

43. This means to say, "O Prophet, the one who refuses to listen to you, thinks that by rejecting Islam and insisting on unbelief he has harmed you, but in fact he has not harmed you but harmed only himself. If he does not listen to you, you need not bother yourself about him at all."

44. That is, "Thank God that you at least know this and believe in this. But if this be the reality, all praise should then belong to Allah alone. How can any other being deserve praise when it has no share whatever in the creation of the

[Contd. on p. 23

مَّا نَفِدَتْ كَلِمٰتُ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَزِيْزٌ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿٢٧﴾ مَا خَلْقُكُمْ وَلَا بَعْثُكُمْ اِلَّا
كَنَفْسٍ وَّاحِدَةٍ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَمِيْعٌۢ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يُوْلِجُ الَّيْلَ فِى
النَّهَارِ وَيُوْلِجُ النَّهَارَ فِى الَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ۙ كُلٌّ يَّجْرِىْٓ اِلٰٓى اَجَلٍ
مُّسَمًّى وَّاَنَّ اللّٰهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَاَنَّ مَا
يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهِ الْبَاطِلُ ۙ وَاَنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْعَلِىُّ الْكَبِيْرُ ﴿٣٠﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ الْفُلْكَ
تَجْرِىْ فِى الْبَحْرِ بِنِعْمَتِ اللّٰهِ لِيُرِيَكُمْ مِّنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ ؕ اِنَّ فِىْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ
لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُوْرٍ ﴿٣١﴾ وَاِذَا غَشِيَهُمْ مَّوْجٌ كَالظُّلَلِ دَعَوُا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ
الدِّيْنَ ۚ فَلَمَّا نَجّٰىهُمْ اِلَى الْبَرِّ فَمِنْهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ ؕ وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِاٰيٰتِنَآ اِلَّا كُلُّ
خَتَّارٍ كَفُوْرٍ ﴿٣٢﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوْا رَبَّكُمْ وَاخْشَوْا يَوْمًا لَّا يَجْزِىْ وَالِدٌ عَنْ
وَّلَدِهٖ ۫ وَلَا مَوْلُوْدٌ هُوَ جَازٍ عَنْ وَّالِدِهٖ شَيْـًٔا ؕ اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ
الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا ۪ وَلَا يَغُرَّنَّكُمْ بِاللّٰهِ الْغَرُوْرُ ﴿٣٣﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عِنْدَهٗ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ ۚ
وَيُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ ۚ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِى الْاَرْحَامِ ؕ وَمَا تَدْرِىْ نَفْسٌ مَّاذَا تَكْسِبُ
غَدًا ؕ وَمَا تَدْرِىْ نَفْسٌۢ بِاَىِّ اَرْضٍ تَمُوْتُ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌ خَبِيْرٌ ﴿٣٤﴾

If all the trees in the earth were to become pens and the ocean (an inkpot) which is replenished with ink by seven more oceans, (the writing of) Allah's Words would not exhaust.[48] Allah is indeed All-Mighty and All-Wise. Your creation and your resurrection are as simple for Him as (the creation and resurrection) of a single soul. The fact is that Allah hears everything and sees everything.[49] 27-28

Do you not see that Allah causes the night to pass into the day and the day into the night? He has subjected the sun and the moon,[50] each voyaging (in its course) till an appointed time.[51] And (do you not know) that Allah is aware of whatever you do? This is because Allah is the very Truth,[52] and all those whom the people invoke instead of Allah, are false,[53] and (this is because) Allah alone is the High, the Great.[54] 29-30

Do you not see that the ship sails in the sea by Allah's grace so that he may show you some of His Signs ?[55] Indeed, there are many signs in this for every patient and grateful person.[56] And when a wave (in the sea) covers them like the mountains, they invoke Allah making their faith pure for Him alone. Then, when He brings them safe to the land, some one among them follows the middle way[57] and does not deny Our Signs except the one who is treacherous and ungrateful.[58] 31-32

O people ! Avoid the wrath of your Lord and fear the Day when no father shall avail anything for his son, nor shall any son avail anything for his father.[59] Allah' promise is surely true.[60] So let not this world' life deceive you,[61] nor let the deceiver deceive you concerning Allah.[62] 33

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. Allah alone is All-Knowing, All-Aware.[63] 34

[Contd. from p. 21]

universe?"

45. That, is, "Most of the people do not know what are the inevitable results and demands of accepting Allah as the Creator of the universe, and what contradicts it. When a person acknowledges Allah as the Creator of the earth and

the heavens, he should also acknowledge that Allah alone is the Deity and Lord: that He alone is worthy of worship and obedience: that He alone can be invoked for needs, and no one other than He can be the Law-Giver and Ruler of His creation. To acknowledge one as the Creator and another as the deity is contrary to reason and a contradiction in terms, which can be upheld only by an ignorant person. Likewise, it would be a contradiction in terms to believe in one Being as the Creator and to regard another from among the creation as remover of hardships or as a deity and possessor of power and authority and sovereignty, which no reasonable will acknowledge and accept."

46. That is, "The reality is not merely this that Allah is the Creator of the earth and the heavens, but in fact He alone is the Master of all things found in the earth and heavens. Allah has not created this universe and left it to others to become masters of the whole or a part of it, but He Himself is Master of His creation and everything that exists in this universe is His. Here, He alone possesses Divine rights and powers and no one else."

47. This has been explained in E. N. 19 above.

48. "Allah's Words": Allah's creative works and the manifestations of His power and wisdom. This very theme has been presented in Sūrah Al-Kahf: 109 above a little differently. A person might think there is exaggeration in this, but if one considers the matter a little deeply, one will feel that there is in fact no exaggeration whatever in it. All the pens that can be made from the trees of the world and all the ink that can be provided by the oceans of the world, which are replenished by seven more oceans, cannot perhaps help prepare a complete list of all the creations in the universe, not to speak of all the manifestations of Allah's power and wisdom and creative works. When it is impossible even to count all the things found on the earth only, how can one bring into writing all the creations found in this limitless universe?

Here, the object is to make man realize that no creature can become a deity and an associate in the works of Allah, Who has brought into being such a vast Universe, Who is administering its affairs and Whose powers and resources are limitless. Not to speak of becoming an associate in the administration of this vast Kingdom, it is not within the power of any creation to obtain a mere nodding acquaintance with the minutest portion of it. How can then one imagine that one or the other creation can have any share in the Divine powers and authority on the basis of which it may answer prayers and make or un-make destinies?

49. That is, "He is hearing every sound in the universe distinctly at one and the same time, and no sound can absorb his hearing so completely that He may hear no other sound. Likewise, He is seeing the whole universe in each of its details as to thing and event at one and the same time and nothing can absorb His

sight so completely that He may see nothing else. The same precisely is the case concerning the creation of men and their re-creation also. He can re-create instantaneously all the men who have been born since the beginning of the creation and will be born till the end of time. His creative power is not absorbed so completely in the creation of one man that He may be unable to create other men at the same time. For Him the creation of one man and of the billions of men, therefore, is equal and one and the same thing."

50. That is, "The appearance and alternation of the day and night consistently and regularly by itself shows that the sun and the moon have been subjected to a system." The sun and the moon have been mentioned here in particular because both these are the most prominent bodies of the heaven, which man has been worshipping as deities since the earliest times, and which many people worship as gods even today. The fact, however, is that Allah has bound all the stars and planets of the universe including the earth into an unalterable system from which they cannot deviate even by an inch."

51. That is, nothing in the world, whether the sun or the moon, or any other star or planet, in the universe, is eternal and ever-lasting. Everything has a term for it and can function only till its expiry. Everything has a beginning in time before which it was not there and an end in time after which it will not be there. This means to imply that such temporal and powerless things cannot become the deities of men.

52. That is, the real Sovereign is Allah. He alone is the real Owner of power and authority over the creation and its disposal.

53. That is, "They are figments of your own imagination. You have yourselves presumed that so-and-so has got a share in Godhead, and so-and-so has been given the powers to remove hardships and fulfil needs, whereas in fact none of them has any power to make or un-make anything."

54. That is, "He is the Highest of all before Whom everything is low, and He is the Greatest of all before Whom everything is small".

55. That is, "Such Signs as show that all powers rest only with Allah. Man may make as strong and suitable ships for his sea journeys as he likes, and may achieve whatever perfection in marine science and in the related knowledge and experience, these by themselves cannot avail him anything to perform safe voyages especially when confronted by the terrible forces at the sea, unless he is succoured by the grace of Allah. As soon as Allah's grace is withdrawn, man immediately realizes how meagre and insufficient are the means and resources and knowledge of the sciences. Similarly, man in the state of peace and security may be a hardened atheist or polytheist, but when his boat loses balance in the storm at

sea, even the atheist comes to realize that there is God and the polytheist that there is only One God."

56. That is, "When the people who possess these two qualities, recognize the reality by these signs, they come to understand *Tauḥīd* clearly and stick to it firmly. The first quality is that they should be patient: they should not be fickle but firm and persistent: they should remain steadfast on the righteous belief under all circumstances, pleasant or unpleasant, difficult or easy, favourable or unfavourable. They should not have the weakness that when the hard times come they start imploring God humbly, and when they change into good times, they forget God altogether. Or that, to the contrary, they should worship God in good times and start cursing Him when touched by afflictions and misfortunes. The other quality is that they should be grateful: they should not prove ungrateful and thankless; but appreciative of favour and should remain perpetually disposed from within to render thanks to the one who conferred the favour."

57. *"Iqtiṣād"* in the original may mean uprightness or moderateness. In the first case, the verse would mean: "A few of them only remain steadfast on *Tauḥīd*, which they had promised to follow when overwhelmed by the storm, and this makes them adhere to uprightness ever afterwards." If it is taken to mean moderateness, it would mean: "Some of them become moderate and less rigid in their creed of atheism and polytheism, or they lose some of their fervour and enthusiasm that had been caused by the incident of calamity." Most probably Allah has used this0 meaningful sentence here in order to allude to all the three states simultaneously. The object probably is to point out the fact that during the storm at sea the mind of everybody is automatically set right, and everybody gives up atheism and polytheism and starts invoking One Allah for help. But as soon as they safely land on the shore, only a few of them seem to have learnt any enduring lesson from their experience. Then, this small number also is divided into three groups: those who adopt uprightness ever afterwards, and those who become moderate in their disbelief, and those who retain some of the spirit of enthusiasm caused temporarily by the calamity.

58. These two qualities are the antithesis of the two qualities mentioned in the preceding verse. A treacherous person is he who is utterly disloyal and who has no regard for his promise and pledge, and the ungrateful he who does not acknowledge the good and the gains and the benefits received by him, and even behaves rebelliously towards his benefactor. The people having these qualities return to their disbelief, their atheism and their polytheism without any hesitation as soon as the danger has been averted. They do not admit that they had perceived some signs in their own selves as well as outside themselves of Allah's existence and of His being only One when overwhelmed by the storm, and their invoking Allah was in fact the result of their recognition of the same reality. The atheists

among them explain away their act, saying, "It was a weakness which we manifested in the state of confusion and bewilderment, whereas there exists no God, Who might have saved us from the storm: we in fact succeeded in escaping by virtue of such and such a device and means and resources." As for the mushriks, they generally say, "We had the succour and protection of such and such a saint or god and goddess available to us by virtue of which we escaped." Therefore, as soon as they land on the shore, they start giving thanks to these false gods and presenting offerings at their shrines. They do not bother to think that when they had lost hope, there was none beside Allah, the One, whom they might have implored and invoked for help.

59. That is, "The relationship of a person with his friend, or his leader, or his spiritual guide, etc. is not so close and intimate as the relationship that exists between the children and their parents. But on the Day of Resurrection even the son and the father will not be able to help each other. The father will not have the courage to come forward and say that he may be seized instead of the son for his sins, nor will the son have the nerve to say that he may be sent to Hell instead of the father. How can then a person expect that one will be able to avail something for the other there? Therefore, foolish is the person who spoils his Hereafter in the world for the sake of another, or adopts the way of sin and deviation by dependence on others. Here, one should keep in view the theme of verse 15, in which the children have been admonished not to accept deviation in the matter of the faith and religion on behest of the parents, though in affairs of mundane life they are duty bound to serve them as best as they can."

60. "Allah's promise": the promise of Resurrection, when the Court of Allah will be established and everyone will be called to render an account of his deeds.

61. The life of the world involves the people, who only see the superficial, in different kinds of misunderstandings. Someone thinks that life and death only belong to this world, and there is no life hereafter; therefore, whatever one has to do, one should do it here and now. Another one who is lost in his wealth and power and prosperity, forgets his death and gets involved in the foolish idea that his grandeur and his power are everlasting. Another one overlooking the moral and spiritual objectives regards the material gains and pleasures in themselves as the only objectives and does not give anything any importance but the "standard of living", no matter whether his standard of humanity goes on falling lower and lower as a result thereof. Someone thinks that worldly prosperity is the real criterion of truth and falsehood: every way of life that ensures this is the truth and everything contradictory to it is falsehood. Someone regards this very prosperity as a sign of being Allah's favourite, and assumes the law that whoever is leading a prosperous life here is Allah's beloved no matter by what means he

might have achieved this prosperity, and whoever is leading a miserable life in the world, even if it be so due to his love of the truth and his uprightness, will live a miserable life in the Hereafter, too. These and other such misunderstandings have been called "deceptions of the worldly life" by Allah.

62. *Al-gharūr* (the deceiver) may be Satan or a man or a group of men, or even man's own self, or something else. The reason for using this comprehensive and meaningful word in its absolute form without identifying a particular person or thing, is that for different people there are different means that cause them deception. Any particular means or cause that deceived a person to be misled and misguided from the right way to the wrong way, will be *al gharūr* in his particular case.

"To deceive (someone) concerning Allah" are also comprehensive words, which include countless kinds of deceptions. "The deceiver" deceives one man with the idea that there is no God at all, and another man with the idea that God after making the world has handed over its control and administration to the men and is no more concerned with it; he misleads another one, saying, "There are some favourite ones of God: if you attain nearness to them, you will surely win your forgiveness whatever you may do, or may have done, in the world;" he deceives another one, saying, "God is All-Forgiving and All-Merciful: you may go on committing sins freely, and He will go on forgiving each sin of yours." He gives another person the idea of determinism and misguides him, saying, "Everything that you do is pre-ordained: if you commit evil, it is God Who makes you commit it; if you avoid goodness, it is God Who makes you avoid it." Thus, there are countless kinds of such deceptions with which man is being deceived concerning God. When analyzed it comes to light that the basic cause of all errors and sins and crimes is that man has been deceived concerning God in one way or the other, and that is how he has been misled to some ideological deviation or moral error."

63. This verse is, in fact an answer to the disbelievers' question as to when the Hour of Resurrection will come, which they asked when they heard the Holy Prophet mention it and the promise of the Hereafter, again and again. The Qur'ān has answered this sometimes by citing the question and sometimes without citing it, because the addressees knew what they were asking. This is one of those verses which answer the question without citing the question itself.

The first sentence: "Allah alone has the knowledge of the Hour", is the real answer to the question. The four sentences that follow constitute the argument to support it. The argument means this: "O man, you do not have the knowledge even about those things with which you are most closely and intimately concerned in life. How then can it be possible for you to know as to when will the whole

world come to an end? Your prosperity and adversity mainly depend on the rain. But its control and regulation is entirely in the hand of Allah. He sends down the rain whenever and wherever and in whatever measure He pleases and withholds it whenever he pleases. You do not at all know how much of the rain will fall at a particular place at a particular time and which land will remain without it, and which land will be adversely affected in spite of it. Your wives conceive by your own sperm-drop, which perpetuates your race in the future, but you do not know what is taking shape in their wombs, and in what form and with what good or evil it will emerge. You do not even know what you are going to meet with the next day. A sudden accident can change your destiny; but you are unaware of it even a minute before its occurrence. You do not know where your present life will eventually come to an end. Allah has kept all this information with Himself alone, and has not given you any knowledge of any of these. You actually desire that you should have the knowledge of each of these things so that you may make necessary preparations beforehand, but you have no other course open to you than to depend only on Allah's decree and disposal in these matters. Likewise, about the end of the world also there is no alternative but to rely on Allah's decree and decision. The knowledge of this also has neither been given to anybody, nor can it be given."

Here, another thing also should be understood well, and it is this: This verse does not give a list of the unseen and hidden things, which are known to no one but Allah. Here only some of the most apparent things have been pointed out only to serve as an illustration. These are the things with which man is most deeply and intimately concerned, yet he is unaware of them. From this it would be wrong to conclude that these are the only five unseen and hidden things which are known to no one but Allah. As a matter of fact, *ghaib* applies to every such thing which is hidden from the creation but is in the knowledge of Allah, and such things are countless and limitless. (For a detailed discussion of this, see An-Naml: 65 and the E.N.'s thereof).



XXXII
AS-SAJDAH

اَلسَّجدة

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

XXXII

AS-SAJDAH

اَلسَّجدہ

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah has been entitled As-Sajdah after the theme of *Sajdah* (prostration) as expressed in verse 15.

Period of Revelation

From the style of the Sūrah it appears that it was sent down during the middle Makkan period, more particularly in its initial stage, for one does not find in its background that severity of the persecution and tyranny which one finds in the Sūrahs sent down in the later stages.

Theme and Topics

The main theme of the Sūrah is to remove the doubts of the people concerning *Tauhīd*, the Hereafter and the Prophethood, and to invite them to all these three realities. The disbelievers of Makkah, when they talked of the Holy Prophet in private, said to one another, "This person is forging strange things. Sometimes he gives news of what will happen after death. He says: when you have become dust, you will be called to render your accounts, and these will be Hell and Heaven. Sometimes he says: these gods and goddesses and saints are nonentities: One God alone is the Deity. And sometimes he says: the discourses which I recite are not my own but Allah's Word. All these are strange things which he presents." The answer to these doubts and misgivings forms the theme and subject-matter of this Sūrah.

In this connection, the disbelievers have been told: "Most certainly it is Allah's Word, which has been sent down in order to arouse a people who are sunk in heedlessness, being deprived of the bounties and blessings of Prophethood. How can you call it a fabrication when its having been sent down from Allah is manifest and self-evident?"

Then, they have been asked, "Use your common sense and judge for yourselves which of the things presented by the Qur'ān is strange and novel? Look at the administration of the heavens and the earth: consider your own creation and structure. Don't these things testify to the teaching which this Prophet is presenting before you in the Qur'ān? Does the system of the universe point to *Tauḥid* or to *shirk?* When you consider this whole system and your own creation, does your intellect testify that the One Who has given you your present existence, will not be able to create you once again?"

Then a scene of the Hereafter has been depicted, the fruits of belief and the evil consequences of disbelief have been mentioned and the people exhorted to give up disbelief even before they meet their doom and accept that teaching of the Qur'ān, which will be to their own advantage in the Hereafter.

Then they have been told: It is Allah's supreme mercy that He does not seize man immediately for his errors to punish him finally and decisively but warns him beforehand by afflicting him with small troubles and hardships and calamities and losses and strokes of misfortune so that he may wake up and take admonition.

Then it is said: "This is not the first and novel event of its kind that a Book has been sent down upon a man from God. Before this the Book had been sent upon Moses also, which you all know. There is nothing strange in this at which you should marvel. Be assured that this Book has come down from God, and note it well that the same will happen now as has already happened in the time of Moses. Leadership now will be bestowed only on those who will accept this Divine Book. Those who reject it shall be doomed to failure."

Then the disbelievers of Makkah have been admonished to the effect: "See the end of the doomed communities of the past by whose ruined habitations you pass during your trade journeys. Will you like to

meet the same doom yourself ? Do not be deluded by the apparent and superficial. Today you see that no one is listening to Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) except a few young men and some slaves and poor men, and he is being made the target of curses and ugly remarks from every side. From this you have formed the wrong impression that his mission will fail. But this is only a deception of your eyes. Don't you see the phenomenon in your daily life that a land previously lying absolutely barren starts swelling with vegetation and plant life everywhere just by a single shower of the rain though before this no one could ever imagine that under the layers of its soil there lay hidden such treasures of greenery and herbage?"

In conclusion, the Holy Prophet has been addressed to the effect: "These people mock at what you say and ask as to when you will attain this decisive victory. Tell them: when the time comes for the final judgement regarding you and us, believing then will not profit you at all. If you have to believe, believe now. But if you intend to await the final judgement, then await it as you please."



الٓمّٓ ﴿١﴾ تَنْزِيْلُ الْكِتٰبِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيْهِ مِنْ رَّبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٢﴾ اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ
افْتَرٰىهُ ۚ بَلْ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ لِتُنْذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّآ اَتٰىهُمْ مِّنْ نَّذِيْرٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا فِيْ
سِتَّةِ اَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰى عَلَى الْعَرْشِ ۭ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِهٖ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا شَفِيْعٍ ۭ

XXXII

AS-SAJDAH

اَلسَّجدہ

Verses : 30 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Alif. Lām Mīm. The revelation of this book is, without any doubt, from the Lord of the Worlds.[1] Do[2] the people say that this man himself has forged it?[3] Nay, but it is the Truth from your Lord so that you may warn a people to whom no warner has come before you.[4] Maybe they are guided aright.[5] 1-3

1. Several Sūrahs of the Qur'ān begin with one or the other such introductory sentence, which is meant to declare at the outset wherefrom this discourse is being issued. This is apparently the same sort of an introductory sentence as an announcer speaks in the beginning of a radio programme to tell which radio station he is speaking from. But unlike the ordinary announcement from a radio station, when the extraordinary declaration at the beginning of a Sūrah is made to the effect that this message is being issued by the Ruler of the

Universe, it is not merely meant to specify the origin of the discourse, but, besides, it also puts forward a big claim, a great challenge and a severe warning, for at the very outset it gives the big news that this is not human but the Lord of the Worlds' Word. This declaration at once brings man face to face with the grave question: "Should I or should I not accept this claim? If I accept it I shall have to bow my head in submission before it for ever. Then, Ishall be left with no freedom concerning it. If I do not accept it, I shall have to take the great risk that if it be really the Lord of the Worlds' Word, I shall have to meet with eternal misery and misfortune in consequence of rejecting it." That is why this introductory sentence solely on account of its extraordinary nature compels man to listen to this Word with full attention and seriousness, and then take the decision whether he would accept it as Divine Word or not;

Here, what has been said is not merely that this Book has been sent down by the Lord of the Worlds, but, besides, it also asserts most forcefully: "It is without any doubt the Book of God: there is absolutely no room for doubt about its having been revealed by Allah." If this assertive sentence is studied in the actual context itself, it will be seen that it contains the argument also along with the assertion, and this argument was not hidden from the people of Makkah before whom the assertion was being made. The whole life of the person presenting it had been spent before them. They had known him before he presented the Book as well as after he had presented it. They knew that the person presenting the Book with that assertion was the most righteous, the most serious and the most pious and virtuous man of their society. They also knew that until a day before he made the claim to Prophethood, no one had ever heard from him those things which he had started presenting suddenly just after his claim to Prophethood. They found a marked difference between the diction and style used in the Book and the diction and style used by Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself, in his daily life, and they also recognized naturally that one and the same person could not have two styles so different from each other. They were also experiencing the highly miraculous literature being presented in the Book and, being the Arabic speaking people themselves, knew that all their literary men and poets were feeling utterly helpless in producing anything the like of it. They were also not unaware that there was a world of difference between the literary productions and orations of their poets and sorcerers and orators, and the Divine discourses being recited before them and the sublimity of the pure themes being presented in them. They did not see in the Book and in the message of the one presenting it any trace whatever of selfishness, which is always present in the work and message of a false claimant to prophethood. They could not find out, however, hard they might have tried, that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) by laying claim to Prophethood was trying to secure a certain benefit for himself or his family or his clan and tribe, or that he had any vested interest in the message he gave. Then,

they could also see what sort of the people of their society were being drawn to his message and what great revolution was taking place in them as soon as they came in contact with his invitation. All these things together supported and proved the assertion and claim. That is why in that background it was enough to say that it is beyond any doubt a Book that has been sent down by the Lord of the Worlds. No further argument was needed to substantiate the claim.

2. After the above introductory sentence, the first objection of the polytheists of Makkah, which they raised concerning the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet, is being dealt with.

3. This is not merely a question but also an expression of great surprise and astonishment. It means to imply this: In spite of all those things on account of which this Book is, without any doubt, a Revelation from Allah, do those people yet say stubbornly that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) has himself forged it and is falsely attributing it to Allah? Don't they feel any shame in uttering such a senseless and baseless accusation? Don't they at all realize what opinion will those people form who are aware of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his work and his discourses and also understand the Book, when they hear their absurd accusation?

4. Just as in the first verse it was considered sufficient to say, "It is without any doubt the Book of God," and no further argument was needed to be advanced to prove the Qur'ān to be Divine Word, so in this verse also the only thing being said to refute the disbelievers' charge that the Qur'ān was being forged is: "It is the Truth from your Lord." The reason for it is the same as we have given in E.N. 1 above. The listeners were well aware of the person who was presenting the Qur'ān, of the environment in which he was presenting it and the confidence and grace with which he was presenting it; they also knew the Book, its diction and literary excellence and its themes; they were also feeling the influence and impact it was having on contemporary society of Makkah. Under those conditions the Book's being the Truth sent down by the Lord of the Worlds, was such an evident factual reality that the mere mention of it in clear and definite terms was enough to refute the accusation of the disbelievers. Any attempt to strengthen this assertion by resort to reasoning would have caused it to be weakened instead. The case would be like this. Supposing it's day and the sun is shining bright, and a stubborn person calls it a dark night. To refute him it would be enough to say: "Do you call it a night when the bright day is clearly visible all around?" If after this, one tried to bring logical arguments to prove the day to be day, it would not in any way strengthen the reply but would rather weaken it instead.

[Contd. on p. 42

أَفَلَا تَتَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٤﴾ يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يَعْرُجُ إِلَيْهِ فِي
يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ مِمَّا تَعُدُّونَ ﴿٥﴾ ذَٰلِكَ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٦﴾ الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ وَبَدَأَ خَلْقَ الْإِنسَانِ مِن
طِينٍ ﴿٧﴾ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ نَسْلَهُ مِن سُلَالَةٍ مِّن مَّاءٍ مَّهِينٍ ﴿٨﴾ ثُمَّ سَوَّاهُ وَنَفَخَ
فِيهِ مِن رُّوحِهِ وَجَعَلَ لَكُمُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ ۚ قَلِيلًا مَّا
تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٩﴾ وَقَالُوا أَإِذَا ضَلَلْنَا فِي الْأَرْضِ أَإِنَّا لَفِي خَلْقٍ جَدِيدٍ ۚ بَلْ
هُم بِلِقَاءِ رَبِّهِمْ كَافِرُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ قُلْ يَتَوَفَّاكُم مَّلَكُ الْمَوْتِ الَّذِي وُكِّلَ بِكُمْ ثُمَّ
إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١١﴾ وَلَوْ تَرَىٰ إِذِ الْمُجْرِمُونَ نَاكِسُوا رُءُوسِهِمْ عِندَ رَبِّهِمْ
رَبَّنَا أَبْصَرْنَا وَسَمِعْنَا فَارْجِعْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا إِنَّا مُوقِنُونَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَلَوْ شِئْنَا
لَآتَيْنَا كُلَّ نَفْسٍ هُدَاهَا وَلَٰكِنْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ مِنِّي لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنَ
الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ فَذُوقُوا بِمَا نَسِيتُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ هَٰذَا إِنَّا نَسِينَاكُمْ
وَذُوقُوا عَذَابَ الْخُلْدِ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ إِنَّمَا يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا الَّذِينَ إِذَا
ذُكِّرُوا بِهَا خَرُّوا سُجَّدًا وَسَبَّحُوا بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾
تَتَجَافَىٰ جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ
يُنفِقُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُم مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ ۚ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ أَفَمَن كَانَ مُؤْمِنًا كَمَن كَانَ فَاسِقًا ۚ لَّا يَسْتَوُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ أَمَّا الَّذِينَ
آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْمَأْوَىٰ نُزُلًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَأَمَّا
الَّذِينَ فَسَقُوا فَمَأْوَاهُمُ النَّارُ ۖ كُلَّمَا أَرَادُوا أَن يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا أُعِيدُوا فِيهَا وَ
قِيلَ لَهُمْ ذُوقُوا عَذَابَ النَّارِ الَّذِي كُنتُم بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُم مِّنَ

Allah it is[6] Who created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six days, and then sat Himself upon the throne.[7] You have no supporter and helper besides Him nor any intercessor before Him. Will you not then take heed?[8] He administers the affairs of the world from the heavens to the earth, and the report of this administration ascends (to be presented) before Him in a Day whose length, according to your reckoning, is a thousand years.[9] He alone is the Knower[10] of the hidden and the open, the All-Mighty,[11] the Compassionate.[12] Who gave everything He created the best form.[13] He began the creation of man from clay; then spread his progeny by an extract of the nature of a despicable water;[14] then He shaped him[15] and breathed into him of His Spirit;[16] and He gave you the ears, and the eyes and the hearts:[17] yet you are seldom grateful.[18] 4-9

And[19] the people say, "When we have become dust, shall we be created again?" The fact is that they disbelieve in the meeting with their Lord.[20] Say to them, "The angel of death who has been appointed over you, shall seize you completely, and then to your Lord you will be made to return."[21] 10-11

Would[22] that you could see the criminals when they will be standing before their Lord with hanging heads. (Then they will be saying: "Our Lord, we have indeed seen and heard: now send us back so that we may act righteously: we are now convinced." (In reply it will be said :) "Had We so willed We would have given every soul its guidance from the beginning,[23] but the Word of Mine, which I had said, has been fulfilled that I shall fill Hell with jinns and men,[24] all together. So, taste now the recompense of your having forgotten the meeting of this Day.[25] We, too, have forgotten you now! Taste the everlasting torment in consequence of your misdeeds." 12-14

Only such people believe in our Revelations, who, when these are recited to them for their admonition, fall down prostrate and glorify their Lord with His praises, and are not proud ;[26] who forsake their beds and invoke their Lord in fear and in hope;[27] and who spend out of what We have given them.[28] No living being knows what comfort of the eyes has been kept hidden from them as a recompense for their deeds.[29] Can he who is a believer be like him who is a sinner?[30] They cannot be alike.[31] For those who have believed and done good works, 15-20

there will be Gardens for their dwellings,[32] an entertainment as a recompense for their deeds. As for those who have adopted evil, their abode shall be Hell. Whenever they try to get out of it, they will be pushed back into it and it will be said to them, "Taste now the torment of the Fire which you used to deny".

Contd. from p. 39]

5. That is, "Just as its being the Truth and a Revelation from Allah is absolutely certain, so is its being based on wisdom and Allah's mercy for you also evident. You yourselves know that for the past many centuries no Prophet has been raised among you, and you also know that your entire nation has been involved in ignorance and moral degeneration and sheer backwardness. In a state like this if a Prophet has been raised among you to awaken you and show you the right way, you should not be surprised. This was a great need which Allah has fulfilled for the sake of your own welfare and well-being.

One should note that in Arabia the light of the true Faith was first of all spread by the Prophets Hūd and Sālih, who lived in the pre-historic age. They were followed by the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael, who lived 2,500 years before the Holy Prophet. After them the last Prophet to be raised in Arabia before the Holy Prophet was the Prophet Shu'aib, who had passed about 2,000 years earlier. This is a very long period. That is why it has been said, and rightly so, that no warner had come to those people. This did not mean that no warner had ever come to them, but it meant that the people had long stood in need of a warner.

Here, another question may arise in the minds, which should be answered straightaway. One may ask: When no Prophet had come to the Arabs for hundreds of years before the Holy Prophet, what would be the basis of accountability of the people who had lived in that age of ignorance? They could not tell guidance from deviation and error. Then, if they had gone astray, how could they be held responsible for their deviation? The answer is this: The detailed knowledge of the true Faith might have been lost to those people, but even in that age of ignorance the people were not unaware that the true Faith was based on *Tauḥīd*, and the Prophets had never taught idol-worship to their followers. This truth was also contained in those traditions which the Arabs had received from the Prophets born in their own land, and they were also aware of this through the teachings of the Prophets Moses, David, Solomon and Jesus (peace be upon all of them) who had been born in the land adjoining their own. In the traditions of Arabia also it was well known that in the earliest times the Arabs' real religion was the Religion of Abraham and that idol-worship had been introduced among them by a person named 'Amr bin Luhayy. In spite of the prevalence of *shirk* and idol-worship,

there were living in different parts of Arabia many such people, who rejected *shirk*, professed *Tauhīd* and openly condemned offering of sacrifices at the shrines of idols. In the age close to the Holy Prophet's own, there had passed people like Quss bin Sā'idat-il-Iyādī, Umayyah bin Abī as-Salt, Suwaid bin 'Āmr al-Mustalhqī, Waki' bin Salamah bin Zuhair al-Iyādī', 'Āmr bin Jundub al-Juhanī, Abū Qais Sarmah bin Abī Anas, Zaid bin 'Āmr bin Nufail, Waraqah bin Naufal, 'Uthmān bin al-Ḥuwairith, 'Ubaidah bin Jahsh, 'Āmir bin az-Zarb ál-'Advānī 'Allaf bin Shahāb at-Tamīmī;, Al-Mutalammis bin Umayyah al-Kinānī;, Zuhair bin Abī Salmā, Khālid bin Sinān bin Ghais al-'Absī, 'Abdullah al-Qudā'ī and many others, who were known as *Ḥunafā'*. These people publicly professed *Tauhīd* as the basis of the Faith and declared their dissociation from the religion of the *mushriks*. Obviously, they had got this concept from whatever had remained behind from the influence of the teaching of the Prophets. Moreover, the inscriptions belonging to the 4th and 5th centuries A.D., which have been discovered in Yaman as a result of modern archaeological research and investigation, reveal that a monotheistic religion existed there in that age, whose followers acknowledged *ar-Raḥmān* (the All-Merciful) and *Rabb-us-samā' wal-ard* (Lord of the heavens and earth) alone as the One and only Deity. An inscription, dated 378 A.D. has been found from the ruins of a house of worship, which says that this house of worship has been built for the worship of "God of heavens" or "Lord of heavens". In an inscription of 465 A.D. there are words which clearly point to the doctrine of *Tauhīd*. Similarly, an inscription of 512 A.D. has been discovered at Zabad, a place between the river Euphrates and Qinnasrīn, in northern Arabia, bearing the words: *Bism-illāhu, lā 'izza illā lahū, lā shukra, illā lahū*. All this shows that before the advent of the Holy Prophet, the teachings of the former Prophets had not altogether been forgotten, and there still existed many means which at least reminded man of the truth: "Your God is only One God." (For further explanation, see E.N. 84 of Sūrah Al-Furqān).

6. Now the second objection of the *mushriks* which they raised against the Holy Prophet's message of *Tauhīd*, is being dealt with. They were severely critical of him because he rejected their gods and saints and openly invited the people to the creed that there is no helper, no fulfiller of needs except Allah and no answerer of prayers, no remover of ills and no sovereign other than Him.

7. For explanation, see E.N. 41 of Al-A'rāf, E.N. 4 of Yūnus and E.N. 3 of Ar-Ra'd.

8. That is, "Your real God is the Creator of the heavens and earth. But you in your folly have set up others than Him as your helpers and supporters in the vast Kingdom of this Universe. The Creator of this whole Universe and whatever it contains is Allah. Here, everything except Himself is created, and Allah has not gone to sleep after having created and made the world go. But He Himself is the

Ruler and Sovereign and Sustainer of His Kingdom. Then, how senseless you are that you have set up a few of His creatures as the masters of your destinies ! If Allah does not help you, none of them has the power to help you. If Allah should seize you, none of them has the power to secure your liberty. If Allah does not permit, none of them has the power to intercede for you before Him."

9. That is, "The events of a thousand years of your history are a day's work for Allah." He entrusts His scheme of work to the "angels of destiny", who submit their report of work before Him and receive orders for the scheme of the next day (whose length according to your calculation would be a thousand years). "This thing has been expressed at two other places also in the Qur'ān, the study of which can help to understand it fully well. The disbelievers of Arabia said, "Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) claimed to be a Prophet many years ago. He has warned us again and again that if we did not accept his message and rejected his invitation, we would be seized by Allah's torment. He has been repeating this threat since many years, but the torment has not overtaken us, although we have denied and rejected him clearly over and over again. Had his threats any substance in them, we would have been seized in the torment long ago." In this connection, in Sūrah Al-Ḥajj Allah says: "These people are demanding of you to hasten the chastisement. Allah will never fail to fulfil His threat, but a day with your Lord is equal to a thousand years as you reckon." (v. 47)

In Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij (vv. 1-7), it has been said: "An asker has asked for a torment, (the torment) which must befall the disbelievers. There is none to avert it. It is from that God Who is the Owner of the Steps of Ascent. The angels and the Spirit ascend to His Presence in a day whose measure is fifty thousand years. So, have patience, O Prophet, a graceful patience! They think it is far off, but We see it near at hand."

What is meant to be impressed in these verses is this: Allah's decrees are not passed and enforced in the history of mankind according to the earthly watches and calendars. When a nation is warned that if it adopted such and such an attitude in life, it would meet with such and such an end, the people would be foolish if from this they understood that the predicted consequences would follow their evil acts and deeds immediately. Not to speak of days and months and years, the occurrence of the results may even take centuries.

10. That is, "For others one thing may be open and known but countless other things hidden. Whether angels or jinns, prophets or saints, or other pious people, none of them has the knowledge of everything. It is Allah alone Who knows everything. He knows all that has passed, all that is present, and all that will happen in the future."

11. "The All-Mighty": The One Who is dominant over everything: no power in the universe can hinder Him in His Design and Will and obstruct His Command from being enforced. Everything is subdued to Him and nothing can resist Him.

12. That is, He is not tyrannous to His creatures but is Gracious and Merciful in spite of being overwhelmingly dominant and possessor of all power and authority.

13. That is, "In this limitless universe He has created countless numbers of things, but none of them is ugly and ill-shaped: everything has its own special beauty: everything is proportionate and symmetrical in its own way. Whatever He has made for a particular purpose, He has given it the most appropriate form and invested it with the most suitable qualities for it. No better and more appropriate structure could be conceived; for example, for the eye and the ear which have been made for seeing and hearing. The air has precisely the same qualities which it should have for the purpose for which it has been made, and the water precisely the same qualities for the purpose for which it has been made. No one can point out any defect or flaw in the design of anything made by God, nor can anyone offer an alteration or modification in it."

14. That is, "In the beginning He created man directly by His own act of Creation, and then placed in man himself such a procreative ability that similar men continue being produced by his sperm-drop. By one excellent act He gave life and consciousness and intellect to a combination of earthly elements by His creative Command so that a wonderful creation like man came into being; by another excellent act He placed in man's own organism such a wonderful machinery for the production of similar more men in the future, whose mode of functioning is highly astonishing and amazing.

This is one of those verses of the Qur'ān, which points to the direct creation of the first man. The scientists since the time of Darwin have felt greatly critical of this concept and have rejected it with contempt as unscientific. But the fact is that they cannot get rid of the concept of the direct creation of the first germ, if not of the first man, or of the first species of animals. If creationism is not accepted, then one will have to accept the utterly absurd idea that life originated merely accidentally; whereas even the simplest form of life as found in the single cell organism is so full of complexities and subtleties that regarding it as the result of an accident would be a million times more unscientific an idea than what the evolutionists think of creationism. And if once it is accepted that the first germ came into being by an act of direct creation, it would be no longer difficult to accept that the first member of every species of animal life was created by the Creator's own act of creation, and then its race started through different forms of

procreation. If accepted this concept would explain away all those riddles and complexities which have remained unsolved in their theory of evolution in spite of all the scientific theorizing by the upholders of Darwinism. (For further explanation, see E.N. 1 of An-Nisā', E.N. 10 and 146 of Al-A'rāf, and E.N. 17 of Al-Hijr).

15. "Shaped him": developed him from a microscopic organism into a full fledged human being and perfected him with limbs and other organs of the body.

16. "Spirit" does not merely imply the life because of which a living thing moves, but the essential human characteristic which imbues man with consciousness and thought, discretion and judgement, discernment, and discrimination, by virtue of which he is distinguished from all other earthly creations and becomes possessor of a personality and self and worthy of Allah's vicegerency. Allah has called this "Spirit" His own either because it belongs to Him alone, and its being attributed to Himself is just like a thing's being attributed to its master, or because the attributes of knowledge, thought, consciousness, will, judgment, discretion, etc. with which man has been characterised are a reflection to the attributes of Allah. They have not arisen from any combination of matter, but from Allah Himself. Man has received knowledge from Allah's Knowledge, wisdom from Allah's Wisdom, and discretion and authority from Allah's Authority. He has not received these from a source which is without knowledge, without wisdom and without discretion and authority. (For further explanation, see E.N. 19 of Al-Hijr).

17. This is a fine way of saying something. Before the mention of "breathing into him of His spirit", man has been referred to in the third person: "He created him ..... spread his progeny ..... shaped him ..... breathed into him His spirit," for till then he was not even worthy of being addressed. Then, when the spirit had been breathed into him, he became worthy of the honour and it was said: "He gave you the ears . . . gave you the eyes . . . gave you the hearts," for after having been blessed with the Spirit, man became worthy of being addressed.

The ears and the eyes imply the instruments by which man obtains knowledge. Although the senses of taste and touch and smell are also instruments of obtaining knowledge, hearing and sight are the major and by far the more important senses. Therefore, the Qur'ān has mentioned only these two at different places as the most important gifts of God to man. "The Heart" implies the mind which arranges the information obtained through the senses and draws inferences from it, and selects a possible way of action and decides to follow it.

18. That is, "The wonderful human spirit with such excellent qualities has not been given to you so that you may live like the animals in the world and plan

life for yourselves as an animal would. You were given the eyes so that you may see things with insight and not that you should live like the blind people; you were given the ears so that you may hear things with attention and not that you should live like the deaf people; you were given the hearts so that you may understand the reality and adopt the right way in thought and action and not that you should expend all your capabilities for collecting the means of nourishing and sustaining your animality, or that you may devise philosophies and programmes of rebellion against your Creator. After having received these invaluable blessings from God, when you adopt polytheism and atheism, when you assume godhead yourself or become servants of other gods, when you lose yourself in sensual pleasure by serving your lusts, you in fact tell your God: "We were not worthy of these blessings: You should have made us a monkey, or a wolf, or an alligator, or a crow, instead of man."

19. After answering the disbelievers' objections about the Prophethood and *Tauhīd* now their objection about the Hereafter, which is the third basic belief of Islam, is being dealt with. The conjunction *wāw* (and) in the beginning of the verse connects this paragraph with the foregoing theme, as if the sequence were like this: "They say: Muḥammad is not Allah's Messenger," "They say: Allah is not One and the only Deity," and "They say: we shall not be raised back to life after death."

20. The gap between the preceding and this sentence has been left for the listener to fill. The objection of the disbelievers as cited in the first sentence is so absurd that no need has been felt to refute it. Only its citation was regarded as enough to show its absurdity. For the two parts which make up the objection are both unreasonable. Their saying: "When we have become dust" is meaningless for that which is "we" can never become dust. Dust is the destiny of the body after it has become devoid of the "we" The body itself is not the "we". When alive, limbs and other parts of the body may be cut off one by one, but the "we" remains intact. No part of it is cut off with the cut off limb. And when the "we" has vacated a body, the "we" remains no longer applicable even in its remotest sense although the body still remains intact. That is why a sincere lover goes and buries the body of his beloved, because the beloved is no more in the body. He buries not the beloved but the empty body, which was once the home of his beloved. Thus, the very first premise of the disbelievers' objection is baseless. As for its second part, "Shall we be re-created?" this question containing surprise and denial would not have arisen, had the objectors considered and taken into account the meaning of the "we" and its creation. The present existence of this "we" is nothing more than that a little of coal and iron and lime and some other earthly substances got together from here and there to combine themselves into a body, which became the home of the "we". Then what happens when it dies? When the

"we" has left the body, the constituent substances of its abode which had been gathered together from different parts of the earth go back to the same earth. The question is: He who had made this home for the "we", can He not make the same home from the same substances once again and settle the "we" in it? When this was possible before and has in actual fact existed, what can hinder its possibility and its existing as an actual fact once again? These are such things as can be understood by the application of a little of the common sense. But why doesn't man allow his mind to think on these lines? Why does he raise the meaningless objections about the life hereafter and the Hereafter? Leaving out all these details, Allah has answered this question in the second sentence, saying: "The fact is that they disbelieve in the meeting with their Lord." That is, "The real thing is not this that the recreation of man is something odd and remote in possibility, which they cannot understand, but in fact, what prevents them from understanding this is their desire to live freely and independently in the world and commit any sin, any excess that they please and then escape scot-free from here: they should not be held accountable for anything, nor answerable for any of their misdeeds."

21. That is, "Your 'ego' will not mix in the dust, but as soon as its term of action comes to an end, God's angel of death will come and will take it out of the body and seize it completely. No part of it will be allowed to become dust with the body. It will be taken intact into custody and produced before its Lord."

Let us consider in some detail the facts which have been presented in this brief verse:

(1) It says that death does not occur as a matter of course, like the stopping of a watch suddenly when it needs re-winding, but for this purpose Allah has appointed a special angel, who comes to receive the soul precisely in the manner as an official receiver takes something into his custody. From the details which have been mentioned at other places in the Qur'ān, it becomes apparent that the chief angel of death has a whole staff of the angels under him, who perform a variety of duties in connection with causing the death, seizing the soul and taking it into custody. Moreover, their treatment of a guilty soul is different from their treatment of a believing, righteous soul. (For details, see An-Nisā': 97, Al-An'ām: 93, An-Nahl: 28, Al-Wāqi'ah: 83-94).

(2) It also shows that man does not cease to exist after death, but his soul survives the body. The words of the Qur'ān: "The angel of death shall seize you completely," point out the same reality. For something which does not exist cannot be seized. Seizing something and taking it into custody implies that the seized thing should be in possession of the seizer.

(3) It also shows that at the time of death that which is seized is not the biological life of man but his self, his ego, which is connoted by the words like "I" and "we" and "you". Whatever personality this ego may have developed during its life-activity in the world, the same is taken out intact as a whole, without effecting any increase or decrease in its characteristics, and the same is made to return to its Lord after death. The same personality will be given a new birth and a new body in the Hereafter; the same will be subjected to trial; the same will be called to account; and the same will have to experience rewards or punishments.

22. This will be the scene when after returning to its Lord the human 'ego' will be standing before Him to render an account of its deeds.

23. That is, "Had it been Our will to give guidance to the people after having made them observe and experience the reality, We would not have brought you here after making you undergo this hard test in the world. We could have given you such guidance even before. But We had a different scheme for you from the very beginning. We wanted to test you by keeping the reality hidden from your eyes and senses in order to see whether you could recognize it by your intellect after perceiving its signs in the universe and in your own selves or not, whether you could take advantage of the help that We provided to you through Our Prophets and Our Books to recognize the reality or not, and whether after knowing the reality you could attain such control over your self or not that you should free yourselves from the service of your desires and lusts and believe in the reality and mend your ways and attitudes accordingly. You have failed in this test. Now setting the same test once again will be useless. If the second test is set in a condition when you remember everything that you have seen and heard here, it will be no test at all. And if, like before, you are given re-birth in the world, while you do not remember anything and the reality is kept hidden from you, and you are set the test once again as before the result will not be any different." (For further explanation, see Al-Baqarah: 210, Al-An'ām: 7-9, 27-28, 158; Yūnus: 19; Al-Mu'minūn: 99-100).

24. The allusion is to what Allah had said, addressing Satan, at the creation of Adam: In vv. 69-88 of Sūrah Sād the whole story of that time has been related. When Satan refused to prostrate himself before Adam and asked for

[Contd. on p.51

الْعَذَابِ الْأَدْنٰى دُوْنَ الْعَذَابِ الْأَكْبَرِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَنْ أَظْلَمُ
مِمَّنْ ذُكِّرَ بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهٖ ثُمَّ أَعْرَضَ عَنْهَا ۚ إِنَّا مِنَ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ مُنْتَقِمُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾
وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ فَلَا تَكُنْ فِيْ مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْ لِّقَآئِهٖ وَجَعَلْنٰهُ هُدًى
لِّبَنِيْٓ إِسْرَآءِيْلَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَّهْدُوْنَ بِأَمْرِنَا لَمَّا صَبَرُوْا ۖ وَكَانُوْا
بِاٰيٰتِنَا يُوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ يَفْصِلُ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فِيْمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ
يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَهْدِ لَهُمْ كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنَ الْقُرُوْنِ يَمْشُوْنَ
فِيْ مَسٰكِنِهِمْ ۚ إِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ ۖ أَفَلَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَسُوْقُ
الْمَآءَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الْجُرُزِ فَنُخْرِجُ بِهٖ زَرْعًا تَأْكُلُ مِنْهُ أَنْعَامُهُمْ وَأَنْفُسُهُمْ ۖ
أَفَلَا يُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ مَتٰى هٰذَا الْفَتْحُ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ قُلْ
يَوْمَ الْفَتْحِ لَا يَنْفَعُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا إِيْمَانُهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنْظَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَأَعْرِضْ
عَنْهُمْ وَانْتَظِرْ إِنَّهُمْ مُّنْتَظِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾

21-22 Even in this world We shall make them taste (one or the other) lesser torment before that greater torment; may-be they desist (from their rebellious attitude).[33] And who could be more wicked than the one who is admonished by the Signs of his Lord and he spurns them?[34] We shall certainly take vengeance on such criminals.

23-25 Before this We gave Moses the Book. You should, therefore, have no doubt on receiving the same.[35] We had made that Book a Guidance for the children of Israel;[36] and when they showed patience and continued to have faith in Our Revelations, We raised among them such leaders as guided (the people) by Our Command.[37] Surely on the Day of Resurrection your Lord alone will decide those things about which (the Israelites) have been differing among themselves.[38]

26-30 And have they found no guidance (in the historical events) that before them We have destroyed many a nation in whose dwelling places they move about?[39] There are many Signs in this. Do they not hear? And have they never seen how We cause the water to flow to a barren land and therefrom bring forth crops of which their animals and they themselves eat? Do they not see anything?[40] They ask, "When will this judgement take place if you are truthful?"[41] Tell them, "To believe on the Day of Judgement will not in any way profit those who have disbelieved, nor will they get any respite after that."[42] Well, leave them to themselves, and wait: they too are waiting.

Contd. from p. 49]

respite till Resurrection in order to seduce mankind, Allah had replied: "The truth is this, and the truth only I speak, that I shall fill Hell with you and all those who follow you from among mankind."

The word *ajma'in* (all together) here does not mean that all jinns and all men will be cast into Hell, but it means that the satans and the men who follow them, will be cast into Hell all together.

25. That is, "You became so absorbed in pleasure-seeking in the world that you totally forgot that you had to meet your Lord on this Day."

26. In other words, they do not regard it as below their dignity to give up their false notions and believe in Allah's Revelations and adopt His service and obedience. Their conceit does not hinder them from accepting the truth and obeying their Lord.

27. That is, "They worship their Lord instead of enjoying sensuous pleasures at night. They are not like the world-worshippers, who seek entertainments in music and dancing, drinking and merry-making, in the night in order to get relief from the day's fatigue and labour and toil. Instead, when they are free from their day's work and duties, they devote themselves to the adoration of their Lord, spend their nights in His remembrance, tremble out of fear of Him, and pin all their hopes on Him."

"Who forsake their beds" does not mean that they do not sleep at all at night, but that they spend a part of the night in Allah's worship.

28. In the original, *rizq:* lawful provisions. Unlawful provisions have nowhere been called *rizq* by Allah. The verse therefore means: They spend from whatever little or much of pure provisions We have given them; they do not over-spend and do not grab unlawful wealth in order to meet their expenses.

29. Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī and Imām Ahmad have in different ways cited on the authority of Hadrat Abū Hurairah that the Holy Prophet said: "Allah says: I have got ready for My righteous servants that which has neither been seen by the eye, nor heard by the ear, nor ever conceived by any man." The same thing has been reported with a little difference in wording by Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī, Mughīrah bin Shu'bah and Sahl bin Sa'd as-Sāi'dī from the Holy Prophet and related with authentic links by Muslim, Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr and Tirmidhī.

30. Here *mu'min* (believer) and *Fāsiq* (sinner) have been used as two contrasting terms. *Mu'min* is he who believes in Allah as his Lord and the One and only Deity and adopts obedience of the Law which Allah has sent down through His Prophets. Contrary to this, *fāsiq* is he who adopts the attitude of *fisq* (disobedience, rebellion, independence and obedience to others than Allah).

31. That is, "They can neither have the same way of thinking and life in the world nor can they be treated alike by God in the Hereafter."

32. That is, "The Gardens will not merely be a means of entertainment for them, but the same will be their dwelling-places in which they will live for ever."

33. "The greater torment" is the torment of the Hereafter, which will be imposed on the guilty ones in consequence of disbelief and disobedience. "The lesser torment", in contrast, implies those calamities which afflict man even in this world, e.g., diseases in the life of individuals, deaths of the near and dear ones, serious accidents, losses, failures, etc. and storms, earthquakes, floods, epidemics, famines, riots, wars and many other disasters, in collective life, which affect hundreds of thousands of the people simultaneously. The reason given for sending these calamities is that the people should take heed even before they are involved in the "greater torment" and give up the attitude and way of life in consequence of which they will have to suffer the greater torment ultimately. In other words, it means this: Allah has not kept man in perfect security in the world so that he may live in full peace, and become involved in the misunderstanding that there is no power above him, which can cause him harm. But Allah has so arranged things that He sends disasters and calamities on individuals as well as on nations and countries from time to time, which give man the feeling that he is helpless and that there is above him an All-Powerful Sovereign Who is ruling His universal Kingdom. These calamities remind each individual and group and nation that there is another Power above him Who is controlling their destinies. Everything has not been placed at man's disposal. The real Power is in the hand of the Sovereign. When a calamity from Him descends on man, you can neither avert it by any artifice, nor can escape from it by invoking a jinn, or a spirit, or a god or goddess, or a prophet or saint. Considered in this light, these calamities are not

mere calamities but warnings of God, which are sent to make man conscious of the reality and to remove his misunderstandings. If man learns a lesson from these and corrects his belief and conduct here in the world, he will not have to face the greater torment of God in the Hereafter."

34. "The Signs of his Lord" include all kinds of the Signs. A perusal of all the Qur'ânic verses in this regard shows that these Signs are of the following six kinds:

(1) The Signs which are found in everything from the earth to the heavens and in the system of the universe as a whole.

(2) The Signs which are found in man's own creation and in his constitution and body.

(3) The Signs which are found in man's intuition, his unconscious and subconscious mind and in his moral concepts.

(4) The Signs which are found in the continuous experience of human history.

(5) The Signs which are found in the coming down of the earthly and heavenly calamities on man.

(6) And, over and above all these, the Revelations which Allah sent through His Prophets so that man may be made conscious in a rational way of those realities, which are pointed out by all the above-mentioned Signs.

All these Signs proclaim consistently and clearly: "O man, you are neither without God, nor the servant of many gods, but your God is only One God: no other way of life is correct for you except the way of His service and obedience. You have not been left to live a free and independent and irresponsible life in this world, but you have to appear before your God and render an account of your deeds after your life-activity here has come to an end, and be rewarded or punished accordingly. Therefore, it is in your own interest that you should follow the guidance which your God has sent through His Prophets and His Books for your instruction and desist from an independent way of life." Now, obviously, the man who has been warned in so many different ways, for whose admonition countless different Signs have been provided, and who has been blessed with the eyes to see and the ears to hear and the mind to think, and yet he closes his eyes to all these Signs, and closes his ears to the admonitions of his well-wishers, and uses his mind also for inventing stupid and blind philosophies only can be a wretched and wicked person. He only deserves to be given full punishment for rebellion when he appears before his God after the expiry of the period of test in the world.

35. The address apparently is to the Holy Prophet, but the real addressees are the people who doubted his Prophethood and the revelation of the Divine Book

to him. From here the discourse turns to the same theme that was mentioned in the beginning of the Sūrah (vv. 2-3). The disbelievers of Makkah were saying: "No book has come down to Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) from Allah. He has himself forged it, but claims that it has been sent down by Allah." The first answer to this was given in the initial verses. This is the second answer. The first thing said in this regard is: "O Prophet, these ignorant people regard it as impossible that a Book should be sent down to you, and want that every other person also should at least be involved in suspicion about it even if he does not reject it altogether. But the revelation of a Book to a servant from Allah is not a novel and new event, which might have occurred for the first time today in human history. Before this Books have been sent down to several Prophets, the most well known among these being the Book which was sent down to the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). A Book of the same nature has been sent down to you now. Therefore, there is nothing odd and strange in this, which may cause doubts in the minds of the people."

36. That is, "That Book was made a means of guidance for the children of Israel, and this Book, likewise, has been sent down for your guidance." As has already been elucidated in verse 3, the full meaning of this verse can be understood only if one keeps in view the historical background. History bears evidence, and the disbelievers of Makkah also were not unaware, that the children of Israel had been passing miserable lives for centuries in Egypt. At such a juncture, Allah raised the Prophet Moses among them, and delivered them from bondage. Then He sent down the Book among them, because of which the same very suppressed and subdued nation got guidance and became a prominent nation in the world. Alluding to this historical background, the Arabs are being told: "Just as that Book was sent for the guidance of the Israelites, so has this Book been sent for your guidance."

37. That is, "Whatever progress the children of Israel made and whatever heights they attained by that Book, was not simply due to the reason that a Book had been sent among them. It was not an amulet that they might have hung around their necks and they might have started ascending the steps of glory under its good and protective influence. But the glory was the direct result of their firm faith in the Revelations of Allah, and of the patience and perseverance that they showed in following the Divine Commandments. Among the Israelites themselves also leadership fell to the lot of only those who were true believers of the Book of Allah and were not tempted at all by the greed of worldly gains and enjoyments. When in their love of the truth they stood firm against every danger, endured every loss and affliction, and exerted their utmost against every hostile force, from the lusts of their own selves to the external enemies of the true Faith, then only did they become the leaders of the world. The object is to warn the disbelievers of

Arabia that just as the coming of the Book of Allah had decided the destinies of the children of Israel, so will this Book decide the destinies among you. Now only those people will become the leaders, who will believe in it and follow the Truth presented by it patiently and resolutely. Those who turn away from it are destined to end up in failure and wretchedness."

38. The allusion is to the differences and schisms in which the children of Israel were involved after they became deprived of the faith and belief and gave up obedience of their righteous leaders and were given to the worship of the world. One result of this is obvious and before the whole world: they suffer from disgrace and infamy and misfortune; the other result is that which is not known, to the world: it will appear on the Day of Resurrection."

39. That is, "Have they not learnt any lesson from this continuous experience of history that to whichever nation a Messenger came, the decision of its destiny became dependent upon the attitude it adopted with regard to him? If it rejected its Messenger, it could not escape its doom. The only people to escape were those who believed in the Messenger. Those who disbelieved became an object of warning for ever and ever."

40. Keeping the context in view it becomes obvious that this thing has not been mentioned here for the sake of providing an argument for the life-after-death, as generally found in the Qur'ān, but in this context its object is different. This, in fact, contains a subtle allusion to this effect: "Just as a person seeing a barren land cannot imagine that it will ever bloom and swell with vegetation, but a single shower of the rain sent by God changes its colour altogether, so is the case with the message of Islam at this juncture. People think that it is not going to gain ground, but a single manifestation of Allah's power and grace will cause it to gain such glory that people will be amazed at its progress."

41. That is, "You say that Allah's succour will at last reach you and your rejectors will be struck down by His wrath. Then, tell us: When will this happen? When will judgement be passed between you and us?"

42. That is, "It is not a thing for which you should feel so impatient and restless. When the torment of Allah comes, you will get no time to mend your ways. Make the best of the time which is available before the coming of the torment. If you will believe only when you see the torment, it will not avail you anything then."


XXXIII
AL-AḤZĀB
الأحزاب

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXXIII

AL-AHZĀB

الاحزاب

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah derives its name *Al-Ahzāb* from verse 20.

Period of Revelation

The Sūrah discusses three important events which are: the Battle of the Trench (or *Al-Ahzāb:* the Clans), which took place in Shawwāl, A.H. 5; the raid on Banī Quraiẓah, which was made in Dhil-Qa'dah, A.H. 5; and the Holy Prophet's marriage with Ḥaḍrat Zainab, which also was contracted in Dhil-Qa'dah, A.H. 5. These historical events accurately determine the period of the revelation of this Sūrah.

Historical Background

The Islamic army's setback in the Battle of Uḥud (A.H. 3) that resulted from the error of the archers appointed by the Holy Prophet so boosted up the morale of the Arab pagans and the Jews and the hypocrites that they started entertaining the hope that they would soon be able to exterminate Islam and the Muslims completely. Their high state

of morale can be judged from the events that occurred in the first year after Uhud. Hardly two months had passed when the tribe of Banī Asad of Najd began to make preparations for a raid on Madīnah and the Holy Prophet had to despatch an expedition under Abū Salamah to counteract them. In Safar A.H. 4 some people of the tribes of 'Adal and Qārah asked the Holy Prophet to send some men to instruct them in Islam. Accordingly six of the Companions were allowed to accompany them for the purpose. But when they reached Rajī' (a place between Rābigh and Jeddah), they summoned Hudhail against them, who killed four of the Companions, and took the other two (Hadrat Khubaib bin 'Adī and Hadrat Zaid bin ad-Dathinnah) to Makkah and sold them to the enemy. Then in the same month of Safar, on the request of a chief of Banī 'Āmir, the Holy Prophet sent another deputation of 40 (according to others, 70) preachers, consisting of the Ansar young men, to Najd. But they were also betrayed. The people of 'Usayyah and Ri'l and Dhakwān, tribes of Banī Sulaim, surrounded them suddenly at Bi'r Ma'ūnah and slew all of them. Meanwhile the Jewish tribe of Banī an-Nadīr of Madīnah, getting encouragement, continued to commit breaches of the treaties; so much so that in Rabī'ul Awwal, A.H. 4, they plotted against the life of the Holy Prophet himself. Then in Jamādī al-Ūlā, A.H. 4, Banī Tha'lbah and Banī Muhārib, the two tribes of Banī Ghatafān started making preparations to attack Madīnah and the Holy Prophet had to go to punish them. Thus, after their setback at Uhud, the Muslims went on encountering repercussions continuously for seven to eight months.

However, it was the Holy Prophet's determination and wisdom and his great Companions' spirit of sacrifice that changed these adverse conditions completely within a short span of time. The economic boycott by the Arabs had made life hard for the people of Madīnah. All the polytheistic tribes around Madīnah were becoming rebellious. Inside Madīnah itself the Jews and the hypocrites were bent upon mischief. But the successive steps taken by a handful of the sincere Muslims, under the leadership of the Holy Prophet, not only restored the image of strength of Islam in Arabia but also increased it manifold.

Raids preceding the Battle of the Trench

The first such step was taken immediately after the Battle of Uhud. The very next day when quite a large number of Muslims lay wounded and the martyrdom of the near and dear ones was being

mourned in many houses, and the Holy Prophet himself was injured and sad at the martyrdom of his uncle, Hadrat Hamzah, he called out to the devoted servants of Islam to accompany him in pursuit of the pagans so as to deter them from returning and attacking Madīnah again. The Holy Prophet's assessment was absolutely correct. He knew that, although the Quraish had retreated without taking any advantage of their almost complete victory, they would certainly regret their folly when they would halt and consider the whole matter coolly on the way, and would return to attack Madinah again. Therefore, he decided to go in pursuit of them, and 630 of the Muslims at once volunteered to accompany him. When they reached Hamra'al-Asad on the way to Makkah and camped there for three days, the Holy Prophet came to know through a sympathetic non-Muslim that Abū Sufyān had stayed at Ar-Rauhā', 36 miles short of Madīnah, with an army 2,978 strong: they were regretting their error and were, in fact, planning to return and attack Madīnah once again. But when they heard that the Holy Prophet was coming in pursuit of them with an army, they lost heart and gave up their plan. Thus, not only were the Quraish deterred by this action but the other enemies living around Madīnah also realized that the Muslims were being led by a person, who was highly well-informed, wise and resolute, and that the Muslims were ever ready to lay down their lives at his command. (For further details, see Introduction to Sūrah Āl-i-'Imrān and E.N. 122 thereof).

Then as soon as the Banī Asad started making preparations for a raid on Madīnah, the Holy Prophet's secret agents gave him timely information about their intention. Thus, before they could come in force to attack Madīnah, he sent an army 150 strong, under Hadrat Abū Salamah (the first husband of Hadrat Umm Salamah) to punish them. They took Banī Asad by surprise, who fled in panic leaving all their possessions behind, which fell into the Muslim hands.

After this came the turn of the Banī an-Nadīr. The day they plotted against the life of the Holy Prophet, and the secret was disclosed, the Holy Prophet ordered them to leave Madīnah within ten days and warned that anyone who remained behind after that would be put to death. 'Abdullah bin Ubayy, the chief of the hypocrites of Madīnah, encouraged them to defy the order and refuse to leave Madīnah. He even promised to help them with 2,000 men, and assured them that the Banī

Ghaṭafān from Najd also would come to their aid. Accordingly, the Banī an-Naḍir sent word that they would not leave no matter what the Holy Prophet might do.

As soon as the time limit of ten days came to an end, the Holy Prophet laid siege to their quarters, but none of their supporters had the courage to come to their rescue. At last, they surrendered on condition that every three of them would be allowed to load a camel with whatever they could carry and go away leaving the rest of their possessions behind. Thus, the whole suburbs of the city which were inhabited by the Banī an-Naḍir, and their gardens and their fortresses and other properties fell to the Muslims, and the people of this treacherous tribe became scattered in Khaiber, Wād il-Qurā' and Syria.

Then the Holy Prophet turned his attention to the Banī Ghaṭafān, who were preparing for a war against Madīnah. He took 400 of the Muslims and overtook them at Dhāt ar-Riqā'. They were so taken by surprise that they fled their houses without a struggle and took refuge in the mountains.

After this in Sha'bān A.H. 4, the Holy Prophet went forth to Badr to fight Abū Sufyān. At the end of the Battle of Uḥud, he had challenged the Holy Prophet and the Muslims, saying, "We shall again meet you in combat at Badr next year." In reply the Holy Prophet announced through a Companion: "All right: we accept your challenge." Accordingly, at the appointed time he reached Badr with 1,500 of the Muslims. From the other side, Abū Sufyān left Makkah with an army of 2,000 men, but could not have the courage to march beyond Marr-aẓ-Ẓahrān (modern, Wādī Fāṭimah). The Holy Prophet waited for him at Badr for eight days; the Muslims during these days did profitable business with a trading party. This incident helped more than restore the image of strength of the Muslims that had been tarnished at Uḥud. It also made the whole of Arabia realize that the Quraish alone could no longer resist Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). (Please also refer to E.N. 124 of Āl-i-'Imrān).

This image and position of the Muslims was further strengthened by another event. Dūmat al-Jandal (modern, Al-Jauf) was an important place at the border between Arabia and Syria. When the caravans of the Arabs, trading between 'Irāq in the south and Syria and Egypt in the

north, passed that way, they were harassed and looted by the natives. In Rabi' al-Awwal, A.H. 5, the Holy Prophet himself went to punish them with an army of 1,000 men. They could not muster up courage to come out and fight him and, therefore, fled the place. This caused the whole of northern Arabia to dread the power of Islam, and the tribes began to realize that the great power emerging from Al Madīnah was formidable and could no longer be resisted by one or a few of the tribes.

The Battle of the Trench

Such were the conditions when the Battle of the Trench took place. It was in fact a combined raid by many of the Arab tribes, who wanted to crush the power of Madīnah. It had been instigated by the leaders of the Banī an-Nadīr, who had settled in Khaiber after their banishment from Madīnah. They went round to the Quraish and Ghaṭafān and Hudhail and many other tribes and induced them to gather all their forces together and attack Madīnah jointly. Thus, in Shawwāl, A.H. 5, an unprecedentedly large army of the Arab tribes marched against the small city of Madīnah. From the north came Jews of Banī an-Naḍir and Banī Qainuqā', who after their banishment from Madīnah, had settled in Khaiber and Wād il-Qurā. From the east advanced the tribes of Ghaṭafān— Banī Sulaim, Fazārah, Murrah, Ashja', Sa'd, Asad, etc. — and from the south the Quraish, along with a large force of their allies. Together they numbered from ten to twelve thousand men.

Had it been a sudden attack, it would have been disastrous. But the Holy Prophet was not unaware of this in Madīnah. His intelligence men and the sympathisers of the Islamic movement and the people influenced by it were present in every tribe, who kept him informed of the enemy's movements.[1] Even before the enemy could reach his city, he got a trench dug out on the north-west of Madīnah in six days, and having the Mount Sal'a at their back, took up a defensive position with 3,000 men in the protection of the Trench. To the south of Madīnah there were

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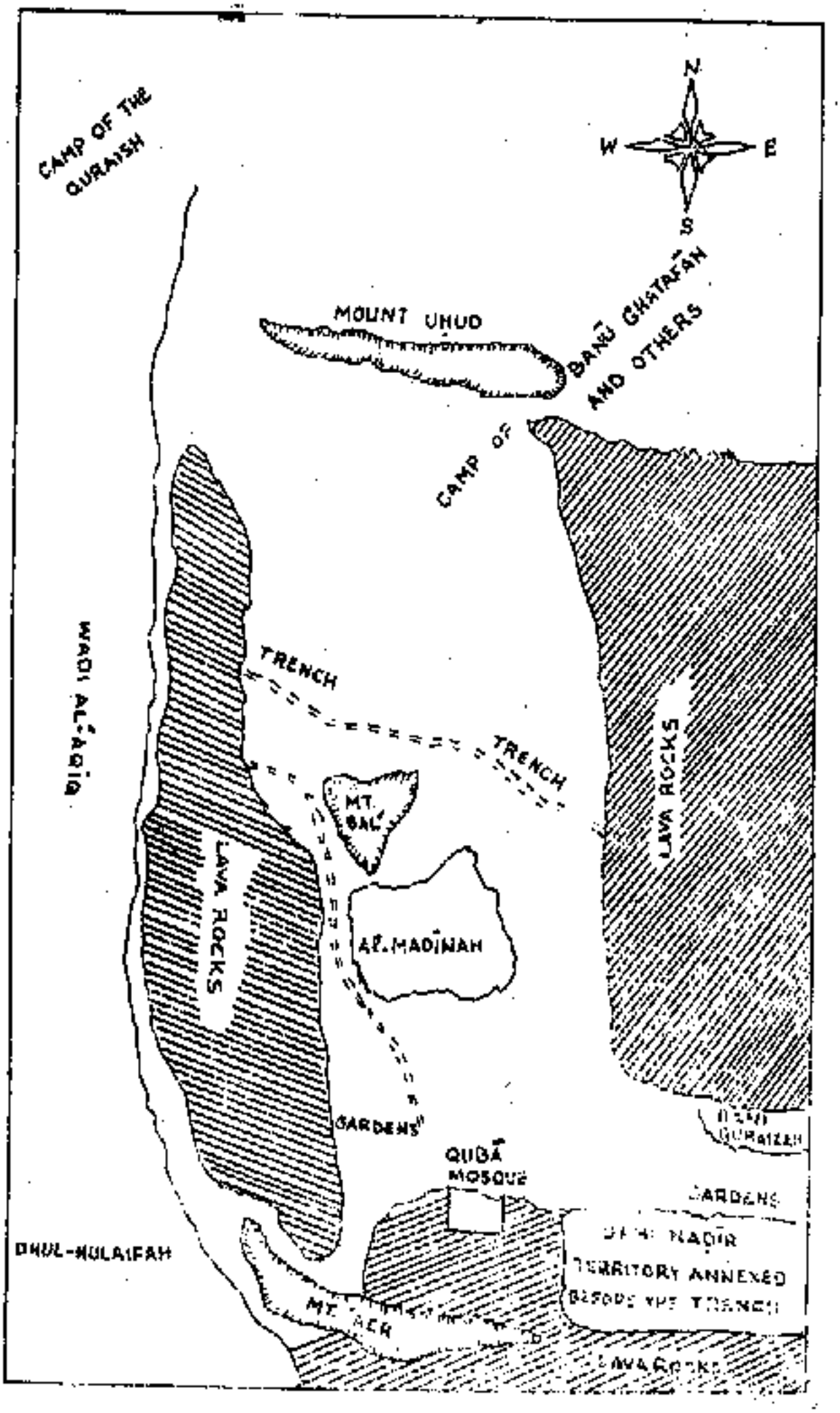
1. This is an important factor of the superiority of an ideological movement over nationalist hordes, who only rely on the support of the individuals of their own tribes and nations. An ideological movement, on the other hand, advances in every direction, and draws its supporters even from among the nationalist hordes themselves.

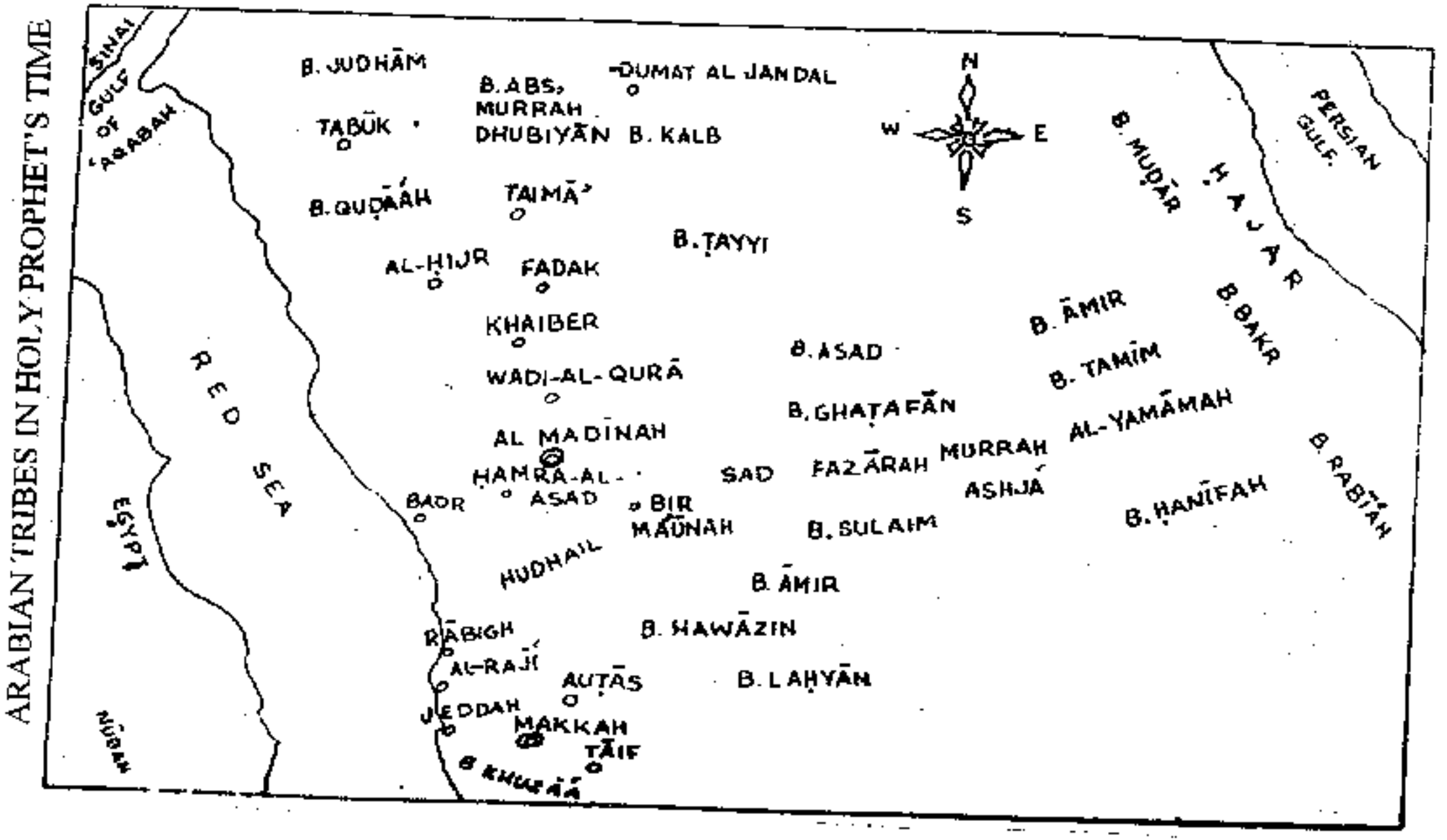
many gardens (even now there are) so that it could not be attacked from that side. To the east there are lava rocks which are impassable for a large army. The same is the case with the south-western side. The attack, therefore, could be made only from the eastern and western sides of the Uhud, which the Holy Prophet had secured by digging a trench. The disbelievers were not at all aware that they would have to counter the trench outside Madīnah. This kind of a defensive stratagem was unknown to the Arabs. Thus, they had to lay a long siege in winter for which they had not come prepared.

After this, only one alternative remained with the disbelievers: to incite the Jewish tribe of Banī Quraiẓah, who inhabited the south-eastern part of the city, to rebellion. As the Muslims had entered a treaty with them that in case of an attack on Madīnah they would defend the city along with them, the Muslims had made no defensive arrangement there and had even sent their families to take shelter in the forts situated on that side. The invaders perceived this weakness of the Islamic defenses. They sent Ḥuyayy bin Akhṭab, the Jewish leader of the Banī an-Naḍīr, to the Banī Quraiẓah so as to induce them to break the treaty and join the war. In the beginning, they refused to oblige and said that they had a treaty with Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), who had faithfully abided by it and given them no cause for complaint. But when Ibn Akhṭab said to them, "Look, I have summoned the united force of entire Arabia against him: this is a perfect opportunity to get rid of him. If you lose it, you will never have another opportunity," the anti-Islamic Jewish mind prevailed over every moral consideration and the Banī Quraiẓah were persuaded to break the treaty.

The Holy Prophet received news of this. He at once told Sa'd bin 'Ubādah, Sa'd bin Mu'ādh, 'Abdullah bin Rawāhah and Khawwāt bin Jubair, chiefs of the Anṣār, to go and find out the truth. He advised them that if they found Banī Quraiẓah still loyal to the treaty, they should return and say so openly before the Muslim army; however, if they found that they were bent upon treachery they should only inform him so that the common Muslims would not be disheartened. On reaching there the Companions found the Banī Quraiẓah fully bent on mischief. They told the Companions openly, "There is no agreement and no treaty between us and Muḥammad." At this they returned to the Islamic army and submitted their report to the Holy Prophet, saying,

BATTLEFIELD OF THE TRENCH




ARABIAN TRIBES IN HOLY PROPHET'S TIME
SINAI
GULF OF 'AQABAH
B. JUDHĀM
DUMAT AL JANDAL
B. ABS,
MURRAH
DHUBIYĀN
B. KALB
TABŪK
B. QUḌĀ'AH
TAIMĀ'
B. ṬAYYI
AL-ḤIJR
FADAK
KHAIBER
WADI-AL-QURĀ
AL MADĪNAH
ḤAMRA-AL-ASAD
BADR
BIR MAŪNAH
HUDHAIL
RĀBIGH
AL-RAJĪ
AUṬĀS
JEDDAH
MAKKAH
ṬĀIF
B. KHUZĀ'Ā
RED SEA
EGYPT
YEMEN
N
W
E
S
PERSIAN GULF
B. MUḌAR
ḤAJAR
B. BAKR
B. ĀMIR
B. TAMĪM
AL-YAMĀMAH
B. ASAD
B. GHAṬAFĀN
FAZĀRAH
MURRAH
ASHJA'
B. SAD
B. SULAIM
B. ĀMIR
B. HAWĀZIN
B. LAḤYĀN
B. ḤANĪFAH
B. RABĪ'AH

"Adal and Qārah." That is, "The Quraiẓah are bent upon doing what the 'Adal and Qārah had done with the preachers of Islam at Rajī'."

This news spread among the Muslims and caused great consternation among them, for they had been encircled and their city had been endangered on the side where there existed no defensive arrangement and where they had also sent their families to take shelter in the forts. This further increased the activities of the hypocrites and they started making psychological attacks to break the morale of the Muslims. One said, "How strange! We were being foretold that the lands of Caesar and Chosroes would fall to us, but here we are that not one of us can go out even to relieve himself." Another one asked for permission to leave his post at the Trench so that he could go and protect his own house which was in danger. Another one started making secret propaganda to the effect: "Settle your affair with the invaders yourselves and hand over Muḥammad to them." This was a highly critical hour of trial, which exposed every person who harboured any hypocrisy in his heart. Only the true and sincere Muslims remained firm and steadfast in their resolve and devotion.

The Holy Prophet at that critical moment initiated peace negotiations with the Banī Ghaṭafān and tried to persuade them to accept one-third of the fruit-harvest of Madīnah and withdraw. But when he asked Sa'd bin 'Ubādah and Sa'd bin Mu'ādh, chiefs of the Anṣār, for their opinion about the conditions of peace, they said, "O Messenger of Allah: Is it your personal wish that we should agree on these conditions, or is it Allah's Command that we have no option but to accept it? Or, are you giving this proposal only in order to save us from the enemy?" The Holy Prophet replied, "I am proposing this only to save you: I see that the whole of Arabia has formed a united front against you. I want to divide the enemy." At this the two chiefs protested, saying, "Sir, if you want to conclude this pact for our sake, kindly forget it. These tribes could not subdue us under tribute when we were polytheists. Now that we have the honour of believing in Allah and His Messenger, will they make us sink to this depth of ignominy? The sword now shall be the arbiter till Allah passes His judgement between them and us." With these words they tore up the draft for the treaty which had not yet been signed.

In the meantime Nu'aim bin Mas'ūd, a member of the Ashja' branch of the Ghaṭafān tribe, became a Muslim and came before the Holy Prophet and submitted: "No one as yet knows that I have embraced Islam: You can take from me whatever service you please." The Holy Prophet replied: "Go and sow the seeds of discord among the enemy.[1] So, first of all, Nu'aim went to the Quraiẓah with whom he was on friendly terms, and said to them, "The Quraish and the Ghaṭafān can become wearied of the siege and go back, and they will lose nothing, but you have to live here with the Muslims. Just consider what was be your position if the matter turns that way. Therefore, I would advise you not to join the enemy until the outsiders should send some of their prominent men as hostages to you." This had the desired effect upon the Banī Quraiẓah and they decided to demand hostages from the united front of the tribes. Then he went to the chiefs of the Quraish and the Ghaṭafān and said to them, "The Banī Quraiẓah seem to be slack and irresolute. May be they demand some men as hostage from you, and then hand them over to Muḥammad (upon whom be Allāh's peace) to settle their affair with him. Therefore, be very firm and cautious in your dealing with them." This made the leaders of the united front suspicious of Banī Quraiẓah and they sent them a message, saying, "We are tired of the long siege; let there be a decisive battle; let us, therefore, make a general assault simultaneously from both the sides." The Banī Quraiẓah sent back the word, saying, "We cannot afford to join the war unless you hand over some of your prominent men to us as hostages." The leaders of the united front became convinced that what Nu'aim had said was true. They refused to send hostages. And the Banī Quraiẓah, on the other side, also felt that Nu'aim had given them the correct counsel. Thus, the strategy worked: it divided the enemy against itself.

The siege was prolonged for more than 25 days. It was winter. The supply of food and water and forage was becoming more and more scarce everyday and division in the camp was also a great strain on the state of morale of the besiegers. Then, suddenly one night a severe windstorm accompanied by thunder and lightning hit the camp. It added to the cold and darkness. The wind overthrew the tents and put the

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1. On this occasion the Holy Prophet had said: "It is permissible to practise deception in war."

enemy in disarray. They could not stand this severe blow of nature. They left the battleground even during the night and returned to their homes. When the Muslims awoke in the morning, there was not a single enemy soldier to be seen on the battlefield. The Holy Prophet, finding the battlefield completely empty, said: "The Quraish will never be able to attack you after this: now you will take the offensive." This was a correct assessment of the situation. Not only the Quraish but the united front of all the enemy tribes had made their final assault against Islam and had failed. Now they could no longer dare invade Madīnah; now the Muslims were on the offensive.

Raid on Banī Quraiẓah

When the Holy Prophet returned from the Trench, Gabriel came to him in the early afternoon with the Divine Command that the Muslims should not lay aside the arms yet but should deal with the Banī Quraiẓah as well. On receipt of this Command, the Holy Prophet got announced "Everyone who is steadfast in obedience should not offer his 'Asr Prayer till he reaches the locality of the Banī Quraiẓah." Immediately after this, he despatched Ḥaḍrat 'Ali with a contingent of soldiers as vanguard towards the Quraiẓah. When they reached there, the Jews climbed on to their roof tops and started hurling abuses on the Holy Prophet and the Muslims, but their invectives could not save them from the consequences of their treachery. They had committed breach of the treaty right at the most critical moment of the war, joined hands with the invaders and endangered the entire population of Madīnah. When they saw the contingent of Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, they thought that they had come only to overawe them. But when the whole Islamic army arrived under the command of the Holy Prophet himself and laid siege to their quarters, they were very frightened. They could not stand the severity of the siege for more than two or three weeks. At last, they surrendered themselves to the Holy Prophet on the condition that they would accept whatever decision Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Mu'ādh, the chief of the Aus, would give. They had accepted Ḥaḍrat Sa'd as their judge because in the pre-Islamic days the Aus and the Quraiẓah had been confederates and they hoped that in view of the past ties he would help them quit Madīnah as had happened in the case of the Banī Qainuqā' and the Banī an-Naḍīr before. The people of the Aus themselves wished that Ḥaḍrat Sa'd treat their previous allies leniently. But Ḥaḍrat Sa'd had just experienced and seen

how the two Jewish tribes who had been allowed to leave Madinah previously had instigated the other tribes living around Madinah and summoned the united front of ten to twelve thousand men against the Muslims. He was also aware how treacherously this last Jewish tribe had behaved right on the occasion when the city was under attack from outside and threatened the safety of the whole of its population. Therefore, he decreed that all the male members of the Quraiẓah should be put to death, their women and children taken prisoners, and their properties distributed among the Muslims. The sentence was carried out duly. When the Muslims entered their strongholds they found that the treacherous people had collected 1,500 swords, 300 coats of mail, 2,000 spears and 1,500 shields in order to join the war. If Allah's succour had not reached the Muslims, all this military equipment would have been used to attack Madinah from the rear right at the time when the polytheists were making preparations for a general assault on the Muslims after crossing the Trench. After this disclosure there remained no doubt that the decision of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd concerning those people was absolutely correct.

Social Reforms

Though the period of two years between the Battles of Uhud and the Trench was a period of disturbance and turmoil and the Holy Prophet and his Companions could hardly relax in peace and security even for a day, the work of reform as a whole and the reconstruction of the Muslim society continued uninterrupted. This was the time when the Islamic laws pertaining to marriage and divorce were complemented; the law of inheritance was introduced, drinking and gambling were prohibited, and the new laws and regulations concerning many other aspects of the economic and social life were enforced.

In this connection, an important thing that needed to be reformed was the question of the adoption of a son. Whoever was adopted by the Arabs as a son was regarded as one of their own offspring: he got share in inheritance; he was treated like a real son and real brother by the adopted mother and the adopted sister; he could not marry the daughter of his adopted father and his widow after his death. And the same was the case if the adopted son died or divorced a wife. The adopted father regarded the woman as his real daughter-in-law. This custom clashed in every detail with the laws of marriage and divorce and inheritance

enjoined by Allah in Sūrahs Al-Baqarah and An-Nisā'. It made a person who could get no share in inheritance entitled to it at the expense of those who were really entitled to it. It prohibited marriage between the men and the women who could contract marriage perfectly lawfully. And, above all, it helped spread the immoralities which the Islamic Law wanted to eradicate. For a real mother and a real sister and a real daughter cannot be like the adopted mother and the adopted sister and the adopted daughter, however one may try to sanctify the adopted relations as a custom. When the artificial relations endued with customary sanctity are allowed to mix freely like the real relations, it cannot but produce evil results. That is why the Islamic law of marriage and divorce, the law of inheritance and the law of the prohibition of adultery required that the concept and custom of regarding the adopted son as the real son should be eradicated completely.

This concept, however, could not be rooted out by merely passing a legal order, saying, "The adopted son is not the real son." The centuries old prejudices and superstitions cannot be changed by mere word of mouth. Even if the people had accepted the command that these relations were not the real relations, they would still have looked upon marriage between the adopted mother and the adopted son, the adopted brother and the sister, the adopted father and the daughter, and the adopted father-in-law and the daughter-in-law odious and detestable. Moreover, there would still exist some freedom of mixing together freely; Therefore, it was inevitable that the custom should be eradicated practically, and through the Holy Prophet himself. For no Muslim could ever conceive that a thing done by the Holy Prophet himself, and done by him under Allah's Command, could be detestable. Therefore, a little before the Battle of the Trench, the Holy Prophet was inspired by Allah that he should marry the divorced wife of his adopted son, Zaid bin Ḥarithah (may Allah be pleased with him), and he acted on this Command during the siege of the Banī Quraiẓah. (The delay probably was caused for the reason that the prescribed waiting period had not yet ended, and in the meantime the Holy Prophet had to become busy in the preparation for war).

Storm of Propaganda at the Marriage of Ḥaḍrat Zainab

As soon as the marriage was contracted, there arose a storm of propaganda against the Holy Prophet. The polytheists, the hypocrites

and the Jews, all were burning with jealousy at his triumphs which followed one after the other. The way they had been humbled within two years after Uhud, in the Battle of the Trench, and in the affair of the Quraizah, had made them sore at heart. They had also lost hope that they could ever subdue him on the battlefield. Therefore, they seized the question of this marriage as a god-send for themselves and thought they would put an end to his moral superiority, which was the real secret of his power and success. Therefore, stories were concocted that Muhammad, God forbid, had fallen in love with his daughter-in-law, and when the son had come to know of this, he divorced his wife, and the father married his daughter-in-law. The propaganda, however, was absurd on the face of it. Hadrat Zainab was the Holy Prophet's first cousin. He had known her from childhood to youth. So, there could be no question of his falling in love with her at first sight. Then he himself had arranged her marriage with Hadrat Zaid under his personal influence, although her whole family had opposed it. They did not like that a daughter of the noble Quraish should be given in marriage to a freed slave. Hadrat Zainab herself was not happy at this arrangement. But everyone had to submit to the Holy Prophet's command. The marriage was solemnized and a precedent was set in Arabia that Islam had raised a freed slave to the status of the Quraishite nobility. If the Holy Prophet had in reality any desire for Hadrat Zainab, there was no need of marrying her to Hadrat Zaid; he himself could have married her. But in spite of all this, the shameless opponents invented stories of love, spread them with great exaggeration and publicised them so vehemently that even some Muslims also began to accept them as true.

Preliminary Commandments of Purdah

The fact that the tales invented by the enemies also became topics of conversation among the Muslims was a clear sign that the element of sensuality in society had crossed all limits. If this malady had not been there, it was not possible that minds would have paid any attention whatever to such absurd and disgusting stories about a righteous and pure person like the Holy Prophet. This was precisely the occasion when the reformative Commandments pertaining to the law of *Hijāb* or Purdah were first enforced in the Islamic society. These reforms were introduced in this Sūrah and complemented a year later in Sūrah An-

Nur, when a slander was made on the honour of Hadrat 'Ā'ishah. (For further details, see Introduction to Sūrah An-Nūr).

Domestic Affairs of the Holy Prophet

There were two other problems which needed attention at that time. Though apparently they pertained to the Holy Prophet's domestic life, it was necessary to resolve them for the domestic and mental peace of the person, who was exerting every effort to promote the cause of Allah's Religion and was day and night absorbed in this great mission. Therefore, Allah took these two problems also officially in His own hand.

The first problem was that economically the Holy Prophet at that time was in straitened circumstances. During the first four years he had no source of income whatever. In 4 A.H. after the banishment of the Banī an-Nadīr, a portion of their evacuated lands was reserved for his use by the Command of Allah, but it was not enough for his family requirements. On the other hand, the duties of the office of Prophethood were so onerous that they were absorbing all his energies of the mind and body and heart and every moment of his time, and he could not make any effort at all for earning his livelihood. In conditions such as these when his wives happened to disturb his mental peace because of economic hardships he would feel doubly strained and taxed.

The other problem was that before marrying Hadrat Zainab, he had four wives already in the houses: Hadrat Saudah, Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, Hadrat Hafsah, and Hadrat Umm Salamah. Hadrat Zainab was his fifth wife. At this the opponents raised the objection, and the Muslims also started entertaining doubts, that as for others it had been forbidden to keep more than four wives at a time, but how the Holy Prophet himself had taken a fifth wife also.

Subject Matter and Topics

These were the questions that were engaging the attention of the Holy Prophet and the Muslims at the time Sūrah Al-Ahzāb was revealed, and replies to the same form the subject-matter of this Sūrah.

A perusal of the theme and the background shows that the Sūrah is not a single discourse which was sent down in one piece but it consists of several injunctions and commandments and discourses, which were

sent down, one after the other, in connection with the important events of the time, and then were put together in one Sūrah. Its following parts stand out clearly distinguished from one another:

1. Verses 1-8 seem to have been sent down before the Battle of the Trench. Their perusal, keeping the historical background in view, shows that at the time of their revelation Hadrat Zaid had already divorced Ḥaḍrat Zainab. The Holy Prophet was feeling the necessity that the concepts and customs and superstitions of ignorance concerning the adoption of the son should be eradicated, and he was also feeling that the delicate and deep sentiments the people cherished about the adopted relations merely on emotional grounds would not be rooted out until he himself took the initiative to eradicate the custom practically. But at the same time he was hesitant and considering seriously that if he married the divorced wife of Ḥaḍrat Zaid then, the hypocrites and the Jews and the *mushriks* who were already bent on mischief would get a fresh excuse to start a propaganda campaign against Islam. This was the occasion of the revelation of vv. 1-8.

2. In verses 9-27 an appraisal has been made of the Battle of the Trench and the raid against the Banī Quraiẓah. This is a clear proof that these verses were sent down after these events.

3. The discourse contained in vv. 28-35 consists of two parts. In the first part Allah has given a notice to the wives of the Holy Prophet, who were being impatient of the straitened circumstances, to the effect: "Choose between the world and its adornments, and Allah, His Prophet and the Hereafter. If you seek the former, you should say so openly: you will not be kept back in hardship even for a day, but will be sent off gracefully. And if you seek the latter, you should cooperate with Allah and His Messenger and bear patiently." In the second part, initial steps were taken towards the social reforms whose need was being felt by the minds moulded in the Islamic pattern themselves. In this regard, reform was started from the house of the Holy Prophet himself and his wives were commanded to avoid behaving and conducting themselves in the ways of the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, to remain in their houses with dignity,

and to exercise great caution in their conversation with the other men. This was the beginning of the Commandments of Purdah.

4. Verses 36-48 deal with the Holy Prophet's marriage with Hadrat Zainab. In this section the opponents' objection about this marriage have been answered; the doubts that were being created in the minds of the Muslims have been removed; the Muslims have been acquainted with the Holy Prophet's position and status; and the Holy Prophet himself has been counselled to exercise patience on the false propaganda of the disbelievers and the hypocrites.

5. In verse 49 a clause of the law of divorce has been laid down. This is a unique verse which was sent down on some occasion probably in connection with the same events.

6. In verses 50-52 a special regulation of marriage has been laid down for the Holy Prophet, which points out that he is an exception to the several restrictions that have been imposed on the other Muslims in regard to marital life.

7. In verses 53-55 the second step was taken towards social reform. It consists of the following injunctions: Restriction on the other men to visit the houses of the Holy Prophet's wives; Islamic etiquette concerning visits and invitations; the law that only the near relatives could visit the holy wives in their houses; as for the other men, they could speak to or ask them a thing from behind a curtain; the injunction that the Holy Prophet's wives were forbidden for the Muslims like their mothers; and none could marry any of them after him.

8. In verses 56-57 warning was given to stop criticizing the Holy Prophet's marriage and his domestic life, and the believers instructed not to indulge in fault-finding like the enemies of Islam, but to invoke the blessings of Allah for their Prophet; moreover, they were instructed that they should avoid falsely accusing one another even among themselves, not to speak of the person of the Prophet.

9. In verse 59 the third step for social reform was taken. All the Muslim women were commanded that they should come out well

covered with the outer garments and covering their faces whenever they came out of their houses for a genuine need.

After this till the end of the Sūrah the hypocrites and other foolish and mean people have been rebuked for the propaganda that they were carrying on at that time against Islam and the Muslims.



يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اتَّقِ اللّٰهَ وَلَا تُطِعِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ وَالْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلِيْمًا
حَكِيْمًا ۝ وَّاتَّبِعْ مَا يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ
خَبِيْرًا ۝ وَّتَوَكَّلْ عَلَي اللّٰهِ ۭ وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ وَكِيْلًا ۝ مَا جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ لِرَجُلٍ مِّنْ
قَلْبَيْنِ فِيْ جَوْفِهٖ ۚ وَمَا جَعَلَ اَزْوَاجَكُمُ الّٰۗـِٔيْ تُظٰهِرُوْنَ مِنْهُنَّ اُمَّهٰتِكُمْ ۚ وَمَا
جَعَلَ اَدْعِيَاۗءَكُمْ اَبْنَاۗءَكُمْ ۭ ذٰلِكُمْ قَوْلُكُمْ بِاَفْوَاهِكُمْ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ يَقُوْلُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ
يَهْدِي السَّبِيْلَ ۝ اُدْعُوْهُمْ لِاٰبَاۗىِٕهِمْ هُوَ اَقْسَطُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ۚ فَاِنْ لَّمْ تَعْلَمُوْٓا

XXXIII
AL-AḤZĀB
الاحزاب

Verses: 73 *Revealed at Madīnah*

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

O Prophet,[1] fear Allah and do not obey the disbelievers and the hypocrites; in fact, Allah alone is All-Knowing, All-Wise.[2] Follow that which you are being inspired with from your Lord: Allah is aware of whatever you do.[3] Have trust in Allah, for Allah alone is sufficient as a Guardian.[4] 1-3

Allah has not put two hearts in a person's body,[5] nor has He made those wives of yours whom you divorce by *Zihār* your mothers,[6] 4-5

nor has made your adopted sons your real sons.[7] These are the things which you utter from your mouths, but Allah says that which is based on the reality and He alone guides to the Right Way. Call your adopted sons after their fathers' names: this is more just in the sight of Allah.[8] And if you do not know who their fathers are, then they are your brothers in faith and your friends.[9] There is no blame on you if you say something unintentionally, but you will surely be to blame for what you say with the intention of your hearts.[10] Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.[11]

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1. As we have mentioned in the introduction to the Sūrah, these verses were sent down at a time when Hadrat Zaid had already divorced Hadrat Zainab. Then the Holy Prophet himself was feeling, and Allah also had inspired him with this, that that was the right time for striking at the root of the tradition and customs of ignorance regarding the adopted relations, and that he should take the initiative and marry the divorced wife of his adopted son (Zaid) so that the custom was completely eradicated. But the reason why he was hesitant in this regard was the fear that this would provide a strong excuse to the disbelievers and the hypocrites, who were already burning with jealousy at his successive victories, to start a propaganda campaign against him. This fear was not due to any apprehension for personal defamation, but for the reason that it would harm Islam; it would cause mistrust of Islam among the people who were inclined towards it; it would make the neutral people to join the enemy; and it would cause the weak-minded people among the Muslims themselves to be involved in doubts and suspicions. Therefore, the Holy Prophet thought it was unwise to take a step for the eradication of a custom of ignorance, which would harm the greater interests and objectives of Islam.

2. In the first very sentence, in the beginning of the discourse, Allah removed all the apprehensions of the Holy Prophet, as if to say: "We know better what is useful and beneficial for our Religion and what is not. We know what would be wise and what unwise in this regard. Therefore, you should not behave in a manner which would suit the disbelievers and the hypocrites, but you should behave in a manner which is according to Our Will. You should fear Us and not the disbelievers and the hypocrites."

3. This sentence is addressed to the Holy Prophet as well as to the Muslims and the opponents of Islam. It means : "If the Prophet earns defamation by acting according to the Command of Allah, and bears patiently the attacks of the enemy on his honour, his devoted and sincere services will not remain hidden from Allah. The state of the Muslims who remain steadfast in their loyalty to the Prophet and of those who are involved in doubts and suspicions will be known to

Allah. And Allah will also not remain unaware of the attempts of the disbelievers and the hypocrites who try to defame the Prophet."

4. The addressee of this sentence is again the Holy Prophet. He is being instructed to the effect "Carry out the duty that is being entrusted to you with full confidence in Allah, and do not care at all even if the whole world turns hostile to you." When a man comes to know with certainty that a certain Command has been given by Allah, he should have the satisfaction that his whole well-being and his good lies in its compliance. Then, it is not for him to see and understand its wisdom, but he should carry it out with full confidence in Allah. Allah is enough for him that the servant should entrust all his affairs to Him. He is enough for his guidance as well as help, and He alone is also responsible that the one working under His guidance should never meet with evil consequences.

5. That is, "One and the same person cannot be a believer and a hypocrite, truthful and false, wicked and righteous, at one and the same time. He does not have two hearts in this chest that one should have sincerity in it and the other fearlessness of God. Therefore, a man can have only one kind of character at a time: either he will be a believer or a hypocrite, a disbeliever or a Muslim. Now if you call a believer a hypocrite, or a hypocrite a believer, it will not change the reality. The true character of the person will inevitably remain the same."

6. *Ziḥār is* a term in Arabic. In old days when an Arab, in the heat of a domestic quarrel, would say to his wife: "Your back for me is as the back of my mother," it was thought that the woman was no longer lawful for him because he had compared her to his mother. About this Allah says: "A woman does not become a man's mother just because he has called her his mother or compared her to his mother. His mother is the woman who bore him. Only his calling his wife his mother cannot change the reality." (For the Islamic Law concerning *Ziḥār*, see Sūrah Mujādalah: 2-4).

7. This is what is intended to be said. The two preceding sentences are meant to support and emphasize this same point.

8. The first reform introduced in connection with the implementation of this Command was that Zaid, the adopted son of the Holy Prophet, began to be called Zaid bin Ḥārithah, after his real father, instead of Zaid bin Muḥammad. Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī and Nasā'ī have related this tradition from Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar' that in the beginning the people called Zaid bin Ḥārithah Zaid bin Muḥammad. After the revelation of this verse they began calling him Zaid bin Ḥārithah. Moreover, after this Revelation it was forbidden that a person should

[Contd. on p. 80

اٰبَآءَهُمْ فَاِخْوَانُكُمْ فِي الدِّيْنِ وَمَوَالِيْكُمْ ۭ وَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ فِيْمَآ اَخْطَاْتُمْ
بِهٖ ۙ وَلٰكِنْ مَّا تَعَمَّدَتْ قُلُوْبُكُمْ ۭ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ۝ اَلنَّبِيُّ اَوْلٰى
بِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ مِنْ اَنْفُسِهِمْ وَاَزْوَاجُهٗٓ اُمَّهٰتُهُمْ ۭ وَاُولُوا الْاَرْحَامِ بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلٰى
بِبَعْضٍ فِيْ كِتٰبِ اللّٰهِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُهٰجِرِيْنَ اِلَّآ اَنْ تَفْعَلُوْٓا اِلٰٓى اَوْلِيٰۗىِٕكُمْ
مَّعْرُوْفًا ۭ كَانَ ذٰلِكَ فِي الْكِتٰبِ مَسْطُوْرًا ۝ وَاِذْ اَخَذْنَا مِنَ النَّبِيّٖنَ مِيْثَاقَهُمْ
وَمِنْكَ وَمِنْ نُّوْحٍ وَّاِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَمُوْسٰى وَعِيْسَى ابْنِ مَرْيَمَ ۠ وَاَخَذْنَا مِنْهُمْ
مِّيْثَاقًا غَلِيْظًا ۝ لِّيَسْـَٔلَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ عَنْ صِدْقِهِمْ ۚ وَاَعَدَّ لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَذَابًا
اَلِيْمًا ۝ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَةَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ اِذْ جَاۗءَتْكُمْ جُنُوْدٌ فَاَرْسَلْنَا
عَلَيْهِمْ رِيْحًا وَّجُنُوْدًا لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا ۭ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرًا ۝ اِذْ جَاۗءُوْكُمْ
مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ اَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَاِذْ زَاغَتِ الْاَبْصَارُ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوْبُ
الْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ الظُّنُوْنَا ۝ هُنَالِكَ ابْتُلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ وَزُلْزِلُوْا زِلْزَالًا
شَدِيْدًا ۝ وَاِذْ يَقُوْلُ الْمُنٰفِقُوْنَ وَالَّذِيْنَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ مَّا وَعَدَنَا اللّٰهُ
وَرَسُوْلُهٗٓ اِلَّا غُرُوْرًا ۝ وَاِذْ قَالَتْ طَّاۗىِٕفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ يٰٓاَهْلَ يَثْرِبَ لَا مُقَامَ لَكُمْ
فَارْجِعُوْا ۚ وَيَسْتَاْذِنُ فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْهُمُ النَّبِيَّ يَقُوْلُوْنَ اِنَّ بُيُوْتَنَا عَوْرَةٌ ۛ وَمَا هِيَ
بِعَوْرَةٍ ۚ اِنْ يُّرِيْدُوْنَ اِلَّا فِرَارًا ۝ وَلَوْ دُخِلَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ اَقْطَارِهَا ثُمَّ سُىِٕلُوا
الْفِتْنَةَ لَاٰتَوْهَا وَمَا تَلَبَّثُوْا بِهَآ اِلَّا يَسِيْرًا ۝ وَلَقَدْ كَانُوْا عَاهَدُوا اللّٰهَ مِنْ
قَبْلُ لَا يُوَلُّوْنَ الْاَدْبَارَ ۭ وَكَانَ عَهْدُ اللّٰهِ مَسْـُٔوْلًا ۝ قُلْ لَّنْ يَّنْفَعَكُمُ الْفِرَارُ
اِنْ فَرَرْتُمْ مِّنَ الْمَوْتِ اَوِ الْقَتْلِ وَاِذًا لَّا تُمَتَّعُوْنَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ۝ قُلْ مَنْ ذَا
الَّذِيْ يَعْصِمُكُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ اِنْ اَرَادَ بِكُمْ سُوْۗءًا اَوْ اَرَادَ بِكُمْ رَحْمَةً ۭ وَلَا

Indeed, the Prophet is preferable for the believers to their own selves,[12] and the Prophet's wives are their mothers.[13] But, according to the Book of Allah, the blood relations have a greater right on one another than the other believers and the migrants. However, you may do any good (you wish) to your friends.[14] This is written in the Divine Book. 6

And (O Prophet,) remember the Covenant that We took from all the Prophets—from you as well as from Noah and Abraham and Moses and Jesus son of Mary. We took a solemn Covenant from all of them[15] so that (their Lord) may question the truthful about their truth;[16] as for the disbelievers, He has indeed reserved a painful punishment for them.[17] 7-8

O people[18] who have believed ! Remember the bounty of Allah, which He has (just now) shown you. When the hosts came down on you, We sent against them a violent wind and the armies which you could not see.[19] Allah was watching all that you were doing. When the enemies came upon you from above and from below you,[20] when eyes were petrified due to fear and the hearts leapt up to the throats, and you began to entertain all sorts of doubts about Allah, the believers then were thoroughly tested and severely shaken.[21] 9-11

Remember the time when the hypocrites and all those whose hearts were diseased were openly saying that the promises Allah and His Prophet had made with them,[22] were nothing but a delusion; when a party of them said, "O people of Yathrib, you have no chance to stay, so go back;"[23] when a section of them sought leave of the Prophet, saying, "Our homes are insecure,"[24] whereas they were not insecure;[25] in fact, they wished to flee (the battle front). If the enemies had made entry from all sides of the city, and these people had been urged to treachery,[26] they would have committed it, and would have little hesitated to become partners in it. They had indeed already made a pledge with Allah that they would not show their backs; and the pledge made with Allah had to be questioned.[27] 12-15

O Prophet, say to them, "If you flee from death or slaughter, your flight will avail you nothing; after that you will enjoy life but for a little while only."[28] Ask them, "Who can protect you from Allah if He intends harm for you? And who can prevent Him if He intends to 16-17

show you mercy?" In fact, they cannot find a protector and helper against Allah.

Contd. from p. 77]

assign his parentage to any other man than his own real father. Bukhārī, Muslim and Abū Da'ūd have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Abī Waqqāṣ that the Holy Prophet said: "Paradise is forbidden for the one who called himself son of another person than his own father." Other traditions bearing on the subject have been related in Aḥādith, which have regarded this as a heinous sin.

9. That is, even in such a case it will not be right to ascribe the parentage of a person to someone else.

10. It means: "There is no harm if a person is called a son out of love. Likewise, there is no sin if someone calls another one a mother, or a daughter, or sister or brother, etc. out of affection and regard, but if such a thing is said with the intention that the one being called so will be accorded the same status and position and rights and privileges as actually belong to these relations, it would certainly be objectionable and one will be held answerable for it."

11. That is, "Allah has frogiven the errors already committed in this regard; no one will be called to account for them." Another meaning is: "Allah does not call a people to account for actions done unintentionally. He will not punish a person for doing something which he did not do intentionally although it resembled a forbidden act apparently."

12. That is, "The relationship of the Holy Prophet with the Muslims and of the Muslims with the Holy Prophet is of a superior nature, over and above all human relationships. No other relationship is in any way comparable with the relationship that exists between the Holy Prophet and the believers. The Holy Prophet (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) is more compassionate and affectionate and a greater well-wisher of the Muslims than their own parents, even their own selves. Their parents and their wives and children can harm them, can treat them in a selfish manner and mislead them, can make them commit errors and mistakes, can push them into Hell, but the Holy Prophet's case is different: he will do for them only that which results in and leads to their eternal well-being and enduring happiness. They can commit follies resulting in their own ruin and disaster, but the Holy Prophet will wish for them only that which is beneficial and useful for them. And when it is so, the Holy Prophet also has a right on the Muslims that they should regard him dearer than their own parents, their own children, even their own selves. They should love him more than anything and anybody else in the world; should prefer his judgement and opinion to their own and should submit to every command that he gives.

The same thing has been said by the Holy Prophet in a *Ḥadīth*, which Bukhārī and Muslim and others have related with a little difference in wording: "No one of you can be a believer until I become dearer to him than his own father and his own children and all mankind."

13. On the basis of the special relationship mentioned above, another characteristic of the Holy Prophet is that his wives are forbidden to the Muslims just like their own real mothers although their adopted mothers are in no sense their real mothers. This thing is peculiar only to the person of the Holy Prophet and of no other man in the world.

In this connection, one should also know that the wives of the Holy Prophet are mothers of the believers only in the sense that the Muslims are under obligation to have reverence and respect for them, and no Muslim could marry them. As for other matters they are not like the mothers. For example, apart from their real relatives, all other Muslims were *non-maḥram* for them from whom they had to observe Purdah; their daughters were not like real sisters for the Muslims, so that no Muslim could marry them; their brothers and sisters were not like the maternal uncles and aunts for the Muslims; they could not be inherited by a Muslim, unless a close relative, as a mother is inherited by her son.

Another noteworthy point in this connection is that according to the Qur'ān, this status accrues to all the wives of the Holy Prophet among whom Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah is also included. But, when a section (of the Muslims) made Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Fātimah (may Allah be pleased with them) and their children the centre of their Faith and made the whole system of religion revolve around them, and made Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah also, along with many other Companions, the target of curse and abuse, this verse became a hindrance for them, for according to it every person who claims to be a believer has to acknowledge her as his mother. Consequently, to overcome this difficulty a strange claim was made to the effect: The Holy Prophet had given Ḥaḍrat 'Alī the authority that after his death he could allow any of his wives he liked to retain her position of the holy wife and divorce any other on his behalf. Abū Manṣūr Aḥmad bin Abū Ṭālib Ṭabrasī has written this in *Kitāb al-Iḥtijāj* and Sulemān bin 'Abdullah al-Baḥrānī has related that the Holy Prophet said to Ḥaḍrat 'Alī "O Abul Ḥasan: this honour will last till the time that we remain steadfast on obedience to Allah. Therefore, you may divorce any of my wives, who after me disobeys Allah by revolting against you, and deprive her of the honour that belongs to the mothers of the faithful."

This is a false tradition even according to the principles of reporting *Ḥadīth*. But if one studies vv. 28-29 and 51-52 of this very Sūrah Al-Aḥzāb itself, one finds that this tradition goes against the Qur'ān as well. For after the revelation of the "verse of the option" (v. 29), the Holy Prophet's right of divorce

against those of his wives who chose to remain with him through every difficulty had been curtailed. For further explanation, see E.N.'s 42 and 93 below.

Moreover, if an unbiased person only uses his common sense and considers this tradition carefully, he will find that it is utterly absurd and highly derogatory in respect to the Holy Prophet. The rank and position of the Messenger of Allah is very high and exalted. It cannot even be expected of an ordinary man that he would think of divorcing his wife after his death and on leaving the world would authorise his son-in-law to divorce her on his behalf if there arose a dispute between him and her in the future. This shows what regard these sectarians have for the honour and reverence of the Holy Prophet himself, and even for the Divine Law.

14. The verse means this: As for the Holy Prophet the nature of the Muslims' relationship with him is unique. But as far as the common Muslims are concerned, their mutual relationship will be based on the principle that the rights of the relatives on one another are given priority over the rights of others. No charity is right if a person overlooks the needs and requirements of his own parents and children and brothers and sisters, and gives away charities to others. The *Zakāt* money also will be used first of all to help one's own poor relatives and then the other needy people. The inheritance will necessarily be divided among those who are nearest in relation to the deceased. As for others, the dying person may give them a part of his wealth as a gift or by trust and will. But in no case is he allowed to deprive his rightful heirs and give away everything to others. After this Divine Command the system of "Brotherhood" that had been established between the *Muhājirīn* and the *Anṣār* after the Hijrah also became abolished, for according to it the *Muhājirīn* and the *Anṣār* became heirs to one another only on the basis of their relationship of being the brethren in faith. Allah enjoined the law that inheritance will be divided only on the basis of blood relationship; however, a person could help his brother-in-faith by making him a gift or through a will if he so liked.

15. Allah in this verse has reminded the Holy Prophet that, like all other Prophets, He has taken from him too a solemn covenant which he should abide by strictly. A study of the preceding verse shows that the Covenant implies: "The Prophet will first himself obey and follow every Command received from Allah, and then make others also to obey and follow it: he will convey Allah's Commands intact to others and will show no laxity in the struggle to enforce them practically." This Covenant has been mentioned at several other places in the Qur'ān, *e.g.*

(1) "He has appointed for you the same way of life which He appointed for Noah and which (O Muhammad,) We have now revealed to you, and

which We had already enjoined on Abraham and Moses and Jesus, stressing : 'Establish this Way and be not divided in it." (Ash-Shūrā:13).

(2) "And remember that Allah had made the Covenant with the people who had been given the Scripture, and enjoined: 'You shall spread the teachings of the Book among the people and shall not conceal them." (Āl-'Imrān: 187).

(3) "Remember that We made a solemn Covenant with the children of Israel to the effect: 'Worship (and submit to) none save Allah." (Al-Baqarah: 83).

(4) "Has not the Covenant of the Book been taken from them.. .: 'Hold fast the Book We have given you, and keep in mind what it contains: it is expected that you will refrain from wrong ways." (Al-A'rāf: 169-171).

(5) "Keep in mind the blessing Allah has bestowed on you and do not forget the solemn Covenant which He made with you, when you said, 'We have heard and submitted.' " (Al-Mā'idah: 7)

The reason why Allah is reminding of this Covenant in this context is that the Holy Prophet was feeling hesitant to break the custom of ignorance in respect of the adopted relations due to the apprehension that the enemies of Islam would put him to a disadvantage. He was feeling shy time and again at the thought: The question is of marrying a woman. I may take this initiative with the purest intention only for the sake of a social reform, but the enemies will certainly say that I have done so for the purpose of satisfying my sensual desires, and I am in fact trying to deceive others under the guise of a reformer. That is why Allah assures him, saying: "You are a Prophet appointed by Us. Like all other Prophets, you also are bound in the Covenant that you will carry out whatever Command We give yourself and command others to follow it. Therefore, you should not bother at all about taunts and derision by others, do not be afraid and fight shy of others, and carry out without hesitation the service that We want to take from you."

A section of the people think that this Covenant is the covenant that was taken from all the Prophets and their communities, who came before the Holy Prophet, to the effect that they would believe in the Prophet who came afterwards and cooperate with him. On the basis of this interpretation they claim that the door to Prophethood is still open after the Holy Prophet and this covenant has been taken from the Holy Prophet too, that his followers will believe in the prophet who will come after him. But the context in which the verse occurs is explicit that this interpretation is absolutely wrong, There is no occasion whatever in the context to indicate that other prophets will come also after the Holy Prophet and his

followers should believe in them. If the verse is read in this sense, it becomes irrelevant and incoherent. Moreover, there is no indication in the words of the verse to show which covenant is implied here. Therefore, to find out the nature of the covenant, we shall have to turn to other verses of the Qur'ān in which mention has been made of the covenants taken from the Prophets. Now, if only one sort of the covenants had been mentioned in the entire Qur'an, *i.e.*, the covenant that the people shall believe in the prophets coming afterwards, it would be correct to think that here also the covenant implied the same covenant. But anyone who has studied the Qur'ān with an open mind knows that it has mentioned many covenants, which were taken from the Prophets and their followers. Therefore, only that covenant from among the different covenant would be implied here, which fitted in with the context here, and not the one which was altogether irrelevant. Such wrong interpretations reveal the mentality of the people who wish to draw no guidance from the Qur'ān but want to re-interpret it instead.

16. That is, "Allah has not just taken the covenant but will also question as to how far it has been kept. Then only those who will have kept Allah's Covenant faithfully, will be declared to be the truthful."

17. To understand the theme of vv. 1-8 well these should be read together with vv. 36-41 of this Sūrah.

18. In vv. 9-27 an appraisal has been made of the Battle of the Trench and the raid against the Banī Quraiẓah and were revealed at the end of the raid. One should keep the details of these events in view as given in the Introduction above.

19. The windstorm did not lash the enemy hordes immediately on their arrival but it occurred when the siege of Madīnah had lasted about a month. "Armies which you could not see" implies the hidden powers which operate in the affairs of men under Allah's Command and of which men are wholly unaware. Man regards the occurrence of events and incidents as resulting from apparent causes and does not take into account the hidden forces at work, whereas in most cases these very hidden forces play the decisive role. As these forces function under the Command of Allah's angels, the "armies" may imply the angels as well though there is no indication here of sending the armies of the angels.

20. It may mean: "The enemies came upon you from every side, and also that those coming from Najd and Khaiber came from above and those coming from Makkah from below you."

21. "The believers": All those who accepted the Holy Prophet as Allah's Messenger and became included among his followers, which comprised both the true believers and the hypocrites. In this paragraph Allah has made mention of the

Muslim community as a whole. In the following three paragraphs the attitude of the hypocrites has been commented upon, and the next two deal with the Holy Prophet and the true believers.

22. That is, "Promises to the effect that the believers will get Allah's support and succour and will be helped to attain victory in the end."

23. This sentence has two meanings: The apparent meaning is that there is no chance for them to stay at the Trench against the polytheists; therefore, they should return to the city. And the hidden meaning is that there is no chance for them to remain in Islam; therefore, they should return to their ancestral religion, so that they might escape the danger in which they had involved themselves by earning the hostility of the whole of Arabia. The hypocrites uttered such mischievous things so that they could make the one who would listen to them understand the intended hidden meaning, but in case someone took exception to their words, they could say they had been misunderstood.

24. That is, "When the Banī Quraizah also joined the invaders, the hypocrites had a good excuse for defection and they started asking the Holy Prophet for leave to go and protect their houses and families, which, they said, had been endangered, whereas at that time the Holy Prophet was responsible for the defence and protection of all the people of Madīnah. After the treachery of the Quraizah it was for the Holy Prophet to devise plans for the protection of the city and its people and not of the soldiers of the army individually."

25. That is, "The Holy Prophet had already made arrangements for protection against the danger, which were a part of the collective scheme of defence being implemented by him as Commander of the Islamic forces. Therefore, there was no immediate danger in the face of which these people could justifiably make such an excuse."

26. "Urged to treachery": Urged by the disbelievers to join them to vanquish the Muslims after entering the city as conquerors.

27. That is, "They had felt regret at the weakness they had shown on the occasion of the Battle of Uhud and pledged to Allah that they would compensate for their error in any trial that they would confront in the future. But Allah cannot be deceived by empty words. He puts to one or the other test everyone who makes a pledge with Him so that his sincerity of intention or otherwise is found out. Therefore, just after two years of the Battle of Uhud, He made them confront an even more serious danger and discovered how far they were sincere in their pledge."

[Contd. on p. 88

يَجِدُوْنَ لَهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَلِيًّا وَّلَا نَصِيْرًا ﴿١٧﴾ قَدْ يَعْلَمُ اللّٰهُ الْمُعَوِّقِيْنَ
مِنْكُمْ وَالْقَآئِلِيْنَ لِاِخْوَانِهِمْ هَلُمَّ اِلَيْنَا ۚ وَلَا يَاْتُوْنَ الْبَاْسَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿١٨﴾
اَشِحَّةً عَلَيْكُمْ ۚ فَاِذَا جَآءَ الْخَوْفُ رَاَيْتَهُمْ يَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَيْكَ تَدُوْرُ اَعْيُنُهُمْ
كَالَّذِيْ يُغْشٰى عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْمَوْتِ ۚ فَاِذَا ذَهَبَ الْخَوْفُ سَلَقُوْكُمْ بِاَلْسِنَةٍ
حِدَادٍ اَشِحَّةً عَلَى الْخَيْرِ ۚ اُولٰٓئِكَ لَمْ يُؤْمِنُوْا فَاَحْبَطَ اللّٰهُ اَعْمَالَهُمْ ۚ وَكَانَ ذٰلِكَ
عَلَى اللّٰهِ يَسِيْرًا ﴿١٩﴾ يَحْسَبُوْنَ الْاَحْزَابَ لَمْ يَذْهَبُوْا ۚ وَاِنْ يَّاْتِ الْاَحْزَابُ يَوَدُّوْا
لَوْ اَنَّهُمْ بَادُوْنَ فِي الْاَعْرَابِ يَسْاَلُوْنَ عَنْ اَنْۢبَآئِكُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ كَانُوْا فِيْكُمْ مَّا
قٰتَلُوْٓا اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٢٠﴾ لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِيْ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ اُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَنْ كَانَ
يَرْجُوا اللّٰهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْاٰخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللّٰهَ كَثِيْرًا ﴿٢١﴾ وَلَمَّا رَاَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ الْاَحْزَابَ ۙ
قَالُوْا هٰذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا اللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ وَصَدَقَ اللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهٗ ۚ وَمَا زَادَهُمْ اِلَّا
اِيْمَانًا وَّتَسْلِيْمًا ﴿٢٢﴾ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوْا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللّٰهَ عَلَيْهِ ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ
مَّنْ قَضٰى نَحْبَهٗ وَمِنْهُمْ مَّنْ يَّنْتَظِرُ ۡ وَمَا بَدَّلُوْا تَبْدِيْلًا ﴿٢٣﴾ لِيَجْزِيَ اللّٰهُ
الصّٰدِقِيْنَ بِصِدْقِهِمْ وَيُعَذِّبَ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ اِنْ شَآءَ اَوْ يَتُوْبَ عَلَيْهِمْ ۚ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
كَانَ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ﴿٢٤﴾ وَرَدَّ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِغَيْظِهِمْ لَمْ يَنَالُوْا خَيْرًا ۚ وَكَفَى
اللّٰهُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الْقِتَالَ ۚ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ قَوِيًّا عَزِيْزًا ﴿٢٥﴾ وَاَنْزَلَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَاهَرُوْهُمْ
مِّنْ اَهْلِ الْكِتٰبِ مِنْ صَيَاصِيْهِمْ وَقَذَفَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمُ الرُّعْبَ فَرِيْقًا تَقْتُلُوْنَ
وَتَاْسِرُوْنَ فَرِيْقًا ﴿٢٦﴾ وَاَوْرَثَكُمْ اَرْضَهُمْ وَدِيَارَهُمْ وَاَمْوَالَهُمْ وَاَرْضًا لَّمْ
تَطَئُوْهَا ۚ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرًا ﴿٢٧﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّاَزْوَاجِكَ اِنْ
كُنْتُنَّ تُرِدْنَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا وَزِيْنَتَهَا فَتَعَالَيْنَ اُمَتِّعْكُنَّ وَاُسَرِّحْكُنَّ سَرَاحًا

Allah knows very well those among you, who create hindrances (in the war efforts), who say to their brothers, "Come to us,"[29] who take part in the fighting only to be counted in, who are ever reluctant to join you.[30] When there is danger, they look towards you, their eyes rolling like the one who is fainting, being on the point of death. But when the danger is gone, they come out to greet you with their scissor-like sharp tongues in greed for gains.[31] These people have not believed at all; so Allah has made all their works fruitless,[32] and this is an easy thing for Allah.[33] They think that the invading hosts are not yet gone, and if they should attack again they would (rather) wish to be in the desert among the beduins and seek information about you from there. However, even if they remained among you, they would take but little part in the fighting. 18-20

There was indeed the best model for you in the Messenger of Allah,[34] for every such person who looks forward to Allah and the Last Day, and remembers Allah much.[35] And when the true believers (at that time)[36] saw the invading hosts, they cried out, "This is what Allah and His Messenger had promised us: Allah and His Messenger were absolutely true."[37] This increased them all the more in faith and resignation.[38] There are among the believers those who have been true in their pledge to Allah: some one of them has fulfilled his vow, and some other is waiting for it;[39] they have made no change in their attitude. (All this happened) so that Allah may reward the truthful for their truthfulness, and punish the hypocrites, or accept their repentance as He will. Indeed Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful. 21-24

Allah turned back the disbelievers: they retreated in their rage without gaining any advantage, and Allah was sufficient to fight on behalf of the believers: Allah is All-Powerful, All-Mighty. Allah brought down from their fortresses those of the people of the Book, who had joined forces with the invaders[40] and created such terror in their hearts that some of them you are slaying today and some taking as prisoners. He made you heirs of their land and their dwellings and their wealth and gave you that land which you had never trodden before. Allah is All-Powerful. 25-27

[Contd. from p. 85]

28. That is, "This flight of yours will not add anything to your life. In no case will you live for ever and gain the whole wealth of the world. Hardly a few years will you live after your flight and enjoy life only as long as it is destined for you."

29. That is, "Abandon this Prophet and do not become involved in dangers and afflictions only for the sake of the Faith and Truth. Live a life of ease and comfort as we do."

30. "Who are ever reluctant...: "Who are not at all willing to spend their energies, their time, their wealth, etc. in any way in which the true believers are expending whatever they have. Not to speak of exerting themselves and braving the dangers, they do not want to cooperate with the believers in anything with an open heart."

31. Lexically, this verse has two meanings: (1) "When you return victorious from a war, they receive you warmly, and try to impress you with a glib tongue that they too are sincere believers and they too have made their contribution to promote the cause of Islam, and therefore, they too deserve a share from the booty." (2) "If victory is attained these people show great powers of the tongue at the time of the division of the spoils and make great demands for their shares, recounting their services to the cause of Islam."

32. That is, "Allah will make null and void all the prayers that they offered, all the fasts that they observed, the *Zakāt* that they paid, and other good works that they did after embracing Islam, and will give them no reward for these. For Allah does not judge actions and deeds according to their external form but on the basis of the faith and sincerity underlying them. When the actions are altogether devoid of this quality, there will be mere show and, therefore, meaningless. Here, one thing is especially noteworthy. A clear verdict has been given about the people who professed to believe in Allah and His Messenger, offered the Prayers, observed the fast, gave the *Zakāt* and co-operated with the Muslims in other good works, to the effect that they did not believe at all. This verdict has been given because when they were put to the test during the conflict between Islam and un-Islam, they showed double-facedness, preferred selfish interests above the interests of the Faith, and shirked offering their selves and their wealth and their energies for the protection of Islam. This shows that the real criterion of the judgement are not the apparent deeds but the loyalties of man. If a person is not loyal to God and His Way, his profession of the Faith and his worship and other good deeds are worthless."

33. That is, "As their deeds and actions do not carry any value, Allah renders them fruitless without the slightest hesitation; and as they do not have any power to resist Allah has no difficulty in destroying their deeds altogether."

34. In view of the context in which this verse occurs, the object of presenting the Holy Prophet's conduct and way of life as a model was to teach a lesson to the people, who had been motivated by considerations of selfish interests and personal safety on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench. They are being addressed, as if to say: "You claimed to be the believers and Muslims and followers of the Holy Messenger. You should have seen how the Messenger whose followers you claimed to be conducted himself on the occasion. If the leader of a group is himself a seeker of personal security, is lazy and indolent, gives preference to personal interests to everything else, and is ever ready to flee danger, it would be reasonable to expect manifestation of such weakness from his followers. But here the case was different. The Holy Prophet endured along with others every toil and labour that he asked others to endure, and endured better than others; there was no trouble which others might have experienced and he himself did not. He was among those who dug the trench, and endured hunger and other afflictions just as the common Muslims did. He did not leave the battlefront even for a moment during the siege nor retreated an inch. After the betrayal of the Banī Quraiẓah his own family had also been exposed to danger even as the families of the other Muslims were. He did not make any special arrangement for his own and his family's protection, which did not exist for others. He was always in the forefront to offer maximum sacrifices for the great objectives for which he was constantly asking others to make sacrifices. Therefore, whoever made a claim of being his follower should have followed the practical example set by the leader.

This is the meaning of the verse in the context here. But its words are general and there is no reason why it should be confined to these meanings only. Allah does not say that only in this respect His Messenger's life is a model for the Muslims to follow, but has regarded it as a model absolutely. Therefore, the verse demands that the Muslims should take the Holy Prophet's life as a model for themselves in every affair of life and should mould their character and personality according to it.

35. That is, "The Prophet's life is no model for the person who is forgetful of God, but it certainly is a model for him who remembers Allah much and consistently and not only occasionally just by chance. Likewise, this life is no model for him who has no hope from Allah and does not expect Resurrection to take place, but it is most surely a model for the person who is hopeful of Allah's grace and His favors, and who is also mindful that the Day of Judgement will come when his well-being will wholly depend on how closely his conduct resembled the conduct and character of the Messenger of Allah in this world."

36. After drawing attention to the model of the Holy Prophet, Allah now presents the model of his Companions so that the character of the false claimants to faith and of the sincere followers of the Messenger is clearly contrasted.

Although both were alike apparently in the affirmation of the faith, both were counted as Muslims, and both attended at the Prayers, they were separated from each other as soon as the time of the trial approached, and it became clear who were loyal to Allah and His Messenger and who were Muslims only in name.

37. Here, one should keep verse 12 in view. There it was said that when the hypocrites and the people with diseased hearts found themselves surrounded by a huge force of ten to twelve thousand men from the front and by the Banī Quraizah from behind, they openly started saying: "The promises that Allah and His Messenger had made with us were nothing but a delusion. We were promised that if we believed in Allah's religion, His succour would be at our back and we would rule Arabia and the world outside and all the wealth of Caesar and Chosroes will be ours, but here we are that the whole of Arabia is bent upon exterminating us, and there is no sign yet of the armies of the angels in sight, who would save us and protect us against this grave calamity." Now they are being told: "One meaning of the promise of Allah and His Messenger was that which was understood by these false claimants to faith. The other meaning is that which is understood by the sincere and true Muslims. When they saw the storms of danger gathering, they too remembered the promises of Allah, but these promises did not mean that as soon as they affirmed the faith they would overwhelm and subdue the whole world without the slightest effort, and the angels would come to perform their coronation, but the promises actually meant that they would have to pass through severe trials, endure extreme hardships and afflictions, offer supreme sacrifices; then only will Allah bless them with His grace and they will be granted successes of the world and the Hereafter, which Allah has promised His believing servants.

"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 afflictions and were so shaken by trials that the Prophet of the time and his followers cried out: 'When will Allah's help come?' — "Yes, Allah's help is near." (Al-Baqarah: 214).

"Do the people think that they will be left alone after they have once said, 'We have believed', and they will not be tested ? The fact is that We have put to the test all those who have gone before them. Surely, Allah has to see who are the truthful and who the liars." (Al-'Ankabūt: 2-3).

38. That is, "On seeing the hard times of affliction approaching they did not waver in their faith but were strengthened in it all the more, and instead of giving up Allah's obedience they became ready to resign and surrender to Him whatever they had with complete conviction and satisfaction of the heart."

Here, one should fully understand that faith and resignation is indeed a quality of the self which is put to trial and test at every command and demand of the Faith. At every step in life man comes across situations where the Faith either enjoins something or forbids something, or requires one to make sacrifices of life and wealth and time and desires of the self. At every such occasion the faith and conviction of the person who deviates from obedience will suffer decline and the faith and conviction of him who submits to the command and demand will be strengthened and enhanced. Although in the beginning a man becomes a believer and Muslim only by embracing the fundamental creed *(Kalimah)* of Islam, yet his state of faith does not remain static but is open to both deterioration and development. Decline in sincerity and the spirit of obedience causes it to deteriorate; so much so that constant retrogression may cause the person to reach the last limits of the faith where the slightest move backward may turn him from a believer to a hypocrite. Contrary to this, the more sincere a person is, the more perfect his obedience and the greater his devotion and dedication to the cause of the true Faith, the stronger and more sound will he grow in faith and may even attain the supreme rank of the truthful. But this increase and decrease in the faith has only the moral significance which can be judged and reckoned by none but Allah. As for the man, faith is simply the act of affirmation by which a Muslim enters Islam and is regarded as a Muslim as long as he remains steadfast to it. In this regard we cannot say that so and so is half a Muslim, or one-third a Muslim, and another one double a Muslim or triple a Muslim. Likewise, in legal rights the Muslims are equal and alike. It cannot be that one is regarded a greater believer and given more rights and another one a lesser believer and given less rights. In these aspects there can be no question of the increase and decrease in the faith, and in fact, in this very sense has Imām Abū Ḥanīfah said: "Faith in Islam neither increases nor decreases."

39. That is, "Someone has already offered his life in the way of Allah, and someone is awaiting the time when he will offer it for the sake of his Faith."

40. That is, Jews of the Banī Quraiẓah.

جَمِيلًا ﴿٢٨﴾ وَإِن كُنتُنَّ تُرِدْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ وَالدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ
لِلْمُحْسِنَاتِ مِنكُنَّ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٢٩﴾ يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ مَن يَأْتِ مِنكُنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ
مُّبَيِّنَةٍ يُضَاعَفْ لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ ۚ وَكَانَ ذَٰلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرًا ﴿٣٠﴾

الجزء ٢٢

وَمَن يَقْنُتْ مِنكُنَّ لِلَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا نُّؤْتِهَا أَجْرَهَا مَرَّتَيْنِ

وَأَعْتَدْنَا لَهَا رِزْقًا كَرِيمًا ﴿٣١﴾ يَا نِسَاءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَأَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَاءِ إِنِ
اتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِي فِي قَلْبِهِ مَرَضٌ وَقُلْنَ قَوْلًا
مَّعْرُوفًا ﴿٣٢﴾ وَقَرْنَ فِي بُيُوتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْأُولَىٰ وَأَقِمْنَ
الصَّلَاةَ وَآتِينَ الزَّكَاةَ وَأَطِعْنَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ ۚ إِنَّمَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيُذْهِبَ
عَنكُمُ الرِّجْسَ أَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيرًا ﴿٣٣﴾ وَاذْكُرْنَ مَا يُتْلَىٰ فِي

ع ١ ٩

بُيُوتِكُنَّ مِنْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ وَالْحِكْمَةِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ لَطِيفًا خَبِيرًا ﴿٣٤﴾ إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ
وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ
وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ
وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّائِمِينَ وَالصَّائِمَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ فُرُوجَهُمْ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ
وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ ۙ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُم مَّغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا ﴿٣٥﴾
وَمَا كَانَ لِمُؤْمِنٍ وَلَا مُؤْمِنَةٍ إِذَا قَضَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ أَمْرًا أَن يَكُونَ لَهُمُ
الْخِيَرَةُ مِنْ أَمْرِهِمْ ۗ وَمَن يَعْصِ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ فَقَدْ ضَلَّ ضَلَالًا مُّبِينًا ﴿٣٦﴾
وَإِذْ تَقُولُ لِلَّذِي أَنْعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِ أَمْسِكْ عَلَيْكَ زَوْجَكَ وَ
اتَّقِ اللَّهَ وَتُخْفِي فِي نَفْسِكَ مَا اللَّهُ مُبْدِيهِ وَتَخْشَى النَّاسَ ۖ وَاللَّهُ أَحَقُّ
أَن تَخْشَاهُ ۖ فَلَمَّا قَضَىٰ زَيْدٌ مِّنْهَا وَطَرًا زَوَّجْنَاكَهَا لِكَيْ لَا يَكُونَ عَلَى

O Prophet,[41] say to your wives, "If you seek the world and its adornments, come, I shall give you of these and send you off in a good way. But if you seek Allah and His Messenger and the abode of the Hereafter, you should rest assured that Allah has prepared a great reward for those of you who do good."[42] 28-29

Wives of the Prophet, whoever among you commits a manifest indecency, will be doubly punished:[43] this is an easy thing for Allah.[44] And whoever among you obeys Allah and His Prophet, and does good works, We shall doubly reward her,[45] and for her We have prepared an honourable provision. 30-31

Wives of the Prophet, you are not like the other women.[46] If you are Godfearing, do not talk in a soft voice lest the man of the diseased heart should cherish false hopes from you, but speak in an unaffected manner.[47] Stay in your houses,[48] and do not go about displaying your fineries as women used to do in the days of ignorance.[49] Establish the *Ṣalāt*, pay the *Zakāt*, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah only intends to remove uncleanliness from you, O people of the Prophet's household, and purify you completely.[50] Remember the Revelations of Allah and the wise sayings which are recited in your houses.[51] Surely, Allah is the Knower of everything[52] and is All-Aware. 32-34

Most surely[53] the men and the women who have surrendered themselves to Allah;[54] who are believing,[55] obedient,[56] truthful,[57] and patient;[58] who bow down before Allah,[59] practise charity,[60] observe the fasts,[61] guard their private parts[62] and remember Allah much:[63] Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward.[64] 35

It[65] does not behove a believing man and a believing woman that when Allah and His Messenger have given their decision in a matter, they should exercise an option in that matter of theirs; and whoever disobeys Allah and His Prophet, has indeed strayed into manifest error.[66] 36

O Prophet,[67] remember the time when you were saying to the man, whom Allah as well as you had favoured, "Keep your wife and fear Allah."[69] You were at that time keeping hidden in your heart that which Allah intended to reveal: you were fearing the people, whereas 37

Allah has a greater right that you should fear Him.[70] So, when Zaid had fulfilled his desire of her,[71] We married (the divorced woman) to you[72] so that there remains no hindrance for the believers in regard to the wives of their adopted sons when they have fulfilled their desire of them.[73] And Allah's Command had to be carried out.

Contd. from p. 911

41. The verses from here to 35 were sent down in the period contiguous to the Battle of the Trench and the raid on Bani Quraizah, whose background we have touched upon in the Introduction to this Sūrah. According to a tradition related in Muslim on the authority of Hadrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, "One day when Hadrat Abū Bakr and Hadrat 'Umar visited the Holy Prophet, they saw that his wives were sitting around him and he was quiet. Addressing Hadrat 'Umar, he said: 'They are sitting around me as you see: they are asking for money for household expenditure'." At this both the Companions rebuked their daughters and said, "Why do you embarrass the Holy Prophet and demand from him that which he does not have." This event shows how hard pressed the Holy Prophet was economically at that time and how distressed and embarrassed he was feeling at his wives' demand for domestic expenditure during the period when a bitter conflict was going on between Islam and paganism.

42. At the time when this verse was sent down, the Holy Prophet had four wives with him: Hadrat Saudah, Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, Hadrat Hafsah and Hadrat Umm Salamah. He had not yet married Hadrat Zainab. (Ibn 'Arabi: *Ahkām al-Qur'ān*, Egyptian Edition, 1958, vol. III, pp. 512-13). When this verse was revealed, he first spoke to Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, and said: "I ask you a thing; do not be hasty in answering; consult your parents, then decide." Then he told her of Allah's Command and recited this verse. She replied: "Should I consult my parents about this?—I seek Allah and His Messenger and the Hereafter. After this he went to each of his wives and asked the same thing and each one gave the same reply as had been given by Hadrat 'Ā'ishah. (Musnad Ahmad, Muslim, Nasā'ī).

This is termed *takhyīr*, *i.e.* to give the wife the option to decide for herself whether she would stay in wedlock or would separate from the husband. This was obligatory for the Holy Prophet because he had been commanded by Allah to offer such an option to his wives. If a lady from among the holy wives had opted to separate she would not have separated automatically but would have been separated by the Holy Prophet, as is clear from the words: " . . . I shall give you of these and send you off gracefully." But the Holy Prophet would certainly have separated her because as a Prophet it would not behove him not to honour the word. After divorce apparently the lady would have stood excluded from the category of the holy wives, and she would not be forbidden to any other Muslim;

for she would have chosen divorce from the Holy Prophet only for the sake of the world and its adornments of which she had been given the choice, and obviously the option could not be exercised in case she was forbidden to re-marry. On the other hand, the intention of the verse also seems that the Holy Prophet was not left with any authority to divorce the wives who chose Allah and His Messenger and the Hereafter in preference to the world. For *takhyīr* had only two sides: if a wife opted for the world, she would be divorced; if she opted for Allah and His Messenger and the Hereafter, she would not be divorced. Obviously, if a lady chose one alternative, the other would become forbidden in her case by itself.

In Islamic Law *takhyīr*, in fact, amounts to delegation of the right to obtain divorce. The husband himself gives the wife the choice to stay in wedlock with him or be separated. Here are briefly the injunctions which the jurists have derived from the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* in this regard:

(1) Once a husband has given this choice to a wife, he can neither withdraw it nor stop her from exercising it. However, it is not necessary that the woman must exercise it. She may choose to remain in weldlock with the husband, or may prefer to separate, or may opt nothing and let the right of divorce be annulled.

(2) There are two conditions of this choice being transferred to the woman: (a) The husband should have given her the right of divorce in clear words, or if there was no clear mention of the divorce, he should have had the intention of giving this right; *e.g.* if he says, "You have the choice" or "your business is in your own hand," such indirect words will not transfer the right of divorce to the woman without the intention of the husband. If the woman claims it and the husband states on oath that he had no intention of giving the right of divorce, his statement will be admitted, unless the woman produces evidence to the effect that those words were said during a dispute, or in connection with divorce, because in that context delegation of the right would mean that the husband had the intention of giving the right of divorce. (b) The woman knows that she has been given the right of divorce. If she was absent, she should receive information of this, and if she is present, she should hear the words. Unless she hears the words, or receives the news, the right will not be transferred to her.

(3) As to the time limit within which the wife has to exercise her right if the husband gives it her absolutely without specifying any limit, there is a difference of opinion among the jurists. Some jurists have expressed the opinion that the woman can exercise the right at the same sitting at which the husband gave it her; if she leaves the place without making a response, or turns her attention to something else which indicates that she

does not want to make a response, she forfeits the right invested in her and her choice no longer remains. This is the opinion of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān, Ḥaḍrat Ibn Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah, 'Attā, Jābir bin Zaid, Mujāhid, Sha'bī, Nakha'ī, Imām Mālik, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Shāfe'ī, Imām Auzā'ī, Sufyān Thaurī 'and Abū Thaur. The other opinion is that her exercise of the choice is not confined to that sitting but she can exercise it even afterwards. This opinion is held by Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Basrī, Qatādah and Zuhrī.

(4) If the husband specifies a time limit and says, for instance, "You have the option for a month or a year, or your business is in your own hand for so long," the wife would enjoy the option only for that long. However, if he says, "You can exercise this option as and when you like," her option would be unlimited.

(5) If the woman intends to obtain separation, she should express her intention clearly and definitely. Vague words which do not express the intention clearly will have no effect.

(6) Legally, the husband can give the option to the wife in three forms: *(a)* He may say, "Your business is in your own hand;" or *(b)* he may say: "You have the option;" or *(c)* "You are divorced if you so please." The legal consequences of each are separate as explained below:

(a) If the husband has said: "Your business is in your own hand," and the woman responds clearly to the effect that she would opt for separation, it would amount to an irreversible divorce according to the Ḥanifites. That is, after this the husband will forfeit his right to have her back as his wife. However, they can remarry if they so like after the expiry of the waiting period. And if the husband said, "Your affair is in your own hand to the extent of one divorce," this will be regarded as the first reversible divorce. That is, the husband can take her back as his wife within the waiting-period. But if the husband had the intention of all the three divorces at the time of delegating to the woman the right of divorce, or mentioned this specifically, the woman's exercise of the option in such a case would amount to divorce no matter whether she pronounces divorce thrice on herself or says only once that she has chosen separation or divorced herself.

(b) If the husband gives the woman the option to separate with the words: "You have the option," and the woman opts for separation in clear words, it will amount to one reversible divorce according to the Ḥanifites even if the husband had the intention of giving option for three divorces. However, if the husband has clearly given option for three divorces, the three divorces will take place only on the woman's

exercise of the option for divorce. According to Imām Shāfe'ī, if at the time of giving the option, the husband had the intention of divorce, and the woman opts for separation, it will amount to one reversible divorce. According to Imām Mālik, it will amount to three divorces in case the wife had been enjoyed; in case she had not been enjoyed, the husband's claim to have intended only one divorce will be admitted.

(c) In case the words "You are divorced if you so please" have been used and the woman has opted for divorce, it will be a reversible divorce and not an irreversible one.

(7) If after the husband has given the option for separation, the woman chooses to remain in wedlock, no divorce will take place at all. This is the opinion of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Abū ad-Dardā, Ibn 'Abbās and Ibn 'Umar, and the same has been adopted by majority of the jurists. When Masrūq asked Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah about this, she replied: "The Holy Prophet had given his wives the option and they chose to continue to live as his wives. Then, was it deemed to be a divorce?" The opinion of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Zaid bin Thābit that has been reported in this regard is that one reversible divorce will take place. But accoring to another tradition these two great Companions also held the opinion that no divorce will take place at all.

43. This does not mean that there was, God forbid, any chance of the Holy Prophet's wives committing an indecency, but this was meant to make them realize that they were the mothers of the Muslims; therefore, their responsibilities were accordingly very high, and so their moral conduct should be the purest. This is just like Allah's addressing the Holy Prophet to the effect: "If you committed *shirk*, all your works would be rendered vain." (Az-Zumar: 65). This also does not mean that there was, God forbid, any chance of the Holy Prophet's committing *shirk*, but this is meant to make the Holy Prophet realize, and through him the common Muslims, that *shirk* is a most heinous crime which must be guarded against most judiciously.

44. That is, "You should not be under the delusion that your being the Prophet's wives will protect you from Allah's punishment, or that it will be difficult for Allah to call you to account on account of your high rank and position in the world."

45. The reason for giving a double punishment for a sin and a double reward for a good work is that those whom Allah honours with a high rank in society generally become the leaders of men and the majority of the people follow them for good or for evil. Thus, their evil does not remain their own evil but becomes the cause of a people's degeneration, and their goodness does not remain

their own goodness but becomes the cause of the true success of many other people also. Therefore, when they commit evil they are punished for their own as well as for others degeneration, and when they do good they are not only rewarded for their own good works but also for this that they guided others also to do good.

This verse also gives the principle that the greater the degree of prohibition and trust in respect of somebody and something the greater and more serious will be the crime of violating that prohibition and trust and the greater will be the punishment for it. For example, drinking in the mosque is a much more serious crime than drinking privately in the house, and therefore, it will entail a severer punishment. Likewise, committing adultery with the prohibited relations is a far more serious crime than committing it with another woman, and therefore, will call for a severer punishment.

46. The verses from here to the end of the paragraph are those with which the Commandments of Purdah were introduced in Islam. In these verses though the wives of the Holy Prophet only have been addressed, the intention is to enforce reforms in all the Muslim houses. The object of addressing the Holy Prophet's wives particularly is that when a pure way of life will start from his house, it will be followed by the women of all other Muslim houses as well, because this house was looked upon by the Muslims as a model to follow. Some people, when they see that these verses have been addressed only to the wives of the Holy Prophet, assert that these Commandments were only meant for them. But when one reads what follows in these verses one feels that there is nothing which might have been meant particularly for the holy wives and not for the other Muslim women. Could Allah have intended only this that the holy wives alone should be free from uncleanliness and they alone should obey Allah and His Prophet and they alone should offer the *Salāt* and pay the *Zakāt*? If this could not be the intention, then how could the Command for them to stay in their houses and avoid displaying the fineries and abstain from talking to the other men in an alluring voice be meant particularly for them to the exclusion of all other Muslim women? Is there any rational proof on the basis of which some Commands in one and the same context and series be regarded as general and some others as particular and special?

As for the sentence, "You are not like the other women," it also does not mean that the other women should come out in full make-up and should talk to the other men coquettishly and flirt with them, but "as for you, you should not adopt such a conduct." The style, to the contrary, is such as if a gentleman would tell his child, "You are not like the common children of the street: you should not use abusive language." From this no sensible person would ever conclude that the

speaker regarded only his own child using abusive language as bad; as for others he would not mind if they used abusive language.

47. That is, "There is no harm if the other man is spoken to in case of a genuine need, but on such an occasion the woman's tone and manner of speech should be such as does not let the other man think that he could cherish any false hope from her. There should be no undue softness in her tone, no allurement in her conversation, no consciously affected mellowness in her voice, which should excite the male hearer's emotions and encourage him to make advances.

About such a manner of speech Allah clearly says that this does not behove a woman who has any fear of God in her heart and desire to avoid evil. In other words, this is the way and manner of the wicked and unchaste woman's speech and not of the believing pious woman's speech. If this verse is read together with verse 31 of Sūrah An-Nūr, in which Allah says: "They should not stamp the ground in walking lest their hidden decoration is revealed," the intention of the Lord clearly seems to be that the women should not attract other men by their voice or the jingle of their ornaments unnecessarily and if at all they have to speak to the other men, they should speak to them in an un-affected tone and manner. That is why it is forbidden for the woman to pronounce the call to the Prayer. Moreover, if a woman is attending a congregational Prayer and the Imām commits a mistake, she is not permitted to say *Subhan-Allah* like the males but should only tap her hands to call the Imām's attention to the error.

Now just consider this: When Islam disallows the woman to talk to other men in a soft and sweet tone and even forbids her to produce her voice before the other men without a genuine need, will it approve her to appear on the stage and sing, dance, flirt and behave, coquettishly? Will it permit her to sing love songs over the radio and excite the people's emotions by presenting sweet melodies full of obscene themes? Will it permit that she should play the roles of the wives and sweet-hearts of others in dramas? Or that the women should be made the air-hostesses and be especially trained to charm and allure the passengers? Or that they should visit clubs and attend social functions and gatherings in full make-up and mix freely with men and have fun and a good time with them ? From which Qur'ān has this culture been derived? For the Qur'ān that was sent down by God there is to be found no hint as to the admissibility of this sort of culture.

48. The word *qarna* in the original is derived from *qarar* according to some lexicographers and from *waqār* according to others. In the first sense, it will mean: "Settle down, stick firmly;" and in the second sense: "Live peacefully, sit with dignity." In both the cases the verse means to impress that the woman's real sphere of activity is her home; she should carry out her functions within that sphere peacefully, and she should come out of the house only in case of a genuine

need. This meaning is clear from the words of the verse itself and the Holy Prophet's *Aḥadīth* also impress it even more forcefully. Ḥāfiz Abū Bakr Bazzār has related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Anas that the women made a submission to the Holy Prophet, saying: "All kinds of virtues have been secured by the men: they fight and accomplish great deeds in the way of Allah. What should we do that we may also get a reward equal to that of the warriors?" The Holy Prophet replied: "The one who sits in her house from among you, will attain the reward of the warriors." What he meant was : The warrior can fight confidently and with full peace of the mind in the way of Allah only when he is sure that all is well at home: his wife is there to look after the house and the children, and there is no cause for him to worry that she will betray him in his absence. The woman who will provide him this satisfaction and peace of the mind will be an equal partner with him in his fighting though she will be sitting back at home. According to another tradition that Bazzār and Tirmidhī have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, the Holy Prophet said: "The woman must remain veiled and concealed. When she comes out of her house, Satan stares at her. And she is closer to Allah's mercy when she is inside her house." (For further details, see E.N. 49 of Sūrah An-Nūr).

In the presence of such a clear and express command of the Qur'ān, it is not at all permissible that the Muslim women should seek membership of the councils and parliaments; that they should run after social activities outside the house; that they should work side by side with men in the government offices, should get education along with boys in the colleges, serve as nurses in the male wards of hospitals, should be employed as hostesses in the aeroplanes and rail cars, and should be sent abroad for education and training. The greatest argument that is given in support of the permissibility of the women's outdoor activities is that Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah had taken part in the Battle of the Camel. But the people who present this argument perhaps do not know what was Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah's own opinion in this regard. 'Abdullah bin Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal has related in his *Zawā'id az-Zuhd* and Ibn Mundhir, Ibn Abī Shaibah and Ibn Sa'd in their own books the tradition from Masrūq, saying that when Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah during her recitation of the Qur'ān would reach this verse *(wa qarna fī buyūt-i kunna)*, she would start crying involuntarily; so much so that her head-wrapper would become wet, for this reminded her of the error that she had committed in the Battle of the Camel.

49. In this verse two important words have been used, which must be understood for the proper understanding of its intention. They are *tabarruj* and *jahiliyyat al-ūlā*.

The word *tabarruj* in Arabic means to become manifest and appear openly before others. The Arabs use the word *barāj* for every conspicuous and elevated object. A *burj* (tower) is so called because of its prominence and elevation. A

sailing-boat is called *bārijah*, because its sails become visible from a distance. The word *tabarruj* when used in respect of a woman will have three meanings: (1) that she should show the charms of her face and body before the people; (2) that she should display the adornments of her dress and ornaments before others; and (3) that she should make herself conspicuous by her gait and figure and coquetry. The same explanation of this word has been given by the leading lexicographers and commentators. Mujāhid, Qatādah and Ibn Abī Nujaiḥ say: "*Tabarruj* means to walk in a vain, alluring and coquettish manner." Muqātil says: "It means a woman's displaying of her necklaces, ear-rings and bosom." Al-Mubarrad says: "That a woman should reveal her adornments which she should conceal." Abū 'Ubaidah comments: "This that a woman should make herself conspicuous by display of her body and dress to attract the attention of men."

The word *jāhiliyyat* has been used at three other places in the Qurān besides this, in Āl-i 'Imrān: 154, where about those who shirk fighting in the way of Allah, it has been said: "They began to cherish about Allah thoughts of Ignorance *(jāhiliyyat)* which were void of the truth," and in Al-Mā'idah: 50, where about those who want to be judged by their own law instead of the law of Allah, it has been said: "Do they desire to be judged by the laws of ignorance *(jāhiliyyat)?"* and in Al-Fatḥ: 26, where the prejudice of the people of Makkah due to which they did not permit the Muslims to perform 'Umrah, has been called as "the haughty spirit of paganism *(jāhiliyyat)."* According to a *Ḥadīth* once Ḥaḍrat Abū ad-Dardā' in the heat of a quarrel abused another person in respect of his mother. When the Holy Prophet heard of it, he remarked: "You still have *jāhiliyyat* in you." According to another *Ḥadīth* the Holy Prophet said: "Three things show *jāhiliyyat* to taunt the lineage of another person, to take omens from the movement of the stars, and to mourn over the dead." All these customs show that *jāhiliyyat* in the Islamic terminology is every such conduct which goes against Islamic culture and civilization and Islamic morality and etiquette and Islamic way of thinking and behaviour. Thus, *jāhiliyyat al-ūlā* would mean all those evils in which the Arabs of the pre-Islamic days and the people of the entire world were involved.

This explanation makes it abundantly clear that what Allah forbids women is to move out of their houses showing off their physical charms and beauty. He instructs them to stay in their houses because their real sphere of activity is their home and not the world outside. However, if they have to move out of the house for an out-door duty, they should not move out as the women used to do in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance. For it does not behove the women of a Muslim society to walk out fully embellished to make their face and figure conspicuous by adornments and tight-fitting or transparent dresses, and to walk coquettishly. These are the ways of ignorance which Islam does not approve. Now everybody

can see for himself whether the culture which is being made popular in our country is the culture of Islam, according to the Qur'ān, or the culture of ignorance.

50. The context in which this verse occurs makes it manifest that the word *ahl al-bait* (people of the house) here implies the wives of the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace), because the address begins with: "O wives of the Prophet," and they are the addressees in the whole discourse preceding it as well as following it. Moreover, the word *ahl al-bait* in Arabic is used precisely in the sense in which the word "household" is used in English, which includes both a man's wife and children. No one would exclude the wife from the "household." The Qur'ān itself has used this word at two other places besides this, and at both the wife is included in its sense, rather as the most important member of the family. In Sūrah Hūd, when the angels give the Prophet Abraham the good news of the birth of a son, his wife exclaims: "Shall I bear a child now when I have grown too old, and this husband of mine has also become old?" The angels say: "What! Are you surprised at Allah's decree, O people of Abraham's household? Allah's mercy and blessings are upon you." In Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ, when the Prophet Moses reaches the Pharaoh's house as a suckling, and the Pharaoh's wife is in search of a suitable nurse for the child, the Prophet Moses' sister says, "Shall I tell you of a household whose people will bring him up for you and look after him well?" Thus, the Arabic idiom and the usage of the Qur'ān and the context of this verse, all point clearly to the fact that the Holy Prophet's wives as well as his children are included in his *ahl al-bait;* rather the more correct thing is that the verse is actually addressed to the wives and the children become included in the household only because of the sense of the word. That is why according to Ibn 'Abbās and 'Urwah bin Zubair and 'Ikrimah, the word *ahl al-bait* in this verse implies the wives of the Holy Prophet.

But if somebody says that the word *ahl al-bait* has been used only for the wives and none else can be included in it, it will also be wrong. Not only this that the word "household" includes all the members of a man's family, but the Holy Prophet has himself explained that this includes even himself. According to Ibn Abī Ḥātim, once when Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah was asked about Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, she said, "Do you ask me about the person who was among the most loved ones of the Holy Prophet and whose wife was the Holy Prophet's daughter and most beloved to him?" Then she related the event when the Holy Prophet had called Ḥaḍrat 'Ali and Fāṭimah and Ḥasan and Ḥusain (may Allah be pleased with them all) and covered them all with a sheet of cloth and prayed: "O Allah, these are my household, remove uncleanness from them and make them pure." Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says, "I said: I also am included among your household (i.e. I may also be covered under the sheet and prayed for)." Thereupon the Holy Prophet replied:

"You stay out, you, of course, are already included." A great many Aḥādīth bearing on this subject have been related by traditionists like Muslim, Tirmidhī, Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr, Ḥākim, Baihaqī, etc. on the authority of Abū Sa'īd Khudrī, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Anas, Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah, Ḥaḍrat Wāthilah bin Aqṣa' and some other Companions, which show that the Holy Prophet declared Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Fāṭimah and their two sons as his *ahl al-bait*. Therefore, the view of those who exclude them from the *ahl al-bait* is not correct.

Similarly the view of those people also is not correct, who, on the basis of the above-cited *Aḥādīth*, regard the wives of the Holy Prophet as excluded from his *ahl al-bait*. In the first place, anything which has been clearly stated in the Qurān cannot be contradicted on the basis of a *Ḥadīth*. Secondly, these *Aḥādīth* also do not have the meaning that is put on them. As related in some traditions that the Holy Prophet did not cover Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah and Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah under the sheet of cloth which he put on the four members of his family, does not mean that he had excluded those ladies from his "household." But it means that the wives were already included in *ahl al-bait*, because the Qur'ān, in fact, had addressed them as *ahl al-bait*. The Holy Prophet, however, thought that the apparent words of the Qur'ān might cause somebody the misunderstanding about these members that they were excluded from the *ahl al-bait*. Therefore, he felt the need for clarification in their case and not in the case of his wives.

A section of the people have not only misconstrued this verse to the extent that they have made the word *ahl al-bait* exclusively applicable to Hadrat 'Ali and Fāṭimah and their children to the exclusion of the holy wives, but have gone even further and concluded wrongly from its words "Allah only intends to remove uncleanliness from you and purify you completely", that Ḥaḍrat 'Ali and Fāṭimah and their children are infallable like the Prophets of Allah. They say that "uncleanliness" implies error and sin, and, as Allah says, these *ahl al-bait* have been purified of this, whereas the words of the verse do not say that uncleanliness has been removed from them and they have been purified. But the words are to the effect: "Allah intends to remove uncleanliness from you and purify you completely." The context also does not tell that the object here is to mention the virtues and excellences of the Holy Prophet's household. On the contrary, they have been advised here what they should do and what they should not, because Allah intends to purify them. In other words, they have been told that if they adopted such and such an attitude and way of life, they will be blessed with cleanliness, otherwise not. However, if the words "Allah intends to remove uncleanliness from you . . ." are taken to mean that Allah has made them infallable, there is no reason why all the Muslims who perform their ablutions before offering the Prayer are not held as infallable, because about them also

Allah says: "But Allah wills to purify you and complete His blessings upon you." (Al-Mā'idah: 6)

51. The word *wadhkurna* in the original has two meanings: Remember and mention. According to the first meaning the verse would mean: "O wives of the Prophet, you should never forget that yours is the house from where the world is being instructed in Divine Revelations and Wisdom; therefore, your responsibility is very great. Let it not happen that the people might see specimens of ignorance in this very house." According to the second meaning, it would mean: "O wives of the Prophet, you should mention and relate before the people whatever you hear and see, for by virtue of your close and constant social association and attachment with the Prophet you will know and experience many such things which the other people will not be able to know by any other means than you."

Two things have been mentioned in this verse: (1) The Revelations of Allah; and (2) the wise sayings. The revelations of Allah are the verses of Allah's Book, but *ḥikmat* (wisdom) is a comprehensive word which includes all those wise things which the Holy Prophet taught the people. This word may also imply the teachings of the Book of Allah, but there is no reason why it should be made exclusively applicable to them. It inevitably includes the wisdom that the Holy Prophet taught by his pure character and by his sayings besides reciting the verses of the Qur'ān. Some people, only on the basis that the word *mā yutlā* (that which is recited) has been used in the verse, make the assertion that the "Revelations of Allah" and "Wisdom" imply only the Qur'ān, for the word "recitation" as a term is specifically used for the recitation of the Qur'ān. But this reasoning is absolutely wrong. The use of the word "recitation" specifically as a term for the recitation of the Qur'ān or the Book of Allah is the work of the people of the later ages. The Qur'ān has not used this word as a term. In Sūrah Al-Baqarah: 102, this same word has been used for the incantation of the magical formulas which the satans falsely attributed to the Prophet Solomon and taught the people. ("They followed that which the satans recited attributing it to the kingdom of Solomon.") This shows that the Qur'ān uses this word in its lexical meaning, and does not specify it for reciting the verses of the Book of Allah.

52. "Knower of everything": Knower of even the most secret and hidden things.

53. Presentation of this theme immediately after the foregoing paragraph contains a subtle allusion to the fact that the instructions given above to the Holy Prophet's wives are not exclusively meant for them but the Muslim society as a whole should reform itself in accordance with them.

54. "Who have surrendered themselves to Allah": Who have accepted Islam as a code of life for themselves, and have decided to follow it in their lives, and who have no wish to resist the Islamic way of life and thought, but have adopted the way of obedience and submission to it.

55. "Who are believing": Whose obedience is not merely outward nor unwilling but who sincerely regard the guidance given by Islam as based on the truth whose faith is that the way shown by the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is the only right and straight way in following which alone lies their true success. That which has been declared as wrong by Allah and His Prophet is certainly wrong even according to their judgement and that which has been declared as right by Allah and His Prophet is certainly right even according to their thinking and sense. Psychologically and intellectually also they do not regard as improper any injunction that has been enjoined by the Qur'ān and *Sunnah*, and do not remain on the lookout to change it somehow to suit their own desire or mould it according to the current trends of the world, avoiding at the same time the blame that they have effected a change in the Command given by Allah and His Prophet. The Holy Prophet has described the true state of faith in a *Ḥadīth* in these words:

"He who reconciled himself to Allah as his Lord and to Islam as his Way of Life and to Muhammad as his Messenger, has the true taste of Faith." (Muslim)

In another *Ḥadīth*, he has explained it thus:

"None of you becomes a believer until the desires of his self become subordinate to what I have brought." *(Sharh as-Sunnah)*

56. That is, "They do not rest content with mere belief but are obedient practically also. They are not the sort of the people who would honestly believe that what Allah and His Messenger have commanded was true but would violate it in practice: that they would sincerely regard what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden as bad but would go on following the same in practical life."

57. That is, "They are truthful in their speech and honest in their dealings. They do not deal in lies, deceptions, frauds and forgeries. They utter with their tongues only what their conscience approves as true. They practise and perform only what they honestly find to be in accordance with righteousness and truth, and they are honest in all their dealings with others."

58. That is, "They patiently and steadfastly bear and face all the obstacles, dangers, difficulties and losses that they might have to encounter in following the right way taught by Allah and His Messenger and in establishing

Allah's Religion in the world; no fear and no temptation and no lust of the self can succeed in diverting them from the right way."

59. That is, "They are free from pride, vanity and haughtiness: they have full understanding of the reality that they are servants and they have no other position than that of servitude. Therefore, their hearts as well as their bodies remain bowed before Allah, dominated by fear of Him. They never display the attitude which is the hall-mark of the lives of those who are fearless of God and are involved in arrogance." From the sequence it appears that the mention of *Khushū'* (expression of humility) in particular along with the general attitude of the fear of God implies the Prayer, for the mention of the practice of charity and fast has been made just after it.

60. This does not only imply payment of the obligatory *Zakāt*, but it also includes general charity. It means to say that they spend their wealth freely in the way of Allah and they are not at all niggardly in the matter of helping the servants of Allah as much as they can. No orphan and no sick or afflicted person, no weak or disabled person, no poor and needy one remains deprived of their support in their dwelling; and if there arises the need for monetary help for promoting the cause of Allah's Religion, they are never miserly in expending their wealth for that purpose.

61. This includes both the obligarory and the voluntary fasts.

62. This has two meanings: (1) They refrain from adultery; and (2) they avoid nudity. One should also note that nudity does not only mean being naked but it is also nudity to put on a thin dress which shows the body, or is so tight-fitting that it reveals all the outlines of the body.

63. "Remember Allah much" means that one should mention Allah's name in one way or other at all times in every business of life. Man cannot develop such a state of the mind unless the thought of God becomes deeply embedded in his heart. When this idea has passed beyond his conscious mind and settled deep in his subconscious and unconscious mind, then only he will remember and mention God's name in whatever he does and in whatever he says. He will begin with bismillah when he eats and say *al-ḥamdu lillah* when he finishes; he will remember Allah when he goes to bed, and mention Allah's name when he gets up. In his conversation also he will again and again pronounce *bismillah, al-ḥamdu-lillah, inshā-Allah, mā shā Allah*, etc. and ask for Allah's help in every matter, and thank Him for every blessing. He will seek His mercy in every affliction, and turn to Him in every trouble. He will fear Him on encountering every evil, and ask for His forgiveness when he happens to have committed an error and will pray to Him for fulfilment of every need. In short, in every state and in every business of life his function will be to remember Allah.

This, in fact, is the essence of the Islamic life. For all other acts of worship there is a prescribed time when they are performed, and one is free when one has performed them. But this is the worship which has no special time; it has to be performed constantly so that it links up the man's life with Allah and His service permanently. The other worships and religious acts themselves also become meaningful only when the heart of man remains inclined to Allah not only at the time when the act is actually being carried out but at all times when the tongue is uttering Allah's name constantly. In such a state as this worship and religious acts develop and flourish in a man's life precisely in the same manner as a plant grows in a congenial climate and environment. Contrary to this, the example of the religious services and worships which are carried out only on special times and occasions in the life which is devoid of this constant remembrance of Allah is of the plant which has been planted in an un-congenial climate, and which is growing only due to the special attention and care of the gardener. This very thing has been explained by the Holy Prophet in a *Ḥadīth*, thus:

"Mu'ādh bin Anas Juhanī relates that a person asked the Holy Prophet of Allah, who among those who fight in the way of Allah will get the highest reward? He replied: The one who remembers Allah the most. The man asked: Who among the observers of the fast will get the highest reward? He replied: The one who remembers Allah the most. The man then asked the same question about the offerer of the Prayer, the payer of the *Zakāt* and charities and the performer of *Ḥajj*, and the Holy Prophet in every case gave the same answer, saying: He who remembers Allah the most." (Musnad Aḥmad)

64. This verse plainly tells what qualities and characteristics are of real worth in the sight of Allah. These are the basic values of Islam which have been compressed into one sentence. As regards these, there is no difference between the man and woman. However, as for their life-activity, the two sexes have separate spheres to function. The males have to function in some particular spheres and the females in some others. But if they possess these qualities and characteristics equally, Allah will raise them to equal ranks and bless them with equal rewards. It will in no way affect their rank and reward if one carried out household chores and the other performed the duties of caliphate and enforced the *Sharī'ah* injunctions; one reared children in the house and the other went to the battlefield and fought for the sake of Allah and His religion.

65. From here begin the verses which were sent down in connection with the Holy Prophet's marriage with Ḥaḍrat Zainab.

66. Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah, 'Ikrimah and Muqātil bin Ḥayyān say that this verse was sent down at the time when the Holy Prophet proposed Ḥaḍrat Zainab for Ḥaḍrat Zaid, and Zainab and her relatives did not agree. According to Ibn

'Abbās, when the Holy Prophet made the proposal, Ḥaḍrat Zainab said, "I am better than him in lineage." Ibn Sa'd says that she also said, "I do not approve him for myself. I am a Quraishite by birth." The same sort of disapproval was expressed by her brother, 'Abdullah bin Jahsh, because Ḥaḍrat Zaid was a freed slave of the Holy Prophet and Hadrat Zainab was the daughter of his paternal aunt, Umaimah bint 'Abdul Muṭṭalib. They did not like the Holy Prophet to propose a girl of a noble Quraishite family, who was none other than his own first cousin, for his freed slave. At this, this verse was sent down and on hearing it Hadrat Zainab and all her relatives yielded to the proposal at once. Then the Holy Prophet married them, paid ten dīnārs and 60 dirhams from his own pocket as dower on behalf of Zaid, provided the bridal dress and sent some articles of food for domestic use.

Though this verse was sent down on a special occasion, the injunction given in it is the cardinal principle of the constitutional law of Islam, and it applies to the entire Islamic system of life. According to it no Muslim individual or nation, or institution, or court or parliament or state, is entitled to use its own freedom of opinion in a matter in which Allah and His Prophet have already given a decision. To be a Muslim means to surrender one's freedom of opinion and action before Allah and His Messenger. It would be a contradiction in terms if a person or a nation claimed to be Muslim and then reserved for itself the freedom of choice and action. No sensible person can think of combining the two contradictory attitudes together. The one who desires to remain a Muslim will inevitably have to bow down to the Command of Allah and His Prophet, and the one who is not inclined to bow will have to admit that he is not a Muslim. If he does not admit he will be regarded as a hypocrite both by God and by the people even though he might proclaim to be a Muslim at the top of his voice.

67. The discourse from here to verse 48 was sent down after the Holy Prophet had married Ḥaḍrat Zainab, and the hypocrites, the Jews and the *mushriks* had started a relentless propaganda campaign against him. While studying these verses one should bear in mind the fact that this Divine discourse was not meant for the instruction of the enemies who were engaged in a wilful campaign of vilification and slander and falsehood to defame the Holy Prophet intentionally and to satisfy their rancour. But its real object was to protect the Muslims against the influence of their campaign and to safeguard them against doubts and suspicions. Evidently, the Word of Allah could not satisfy the unbelievers. It could give peace of mind only to those who knew and believed it to be Allah's Word. There was a danger that those righteous people also might be confused and influenced by the objections that were being raised by their enemies. Therefore, on the one hand, Allah removed all possible doubts from their minds, and on the other, taught the

Muslims as well as the Holy Prophet himself how they should conduct themselves under the circumstances.

68. It refers to Ḥaḍrat Zaid as has been mentioned clearly below. In order to understand how Allah had favoured him and how the Holy Prophet, it is necessary here to relate his story briefly. He was the son of Ḥārithah bin Shurahbil, a person of the Kalb tribe, and his mother, Su'dā bint Tha'labah, was from the Banī Ma'n, a branch of the Tay tribe. When he was eight years old, she took him along to her parents. There the people of Banī Qain bin Jasr raided their camp, plundered their goods and took some men prisoners, Ḥaḍrat Zaid included. Then they sold Zaid at the fair of 'Ukāz near Tā'if. His buyer was Ḥākim bin Ḥizām, a nephew of Ḥaḍrat Khadījah. Hākim brought him to Makkah and presented him to his paternal aunt. When the Holy Prophet married Ḥaḍrat Khadījah he found Zaid in her service and was so impressed by his good manners and conduct that he asked him of her. Thus, this fortunate boy entered the service of the best of men, whom Allah, after a few years, was going to appoint a Prophet. Ḥaḍrat Zaid at that time was 15 years old. Afterwards when his father and uncle came to know that their child was at Makkah, they came to the Holy Prophet and requested him to return him in exchange for ransom. The Holy Prophet said, "I shall call the boy and leave it to him whether he would like to go with you or stay with me. If he chose to go, I would take no ransom but would let him go with you. However, if he chose to stay back, I am not the one who would turn out a person who would like to stay with me." They said, "This is perfectly right and just. Please ask the boy." The Holy Prophet called Zaid and asked him, "Do you know these two gentlemen?" He said, "Yes sir, this is my father and this my uncle." The Holy Prophet then said, "Well, you know them as well as me. You have the choice to go with them, or stay with me if you so desire." He said, "I have no wish to leave you and go with anyone else." His father and uncle said, "Zaid, will you prefer slavery to freedom, and choose to stay with others in preference to your parents and family?" He replied, "After what I have seen of this person I cannot now prefer anything else of the world to him." Hearing the reply the father and uncle of Zaid were reconciled to his remaining with the Holy Prophet. The Holy Prophet set Zaid free immediately and proclaimed before a gathering of the Quraish in the Ka'bah, "Bear witness that hence-forth Zaid is my son: he will receive inheritance from me and I from him." Thereafter, he began to be called Zaid bin Muhammad by the people. All this happened before the Holy Prophet's advent as a Prophet. Then, when he was blessed with Prophethood by Allah, there were four persons who accepted his claim to it without a moment's hesitation as soon as they heard of it from him. They were Hadrat Khadijah, Hadrat Zaid, Hadrat 'Ali and Hadrat Abū Bakr. Hadrat Zaid was 30 years old then, and had already spent 15 years in the Holy Prophet's service. In the fourth year after Hijrah, the Holy Prophet married him to his first cousin Hadrat Zainab.

[Contd. on p. 112

الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ حَرَجٌ فِيْٓ اَزْوَاجِ اَدْعِيَآئِهِمْ اِذَا قَضَوْا مِنْهُنَّ وَطَرًا ۭ وَكَانَ اَمْرُ
اللّٰهِ مَفْعُوْلًا ۝ مَا كَانَ عَلَي النَّبِيِّ مِنْ حَرَجٍ فِيْمَا فَرَضَ اللّٰهُ لَهٗ ۭ سُنَّةَ اللّٰهِ
فِي الَّذِيْنَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۭ وَكَانَ اَمْرُ اللّٰهِ قَدَرًا مَّقْدُوْرَۨا ۝ الَّذِيْنَ يُبَلِّغُوْنَ
رِسٰلٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَيَخْشَوْنَهٗ وَلَا يَخْشَوْنَ اَحَدًا اِلَّا اللّٰهَ ۭ وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ حَسِيْبًا ۝
مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ اَبَآ اَحَدٍ مِّنْ رِّجَالِكُمْ وَلٰكِنْ رَّسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيّٖنَ ۭ وَ
كَانَ اللّٰهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمًا ۝ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللّٰهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيْرًا ۝
وَّسَبِّحُوْهُ بُكْرَةً وَّاَصِيْلًا ۝ هُوَ الَّذِيْ يُصَلِّيْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَمَلٰۗىِٕكَتُهٗ لِيُخْرِجَكُمْ مِّنَ
الظُّلُمٰتِ اِلَى النُّوْرِ ۭ وَكَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ رَحِيْمًا ۝ تَحِيَّتُهُمْ يَوْمَ يَلْقَوْنَهٗ سَلٰمٌ ۚ
وَاَعَدَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَرِيْمًا ۝ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اِنَّآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ شَاهِدًا وَّمُبَشِّرًا وَّ
نَذِيْرًا ۝ وَّدَاعِيًا اِلَى اللّٰهِ بِاِذْنِهٖ وَسِرَاجًا مُّنِيْرًا ۝ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ بِاَنَّ
لَهُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ فَضْلًا كَبِيْرًا ۝ وَلَا تُطِعِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ وَالْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ وَدَعْ اَذٰىهُمْ
وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَي اللّٰهِ ۭ وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ وَكِيْلًا ۝ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِذَا نَكَحْتُمُ
الْمُؤْمِنٰتِ ثُمَّ طَلَّقْتُمُوْهُنَّ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ تَمَسُّوْهُنَّ فَمَا لَكُمْ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ عِدَّةٍ
تَعْتَدُّوْنَهَا ۚ فَمَتِّعُوْهُنَّ وَسَرِّحُوْهُنَّ سَرَاحًا جَمِيْلًا ۝ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اِنَّآ اَحْلَلْنَا
لَكَ اَزْوَاجَكَ الّٰتِيْٓ اٰتَيْتَ اُجُوْرَهُنَّ وَمَا مَلَكَتْ يَمِيْنُكَ مِمَّآ اَفَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْكَ وَ
بَنٰتِ عَمِّكَ وَبَنٰتِ عَمّٰتِكَ وَبَنٰتِ خَالِكَ وَبَنٰتِ خٰلٰتِكَ الّٰتِيْ هَاجَرْنَ مَعَكَ ۡ
وَامْرَاَةً مُّؤْمِنَةً اِنْ وَّهَبَتْ نَفْسَهَا لِلنَّبِيِّ اِنْ اَرَادَ النَّبِيُّ اَنْ يَّسْتَنْكِحَهَا ۡ
خَالِصَةً لَّكَ مِنْ دُوْنِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۭ قَدْ عَلِمْنَا مَا فَرَضْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ فِيْٓ اَزْوَاجِهِمْ
وَمَا مَلَكَتْ اَيْمَانُهُمْ لِكَيْلَا يَكُوْنَ عَلَيْكَ حَرَجٌ ۭ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ۝

There is no harm for the Prophet to do a thing which Allah has ordained for him.[74] The same has been the Way of Allah with regard to all the Prophets who have gone before, and Allah's Command is an absolutely settled decree.[75] (This is the Way of Allah for those) who convey His messages, who fear Him alone and fear none but One God: Allah is enough to take account.[76] 38-39

(O people) Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets and Allah is the Knower of everything.[77] 40

O you who have believed, remember Allah much and glorify Him morning and evening.[78] He it is Who blesses you, and His angels pray for His blessings for you, so that He may bring you out of darkness into light: He is very Kind to the believers.[79] Their salutation on the day they meet Him will be "Peace",[80] and Allah has prepared for them an honourable reward. 41-44

O Prophet,[81] We have sent you as a witness,[82] a bearer of good news and a warner,[83] an inviter to Allah by His leave[84] and a luminous lamp. Give good news to those who have believed (in you) that there are great bounties in store for them from Allah, so do not yield to the disbelievers and the hypocrites, disregard their persecution and put your trust in Allah: for Allah is sufficient for being entrusted with all one's affairs. 45-48

O you who have believed, when you marry the believing women, and then divorce them before you have touched them,[85] they do not have to fulfil a waiting term, whose completion you may demand of them; so provide them with something and send them off gracefully.[86] 49

O Prophet, We have made lawful to you those of your wives, whose dowers you have paid,[87] and those women who come into your possession out of the slavegirls granted by Allah, and the daughters of your paternal uncles and aunts, and of your maternal uncles and aunts, who have migrated with you, and the believing woman who gives herself to the Prophet if the Prophet may desire to marry her.[88] This privilege is for you only, not for the other believers.[89] We know what restrictions We have imposed on the other believers concerning their 50

wives and slavegirls. (You have been made an exception) so that there may be no hindrance to you;[90] and Allah is AllForgiving, AllMerciful.

Contd. from p. 109]

paid her dower on his behalf and provided them with necessary articles for setting up the house.

This is to what Allah has alluded in the verse, saying: "Whom Allah as well as you had favoured."

69. These words were said when the relations between Ḥaḍrat Zaid and Ḥaḍrat Zainab had become very strained, and after making repeated complaints Ḥaḍrat Zaid had finally told the Holy Prophet that he intended to divorce her. Although Ḥaḍrat Zainab had accepted to be married to him in obedience to Allah and His Messenger's command, she could not overcome her feeling that Zaid was a freed slave, who had been brought up by her own family, and she in spite of being the daughter of a noble Arab family, had been wedded to him. Due to this feeling she could never regard Ḥaḍrat Zaid as her equal in matrimonial life, and this caused more and more bitterness between them. Thus after a little more than a year the marriage ended in divorce.

70. Some people have misconstrued this sentence to mean this: The Holy Prophet desired to marry Ḥaḍrat Zainab and wanted that Zaid should divorce her. But when Zaid came to the Holy Prophet and said that he wanted to divorce his wife, the Holy Prophet stopped him from this only half-heartedly. At this Allah said: "You were keeping hidden in your heart that which Allah intended to reveal." The real meaning, however, is contrary to this. If this the sentence is read with verses 1, 2, 3 and 7 of this Sūrah, one can clearly see that in the very days when bitterness was increasing between Ḥaḍrat Zaid and his wife, Allah had hinted to His Prophet that when Zaid had divorced his wife, he would have to marry the divorced lady. But since the Holy Prophet knew what it meant to marry the divorced wife of the adopted son in the contemporary Arab society, and that too at a time when apart from a handful of the Muslims the entire country had become jealous of him, he was hesitant to take any step in that direction. That is why when Ḥaḍrat Zaid expressed his intention to divorce his wife, the Holy Prophet said to him, "Fear Allah and do not divorce your wife." What he meant by this was that Zaid should not divorce his wife so that he was saved from facing the trial, otherwise in case the divorce was pronounced he would have to comply with the command, and thus provoke a severe storm of criticism and vilification against himself. But when the Holy Prophet deliberately forbade Zaid to divorce his wife so that he himself might be saved from what he feared would cause him defamation, Allah found this below the high position that He wanted His Prophet

to enjoy, whereas Allah intended to effect a great reform through this marriage of the Prophet. The words "You were fearing the people, whereas Allah has a greater right that you should fear Him," clearly point to the same theme.

The same explanation of this verse has been given by Imām Zain-ul-'Ābedīn Ḥadrat 'Ali bin Hussain (may Allah be pleased with him). He says, "Allah had indicated to His Prophet that Zainab would be included among his wives. But when Zaid complained about her to him, the Holy Prophet admonished him to fear Allah and keep his wife. At this Allah said to His Prophet, 'I had informed you that I would marry you to Zainab. But when you were forbidding Zaid to divorce his wife, you were hiding that which Allah was going to reveal'." (Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Kathīr on the authority of Ibn Abī Ḥātim).

'Allāma Ālūsī also in his *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī* has given the same meaning of it. He says, "This is an expression of displeasure on abandoning the better course, which was that the Holy Prophet should have kept quiet, or should have told Zaid to do as he liked. The displeasure amounted to this: 'Why did you tell Zaid to keep his wife, whereas I had informed you beforehand that Zainab would be included among your wives?'"

71. That is, Zaid divorced his wife and her waiting-period came to an end. The words "fulfilled his desire of her" by themselves give the meaning that Zaid was left with no desire attached to her. And this state of affairs does not appear on mere pronouncement of the divorce, because even during the waiting-period the husband can take his wife back if he has any interest in her; and the husband also has this desire left with the divorced wife that it should become known whether she is pregnant or not. Therefore, the desire of her former husband with the divorced wife comes to an end only on the expiry of the waiting-period.

72. These words are explicit that the Holy Prophet had married Hadrat Zainab not because of any personal desire but under the Command of Allah.

73. These words clearly indicate that Allah accomplished this social reform through the Holy Prophet to effect a great change which could not be enforced by any other means. There was no way to put an end to the wrong customs that had become prevalent in Arabia in respect of the adopted relations but that Allah's Messenger himself should take initiative to abolish them. Therefore, Allah arranged this marriage not for the sake of adding a wife to the Holy Prophet's household but for enforcing an important social change.

74. These words show that for the other Muslims such a marriage is just permissible but for the Holy Prophet it was a duty which Allah had imposed on him.

75. That is, "For the Prophets it has always been a law that whatever Command they receive from Allah, they have to act on it as a duty which they cannot in any case avoid. When Allah enjoins something on His Prophet, he has to accomplish it even if the whole world is deadly opposed to it."

76. The words in the Text have two meanings: (1) That Allah is enough to counter every fear and danger; and (2) that Allah is enough to take account: none else but Allah should be feared for accountability.

77. This one sentence cuts at the root of all those objections which the opponents were raising in connection with this marriage of the Holy Prophet.

Their first objection was that he had married his own daughter-in-law, whereas according to his own law the son's wife is forbidden for the father. This was answered by saying: "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men." That is, Zaid was not his real son, and so it was not unlawful to marry his divorced wife.

Their second objection was that even if his adopted son was not his real son, it was not necessary that he should have married his divorced wife. This was answered by saying: " . . . but he is the Messenger of Allah." That is, it was his duty as the Messenger of Allah to put an end to all kinds of prejudices about a lawful thing which custom and tradition had made unlawful without good reason and declare it to be lawful once again.

The point was stressed by saying: " ... and (he is) the last of the Prophets." That is, not to speak of a Messenger, no other Prophet would be raised after him, who could make up for a possible deficiency in the enforcement of a reform in the law and society that might have been left un-enforced in his time. Therefore, it had become all the more necessary that he should himself root out the custom of ignorance.

Again, to further emphasize this point, it was said: "Allah has knowledge of everything," that is, Allah knows best why it was imperative to get the custom of ignorance rooted out at that juncture through the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) rather than let it remain as it was. He knows that no other prophet would be coming after him in the future; therefore, if He did not abolish this custom through His Last Prophet, no other person after him would be able to abolish it for all the Muslims of the world for ever. Even if the later reformers would abolish it, no action of any one of them will have the permanent and universal authority behind it so that the people of every country and every age might start following it, and none of them would have a personality endowed with that holiness and sanctity that an action's being merely his way *(Sunnah)* might root out every feeling of aversion and abhorrence from the mind of the people.

It is a pity that a section of the people in our age have given wrong interpretations of this verse and opened the way to a great mischief. We have therefore added a comprehensive appendix at the end of the commentary of this Sūrah for the explanation of the question of the Finality of Prophethood and the eradication of the misunderstanding spread by these people.

78. This is meant to instruct the Muslims to the effect: When the Messenger of Allah is being showered with taunts and abuses by the enemies and his person being made the target of a propaganda campaign to frustrate his mission, the believers should neither listen to these absurd things unconcerned nor should become themselves also involved in the doubts and suspicions spread by the enemies nor should resort to abusive language in retaliation, but they should turn to Allah and remember Him more than usual as a special measure, The meaning of "remembering Allah much" has been explained in E.N. 63 above. "To glorify Allah morning and evening" means to glorify Him constantly, to express His holiness and purity by word of mouth and not merely by counting beads on the rosary.

79. This is meant to make the Muslims realize this: "The jealousy and malice of the disbelievers and hypocrites towards you is only due to the mercy that Allah has shown you through His Messenger. It is through him that you have been blessed with the faith, that you have come out from the darkness of unbelief and ignorance into the light of Islam, that you have developed the high moral and social qualities by virtue of which you stand distinguished above others. It is this which has filled the jealous people with malice and rage against the Messenger of Allah. However, in this state you should not adopt any unbecoming attitude which might alienate you from the mercy of Allah."

The word *Ṣalāt* when used with the preposition *'alā* by Allah in respect of the servants, it means mercy and kindness and compassion and when used by the angels in respect of the human beings, it means the prayer for mercy. That is, the angels pray to Allah to bless the human beings with His bounty and favours. Another meaning of *yuṣallī 'alaikum* is: "Allah blesses you with renown among the people and exalts you to a high rank so that the people begin to praise you and the angels begin to eulogize you."

80. This can have three meanings: (1) That Allah will Himself receive them with: "Peace be upon you," as has been stated in Sūrah Yā Sīn :58: "...they have been greeted with 'peace' from the Merciful Lord." (2) That the angels will greet them, as stated in Sūrah An-Naḥl: 32: "This is the reward for those pious people whose souls are received in a pure state, by the angels, who welcome them, saying: 'Peace be upon you: enter into Paradise as the reward of your good deeds." (3) That they will greet one another among themselves, as stated in Sūrah

Yūnus: 10, thus: "Therein their prayer will be 'Glory to Thee, O Lord,' and their greeting: 'Peace be to you,' and the burden of their hymn: 'Praise is for Allah alone, Lord of the universe.'"

81. After admonishing the Muslims, Allah now addresses a few words of consolation to His Prophet, as if to say: "We have blessed you with such and such a high rank and raised you to an exalted place of honour. Your opponents will not be able to harm you in any way by their propaganda campaign of slander and calumny. Therefore, you should not take their mischief to heart, nor give any weight to their propaganda. You should continue doing the duties of your mission, and let them utter whatever nonsense they like." Along with this, incidentally, the other people, both the believers and the unbelievers, also have been told that the person they have to deal with is not an ordinary man but a great personality, whom Allah has raised to the highest ranks of honour and glory.

82. The meaning of the Prophet's being a "witness" is very vast. It includes three kinds of evidence:

(1) *Verbal evidence*, i.e. the Prophet should bear out the truth of the realities and principles on which Allah's Religion is based and tell the world plainly that they are the truth and all that is opposed to them is falsehood. He should rise to proclaim without hesitation and fear the Being of Allah and His Unity, the existence of the angels, the coming down of Revelation, the occurrence of life-after-death, the Hell and Heaven, all are realities, even if they appear strange to the world, and the people mock the one presenting them, or call him a madman. Likewise, the Prophet should openly present before the people the concepts, values, principles and rules pertaining to morality and civilization and social life that God has revealed to him, and reject as wrong all the concepts and ways which are prevalent and are opposed to them, even if the whole world rejects them as wrong and violates them in practice. Similarly, the Prophet should proclaim as lawful what is lawful in Allah's Law even if the whole world regards it as unlawful, and should proclaim as unlawful whatever is unlawful in Allah's Law even if the world regards it as lawful and pure.

(2) *Practical evidence:* That is, the Prophet in his own life should practically demonstrate all that he has been commissioned to present before the world. His life should be free from every shade of that which he calls evil, and his own character should clearly reflect that which he calls good; he should be the foremost in carrying out what he regards as obligatory, and most cautious in refraining from what he calls sinful. He should exert his utmost to enforce the code of life which he calls Divine. His own character and conduct should bear out how sincere and truthful he is in his

invitation; and his own self should be such a model of his teaching that anyone who sees him should know what kind of a man he wants to produce by the Faith to which he invites the world, what kind of a character he wants to instil in him and what system of life he wants to be established through him in the world.

(3) *Evidence in the Hereafter:* That is, when the Court of Allah is established in the Hereafter, the Prophet should give evidence to prove that he had conveyed to the people the whole message, without making any alteration or change in it, that had been entrusted to him, and that he had shown no slackness in making the truth manifest before them, by word and by deed. On the basis of this evidence it will be determined what reward the believers deserve and what punishment the disbelievers deserve

From this one can have an idea of how great a responsibility had Allah placed upon the Holy Prophet by raising him to the position of a "witness", and how great should be the personality worthy of that high position. Evidently, there has been no slackness whatever on the part of the Holy Prophet in the matter of giving evidence with regard to the Faith, verbally as well as practically. That is why in the Hereafter he will be able to testify that he had made the Truth plain to the people, and that is how Allah's argument will be established against them; otherwise, if, God forbid, there had been any slackness on the part of the Prophet in providing evidence, he could neither be a witness against them in the Hereafter nor could any case be established against the deniers of the truth.

Some people have tried to give a different interpretation to the word "witness". They say that the Holy Prophet in the Hereafter will bear witness to the acts and deeds of the people. From this they conclude that the Holy Prophet is watching and witnessing the acts of all the people; otherwise he could not bear the witness. But according to the Qur'ān this interpretation is absolutely wrong. The Qur'ān tells us that Allah has arranged a different system for recording the acts of the people. For this purpose His angels are preparing the conduct-book of every person. (See in this connection Sūrah Qāf: 17-18, and Al-Kahf: 49). After this He will make the people's own limbs also to bear witness against them. (Yā Sīn: 65, Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah: 20-21). As for the Prophets, they are not to testify to the acts of the people, but to give evidence to prove that they had conveyed the Truth to the people. The Qur'ān clearly says:

"On the Day when Allah will assemble all the Messengers, He will ask: 'What was the response you received?' They will answer, 'We have no knowledge: You alone have the full knowledge of all that is hidden'." (Al-Mā'idah: 109)

In the same connection, the Qurān says about the Prophet Jesus that when he will be questioned about the deviation of the Christians, he will say: "I was a witness to their conduct as long as I remained among them, but after You recalled me, You watched over them." (Al-Mā'idah: 117)

These verses clearly show that the Prophets will not be witnesses in regard to the acts of the people. As to what they will bear witness to the Qur'an gives an equally clear answer:

"O Muslims, We have made you a community of the 'Golden Mean' so that you may be witnesses in regard to mankind and the Messenger may be a witness in regard to you." (Al-Baqarah: 143)

"(O Muhammad, warn them of) the Day when We shall call a witness from among every community to testify against it. And We shall call you to testify against these people." (An-Nahl: 89)

This shows that on the Day of Resurrection the Holy Prophet's evidenc in its nature will not be any different from the evidence for bearing which the Holy Prophet's community and the witnesses in regard to every other community will be summoned. Evidently, if it be an evidence in regard to the acts, then the omnipresence of all of them also becomes necessary. And if these witnesses will be called to give evidence to confirm that the Creator's message had reached His creation, inevitably the Holy Prophet also will be called upon to give a similar evidence.

The same is supported by the *Hadīth* which Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Imām Aḥmad and others have related on the authority of 'Abdullah bin 'Mas'ūd, 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Abū ad-Dardā', Anas bin Mālik and many other Companions (may Allah be pleased with them all), whose common theme is this: "The Holy Prophet on the Day of Resurrection will see some of his Companions being brought, but instead of coming to him they will either be going or being pushed to the other side. Thereupon the Holy Prophet will say: 'O Allah, they are my Companions!' Allah will say: 'You do not know what misdeeds they committed after you'." This theme has been reported by numerous Companions and with so many chains of authorities that there remains no doubt about its authenticity. This proves that the Holy Prophet is not at all a witness to each individual of his community and to each of his acts. As for the *Hadīth* which says that the acts of the people of his Ummah are presented before him, it does not in any way contradict this, because its purport is that Allah keeps him informed of the affairs of his *Ummah*, which does not mean that the Holy Prophet is actually witnessing the acts of every person.

83. One should note that a person's giving the good news of a good end for belief and righteous acts and the warning of an evil end for disbelief and evil acts, in his personal capacity, is a different thing, and another's being appointed by Allah as a bearer of the good news and a warner is quite another thing. The one who is appointed to this office by Allah necessarily possesses an authority to give the good news and administer the warnings due to which his good news and his warnings are invested with legality. His giving a good news for an act has the meaning that the Greatest of all Judges, Who has sent him, approves of the act and holds it worthy of a reward; so, it is certainly imperative or obligatory or commendable in nature, and its doer will surely get a reward. On the other hand, his giving a warning of an evil end for an act has the meaning that the Sovereign forbids that act; so, it is certainly sinful and unlawful, and its doer will surely be punished. The good news and warnings of the one who is not divinely appointed cannot ever be invested with such an authority.

84. Here also the same difference as pointed out above exists between the preaching of a common man and of a Prophet. As for the invitation to Allah, it is given, and can be given, by every preacher, but he is not appointed by Allah to do so. Contrary to this, a Prophet rises to call the people towards Allah by the leave of Allah. His call is not mere preaching but has also the support of the authority of the Lord of the Universe, Who sent him. That is why resistance and opposition to the inviter to Allah amounts to rebellion against Allah Himself precisely as resistance to a government official when he is performing official duty is regarded as hostile to the government itself.

85. This sentence is explicit that the word *nikāḥ* here has been used for the contract of marriage only. The lexicographers have greatly disputed over the real meaning of the Arabic word *nikāḥ*. One section of them says that as a word it is common both for intercourse and for the contract of marriage. The second section says that in its meaning it is common for both. The third section opines that its real meaning is the contract of marriage and for intercourse it is used only figuratively. And the fourth section expresses the opinion that its real meaning is intercourse and for the contract of marriage it is used only figuratively. Each section has cited Arabic poetry in support of its view. But Rāghib Iṣfahānī has emphatically asserted this: "The real meaning of the word *nikāḥ* is contract of marriage; it has been used for intercourse metaphorically. It is impossible that its real meaning be intercourse and may have been used for the contract of marriage only metaphorically." The argument he gives is that all the words that have been actually coined for intercourse in Arabic, or in other languages of the world, are obscene and vulgar. No gentleman would like to utter them in a civilized gathering. Therefore, it is not possible that a society should use the word which has actually been coined for this act for marriage as a metaphor. For conveying

this meaning only chaste words have been used in every language of the world and not obscene words.

As far as the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* are concerned, *nikāh* is a term, which either implies only contract of marriage, or intercourse after the contract of marriage; but it has nowhere been used for intercourse outside marriage. This kind of intercourse has been called *zinā* (adultery) by the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* and not *nikāh*.

86. This is a unique verse which was sent down probably in the same period respecting some case of divorce, and so inserted in this context. This shows that it was sent down after the preceding and before the following discourse.

Below is given a summary of the legal injunctions that have been derived from this verse:

(1) Although the word "believing women" has been used, which apparently may give the impression that the law enunciated in this verse is not applicable to the women of the people of the Book, yet all scholars are agreed that this very injunction is applicable to them also. That is, in case a Muslim has married such a woman, all the injunctions relating to her divorce, dower, waiting-period *('iddat)* and provision at divorce are the same as of marriage with a believing woman. The scholars are also agreed that Allah's mentioning the believing women here in particular is actually meant to tell the Muslims that only the believing women are suitable for them. That is, although it is permissible for them to marry Jewish and Christian women, it is not proper and commendable. In other words, the Qur'ān seems to impress that Allah expects that the believers would marry only the believing women.

(2) The word *mas* (to touch) here has been used for intercourse by implication. Thus, the verse apparently implies that if the husband has not had intercourse with the woman, even though he has had seclusion with her and has even touched her with the hand, she will not have to observe the waiting-term *('iddat)* in case of divorce. But the jurists, for the sake of precaution, have decreed that if they have had seclusion proper (i.e. seclusion during which intercourse could be possible), waiting-period will have to be observed if divorce is pronounced after it, and the waiting-period would be annulled only in case divorce was pronounced before they have had the seclusion.

(3) The annulment of the waiting-period in case of divorce before the event of seclusion means that in this case the man forfeits his right to take the woman back as his wife, and the woman becomes entitled to marry anyone she likes immediately after the divorce. But it should be borne in

mind that this applies only to the divorce which is pronounced before the event of the seclusion. If a woman's husband dies before having had seclusion, the waiting-period that has to be observed after death will not be annulled, but she will have to pass the same waiting-period of four months and ten days as is obligatory for a married woman in normal conditions. (*'Iddat* is the waiting-period before the expiry of which a divorced woman or a widow is forbidden to remarry).

(4) The words "they do not have to fulfil a waiting-period for you", show that the waiting-period is a right of the man on the woman. But it does not mean that this is only the man's right. It, in fact, includes two other rights as well: the right of the children, and the right of Allah or of the Law. The man's right is on the ground that he has the right to take the woman back as his wife during the period, and also on the ground that the proof of the parentage of his children, which depends on the woman's being pregnant or otherwise, becomes established in the waiting-period. The reason for including the right of the children is that the proof of a child's parentage is necessary for the establishment of his legal rights and his moral status also depends on this that his parentage should not be doubtful. The reason for including the right of Allah (or the right of the Law) is that even if the people and their children become heedless of their rights, the Divine Law requires that their rights should be protected. That is why even if a man gives a warrant to a woman that after his death or after obtaining divorce from him, there will be no waiting-period binding on her from him, the Divine Law will in no case annul it.

(5) "Provide them with something and send them away with kindness"; The intention of this injunction would be fulfilled by acting in either of the two ways: If the dower had been fixed at the time of marriage, and then divorce pronounced before the event of seclusion proper, payment of half of the dower will be obligatory, as enjoined in Al-Baqarah: 237. To give more than what is obligatory is not binding but certainly commendable. For instance, it is commendable that besides paying half of the dower the man should let the woman retain the bridal garments, or any other articles that he had sent her for the occasion of marriage. But if no dower had been fixed at the time of marriage, it is obligatory to pay her something before sending her away, and this "something" should be according to the status and financial means of the man, as has been enjoined in Al-Baqarah: 236. One section of the scholars hold that something in any case has to be paid in case of divorce as an obligation whether dower has been fixed or not.

(6) "Sending off gracefullly" does not only mean that the woman should be provided with something on divorce but this also that separation should be

adopted in a gentlemanly way, without any kind of vilification. If a man does not happen to like a woman, or there has been some other cause of complaint due to which he does not want to keep the woman, he should divorce her like a gentleman and send her away. He should not start mentioning her faults and relating his complaints against her before the people so as to also prejudice them against her. This instruction of the Qur'ān clearly shows that annexing the enforcement of divorce to the permission of a local council or court is wholly against the wisdom and spirit of the Divine Law, for in that case there remains no chance of "sending her away gracefully", but defamation, revilement and vilification do inevitably result even if the man does not so will. Moreover, the words of the verse also do not admit that the power of the man to divorce should be bound up with the permission of a local council or court. The verse is clearly giving the married man the power of divorce and placing on him alone the responsibility that if he wants to release the woman before touching her he must pay her half the dower as an obligation, or something else according to his means. From this the object of the verse clearly seems to be that in order to prevent divorce from being taken lightly the man should be placed under the burden of a financial responsibility so that he himself uses his power of divorce with sense, and there is no chance of an external interference in the internal affairs of the two families.

(7) Ibn 'Abbās, Sa'īd bin al-Musayyib, Ḥasan Baṣrī, 'Alī bin al-Ḥusain (Zain al-'Ābidīn), Imām Shāfe'ī and Imām Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal have deduced from the words, "when you marry...and then divorce ..." that divorce takes effect only when marriage has been contracted. Divorce before the contract of marriage is without effect. Therefore if a person says, "If I marry such and such a woman, or a woman of such and such a tribe or nation, or any other woman, she is divorced," it will be an absurd and meaningless thing; no divorce can take effect from this. The following *Aḥadīth* are presented in support of this view:

"The son of Adam is not entitled to use his power of divorce in respect of that which he does not possess." (Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah). And: "There is no divorce before marriage." (Ibn Mājah). But a great number of the jurists hold that this verse and these *Aḥadīth* apply in the case when a man says to a woman, who is not his wife, "You have divorce on you," or "I divorce you." Saying such a thing is no doubt absurd, and is of no legal consequence, but if he says, "If I marry you, you are divorced," this is not divorcing before the marriage, but the person is in fact declaring his intent that when the woman is married to him, she will stand divorced. Such a declaration cannot be absurd and without effect, but, as a matter of fact, whenever the woman is married to him,

divorce will fall on her. The jurists who hold the view have further differed as to the extent this kind of divorce will have effect.

Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Muḥammad and Imām Zufar hold that divorce will take place in any case whether a person specifies a woman or a tribe or a nation, or talks generally so as to say, "Any woman whom I marry is divorced." Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣās has cited the same opinion also from Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ibrāhīm Nakha'ī, Mujāhid and 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Azīz (may Allah show mercy to them all).

Sufyān Thaurī and 'Uthmān al-Battī say that divorce will take place only in case the person says, "If I marry such and such a woman, she is divorced."

Ḥasan bin Sālih, Laith bin Sa'd and 'Āmir ash-Sha'bi, say that such a divorce will take place even if something is said in general terms provided that a particular class of the people has been mentioned; for instance, if the person has said, "If I marry a woman of such and such a family, or such and such a tribe, or such and such city or country or nation, she is divorced."

Ibn Abī Lailā and Imām Mālik, disputing the above opinion, have added a condition that the time limit also should be determined. For example, if the man said, "If I marry within this year or the next ten years such and such a woman or a woman from such and such a class, she is divorced," divorce will take place, otherwise not. Imām Mālik also adds that if the time limit is so long that the man is not expected to outlive it, his declaration will have no effect.

87. This, in fact, is an answer to the objection of the people who said that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) forbade others to keep more than four wives at a time but had himself taken a fifth wife. This objection was raised because at the time the Holy Prophet married Ḥaḍrat Zainab, he already had four wives with him: (1) Ḥaḍrat Saudah whom he had married in the 3rd year before the Hijrah, (2) Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah whom he married in the 3rd year before the Hijrah but who came to live with him in Shawwāl, A.H. 1, (3) Ḥaḍrat Ḥafsah whom he married in Sha'bān, A.H. 3, and (4) Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah whom he married in Shawwal, A.H. 4. Thus, Ḥaḍrat Zainab was his fifth wife. Here Allah has answered the objection of the disbelievers and the hypocrites, as if to say, "O Prophet, We have made lawful for you all these five wives whom you have married by giving them their dowers." In other words, the answer means this: "It is We Who have imposed the restriction of four wives on others, and it is also We Ourselves Who have made Our Prophet an exception to the restriction. When We could impose the restriction, We could also make the exception."

About this answer also one should note that it was not meant to satisfy the disbelievers and the hypocrites but those Muslims to whom the opponents of Islam

were trying to impart evil suggestions. Since they believed that the Qur'ān is Allah's speech and has been sent down in Allah's own words, Allah declared through a clear and decisive verse that the Prophet had not made himself an exception from the general law about four wives of his own accord, but the exception in regard to him had been decreed by Allah.

88. Besides making the fifth wife lawful for the Prophet, Allah in this verse also granted him the permission to marry a few other kinds of the women:

(1) The woman who came into his possession from among the slave-girls granted by Allah. According to this the Holy Prophet selected for himself Ḥaḍrat Raihānah from among the prisoners of war taken at the raid against the Banī Quraizah, Ḥaḍrat Juwairiyah from among the prisoners of war taken at the raid against the Banī al-Mustaliq, Ḥaḍrat Safiyyah out of the prisoners of war captured at Khaiber, and Ḥaḍrat Mārīah the Copt, who was presented by Maqauqis of Egypt. Out of these he set three of them free and married them, but had conjugal relations with Mārīah on the ground of her being his slave-girl. In her case there is no proof that the Holy Prophet set her free and married her.

(2) The ladies from among his first cousins, who emigrated along with him. The words "who emigrated with you" do not mean that they accompanied the Holy Prophet in his migration journey but this that they also had migrated in the way of Allah for the sake of Islam. The Holy Prophet was given the choice to marry any one of them he liked. Accordingly, in A.H. 7 he married Ḥaḍrat Umm Habībah. (Incidentally, in this verse it has been elucidated that the daughters of one's paternal and maternal uncles and aunts are lawful for a Muslim. In this regard the Islamic Law is different both from the Christian Law and from the Jewish Law. Among the Christians one cannot marry a woman whose line of descent joins one's own anywhere in the last seven generations, and among the Jews it is permissible even to marry one's real niece, i.e. daughter of one's brother or sister).

(3) The believing woman who gives herself to the Prophet, i.e. who is prepared to give herself in marriage to the Prophet without a dower, and he may like to marry her. On account of this permission the Holy Prophet took Ḥaḍrat Maimūnah as his wife in Shawwāl, A.H. 7, but he did not think he should have conjugal relations with her without paying her the dower. Therefore, he paid her the dower even though she did not demand or desire it. Some commentators say that the Holy Prophet did not have any wife who had offered herself to him; but this in fact means that he did not keep any wife without paying her the dower although she offered herself to him.

89. If this sentence is taken to be related with the preceding sentence, it will mean that it is not permissible for any Muslim to take in marriage a woman who gives herself to him, without paying her the dower; and if it is taken to be related with the whole preceding passage, it will imply that the concession to marry more than four wives is only reserved for the Holy Prophet, not for the other Muslims. This verse also shows that certain commandments are specifically meant for the Holy Prophet to follow and are not applicable to the other Muslims. A study of the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* reveals several such commandments. For example, the *Tahajjud* prayer was obligatory for the Holy Prophet but is voluntary for the Ummah. It is unlawful for him and his family to receive charities though it is not so for others. The inheritance left by him cannot be divided; as for the inheritance left by others relevant commandments have been given in Sūrah An-Nisā'. Keeping of more than four wives was made lawful for him though he was not enjoined to do equal treatment with them. He was permitted to marry a woman who gave herself to him without any dower, and after his death his wives were forbidden for the Ummah. None of these privileges could be enjoyed by any other Muslim. Another special thing that the commentators have mentioned in this regard is that it was forbidden for the Holy Prophet to marry a woman from among the people of the Book though it is lawful for the Muslims to do so.

90. This is the reason why Allah made the Holy Prophet an exception to the general rule. "So that there may be no restraint on you" does not mean that he was, God forbid, a very lustful person, and therefore, he was permitted to marry several wives so that he might not feel any hindrance due to the restriction to four wives. This meaning will be understood only by the person who, blinded by prejudice, forgets that the Holy Prophet at the age of 25 married a lady who was 40 years old, and lived a happy, contented married life with her for full 25 years. Then, when she died, he married another old lady Ḥaḍrat Saudah, who remained his only wife for the next four years. Now, no sensible and honest person can imagine that when he became over fifty-three he was suddenly filled with lust and needed to have more and more wives. In fact, in order to understand the meaning of "no restraint", one should, on the one hand, keep in view the great task whose responsibility Allah had placed on the Holy Prophet, and on the other, understand the conditions and circumstances under which he had been appointed to accomplish the great task. Anyone who understands these two things with an unbiased mind, will certainly realize why it was necessary to grant him freedom in respect of the wives and what "hindrance" was there for him in the restriction to four wives.

The task entrusted to the Holy Prophet was that he should mould and chisel by all-round education and training an uncouth, uncultured nation which was not uncivilized only from the Islamic point of view but from a general viewpoint as well, into a highly civilized, refined and virtuous nation. For this purpose it was

[Contd. on p. 128.

تُرْجِیْ مَنْ تَشَآءُ مِنْهُنَّ وَتُـْٔوِیْۤ اِلَیْكَ مَنْ تَشَآءُ ؕ وَمَنِ ابْتَغَیْتَ مِمَّنْ عَزَلْتَ
فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَیْكَ ؕ ذٰلِكَ اَدْنٰۤی اَنْ تَقَرَّ اَعْیُنُهُنَّ وَلَا یَحْزَنَّ وَیَرْضَیْنَ بِمَاۤ
اٰتَیْتَهُنَّ كُلُّهُنَّ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ یَعْلَمُ مَا فِیْ قُلُوْبِكُمْ ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلِیْمًا حَلِیْمًا ﴿۵۱﴾ لَا
یَحِلُّ لَكَ النِّسَآءُ مِنْۢ بَعْدُ وَلَاۤ اَنْ تَبَدَّلَ بِهِنَّ مِنْ اَزْوَاجٍ وَّلَوْ اَعْجَبَكَ
حُسْنُهُنَّ اِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتْ یَمِیْنُكَ ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰی كُلِّ شَیْءٍ رَّقِیْبًا ﴿۵۲﴾ یٰۤاَیُّهَا
الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَدْخُلُوْا بُیُوْتَ النَّبِیِّ اِلَّاۤ اَنْ یُّؤْذَنَ لَكُمْ اِلٰی طَعَامٍ غَیْرَ
نٰظِرِیْنَ اِنٰىهُ ۙ وَلٰكِنْ اِذَا دُعِیْتُمْ فَادْخُلُوْا فَاِذَا طَعِمْتُمْ فَانْتَشِرُوْا وَلَا
مُسْتَاْنِسِیْنَ لِحَدِیْثٍ ؕ اِنَّ ذٰلِكُمْ كَانَ یُؤْذِی النَّبِیَّ فَیَسْتَحْیٖ مِنْكُمْ ۫ وَاللّٰهُ
لَا یَسْتَحْیٖ مِنَ الْحَقِّ ؕ وَاِذَا سَاَلْتُمُوْهُنَّ مَتَاعًا فَسْـَٔلُوْهُنَّ مِنْ وَّرَآءِ حِجَابٍ ؕ
ذٰلِكُمْ اَطْهَرُ لِقُلُوْبِكُمْ وَقُلُوْبِهِنَّ ؕ وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمْ اَنْ تُؤْذُوْا رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ وَلَاۤ
اَنْ تَنْكِحُوْۤا اَزْوَاجَهٗ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖۤ اَبَدًا ؕ اِنَّ ذٰلِكُمْ كَانَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ عَظِیْمًا ﴿۵۳﴾
اِنْ تُبْدُوْا شَیْـًٔا اَوْ تُخْفُوْهُ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَیْءٍ عَلِیْمًا ﴿۵۴﴾ لَا جُنَاحَ
عَلَیْهِنَّ فِیْۤ اٰبَآىِٕهِنَّ وَلَاۤ اَبْنَآىِٕهِنَّ وَلَاۤ اِخْوَانِهِنَّ وَلَاۤ اَبْنَآءِ اِخْوَانِهِنَّ وَ
لَاۤ اَبْنَآءِ اَخَوٰتِهِنَّ وَلَا نِسَآىِٕهِنَّ وَلَا مَا مَلَكَتْ اَیْمَانُهُنَّ ۚ وَاتَّقِیْنَ اللّٰهَ ؕ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلٰی كُلِّ شَیْءٍ شَهِیْدًا ﴿۵۵﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ وَمَلٰٓىِٕكَتَهٗ یُصَلُّوْنَ عَلَی
النَّبِیِّ ؕ یٰۤاَیُّهَا الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا صَلُّوْا عَلَیْهِ وَسَلِّمُوْا تَسْلِیْمًا ﴿۵۶﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِیْنَ یُؤْذُوْنَ
اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ لَعَنَهُمُ اللّٰهُ فِی الدُّنْیَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ وَاَعَدَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا مُّهِیْنًا ﴿۵۷﴾
وَالَّذِیْنَ یُؤْذُوْنَ الْمُؤْمِنِیْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتِ بِغَیْرِ مَا اكْتَسَبُوْا فَقَدِ احْتَمَلُوْا
بُهْتَانًا وَّاِثْمًا مُّبِیْنًا ﴿۵۸﴾ یٰۤاَیُّهَا النَّبِیُّ قُلْ لِّاَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنٰتِكَ وَنِسَآءِ الْمُؤْمِنِیْنَ

You are granted the option that you may keep aside any of your wives you please, and keep to yourself any of them you please, and call back any of them you had set aside: there is no blame on you in this regard. Thus, it is expected that their eyes will be cooled and they will not grieve, and they will all remain well satisfied with whatever you give them.[91] Allah knows whatever is in your hearts, and Allah is All-Knowing, All-Forbearing.[92] No other women are lawful to you after this, nor are you allowed to have other wives instead of them, even if their beauty may be very pleasing to you.[93] You may, however, have slave-girls.[94] Allah is Watchful over everything. 51-52

O you who have believed, do not enter the houses of the Prophet without permission,[95] nor stay watching for the meal time; but if you are invited to meals, do come,[96] and when you have taken food, disperse. Do not engage in talk and discussion,[97] for such behaviour causes trouble to the Prophet but he is shy of saying anything, and Allah does not feel shy in telling the truth. If you have to ask the wives of the Prophet for something, ask for it from behind a curtain. This is a better way for the purity of your as well as their hearts.[98] It is not at all permissible that you should trouble the Messenger of Allah,[99] nor is it permissible that you should marry his wives after him.[100] This is a grave offence in the sight of Allah. Whether you reveal something or conceal it, Allah has full knowledge of everything.[101] 53-54

There is no blame on the wives of the Prophet that they are visited in their houses by their fathers, their sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons,[102] their familiar women[103] and their slaves.[104] (O women,) you should avoid the disobedience of Allah, for Allah observes everything.[105] 55

Indeed Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet.[106] O you who have believed, you also should ask and send blessings and peace on him.[107] 56

Allah has cursed in this world and in the Hereafter those who cause trouble to Allah and His Messenger, and has prepared for them a disgraceful punishment.[108] And those who cause trouble to the believing men and women for no fault of theirs, have indeed born on their head the burden of a grave slander[109] and a manifest sin. 57-58

Contd. from p.125]

unbiased mind, will certainly realize why it was necessary to grant him freedom in respect of the wives and what "hindrance" was there for him in the restriction to four wives.

The task entrusted to the Holy Prophet was that he should mould and chisel by all-round education and training an uncouth, uncultured nation which was not uncivilized only from the Islamic point of view but from a general viewpoint as well, into a highly civilized, refined and virtuous nation. For this purpose it was not enough only to train men but the training of the women also was equally necessary. However, the principles of social life and civilization which he had been appointed to teach forbade free mixing of the sexes together, and it was not possible for him to impart direct training to the womenfolk himself without violating this rule. Therefore, for imparting education to the women the only alternative left for him was that he should marry several women of different ages and mental capabilities and should prepare them by education and training to become his helpers, and then employ them to give religious instructions to the young, middle-aged and old women of the city and desert and teach them the new principles of morality and civilization.

Moreover, the Holy Prophet had also been appointed to abolish the system of life of the pre-Islamic days of ignorance and replace it with the Islamic system of life practically. For the accomplishment of this task a conflict was inevitable with those who upheld the system of ignorance, and this conflict was being encountered in a country where the tribal system of life was prevalent with all its peculiar customs and traditions. Under these conditions, besides other devices, it was also necessary that the Holy Prophet should marry in different families and clans in order to cement many ties of friendship and put an end to enmities. Thus, the selection of the ladies whom he married was to some extent determined by this object besides their personal qualities. By taking Hadrat 'Ā'ishah and Hadrat Ḥafsah to wife he further strengthened and deepened the relations with Hadrat Abū Bakr and Ḥadrat 'Umar. Ḥadrat Umm Salamah was the daughter of the family to which Abū Jahl and Khālid bin Walīd belonged, and Umm Ḥabībah was the daughter of Abū Sufyān. These marriages neutralized the enmity of these families to a large extent; so much so that after Umm Habībah's marriage Abū Sufyān never confronted the Holy Prophet on the battefield. Ḥadrat Safiyyah, Ḥadrat Juwairiah and Raiḥānah belonged to Jewish families. When the Holy Prophet married them, after setting them free, the hostile Jewish activities against him subsided. For according to the Arab traditions when the daughter of a clan or tribe was married to a person, he was regarded as the son-in-law of not only the girl's family but of the entire tribe, and it was disgraceful to fight the son-in-law.

Practical reformation of the society and abolition of its customs of ignorance was also included among the duties of his office. Therefore, he had to undertake one marriage for this purpose also, as has been related in detail in this Sūrah Aḥzāb itself.

For these reasons it was essential that there should be no restriction for the Prophet in respect of marriage so that in view of the requirements of the great mission entrusted to him he could marry as many women as he wanted.

This also brings out the error of the view of those people who think that polygamy is permissible only under special personal requirements and apart from these there can be no other object for which it may be permissible. Evidently, the reason for the Holy Prophet to marry more wives than one was not that the wife was sick, or barren, or that he had no male child, or that there was the question of the bringing up of some orphans. Without these restrictions he married all his wives either in view of the educational requirements, or for the reformation of society, or for political and social objectives. The question is, when Allah Himself has not kept polygamy restricted to a few particular needs, which are being mentioned these days and the Messenger of Allah took several wives for many purposes other than these, how is another person entitled to propose some restrictions in the law and then claim that he is imposing these in accordance with the Sharī'ah? As a matter of fact, the root cause for the imposition of these restrictions is the Western concept that polygamy is an evil in itself. That very concept has given rise to the idea that this unlawful thing can become lawful only in case of extreme circumstances. Now, however hard one may try to label this imported concept with Islam artificially, it is entirely alien to the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* and the whole Muslim literature.

91. This verse was meant to relieve the Holy Prophet of the domestic worries and anxieties so that he could carry out his duties with full peace of mind. When Allah clearly gave him the power and the authority to treat any of his wives as he liked, there remained no chance that those believing ladies would trouble him in any way, or would create complications for him by their mutual rivalries and domestic squabbles. But in spite of having this authority from Allah the Holy Prophet meted out full justice to his wives. He did not prefer one to the other and would visit each of them regularly by turns. Only Abū Razīn from among the traditionists has said that the Holy Prophet visited only four of his wives (Hadrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Hafsah, Ḥaḍrat Zainab and Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah) by turns and no turn had been fixed for the other wives. But all other traditionists and commentators contradict this and prove by authentic traditions that even after having this authority the Holy Prophet visited all his wives in turn and treated them alike. Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Abū Da'ūd and others have reported on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah that even after the revelation of this verse the Holy

Prophet's practice was that whenever he wanted to visit any of us, his wives, on the turn of another wife, he would first ask her permission for it. Abū Bakr al-Jassās relates from 'Urwah bin Zubair that Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah told him, "As to our turns the Holy Prophet never preferred any of us to the other, although it seldom happened that he did not visit all his wives on the same day, but he never touched a wife unless it was her day by turn." And this also is a tradition from Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah that during his last illness when it became difficult for him to move about he asked for his other wives' permission to stay with her, and only on their approval he passed his last days in her apartment. Ibn Abi Ḥātim has cited this from Imām Zuhri that the Holy Prophet is not known to have deprived any of his wives of her turn. To this Ḥaḍrat Saudah only was an exception, who on account of her advanced age had willingly surrendered her turn in favour of Hadrat 'Ā'ishah.

Here, nobody should entertain the doubt that Allah had, God forbid, shown an undue privilege to His Prophet and deprived his wives of their rights. As a matter of fact, the great objectives for the sake of which the Holy Prophet had been made an exception to the general rule in respect of the number of wives, also demanded that he should be afforded full peace in domestic life and anything that could cause him distraction and embarrassment should be eradicated. It was a unique honour for the holy wives that they were privileged to be the life-partners of the greatest of all men like the Holy Prophet, and by virtue of this they got the opportunity to become his Companions and helpers in the great task of reform and invitation that was to become the means of true success for mankind till the end of time. Just as the Holy Prophet was offering every kind of sacrifice for the sake of this objective and the Companions also were following his example according to their capabilities, so it was the duty of his wives also to display selflessness in every way. Therefore, all the wives accepted Allah's decision with regard to themselves happily and willingly.

92. This is a warning for the Holy Prophet's wives as well as for all other people. For the wives it is a warning in the sense that if after the coming down of this Divine Command they did not feel reconciled to it in their hearts, they would not escape Allah's punishment. And for others the warning is that if they entertained any kind of suspicion in their hearts in regard to the Holy Prophet's matrimonial life, or harboured any misgiving in any recess of their minds, this would not remain hidden from Allah. Along with this Allah's attribute of forbearance also has been mentioned so that one may know that although even a thought of insolence in regard to the Prophet is also punishable, yet if a person got rid of such a suspicion he might have the hope of His forgiveness.

93. This has two meanings: (1) "No other woman except those made lawful to you in verse 50 above, is any more lawful to you"; and (2) "when your

wives have become pleased and ready to stay with you through every kind of hardship and have rejected the world in preference to the Hereafter, and are satisfied that you may treat them as you please, it is no longer lawful for you that you should divorce any of them and take another wife instead."

94. This verse explains why one is permitted to have conjugal relations with one's slave-girls besides the wedded wives, and there is no restriction on their number. The same thing has also been stated in Sūrah An-Nisā': 3, Al-Mu'minūn: 6, and Al-Ma'ārij: 30. In all these verses the slave-girls have been mentioned as a separate class from the wedded wives, and conjugal relations with them have been permitted. Moreover, verse 3 of Sūrah An-Nisā' lays down the number of the wives as four, but neither has Allah fixed the number of the slave-girls in that verse nor made any allusion to their number in the other relevant verses. Here, of course, the Holy Prophet is being addressed and told: "It is no more lawful for you to take other women in marriage, or divorce any of the present wives and take another wife in her stead; slave-girls, however, are lawful." This shows that no restriction has been imposed in respect of the slave-girls.

This, however, does not mean that the Divine Law has provided the rich an opportunity to purchase as many slave-girls as they like for their carnal indulgence. This is in fact how the self-seeking people have exploited and abused the Law. The Law had been made for the convenience of the people; it had not been made to be abused. One could, for instance, similarly abuse the Law concerning marriage. The *Shari'ah* permits a man to marry up to four wives and also gives him the right to divorce his wife and take another one. This law had been made in view of man's requirements and needs. Now, if a person, merely for the sake of sensual enjoyment, were to adopt the practice of keeping four wives for a time and then divorcing them to be replaced by another company of them, it would be abusing the provisions of the law, for which the person himself would be responsible and not the *Shari'ah*. Likewise the *Shari'ah* has allowed that the women who are captured in war and whose people do not exchange them for Muslim prisoners of war nor ransom them, may be kept as slave-girls, and gave the persons to whom they are assigned by the government the right to have conjugal relations with them so that they do not become a moral hazard for the society. Then, as it was not possible to determine the number of the prisoners of war, legally also it could not be determined how many slave girls a person could keep at a time. The sale of the slaves and slave-girls was also allowed for the reason that if a slave or a slave-girl could not pull on well with a master, he or she could be transferred to another person so that the same person's permanent ownership did not become a cause of unending torture for both the master and the captive. The *Shari'ah* made all these laws keeping in view human conditions and

requirements for the convenience of men. If these have been made a means of sexual enjoyment and luxury by the rich, it is they who are to blame for this and not the *Sharī'ah*.

95. This is an introduction to the general Command that was given in Sūrah An-Nūr: 27 about a year later. In the ancient times the Arabs would enter one another's house unceremoniously. If a person had to see another person he did not think it was necessary to call at the door or take permission for entry, but would enter the house and ask the womenfolk and children whether the master was at home or not. This custom of ignorance was the cause of many evils and would often give rise to some serious evils. Therefore, in the beginning a rule was made in respect of the houses of the Holy Prophet that no person, whether a close friend or a distant relative, could enter them without permission. Then in Sūrah An-Nūr a general command was given to enforce this rule for the houses of all the Muslims.

96. This is the second command in this connection. An uncivilized practice prevalent among the Arabs was that the visitors would call on a friend or acquaintance right at the time of the meals, or would come and prolong their stay till the meals time approached. This would often cause the master of the house great embarrassment. He could neither be so discourteous as to tell the visitors to leave because it was his meals time, nor could feed so many unexpected guests together. For it is not always possible for a person to arrange meals immediately for as many visitors as happened to call on him at a time. Allah disapproved of this practice and commanded that the visitors should go for meals to a house only when invited. This Command did not in particular apply to the Holy Prophet's house only but the rules were in the beginning enforced in that model household so that they become general rules of etiquette in the houses of the other Muslims as well.

97. This was to reform yet another foolish practice. The guests at a feast, after they had finished eating, would sit down to endless gossip and discussions much to the inconvenience of the people of the house. They would often embarrass the Holy Prophet also by this practice, but he would forbear and forget. At last on the day of the marriage feast of Ḥaḍrat Zainab the embarrassment thus caused crossed all limits. According to the Holy Prophet's special attendant, Ḥaḍrat Anas bin Mālik, the feast was held at night. Most of the people left after taking food but a couple or two of them got engaged in gossip. Disconcerted the Holy Prophet rose and went round to his wives. When he returned he found the gentlemen still sitting. He turned back and sat in Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah's apartment. When a good deal of the night had passed he came to know that the gentlemen had left. Then he returned and went to the apartment of Ḥaḍrat Zainab. After this it became inevitable that Allah Himself should warn the people of these evil

practices. According to Ḥaḍrat Anas these verses were sent down on this occasion. (Muslim, Nasā'ī Ibn Jarīr).

98. This is the verse which is called "the verse of the veil". Bukhārī has related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Anas that before the coming down of this verse, Ḥaḍrat 'Umar had made a suggestion several times to the Holy Prophet to the effect: "O Messenger of Allah, all sorts of the people, good and bad, come to visit you. Would that you commanded your wives to observe hijab. According to another tradition, once Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said to the holy wives, "If what I say concerning you is accepted, my eyes should never see you." But since the Holy Prophet was not independent in making law, he awaited Divine Revelation. At last, this Command came down that except for the *maḥram* males (as being stated in v. 55 below) no other man should enter the Holy Prophet's houses, and whoever had to ask some thing from the ladies, should ask for it from behind a curtain. After this Command curtains were hung at the doors of the apartments of the wives, and since the Holy Prophet's house was a model for the Muslims to follow, they too hung curtains at their doors. The last sentence of the verse itself points out that whoever desire that the hearts of the men and women should remain pure, should adopt this way.

Now whosoever has been blessed with understanding by Allah can himself see that the Book which forbids the men and women to talk to each other face to face and commands them to speak from behind a curtain because "this is a better way for the purity of your as well as their hearts," could not possibly permit that the men and women should freely meet in mixed gatherings, educational and democratic institutions and offices, because it did not affect the purity of the hearts in any way. For him who does not want to follow the Qur'ān, the best way would be that he should disregard its Commands and should frankly say that he has no desire to follow it. But this would be the height of meanness that he should violate the clear Commandments of the Qur'ān and then stubbornly say that he is following the "spirit" of Islam which he has extracted. After all, what is that spirit of Islam which these people extract from sources outside the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah?*

99. The allusion is to the false allegations that were being made in those days against the Holy Prophet, and some weak-minded Muslims also were joining the disbelievers and the hypocrites in doing this.

100. This is the explanation of what has been said in verse 6:"...the Prophet's wives are mothers of the believers."

101. That is, "If a person entertains an evil thought in his heart against the Holy Prophet, or harbours an evil intention about his wives, it will not remain hidden from Allah, and he will be punished for it."

102. For explanation, see E.N.'s 38 to 42 of Sūrah An-Nūr. 'Allāma Ālūsī's commentary in this connection is also noteworthy. He says, "Brothers and sons of brothers and sisters include all those relatives who are unlawful for a woman, whether they are blood relations or foster relations. This list does not mention the paternal and maternal uncles because they are like the parents to the woman, or perhaps they have been left out because there was no need to mention them after mentioning their sons. For the reason for not observing purdah from the brother's son and sister's son is the same as of not observing it from the paternal and maternal uncles." *(Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī.*

103. For explanation, see E. N. 43 of An-Nūr.

104. For explanation, see E. N. 44 of An-Nūr.

105. It means this: "After the coming down of this absolute Command no person outside the circle of the relatives, who have been made an exception, should be allowed to enter the houses without purdah being observed from them." Another meaning is: "The woman should never adopt the attitude that they should observe purdah when the husband is present, but should appear without purdah before the other men, when he is away. Such a conduct may remain hidden from the husband but not from Allah.

106. "Allah's sending His blessings on His Prophet" means this: "Allah is very kind to His Prophet: He praises him, blesses his work, exalts his name, and showers His mercies on him." "Blessings of the angels" means: "They love the Prophet most dearly and pray to Allah to bless him with the highest ranks, cause his religion and *Shari'ah* to flourish and exalt him to the laudable position." One can clearly see from the context, why this thing has been said here. This was the time when the enemies of Islam were making all sorts of false allegations against the Holy Prophet in order to satisfy their jealousy on the success of Faith. By sullying him they thought they would destroy his moralinfluence through which Islam and the Muslims were gaining more and more ground every day. Such were the conditions when Allah sent down this verse, as if warn the people: "However hard the disbelievers and the hypocrites and the polytheists might try to vilify and slander My Prophet with a view to frustrating his mission, they are bound to suffer disgrace and humiliation in the end, for I am kind to him, and the angels, who are administering the entire universe, are his supporters and admirers. His enemies cannot gain anything by their condemnation of him because I am exalting his name and My angels are adoring him constantly. They cannot harm him by their mean machinations when My mercies and blessings are with him, and My angels pray for him day and night to the effect: "O Lord of the worlds, raise Muhammad to even higher ranks and make his Religion flourish and prosper."

107. In other words, it means this: "O people, who have found the right path through Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah, you should recognize his true worth and be grateful to him for his great favours to you. You were lost in the darkness of ignorance: He afforded you the light of knowledge: you had become morally bankrupt: he raised you high on the moral level so that the people now feel envious of you; you had sunk to barbarism and savagery: he adorned you with the most refined human civilization. The disbelievers everywhere have turned his enemies only because he has done you these favours; otherwise personally he has not done any harm to anyone. Therefore, the inevitable demand of your gratitude to him is that you should regard him with an equal, or even greater, love than the malice and grudge these people display against him; that you should show a greater attachment to him than the hatred these people show towards him; that you should praise and adore him even more fervently than they condemn him; that you should wish him well even more heartily than they wish him ill, and pray for him just as the angels do day and night, saying: "O Lord of the worlds: Just as Your Prophet has done us countless and endless favours, so do You also show him endless and limitless mercy: raise him to the highest ranks in the world and bless him with the greatest nearness to Yourself in the hereafter."

In this verse, Muslims have been commanded two things: (1) *Ṣallū 'alaihi;* and (2) *ṣallimū taslīmā.* The word *Salāt* when used with the associating particle *'alā* gives three meanings: (1) To be inclined to some body, to attend to him with love, and to bend over him; (2) to praise somebody; and (3) to pray for somebody. Obviously, when the word is used in regard to Allah, it cannot be in the third meaning, for it is absolutely inconceivable that Allah should pray to someone else; it can only be used in the first two meanings. But when this word is used for the servants, whether angels or men, it will be in all the three meanings. It will contain the sense of love as well as praise and prayer for mercy. Therefore, the meaning of giving the Command of *ṣallū 'alaihi* to the believers for the Holy Prophet is: "Be attached to him, praise and adore him and pray for him."

The word *salām* also has two meanings: (1) To be secure from every kind of affliction and fault and defect; and (2) to be at peace and refrain from opposing the other person. Therefore, one meaning of *ṣallimū taslīmā* in regard to the Holy Prophet is: "You should pray for his well-being and security," and another meaning is: "Cooperate with him with all your heart and mind; refrain from opposing him and obey him most faithfully and sincerely."

When this Command was sent down, several of the Companions said to the Holy Prophet, "O Messenger of Allah, you have taught us the method of pronouncing *salām* (i.e. of saying *as-salāmu 'alaika ayyuhannabiyyu wa raḥmatullahi wa barakāt-u-hū* in the Prayer, and *as-salāmu 'alaika yā Rasūl-Allah* as a greeting, but what is the method of sending *Ṣalāt* on you ?" In response to

thus, the methods of pronouncing *Ṣalāt* and *darūd* that the Holy Prophet taught to many people on different occasions are as follows:

Ka'b bin'Ujrah: *Allahumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā ṣallaita 'alā Ibrāhīma wa 'alā āl-i Ibrāhīma innaka Ḥamīd-um-Majīd, wa bārik 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā bārakta 'alā Ibrāhīma wa 'alā āl-i Ibrāhīma innaka Ḥamīd-um-Majīd.* This *darūd* with a little difference in wording has been reported by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dā'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Imām Aḥmad, Ibn Abī Shaibah, 'Abdur Razzāq, Ibn Abī Hātim and Ibn Jarīr on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Ka'b bin 'Ujrah.

Ibn 'Abbās: From him also the same *darūd* as given above has been reported with a slight difference. (Ibn Jarīr).

Abū Humaid Ṣā'idī: *Allahumma salli 'alā Muḥammad-in wa azwāji-hī wa dhurriyāti-hī kamā ṣallaita 'alā Ibrāhīma wa 'alā āl-i Ibrāhīma wa bārik 'alā Muḥammad-in wa azwāji-hi wa dhurriyāt-hī kamā bārakta 'alā āl-i Ibrāhīma innaka Ḥamīd-um-Majīd.* (Mālik, Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Abū Da'ūd, Ibn Mājah).

Abū Mas'ūd Badrī: *Allahumma ṣalli 'ala Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā ṣallaita 'alā Ibrāhīma wa 'alā āl-i Ibrāhīma wa bārik 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kāma bārakta 'ala Ibrāhīma fil-'ālamīn innaka Ḥamīd-ūm-Majīd* (Mālik, Muslim, Abū Dā'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Ḥabbān, Ḥākim).

Abū Sa'īd Khudrī: *Allahumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad-in 'abdika wa rasūli-ka kamā sallaita 'alā Ibrāhīma wa bārik 'alā Maḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muhammad-in kamā bā rakta 'alā Ibrāhīm.* (Ahmad, Bukhārī, Nasā'ī Ibn Mājah).

Buraidah al-Khuza'ī: *Allahumm-aj'al Salātaka wa rahmataka wa barakāti-ka 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā ja'altahā 'alā Ibrāhīma innaka Hamīd-um-Majīd.* (Aḥmad, 'Abd bin Humaid, Ibn Mardūyah).

Abū Hurairah: *Allahumma salli 'alā Muḥammad-in wa alā āl-i Muḥammad-in wa bārik alā Muhammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā sallaita wa bārakta 'alā Ibrāhīma wa 'alā āl-i Ibrāhīm fil-'ālamīn innaka Ḥamīd-um-Majīd.* (Nasāī).

Talhah: *Allahumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad-in wa 'alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā ṣallaita 'alā Ibrāhīma innaka Ḥamīd-um-Majīd wa bārik 'alā Muḥammad-in wa alā āl-i Muḥammad-in kamā bārakta 'alā Ibrāhīma innaka Ḥamīd-um-Majīd.* (Ibn Jarīr).

All these *darūds* agree in meaning despite the difference in wording. A few points concerning them should be understood clearly:

First, in all these the Holy Prophet tells the Muslims that the best way of sending *darūd* and *Ṣalāt* on him is that they should pray to Allah, saying, "O God: send *darūd* on Muḥammad." Ignorant people who do not possess full understanding of the meaning immediately raise the objection: "How strange that Allah commands us to send *darūd* on His Prophet, but we, in return, implore Allah that He should send it." The fact, however, is that the Holy Prophet has instructed the people, as if to say, "You cannot do full justice to sending of darūd and *Ṣalāt* on me even if you want to. Therefore, pray only to Allah to bless me with *Ṣalāt*." Evidently, the Muslims cannot raise the ranks of the Holy Prophet. Allah only can raise them; the Muslims cannot repay the Holy Prophet for his favours and kindness, Allah only can adequately reward him for this; the Muslims cannot attain any success in exalting the Holy Prophet's name and promoting the cause of religion unless Allah favours them with His help and succour. So much so that the Holy Prophet's love can be impressed in our hearts only by Allah's help; otherwise Satan can turn us away from him by every kind of evil suggestion sand suspicions. May Allah protect us from this! Therefore, there is no other way of doing full justice to sending of *darūd* and *salāt* on the Holy Prophet than that we should supplicate Allah to send *salāt* on him. The person who says: *Allahumma ṣalli 'alā Muḥammad-in*, in fact, admits his helplessness before Allah, and says: "O God: it is not in my power to send *salāt* on Your Prophet as it should be sent. I, therefore, implore You to send it on my behalf and take from me whatever service You will in this regard."

Secondly, the Holy Prophet did not want to have this prayer reserved for only himself but included his followers and his wives and offsprings also. The meaning of the wives and offspring is obvious. As for the word *āl* it does not merely denote the people of the Holy Prophet's household, but it applies to all those people who follow him and adopt his way. Lexically, there is a difference between the words *āl* and *ahl*. By the *āl* of a person are understood all those people who are his companions, helpers and followers, whether they are related to him or not, and his *ahl* are those who are related to him, whether or not they are his companions and followers. The Qur'ān has used the word *āl Fir'aun* at fourteen places but nowhere has it been used to mean the people of Pharaoh's household only; everywhere it implies all those who sided with him in the conflict against the Prophet Moses. (For example, see Al-Baqarah: 49-50, Āl-i-'Imrān: 11, Al-A'rāf: 130, Al-Mu'min: 46). Thus, from *āl-Muḥammad* is excluded every such person who is not on the way of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), whether he be a member of his household, and in it is included every such person, who is following in his footsteps, whether he is not even distantly related to him by blood. However, those members of the Prophet's

household who are related to him by blood and are also his followers are most worthy to be regarded as *āl-Muhammad*.

Thirdly, the same thing found in all the *darūds* taught by the Holy Prophet is that he may be blessed with the same kindness with which Abraham and the followers of Abraham have been blessed. The people have found it difficult to understand this. The scholars have given different interpretations of it but none of them is appealing. In my opinion the correct interpretation is this (though the real knowledge is with Allah): Allah blessed the Prophet Abraham in particular with something with which He has blessed no one else in the world, and it is this: All those human beings who regard the Prophethood and the Revelation and the Book as the source of guidance are agreed on the leadership of the Prophet Abraham, whether they are Muslims or Christians or Jews. Therefore, what the Holy Prophet means to say is this: "O Allah, just as You have made the Prophet Abraham the refuge of the followers of all the Prophets, so You make me also the refuge, so that no one who is a believer in Prophethood, may remain deprived of the grace of believing in my Prophethood."

That it is an Islamic practice to send *darūd* on the Holy Prophet, that it is commendable to pronounce it when the Holy Prophet's name is mentioned, that it is a *Sunnah* of the Prophet to recite it in the Prayer in particular, is agreed upon by all the scholars. There is also a consensus that it is obligatory to pronounce the *darūd* on the Holy Prophet at least once in a lifetime, because Allah has clearly commanded it, but apart from this there are differences among the scholars regarding it.

Imām Shāfe'ī holds the view that it is obligatory to recite *salāt* on the Prophet during *tashahhud* in the final sitting of the Prayer, for without it the Prayer would be void. Hadrat Ibn Mas'ūd, Abū-Mas'ūd Ansārī, Ibn 'Umar and Jābir bin 'Abdullah from among the Companions, Sha'bī, Imām Muhammad bin Bāqir, Muhammad bin Ka'b al-Qurzī and Muqātil bin Hayyān from among the immediate followers of the Companions, and Ishāq bin Rahwayah from among the jurists also held the same opinion, and Imām Ahmad bin Hanbal also had adopted the same in the end.

Imām Abū Hanīfah, Imām Mālik and the majority of the scholars hold that the pronouncing of the *Salāt* is obligatory only once in a life time. It is just like the *Kalimah:* whoever affirmed the divinity of Allah and the Prophethood of the Messenger of Allah once in a lifetime carried out his duty. Likewise, the one who pronounced the *darūd* and *salāt* once in his lifetime would be deemed to have done his duty of pronouncing the *darūd* on the Holy Prophet. After it, it is neither obligatory *(farḍ)* to recite the *Kalimah* nor the *darūd*.

Another group holds that it is absolutely *wājib* to recite it in the Prayer but not necessarily in the *tashahhud*.

Still another group holds the view that it is *wājib* to pronounce the *darūd* in every supplication. Some others say that it is *wājib* to pronounce it whenever the Holy Prophet's name is mentioned, and according to another group recitation of the *darūd* is *wājib* only once in an assembly or sitting no matter how often the name of the Holy Prophet is mentioned during it.

These differences only pertain to the *darūd's* being obligatory in status or otherwise. As for its merit and excellence, its being conducive to high spiritual rewards and its being a great righteous act, there is complete unanimity among the Ummah. No one who is a believer in any degree can have any different opinion about it. The *darūd is* the natural supplication of the heart of every Muslim, who realizes that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon Whom be Allah's peace) is the Ummah's greatest benefactor after Allah. The greater one's appreciation of Islam and the Faith, the greater will one be appreciative of the favours of the Holy Prophet himself; and the greater one's appreciation of the favours of the Holy Prophet, the more often will he pronounce the *darūd* and *salāt* on him. Thus, in fact, the frequency with which a person pronounces the *darūd* is the measure which shows the depth of his relationship with the Holy Prophet's Religion and the extent of his appreciation of the blessing of the Faith. On this very basis the Holy Prophet has said: "The angels send *darūd* on him who sends *darūd* on me, as long as he does so." (Ahmad, Ibn Mājah). "He who sends *darūd* on me once, Allah sends *darūd* on him ten times over." (Muslim) "The one who sends *darūd* on me most often will deserve to remain close to me on the Day of Resurrection" (Tirmidhi). "Niggardly is the person who does not send *darūd* on me when I am mentioned before him." (Tirmidhi)

As to whether it is permissible to use the words *Allahumma salli 'alā* so-and-so, or *sallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam,* or similar other words for others than the Holy Prophet, it is disputed. One group of the scholars of whom Qādī 'Iyād is most prominent holds it as absolutely permissible. Their argument is this: Allah Himself has used the word *salāt* in respect of those who were not prophets at several places in the Qur'ān, *e.g.* in Al-Baqarah; 157, At-Taubah: 103, Al-Ahzāb;

[Contd. on p. 142

يُدْنِيْنَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيْبِهِنَّ ۚ ذٰلِكَ اَدْنٰٓى اَنْ يُّعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ ۗ وَ
كَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ﴿٥٩﴾ لَئِنْ لَّمْ يَنْتَهِ الْمُنٰفِقُوْنَ وَ الَّذِيْنَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ
مَّرَضٌ وَّ الْمُرْجِفُوْنَ فِي الْمَدِيْنَةِ لَنُغْرِيَنَّكَ بِهِمْ ثُمَّ لَا يُجَاوِرُوْنَكَ فِيْهَآ
اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ﴿٦٠﴾ مَّلْعُوْنِيْنَ ۚ اَيْنَمَا ثُقِفُوْٓا اُخِذُوْا وَ قُتِّلُوْا تَقْتِيْلًا ﴿٦١﴾ سُنَّةَ اللّٰهِ فِي
الَّذِيْنَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ وَ لَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللّٰهِ تَبْدِيْلًا ﴿٦٢﴾ يَسْـَٔلُكَ النَّاسُ عَنِ
السَّاعَةِ ۭ قُلْ اِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَ مَا يُدْرِيْكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ تَكُوْنُ قَرِيْبًا ﴿٦٣﴾
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَعَنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ وَ اَعَدَّ لَهُمْ سَعِيْرًا ﴿٦٤﴾ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَآ اَبَدًا ۚ لَا يَجِدُوْنَ
وَلِيًّا وَّ لَا نَصِيْرًا ﴿٦٥﴾ يَوْمَ تُقَلَّبُ وُجُوْهُهُمْ فِي النَّارِ يَقُوْلُوْنَ يٰلَيْتَنَآ اَطَعْنَا
اللّٰهَ وَ اَطَعْنَا الرَّسُوْلَا ﴿٦٦﴾ وَ قَالُوْا رَبَّنَآ اِنَّآ اَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَ كُبَرَآءَنَا فَاَضَلُّوْنَا
السَّبِيْلَا ﴿٦٧﴾ رَبَّنَآ اٰتِهِمْ ضِعْفَيْنِ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ وَ الْعَنْهُمْ لَعْنًا كَبِيْرًا ﴿٦٨﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا
الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّذِيْنَ اٰذَوْا مُوْسٰى فَبَرَّاَهُ اللّٰهُ مِمَّا قَالُوْا ۭ وَ كَانَ
عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَجِيْهًا ﴿٦٩﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَ قُوْلُوْا قَوْلًا سَدِيْدًا ﴿٧٠﴾
يُّصْلِحْ لَكُمْ اَعْمَالَكُمْ وَ يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوْبَكُمْ ۭ وَ مَنْ يُّطِعِ اللّٰهَ وَ رَسُوْلَهٗ فَقَدْ
فَازَ فَوْزًا عَظِيْمًا ﴿٧١﴾ اِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْاَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ وَ الْجِبَالِ
فَاَبَيْنَ اَنْ يَّحْمِلْنَهَا وَ اَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَ حَمَلَهَا الْاِنْسَانُ ۭ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ ظَلُوْمًا
جَهُوْلًا ﴿٧٢﴾ لِّيُعَذِّبَ اللّٰهُ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ وَ الْمُنٰفِقٰتِ وَ الْمُشْرِكِيْنَ وَ الْمُشْرِكٰتِ وَ
يَتُوْبَ اللّٰهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَ الْمُؤْمِنٰتِ ۭ وَ كَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ﴿٧٣﴾

O Prophet, enjoin your wives and daughters and the women of the believers that they should let down over their faces a part of their outer-garments;[110] it is expected that they will thus be recognized and not molested.[111] Allah is Forgiving and Merciful.[112] 59

If the hypocrites and those whose hearts are diseased[113] and the scandal-mongers in Madīnah[114] do not desist, We shall stir you up to take action against them; then they will hardly be able to live in this city as your neighbors. They will be cursed from every side and will be seized wherever they are found and killed mercilessly. This has been the Way of Allah with regard to such people before, and you will never find any change in the Way of Allah.[115] 60-62

The people ask you as to when will Resurrection take place.[116] Say, "The knowledge of it is with Allah alone: you may not know that it may well be near at hand. In any case, it is certain that Allah has laid curse on the disbelievers and has prepared for them a blazing Fire, in which they will live for ever and will have no protector and helper. On the Day their faces are rolled about on the Fire, they will say, "Would that we had obeyed Allah and His Messenger!" 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 chastisement and curse them severely."[117] 63-68

O you who have believed,[118] do not be like those who had maligned Moses; then Allah cleared him of what they said of him, and he was honourable in the sight of Allah[119]. O believers fear Allah and say the right thing: Allah will adorn your deeds and will overlook your errors. Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, has indeed attained a great success. 69-71

We offered this trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains but they refused to bear it and were afraid of it, the but man undertook to bear it. Indeed, he is unjust and ignorant.[120] (The inevitable result of bearing the burden of the trust is) that Allah should punish the hypocritical men and women and *mushrik* men and women, and accept the repentance of the believing men and women: Allah is indeed Forgiving and Merciful. 72-73

[Contd. from p. 139

43. Similarly, the Holy Prophet also prayed for those who were not prophets using the word *salāt* on several occasions. For example, he prayed for a Companion, thus: *Allahumma salli 'ala āl Abi Aufā;* on the request of Ḥaḍrat Jabir bin 'Abdullah's wife, he said: *Ṣallallahu 'alaiki wa 'ala zaujiki.* Then concerning those who came with the *Zakāt* money, he would say: *Allahumma salli 'alaihim.* Praying for Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin 'Ubādah he said: *Allahumma aj'al ṣalātaka wa rahmataka 'ala āl-i Sa'd bin 'Ubādah.* And about the soul of the believer the Holy Prophet gave the news that the angels prayed for him, thus: *Ṣallallahu 'alaika wa 'ala jasadika.* However, the majority of the Muslim scholars opine that it was correct for Allah and His Messenger but not so for the Ummah. They say that it has become a convention with the Muslims to use *ṣalāt-o-salām* exclusively for the Prophets. Therefore, it should not be used for those who are not prophets. On this very basis Ḥaḍrat 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Aziz once wrote to one of his governors, saying: "I hear that some preachers have started using the word *ṣalāt* in respect of their patrons and supporters in the manner of *ṣalāt 'alan-Nabi.* As soon as you receive this letter, stop them from this practice and command them to use *Ṣalāt* exclusively for the Prophets and remain content with the prayer for the other Muslims." *(Ruḥ al-Ma'āni).* Most scholars also hold that using the words *ṣallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam* for any other Prophet than the Holy Prophet is not correct.

108. "To trouble Allah" implies two things: That Allah should be disobeyed, that an attitude of disbelief and *shirk* and atheism be adopted with regard to Him, and that things made unlawful by Him be made lawful; and (2) that His Messenger be troubled, for just as obedience to the Messenger is obedience to Allah, so is opposition and disobedience of the Messenger opposition and disobedience of Allah.

109. This verse determines the definition of slander. It is to ascribe a fault to a person which he does not have, or an error which he has not committed. The Holy Prophet also has explained it. According to Abū Dā'ūd and Tirmidhī, when he was asked as to what is *ghībat* (backbiting), he replied: "It is to make mention of your brother in a manner derogatory to him." The questioner said, "And if the fault is there in my brother?". The Holy Prophet replied: "If the fault that you mentioned is there in him, you backbite him; if it is not there, you slandered him." Such an act is not only a moral sin, which will entail punishment in the Hereafter, but this verse also requires that in the law of an Islamic State also false allegation should be held as a culpable offence.

110. *Jilbāb* is a large sheet and *idnā'* is to draw close and wrap up, but when this word is used with the associating particle *'alā,* it gives the meaning of

letting something down from above. Some modern translators, under the influence of the West, have translated this word "to wrap up" so as to avoid somehow the Command about covering of the face. But if Allah had meant what these gentlemen want to construe, He would have said: *yudnīna ilal-hinna* and not *yudnīna 'alal-hinna*. Anyone who knows Arabic knows that *yudnīna 'alal-hinna* cannot merely mean "wrapping up." Moreover, the words *min jalābīb-i hinna* also do not permit of this meaning. It is obvious that the preposition *min* here signifies a part of the sheet, and also that wrapping up is done by means of a whole sheet and not merely by a part of it. The verse, therefore, clearly means : The women should wrap themselves up well in their sheets, and should draw and let down a part of the sheet in front of the face.

This same meaning was understood by the major commentators who lived close to the time of the Holy Prophet. Ibn Jarīr and Ibn al-Mundhir have related that Muḥammad bin Sīrīn asked Ḥaḍrat 'Ubaidah as-Salmānī the meaning of this verse. (This Ḥaḍrat 'Ubaidah had become a Muslim in the time of the Holy Prophet but had not been able to visit him. He came to Madīnah in the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Umar and settled down there. He was recognized as equal in rank with Qādī Shuraih in jurisprudence and judicial matters). Instead of giving a verbal reply Ḥaḍrat 'Ubaidah put on his sheet and gave a practical demonstration by covering his head and forehead and face and an eye, leaving only the other eye uncovered. Ibn 'Abbās also has made almost the same commentary. In his statements which have been reported by Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ibn Mardūyah, he says: "Allah has commanded the women that when they move out of their houses for an outdoor duty, they should conceal their faces by drawing and letting down over themselves a part of their sheets, keeping only the eyes uncovered." The same explanation of this verse has been given by Qatādah and Suddī.

All the great commentators who have passed after the period of the Companions and their immediate followers have given the same meaning of this verse. Imām Ibn Jarīr Tabarī, in his commentary of this verse, says: "The respectable women should not look like the slave-girls from their dress when they move out of their houses, with uncovered faces and loose hair; they should rather draw and let down over them a part of their sheets or outer-garments so that no evil person may dare molest them." *(Jāmi' al Bayān,* vol. XXII, p. 33).

'Allāma Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣās says: "This verse points out that the young woman has been commanded to conceal her face from the other men; when moving out of the house she should cover herself up well to express chastity and purity of character so that people of doubtful character do not cherish any false hope when they see her." *(Aḥkām al-Qur'an,* vol. III, p. 458).

'Allāma Zamakhshari says: "It means that they should let down a part of their sheet over themselves, and should cover their faces and wrap up their sides well." *(Al-Kashshāf,* vol. II, p. 221).

'Allāma Nizāmuddin Nishāpūrī says: "That is, they should let down a part of the sheet over them; in this verse, the women have been commanded to cover the head and face." *(Gharā'ib al-Qur'ān,* vol. XXII, p. 32).

Imām Rāzī says: "What is meant is that the people may know that they are not promiscuous women. For the woman who covers her face, though the face is not included in the *satar,* cannot be expected to uncover her *satar,* which is obligatory to cover before the other man. Thus, everyone will know that they are modest and virtuous women who cannot be expected to do anything indecent." *(Tafsīr Kabīr,* vol. VI, p 591).

Incidentally, another thing that is proved by this verse is that the Holy Prophet had several daughters, for Allah Himself says: "O Prophet, enjoin your wives and daughters." These words absolutely refute the assertion of those people who without any fear of God make the claim that the Holy Prophet had only one daughter, Hadrat Fātimah, and the other daughters were not from his own loins but by the former husbands. These people are so blinded by prejudice that they do not even bother to consider what crime they are committing by denying the parentage of the children of the Holy Prophet, and what severe punishment will await them in the Hereafter. All authentic traditions concur that from Ḥadrat Khadījah the Holy Prophet had not one daughter, Ḥadrat Fātimah, but three other daughters as well. The Holy Prophet's earliest biographer, Muḥammad bin Ishāq, after mentioning his marriage with Ḥadrat Khadījah, says; "She was the mother of all the Holy Prophet's children except Ibrāhīm, namely Qāsim and Tāhir and Tayyib and Zainab and Ruqayyah and Umm Kulthūm and Fātimah." (Ibn Hishām, vol. I, p. 202).

The famous genealogist, Hāshim bin Muḥammad bin as-Sā'ib al-Kalbī, states: "The first born child to the Messenger of Allah before his call to Prophethood was Qāsim; then Zainab was born to him, then Ruqayyah, then Umm Kulthum." (Tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd, vol. I, p. 133). Ibn Hazam writes in *Jawāmi' as-Sīrah* that from Ḥadrat Khadījah the Holy Prophet had four daughters, the eldest being Zainab, then Ruqayyah, then Fātimah and then Umm Kulthūm (pp. 38-39). Tabari, Ibn Sa'd, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad bin Ḥabīb (author of *Kitāb al-Muhabbar)* and Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (author of *Kitāb al-Isti'āb)* state on the strength of authentic sources that before her marriage with the Holy Prophet Ḥadrat Khadījah had two husbands, Abū Hālah Tamīmī by whom she had a son named Hind bin Abū Hālah, and 'Atīq bin 'Ā'idh Makhzūmī, by whom she had a daughter named Hind. Then she was married to the Holy Prophet and all the genealogists agree

that from his loins she had the four daughters as stated above. (See Tabari, vol. II, p. 411; *tabaqāt Ibn Sa'd,* vol. VIII, pp. 14-16; *Kitāb al-Muhabbar,* pp. 78, 79, 452; *Al-Isti'āb,* vol. II, p. 718). All these statements are authenticated by the Qur'ānic declaration that the Holy Prophet had not one but several daughters.

111. "... will thus be recognized": will be recognized to be noble and chaste women from their simple and modest dress, and not women of ill repute from whom some wicked person could cherish evil hopes. ".. are not molested": will not be teased but let alone.

Let us pause here for a while and try to understand what spirit of the social law of Islam is being expressed by this Qur'ānic Command and what is its object which Allah Himself has stated. Before this in Sūrah An-Nūr: 31, the women have been forbidden to display their adornments before others except such and such men and women, and "also that they should not stamp their feet on the ground lest their hidden decoration (ornaments) should be known." If that Command is read with this verse of Al-Ahzāb it becomes obvious that the intention of the Command for the woman to cover herself well with the sheet here is to conceal her adornments from others. And, evidently, this purpose can be fulfilled only if the sheet or the outer-garment itself is simple; otherwise wrapping up oneself with a decorated and attractive sheet will defeat the purpose itself. Besides, Allah does not only command the woman to conceal her adornment by covering herself with the sheet, but also enjoins that she should let down a part of the sheet over herself. No sensible person can take any other meaning of this Command than that it requires to conceal the face along with the concealment of the adornments of the body and dress. Then, Allah Himself states the reason for enjoining the Command, saying: "This is an appropriate way by adopting which the Muslim women will be recognized and will remain safe from trouble." Evidently, this instruction is being given to those women who regard flirtation and stares and evil advances by men as annoying and troublesome and not as enjoyable, who do not want to be counted among ill-reputed, immodest society-girls, but wish to be known as chaste and modest domestic women. To such noble and pious women Allah says: "If you really wish to be known as good women, and the men's lustful attention is not pleasurable but embarrassing for you, then you should not come out of your houses in full make-up like the newly-wed brides so as to display your beauty and physical charms before the greedy eyes of the people, but the best way for this would be that you should come out in a simple sheet fully concealing your adornments and covering your face and walking in a manner that even the jingle of your ornaments does not attract attention. The woman who applies herself to make-up and does not step out of the house until she has fully embellished and decorated herself with every adornment cannot have any other intention that to become the center of attention of all the men, whom she

herself allures. After this if she complains that the greedy looks of the people cause embarrassment to her, and she does not wish to be known as a "society woman" and a "popular lady", but wants to live as a chaste house-wife, it will be nothing but a fraud. It is not the word of the mouth of a person that determines his intention, but his real intention is manifested in his act and mode of behavior. Therefore, the act of the woman who appears before the other men attractively itself shows what motivates her behaviour. That is why the mischievous people cherish the same hopes from her as can be cherished from such a woman. The Qur'ān tells the women: "You cannot be chaste women and society women at one and the same time. If you want to live as modest, chaste women, you will have to give up the ways that are conducive to becoming society women only, and adopt the way of life that can be helpful in becoming chaste women."

Whether a man's personal opinion is according to the Qur'ān or opposed to it, and whether he wants to accept the Qur'ānic guidance as a practical guide for himself or not, in any case if he does not wish to be intellectually dishonest in interpreting the Qur'ān, he cannot fail to understand its real intention. If he is not a hypocrite he will frankly admit that the Qur'ān's intention is what has been stated above. After this if he violates any Command, he will do so with the realization that he is violating the Qur'ānic Command, or regards the Qur'ānic guidance as wrong.

112. That is, "Allah will forgive the errors and mistakes that were committed in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, provided that you reform yourselves now when you have received clear guidance, and do not violate it intentionally."

113. "Having diseased hearts" points to two kinds of evils: (1) That a person should be an ill-wisher of Islam and the Muslims although he gets himself counted among the Muslims; and (2) that he should be cherishing evil intentions and having criminal mentality and his evil tendencies be manifesting themselves in everything he thinks and does.

114. This implies the people who, in order to cause panic among the Muslims and to lower their morale, used to spread rumours in Madīnah to the effect that the Muslims had suffered such and such serious setback, that a huge army was gathering together against them at such and such a place, that Madīnah was under threat of a sudden attack, etc. Besides this, they had another pastime. they would concoct and spread imaginary stories about the domestic life of the Holy Prophet's household and of other Muslims so as to produce suspicions among the common people and destroy the moral influence of the Muslims.

115. That is, "This is a permanent law of Allah's *Sharī'ah* that in an Islamic society and state such mischief-mongers are never given an opportunity to

flourish and prosper. Whenever the system of society and state is established on Divine Law, such people will be warned to mend their ways and if they still persisted in their evil ways they would be severely dealt with and exterminated."

116. The Holy Prophet was generally asked this question by the disbelievers and the hypocrites. By this they did not mean to obtain any knowledge but they did so out of fun and jest. As a matter of fact, they did not believe in the coming of the Hereafter at all; they regarded its concept as an empty threat only. They did not ask about the time of its coming so that they could set their affairs right, but what they really meant was : "O Muhammad, we have been doing everything to frustrate your mission, and you have not been able to do any harm to us so far; now let us know as to when will Resurrection take place when we will be taken to task by Allah."

117. This thing has been stated at several places in the Qur'ān. For instance, see Al-A'rāf: 187; An-Nāziyāt: 42-46: Sabā: 3-5; Al-Mulk: 24-27; Al-Mutaffifīn: 10-17; Al-Hijr: 2-3; Al-Furqān: 27-29; Ḥā Mīm As-Sajdah: 26-29.

118. One should note that the Holy Qur'ān has at some places addressed the true Muslims with: "O you who have believed," and at others the Muslim community as a whole, which includes the believers as well as the hypocrites and the Muslims of the weak faith, and at still others only the hypocrites. When the hypocrites and the Muslims of the weak faith are addressed with: "O you who have believed," it is meant to put them to shame, as if to say, "You claim to have affirmed faith, but your acts and deeds do not support your claim." A little study of the context can easily show which class of the people has been addressed at a particular place. Here, obviously, the common Muslims are being addressed.

119. In other words, it means: "O Muslims, do not behave like the Jews. You should not behave towards your Prophet as the children of Israel behaved towards the Prophet Moses." The Israelites themselves admit that the Prophet Moses was their greatest benefactor. Whatever they achieved as a nation was only due to him; otherwise in Egypt they would have been doomed to a worse fate than that of the Shudras in India. But how the Israelites treated the greatest benefactor of theirs can be judged by a cursory glance at the following places of the Bible: Exodus, 5: 20-21, 14: 12, 16: 2-3, 17: 3-4. Numbers, 11:1-15,14:1-10, 16 (the whole chapter), 20: 1-5.

The Qur'ān by referring to this ingratitude of the children of Israel, warns the Muslims, so as to say: "Refrain from adopting this same attitude towards Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace); otherwise you should be ready to face the same fate as the Jews."

This same thing was said by Holy Prophet himself on several occasions. Once he was dividing some goods among the Muslims. When the people

dispersed, a man said; "Muhammad in this division has shown no regard for Allah and the Hereafter." Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd heard this remark and told the Holy Prophet what had been said concerning him that day. He replied, "May Allah show mercy to Moses: he was maligned even more severely, but he showed patience." (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Abū Dā'ūd).

120. In the end, Allah wants man to realize his real position in the world; if in that position he regarded the life of the world as mere fun and sport and adopted a wrong attitude carelessly, he would only be working for his own doom.

Here, the word "*amānat*" (trust) implies *khilāfat* (caliphate) which, according to the Qur'ān, man has been granted in the earth. The inevitable result of the freedom given to man to choose between obedience and disobedience, and the powers and authority granted him over countless creations for using that freedom, is that he himself be held responsible for his voluntary acts and should deserve rewards for his righteous conduct and suffer punishment for his evil conduct. Since man has not attained these powers by his own efforts but has been granted those by Allah, and he is answerable before Allah for their right or wrong use, these have been described by the word *khilāfat* at other places in the Qur'ān, and by *amānat* here.

In order to give an idea of how important and heavy this "trust" *(amānat)* is, Allah says that the heavens and the earth, in spite of their glory and greatness, and the mountains, in spite of their size and firmness, could not have the power and courage to bear it. But man, the weak and frail man, has borne this heavy burden on his tiny self.

The presentation of the trust before the earth and the heavens and their refusal to bear it and their being afraid of it may be true literally, or it may have been said so metaphorically. We can neither know nor can comprehend Allah's relationship with His creations. The earth and the sun and the moon and the mountains are dumb, deaf and lifeless for us but they may not be so also for Allah. Allah can speak to each of His creations and it can respond to Him, though its nature is incomprehensible for us. Therefore, it is just possible that Allah, in fact, might have presented this heavy trust before them, and they might have shuddered to see it, and they might have made this submission before their Master and Creator:

"Lord, we find our good and our convenience only in remaining as Your powerless servants: we do not find courage to ask for the freedom to disobey and do justice to it, and then suffer Your punishment in case we cannot do justice to it." Likewise, it is also quite possible that before this present life Allah might have given another kind of existence to mankind and summoned it before Himself, and it might have willingly undertaken to accept the delegated powers and authority. We have no rational argument to regard this as impossible. Only such a person,

who might have made a wrong estimate of his mental and intellectual powers and capabilities, can think of regarding it as impossible.

However, this also is equally possible that Allah may have said so allegorically. In order to give an idea of the extraordinary importance of the matter, He may have depicted the scene as if the earth and the heavens and the mountains like the Himalayas were present before Him on one side and a 5 to 6-foot man, on the other. Then Allah might have asked:

"I want to invest someone of My creation with the power that being a subject of My Kingdom, it may acknowledge My Supremacy and obey My Commands of its own free will; otherwise it will also have the power to deny Me, even rebel against Me. After giving him this freedom I shall so conceal Myself from him as if I did not exist at all. And to exercise this freedom I shall invest him with vast powers, great capabilities, and shall give him dominion over countless of My creations so that he may raise any storm that he may in the universe. Then I shall call him to account at an appointed time. The one who will have misused the freedom granted by Me, will be made to suffer a most terrible punishment; and the one who will have adopted My obedience in spite of all chances and opportunities for disobedience, will be raised to such high ranks as no creation of Mine has ever been able to attain. Now tell, which of you is ready to undergo this test?"

Hearing this discourse a hush might have prevailed for a while all through the universe. Then one huge creation after the other might have bowed down and submitted that it should be excused from the severe test. Then, at last, this frail creation might have risen and submitted: "O my Lord, I am ready to undergo this test. I shall brave all the dangers inherent in the freedom and independence only in the hope that I shall be blessed with the highest office in Your Kingdom if I pass the test."

By imagining this scene through his mind's eye only can man judge exactly what delicate position he holds in the universe. Allah in this verse has called the person "unjust and ignorant", who lives a carefree life in the place of test, and has no feeling at all of how great a responsibility he is shouldering, and what consequences he will encounter of the right or wrong decisions that he makes in choosing and adopting an attitude for himself in the life of the world. He is ignorant because the fool holds himself as responsible to no one; he is unjust because he is himself preparing for his doom and is also preparing the doom of many others along with him.

APPENDIX

THE FINALITY OF PROPHETHOOD

(IN CONTINUATION OF E.N. 77)

A section of the people who in the present age have created great mischief by introducing a new prophethood, translate the word *khātam an-Nabiyyīn* as meaning the "seal of the Prophets." By this they imply that the prophets who would come after the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) would become the prophets only by bearing his seal; or, in other words, unless a person's prophethood was stamped with his seal, he could not be a prophet.

But this word, when considered in the context of the verse, does not at all bear this meaning. For if it had meant that, it would not only be irrelevant to the context but would also contradict the theme itself.[1] After all, what could be the relevance of saying abruptly that Muhammad was the "seal of the Prophets" and anyone who became a prophet in the future would become so only by bearing his seal, when the context, in fact, related to the objections of the people concerning Hadrat Zainab's marriage and removal of their doubts in that regard ? In this context not only is such a meaning absolutely irrelevant but, on the contrary, it also weakens the argument being advanced to answer the objections of the people. If it were so they would have been well justified by saying: "There would have been no harm if you did not contract this marriage at this time. If it was all that necessary to abolish this custom, one of the prophets coming after you, with your seal, could have abolished it."

Another interpretation given by these people is that *"khātam an-Nabiyyīn"* means *"afdal an-Nabiyyīn"* (the best of the Prophets). That is, the door to new prophethoods is open, though the perfections of prophethood have been exhausted with the advent of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). But this meaning too suffers from the same drawback as we have indicated above. It also has no

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1. For this please refer to E.N.'s 67 to 79 of this Sūrah.

hypocrites could very well say, "Sir, even if minor ones, prophets in any case will continue to come after you. Therefore, it was not necessary that you only should have abolished this custom."

Lexical Meaning of Khātam an-Nabiyyīn

Thus, as far as the context is concerned, it means that the *word khātam an-Nabiyyīn* here be only taken to mean that Prophethood has been brought to a close and no other prophet will come after the Holy Prophet Muhammad. But this is not only the demand of the context but of the lexical considerations as well. According to Arabic lexicon, *"khatam"* means to put a seal, to close, and to be free after bringing something to completion. Thus, *khatam-al 'amal* means *faragha min-al-'amal:* (he) finished the work; *khatam-al-inā':* (he) closed the mouth of the utensil and sealed it so that neither should anything come out of it nor enter it; *khatam-al-kitab:* (he) closed the letter and sealed its so as to make it secure; *khatama 'alal-qalb:* sealed the heart so that it neither understands anything new nor forgets anything already learnt; and *khitāmu kulli mashrūb-in* means "the flavour left by a drink after it has been drunk." *Khatam-ashshai': balagha akhiruhu: "khatam* of something is to reach the end of it." In this very sense is the word *khatam-i-Qur'ān* understood, and in the same sense are the last verses of the Sūrahs called *khawātim.* Similarly, *khatam-ul-qaum* implies the last person of the tribe. (See *Lisān-ul-'Arab, Qāmūs, Aqrab-ul-Muwārid).*[2]

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2. We have cited only three lexicons here but the same meaning of the word *khatam* will be borne out by every authentic lexicon of Arabic. The deniers of the Finality of Prophethood, however, in order to contravene the Religion of God, pay no attention to the lexicon but try to argue like this: Calling a person *khātam ash-shu'arā'*, or *khātam al-fuqahā'*, or *khātam al-mufassirīn* does not mean that after such a person, no other poet, or jurist, or commentator would be born, but it means that this particular branch of knowledge was exhausted with that person. But this is a fallacious argument. The use of such a title as an exaggeration does not at all mean that the real meaning of *khatam* should become "perfect and excellent", and using it in the sense of "last and final" should be discontinued as absolutely wrong. Such a thing can be said only by a person who is unaware of the rules of language. In no language is there the rule that if a word is some times used in a figurative sense, apart from its real sense, the figurative meaning should become its real meaning, and the word be forbidden to be used in its real meaning afterwards. If somebody were to say *jā'a khātam al-qaum,* before an Arab, the, latter would never understand it to mean

On this very basis, all the lexicographers and commentators have unanimously taken *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn* to mean *Ākhir an-Nabiyyīn*. From the viewpoint of Arabic usage and lexicon, *khātam* does not imply the postal seal which is used to issue letters, but it implies the seal which is put on the envelope so that it is secured and neither should anything come out of it nor enter it.

Traditions of the Holy Prophet Concerning Finality of Prophethood

The meaning of the word *khātam* as understood from the Qur'ānic context and Arabic lexicon is further confirmed by the explanations given by the Holy Prophet himself. Below we quote some of the most authentic *Aḥādīth* in this regard:

(1) The Holy Prophet said: The children of Israel were guided by the Prophets. When a prophet died, another succeeded him. However, there will be no prophet after me: there will be only caliphs. (Bukhārī: *kitāb al-Manāqib).*

(2) The Holy Prophet said: "My position in relation to the Prophets who came before me can be understood by a parable: A person

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that the most perfect man of the tribe had come, but that the entire tribe had come, and its last man had also arrived.

One should also note that the titles of *khātam ash-shu'arā'*, *khātam al-fuqahā'*, etc. given to some people, were given by human beings, and no human being can ever know that after the person whom he is calling *khātam* for some quality, another person of the same quality would never be born. That is why in human language, these titles are no more than mere exaggerations and recognition of excellence, but when Allah says that such and such a quality has been culminated and finalised in a particular person, there is no reason why we should understand it also in its metaphoric sense just as we do in case of human appelations. If Allah had called someone *Khatam ash-Shu'ara'*, most certainly there could be no poet after him. Likewise, after the one whom He has called *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn*, it is impossible that another prophet should come. This is so because Allah is the Knower of the unseen and hidden, man is not. Therefore, Allah's calling someone *Khatam an-Nabiyyīn* and the man's calling someone *khātam ash-shu'ara'* or *khātam al-fuqahā'*, etc. cannot be regarded as at the same level.

(2) The Holy Prophet said: "My position in relation to the Prophets who came before me can be understood by a parable: A person erected a great building and decorated and adorned it well, but in a corner he left a niche, an empty space, for just one brick. The people went round the building and wondered at its beauty, but said: Why was not a brick laid here ? So, I am that brick and I am the Last of the Prophets. (That is, with my advent the edifice of Prophethood has been perfected. Now there is found no empty niche, which may have to be filled by another prophet)." (Bukhāri: *Kitab al-Manāqib).*

Four *Aḥādīth* on the same subject have been reported in Muslim *(Kitāb al-Faḍā'il: Khâtam an-Nabiyyin)* with the following additional words in the last *Ḥadīth: fa-ji'tu fakhatam-tal-anbiya': "So,* I came and I closed the line of the Prophets." This same *Ḥadīth* in these very words is found in Tirmidhi: *Kitāb al-Manāqib,* chap. *Faḍl an-Nabī.*

In Musnad Abū Dā'ūd Tayālisi, this *Ḥadith* is one of those reported by Jābir bin 'Abdullah, and its last words are to the effect: "Through me the Prophethood was brought to a close."

In Musnad Aḥmad Traditions on the subject with a slight difference in wording have been reported on the authority of Hadrat Ubayy bin Ka'b, Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī and Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah.

(3) The Holy Prophet said: "I have been distinguished from the other Prophets in six things: (1) I have been endowed with the eloquent speech, (2) I have been succoured with awe, (3) Booty has been made lawful for me, (4) the earth has been made a mosque for me as well as a means of obtaining purity (i.e. In my *Sharī'ah* the Prayer can be offered anywhere on the surface of the earth and not only in specific houses of worship, and *tayammum* (purification through dust) can be resorted to for ablutions in case water is not available, (5) I have been appointed a Messenger for the entire world, and (6) with me the office of Prophethood has been closed. (Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ibn Mājah)."

(4) The Holy Prophet said: "The line of Prophethood and Apostleship has come to an end: after me there will neither be a prophet nor an apostle." (Tirmidhi)

(5) The Holy Prophet said: "I am Muḥammad, I am Aḥmad. I am the effacer: disbelief will be effaced through me. I am the assembler: after me the people will be assembled in the Plain of Resurrection. (That is, after me now only Resurrection is to take place). And I am the Last: after me there is no prophet." (Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Mu'wattā, Al-Mustadrak).

(6) The Holy Prophet said: "Allah has sent no Prophet who did not warn his people of the coming of the *Dajjāl* (the Antichrist, but he did not come in their times). Now I am the last of the Prophets and you are the last Community. Therefore, he is about to appear among you now." (Ibn Mājah).

(7) 'Abdur Rahmān bin Jubair says: "I heard 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Ās say that the Holy Prophet one day came out to us in a manner as though he were taking his leave. He said: I am Muḥammad, the un-lettered Prophet, thrice; then said: and no prophet will come after me." (Musnad Aḥmad: Traditions from 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ).

(8) The Holy Prophet said: "There is no prophethood after me; there are only harbingers of good news. It was asked, "What are the harbingers of good news, O Messenger of Allah ?" He replied: "A true vision," or said, "A righteous vision." (That is, there is no possibility of Divine Revelation now. At the most a person may receive an inspiration, which will be in the form of a true vision.) (Musnad Aḥmad, Nasā'ī, Abū Dā'ūd).

(9) The Holy Prophet said: "If there were a prophet after me, it would have been 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb." (Tirmidhī).

(10) The Holy Prophet said to Ḥaḍrat 'Ali: "You are to me as Aaron was to Moses, but there is no prophet after me." (Bukhārī, Muslim)

Bukhārī and Muslim have related this *Ḥadīth* in connection with the Tabūk Expedition. Two *Aḥādīth* on this subject have been related in Musnad Aḥmad on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Ṣa'd bin Abī Waqqās, the last sentence of one of which is to the effect: "But there is no prophethood after me." The detailed traditions related in this connection by Abū Dā'ūd Tayālisī, Imām Aḥmad and Muḥammad bin Ishāq show that on

the eve of his departure on the Tabūk Expedition the Holy Prophet had decided to leave Ḥaḍrat 'Ali behind in the defense and protection of Madīnah. The hypocrites thereupon had an opportunity to pass discourteous remarks about him. He went to the Holy Prophet and asked him: "O Messenger of Allah, are you leaving me behind among the women and children?" On this occasion the Holy Prophet consoled him, saying: "You are to me as Aaron was to Moses." That is, "Just as the Prophet Moses, on his departure for Mount Ṭūr, had left the Prophet Aaron behind to look after the children of Israel, so am I leaving you behind for the defence of Madīnah." But at the same time, apprehending lest Ḥaḍrat 'Ali's comparison with the Prophet Aaron might cause mischief later, the Holy Prophet immediately added: "But there will be no prophet after me."

(11) Thaubān says that the Holy Prophet said: " . . . and that 30 impostors will appear in my community each one of whom will claim to be a prophet, whereas I am the last Prophet: there is no prophet after me." (Abū Dā'ūd).

Abū Dā'ūd has related another *Ḥadīth* on this subject in *Kitāb al-Malāḥim* on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah. Tirmidhī also has related these two Traditions on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Thaubān and Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah; the second Tradition is to the effect: "So much so that about 30 impostors will arise, each of whom will claim to be a messenger of Allah."

(12) The Holy Prophet said: "There have been before you among the children of Israel such people, who were spoken to (by God) though they were not prophets. If there be such a one in my Ummah, it will be 'Umar." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Manāqib).*

A *Ḥadīth* on this subject in Muslim has the word *muḥaddathūn* instead of *yukallamūn,* which both mean the persons who are spoken to by God, or are spoken to from the unseen. This shows that if there had been any in this Ummah, who could have the honour of being spoken to by God, without being a prophet, it would have been 'Umar.

(13) The Holy Prophet said: "There is no prophet after me, and there is no ummah (of any other prophet) after my Ummah." (Baihaqi: *Kitāb ar-Ru'yā',* Tabarānī).

(14) The Holy Prophet said: "I am the last Prophet and my Mosque is the last Mosque (i.e. the Prophet's Mosque at Madīnah)."[3] (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Ḥajj*).

These *Aḥādīth* have been reported by a large number of the Companions and related by many Traditionists with many strong chains of authorities. A study of these shows that the Holy Prophet has on different occasions in different ways and in different words affirmed that he is the last of the Prophets, that no prophet will come after him, that prophethood has been finalised in him, and that the people who claim to be messengers and prophets after him would be impostors[4] . There can

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3. The deniers of the Finality of Prophethood have argued thus, from this Ḥadīth: "Just as the Holy Prophet has called his Mosque the last Mosque, whereas it is not the last mosque, but countless other mosques have been built after it in the world, so when he said that he is the last Prophet, it also meant that other prophets would continue to appear after him in the world; however, with regard to excellence and perfection he is the last Prophet and his Mosque the last Mosque." But interpretations such as these are, in fact, a proof that these people have lost the faculty of understanding the true meaning of the words of Allah and His Messenger. If a person has a glance through all the *Aḥādīth* on this subject as related in Muslim, he will understand precisely in what sense has the Holy Prophet called his Mosque the last Mosque. The Traditions related by Imām Muslim in this connection on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar and Ḥaḍrat Maimūnah (wife of the Prophet) are explicit that there are three such Mosques in the world, which are superior to all other mosques in the sense that offering the Prayer in them carries a thousand times greater spiritual rewards than offering it in other mosques. On that very basis, to undertake a journey for the purpose of offering the Prayer in these three Mosques only is permissible. No other mosque has the right and merit that one should make a journey especially to it for offering the Prayer in it, apart from the other mosques. The first of these is the *masjid al-Ḥarām*, which was built by the Prophet Abraham; the second is the *Masjid al-Aqṣā* which was built by the Prophet Solomon; and the third is the Prophet's Mosque at Madīnah, which was founded by the Holy Prophet himself. What the Holy Prophet meant was this: "Since no other prophet will come after me, no fourth mosque will be built in the world, offering the Prayer in which might carry greater rewards than offering it in other mosques and making a journey to which especially for the purpose of offering the Prayer in it might be lawful."

4. As against all these sayings of the Holy Prophet, the deniers of the Finality of Prophethood cite a saying of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah to the effect: "Do say

be no more authentic and reliable and conclusive explanations of the Qur'ānic word *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn* than this. The Holy Prophet's statement by itself is authoritative and decisive. But when it explains a text of the Qur'ān, it becomes all the more authenticated and conclusive. The question is: Who can be better qualified to understand and explain the Qur'ān than the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself? Thus, if a person gives a different meaning to *Khatam Nubuwwat* (Finality of Prophethood), how can we hold it worthy of any attention or consideration, much less accept it as correct?

Consensus of the Companions

After the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* the third place is accorded to the consensus of the Holy Prophet's Companions. All reliable historical traditions agree that the Companions by complete consensus had fought wars against the people who claimed to be the prophets and those who accepted them as such, immediately after the death of the Holy Prophet.

In this connection, the case of Musailimah the Liar is particularly noteworthy. This man did not deny the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet, but claimed that he had been made an associate with him in his Prophethood. Some time before the Holy Prophet's death, he had written:

"From Musailimah, the messenger of Allah, to Muḥammad, the Messenger of Allah: Peace be on you: You should know that I have been made an associate with you in the work of prophethood." (Ṭabari, vol. II, p. 399. Egyptian Edition).

Furthermore, the historian Ṭabari has related that in the call to the prayer that was pronounced under Musailimah, the words: *Ash-hadu*

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that the Holy Prophet is the last of the Prophets, but do not say that no prophet will come after him." But, in the first place, to cite a saying of Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah as against the authentic statements of the Holy Prophet is highly derogatory; besides, the tradition in which this saying has been ascribed to Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah is in itself un-authentic. No traditionist worthy of any mention has related it in any reliable *Ḥadīth* Collection. It is only traced to *Durr-i Manthūr*, a commentary of the Qur'ān, and *Takmilah Majma' al-Biḥār*, a dictionary of *Ḥadīth*, but without any reference to its chain of transmitters. How then can such a weak tradition containing a saying of a Companion be cited to contradict the sayings of the Holy Prophet, which have been related by all the eminent traditionists with strong and authentic chains of the transmitters?

anna Muḥammad ar-Rasūl Allah were also included. In spite of this clear affirmation of the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet by him, he was declared a *kāfir*, excommunicated and fought against. History also proves that the Banū Ḥanīfah had believed in him in good faith, and they had been made to understand that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself had made him an associate in his Prophethood. Moreover, the verses of the Qur'ān had been presented before them in a way as if they had been sent down to Musailmah, by a person who had received instruction in the Qur'ān at Madīnah. *(Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah,* vol. V, p. 51). But, in spite of this, the Companions did not accept them as Muslims and sent an army to fight them. Then, it cannot also be claimed that the Companions had fought against them not on account of apostasy but for the crime of rebellion. According to the law of Islam, in case war is fought against rebellious Muslims, their prisoners of war cannot be made slaves. Not to speak of Muslims, even the rebellious *dhimmīs* cannot be made the slaves in case they are captured in war. But when invasion was made on Musailimah and his followers, Hadrat Abū Bakr declared that their women and children would be made slaves; and when they were taken prisoners they were actually made slaves. Thus, it was from among them that a slave-girl was assigned to Hadrat 'Alī of whom Muḥammad bin Ḥanafiah[5], so well-known to the history of Islam, was born. *(Al-Bidāyah wan-Nihāyah,* vol. VI, pp. 316, 325). Thus, evidently, it was not the crime of rebellion for which the Companions fought them but the crime was that a person had claimed to be a prophet after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and others had believed in his prophethood. This action was taken immediately after the death of the Holy Prophet, under the leadership of Abū Bakr, and the full consensus of all the Companions. Perhaps there does not exist a more explicit example than this of a perfect consensus of the Companions.

Consensus of Religious Scholars

After the consensus of the Holy Prophet's Companions the next place with regard to authority is accorded to the consensus of the religious scholars who lived after the period of the Companions. A study of their verdicts shows that right from the first century after Ḥijrah till

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5. Ḥanafiah: a woman of the tribe of Banū Ḥanīfah.

the present day the religious scholars of every country of the entire Muslim world have held the unanimous belief that there can be no prophet after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), and this also that anyone who lays a claim to this office after him, or accepts such a claim, is a *kāfir* and must be excommunicated from Islam. Some of these verdicts are given below:

(1) A man in the time of Imām Abū Ḥanīfah (80-150 A.H.) claimed to be a prophet, and said, "Allow me to present proofs of my prophethood." The Imām ruled: "Anyone who demands a proof of prophethood from him, will also turn a disbeliever, for the Messenger of Allah has said: 'There is no prophet after me'." *(Manāqib* al-Imām al-A'zam Abī Ḥanīfah, Ibn Aḥmad al-Makki, vol. I, p. 161 . Hyderabad Ed. 1 321 A.H.)

(2) 'Allāma Ibn Jarīr Ṭabari (224-310 A.H.) in his well-known commentary of the Qur'ān, has explained the meaning of this verse, thus: "He brought the Prophethood to a close and sealed it: Now this door will not open for anyone till Resurrection." *(Tafsīr Ibn Jarīr,* vol. XXII, p 12).

(3) Imām Ṭahāvi (239-321 A.H.) writes in his *'Aqīdah Salfīyah,* in connection with the beliefs of the righteous, especially of Imam Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Abū Yūsuf and Imām Muḥammad (may Allah show mercy to all of them), in respect of Prophethood, "And that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is a chosen servant of Allah, His Prophet and favourite Apostle; and he is the last of the Prophets, the leader of the righteous, the chief of the Apostles, and beloved of the Lord of the worlds. Any claim to prophethood after him is deviation and worship of the lusts of the self." *(Sharh at-Ṭaḥaviah,* Dār al-Ma'ārif, Egypt, pp. 15, 87, 96, 97, 100, 102).

(4) 'Allāma Ibn Ḥazm Andalusi (384-456 A.H.) writes: "Most certainly the coming down of the Revelation after the death of the Holy Prophet has ceased, the reason being that the Revelation comes down to none but a Prophet, and Allah Himself has stated: Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets." *(Al-Muḥallā,* vol. I, p. 26).

(5) Imām Ghazzālī (450-505 A.H.) says: "There is complete consensus among the Muslim Ummah that there is no prophet after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) . . . The whole Ummah is unanimous that the Holy Prophet by his words *La nabiyya ba'dī* meant nothing but that after him there will neither be a prophet nor an apostle. Anyone who interprets this saying in any other way, falls outside the pale of Islam; his interpretation would be nonsensical and his writing heretical. Besides, the Ummah is also unanimous that there is no scope whatever for any other interpretation than this; the one who denies it, denies the consensus of the *Ummah*" *(Al-Iqtisād fil I'tiqād*, Egypt, p. 114).

(6) Muḥy-is-Sunnah Baghavī (d. 510 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Ma'ālim at-Tanzīl:* "Allah closed the Prophethood through the Holy Prophet; thus, he is the last of the Prophets.... And Ibn 'Abbās says that Allah Almighty (in this verse) has decreed that after him there will be no prophet." (Vol. III, p. 158).

(7) 'Allāma Zamakhsharī (467-538 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Al-Kashshāf:* "If you ask: How can the Holy Prophet be the last of the Prophets when there is the belief that the Prophet Jesus will come down in the last days before Resurrection? I shall say: The Holy Prophet is the last of the Prophets in the sense that no other person will be raised as a prophet after him. As for the Prophet Jesus, he is one of those who had been made the Prophets before the advent of the Holy Prophet. And when he comes again, he will come as a follower of the *Sharī'ah* of Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and will offer the Prayer with his face towards his *qiblah* (the Ka'bah) like any other member of his Ummah." (Vol. II, p. 215).

(8) Qāḍī 'Iyād (d. 544 A.H.) writes: "He who lays a claim to prophethood for himself, or holds that one can acquire it and can attain the rank of prophethood through the purification of the heart, as some philosophers and so-called *ṣūfīs* assert, and likewise he who does not claim to be a prophet but claims that he receives Revelation . . . all such people are disbelievers and

deniers of the Holy Prophet, for he has informed us that he is the last of the Prophets and that no prophet is to come after him. And he has conveyed this news from Allah that he has closed the Prophethood and that he has been sent to all mankind; and the whole Ummah is unanimous that these words have no other but the apparent meaning. There is no room for a different interpretation or special meaning. Therefore, there can be absolutely no doubt about such people's being *kāfir* both according to the consensus and the Traditions." *(Shifā'*, vol. II, pp. 270, 271).

(9) 'Allāma Shehrastāni (d. 548 A.H.) writes in his famous *Al-Milal wan-Niḥal:* "And likewise the one who says . . . that another prophet (except for the Prophet Jesus) will be raised after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), is a *Kāfir* and there is no difference of opinion about this even between two men." (Vol. III, p. 249).

(10) Imām Rāzī (543-606 A. H.), explaining the verse of *Khātam-an-Nabiyyīn* says in his *Tafsīr Kabīr;* "In this context, the reason for saying *wa Khātam-an-Nabiyyīn* is this: If a prophet after whom another prophet is to be raised, leaves the work of admonition and explanation of injunctions somewhat incomplete, the one coming after him can complete it. But the Prophet after whom no other prophet is to be raised, is by far more compassionate to his people (Ummah) and gives them explicit guidance, for he is like the father who knows that after him his son has no guardian and patron to look after him." (Vol. VI, p. 581).

(11) 'Allāma Baiḍāwī (d. 685 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Anwār at-Tanzīl:* "That is, the Holy Prophet is the last of the Prophets, who closed their line, or through whom the line of the Prophets was sealed. And the Prophet Jesus' second advent does not contradict the Holy Prophet's being the last Prophet, for when he comes, he will be a follower of his *Sharī'ah."* (Vol. IV, p. 164).

(12) 'Allāma Ḥāfiz ad-Dīn Nasafī (d. 710 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Madārik at-Tanzīl:* "And the Holy Prophet is *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn,* i.e. the last of the Prophets: After him no other person will be appointed a prophet. As for the Prophet

Jesus, he is one of those who had been appointed Prophets before him, and when he comes the second time, he will come as a follower of the Law of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), and as a member of his own Ummah." (p. 471).

(13) 'Allāma 'Alā' ad-Dīn Baghdādī (d. 725 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Khāzin:* "*Wa Khātam an-Nabiyyīn*, i.e. Allah closed the line of the Prophethood in the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be His peace). Now there is neither any Prophethood after him nor any associate with him in this.... *wa kān-Allah-u bi-kulli shai'in 'Alīmā:* Allah has the knowledge that there is no prophet after him." (pp. 471-472).

(14) 'Allāma Ibn Kathīr (d. 774 A.H.) writes in his well-known Commentary: "Thus, this verse is an express injunction in this regard that after the Holy Prophet there in no prophet; and when there is no prophet after him, there can be no apostle either, for apostleship is specific and prophethood general: every apostle is a prophet but every prophet is not an apostle. ... Anyone who lays a claim to this office after the Holy Prophet, is a liar and impostor and deviator and unbeliever, no matter what supernatural and magical spells and charms and sorcery he practises. . . . The same is the position of every such person who lays a claim to this office till Resurrection." (Vol. III, pp. 493, 494)

(15) 'Allāma Jalāl ad-Dīn Suyūtī (d. 911 A.H.) writes in *Jalālayn:* "*Wa kān-Allah-u bi-kulli shai'in 'Alīmā:* Allah knows that there is no prophet after the Holy Prophet; and when the prophet Jesus comes down, he will be a follower of the Holy Prophet's *Shari'ah.*" (p. 768).

(16) 'Allāma Ibn Nujaim (d. 970 A.H.) writes in his *Kitāb al-Ashbāh wan-Nazā'ir,* the famous work on the principles of jurisprudence: "If a person disbelieves that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is the last of the Prophets, he is not a Muslim, for this is one of those fundamental things knowing and believing which is a basic requirement of the faith." (p. 179).

(17) Mullā 'Ali Qārî (d. 1016 A.H.) writes in *Sharh Fiqh Akbar:* "There is complete consensus of the Ummah that laying claim to

prophethood after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is *kufr* (heresy)." (p. 202).

(18) Shaikh Ismā'īl Ḥaqqī (d. 1137 A.H.), explaining this verse in his Commentary *Rūḥ al-Bayān*, writes:" 'Aṣim has read the word as *Khātam*, which is the sealing instrument with which things are sealed. It implies that the Holy Prophet came at the end and in him the line of the Prophets was closed and sealed. ... Some people have read it as *Khātim*, which means the one who puts a seal. Thus, *Khātim* also is a synonym of *Khātam* . . . Henceforth the scholars of his Ummah will only inherit him in *Walāyat* (spiritual eminence, saintliness), the inheritance of the Prophethood having been brought to a close in him. And the second coming of the Prophet Jesus does not affect the Holy Prophet's being the last of the Prophets, for *Khātam an-Nabiyyin* means that no other prophet will be raised after him.... And Jesus had been raised as a Prophet before him. When he comes the second time, he will come as a follower of the *Sharī'ah* of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). He will offer the Prayer with his face towards his *qiblah*, like any other man belonging to his Ummah. He will neither receive revelation nor issue new commands, but he will be a Caliph of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). ... And the followers of the *Sunnah* believe that there is no prophet after our Holy Prophet, for Allah has said: "But he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets," and the Holy Prophet has declared: "There is no prophet after me." Now whoever says that there is a prophet after our Holy Prophet, will be declared a *kāfir*, for he has denied a fundamental article of the faith; likewise, the one who doubts it, will also be declared a *kāfir*, for the Truth has been made distinct from falsehood. And the claim of the one who claims to be a prophet after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) can be nothing but imposture." (Vol. XXII, p. 188).

(19) According *to Fatāwā 'Ālamgīrī*, *a* compilation of the 12th century after Hijrah, compiled by a board of eminent scholars under orders of Aurangzeb 'Alamgir: "If a person disbelieves that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is the last of the

Prophets, he is not a Muslim; and if he claims that he is Allah's messenger or prophet, he will be declared a *kāfir*." (Vol. II, p. 263).

(20) 'Allāma Shaukānī (d. 1255 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Fath al-Qadīr:* "The majority of the scholars have read the word as *Khātim* and 'Āsim as *Khātam*. According to the first reading, it would mean this: "The Holy Prophet closed the line of the Prophets, i.e. he came at the end of them," and according to the second reading this: "He was like a seal for them, with which their line was sealed, and with whose inclusion their group was embellished." (Vol. IV, p. 275).

(21) 'Allāma Ālūsi (d. 1270 A.H.) writes in his Commentary *Rūh al-Ma'āni:* "The word *Nabí* (Prophet) is general and *Rasūl* (Apostle) specific. Therefore, the Holy Prophet's being *Khātam an-Nabiyyín* by itself requires that he should also be *Khātam al-Mursalín;* and his being the last of the Prophets and Apostles implies that after his being blessed by Allah with the Prophethood in this world, the office of Prophethood for any jinn or human being has been abolished." (Vol. XXII, p. 32). "Whoever after him claims to be the recipient of revelation of prophethood, will be declared a *kāfir* and there is no difference of opinion among the Muslims in this regard." (Vol. XXII, p. 38). The Holy Prophet's being the last of the Prophets has been explicitly stated by the Book of Allah, clearly enunciated by the *Sunnah* and fully agreed upon by the entire Ummah. Therefore, whoever claims something contrary to it, will be declared a *kāfir*." (Vol. XXII, p. 39).

These elucidations have been made by the eminent scholars, jurists, traditionists and commentators of every Muslim country from India to Morocco and Spain and from Turkey to Yaman. A glance at their dates of birth and death will show that they include eminent authorities of every century of the history of Islam, from the first to the 13th. Although we could have cited the Muslim scholars of the 14th century as well, we have deliberately omitted them because someone might say that these scholars had given this meaning of the Finality of Prophethood especially in order to counter the claim of the modern

claimant to prophethood. Therefore, we have cited the writings of the earlier scholars who, evidently, could have no ill-will or animosity against any person of the present day. These writings conclusively prove that from the first century after Hijrah till today the entire Islamic world has unanimously understood the word *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn* to mean' "the last of the Prophets," that there has been complete unanimity of belief among the Muslims of every age that the door to prophethood after the Holy Prophet has been closed for ever and ever, and that there has never been any difference of opinion that the one who laid claim to prophethood or apostleship after the Holy Prophet, and the one who accepted such a claim, would fall outside the pale of Islam.

Now it is for every sensible person to see and judge for himself what room is there for anybody to open the door of prophethood for a new claimant and to take the word *Khātam an-Nabiyyīn* in a meaning different from that which is established lexically, which is evident from the Qur'ānic context, which the Holy Prophet himself has explained, which is completely agreed upon by the Companions, and which has been accepted unanimously by the entire Ummah, from the time of the Companions till the present day; and how can such people be regarded as Muslims, who have not merely expressed the opinion that the door to prophethood is still open, but have practically affirmed belief in the prophethood of a person, who has actually broken into the sacred house of the Prophethood ?

Three other things also merit consideration in this regard:

Is Allah the Enemy of Our Faith?

In the first place, Prophethood is a delicate matter. According to the Qur'ān, it is one of those fundamental articles of the faith whose acceptance or rejection determines whether a person is a believer or a non-believer. If a person is a prophet and one does not believe in him, one will be a *kāfir;* and if the person is an impostor and one believes in him, one will again be a *kāfir.* Concerning a delicate matter like this, Allah certainly could not be expected to have made any mistake. If a prophet were to be raised after the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), Allah would have clearly stated this in the Qur'ān, would have had it openly proclaimed through His Prophet, and the Holy Prophet would not have left the world until he had forewarned

his followers in unequivocal terms that other prophets would come after him and that they must believe in them. After all, what enmity could Allah and His Prophet have against our faith and belief that although the door to prophethood had been open and another prophet had to come without believing in whom we could not be Muslims, yet not only should we have been kept uninformed, but, on the contrary, both Allah and His Messenger should have made such statements as would involve the whole Ummah, throughout 1,300 years, and even today, in the misunderstanding that no other prophet was to be raised after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (may Allah's peace be upon him)?

Now, supposing the door to prophethood is still open and another prophet has also appeared, we will deny him straight way without any hesitation. The only risk could be of our accountability before Allah. If Allah were to question us on the Day of Resurrection, we could produce the whole evidence in His Court to establish that, God forbid, we had been involved in disbelief and deviation only by Allah's own Book and the *Sunnah* of His own Prophet. We do not at all apprehend that Allah will still punish us in spite of the evidence for not having believed in the new prophet. But if, on the contrary, the door to ptopethood is really closed, and no new prophet is to be raised, and in spite of that someone believes in the prophethood of an impostor, he should well consider what evidence he will produce in God's Court to escape the punishment for disbelief and deviation. Before the time comes for him to be produced in Allah's Court, he should examine his defence material here, and by comparison with the arguments presented above, should see and judge for himself whether a sensible person could run the risk of the punishment for disbelief by placing reliance on the kind of the defence pleas that he has at his disposal.

Is there Need for a New Prophet?

The second point that demands consideration is that prophethood is not a quality which someone could develop by making himself worthy of it through worship and righteous acts, nor is it a prize which might be awarded for rendering some services. This is indeed an office to which Allah appoints a person to fulfil a specific need. When the need arises, a prophet is appointed to fulfil it, and when there is no need, or does not remain any need, prophets are not sent unnecessarily in vain.

When we turn the Qur'ān to find out as to what were precisely the conditions that made the appointment of the Prophets necessary in the past, we find that there have been four situations which made their appointment essential:

(1) A particular nation stood in need of a prophet because no prophet had come to it before, nor had the message of a prophet sent to another nation reached it.

(2) The appointment of a prophet became necessary because the teaching of the former prophet had been forgotten, or tampered with, and it was no longer possible to know and follow his message in practical life.

(3) The people might not have received the full message and guidance through the former prophet and more prophets were needed to supplement his teaching.

(4) A prophet might have needed another prophet to help and support him in carrying out his mission.

Now, evidently, none of these situations needs to be fulfilled after the advent of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). The Qur'ān itself tells that the Holy Prophet has been raised for the guidance of the entire mankind and the cultural history of the world tells that since his advent conditions have been constantly such that his message and invitation could reach, and still can reach, every nation. Therefore, there remains no need for separate prophets to be sent to separate nations:

Again the Qur'ān bears evidence, and the whole *Ḥadīth* and biographical literature (on the Holy Prophet's life) testifies, that the teaching of the Holy Prophet still remains safe in its original form. It has not been tampered with in any way. The Book that he brought remains intact to each letter and syllable and will remain so till the Last Day. The full account and record of the guidance that he gave by precept and example is still available in its entirety and in such pure and original form as if we were a living witness to it. This sets aside the second need also.

Then the Qur'ān also proclaims unequivocally that the Religion of Islam was perfected through the Holy Prophet. Therefore, for the perfection of Religion also no new prophet is required.

As regards the fourth need, if a prophet were actually needed, he should have been appointed in the time of the Holy Prophet to assist him. Evidently, when none was appointed then, this need and condition is also eliminated.

Now we should be told what is that fifth kind of need for which a prophet may have to be raised after the Holy Prophet. If it is argued that the community has degenerated, and a prophet was needed for its reformation, we shall say that no prophet ever had been raised only for the sake of reformation in the world. A prophet is appointed so that Divine Revelation is sent to him, and Divine Revelation is needed either to convey a new message, or to supplement a former message, or to cleanse it of impurities and corruption. Now when the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) are safe and intact and the Religion has been perfected and completed, there remains no need for a new Divine Revelation. Now for the sake of the reformation only reformers will be needed and not any prophets.

A New Prophethood is a Curse rather than a Blessing for the Ummah

The third point worthy of consideration is that whenever a prophet arises among a people, they will immediately be confronted with the question of belief and unbelief. Those who accept him will form one community and those who reject him inevitably a separate community. The difference between the two communities will not be of superficial nature but a fundamental one owing to their believing and disbelieving in a prophet, which will prevent them from ever uniting together unless one or the other community abandons its faith. Then practically also they will have separate sources of the guidance and law, because one community will derive its law from the Revelation and *Sunnah* of the Prophet accepted and recognized by it, while the other community will reject it altogether as a source of law. For this reason it will be impossible for the two communities to unite and become a cohesive society.

If one keeps these realities in view one will understand that the Finality of Prophethood is a great blessing of Allah, which alone has made it possible for the Muslim Ummah to become an enduring and universal brotherhood. It has secured the Muslims against every fundamental difference which might have caused a permanent division in it. Now, whoever accepts the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) as his guide and leader and is not prepared to turn to any other source of guidance except his teaching, is a member of this brotherhood and can always be. This unity could never have been achieved by the Ummah had the door to prophethood not been closed and sealed, for it would have continued to sufferdisintegration on the advent of every new prophet.

Any sensible person after a little deliberation can easily understand that when a prophet has been sent for the entire mankind, when Religion has been perfected and completed through him, when his teaching has been fully secured and preserved for ever, the door to prophethood should naturally be closed and sealed in order that the believers the world over may unite into a single community permanently by adherence to the teaching of the Last Prophet, and the appearance of the new prophets every now and then does not cause divisions to appear in the Ummah. Whether a prophet is a "shadow prophet" or a "reincarnation", or whether he is the follower of a former Prophet, or a lawgiver and bearer of a book, in any case whenever such a prophet arises, and is sent by God, his emergence will necessarily cause mankind to be divided into two communities: those who accept him as a prophet will form the community of the believers and those who reject him will stand condemned as the disbelievers. This division is inevitable when there is really the need for a new prophet, but when there is no such need, it cannot be expected that Allah in His wisdom and mercy would cause His servants to be needlessly involved in the conflict of belief and unbelief and would prevent their becoming one integrated Ummah for ever. Therefore, whatever is established by the Qur'ān and confirmed by the *Sunnah* and consensus, is also corroborated by reason, and reason also demands that the door to prophethood should now remain closed and sealed for ever and ever.

The Reality about the "Promised Messiah"

The inviters to the new prophethood usually tell the ignorant Muslims that the traditions of the Holy Prophet have foretold the coming of a "promised Messiah", and the Messiah (Jesus Christ) was a prophet, and therefore, his second coming does not contradict the doctrine of the Finality of Prophethood. Thus, the doctrine of the Finality of Prophethood is true and, at the same time, the advent of the "promised Messiah" is also true.

In this regard, they also say that the "promised Messiah" does not imply Jesus son of Mary. Jesus is dead. The one whose coming has been foretold in *Ḥadīth* is a man like the Messiah, a Messiah like the Prophet Jesus, and he is so-and-so, who has already come. To believe in him is not contradictory to the belief in the Finality of Prophethood.

In order to expose this fraud we reproduce below, with full references to their sources, the authentic Traditions, which are found in the most reliable *Ḥadīth* collections. By going through these Traditions everyone can know what the Holy Prophet has said in this regard and how it is being misconstrued and misinterpreted these days for ulterior motives.

Traditions Relating to the Second Advent of Jesus Son of Mary

(1) Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah reports that the Holy Prophet said: "I swear by Him in Whose hand is my soul: the son of Mary shall descend among you, as a just ruler. Then he will break the Cross, and kill the swines,[6] and put an end to war (in another

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6. "To break the Cross and kill the swine" means that Christianity will cease to exist as a separate religion. The entire creed of Christianity is based on the doctrine that God caused His only son (the Prophet Jesus) to die an "accursed" death on the Cross, which made him the Atonement for the sin of man. And the distinction of the Christians among the prophetic communities is that they abandoned the whole Divine Law and only took this doctrine; so much so that they made the swine lawful, which was forbidden in the Law of all the Prophets. Therefore, when the Prophet Jesus will himself declare: "I am neither son of God, nor did I die on the Cross, nor became atonement for anybody's sin," the Christian faith will have no basis left for it. Likewise, when he will declare that he

Tradition, there is the word *jizyah* instead of *harb* (war), meaning that he will abolish *jizyah)* ;[7] then there will be such abundance of wealth that nobody will like to accept it, and (conditions will be such that) performing of one *sajdah* (prostration) before Allah will be considered better than the world and what it contains." (Bukhāri: *Kitāb Aḥādīth al-Anbiyā', bāb Nuzūl 'Isā Ibn Maryam;* Muslim: *bāb Nuzūl 'Isā;* Tirmidhi: *Abwāb al-Fitan, Bāb fī Nuzūl 'Isā;* Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyāt Abū Hurairah).*

(2) Another Tradition from Hadrat Abū Hurairah is to the effect: "Resurrection will not take place until Jesus son of Mary has descended..." (This is followed by the same theme as reported in the above cited Tradition). (Bukhāri: *Kitāb al-Mazālim, Bāb Kasr as-Salīb;* Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb al-Fitan).*

(3) Ḥadrat Abū Hurairah reports that the Holy Prophet said: "How will you be when the son of Mary will descend among you, and your Imām at that time will be from among yourselves?"[8] (Bukhāri: *Kitāb Aḥādīth Anbiyā', Bāb Nuzūl 'Isā;* Muslim: *Nuzūl 'Isā;* Musnad Aḥmad) .

(4) Ḥadrat Abū Hurairah has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "Jesus son of Mary shall descend; then he will kill the swine and destroy the Cross; and a congregation will be held for him for the Prayer; and he will distribute so much wealth that people will be satiated with it; and he will abolish the tribute; and he will encamp at Rauhā',[9] and from there will go to perform Hajj or

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had neither made the swine lawful for his followers nor given them the freedom to disobey the Law, the other distinctions of Christianity will also disappear.

7. In other words it means: "All kinds of differences among the communities will disappear and human beings will join one community, the Community of Islam; thus, war will be put to an end, and *jizyah* will cease to be imposed." This same thing is supported by the Traditions No. 5 and 15 below.

8. That is, "The Prophet Jesus, will not lead the people in the Prayer, but will perform his Prayer behind the existing Imam of the Muslim"

9. A place at a distance of 35 miles from Madīnah.

'Umrah, or both."[10] (The reporter is in doubt as to what exactly the Holy Prophet said) ... (Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyāt Abū Hurairah;* Muslim: *Kitāb al-Ḥajj).*

(5) Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah reports that the Holy Prophet (after making mention of the appearance of the *Dajjāl)* said: "In the meantime, when the Muslims will be making preparations to fight him, will be lining up (for the Prayer) and the *Iqāmah will* have been pronounced, Jesus son of Mary shall descend and lead them in the Prayer; and the enemy of Allah (i.e. the *Dajjāl)* on seeing him shall start dissolving like salt in water. If Jesus were to leave him alone, he would melt to death anyway, but Allah will have him killed at his hand, and he will show his blood on his spear to the Muslims." (Mishkāt: *Kitāb al-Fitan,* with reference to Muslim).

(6) Abū Hurairah reports that the Holy Prophet said: "There is no prophet between me and him (i.e. Jesus Christ), and he shall descend. So, recognize him when you see him. He is a man of medium height, of ruddy and fair complexion; he will be dressed in two yellow garments; the hair of his head will appear as though water was going to trickle down from it, whereas it will not be wet. He will fight people in the cause of Islam, will break the Cross and kill the swine and will abolish *jizyah;* and Allah will put an end to all communities in his time except Islam; and he will slay the Antichrist *(Dajjāl);* and he will stay in the world for 40 years; then will die and the Muslims will offer the funeral Prayer for him." (Abū Da'ūd: *Kitāb al-Malāḥim;* Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyāt Abū Hurairah).*

(7) Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah says that he heard the Holy Prophet say: " . . . then Jesus son of Mary will descend. The leader of the Muslims will say to him, 'Come, lead us in the Prayer', but he will say, 'No: you yourselves are leaders over one another.'[11] This he will say in view of the honour that Allah has bestowed on

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10. One should note that the person who has been accepted as "Jesus incarnate" in our time performed neither Hajj nor 'Umrah during his lifetime.

11 That is, "Your leader should be from among yourselves."

this Community." (Muslim: *Bayān Nuzūl 'Isā Ibn Maryam*, Musnad Ahmad: *Marwiyāt Jābir bin 'Abdullah*).

(8) Jābir bin 'Abdullah reports (in connection with the story of Ibn Sayyād): "Then, 'Umar bin al-Khaṭṭāb submitted: O 'Messenger of Allah, permit me to kill him. The Messenger of Allah replied: If he is the same person (i.e. the *Dajjāl*), then you will not kill him, but he will be killed by Jesus son of Mary. And if he is not he (i.e. the *Dajjal*), then you have no right to kill a man from among the *dhimmís*." (Mishkāt: *Kitāb al-Fitan*).

(9) Jābir bin 'Abdullah reports that the Holy Prophet (while relating the story of the *Dajjal*) said: "At that time suddenly Jesus son of Mary (on whom be peace) shall appear among the Muslims. Then the people will stand up for the Prayer, and he will be asked, 'Step forward, O Spirit of Allah (and lead us in the Prayer); but he will say, 'No: your own leader should step forward and lead the Prayer.' Then, after offering the Morning Prayer, the Muslims shall go forth to fight the *Dajjal*.' He said, 'When the liar will see Jesus, he will start dissolving like the salt in water. Then Jesus will advance towards him and will slay him; and it will so happen that the trees and the stones will cry out: 'O Spirit of Allah, here is a Jew hiding behind me.' None will be left from among the followers of the *Dajjal*, whom he (i.e. Jesus) will not kill." (Musnad Aḥmad: *Rawāyāt Jābir bin 'Abdullah*).

(10) Ḥaḍrat Nawwās bin Sam'ān Kilābī reports (in connection with the story of the *Dajjal*): In the mean time when the *Dajjal* will be busy doing this and this, Allah will send down Messiah son of Mary, and he will descend in the eastern part of Damascus, near the white tower, dressed in the two yellow garments with his hands resting on the arms of two angels. When he will bend down his head, waterdrops will appear trickling down, and when he will raise it, it will appear as though pearl-like drops are rolling down. Any disbeliever whom the air of his breath reaches—and it will reach up to the last limit of his sight—will fall dead. Then the son of Mary will go in pursuit of the *Dajjāl*,

and will overtake him at the gate of Lod,[12] and will kill him." (Muslim: *Dhikr ad-Dajjal;* Abū Da'ūd: *Kitāb al-Malāhim;* Tirmidhi: *Abwāb al-Fitan;* Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb al-Fitan).*

(11) 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ reports that the Holy Prophet said: "The *Dajjāl* will appear in my Ummah, and will live for forty (I do not know whether he said 40 days, or 40 months or 40 years). Then Allah will send Jesus son of Mary. He will closely resemble 'Urwah bin Mas'ūd (a Companion). He will pursue him and kill him. Then for seven years the people will live in such a state that no ill-will and enmity will exist between any two of them." (Muslim: *Dhikr ad-Dajjāl).*

(12) Hudhaifah bin Asid al-Ghifārī says: Once the Holy Prophet joined our company and we were engaged in mutual talk. He asked, "What are you talking about?" The people said, "We were talking about Resurrection." He said, "Resurrection will not take place until ten Signs have appeard." He then pointed out the ten Signs:(1) Smoke, (2) the *Dajjāl,* (3) *Dāābbat al-Ard,* (4) Rising of the sun in the west, (5) Descent of, Jesus son of Mary, (6) Gog and Magog, (7) Three big landslides: one in the east, (8) the second in the west, (9) the third in the Arabian peninsula, and (10) a fire which will arise from the Yaman and will drive mankind towards the plain of Resurrection." (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Fitan;* Abū Da'ūd: *Kitāb al-Malāhim).*

(13) Thaubān, the freedman of the Holy Prophet, reports that the Holy Prophet said: "Allah has saved from the fire of Hell two armies of my Ummah: the army which will invade India, and the army which will be with *Jesus son of Mary."* (Nasā'ī: *Kitāb al-jihād;* Musnad Aḥmad: *Rawāyāt Thaubān).*

(14) Mujammi' bin Jārlah Ansārī says: "I have heard the Holy Prophet say that the son of Mary will slay the *Dajjāl* at the gate of Lod." (Musnad Aḥmad; Tirmidhi: *Abwāb al-Fitan).*

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12. Lod (Lydda) is situated 13 miles south-east of Tel-Aviv, Capital of Israel, and is the most important airport of the country.

(15) Abū Umāmah Bāheli (while mentioning the *Dajjal* in a lengthy *Ḥadīth)* reports: Exactly at the time when the Imām of the Muslims will have stepped forward to lead them in the Morning Prayer, Jesus son of Mary shall descend upon them. The Imām will step back so that Jesus may step forward (to lead the Prayer), but Jesus, placing his hand between his two shoulders, will say, "No, you should lead, for the congregation has assembled to follow you." So, the Imām will lead the Prayer. After the salutation, Jesus will say, "Open the gate;" so the gate will be opened. Outside there will be the *Dajjāl* along with 70,000 of the armed Jews. As soon as he will look at Jesus (upon whom be peace) he will start melting like the salt in water, and will flee. Jesus will say, "I shall strike you a blow which will not let you live." And he will overtake him at the eastern gate of Lod, and Allah will cause the Jews to be defeated. ... And the earth will be so filled with the Muslims as a vessel is filled with water. The entire world shall recite and follow one and the same *Kalimah* and none shall be worshipped except Allah." (Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb al-Fitan)*.

(16) 'Uthmān bin Abī al-'Āṣ says: I have heard the Holy Prophet say:".....and Jesus son of Mary (peace be upon him) shall descend at the time of the Morning Prayer. The Imām of the Muslims will say: O Spirit of Allah, lead us in the Prayer. He will reply: The people of this Ummah are themselves leaders one over the other. Then the *Imām* will step forward and lead the Prayer. After the Prayer, Jesus will hold his weapon and advance towards the *Dajjāl*. On seeing Jesus he will start melting like lead. Jesus will kill him with his weapon and his followers will flee, routed and vanquished, but will find no place to hide; so much so that the trees will call out: "O believer, here is a Jew behind me," and the stones will call out "O believer, here is a Jew behind me." (Musnad Aḥmad, Ṭabarāni, Ḥākim).

(17) Samurah bin Jundub (in a lengthy *Ḥadīth)* has reported that the Holy Prophet said: Then in the morning Jesus son of Mary will join the Muslims, and Allah will cause the *Dajjāl* and his hosts to be routed, until the walls and the roots of the trees will cry out:

"O believer, here is a disbeliever hidden behind me: come and kill him." (Musnad Aḥmad, Ḥākim).

(18) 'Imrān bin Hasīn reports that the Holy Prophet said: There will always be in my Ummah a group who will remain steadfast on the Truth, and will overwhelm the opponents, till Allah's Decree comes to pass and Jesus son of Mary. (on whom be peace) descends. (Musnad Ahmad)

(19) Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has reported (in connection with the story of the *Dajjāl):* Then Jesus shall descend and kill the *Dajjāl.* After this Jesus will stay on the earth for forty years as a just leader and an equitable ruler. (Musnad Aḥmad)

(20) Safīnah, freed slave of the Holy Prophet, reports (in connection with the story of the *Dajjāl):* Then Jesus (on whom be peace) will descend, and Allah will cause the *Dajjāl* to be killed near the mountain pass of Afiq.[13] (Musnad Aḥmad)

(21) Ḥaḍrat Ḥudhaifah bin Yamān reports (with reference to the *Dajjāl):* Then, when the Muslims will stand up to offer the Prayer, Jesus *son of Mary* will descend just in front of them, and he will lead the Muslims in the Prayer. Then after the salutation, he will tell the Muslims to go away from between him and the enemy of Allah.... And Allah will make the Muslims to dominate over the followers of the *Dajjāl,* and they will inflict heavy casualties on them; so much so that the trees and the stones will cry out: "O 'Abdullah, O 'Abdur Raḥmān, O Muslim, here is a Jew, kill him." Thus, Allah will annihilate them, and the Muslims will be dominant; they will break the Cross, kill the swine and abolish the *Jizyah. (Mustadrak Ḥākim.* A brief version of this Tradition has also been reported in Muslim, and Ḥāfiz Ibn

13. Afiq (mod.Fiq) is the last Syrian city on the border between Syria and Israel. A little further on towards west at a few miles is the Lake Tiberias (Sea of Galilee), the source of River Jordan. Towards the south-west in the mountains is a low pass, which descends about 2,000 feet to the point from where River Jordan comes out from Lake Tiberias. This same mountain path is called 'Aqabah Afiq, the pass of Afiq.

Hajar in his *Fath al-Bārī* (vol. VI, p. 450) has declared it to be authentic).

These are 21 Traditions in all, which have been reported on the authority of 14 of the Companions of the Holy Prophet and related with correct references in the most reliable and authentic *Hadīth* Collections. Though, in addition to these, there are many other Traditions on the subject as well, we have cited only those few which are sound and authentic as regards the chains of their transmitters.

What do these Traditions Prove?

Anyone who goes through these Traditions will see for himself that they do not contain any mention whatever of the advent of a "promised Messiah", or "a man like the Messiah", or a "projection of the Messiah", nor do they admit that somebody in this age having been born from the womb of any mother and by the sperm of any father, should put forward the claim that he is the Messiah whose coming has been foretold by the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). All these Traditions clearly and explicitly give the news of the advent of the same Jesus Christ (upon whom be peace) who was born of the Virgin Mary two thousand years ago. It would be useless to debate here the point whether Jesus has died or is still living somewhere in the universe. Even if he is dead, Allah has the power to raise him back to life;[14] otherwise also it is not beyond the power of Allah that He should keep a servant of His alive for thousands of years somewhere in His universe, and then bring him back into the world whenever He wills. In any case if a person believes in *Ḥadīth*, he will have to admit that the one whose advent has been foretold will be Jesus son of Mary; and if he does not believe in *Ḥadīth*, he cannot be a believer in the advent of anyone whatever, for the doctrine of the Advent is based on *Ḥadīth* and on nothing else. But this is strange logic that the people should adopt the doctrine of the Advent from *Ḥadīth* and then should discard the particularities given in the same *Ḥadīth*, which clearly state that the one

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14. Those who deny this should see Al-Baqarah: 259, where Allah has clearly stated: "He (Allah) kept a servant of His dead for a hundred years and then brought him back to life."

whose advent has been foretold will be Jesus son of Mary, and not a "man who is spiritually like unto the Messiah."

Another thing which becomes equally evident from these Traditions is that the advent of the Prophet Jesus will not be in the capacity of a new Prophet: he will neither receive Revelation nor bring a new message or new injunctions from God, nor make any change or alteration in the *Sharī'ah* of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), nor will be raised in the world for the revival of Islam, nor will invite the people to believe in his prophethood, nor make a separate community of those who follow him.[15] He will be sent for a specific task, which will be to crush the mischief created by the *Dajjāl*. For this purpose he will descend in a manner that the Muslims among whom he descends will have no doubt at all that he is Jesus son of Mary, who has appeared at the right time, as foretold by the Holy Prophet. He will

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15. The Islamic scholars have explained this in great detail. 'Allāma Taftāzānī (722-792 A.H.) writes in *Sharh 'Aqā'id Nasafī*: "This is an established fact that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is the Last Prophet ..... If it is said that after him the coming of the Prophet Jesus has been mentioned in *Ḥadīth*, we shall say: yes, this thing has been mentioned, but he will come as a follower of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), for his *Sharī'ah* stands abrogated; therefore he will neither receive Revelation nor enjoin new injunctions, but will only work as a representative of the Holy Prophet." (Egyptian Ed. p. 135).

The same thing has been said by 'Allāma Ālūsī in *Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*: "Then, when the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) will descend he will retain his previous prophethood and will not be divested of it, but he will not follow his previous *Sharī'ah*, because it stands abrogated for him as well as for all other people; he will be under obligation to follow this *Sharī'ah* in every detail. Therefore, he will neither receive Revelation nor enjoin new injunctions but he will function as a representative of the Holy Prophet and as a ruler from among the rulers of his Ummah". (Vol. XXII, p. 32).

Imām Rāzī has further elucidated this point like this: "The period of the Prophets was up to the advent of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). With his appointment as a Prophet, the era of the Prophets came to an end. Now it is not at all incomprehensible that the Prophet Jesus after his second advent will be a follower of the Holy Prophet." *(Tafsīr Kabīr*, vol. III, p. 343).

immediately join the congregation of the Muslims, will offer his Prayer behind the Imam of the Muslims present at the time,[16] and will follow the leader of the Muslims as such so that there remains no room for anyone to entertain the doubt that he has come back to the world again to perform his prophetic duties in his previous capacity as a Prophet. Evidently, when a Prophet of God is present in a community, no one else can act as an Imām or a leader. Thus, when he will join the Muslims' Community as an individual, it will by itself be a declaration that he has not come as a prophet. On this basis therefore there will be no question whatever of the violation of the sanctity of the seal of prophethood on his advent.

It may be said (without making any real comparison) that his advent will be like the visit of a former head of a state in the time of the ruling head of a state and his rendering some service to the state under him. Even a person of ordinary common sense can understand that the mere visit and arrival of a former head of the state in the time of a ruling head of the state does not affect the constitution at all. The constitution, however, would be violated in two cases: First, that the former head of the state should, on his return, try to resume the office of the head of state, second, that somebody should challenge his former position of the head of state, for this would be tantamount to challenging the validity of all the works that had been accomplished during his past tenure of office. If neither case exists, the former head of the state's arrival by itself does not effect any change in the constitutional position of the country. The same will be the case with the Prophet Jesus' second coming. His mere advent does not affect the Finality of Prophethood. However, if he resumes the office of Prophethood on his advent and starts performing the duties and functions of Prophethood, or somebody repudiates and disowns his being a former Prophet also, this would certainly violate the sanctity of Allah's Law of raising Prophets in the

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16. Although according to the Traditions (No. 5 and 21) the Prophet Jesus after his descent will lead the Muslims himself in the Prayer, most of the Traditions which are more sound comparatively tell that he will decline the request to lead the Prayer, and will tell the Imām present at the time to step forward to lead the Prayer. This same thing has the consensus of the traditionists and commentators.

world. The Traditions have clearly ruled out the possibility of both. On the one hand, they explain that no other prophet will be raised after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings), and on the other, they give the news that Jesus son of Mary will come for the second time. This clearly shows that this second coming of Jesus will not be for the purpose of performing the duties of the office of Prophethood.

Likewise, his second advent will also not create the new question of belief and unbelief among the Muslims. Even if a person disbelieves in his being a former Prophet today, he turns an apostate. The Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself believed in his Prophethood and his entire Ummah has been his believer from the very beginning. The same will be his position then. The Muslims will not have to believe in a new prophet, but will believe in Jesus son of Mary as a former Prophet as they do today. This is neither contrary to the belief in the Finality of Prophethood today nor will be so then.

The last thing which becomes evident from these and many other Traditions is that the *Dajjāl* for the eradication of whose mischief the Prophet Jesus will be sent, will be from among the Jews, and he will present himself as the "Messiah." A person cannot understand the reality of this unless he gets acquainted with the history of the Jews and their religious beliefs. After the death of the Prophet Solomon when the Israelites suffered one calamity after the other and were ultimately scattered throughout the world as slaves by the Babylonian and Assyrian empires, their Prophets began to give them the good news of the advent of a "Messiah", who would deliver them from their disgrace and humiliation. On account of these prophecies the Jews had been expecting the advent of a Messiah, who would be a king, would fight and conquer lands and would gather together the Jews from all over the world and assemble them in Palestine and create a mighty empire for them. But when, contrary to these expectations, the Prophet Jesus son of Mary came as a Messiah from God, and came without an army, the Jews refused to accept and acknowledge him as the Messiah and made up their mind to kill him. Since then the Jews the world over have been awaiting the coming of the Promised Messiah, whose coming they had been foretold. Their literature is replete with the visions of the millenium. They have been waiting for many centuries the imaginary pleasures of

the millenium as described in the Talmud and the rabbinical literature and living by the hope that the Promised Messish would be a great military and political leader, who would restore to them the whole land between the river Nile and the river Euphrates (which the Jews regard as their heritage), and will gather the Jews together from every part of the world and assemble them once again in this country.

Now if a person looks at the affairs of the Middle East and studies them in the light of the background of the Holy Prophet's prophecies, he will at once perceive that the stage is fully set for the emergence of the great *Dajjāl*, who would arise as the "promised Messiah" of the Jews as foretold by the Holy Prophet. The Muslims have been expelled from the major part of Palestine and a Jewish state of Israel has been established there. The Jews from all over the world are being drawn to it. The U.S.A., Britain and France have turned it into a great military power. The Jewish scientists and experts are developing it with the massive aid of the Jewish capital and its power has become a great danger for the Muslim nations of the region. The leaders of Israel have never made a secret of their desire that they want to have the "land of their heritage". The map of the Jewish empire of the future which they have been openly publicising since long is given on the opposite page. This shows that they want to take the whole of Syria, the whole of Lebanon, the whole of Jordan and almost the entire Iraq in addition to Iskenderun from Turkey, Sinai and the Delta area from Egypt and the upper Ḥejāz and Najd from Saudi Arabia, which also includes Madīnah. From this one can clearly perceive that taking advantage of the confusion and chaos created by the prospect of some future world war, they will try to occupy these territories. Right on that occasion the great *Dajjāl* will arise as their Promised Messiah. The Holy Prophet has not only given the news of his coming but has also foretold that the Muslims will suffer colossal hardships in those days; so much so that one day will appear as long as a year. That is why not only did the Holy Prophet himself ask for Allah's refuge from the great mischief of the *Dajjāl* but also exhorted his followers to implore Allah for protection against him.

To counter and fight this Antichrist Allah will not send a "man like the Messiah" but the real Messiah, whom the Jews had declined to acknowledge as such two thousand years ago, and whom they thought they had disposed of by putting him on the Cross. The place where the

real Messiah will descend will not be in India or Africa or America, but in Damascus, for Damascus at that time will be the actual battle front. (Please see the map on the following page). In this map you will see that Damascus is hardly 50 to 60 miles from the Israeli border. From the foregoing Traditions it should not be difficult for anyone to understand that the *Dajjāl* will enter Syria with a Jewish army 70,000 strong, and will take position right in front of Damascus. Right at this critical moment the Prophet Jesus son of Mary shall descend in the eastern part of Damascus near a white minaret in the morning, and will lead the Muslims against him after the Prayer. The *Dajjāl* will retreat towards Israel by way of the Afiq Pass (with reference to Tradition No. 21), and Jesus will pursue him and overtake and kill him at the Lod airfield. (Traditions No. 10, 14, 15). After this the Jews will be picked off and killed wherever found so as to put an end to Jewish community (Traditions No. 9, 15, 21). Christianity also will be finished after the proclamation of the reality by the Prophet Jesus. (Traditions No. 1, 2, 4, 6), and all these communities will merge into the single Community of Islam (Traditions No. 6, 15).

This is the reality that becomes apparent from *Hadīth* without any ambiguity. In view of his, there remains no doubt that the business being spread in our country in the name of a "promised messiah" is no more than a deception and fraud.

The most peculiar aspect of this fraud and forgery is that the person who claims to be the subject of these prophecies has given the following explanation to prove that he himself is Jesus son of Mary:

> "He (i.e. Allah Almighty) named me Mary in the third part of *Burāhīn-i Aḥmadiyyah*. Then, as is evident from *Burāhīn-i Aḥmadiyyah*, I was reared up with the nature of "Maryhood" for two years.... Then... the spirit of Jesus was breathed into me as it had been in the case of Mary, and I was made pregnant in the metaphorical sense. At last, after a period of several months, which did not last more than ten months, by virtue of the inspiration recorded at the end of the fourth part of *Burāhīn-i Aḥmadiyyah*, I was made Jesus from Mary. So, in this way I became son of Mary." *(Kashti-i Nūḥ*, pp. 87, 88, 89).

That is, he became Mary in the first instance, then became pregnant by his own agency, then from his own self took birth as Jesus son of Mary ! One difficulty, however, remained to be overcome. According to the Traditions, Jesus son of Mary will descend in Damascus, which has been a well-known city in Syria for several thousand years, and still exists on the map of the world with the same name. This difficulty was overcome by another peculiar explanation:

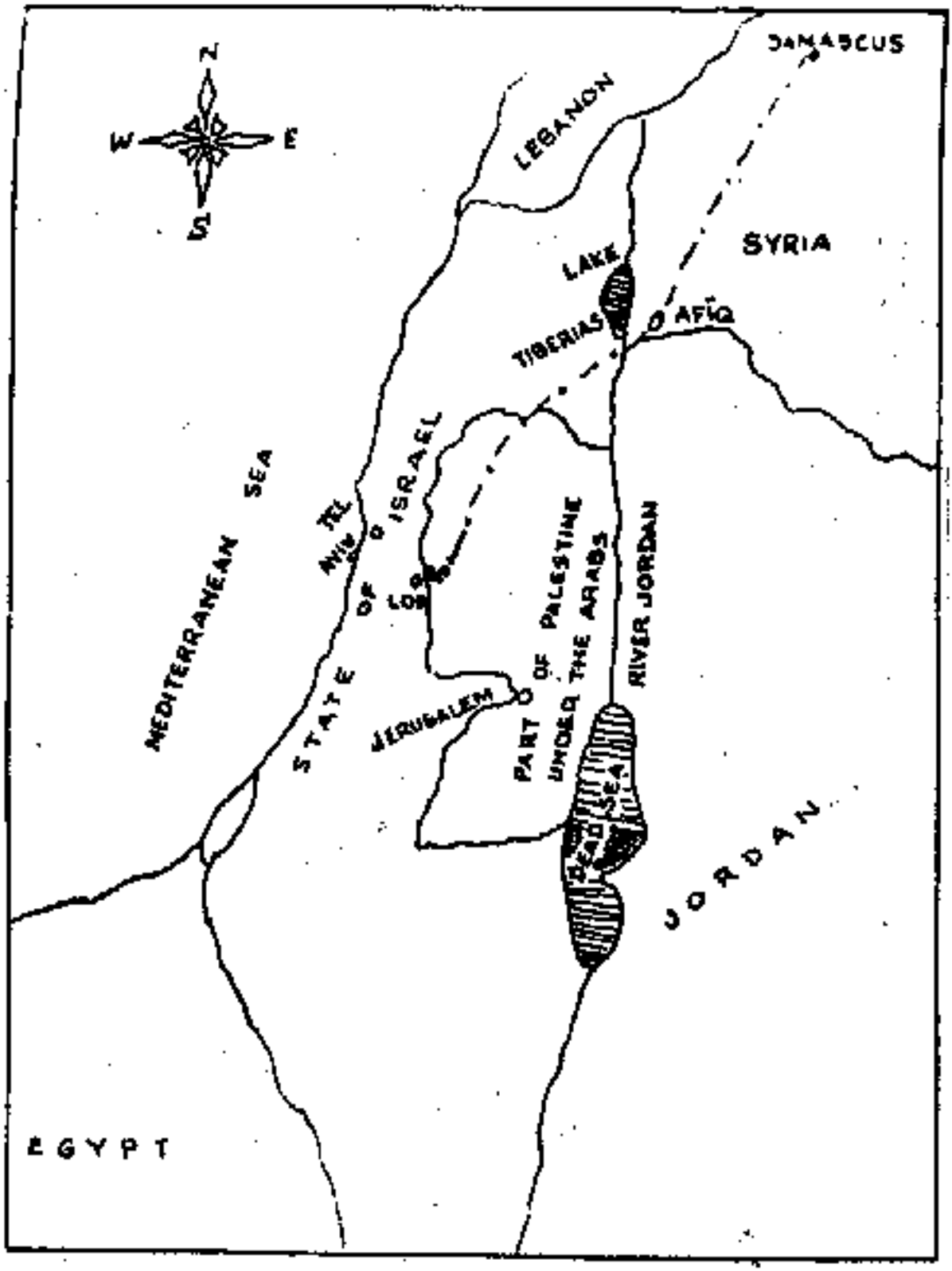
"Let it be known that in respect of the interpretations of the word Damishq (Damascus) it has been explained to me through revelation by Allah that in this place the name Damascus has been given to a town whose inhabitants possess the characteristics of Yazīd and follow the ways and notions of the unclean Yazīd.....This town of Qādiān, for the reason that most of its inhabitants possess the qualities and characteristics of Yazīd, bears a resemblance and similarity with Damascus." (Footnote, *Izāla-i Auhām*, pp. 63 to 73).

Yet another difficulty needed to be resolved. According to the Traditions, the son of Mary would descend near a white tower. This was resolved when the "Messiah" later got a minaret built for himself, although, according to the Traditions the minaret should have been there before the descent of the son of Mary.

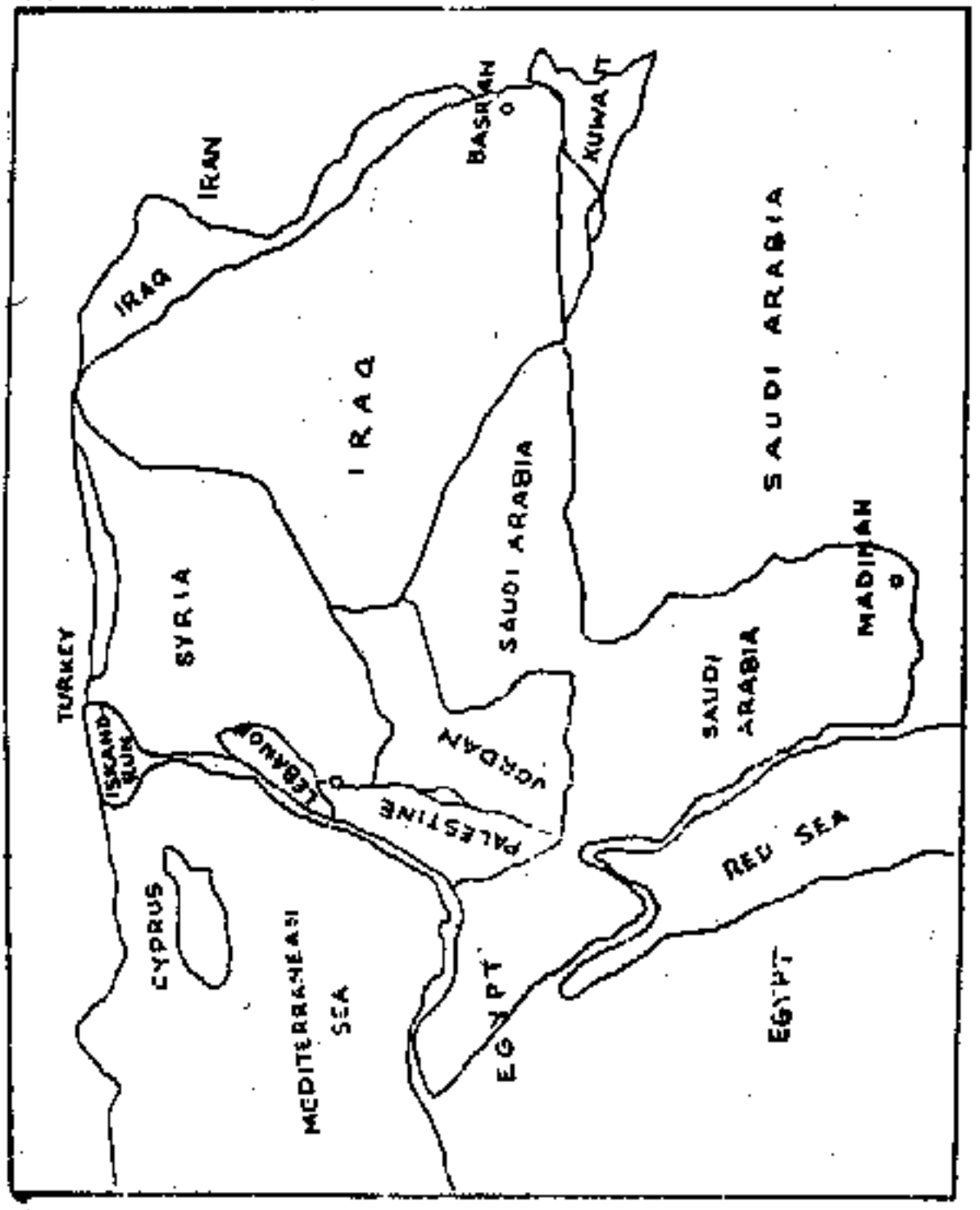
The last and most serious difficulty was that according to the Traditions, Jesus son of Mary was to kill the Dajjāl at the gate of Lod. To resolve this difficulty, in the beginning, different sorts of explanations were given. Sometimes it was said that Lod is the name of a village in the vicinity of Bait al-Maqdis *(Izāla-i Auhām*, published by Anjuman Aḥmadiyyah, Lahore, p.220). Then it was said, "Lud is a name given to the people who pick quarrels without reason. ... When the quarrels of the *Dajjāl* shall reach the extreme limits, the promised Messiah will appear, and he will put an end to all such quarrels." *(Izāla-i Auḥām*, p.730). But when this also did not help, it was plainly said that Lud meant Ludhiana, and the *Dajjāl's* being slain at its gate implied that in spite of the opposition of the mischief-mongers, it was from there that the first person swore fealty to the Mirzā Sāhib. *(Al-Hudā*.p.91).

Anyone who goes through these far-fetched interpretations will come to the conclusion that this is nothing but a clear case of imposture.

THE PLACE WHERE THE REAL MESSIAH WILL DESCEND



THE JEWISH STATE OF WHICH THE ISRAELI LEADERS ARE DREAMING





XXXIV

SABĀ

سبَا

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXXIV

SABĀ

سبا

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from verse 15 in which the word *Sabā* has occurred, which implies that it is the Sūrah in which mention has been made of Sabā. (i.e. the Sabaeans).

Period of Revelation

The exact period of its revelation is not known from any reliable tradition. However, the style shows that it is either the middle or the early Makkan period. If it is the middle period, it was probably its initial stage when the persecution had not yet become tyrannical and the Islamic movement was being suppressed only by resort to derision and ridicule, rumour-mongering, false allegations and casting of evil suggestions in the people's minds.

Theme and Subject Matter

The Sūrah deals with those objections of the disbelievers, which they were raising against the Holy Prophet's message of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter, and about his Prophethood itself, mostly in the form of absurd allegations and taunts and mockery. These objections have been answered, sometimes by citing them and sometimes without citing them, and the discourse itself shows which objection is being answered at a

particular place. The answers mostly take the form of instruction and admonition and argument, but at some places the disbelievers have been warned also of the evil consequences of their stubbornness. In this connection, the stories of the Sabaeans and the Prophets David and Solomon have been related to impress this lesson: "You have both these historical precedents before you. On the one hand, there were the Prophets David and Solomon, who had been blessed by Allah with great powers and such grandeur and glory as had been granted to hardly any people before them. In spite of this, they were not proud and arrogant, but remained grateful servants of their Lord. They were never rebellious. On the other hand, there were the people of Sabā, who, when blessed by Allah, became proud, and were consequently so thoroughly destroyed and dispersed as to be remembered only in myths and legends. With these precedents in view, you may see and judge for yourselves as to which kind of the life is better: that which is built on belief in *Tauḥid* and the Hereafter and the attitude of gratefulness to Allah, or that which is based on disbelief and *shirk* and denial of the Hereafter and the worship of the world."

سُوْرَةُ سَبَا مَكِّيَّةٌ
اٰيَاتُهَا ٥٤ رُكُوْعَاتُهَا ٦
بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ لَهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي
الْاٰخِرَةِ ۭ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيْمُ الْخَبِيْرُ ۝١ يَعْلَمُ مَا يَلِجُ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَمَا يَخْرُجُ
مِنْهَا وَمَا يَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاۗءِ وَمَا يَعْرُجُ فِيْهَا ۭ وَهُوَ الرَّحِيْمُ الْغَفُوْرُ ۝٢ وَ
قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَا تَاْتِيْنَا السَّاعَةُ ۭ قُلْ بَلٰى وَرَبِّيْ لَتَاْتِيَنَّكُمْ ۙ عٰلِمِ الْغَيْبِ ۚ
لَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْهُ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَلَا فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلَآ اَصْغَرُ مِنْ
ذٰلِكَ وَلَآ اَكْبَرُ اِلَّا فِيْ كِتٰبٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ۝٣ لِّيَجْزِيَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا
الصّٰلِحٰتِ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّرِزْقٌ كَرِيْمٌ ۝٤ وَالَّذِيْنَ سَعَوْ فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِنَا مُعٰجِزِيْنَ
اُولٰۗىِٕكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مِّنْ رِّجْزٍ اَلِيْمٌ ۝٥ وَيَرَى الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ الَّذِيْٓ اُنْزِلَ
اِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ هُوَ الْحَقَّ ۙ وَيَهْدِيْٓ اِلٰى صِرَاطِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَمِيْدِ ۝٦ وَقَالَ
الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا هَلْ نَدُلُّكُمْ عَلٰي رَجُلٍ يُّنَبِّئُكُمْ اِذَا مُزِّقْتُمْ كُلَّ مُمَزَّقٍ ۙ اِنَّكُمْ
لَفِيْ خَلْقٍ جَدِيْدٍ ۝٧ اَفْتَرٰى عَلَي اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا اَمْ بِهٖ جِنَّةٌ ۭ بَلِ الَّذِيْنَ لَا
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ فِي الْعَذَابِ وَالضَّلٰلِ الْبَعِيْدِ ۝٨ اَفَلَمْ يَرَوْا اِلٰى مَا بَيْنَ
اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَاۗءِ وَالْاَرْضِ ۭ اِنْ نَّشَاْ نَخْسِفْ بِهِمُ الْاَرْضَ
اَوْ نُسْقِطْ عَلَيْهِمْ كِسَفًا مِّنَ السَّمَاۗءِ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيَةً لِّكُلِّ عَبْدٍ مُّنِيْبٍ ۝٩
وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا دَاوٗدَ مِنَّا فَضْلًا ۭ يٰجِبَالُ اَوِّبِيْ مَعَهٗ وَالطَّيْرَ ۚ وَاَلَنَّا لَهُ الْحَدِيْدَ ۝١٠
اَنِ اعْمَلْ سٰبِغٰتٍ وَّقَدِّرْ فِي السَّرْدِ وَاعْمَلُوْا صَالِحًا ۭ اِنِّىْ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ
بَصِيْرٌ ۝١١ وَلِسُلَيْمٰنَ الرِّيْحَ غُدُوُّهَا شَهْرٌ وَّرَوَاحُهَا شَهْرٌ ۚ وَاَسَلْنَا لَهٗ

XXXIV

SABĀ

سبا

Verses: 54 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Praise is for Allah alone Who is the Owner of everything in the heavens and the earth,[1] and the praise is for Him alone in the Hereafter, too:[2] He is the All-Wise, the All-Aware.[3] He knows whatever goes into the earth and whatever comes out of it; and whatever comes down from the sky and whatever ascends into it: He is the All-Merciful, the All-Forgiving.[4] 1-2

The disbelievers say, "How is it that the Resurrection is not coming upon us?"[5] Say, "By my Lord, Knower of the Unseen, it shall certainly come upon you.[6] Not an atom's weight of anything is hidden from Him, neither in the heavens nor in the earth, nor anything smaller than an atom nor greater than it: everything is recorded in a clear register."[7] Resurrection shall take place so that Allah may reward those who have believed and done good works. For them there is forgiveness and a generous provision. As for those who have striven hard to discredit Our Revelations, for them there is a painful torment of the worst kind.[8] O Prophet, those who possess the knowledge fully well know that whatever has been revealed to you from your Lord, is the very Truth, and it guides to the Way of the All-Mighty, All-Praiseworthy God.[9] 3-6

The disbelievers say to the people, "Shall we point out to you a man who gives the news that when your body will have been scattered into particles, you will be resurrected once again? No one knows whether this man forges a lie in the name of Allah or is mad."[10] 7-8

9 Nay, but those only, who do not believe in the Hereafter, will incur the punishment and they are involved in gross error.[11] Have they never seen the earth, which surrounds them from front and from behind? If We will, We can sink them underground, or cause some fragments of the sky to fall down upon them.[12] There is indeed a Sign in this for every such servant who turns to God.[13]

10-11 We had blessed David with a great bounty from Ourself.[14] (We commanded:) "O mountains, join with him in glorification," and (the same Command We gave to) the birds.[15] We made iron soft for him, saying, "Make coats of mail and set the rings in proper measure."[16] (O people of David,) "Do good works: surely I see whatever you do."

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1. The Arabic word *hamd* is used both for praise and for gratitude and both the meanings are implied here. When Allah alone is the Owner of the whole universe and of everything in it, then inevitably He alone deserves to be praised for every beauty, perfection, wisdom, power and excellent skill and design shown and manifested by it. Therefore, every inhabitant of the world must thank Allah alone for any benefit and pleasure that he draws from anything here. For when no one else is a partner in the ownership of these things, no one else deserves to be praised or thanked.

2. That is, "Just as every blessing in this world is granted by Allah alone, so in the Hereafter also whatever a person will get, he will get from His treasures and by His grace. Therefore, in the Hereafter too, Allah alone deserves to be praised as well as thanked."

3. That is, "All His works are based on perfect wisdom and knowledge. Whatever He does, He does right. He has full knowledge about every creation of His as to where it is, in what state it is, what are its requirements, what precisely needs to be done for its well-being, what it has done so far and what it will do in the future. He is not unaware of the world created by Himself, but is fully aware of the condition and state of every particle in it."

4. That is, "If a person (or persons) is not being seized in spite of rebellion against Him in His Kingdom, it is not because this world is a lawless kingdom and Allah is ruler, but because Allah is an inept All-Merciful and All-Forbearing. Although it lies in His power to seize the sinner and the wrongdoer immediately on the commission of sin, to withhold his sustenance, to paralyse his body, and to put him to death suddenly, yet He does not do so. It is the demand of His Beneficence that in spite of being All-Powerful He gives the disobedient servant plenty of rope and enough respite to mend his ways and as soon as he desists from his evil ways, He pardons and forgives him."

5. This they said satirically and mockingly. What they meant was: "This Prophet has been giving us the news of his coming of Resurrection for a long time now, but Resurrection has not overtaken us so far although we have openly denied and rejected him as a Prophet, have been insolent to him and have ridiculed him in every way."

6. The use of the attribute "Knower of the unseen" for Allah while swearing by him by itself points to the fact that the coming of Resurrection is certain, but no one knows except Allah, Knower of the unseen, when exactly it will come. This same theme has been explained at different places in the Qur'ān in various ways. For details, see Al-A'rāf: 187, Ṭā Hā: 15. Luqmān: 34, Al-Aḥzāb: 63, Al-Mulk: 25-26, An-Nāziyāt: 42-44.

7. This is one of the arguments for the possibility of the Hereafter as is being stated in verse 7 below. One of the reasons why the deniers of the Hereafter regarded the life-after-death as irrational was : They said that when all human beings will have become dust after death, and scattered away in particles, how it will be possible to bring all the countless particles together and combine them to be re-created as the same human bodies once again. This doubt has been dispelled, saying, "Every particle wherever it is, is recorded in God's Register, and God knows where a particle is. Therefore, when He wills to recreate, He will not face any difficulty in gathering together all the particles of the body of each and every man."

8. The above was an argument for the possibility of the Hereafter: this is an argument for its need and necessity. It means: A time must come when the wicked should be requited for their wickedness and the righteous rewarded for their righteousness. Reason wants and justice demands that a worker of goodness should be rewarded and a worker of evil punished. Now when you see that in the present worldly life neither is an evildoer fully requited for his evil nor a worker of goodness for his goodness, rather there are opposite results of evil and goodness in most cases, you should admit that this necessary demand of both reason and justice must be fulfilled at some time in the future. Resurrection and the Hereafter will be the same time. It is not its coming but its not coming which is contrary to reason and against justice.

In this connection, another point becomes evident from the preceding verses. They tell that the result of faith and righteous acts is forgiveness and a bounteous provision, and for those who strive and act antagonistically in order to discredit and defeat Allah's Religion, there will be a torment of the worst kind. This makes it manifest that he who believes sincerely will not be deprived of forgiveness even though he may not get a bounteous provision owing to some flaw or weakness in his deeds. And the one who is a disbeliever but who does not adopt

an attitude of enmity and antagonism towards the true Faith, will not be able to avoid the torment but he will be saved from the worst torment.

9. That is, "These antagonists cannot succeed in their object to prove the truth presented by you false, however hard they may try, for they can only delude and misguide the ignorant people by their designs. Those possessed of knowledge cannot be deceived by them."

10. The chiefs of the Quraish knew full well that it was extremely difficult for the common people to accuse Muhammad (upon whom be Allah' peace) of being a liar, for the whole nation knew that he was a completely truthful person, and no one had ever heard a lie from him all his life. Therefore, they presented their charge against him before the people like this: "When this person utters an impossible thing like the life-after-death from his mouth, he is either uttering (God forbid) a falsehood deliberately, or he is mad." But this accusation of madness also was as absurd as of falsehood, for a stupid person only could admit that such a wise and intelligent man as the Holy prophet could be mad. That is why Allah did not feel it was necessary to refute their absurd charge by an argument, and only made mention of their wonder which they expressed at the possibility of the life-after-death.

11. This is the first answer to their charge. It means: "O foolish people, it is you who have lost your reason. For you do not listen to the one who is informing you of the truth and are recklessly galloping on the way that leads to Hell. But the height of your stupidity is that you are calling the one who is anxious for your salvation, mad."

12. This is the second answer to their charge. To understand it well one should bear in mind the fact that three things were most prominent among the reasons for which the disbelieving Quraish denied the life-after-death: (1) They did not want to believe in any kind of accountability before God, for after believing in such a thing they would be left with no freedom whatever to behave and act as they pleased in the world. (2) They thought it was inconceivable that Resurrection would take place and the present material order of the universe would be destroyed and replaced by a new order. (3) They thought it was impossible that the people who had died hundreds of thousands of years in the past and whose bones even had decayed and disintegrated, would be raised back to life, with the same body and soul. The answer given above covers all these three aspects, and contains a severe warning as well. The details of the theme contained in these brief sentences are given below:

(1) If you ever had observed this earth and the heavens with clear sightedness, you would have seen that it is not a plaything nor has its creation come into being by accident. Everything in this universe points to

the fact that it has been created by an All-Powerful Being with great wisdom. In such a wise system it would be highly absurd to think that somebody could be left to live an irresponsible and unaccountable life after he had been given the faculties of intellect and discrimination and authority.

(2) Anyone who sees the natural order with discerning eyes will realize that the occurrence of Resurrection is not at all difficult. It can take place suddenly as soon as the system in which the earth and the heavens are bound together is disturbed. And the same system testifies that the One Who has made and is running this world today can create another world again. If it were difficult for Him to do so, this world would not have existed as it does today.

(3) Your opinion and judgement about the Creator of the universe that it will be impossible for Him to resurrect the dead, is strange. The bodies of the men who die may utterly decay and disintegrate and be scattered but nevertheless remain within the bounds of this very universe and do not go anywhere outside its bounds. Then it is not at all difficult for the God Who has created this earth and the heavens to gather together everything from the earth and water and air wherever it happens to be. Whatever makes up your body today was collected and combined by Him, and brought out from this very earth, water and air. When the collecting and assembling of these elements together is possible today, how will it be impossible tomorrow?

Besides these three arguments, the discourse also contains a subtle warning to the effect: "You are surrounded by God's Kingdom on all sides. Wherever you may go, you would be covered and surrounded by the same universe. You cannot find any place of refuge against God, and God's power is such that He can afflict you whenever He likes with a calamity from under your feet or from above your heads. You do not know what forces might be working under the very surface of the earth which you find as an abode of perfect peace and safety for yourselves, and when they would cause an earthquake to take place and turn the same earth into your grave. You do not know when a disaster might befall you—a lightning, or a devastating rain, or some other calamity—from the same sky under which you walk about with full peace and satisfaction of the heart as if it were the ceiling of your own house. In a state like this, your fearlessness of God, your heedlessness of any thought of the Hereafter and your vain and nonsensical talk against the admonition of a well-wisher has no other meaning than that you are only inviting your own doom."

[Contd. on p. 196

عَيْنَ الْقِطْرِ ۖ وَمِنَ الْجِنِّ مَنْ يَّعْمَلُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ بِاِذْنِ رَبِّهٖ ۖ وَمَنْ يَّزِغْ
مِنْهُمْ عَنْ اَمْرِنَا نُذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ السَّعِيْرِ ﴿١٢﴾ يَعْمَلُوْنَ لَهٗ مَا يَشَآءُ مِنْ
مَّحَارِيْبَ وَتَمَاثِيْلَ وَجِفَانٍ كَالْجَوَابِ وَقُدُوْرٍ رّٰسِيٰتٍ ۖ اِعْمَلُوْٓا اٰلَ دَاوٗدَ
شُكْرًا ۖ وَقَلِيْلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّكُوْرُ ﴿١٣﴾ فَلَمَّا قَضَيْنَا عَلَيْهِ الْمَوْتَ مَا دَلَّهُمْ
عَلٰى مَوْتِهٖٓ اِلَّا دَآبَّةُ الْاَرْضِ تَاْكُلُ مِنْسَاَتَهٗ ۚ فَلَمَّا خَرَّ تَبَيَّنَتِ الْجِنُّ اَنْ
لَّوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ الْغَيْبَ مَا لَبِثُوْا فِي الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِيْنِ ﴿١٤﴾ لَقَدْ كَانَ لِسَبَاٍ
فِيْ مَسْكَنِهِمْ اٰيَةٌ ۚ جَنَّتٰنِ عَنْ يَّمِيْنٍ وَّشِمَالٍ ۚ كُلُوْا مِنْ رِّزْقِ رَبِّكُمْ وَ
اشْكُرُوْا لَهٗ ۚ بَلْدَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ وَّرَبٌّ غَفُوْرٌ ﴿١٥﴾ فَاَعْرَضُوْا فَاَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سَيْلَ
الْعَرِمِ وَبَدَّلْنٰهُمْ بِجَنَّتَيْهِمْ جَنَّتَيْنِ ذَوَاتَيْ اُكُلٍ خَمْطٍ وَّاَثْلٍ وَّشَيْءٍ
مِّنْ سِدْرٍ قَلِيْلٍ ﴿١٦﴾ ذٰلِكَ جَزَيْنٰهُمْ بِمَا كَفَرُوْا ۚ وَهَلْ نُجٰزِيْٓ اِلَّا الْكَفُوْرَ ﴿١٧﴾
وَجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ الْقُرَى الَّتِيْ بٰرَكْنَا فِيْهَا قُرًى ظَاهِرَةً وَّقَدَّرْنَا فِيْهَا
السَّيْرَ ۚ سِيْرُوْا فِيْهَا لَيَالِيَ وَاَيَّامًا اٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ فَقَالُوْا رَبَّنَا بٰعِدْ بَيْنَ اَسْفَارِنَا وَظَلَمُوْٓا
اَنْفُسَهُمْ فَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ اَحَادِيْثَ وَمَزَّقْنٰهُمْ كُلَّ مُمَزَّقٍ ۚ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ
لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُوْرٍ ﴿١٩﴾ وَلَقَدْ صَدَّقَ عَلَيْهِمْ اِبْلِيْسُ ظَنَّهٗ فَاتَّبَعُوْهُ اِلَّا فَرِيْقًا
مِّنَ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَمَا كَانَ لَهٗ عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ سُلْطٰنٍ اِلَّا لِنَعْلَمَ مَنْ يُّؤْمِنُ
بِالْاٰخِرَةِ مِمَّنْ هُوَ مِنْهَا فِيْ شَكٍّ ۚ وَرَبُّكَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ حَفِيْظٌ ﴿٢١﴾ قُلِ ادْعُوا
الَّذِيْنَ زَعَمْتُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ۚ لَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَلَا
فِي الْاَرْضِ وَمَا لَهُمْ فِيْهِمَا مِنْ شِرْكٍ وَّمَا لَهٗ مِنْهُمْ مِّنْ ظَهِيْرٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَا
تَنْفَعُ الشَّفَاعَةُ عِنْدَهٗٓ اِلَّا لِمَنْ اَذِنَ لَهٗ ۚ حَتّٰٓى اِذَا فُزِّعَ عَنْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ قَالُوْا

And for Solomon We subjected the wind which covered a month's journey in the morning and a month's journey in the evening;[17] and We made a fountain of molten copper to flow for him[18] and subdued such jinns to him who served before him by the command of his Lord.[19] Whoever from among them swerved from Our Command, We made him taste the blazing Fire. They made for him whatever he desired: lofty edifies, images,[20] bowls like troughs and immovable heavy cooking-pots.[21] ___ O people of David, work gratefully:[22] a few of My servants only are grateful. 12-13

Then, when we decreed death for Solomon, there was nothing to inform the jinns of his death except the wood louse which was eating away his staff. So, when Solomon fell down, it became clear to the jinns[23] that if they had known the unseen, they would not have continued in the humiliating torment.[24] 14

For Sabā[25] there was a Sign in their own dwelling-place:[26] two gardens, on the right and on the left: eat of the provisions of your Lord and be grateful to Him: pure and pleasant is the land and Forgiving the Lord. But they turned away.[28] Consequently, We sent upon them a flood due to bursting of the dam[29] and replaced their two gardens by two other gardens producing bitter fruit and tamarisks and a few lote bushes.[30] This was Our retribution for their disbelief and We recompense none with such a retribution except the ungrateful. 15-17

And We had made between them and the habitations which We had blessed, (other) conspicuous habitations and set between them their travelling distances:[31] "Travel on these ways night and day in complete security." But they said, "Our Lord, make our journeys longer."[32] They wronged their own selves. Consequently, We made them mere legends and scattered them utterly.[33] Surely there are Signs in this for every patient and grateful person.[34] In their case Iblīs found his suspicions correct, and they all followed him except for a small group of the believers.[35] Iblīs did not have any power over them, but whatever happened, it happened because We wanted to see who believed in the Hereafter and who cherished any doubt about it.[36] Your Lord is Watchful over everything.[37] 18-21

(O Prophet,)[38] say (to the *mushriks*), "Call those whom you worship as deities instead of Allah.[39] They neither own an atom's 22-23

weight of anything in the heavens nor in the earth, nor have they anything to share in either, nor is any of them a helper of Allah. And no intercession before Allah can avail anyone except for the one for whom Allah permits it.[40] So much so that when dread is gone from their hearts, the people will ask (the intercessors), "What reply did your Lord give?" They will say, "The right reply! And He is the Exalted, the Great!"[41]

Contd. from p. 193]

13. That is, "The person who is neither prejudiced nor obstinate and stubborn, but is a sincere seeker of guidance from his God, can learn many lessons from the observation of the earth and heavens; but the one whose heart is turned away from God, will see everything in the universe, but will never perceive any Sign pointing to the Truth."

14. This is an allusion to the countless favours with which Allah had blessed the Prophet David. He was an ordinary young man of the tribe of Judah, living at Bethlehem. In a campaign against the Philistines he slew the giant Goliath, the great enemy of Israel, and suddenly grew in esteem of the Israelites. With this event began his rise to prominence; so much so that after the death of Saul he was first elected king of Judah in Hebron (mod. Al-Khalīl), and then a few years later he was made king over all the tribes of Israel. He took Jerusalem and made it the capital of the kingdom of Israel. It was under his leadership that for the first time in history a God-worshipping kingdom was established, whose boundaries extended from the Gulf of 'Aqabah to the western banks of the River Euphrates. In addition to these favours, he was further graced with Divine bounties in the form of knowledge and wisdom, and the qualities of justice and mercy and devotion to the truth. (For details, see E.N. 273 of Al-Baqarah and E.N. 7 of Banī Isrā'īl).

15. For this please refer to Al-Anbiyā': 79 and E.N. 71 thereof.

16. For this also please refer to Al-Anbiyā': 80 and E.N. 72 thereof.

17. For this also please refer to Al-Anbiyâ: 81 and E.N. 74 thereof.

18. Some former commentators have taken this to mean that a spring from the earth had erupted for the Prophet Solomon from which molten copper flowed out instead of water. But another interpretation of this verse can be that in the time of the Prophet Solomon the work of melting and moulding copper for different uses was done on a very large scale and the same has been referred to here as the flowing of a spring of molten copper for him. (For further details, see E.N. 74 of Al-Anbiyā').

19. The question whether the jinns who had been subdued to the Prophet Solomon were human beings of the mountain tribes or really the jinns who are well known by this name as the hidden creation, has been discussed in detail in our commentary of Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' and Sūrah An-Naml. (Please see E.N. 75 of Al-Anbiyā' and E.N.'s 23, 45 and 52 of An-Naml).

20. The word *tamāthīl* in the Text is the plural of *timthāl*, which in Arabic is used for every such thing as is made to resemble a natural thing, whether it is a human being, an animal, a tree, a flower, a river, or some inanimate object. "*Timthāl* is the name of every artificial thing which may have been made to resemble something made by God." *(Lisān al-'Arab).* "*Timthāl* is every such picture which may have been made to resemble the likeness of something else, whether living or dead." (The Commentary, *Al Kashshāf).* On this basis the statement of the Qur'ān does not necessarily imply that the "images" made for the Prophet Solomon were the pictures or images of human beings and animals. They might have been floral designs or natural landscape or different kinds of decorations with which the Prophet Solomon might have decorated his buildings and works.

The misunderstanding has been created by some commentators who have stated that the Prophet Solomon had got the pictures of the Prophets and the angels made for himself. They took such things from the Israelite traditions and then explained them saying that in the former *Sharī'ahs* it was not forbidden to make the pictures. But while accepting and citing these traditions without question, these scholars did not keep in mind the fact that the Prophet Solomon was a follower of the Mosaic Law and in that Law also making of the pictures and images of human beings and animals was forbidden as it is in the *Sharī'ah* of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). And they also did not remember that because of the enmity which a section of the Israelites bore against the Prophet Solomon they have accused him of crimes like polytheism, idolatry, sorcery and adultery. Therefore, one should not place reliance on the Israelite traditions and accept anything about this great Prophet, which might contradict any *Sharī'ah* enjoined by God. Everyone knows that all the Prophets who came after the Prophet Moses till the Prophet Jesus among the Israelites were the followers of the Torah, and none of them had brought forth a new law, which might have abrogated the Law of the Torah. Now the Torah clearly enjoins repeatedly that making of the pictures and images of human beings and animals is absolutely forbidden.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that *is* in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth." (Exod., 20: 4)

"Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, nor rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it." (Levit., 26: 1)

"Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female. The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air. The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that *is* in the waters beneath the earth." (Deut., 4: 16-18).

"Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the Lord, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place." (Deut., 27: 15).

In the face of these clear and express injunctions how can it be accepted that the Prophet Solomon might have employed the jinns to make pictures and images of the Prophets and the angels for him? And how can this thing be admitted on the authority of the statements of the Jews who accuse the Prophet Solomon of idolatry due to his love for polytheistic wives? (t Kings, ch., 11).

However, the Muslim commentators, while citing the Israelite traditions, had made it clear that in the *Shari'ah* of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) this thing is forbidden; therefore, it is no more lawful for anybody to make pictures and images in imitation of the Prophet Solomon. But some people of the modern time, who want to make photography and carving of idols lawful in imitation of the West, took this verse of the Qur'ān as an argument for themselves. They argue like this: "When a Prophet of Allah has done this and Allah Himself has mentioned this act of the Prophet in His Book, and has expressed no disapproval of it either, it must be lawful."

This argument of these followers of the West is wrong for two reasons. First, the word *tamāthīl* that has been used in the Qur'ān, does not explicitly give the meaning of the human and animal pictures, but it applies to the pictures of lifeless things as well. Therefore, only on the basis of this word, it cannot be concluded that it is lawful to make the human and animal pictures according to the Qur'ān. Secondly, it is established by a large number of the *Aḥādīth*, which have been reported through authentic chains of transmitters, and commonly reported by many authorities, that the Holy Prophet absolutely forbade the making and keeping of the pictures of the living things. In this connection, we reproduce below the authentic Traditions of the Holy Prophet and the verdicts given by the eminent Companions:

(1) Mother of the faithful Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has reported that Ḥaḍrat Umm Ḥabībah and Ḥaḍrat Umm Salamah had seen a church in Ḥabash, which

had pictures in it. When they mentioned this before the Holy Prophet, he said: "The custom among those people was that when a pious man from among them died, they would build a house of worship at his grave and would make his pictures in it. On the Day of Resurrection, these people will be among the most wretched creatures in the sight of Allah." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb as-Ṣalāt;* Muslim: *Kitāb al-Masājid;* Nasā'ī: *Kitāb al-Masājid).*

(2) Abū Ḥujaifah has reported that the messenger of Allah has cursed the maker of pictures. *(Bukhārī: Kitāb al-Buyū', Kitāb al-Ṭalāq, Kitāb al-Libās).*

(3) Abū Zur'ah says, "Once when I entered a house along with Hadrat Abū Hurairah I saw that a painter was making pictures at the top. Thereupon, Hadrat Abū Hurairah said, 'I have heard the Holy Prophet say: Allah says who could be more wicked than the one who tries to create a thing like My creation? Let them, if they can, create a seed or an ant'." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Musnad Aḥmad. According to the tradition in Muslim, this was the house of Marwān).

(4) Abū Muḥammad Hudhali has reported on the authority of Ḥadrat 'Ali: The Holy Prophet was present at a funeral prayer when he said: Who from among you would go to Madīnah and demolish every idol that he sees, and level down every grave that he sees, and blot out every picture that he sees. A man said that he would go. So he went but came back without carrying out the task due to fear of the people of Madīnah. Then Ḥadrat 'Ali submitted that he would go, and the Holy Prophet allowed him to go. Ḥadrat 'Ali went, then came back and said: I have demolished every idol and leveled down every grave and blotted out every picture. Thereupon the Holy Prophet said: "Now if any one made any of these things, he would be denying the teaching sent down on Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace)." (Musnad Aḥmad; Muslim: *Kitāb al-Janā'iz;* Nasā'ī *(Kitāb al-Janā'iz)* also contain a Tradition on the same subject).

(5) Ibn 'Abbās has reported: ".....And he who made a picture would be chastised and compelled to breathe the soul into it, which he will not be able to do." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Ta'bīr;* Tirmidhī: *Abwāb al Libās;* Nasā'ī: *Kitāb az-Zīnah;* Musnad Aḥmad).

(6) Sa'īd bin al-Ḥasan says: "I was sitting with Ibn 'Abbās when a man came and said: O Ibn 'Abbās, I am a man who earns his living with his hand, and my profession is to make these pictures. Ibn 'Abbās replied: I shall say to you the same that I have heard from the Holy Prophet. I have heard this from him that Allah will chastise the one who makes pictures, and will not leave him till he breathes the soul into it, and he will never be

able to breathe the soul into it. At this the man was much upset and his face turned pale. Ibn 'Abbās said: Well, if you have to make the pictures, make of this tree, or of something which is lifeless." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Buyū';* Muslim: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Nasā'ī; *Kitāb al-Zīnah;* Musnad Aḥmad).

(7) "Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "On the Day of Resurrection the ones to be most severely punished by Allah would be the painters of the pictures."(Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Muslim: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Nasā'ī; *Kitāb al-Zīnah;* Musnad Aḥmad).

(8) 'Abdullah bin 'Umar has reported that the Holy Prophet said: Those who paint the pictures will be punished on the Day of Resurrection. They will be asked to put life into what they have made. (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Muslim: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Nasā'ī; *Kitāb al-Zīnah;* Musnad Aḥmad).

(9) Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says that she bought a cushion in which pictures had been painted. Then the Holy Prophet came and stood at the door and did not enter. I said: "I repent before God of any sin that I may have committed." The Holy Prophet asked: "What is this cushion for?" I said: "This is here so that you may sit and may recline on it." He said: "The painters of these pictures will be chastised on the Day of Resurrection: they will be asked to put life into what they have made; and the angels (*i.e.* the angels of mercy) do not enter a house which has pictures in it."(Bukhārī;: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Muslim: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Nasā'ī: *Kitāb az-Zīnah;* Ibn Mājah: *Kitāb at-Tajārāt;* Mu'waṭṭā': *Kitāb al-Istīdhān).*

(10) Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says: Once the Holy Prophet came to my house, and I had hung a curtain which had pictures on it. The colour of his face changed. Then he took hold of the curtain and tore it and said: "Those who try to create like the creation of Allah will be among those who will be severely punished by Allah on the Day of Resurrection." (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Bukhāri: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Nasā'i: *Kitāb az -Zīnah).*

(11) Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says: Once the Holy Prophet came back; from a journey and I had hung a curtain at my door, which had the pictures of winged horses on it. The Holy Prophet commanded me to remove it and I removed it. (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Libās;* Nasā'i: *Kitāb al-Zīnah).*

(12) Jābir bin 'Abdullah says: The Holy Prophet prohibited keeping of the pictures in the house and also forbade that somebody should make pictures. (Tirmidhi: *Abwāb al-Libās*).

(13) Ibn 'Abbās has related on the authority of Abū Ṭalḥah Anṣarī: The Holy Prophet said that the angels (i.e. of mercy) do not enter a house where there is a dog, nor where there is a picture. (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Libās).*

(14) 'Abdullah bin 'Umar says: Once Gabriel promised to pay the Holy Prophet a visit, but the time passed and he did not come. The Holy Prophet felt troubled and came out of his house and met him. When he complained to him, he (Gabriel) replied: "We do not enter a house where there is a dog or a picture." (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Libās*. Several Traditions on this subject have been related by Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhi, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Imām Mālik and Imām Aḥmad on the authority of several Companions).

As against these, there are some other Traditions which allow some exceptions regarding the pictures. For example, according to a tradition of Abū Talhah Anṣārī, it is permissible to hang the curtain of a cloth which has pictures embroidered on it. (Bukhārī: *Kitāb al-Libās);* and according to Hadrat 'Ā'ishah's tradition, when she tore a cloth having pictures on it and made a cushion from it to be spread on the floor, the Holy Prophet did not forbid it. (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Libās);* and Sālim bin 'Abdullah bin 'Umar's tradition that the prohibition is of the picture which is displayed and installed prominently and not of the one which is used as a carpet. (Musnad Aḥmad). But none of these traditions contradicts the Traditions which have been cited above. None of these sanctions the making and painting of the pictures. They only tell that if a person has got a piece of cloth having pictures on it, how he should use it. In this regard, the tradition of Abū Ṭalḥah Anṣarī cannot at all be accepted because it contradicts many other authentic Traditions in which the Holy Prophet not only forbade use of cloth having pictures on it as a curtain but even tore it into pieces. Moreover, Ḥadrat Abū Ṭalḥah Anṣari's own practice that has been reported in Tirmidhi and Mu'wattā', in this regard, was that he did not even like to use a piece of cloth which had pictures on it, as a carpet, not to speak of hanging it as a curtain.

As for the traditions related by Ḥadrat 'Ā'ishah and Salim bin 'Abdullah, they only permit that if a picture is not placed prominently out of respect and esteem but is used as a carpet disrespectfully and is trodden under the feet, it could be tolerable. After all, how can these Traditions be cited for obtaining sanction for the culture which regards the art of painting and portrait making and sculpture as an enviable achievement of the human civilization, and wants to popularize it among the Muslims?

The code of practice that the Holy Prophet left for his Ummah with regard to the pictures, can be seen from the conduct and practice of the eminent Companions, which they adopted in this regard. The admitted principle of law in Islam is that the authentic and reliable Islamic Law is that which the Holy Prophet enjoined during the latter part of his life after it had passed through gradual and preliminary injunctions and exceptions. And after the Holy Prophet the eminent Companions' practice and persistence on a particular way is a proof that he left

the Ummah on that way. Now let us see how these holy and pious people treated and regarded the pictures.

Ḥaḍrat 'Umar said to the Christians: "We do not enter your churches because there are pictures in them." (Bukhāri: *Kitāb as -Ṣalāt).*

Ibn 'Abbās would sometimes offer his Prayer in the church, but not in a church which had pictures in it. (Bukhārī;: *Kitāb as-Ṣalāt).*

Abū al-Hayyāj al-Asadī says: Ḥaḍrat 'Ali said to me: "Should I not send you on the same mission on which the Holy Prophet had sent me? And it is this that you should not leave any idol that you should not break, and you should not leave any grave that you should not level down, and you should not leave any picture that you should not blot out." (Muslim: *Kitāb al-Janā'iz;* Nasā'ī: *Kitāb al Janā'iz).*

Hanash al-Kinānī says: Ḥaḍrat 'Ali said to his chief of the police: "Do you know on what mission I am going to send you?—on the mission on which the Holy Prophet had sent me, that you should blot out every picture and level down every grave." (Musnad Aḥmad).

This very established Law of Islam has been accepted and acknowledged by the jurists of Islam and regarded as an article of the Islamic Law. Thus, 'Allāma Badruddīn 'Aini writes with reference to *Tauḥīd:*

"Our elders *(i.e.* the Ḥanifite jurists) and other jurists say that making the pictures of a living thing is not only unlawful but strictly forbidden and a major sin, whether the maker has made it for a purpose where it would be held with contempt or for some other use and purpose. The making and painting of the picture anyway is unlawful, because it is an attempt to create like the creation of Allah. Likewise. the making of pictures whether in the cloth, or in the carpet, or on a coin, or in a utensil, or in a wall, is in any case unlawful. However, making the pictures of something else, for instance, of a tree, etc., is not forbidden. Whether the picture casts a shadow or not is immaterial. The same is the opinion of Imām Mālik, Sufyān Thaurī, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, and other scholars. Qādī Iyād says that the dolls of girls are an exception, but Imām Malik; disapproved of even buying them." *('Umdat al-Qārī,* vol. XXII p. 70). Imām Nawawī has elucidated this same view in greater detail in his commentary of Muslim. Please refer to *Sharh Nawawī,* Egyptian Ed., vol. XIV, pp. 81-82).

This is then the injunction about the making of pictures. As regards the use of the pictures made by others, 'Allāma Ibn Ḥajar has cited the views of the jurists of Islam as follows:

"Ibn 'Arabi, the Malikite jurist, says that the consensus of opinion is that the picture that casts a shadow is unlawful, whether it is regarded with contempt or not. Only the dolls of girls are an exception ... Ibn 'Arab; also says that the picture which does not cast a shadow but which persists (as in the printed form, unlike the reflection of a mirror) is also unlawful, whether it is regarded with contempt or not. However, if its head is cut off, or its limbs or parts are separated, it may be used. ... Imām al-Harmayn has cited a verdict according to which a curtain or a cushion having pictures on it may be used, but the picture hung on the wall or ceiling is forbidden, for it would show respect and esteem for it, while the picture on the curtain or cushion, on the contrary, would be held with contempt. ... Ibn Abī Shaibah has related on the authority of 'Ikrimah that the scholars among the immediate followers of the Companions held the opinion that the picture's being in the carpet or cushion is disgraceful for it; they also opined that the picture hung prominently is unlawful, but the one trodden under the feet is permissible. The same opinion has been cited from Ibn Sirīn, Sālim bin 'Abdullah, 'Ikrimah bin Khālid and Sa'īd bin Jubair." *(Fath al-Bārī*, vol. X, p. 300).

The details given above clearly show that the forbiddence of the pictures is not a controversial or doubtful matter in Islam, but it is an established article of the law according to the express instructions of the Holy Prophet, the practice of the Companions and the unanimous verdicts of the jurists of Islam, which cannot be changed by the hairsplitting of the people influenced by the alien cultures.

In this connection, certain other things should also be understood so that there remains no misunderstanding in this regard.

Some people try to make a distinction between a photograph and a painting, whereas the *Shari'ah* forbids the picture itself and not any process or method of making pictures. There is no difference between a photograph and a painting: they are both pictures. Whatever difference is there between them is due to the method of making them, and in this regard the *Shari'ah* injunctions make no difference between them.

Some people give the argument that the picture was forbidden in Islam in order to put an end to idol-worship. As there is no such danger now, this injunction should be annulled. But this argument is absolutely wrong. In the first place, nowhere in the Traditions has it been said that the pictures have been made unlawful in order to avoid the danger of *shirk* and idol-worship. Secondly, the assertion that *shirk* and idol-worship have been eradicated from the world is also baseless. Today in the Indo-Pak sub-continent itself there are millions of idol-worshippers and polytheists. *Shirk* is being practised in different regions of the world in different ways. The Christian people of the Book also are worshipping the images and portraits of the Prophet Jesus and Mary and other saints; so much

so that even a large number of the Muslims also are involved in the evil of worshipping others than God.

Some people say that only those pictures which are polytheistic in nature should be forbidden, *i.e.*, pictures and images of those persons who have been made gods. As for the other pictures and images there is no reason why they should be forbidden. But the people who argue like this, in fact, become their own law-givers instead of deriving law from the Commandments and instructions of the Law-Giver. They do not know that the picture does not become the cause of polytheism and idol-worship only but has become the cause of many other mischiefs in the world, and is becoming so even today. The picture is one of those major means by which the aura of greatness of the kings, dictators and political leaders has been impressed upon the minds of the common people. The picture also has been used extensively for spreading obscenity and today this mischief has touched heights unknown to previous history. Pictures have also been used for sowing discord and hatred and for creating mischief between the nations and for misleading the masses in different ways. Therefore, the view that the Law-Giver forbade the picture only in order to eradicate idol-worship is basically wrong. The Law-Giver has absolutely forbidden pictures of the living things. If we are not our own law-givers but are the followers of the Law-Giver, we should desist from this accordingly. It is not at all lawful for us that we should propose from ourselves a basis for a particular injunction and then, on the basis of it, should declare some pictures lawful and some as unlawful.

Some people refer to some apparently "harmless' kinds of pictures and say that there could be no danger from these; they could not cause the mischiefs of *shirk*, obscenity, political propaganda or other evils; therefore, they should not be forbidden. Here again the people commit the same error: they first propose a cause and a basis for an injunction, and then argue that when the cause is not found in a particular forbidden thing, it should not be forbidden. Furthermore, these people also do not understand the rule of the Islamic *Sharī'ah* that it does not make vague and ambiguous boundaries between the lawful and the unlawful from which a man may not be able to judge when he is within the bounds and when he has crossed them; but it draws a clear line of demarcation which every person can see like the broad daylight. The demarcation in respect of the picture is absolutely clear: pictures of living things are unlawful and of the lifeless things lawful. This line of demarcation does not admit any ambiguity. The one who has to follow the injunctions can clearly know what is permissible for him and what is not. But, if some pictures of the living things had been declared lawful and some unlawful, no list of the two kinds of the pictures however extensive, would have made the boundary between the lawful and the unlawful clear, and the case of many pictures would still have remained ambiguous as to whether they were within the

bounds of lawfulness or outside them. This is similar to the Islamic injunction about wine that one should completely abstain from it, and this marks a clear limit. But, if it had been said that one should abstain from such a quantity of wine as intoxicates, it would be impossible to demarcate between the lawful and the unlawful, and no one would have been able to decide what quantity of wine he could drink; and where he had to stop. (For a further discussion, see *Rasā'il-o-Masā'il,* Part 1, pp. 152-155).

21. This gives an idea of the generous and large scale hospitality practised by the Prophet Solomon. Big bowls like troughs had been arranged to serve as containers of food for the guests and heavy cooking pots were meant for cooking food for thousands of the people at one and the same time.

22. "Work gratefully": work like grateful servants. The mere verbal thankfulness of a person who acknowledges only verbally the favours done by the benefactor but uses them against his will is meaningless. The truly grateful person is he who acknowledges the favours with the tongue as well as uses and employs the favours according to the will of the benefactor.

23. Another meaning of the sentence can be: "The true state and condition of the jinns became clear and exposed." According to the first meaning, it will mean: "The jinns realized that their claim to have the knowledge of the unseen was wrong." According to the second, it will mean: "The people who thought that the jinns possessed the knowledge of the unseen, came to know that they had no such knowledge."

24. Some modern commentators have interpreted it as follows: As the Prophet Solomon's son, Rehoboam, was unworthy and given to luxurious living and surrounded by flatterers, he could not sustain the heavy burden of responsibility that fell on his shoulders after the death of his great father. A short time after his succession, the kingdom collapsed, and the frontier tribes *(i.e.,* of the jinns) whom the Prophet Solomon had subdued by his mighty power, rebelled and broke away. But this interpretation does not at all conform to the words of the Qur'ān. The scene depicted by the words of the Qur'ān is somewhat like this: Death came to the Prophet Solomon in a state when he was standing or sitting with the support of a staff. His body stood in place due to the staff, and the jinns continued to perform their duties and services, thinking that he was living. At last, when the wood-louse started eating away the staff and it became hollow from within, the Prophet Solomon's body fell down; then the jinns realized that he had died. After all, why should this clear and unambiguous description of the event be construed to mean that the wood-louse implied the unworthiness of the Prophet Solomon's son, and the staff implied his power and authority and the falling down of his body implied the disintegration of his kingdom? Had Allah meant to say all

this, there was no dearth of the words in the vast Arabic language. The Qur'ān, in fact, has nowhere used such enigmatic language. How could the common Arabs, who were its first addressees, have solved this riddle?

Then, the most absurd part of this interpretation is that according to it the jinns imply the people of the frontier tribes whom the Prophet Solomon had subdued to perform certain services under him. The question is, which of these tribes had claimed to have the knowledge of the unseen, and whom did the *mushriks* regard as the knower of the unseen? A person who reads the last words of the verse with open eyes can himself see that jinn here necessarily implies a group of beings who either had themselves made a claim to have the knowledge of the unseen, or who, the people believed, had the knowledge of the unseen; and the secret of this group's being ignorant and unaware of the unseen became disclosed when they continued to serve the Prophet Solomon under the impression that he was living, whereas he had died. This statement of the Qur'ān was enough to induce an honest person to revise his this opinion that the jinn imply the frontier tribes, but the people who feel shy of admitting the existence of the hidden creation called the jinn before the materialistic world still insist on this interpretation of theirs in spite of the plain meaning of the Qur'ān.

At several places in the Qur'ān Allāh tells that the *mushriks* of Arabia regarded the jinns as the associates of Allah, and as His children, and used to seek their refuge:

"They set up the jinns as partners with Allah, whereas He has created them." (Al-An'ām: 100). "And they have invented a blood-relationship between Allah and the jinns." (Aṣ-Ṣaffāt: 158). "And that, some people from among the men used to seek refuge with some people from among the jinns." (Al-Jinn: 6).

One of their beliefs was that they regarded the jinns as the knowers of the unseen and hidden, and used to turn to them to obtain knowledge of the hidden things. Allah has related this event here in order to repudiate this belief and to make the Arabs realize that they are following the false creeds of ignorance without any valid reason, whereas the fact is that these beliefs are absolutely baseless. (For further explanation, see E.N. 63 below).

25. To understand the continuity of the subject-matter one should keep in view the theme as expressed in vv.1-9. There it has been pointed out that the pagans of Arabia regarded the coming of the Hereafter as irrational, and declared openly that the Messenger who was presenting this doctrine was either a mad man or deliberately was fabricating falsehood. In reply to this, Allah first gave some rational arguments, which we have elaborated in E.N.'s 7, 8 and 12 above. Then in vv. 10-21 the story of the Prophets David and Solomon and of Sabā has been related as an historical argument, which is meant to impress the reality that the

history of the human species on the earth itself testifies to the law of retribution. If man studies his own history carefully he will see that this world is not a lawless kingdom, which might be functioning blindly, but it is being ruled by an All-Hearing and All-Seeing Being, Who treats and deals with His grateful servants in one way and with the ungrateful and thankless people in quite another way. If one wants one can learn this lesson from the same history that in the Kingdom of God which has such a character, goodness and evil cannot have one and the same result. The necessary demand of its justice is that a time must come when goodness should be fully rewarded and evil fully punished.

26. That is, "A Sign of this that whatever they have is the gift of some one else and not of their own creation, and a Sign of this that the one worthy of their service and worship and gratitude is that God Who has blessed them with these favours and not those who have no share in bestowing these, and a Sign of this that their wealth is not imperishable but can perish even as it has been amassed".

27. This does not mean that there were only two gardens in the whole country, but that the entire land of Sabā was like a garden. Wherever a man stood he could see a garden on his right and a garden on his left.

28. That is, "They adopted the way of disobedience and ingratitude instead of obedience and gratefulness."

29. The word *'arim* as used in *sayl al-'arim* in the Text is derived from the South Arabic word *'ariman*, which stands for a "dam". In the ancient inscriptions that have been unearthed in the ruins of the Yaman, this word has been commonly used in this meaning. For example, in an inscription dated 542 or 543 A.D., which Abraha, the Abyssinian governor of the Yaman, had got installed after the repairs to the great dam of Maā'rib, this word has been used repeatedly in the meaning of a dam. Therefore, *sayl al-'arim* implies a flood that comes when a dam breaks.

30. That is, "As a result of the flood that came after the dam burst, the whole land was laid waste. The canals which the Sabaeans had dug out by building dams between the mountains, were ruined and the irrigation system destroyed. Then the same land which had been like a garden before, became a jungle of wild growth and no eatable plants were left in it except the small plum-like fruit of the lote bushes."

31. "Blessed habitations": the lands of Syria and Palestine, which have been generally mentioned in the Qur'ān by this title, as for instance, in Al-A'rāf: 137, Banī Isrā'īl: 1, Al-Anbiyā': 71, 81.

"Conspicuous habitations": habitations situated on the highway and not inside the country. It may also mean that the habitations were not very far apart but contiguous so that as the outlying areas of one habitation came to an end those of the other started coming into view.

"Set...distances" implies that from the Yaman to the borders of Syria the whole journey passed through inhabited lands, and the distances between one station and another were known and determined. That makes the distinction between the journey through inhabited land and the journey through uninhabited desert area. In the desert the traveller continues to travel as long as he wills and halts when tired. Contrary to this, in settled areas as the distance between one habitation and the other is well known, the traveller can plan beforehand where he would break his journey, where he would have his midday rest and where he would stay for the night.

32. They may not have prayed thus in so many words. As a matter of fact, whoever is ungrateful to Allah for His blessings, tells Allah, as if to say that he is not worthy of those blessings. Likewise, the nation which abuses the bounties of Allah, in fact, prays to Him, as if to say, "Our Lord, withdraw Your blessings from us: we are not worthy of these."

Moreover, the words in the Text also seem to suggest that the Sabaeans perhaps regarded their large population as a calamity for themselves, and they also wanted like the other foolish people that their population should fall.

33. That is, "The people of Sabā were so dispersed in all directions that their dispersion became proverbial. Even today when the Arabs have to mention the complete dispersion of any people they refer to the people of Sabā as an example. When Allah caused His blessings to be withdrawn from them, the different tribes of the Sabaeans started leaving their homes and migrating to other parts of Arabia. The Banū Ghassān went to settle in Jordan and Syria, the Aus and Khazraj in Yathrib, and the Khuzā'ah in Tihāmah near Jeddah. The Azd left for 'Umān and the Banī Lakhm and Judhām and Kindah were also forced to give up their homes for other places. Thus, the "Sabaeans" ceased to exist as a nation and became a mere legend."

34. In this context the "patient and grateful person" implies every such person (or persons) who does not lose his balance after he has received blessings from Allah, nor exults at prosperity, nor becomes heedless of God Who has blessed him with these. Such a person can learn great lessons from the history of those people who adopted the way of disobedience after attaining opportunities for progress and prosperity and ultimately met with their doom.

35. History shows that in ancient times there lived among the Sabaeans a small group of the people, who believed in one God, apart from all other gods. The inscriptions that have been discovered in the ruins of Yaman as a result of modern archaeological research point to the existence of this small element. Some inscriptions of the period about 650 B.C. indicate that at several places in the kingdom of Sabā there existed such houses of worship as were exclusively meant for the worship of *dhu-samavī or dhu-samāvī (i.e. Rabb as-Samā'*: Lord of the heavens). In some places this Deity has been mentioned as *Malikan dhu-samavī* (the King who is the Owner of the heavens). This remnant of the Sabaeans continued to live in Yaman for centuries afterwards. Thus, in an inscription of 378 A.D. also there is found the mention of a house of worship built in the name of *Ilāh dhu-samavī*. Then, in an inscription dated 465 A.D. the words are: *Bi-nasr wa ridā ilāh-in ba'l samīn wa ardin* (i.e. with the help and support of that God Who is the Owner of the heavens and the earth). In another inscription of the period dated 458 A.D., the word *Raḥmān* has been used for the same God, the actual words being *bi-ridā Raḥmanan (i.e.* with the help of *Raḥmān).*

36. That is, *"Iblīs* did not have the power to have forcibly misled these people to the way of God's disobedience although they had wanted to adopt His obedience. Allah had only given him the power that he may seduce and mislead them and make all such people his followers, who may like to follow him of their own accord. And *Iblīs* was provided these opportunities for seduction so that the believers of the Hereafter were distinguished from those who entertained doubts about its coming."

In other words, this Divine statement makes the truth explicit that nothing in this world other than belief in the Hereafter can ensure man's adherence to the right way. If a man disbelieves that he is to be raised back to life after death and has to render an account of his deeds before his God, he will certainly be misled and go astray, for he will never be able to develop in himself the sense of responsibility which alone can make him adhere to the right way. That is why the artifice of Satan by which he ensnares man is that he makes him heedless of the Hereafter. The one who escapes this satanic enticement can never agree that he should sacrifice the interests of his real everlasting life to the interests of the transient life of the world. On the contrary, the one who disbelieves in the Hereafter under the evil influence of Satan, or at least entertains doubts about it, can never be induced to withdraw from the cash bargain being made in this world only due to the apprehension that it might cause loss in some later life. Whoever has gone astray in the world, has gone astray only due to the denial of the Hereafter, or some suspicion about it; and whoever has adopted righteousness has done so because his righteous deeds have issued from his belief in the Hereafter.

37. To understand fully the allusions made in the Qur'ān to the history of the Sabaeans, one should also keep in view the information that has been obtained through other historical sources about this nation.

Historically, "Sabā" were a great nation of Southern Arabia, which comprised some large tribes. Imām Ahmad, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn 'Abd al-Barr and Tirmidhī have related from the Holy Prophet that Sabā was the name of an Arab, from whose race issued the following tribes of Arabia: Kindah, Himyar, Azd, Ash'ariyyīn, Madhhij, Anmār (with its two branches: Khath'am and Bajīlah), 'Āmilah, Judhām, Lakhm and Ghassān.

Since antiquity this Arabian nation has been well known to the rest of the world. Ur inscriptions of 2500 B.C. mention it by the name of Sabom. Then in the Babylonian and Assyrian inscriptions and also in the Bible it has been mentioned several times. (See, for instance, Psalms 72:15; Jeremiah 6: 20; Ezekiel 27:22, 38: 13; Job 6: 19). The Greek and Roman historians and the geographer Theophrastus (288 B.C.) have mentioned it continuously for many centuries of the Christian era since before Christ.

Its home was the south-western corner of the Arabian peninsula, now called al-Yaman. Its rise to prominence started in 1100 B.C. In the time of the Prophets David and Solomon the Sabaeans had become world famous as a wealthy people. In the beginning they were a sun-worshipping nation. Then, when their queen affirmed faith at the hand of the Prophet Solomon (965-926 B.C.) probably most of them became Muslims. But then in some unknown later period they again began to worship gods and goddesses like Almaqah (the moon-god), 'A thtar (Venus), Dhāt Ḥamīm, Dhāt Bad'ān (the sun-god), Harmatam or Harimat and many others. Almaqah was their chief deity, and the kings made claim to the people's obedience as representatives of this deity. Many inscriptions have been unearthed in the Yaman, which show that the whole land abounded in the temples of these gods, especially of Almaqah, and thanksgiving services for them were held at every important event.

As a result of the modern archaeological researches about 3,000 inscriptions have been discovered, which throw a good deal of light on the history of this nation. Besides these, if the information yielded by the Arabian traditionists and the Roman and Greek historians is compiled, a detailed history of this nation can be prepared. According to this information the following are the important periods of its history:

(1) *The Pre-mid-seventh Century Period:* In this period Mukarrib was the title of the Sabaean kings. Probably a synonym of *Muqarrib*, it signified that the kings regarded themselves as the link between men and gods; or, in other words, they were the priest-kings. Their capital was Sirwāh, whose

ruins are found at a day's journey to the west of Maā'rib, and are now called al-Kharībah. The foundations of the great Maā'rib dam were laid in this period: then the different kings extended it from time to time.

(2) 650 *B.C. to* 115 *B.C.*: In this period the Sabaean kings discarded *Mukarrib* and adopted the title of *Malik* (king), which signified that theocracy was replaced by secular kingship. They left Sirwāh and made Maā'rib their capital and extended it in every way. This place lay 3900 feet above the sea, and is some 60 miles east of San'ā'. Even today its ruins bear evidence that it was once the centre of a highly civilized nation.

(3) 115 *B.C.* to 300 *A.D.* : In this period the Sabaean kingdom fell under the domination of the tribe of Himyar, a more numerous tribe of Sabā. They discarded Maā'rib and made their central place, Raydān, their capital, which later became known as Zafār. Its ruins can still be seen on a circular hill near the modern city of Yarīm. Close by it there resides a small tribe by the name of Hinmar, perhaps the remnant of the great nation which was once well known throughout the world for its glory and grandeur. In the same period the word Yamanat and Yamanāt began to be used for the first time for a part of the kingdom, which gradually became Yaman and the name of the entire land, which extends from 'Asīr to Aden and from Bāb al-Mandab to Ḥaḍramaut. During this very period the decline of the Sabaean began.

(4) 300 *A.D. to the rise of Islam* : This is the period of the Sabaea's destruction. They started fighting civil wars, which provided occasion for external intervention. This resulted in the decline in their trade and their agriculture and even loss of political freedom. Taking advantage of the internal conflicts between the Himyarites and other tribes, the Abyssinians occupied the Yaman and ruled it briefly from 340 A.D. to 378 A.D. Then, though political freedom was restored, breaches began to appear in the great dam of Maā'rib, which in 450 or 451 A.D. led to the catastrophe occasioned by the "bursting of the dam" as has been referred to in verse 16 above. Although after it till the time of Abraha the dam was extensively repaired, the population that had dispersed could not be brought back, nor could the ruined system of irrigation and agriculture be restored. In 523 A.D., dhū-Nuwās, the Jewish king of the Yaman, carried out the great massacre of the Christians of Najrān, which has been referred to in the Qur'ān under *"ashāb al-ukhdūd"* (LXXXV: 4). In retaliation, the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia invaded Yaman and occupied the whole land. Later the Abyssinian governor of Yaman, Abrahah, in a bid to put an end to the central position of the Ka'bah and to bring the whole of western Arabia into the sphere of the Byzantine-Abyssinian influence invaded Makkah in 570 or 571 A.D., a few days

before the birth of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). The Abyssinian army was completely destroyed as alluded to under *ashāb al-fīl* in the Qur'ān. At last, in 575 A.D. Yaman fell to the Iranians; their rule came to an end in 628 A.D. when their governor Bādhān embraced Islam.

The Sabaeans owed their prosperity to two main factors: agriculture and commerce. They had developed their agriculture by means of a wonderful irrigation system unknown in the ancient world except in Babylon. There were no natural rivers in their land; in the rainy season small hill-torrents rose on which they had built dams every where in the country and collected water in small lakes from which they had taken out canals to water their lands. This had virtually turned the whole country into a vast garden as mentioned in the Qur'ān. The largest reservoir was the lake which had been formed by the construction of a dam on the opening in the Jabal Balaq near Maā'rib. But when Allah caused His favours to be turned away from them, the great dam burst in the mid-fifth century A.D. and the resultant floods went on breaking one dam after the other on the way, destroying the entire irrigation system, which could never again be restored.

For commerce the Sabaeans had been blessed by God with the most favourable geographical position of which they took full advantage. For more than a thousand years they monopolised the means of trade between the East and the West. On the one hand, they received silk from China, spices from Indonesia and Malabar, fabrics and swords from India, negro slaves, monkeys, ostrich feathers and ivory from East Africa at their ports, and on the other, they transported this merchandise to the Egyptian and Syrian marts, to be supplied onward to Rome and Greece. Besides, they themselves were great producers of frankincense and myrrh and other perfumes, which were in great demand in Egypt and Syria and in Rome and Greece.

Two great routes existed for this international trade: the sea route and the land route. The maritime trade remained in the Sabaeans' control for more than a thousand years for they alone knew the mysteries of the Red Sea monsoons, breakers and rocks and the anchorages, and no other nation could risk navigation through these dangerous waters. Through this maritime route they took their trade goods to the harbours of Jordan and Egypt. The land routes from Aden and Hadramaut joined at Ma'ārib, from where a highway led to Petra through Makkah, Jeddah, Yathrib, Al-'Ulā, Tabūk and Aylah, forking at the northern end to Egypt and Syria. Along this land route, a number of Sabaean colonies had been established right from the Yaman to the borders of Syria, as mentioned in the Qur'ān, and trade caravans passed by these day and night. The signs of many of these colonies still exist on this route from which the Sabaean and the Himyarite inscriptions are being discovered.

After the first century after Christ Sabaean trade began to suffer a decline. When the Greek, and then the Roman, kingdoms were established in the Middle East, the citizens began complaining of the high prices that the Arabian traders were charging for the oriental goods because of their monopoly, and urged their governments to take the initiative to break their supremacy in the sea trade. Thus, in the beginning, Ptolemy II (985-246 B.C.), the Greek ruler of Egypt, reopened the Nile-Red Sea canal originally dug by Pharaoh Sesostris some seventeen centuries previously. Consequently, it was through this canal that the Egyptian fleet entered the Red Sea for the first time, but it could not succeed much against the Sabaeans. When Egypt fell to the Romans they brought a stronger merchant marine into the Red Sea and put a naval fleet at its back. The Sabaeans could not withstand this force. Consequently, the Romans set up their trade colonies at every seaport, arranged supplies for the ships and also stationed their military troops wherever possible. At last, the time came when Aden passed under the military occupation of the Romans. In this connection, the Roman and the Abyssinian kingdoms also entered secret pacts against the Sabaeans, which ultimately deprived this nation of its political freedom as well.

After losing control over maritime trade the Sabaeans were left with trade over the land route only, but many factors combined to gradually break its back too. First, the Nabataeans ousted them from all the colonies of the upper Hejāz and Jordan, from Petra to Al-'Ulā. Then in 106 A.D. the Romans put an end to the Nabataean kingdom and captured all the Syrian and Jordanian territories up to the Hejāz. After this Abyssinia and Rome jointly tried to ruin the Sabaean trade completely by taking advantage of their internal conflicts. That is why the Abyssinians intervened in the Yaman again and again, till at last they brought the whole land under their occupation.

Thus, Allah's wrath caused this nation to be toppled from the heights of glory and prosperity into oblivion from which they were never able to rise again. There was a time when the Greeks and the Romans felt tempted when they heard of the legendary wealth of this people. Strabo writes, "The Sabaeans use gold and silver utensils and even the ceilings, walls and doors of their houses are bedecked with ivory, gold, silver and jewels." Pliny says, "The whole wealth of Rome and Persia is flowing into Sabaean hands. They are the richest people of the world today, and their fertile land abounds in gardens, crops and cattle." Artemidorus says, "These people roll in luxury. They burn cinnemon, sandalwood and other sweet smelling wood as fuel." Likewise, other Greek historians relate that the passengers passing by their shores can smell the perfumes of their land in the merchant ships at sea. For the first time in history they built a skyscraper, called the castle of Ghumdān, on the hill top in San'ā'. This citadel, according to the Arab historians, had twenty storeys, each storey being 36 feet high. Thus did they

[Contd. on p. 216

مَاذَا ۙ قُلِ اللّٰهُ ۙ وَاِنَّآ اَوْ اِيَّاكُمْ لَعَلٰى هُدًى اَوْ فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٢٤﴾
قُلْ لَّا تُسْـَٔلُوْنَ عَمَّآ اَجْرَمْنَا وَلَا نُسْـَٔلُ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قُلْ يَجْمَعُ بَيْنَنَا
رَبُّنَا ثُمَّ يَفْتَحُ بَيْنَنَا بِالْحَقِّ ۭ وَهُوَ الْفَتَّاحُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٢٦﴾ قُلْ اَرُوْنِيَ الَّذِيْنَ
اَلْحَقْتُمْ بِهٖ شُرَكَاۗءَ كَلَّا ۭ بَلْ هُوَ اللّٰهُ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ اِلَّا
كَاۗفَّةً لِّلنَّاسِ بَشِيْرًا وَّنَذِيْرًا وَّلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ
مَتٰى هٰذَا الْوَعْدُ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ قُلْ لَّكُمْ مِّيْعَادُ يَوْمٍ لَّا تَسْتَاْخِرُوْنَ
عَنْهُ سَاعَةً وَّلَا تَسْتَقْدِمُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَنْ نُّؤْمِنَ بِهٰذَا
الْقُرْاٰنِ وَلَا بِالَّذِيْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ ۭ وَلَوْ تَرٰٓى اِذِ الظّٰلِمُوْنَ مَوْقُوْفُوْنَ عِنْدَ
رَبِّهِمْ ۚ يَرْجِعُ بَعْضُهُمْ اِلٰى بَعْضِ ۨ الْقَوْلَ ۚ يَقُوْلُ الَّذِيْنَ اسْتُضْعِفُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ
اسْتَكْبَرُوْا لَوْلَآ اَنْتُمْ لَكُنَّا مُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اسْتَكْبَرُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ اسْتُضْعِفُوْٓا
اَنَحْنُ صَدَدْنٰكُمْ عَنِ الْهُدٰى بَعْدَ اِذْ جَاۗءَكُمْ بَلْ كُنْتُمْ مُّجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَقَالَ
الَّذِيْنَ اسْتُضْعِفُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ اسْتَكْبَرُوْا بَلْ مَكْرُ الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ اِذْ تَاْمُرُوْنَنَآ اَنْ
نَّكْفُرَ بِاللّٰهِ وَنَجْعَلَ لَهٗٓ اَنْدَادًا ۭ وَاَسَرُّوا النَّدَامَةَ لَمَّا رَاَوُا الْعَذَابَ ۭ وَجَعَلْنَا
الْاَغْلٰلَ فِيْٓ اَعْنَاقِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ۭ هَلْ يُجْزَوْنَ اِلَّا مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَمَآ
اَرْسَلْنَا فِيْ قَرْيَةٍ مِّنْ نَّذِيْرٍ اِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوْهَآ ۙ اِنَّا بِمَآ اُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهٖ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾
وَقَالُوْا نَحْنُ اَكْثَرُ اَمْوَالًا وَّاَوْلَادًا ۙ وَّمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِيْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ قُلْ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ
يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ وَيَقْدِرُ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَمَآ
اَمْوَالُكُمْ وَلَآ اَوْلَادُكُمْ بِالَّتِيْ تُقَرِّبُكُمْ عِنْدَنَا زُلْفٰٓى اِلَّا مَنْ اٰمَنَ وَعَمِلَ

(O Prophet), ask them, "Who gives you sustenance from the heavens and the earth?" Say, "Allah.[42] Only either we or you are on the Right Way or in manifest error."[43] Say to them, "You will not be questioned for the errors we have committed, nor shall we be answerable for what you are doing."[44] Say, "Our Lord will gather us together, then He will judge between us rightly. He is such a great Judge Who knows everything."[45] Say to them, "Just show me those whom you have made associates with Him."[46] Nay, never! Allah alone is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise. 24-27

And (O Prophet,) We have sent you to the entire mankind as a bearer of good news and a warner, but most people do not know.[47] 28

These people say to you, "When will the promise (of Resurrection) be fulfilled if you are truthful?"[48] Say, "For you the appointment of a day is fixed, which you can neither hold back for an hour nor hasten on by an hour."[49] 29-30

The disbelievers say, "We shall never believe in this Qur'ān, nor in any other Book which came before it."[50] Would that you could see these wicked people at the time when they will be standing before their Lord! Then, they will blame one another. Those who had been oppressed in the world, will say to the arrogant, "But for you we would have been the believers."[51] The arrogant ones will say to the oppressed once, "Did we hinder you from the guidance when it came to you? Nay, but you yourselves were guilty."[52] The oppressed ones will say to the arrogant ones, "Nay, but it was your plotting by day and night when you told us to deny Allah and to set up others as equals with Him."[53] At last, when they will see the torment, they will repent in their hearts, and We shall put fetters on the necks of the disbelievers. Can the people be requited except in accordance with their deeds? 31-33

It has never happened that We sent a warner to a habitation and its people of means did not say, "We disbelieve the message you have brought."[54] They always said this: "We have more wealth and children than you, and we shall never be punished."[55] O Prophet, say to them, "My Lord gives abundantly to whom He wills and sparingly to whom He wills, but most people do not realize this."[56] It is not your wealth and your children, which bring you nearer to Us, save him who believes and does good works.[57] These are the ones who will have a 34-38

double reward for their deeds, and they will live in peace in high mansions.[58] As for those who strive hard in order to frustrate Our Revelations, they shall be severely punished.

Contd. from p. 213]

prosper and enjoy life as long as Allah favoured them with His bounties. At last, when they transgressed all limits in their ingratitude, the Almighty Allah also withdrew His attention, and they were so utterly destroyed as if they had never existed at all.

38. Until now the *mushriks'* wrong notions about the Hereafter have been dealt with. From here the discourse turns to the refutation of *shirk* itself.

39. That is, "Allah makes and un-makes the destinies of individuals and nations and kingdoms in ways as you have seen from the stories of the Prophets David and Solomon and the people of Sabā. Now, you may invoke, if you so like, these self-made gods of yours to see whether they also possess the power to change someone's good fortune into misfortune and misfortune into good fortune."

40. That is, "Not to speak of owning something, or being a partner in the ownership of something, or being a helper of Allah in any way, there exists no one in the universe, who of his own accord may intercede for someone before Allah. You are involved in the misunderstanding that there are some beloved ones of God, or some such powerful personalities, who can force and press God to accept their intercession, whereas the fact is that no one will dare utter a word of recommendation there without Allah's permission. Only such a one will be able to make his submissions, who is permitted by Allah to do so, and will intercede for him alone for whom permission for intercession is granted. (To understand the distinction between the Islamic concept of intercession and the polytheistic concept, see Yūnus: 3, 18; Hūd: 76, 105; Tā Hā: 109; Al-Anbiyā': 28; Al-Ḥajj: 76).

41. Here a graphic picture has been drawn of the time when on the Day of Resurrection an intercessor will be seeking permission to intercede on behalf of another. It presents this scene: "After submitting the application for permission, both the intercessor and the intercessee are awaiting the reply in a state of restlessness and awe. At last, when the permission is granted and the intercessee perceives satisfaction in the face of the intercessor he feels a little comforted and asks the intercessor: 'What reply has been received?' The intercessor says, 'The right reply: permission has been granted.' What is meant to be impressed is this: 'O foolish people! Such will be the awe of the great Court of Allah ! How dare you entertain the notion that anybody will have you forgiven by his own power, or -

dare behave stubbornly and tell Allah: These are my favourites: they will have to be forgiven!'"

42. There is a subtle gap between the question and the answer. The addressees were the *mushriks* who not only did not disbelieve in the existence of Allah but also knew and believed that the keys of the provisions are in His hand. But in spite of this they held others also as Allah's associates in His work. Now when they were confronted with the question: "Who gives you sustenance from the heavens and the earth?" they were put in a tight corner. If they mentioned another beside Allah they would say a thing contrary to their own and their people's creed. If they showed stubbornness and said such a thing, they feared that their own people would immediately refute them. And if they acknowledged that Allah alone is their Sustainer, they would immediately be confronted with the next question: "Then, why and what for have you made these others your gods?" When Allah is the Sustainer, why should these others be served and worshipped? Thus they stand confused and bewildered. Neither can they say that Allah alone is the Sustainer nor that another god is the sustainer. When the questioner sees that they do not make any answer, he himself answers his question and says, "Allah."

43. This sentence contains an important point of the wisdom of preaching. The logical conclusion of the question and answer cited above would be that the one who serves and worships Allah should be on right guidance and the one who worships others beside Him should be misguided. Therefore, apparently, the conclusion should have been: "Then, we are rightly guided and you are misguided." But such a plain and straight reply, although correct and true, would not have been a wise thing from the point of view of preaching. For when a person is addressed and told plainly that he is misguided and the speaker claims to be rightly-guided himself, he will become obdurate and will never be inclined to accept and acknowledge the truth. As the Messengers of Allah are not sent only for the sake of speaking the plain truth, but are also entrusted with the duty of reforming the wrongdoers as tactfully as possible, Allah has not asked His Prophet to tell them plainly, after the question and answer, that they are all misguided and that he alone is rightly-guided. Instead of this, it was said: "Tell them: it has become clear that we regard as our Deity only Him Who is the Sustainer, and you have taken as deities those who are not sustainers. Now, it is not possible that both you and we should be on right guidance simultaneously. Only one of us can be rightly-guided, and the other inevitably will be misguided. Now it is for you to consider and judge who is being proved by reason to be in the right and who in the wrong."

44. The above question had already made the listeners to think seriously. This additional sentence was meant to make them think even more seriously, as if to say, "It is in our own interest individually that we should consider and decide

the question of guidance and misguidance rightly. For if we are misguided, we shall ourselves bear the consequences of our error; you will not be held answerable for it. Therefore, it is in our own interest that we should consider seriously, before adopting a creed, that we are not following a wrong way. Likewise, you also should think seriously for your own sake, not for our sake in any way, and make sure that you are not investing your life's capital in a false creed. For if you committed an error in this regard, you would be harming only your own selves and not us."

45. This is the last and the strongest motive for the consideration of which the listeners' attention has been invited. It means to impress: "The thing is not only that there is the diffrence of the truth and the falsehood between you and us, but that both we and you have to be presented before our Lord, the Being Who knows the truth and is also fully aware of the affairs of each of us. There before Him not only will this thing be decided who, between you and us, was in the right and who in the wrong, but this issue also will be settled how we made every possible effort to make the truth plain to you, and how you opposed and resisted us in your antagonism to the truth."

46. That is, "Before ever you take the great risk due to your reliance on these deities, just tell me here who among them is so powerful as to arise in the Court of Allah as your supporter and save you from His punishment."

47. That is, "You have not been sent as a Prophet for the people of this city, or this country, or this age alone, but for the people of the entire world and for ever, but your compatriots do not recognize your worth and they do not realize how great a person has been raised among them as a Prophet and how uniquely they have been blessed by Allah."

The fact that the Holy Prophet has not been appointed a Prophet only for his own country or for his own age but for all mankind till Resurrection, has been stated at several places in the Qur'ān. For instance,

"And this Qur'ān has been revealed to me that I should thereby warn you and all those whom it may reach." (Al-An'ām: 19).

"O Prophet, say: O mankind, I am a Messenger to all of you from Allah." (Al-A'rāf: 158).

"O Prophet, We have sent you to be a real blessing for all the people of the world." (Al-Anbiyā': 107).

"Highly blessed is He Who has sent down *Al-Furqān* to His servant so that he may be a warner to all mankind." (Al-Furqān: 1).

The same thing has been stated by the Holy Prophet in a number of *Aḥādīth* in different ways. For example.

"I have been sent to all mankind, the black as well as the white." (Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyāt 'Abū Mūsā Ash'arī).*

"I have been sent to all mankind as a whole, whereas every Prophet before me was only sent to his own people." (Musnad Aḥmad: *Marwiyāt 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'Āṣ).*

"Before me every Prophet was specifically sent to his own people; but I have been sent for all mankind." (Bukhārī and Muslim: From Traditions related by Jābir bin 'Abdullah).

"My appointment as a Prophet and Resurrection are like this. Saying this the Holy Prophet raised his two fingers." (Bukhārī and Muslim). What he meant by this was : "Just as no third finger intervenes between these two fingers, so there is no prophethood between me and Resurrection. After me there will be Resurrection only, and I shall be the Prophet till Resurrection."

48. That is, "When will the time come about which you say: 'Our Lord will gather us together, then He will judge between us rightly?' We have been denying you persistently and opposing you openly for so long. Why is not then the judgement being passed against us ?"

49. In other words, the reply means: "Allah's judgments are not subject to your whims that He should be bound to do a thing at the time which you have fixed for it. He carries out His designs only according to His own discretion. You cannot understand how long is mankind to be allowed to function in this world in the scheme of Allah, how many individuals and how many nations are to be put to the test in different ways, and what Will be the right time for the Day of Judgment and summoning mankind of all ages for rendering their accounts. All this will be accomplished only at the time which Allah has fixed for it in His scheme of things. Your demands can neither hasten it on by a second nor your supplications can withhold it by a second."

50. The allusion is to the pagans of Arabia, who did not believe in any Divine Book.

51. That is, "The common people who are following their leaders, chiefs, saints and rulers blindly, and are not prepared to listen to any word of advice from a well-wisher against them. When the same people will see the actual reality and will also remember how their religious leaders used to misrepresent things, and when they will realize what doom they are going to meet on account of following

[Contd. on p. 222

صَالِحًا فَأُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ جَزَآءُ الضِّعْفِ بِمَا عَمِلُوْا وَهُمْ فِي الْغُرُفٰتِ اٰمِنُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾
وَالَّذِيْنَ يَسْعَوْنَ فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِنَا مُعٰجِزِيْنَ اُولٰٓئِكَ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُحْضَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ قُلْ اِنَّ
رَبِّيْ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ وَيَقْدِرُ لَهٗ ۭ وَمَآ اَنْفَقْتُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ فَهُوَ
يُخْلِفُهٗ ۚ وَهُوَ خَيْرُ الرّٰزِقِيْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَيَوْمَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيْعًا ثُمَّ يَقُوْلُ لِلْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةِ اَهٰٓؤُلَاۗءِ
اِيَّاكُمْ كَانُوْا يَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ قَالُوْا سُبْحٰنَكَ اَنْتَ وَلِيُّنَا مِنْ دُوْنِهِمْ ۚ بَلْ كَانُوْا يَعْبُدُوْنَ
الْجِنَّ ۚ اَكْثَرُهُمْ بِهِمْ مُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يَمْلِكُ بَعْضُكُمْ لِبَعْضٍ نَّفْعًا وَّلَا ضَرًّا ۭ
وَنَقُوْلُ لِلَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا ذُوْقُوْا عَذَابَ النَّارِ الَّتِيْ كُنْتُمْ بِهَا تُكَذِّبُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَاِذَا تُتْلٰى
عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتُنَا بَيِّنٰتٍ قَالُوْا مَا هٰذَآ اِلَّا رَجُلٌ يُّرِيْدُ اَنْ يَّصُدَّكُمْ عَمَّا كَانَ يَعْبُدُ
اٰبَاۗؤُكُمْ ۚ وَقَالُوْا مَا هٰذَآ اِلَّآ اِفْكٌ مُّفْتَرًى ۭ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا
جَاۗءَهُمْ ۙ اِنْ هٰذَآ اِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَمَآ اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ مِّنْ كُتُبٍ يَّدْرُسُوْنَهَا وَ
مَآ اَرْسَلْنَآ اِلَيْهِمْ قَبْلَكَ مِنْ نَّذِيْرٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَكَذَّبَ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۙ وَمَا بَلَغُوْا
مِعْشَارَ مَآ اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ فَكَذَّبُوْا رُسُلِيْ ۭ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيْرِ ﴿٤٥﴾ قُلْ اِنَّمَآ اَعِظُكُمْ
بِوَاحِدَةٍ ۚ اَنْ تَقُوْمُوْا لِلّٰهِ مَثْنٰى وَفُرَادٰى ثُمَّ تَتَفَكَّرُوْا ۣ مَا بِصَاحِبِكُمْ مِّنْ
جِنَّةٍ ۭ اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا نَذِيْرٌ لَّكُمْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْ عَذَابٍ شَدِيْدٍ ﴿٤٦﴾ قُلْ مَا سَاَلْتُكُمْ
مِّنْ اَجْرٍ فَهُوَ لَكُمْ ۭ اِنْ اَجْرِيَ اِلَّا عَلَي اللّٰهِ ۚ وَهُوَ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ شَهِيْدٌ ﴿٤٧﴾
قُلْ اِنَّ رَبِّيْ يَقْذِفُ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوْبِ ﴿٤٨﴾ قُلْ جَاۗءَ الْحَقُّ وَمَا يُبْدِئُ
الْبَاطِلُ وَمَا يُعِيْدُ ﴿٤٩﴾ قُلْ اِنْ ضَلَلْتُ فَاِنَّمَآ اَضِلُّ عَلٰي نَفْسِيْ ۚ وَاِنِ اهْتَدَيْتُ
فَبِمَا يُوْحِيْٓ اِلَيَّ رَبِّيْ ۭ اِنَّهٗ سَمِيْعٌ قَرِيْبٌ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَلَوْ تَرٰٓى اِذْ فَزِعُوْا فَلَا فَوْتَ وَاُخِذُوْا
مِنْ مَّكَانٍ قَرِيْبٍ ﴿٥١﴾ وَّقَالُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا بِهٖ ۚ وَاَنّٰى لَهُمُ التَّنَاوُشُ مِنْ مَّكَانٍۢ بَعِيْدٍ ﴿٥٢﴾ وَ

O Prophet, say to them, "My Lord gives abundantly to whomever of His servants He wills and sparingly to whom He wills.[59] Whatever you spend, He replenishes it by other provisions: He is the best of Providers."[60] 39

And the Day when He will gather all mankind together, He will ask the angels, "Did they really worship you?"[61] They will reply, "Glory be to Thee: our connection is with Thee, not with them.[62] They, in fact, worshipped the jinns, not us. It was in them that most of them believed."[63] (At that time We shall say:) "Today you can neither help nor harm one another." And to the wrongdoers We shall say, 'Now taste the torment of Hell which you used to deny." 40-42

When Our clear Revelations are recited to these people, they say, "This person only wants to turn you away from those deities whom your forefathers have been worshipping." And they say, "This (Qur'ān) is only a forged falsehood." When the Truth came before these disbelievers, they said, "This is plain magic," whereas We had neither given them a book before that they might study it, nor sent to them any warner before you.[64] Those who have gone before them denied likewise. These people have not attained even a tenth of what We had given them. But when they treated My Messengers as liars, see how severe was My punishment![65] 43-45

O Prophet, say to them, "I shall advise you of one thing: Think hard singly or in twos for the sake of Allah and reflect as to what is there of madness in your companion.[66] He is only a warner to you before the coming of a dreadful torment."[67] Say to them, "If I have asked you for a reward, keep it with yourselves,[68] for my reward is with Allah and He is a witness over everything."[69] Say to them, "My Lord inspires (me) with the Truth,[70] and He is the Knower of all the hidden realities." Say, "The Truth has come; now falsehood cannot succeed whatever it may do." Say "If I have gone astray, the burden of my going astray is on myself alone, and if I am on right guidance, it is by virtue of what my Lord reveals to me. He hears everything and is near at hand."[71] 46-50

Would that you could see these people when they will be in a state of confusion! They will not be able to escape but will be seized from a place closeby.[72] Then they will say, "We believe in it,"[73] 51-52

whereas they cannot attain a thing gone far out of hand.[74]

Contd. from p.219]

their leaders, they will turn on them, and say, "O wretched people, you led us astray: you are responsible for all our afflictions. Had you not misguided us, we would have listened to the Messengers of Allah and believed in what they said."

52. That is; "They will say: We had no power by which a few of us could have compelled hundreds of thousands of the people like you to follow us. If you had the will to believe, you could have deposed us from leadership and power and authority and government. In fact, you were our army: you were the source of our wealth and power. But for your offerings and gifts and taxes we should have been paupers. Had you not sworn allegiance to us, we could not have flourished as saints even for a day. Had you not appreciated and applauded us as leaders, we would have remained unknown. Had you not become our army and fought against the whole world for our sake, we could not have ruled over a single individual. Now why don't you admit that you yourselves did not want to follow the way that the Messengers had presented before you. You were the slaves of your own lusts and desires, and the demands of your selves could not be fulfilled by the righteous way of life presented by the Messengers but by what we presented before you. You were heedless of the lawful and the unlawful and craved for the luxuries of life, which we only could provide you. You were in search of such guides as could give you the licence to commit any sin, any crime, and take on themselves the responsibility to have you forgiven by God, in exchange for gifts. You wanted to listen to such religious scholars only who could please you by proving every kind of *shirk* and every innovation in religion and every lust of your self to be the very truth. You needed such forgerers who could invent a new religion by altering the Religion of God after your desires. You wanted to follow such leaders who could help you become prosperous in this world, no matter how you fared in the Hereafter. You wished to have such rulers who were immoral and dishonest so that under their patronage you also could have the freedom to indulge in any sin, any immorality. Thus, you and we were equal partners in the bargain. Now you cannot delude anyone by saying that you were absolutely innocent and that we had spoiled and corrupted you against your will."

53. In other words, the common people's reply will be: "How can you hold us as equal partners in this responsibility? Do you also remember what sort of trickeries and deceptions and false propaganda you practised and what efforts you used to make to tempt and entice the people day and night. It is not just that you presented the world before us and we were allured, but this also is a fact that you used to befool us by your frauds and deceptions and each one of you brought a new bait every day to tempt and lure the simple people."

The Qur'ān has made mention of the dispute between the religious guides and their followers at different places in different ways. For details, see Al-A'rāf: 38-39; Ibrāhīm: 21; Al-Qaṣaṣ: 63; Al-Aḥzāb: 66-68; Al-Mu'min: 47-48; Ḥā Mīm Sajdah: 29.

54. That the message of the Prophets was first of all opposed and resisted by the well-to-do people who possessed wealth and influence and authority, has been stated at many places in the Qur'ān. For instance, see Al-An'ām: 123; Al-A'rāf: 60, 66, 75, 88, 90; Hūd: 27; Banī Isrā'īl: 16; Al-Mu'minūn: 24, 33 to 38, 46, 47; Az-Zukhruf: 23.

55. Their reasoning was: "We are greater favourites of Allah than you. That is why He has favoured us with the blessings of which you are deprived, or have received them in lesser measure. Why should Allah have given us all these provisions and wealth and power had He not been pleased with us? Now, how can we believe that Allah Who is showering us with all kinds of His blessings here will punish us in the Hereafter? He will punish only those who are deprived of His favours here."

This misunderstanding of the world-worshippers also has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān and refuted. For instance, see Al-Baqarah: 126, 212; At-Taubah: 55, 69; Hūd: 3, 27; Ar-Ra'd: 26; Al-Kahf: 34 to 43; Maryam: 73 to 77; Tā Hā: 131; Al-Mu'minūn: 55 to 61; Ash-Shu'arā': 111; Al-Qaṣaṣ: 76 to 83; Ar-Rūm: 9; Al-Muddaththir: 11-26; Al-Fajr: 15 to 20.

56. They do not understand the wisdom on which the system of the distribution of provisions is based in the world, and are thus involved in the misunderstanding that whoever is being given abundantly is a beloved of Allah and whoever is being given sparingly is under His wrath. The fact, however, is that if a person looks around with open eyes he will see that in most cases the people with filthy and repulsive character are prosperous, and many good and noble people, who are known and recognized as morally pure, are found living in poverty. Now, how can a sensible person say that Allah dislikes the people of pure character and favours the wicked wrongdoers?"

57. This can have two meanings and both are correct: (1) That which brings the people nearer to Allah is not wealth and children but faith and righteous deeds; and (2) wealth and children can become a means of nearness to Allah only for that believing, righteous person, who spends his wealth in the way of Allah and tries to make his children God-conscious and righteous by good education and training.

58. Here there is also a subtle allusion that their blessing shall be imperishable, and their reward endless. For one cannot enjoy with full satisfaction of the heart a reward which is likely to perish or withdrawn suddenly at any time.

59. The repetition of this theme is meant to impress this: The abundance or restriction of the provisions is connected with Allah's will, not with His pleasure and approval. Under the will of Allah every good or evil person is receiving his provision. Both those who believe in Him and those who do not believe are getting their provisions. Neither is abundance of the provisions a proof that one is Allah's favourite servant nor is its restriction a sign that one is under His wrath. Under His will a wicked and dishonest person prospers, although wickedness and dishonesty are disliked by Allah. On the contrary, under the same Divine will a truthful and honest man suffers losses and undergoes hardships although these qualities are liked by Allah. Hence, the person who regards the material gains and benefits as the criterion for the good and evil is grossly mistaken. The real criterion is Allah's pleasure and approval which is attained through the moral qualities liked and approved by Him. With these qualities if a person gets the worldly blessings as well it will certainly be Allah's bounty for which he should be grateful to Him. But if from the moral point of view a person is Allah's rebel and is disobedient to Him and in spite of that is being favoured with worldly blessings, it would mean that he is preparing himself for a strict accountability and a most severe punishment.

60. Sustainer, Creator, Inventor, Donor and many other such attributes are in actual fact the attributes of Allah, but are metaphorically applied to men also. For example, about a person we may say, "He provided a job for so-and-so, or he made or invented such and such a thing, or he made a gift to so-and-so." Accordingly, Allah has used the word *Khair ar Rāziqīn* (the Best of Providers) for Himself. It means to impress the fact that Allah is the best of Providers among all those about whom you think that they are in any way connected with arranging the provisions.

61. Since the earliest times the polytheists in every age have been looking upon the angels as gods and goddesses and carving their idols and worshipping them. One has been regarded as the god of rain, another of lightning and another of wind; one is the goddess of wealth, another of knowledge and another of life and death. About this Allah says that on the Day of Resurrection the angels will be asked: "Were you being worshipped as deities by these people?" This question is not meant merely to find out the truth, but to ask, "Did you approve of their worship? Did you tell the people that you were their deities, so they should worship you? Or, did you wish that the people should do obeisance to you?" This question will not only be asked of the angels but of all those beings who have been worshipped as gods in the world. In Sūrah Al-Furqān it has been said: "On that

Day (Allah) will gather all these people together as well as their deities, whom they worship beside Allah. Then he will ask them, 'Did you mislead these servants of Mine, or did they themselves go astray?' " (V. 17).

62. That is, "They will answer: You are Pure and Exalted far above that another should be made a partner in Godhead with you. We have no connection with these people: we are not responsible for them, nor for what they did. We are Your servants only."

63. In this sentence, jinn implies the satans among the jinns. The answer means: "Apparently these people worshipped us, by mentioning our names and by making our images according to their imaginations. But, in fact, they did not worship us but worshipped the satans, for the satans only had shown them the way that they should regard others than Allah as fulfillers of their needs, and should make offerings before them."

This verse clearly brings out the error of the view of those people who take the word "jinn" to mean the dwellers of the mountains and deserts and rural areas. Can a sensible person imagine, on the basis of this verse, that the people used to worship the dwellers of the mountains and the deserts and the villages and believed in them?

This verse also throws light on another meaning of *'ibādat*. It shows that *'ibādat* is not mere worship and service, but it also implies carrying out somebody's orders and obeying him without question. Even if one curses another (as one curses Satan) but at the time follows his way, one would be performing his *'ibādat*. For other examples, see An-Nisā': 117-119; Al-Mā'idah: 60; At-Taubah: 31; Maryam: 42; Al-Qaṣaṣ:63.

64. That is, "Neither a book from God has come to them before this nor a messenger, who might have taught them to worship and serve others than God. Therefore, they are denying the invitation to *Tauḥīd* being given by the Qur'ān and Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) due to sheer ignorance, and not on the basis of any knowledge. They have in fact no authority for this."

65. That is, "The people of Makkah have not attained even one-tenth of the power and grandeur and prosperity that was possessed by those people. But just see how they went to their doom ultimately and their power and wealth could not avail them anything, when they refused to believe in the realities presented before them by the Prophets, and founded their system of life on falsehood."

66. That is, "Free yourselves of selfish interests and whims and prejudices

[Contd. on p. 226

قَدْ كَفَرُوا بِهٖ مِنْ قَبْلُ ۚ وَيَقْذِفُوْنَ بِالْغَيْبِ مِنْ مَّكَانٍۢ بَعِيْدٍ ۝٥٣ وَحِيْلَ بَيْنَهُمْ
وَبَيْنَ مَا يَشْتَهُوْنَ كَمَا فُعِلَ بِاَشْيَاعِهِمْ مِّنْ قَبْلُ ۭ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا فِيْ شَكٍّ مُّرِيْبٍ ۝٥٤

* Even before they had disbelieved and used to conjecture without true knowledge.[75] At that time they will be deprived of that which they will desire, as will have been deprived their likes before them: Indeed they had been involved in a misleading suspicion.[76] 53-54

Contd. from p.225]

and consider this sincerely for the sake of Allah: consider this singly as well as jointly in two's and three's and four's in an objective manner and consider it well and deeply: What after all can be the reason that the person whom you call a madman today was, until yesterday, being looked upon as a very wise man among you ? The incident that happened a little before his appointment to Prophethood is well known among you. When after the re-construction of the Ka'bah the different clans of the Quraish were going to clash among themselves on the question as to who should place the Black Stone in the wall, you yourselves had unanimously agreed to accept Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) as the arbitrator, and he had settled the question amicably to the entire satisfaction of all concerned. Now, how is it that you have started calling the same person mad, whose wisdom and sagacity has been thus tested and experienced by your whole nation? What is it if not stubbornness? Do you really mean the same that you say with your tongues?"

67. That is, "Do you call him mad only for this reason? Do you regard as wise him who finds you following the path of ruin, and applauds you, and mad him who warns you beforehand of the coming of a disaster and shows you the way to safety and well-being?"

68. Another meaning of this can be: "I do not seek anything but your well-being: My only recompense is that you should be reformed." This thing has been expressed at another place thus; "O Prophet, say to them: I do not ask of you any recompense for this: I only ask of the one, who will, to adopt the way of his Lord." (Al-Furqān 57)

69. That is, "The accusers may say whatever they like but Allah knows everything. He is a witness that I am a selfless person: I am not performing this mission for any selfish motive."

70. The words *yaqdhifu bil-ḥaqq* give two meanings: (1) "He inspires me with the knowledge of the truth by Revelation;" and (2) "He is making the truth to prevail: He is crushing falsehood by means of the truth."

71. From this verse some people of the modern age have argued thus: "According to it the Holy Prophet also could go astray: rather used to go astray. That is why Allah has made the Holy Prophet himself say: 'If I have gone astray, I am myself responsible for this. And I am on right guidance only when my Lord sends down Revelation (*i.e.*, verses of the Qur'ān) to me." By this wrong interpretation these unjust people in fact want to prove that the Holy Prophet's life was, God forbid, a combination of guidance and error, and Allah had made him confess this before the disbelievers lest one should adopt his obedience completely, taking him to be wholly on right guidance. The fact however is that whoever considers the theme in its correct context will know that here the words, 'If I have gone astray', are not meant to give the meaning that the Holy Prophet actually used to go astray, but it means: 'If I have gone astray, as you accuse I have, and my claim to Prophethood and my this invitation to *Tauḥīd* are the result of the same deviation, as you seem to imagine, then the burden of my going astray will be on me alone; you will not be held responsible for it. But if I am on right guidance, as in fact I am, it is because I receive Revelation from my Lord, by virtue of which I have obtained the knowledge of the guidance. My Lord is near at hand and is hearing everything. He knows whether I have gone astray or am on right guidance from Him."

72. That is, "On the Day of Resurrection, every culprit will be seized in a way as though he lay in hiding closeby. As he will try to flee, he will be seized immediately."

73. "We believe in it": "We believe in the message presented by the Messenger in the world."

74. That is, "They should have believed when they lived in the world; they have come a long way away from it. After having arrived in the Next World how can they get a chance to repent and believe ?"

75. That is, "They used to charge the Messenger and the believers with false accusations and used to taunt and mock his message. Some times they said he was a sorcerer or a madman; sometimes they ridiculed *Tauḥīd* and the concept of the Hereafter; sometimes they invented the story that another one taught him everything; and sometimes they said that the believers had started following him only on account of folly and ignorance."

76. As a matter of fact, no one adopts *shirk* and atheism and denial of the Hereafter by conviction, nor can he, for conviction comes from knowledge. And

no one has the knowledge that there is no God, or that many others have a share in Divine authority, or that there should be no Hereafter. Thus, whoever has adopted these beliefs in the world, has raised a structure on mere conjecture, which has no basis except doubt and suspicion, and this suspicion has led him to sheer error. Consequently, they doubted God's existence, they doubted the truth of *Tauḥīd*, they doubted the coming of the Hereafter; so much so that they made this doubt their faith and did not listen to the Prophets and expended and wasted their whole lifetime indulging in a wrong creed and way of life.



XXXV

FĀṬIR

فَاطِر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXXV

FĀṬIR

فَاطِر

INTRODUCTION

Name

The word *Fāṭir* of the first very verse is the title given to this Sūrah, which simply means that it is a Sūrah in which the word *Fāṭir* has occurred. The other name is *Al-Malā'ika*, which also occurs in the first verse.

Period of Revelation

The internal evidence of the style shows that the period of the revelation of this Sūrah is probably the middle Makkan period, and especially that part of it, when antagonism had grown quite strong and every sort of mischief was being adopted to frustrate the mission of the Holy Prophet.

Subject Matter and Theme

The discourse is meant to warn and reprove the people of Makkah and their chiefs for their antagonistic attitude that they had then adopted towards the Holy Prophet's message of *Tauḥid*, like a well-wisher, and also to admonish them like a teacher, as if to say: "O foolish people, the way to which this Prophet is calling you is to your own advantage. Your anger, your tricks and machinations against it and your conspiracies and designs to frustrate it are not directed against him but against your own selves. If you do not listen to him, you will be harming your own selves, not him. Just consider and ponder over what he says: there is nothing wrong in it. He repudiates *shirk*. If you look around carefully, you will yourself realize that there is no basis for *shirk* in the world. He presents the doctrine of *Tauḥid*. If you use your common sense, you will come to the conclusion that there is no being, beside Allah, Creator of the Universe, which might possess divine attributes and powers and authority. He tells you that you have not been created to be irresponsible in this world, but you have to render an account of your deeds before your God, and that there is life after the life of this world when everyone will meet the consequences of what he has done here. If you think a little you will see that your doubts and your astonishment about it are absolutely baseless. Don't you see the phenomenon of the reproduction of creation day and night? How can then your own recreation be impossible for that God Who created you from an insignificant sperm-drop? Doesn't your own intellect testify that the good and the evil cannot be alike? Then think and judge for yourselves as to what is reasonable: should the good and the evil meet with the same fate and end up in the dust, or should the good be requited with good and the evil with evil? Now, if you do not admit and acknowledge these rational and reasonable things and do not abandon your false gods, and wish to continue living only as irresponsible people in the world, the Prophet will not lose anything. It is you yourselves only who will suffer the consequences. The Prophet's only responsibility was to make the truth plain to you, which he has done".

In this connection, the Holy Prophet has been consoled again and again, as if to say: "When you are doing full justice to the preaching of your mission, you do not incur any responsibility for those who persist in their error and do not accept and follow the right way". Furthermore,

he has also been consoled to the effect: "You should neither grieve on account of those who do not want to believe, nor consume yourself with the thought of how to bring them to the right path. Instead of this, you should pay your full attention to those who are inclined to listen to you".

The believers also, in this connection, have been given the good news so that they may feel strengthened and encouraged and remain steadfast on the path of the truth with full faith in the promises made by Allah.



اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ فَاطِرِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ جَاعِلِ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ رُسُلًا اُولِيْٓ اَجْنِحَةٍ
مَّثْنٰى وَ ثُلٰثَ وَ رُبٰعَ ؕ يَزِيْدُ فِي الْخَلْقِ مَا يَشَآءُ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
قَدِيْرٌ ۝١ مَا يَفْتَحِ اللّٰهُ لِلنَّاسِ مِنْ رَّحْمَةٍ فَلَا مُمْسِكَ لَهَا ۚ وَ مَا يُمْسِكْ ۙ
فَلَا مُرْسِلَ لَهٗ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ ؕ وَ هُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ۝٢ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اذْكُرُوْا
نِعْمَتَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ ؕ هَلْ مِنْ خَالِقٍ غَيْرُ اللّٰهِ يَرْزُقُكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ وَ الْاَرْضِ ؕ
لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ فَاَنّٰى تُؤْفَكُوْنَ ۝٣ وَ اِنْ يُّكَذِّبُوْكَ فَقَدْ كُذِّبَتْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْ
قَبْلِكَ ؕ وَ اِلَى اللّٰهِ تُرْجَعُ الْاُمُوْرُ ۝٤ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا
تَغُرَّنَّكُمُ الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا ۪ وَ لَا يَغُرَّنَّكُمْ بِاللّٰهِ الْغَرُوْرُ ۝٥ اِنَّ الشَّيْطٰنَ لَكُمْ
عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوْهُ عَدُوًّا ؕ اِنَّمَا يَدْعُوْا حِزْبَهٗ لِيَكُوْنُوْا مِنْ اَصْحٰبِ السَّعِيْرِ ۝٦
اَلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌ ۚ وَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَهُمْ
مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّ اَجْرٌ كَبِيْرٌ ۝٧ اَفَمَنْ زُيِّنَ لَهٗ سُوْٓءُ عَمَلِهٖ فَرَاٰهُ حَسَنًا ؕ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ
يُضِلُّ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَ يَهْدِيْ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۫ فَلَا تَذْهَبْ نَفْسُكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَسَرٰتٍ ؕ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِمَا يَصْنَعُوْنَ ۝٨ وَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْٓ اَرْسَلَ الرِّيٰحَ فَتُثِيْرُ سَحَابًا
فَسُقْنٰهُ اِلٰى بَلَدٍ مَّيِّتٍ فَاَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ النُّشُوْرُ ۝٩
مَنْ كَانَ يُرِيْدُ الْعِزَّةَ فَلِلّٰهِ الْعِزَّةُ جَمِيْعًا ؕ اِلَيْهِ يَصْعَدُ الْكَلِمُ الطَّيِّبُ وَ

XXXV

FĀṬIR

فَاطِر

Verses: 45 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate

Praise is only for Allah, Who is the Creator of the heavens and the earth and the Employer of the angels[1] having wings in twos and threes and fours,[2] as His messengers. He adds to His creation as He pleases[3]: surely Allah has power over everything. Whatever door of mercy Allah may open for the people, none can withhold it, and the door that He closes, none has the power to open it after Him.[4] He is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.[5] 1-2

O people, remember the favours Allah has done to you.[6] Is there beside Allah any other creator also, who provides for you from the heavens and the earth ? There is no god but He. Wherefrom then are you being deceived[7]? Now (O Prophet,) if these people treat you as a liar,[8] (it is not a new thing :) many Messengers before you also have been treated as liars. And all affairs shall ultimately be presented before Allah.[9] 3-4

O people, the promise of Allah is surely true.[10] Therefore, let not the worldly life deceive you,[11] nor let that great deceiver deceive you concerning Allah.[12] Indeed, Satan is your enemy; therefore, you also should treat him as your enemy. He is inviting his followers towards his way so that they may join the dwellers of Hell. Those who disbelieve[13] shall have a severe punishment, and those who believe and do good works shall have forgiveness and a rich reward.[14] 5-7

(Can[15] the deviation of that person be imagined) whose evil deed is made seem fair to him and he deems it as good[16]? The fact is that Allah leads astray whomsoever He pleases and shows the Right Way to whomsoever He pleases. So, (O Prophet,) let not yourself be consumed 8-9

with grief for the sake of these people[17]: Allah is aware of whatever they are doing.[18] Allah it is Who sends the winds; then they raise the cloud, then We drive it towards a waste land and revive it thereby after its death. Likewise shall be the Resurrection of the dead men.[19]

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1. This can have two meanings: (1) "That these angels perform the service of communicating messages between Allah and His Prophets;" and (2) "that it is the duty of these angels to convey and enforce the Commands of Allah Almighty throughout the universe." The object is to impress this truth: The position of the angels whom the polytheists have made their gods and goddesses is no more than of obedient servants of Allah, the One. Just as the servants of a king run about for the implementation of his orders, so do these angels fly about in the service of the real Sovereign of the Universe. These servants have no authority of their own; all powers rest with Allah, Who is the real Sovereign.

2. We have no means to know what is the nature of the wings of these angels. But when Allah has used this word, which in human language is used for the wings of birds, instead of any other words, to express and depict the truth, one can certainly conclude that this very word of our language is nearest to the actual meaning. The mention of two and three and four pairs of the wings shows that different angels have been granted different degrees of powers by Allah. They have been equipped with different powers of speed and efficiency as demanded by the nature of service for which they are employed.

3. These words show that the number of the wings of the angels is restricted to four, but Allah has provided some angels with more wings than four. According to a *Ḥadīth* related by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, the Holy Prophet once saw the Angel Gabriel (peace be upon him) with six hundred wings. (Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī). Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah relates that the Holy Prophet had seen Gabriel twice in his real shape: he had six hundred wings and had covered the whole horizon. (Tirmidhī)

4. This also is meant to remove the misunderstanding of the polytheists, who believed that from among the servants of Allah some one gave them the jobs, some one the children and some one health to their patients. All these superstitions of *shirk* are baseless, and the pure truth is just that whatever of mercy reaches the people, reaches them only through Allah Almighty's bounty and grace. No one else has the power either to bestow it or to withhold it. This theme has been expressed at many places in the Qur'ān and the *Aḥādīth* in different ways so that man may avoid the humiliation of begging at every door and at every shrine and may realize that making or marring of his destiny is in the power of One Allah alone and of none else.

5. "He is the All-Mighty": He is dominant and the owner of Sovereignty: none can stop His judgments from being enforced. Also "He is All-Wise": every judgement of His is based on wisdom. When He gives somebody something He gives it because it is demanded by wisdom, and when He withholds something from somebody He withholds it because it would be against wisdom to give it.

6. "Remember.....you": "Do not be ungrateful: do not forget that whatever you have has been given by Allah". In other words, this sentence is meant to warn that whoever worships another than Allah, or regards a blessing as a favour done by another than Allah, or thanks another than Allah for a favour received, or prays to another than Allah for the grant of a blessing, is ungrateful".

7. There, is a subtle gap between the first and the second sentence, which is being filled by the context itself. To understand this, one may visualize the scene like this: The polytheists are being addressed. The speaker asks the audience: "Is there another creator beside Allah, who might have created you, and might be arranging provisions for you from the earth and heavens ?" After this question the speaker waits for the answer. But there is no reply from anywhere. No one replies that there is another one beside Allah, who is their creator and sustainer. This by itself shows that the audience also believe that there is none beside Allah, who could be their creator and sustainer. Then the speaker says: "If so, then He alone can be the Deity also and no one else. How have you been so deceived ? Why have you taken these others as your deities, when Allah alone is your Creator and Sustainer?"

8. "If they ...liar": "If they do not believe that there is no one worthy of worship but Allah, and accuse you of having made a false claim to Prophethood."

9. That is, "It is not for the people to give the verdict that whomsoever they call a liar should in actual fact become a liar. The judgement rests with Allah. He shall in the end decide who was the liar, and shall bring the real liars to their evil end."

10. "The promise" implies the promise of the Hereafter to which allusion was made in the preceding sentence, saying: "All affairs shall ultimately be presented before Allah. "

11. "Let not...deceive you": "Deceive you that the world is an end in itself: that there is no Hereafter when one will have to render an account of one's deeds; or that even if there is the Hereafter, the one who is enjoying life here will enjoy life there, too."

12. "Great deceiver": Satan, as is evident from the next sentence. And "deceive you concerning Allah" means: (1) That he should make some people

[Contd. on p. 240

الْعَمَلُ الصَّالِحُ يَرْفَعُهٗ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَمْكُرُوْنَ السَّيِّاٰتِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌ ؕ
وَمَكْرُ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُوَ يَبُوْرُ ﴿١٠﴾ وَاللّٰهُ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ
جَعَلَكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا ؕ وَمَا تَحْمِلُ مِنْ اُنْثٰى وَلَا تَضَعُ اِلَّا بِعِلْمِهٖ ؕ وَمَا
يُعَمَّرُ مِنْ مُّعَمَّرٍ وَّلَا يُنْقَصُ مِنْ عُمُرِهٖٓ اِلَّا فِيْ كِتٰبٍ ؕ اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ
يَسِيْرٌ ﴿١١﴾ وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْبَحْرٰنِ ۖ هٰذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ سَآئِغٌ شَرَابُهٗ وَهٰذَا
مِلْحٌ اُجَاجٌ ؕ وَمِنْ كُلٍّ تَاْكُلُوْنَ لَحْمًا طَرِيًّا وَّتَسْتَخْرِجُوْنَ حِلْيَةً تَلْبَسُوْنَهَا ۚ
وَتَرَى الْفُلْكَ فِيْهِ مَوَاخِرَ لِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ يُوْلِجُ
الَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ وَيُوْلِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي الَّيْلِ ۙ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ۚ كُلٌّ
يَّجْرِيْ لِاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ؕ ذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ
دُوْنِهٖ مَا يَمْلِكُوْنَ مِنْ قِطْمِيْرٍ ﴿١٣﴾ اِنْ تَدْعُوْهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوْا دُعَآءَكُمْ ۚ وَلَوْ
سَمِعُوْا مَا اسْتَجَابُوْا لَكُمْ ؕ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ يَكْفُرُوْنَ بِشِرْكِكُمْ ؕ وَلَا يُنَبِّئُكَ
مِثْلُ خَبِيْرٍ ﴿١٤﴾ يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اَنْتُمُ الْفُقَرَآءُ اِلَى اللّٰهِ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيْدُ ﴿١٥﴾
اِنْ يَّشَاْ يُذْهِبْكُمْ وَيَاْتِ بِخَلْقٍ جَدِيْدٍ ﴿١٦﴾ وَمَا ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ بِعَزِيْزٍ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا
تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِّزْرَ اُخْرٰى ؕ وَاِنْ تَدْعُ مُثْقَلَةٌ اِلٰى حِمْلِهَا لَا يُحْمَلْ مِنْهُ شَيْءٌ
وَّلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبٰى ؕ اِنَّمَا تُنْذِرُ الَّذِيْنَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَيْبِ وَاَقَامُوا
الصَّلٰوةَ ؕ وَمَنْ تَزَكّٰى فَاِنَّمَا يَتَزَكّٰى لِنَفْسِهٖ ؕ وَاِلَى اللّٰهِ الْمَصِيْرُ ﴿١٨﴾ وَمَا يَسْتَوِي
الْاَعْمٰى وَالْبَصِيْرُ ﴿١٩﴾ وَلَا الظُّلُمٰتُ وَلَا النُّوْرُ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَلَا الظِّلُّ وَلَا الْحَرُوْرُ ﴿٢١﴾
وَمَا يَسْتَوِي الْاَحْيَآءُ وَلَا الْاَمْوَاتُ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُسْمِعُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۚ وَمَآ اَنْتَ
بِمُسْمِعٍ مَّنْ فِي الْقُبُوْرِ ﴿٢٢﴾ اِنْ اَنْتَ اِلَّا نَذِيْرٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ اِنَّآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيْرًا

Whoever seeks honour should know that the honour wholly belongs to Allah.[20] Only the pure Word rises up to Him, and the righteous deed causes it to rise.[21] As for those who plot evil,[22] there is a severe torment for them, and their plotting shall itself perish. 10

Allah[23] created you from dust, then from the sperm-drop,[24] then made you pairs (*i.e.*, male and female). No woman conceives or is delivered but it is in the knowledge of Allah. No aging person grows old nor is anything reduced of his age except in accordance with a Book[25]: this is an easy thing for Allah.[26] And the two bodies of water are not alike[27]: one is sweet and thirst-quenching, pleasant to drink, while the other is saltish and pungent; yet from both you get fresh flesh[28] and bring out decorations to wear,[29] and in the same waters you see the ships which plough through it so that you may seek Allah's bounty and be grateful to Him. He causes the night to pass into the day and the day into the night[30] and He has subjected the sun and the moon till an appointed time.[31] The same Allah (Whose works are these) is your Lord: Sovereignty is His. Those whom you invoke instead of Him do not own even a blade of grass.[32] If you call them, they cannot hear your prayers, and if they hear, they cannot answer you[33]; and on the Day of Resurrection they will disown your *shirk*.[34] None can inform you of the truth except the One Who is All-Aware.[35] 11-14

O people it is you who stand in need[36] of Allah: Allah is Self-Sufficient and Self-Praiseworthy.[37] If He wills He can remove you and bring a new creation in your place: this is not at all difficult for Allah.[38] No bearer of a burden will bear another's burden[39], and if a laden soul cries out for help, none will come forward to share the least of its burden, even though it be the nearest kinsman.[40] (O Prophet,) you can only warn those who fear their Lord though they cannot see Him, and establish the *ṣalāt*.[41] Whoever adopts purity does so for his own good, and to Allah shall all return. The blind and the seeing are not alike, nor are the darknesses and light alike, nor are the cool shade and the heat of the sun, nor the living and the dead alike.[42] Allah causes whomever He wills, to hear, but (O Prophet,) you cannot make those who are buried in the graves to hear you.[43] You are only a warner,[44] We have sent you with the Truth, as a bearer of good news and a 15-24

warner. And there has been no nation which was not visited by a warner.[45]

Contd. from p.237]

believe that Allah does not exist at all; (2) involve others in the misunderstanding that Allah after having once created the world, has retired and has now practically nothing to do with the universe any more; (3) delude others into believing that Allah no doubt is running the universe, but He has taken no responsibility of providing guidance to man: therefore, Revelation and Prophethood are a mere deception; and (4) give still others the false hope that since Allah is All-Forgiving and All-Merciful, He will forgive one whatever sins one might have committed, and that He has some beloved ones too: if one remains attached to them, success and salvation are assured.

13. "Those who disbelieve": those who will refuse to believe in this invitation of Allah's Book and His Messenger.

14. That is, Allah will overlook their errors and will reward them for their good deeds not merely with what they will just deserve but much more richly and generously.

15. Verses 3-7 were addressed to the common people. In this paragraph mention has been made of the standard-bearers of error and deviation, who were exerting their utmost to frustrate and defeat the mission of the Holy Prophet.

16. That is, one kind of perverted person is he who commits evil but knows and understands that he is committing evil. Such a person can be reformed by counsel and advice, and sometimes his own conscience also pricks and brings him to the right path, for his habits only are perverted, not his mind. But there is another kind of a person whose mentality has been perverted, who has lost the discrimination between good and evil, for whom the life of sin has become alluring and lustrous, who abhors good and takes evil for civilization and culture, who regards goodness and piety as things of the past, and sinfulness and wickedness as progressiveness, and for whom guidance becomes error and error guidance. Such a person is not amenable to any advice, any admonition. He neither takes warning from his own follies, nor listens to a well-wisher. It is useless to waste one's time and energy for the reformation of such a person. Instead, the inviter to the truth should turn his attention towards those whose consciences may still be alive and who may still be inclined to listen to the truth.

17. The insertion of the words "Allah leads astray whomsoever He pleases and shows the Right Way to whomsoever He pleases", between the preceding and this sentence, clearly gives the meaning that Allah deprives, of the

grace of guidance, those who become so perverted mentally, and leaves them to wander aimlessly in the ways in which they themselves wish to remain lost. After making the Holy Prophet realize this fact Allah exhorts him to the effect: "It is not within your power to bring such people to the right path; therefore, have patience in their regard. Just as Allah is indifferent about them, so should you also avoid being unduly anxious about their reformation."

Here, one should bear in mind two things very clearly. First, the people being mentioned here were not the common people, but the chiefs of Makkah, who were employing every falsehood, every fraud and every trick to defeat the mission of the Holy Prophet. These people were in fact not involved in any misunderstanding about the Holy Prophet. They knew full well what he was calling them to and what were the evils and moral weaknesses which they themselves were striving to maintain. After knowing and understanding all this they had firmly resolved not to let him succeed in his object, and for this purpose they did not feel any hesitation in using any mean or petty device. Now, evidently the people who deliberately and after mutual consultation invent a new falsehood every next day and spread it against a person, can deceive the whole world but as for themselves they know that they are the liars and that the person whom they have accused is free of every blame. Then, if the person against whom the false propaganda is being made also does not react and respond in a way opposed to truth and righteousness, the unjust people also cannot help realizing that their opponent is a truthful and honest man. If in spite of this the people do not feel ashamed of their misconduct and continue to oppose and resist the truth with falsehood, their conduct itself testifies that they are under Allah's curse and they can no longer discriminate between good and evil.

Secondly, if Allah had only meant to make His Prophet understand the supreme truth, He could have secretly made him aware of this. There was no need to proclaim it openly in the Revelation. To mention it in the Qur'ān and to proclaim it to the world was in fact meant to warn the common people that the leaders and the religious guides whom they were following blindly were the people of perverted mentality, whose mean conduct was itself an evidence that they were under the curse of Allah.

18. This sentence in itself contains the threat that a time is coming when Allah will punish them for their misdeeds. When a ruler says that he is fully aware of the misdeeds of a culprit, it does not only mean that the ruler has the knowledge of his misconduct, but it necessarily contains the warning that he will also punish him for this certainly.

19. That is, "These ignorant people think that the Hereafter is impossible. That is why they are living under the delusion that they may do whatever they like

in the world, the time will never come when they will have to appear before their God and render an account of their deeds. But this is no more than a delusion. On the Day of Resurrection, the dead men of all ages will suddenly rise back to life at one call of Allah just as the dead earth comes back to life at one shower of the rain and the roots, lying dead for ages, become green and start sprouting up from the layers of the earth."

20. It should be noted that whatever the chiefs of the Quraish were doing against the Holy Prophet, they were doing it for the sake of their honour and dignity. They thought that if the Holy Prophet succeeded in his mission, their greatness and glory would fade away, their influence would die out and their honour among the Arabs would be ruined. At this it is being said: "The honour that you have attained for yourselves by your disbelief in and rebellion against Allah, is a false honour, which is destined to be ruined. The true and enduring honour, which can never suffer debasement, can be attained only through service of Allah. If you turn sincerely and faithfully to Him, you will attain it; and if you turn away from Him you are bound to live an abject, wretched life."

21. This is the real means of attaining the honour. In the sight of Allah the false, vicious and mischievous can never rise and flourish. In His sight only such a word can rise and flourish, which is true and pure and based on the truth, and in which a righteous creed and a correct point of view may have been expressed and presented. Then the thing which makes the pure word rise and prosper is the action which conforms to it. Wherever the word is pure but the action opposed to it, the purity of the word suffers a blemish. The mere extravagant use of the tongue does not exalt a word: the power of the righteous action is needed to exalt and raise it high.

Here, one should also note that the Qur'ān presents the righteous word and the righteous action as inter-dependent. No action can be righteous merely on the basis of its external and apparent form unless it has a righteous creed behind it. And no righteous creed can be reliable unless it is supported and confirmed by a person's action. For instance, if a person says that he regards Allah, the One, alone as his Deity, but worships others than Allah in practical life, his action belies his word. If a person says that he regards the wine as unlawful but drinks, his mere word can neither be acceptable to the people nor deserve approval in the sight of Allah.

22. "Those who plot evil": Those who propagate false and evil words by means of cunning tricks, deceit and deceptive reasoning, and do not feel any hesitation in employing any device, however mean and depraved, to frustrate and defeat the word of the truth.

23. From here again the discourse is directed to the common people.

24. That is, man in the first instance was created from the dust directly, then his race was perpetuated through the sperm-drop.

25. That is, "It is pre-ordained for everyone who is born in this world how long he will live. If a person lives a long life, he does so by Allah's decree, and if another one lives a short life, he too lives so by Allah's decree. Some ignorant people give the argument that in the past the death-rate of the newly-born children used to be high, and now it has been checked by the advancement of the medical science; and the people used to live short lives in the past, now due to better medical facilities the life-span has increased. But this argument could be presented in refutation of the Qur'ānic argument only when it could be ascertained that Allah, for instance, had pre-ordained a two-year life for a certain person, and the modern medical facilities have enhanced it by a day. If a person has no such knowledge, he cannot refute this Qur'ānic statement on any rational grounds. Only on the basis of the statistics that the death-rate among children has fallen, or that the people now are living longer lives, it cannot be argued that man has now become able to change the decrees of Allah. Rationally it is not impossible that Allah might have fixed different life-spans for the people born in different periods, and this might also be Allah Almighty's decree that man in such and such an age would be granted curative power to treat such and such diseases, and in such and such a period man would be given greater means for longevity.

26. That is, "It is not at all difficult for Allah to give commands and pass judgements about each individual of His countless creations when He possesses detailed and perfect knowledge about them."

27. That is, the body of water in the oceans, and the body of water in the rivers and springs and lakes.

28. "Fresh flesh": Flesh of water animals.

29. That is pearls and corals and, in some rivers, diamonds and gold.

30. That is, "The light of the day starts diminishing and the darkness of the night increasing gradually so as to cover up everything completely. Likewise, towards the end of the night, in the beginning, a streak of the light appears on the horizon, and then the bright day dawns."

31. "Subjected .." : subjected to a law.

32. The word *qiṭmīr* in the original means the thin skin that covers the stone of the date-fruit; but what is meant to be said is that the gods of the *mushriks* do not own anything whatever. That is why we have translated it "a blade of grass", which is an insignificant thing.

33. This does not mean that they cannot tell aloud, in answer to your prayer, whether your prayer has been accepted or not, but it means that they cannot take any action on your supplications. If a person sends his application to someone who is not a ruler, his application miscarries. For the person to whom it has been sent, has no authority whatever: he can neither reject it nor accept it. However, if the same application is sent to the one who is really a ruler, one or the other action will certainly be taken on it.

34. That is, "They will plainly say: We had never told them that we are Allah's associates and that they should worship us. On the contrary, we were not at all aware that they regarded us as Allah's associates and were invoking us for help. None of their prayers has reached us, nor has any of their gifts and offerings".

35. "All-Aware": Allah Almighty Himself. It means this: "The other person can at the most refute *shirk* and prove the powerlessness of the gods of the polytheists by rational arguments only, but We are directly aware of the Absolute Truth. We are telling you, on the basis of knowledge, that all those whom the people believe to be possessing some powers in Our Godhead are absolutely powerless. They have no authority whatever by which they might do somebody good or harm. And We know this directly that on the Day of Resurrection, these gods of the *mushriks* will themselves refute their *shirk*."

36. That is, "You should not remain under the delusion that Allah stands in need of your help. If you do not accept Him as God, His Godhead will fail, and if you do not serve and worship Him, He will incur some loss. Nay, but the fact is that you stand in need of Him. You cannot remain alive for a moment if He does not keep you alive, and does not provide you with the means by which you remain alive in the world and function. Therefore, when you are told to adopt His service and obedience, it is not because Allah stands in need of it, but because upon it depends your own success here as well as in the Hereafter. If you do not do so, you will be harming your own selves only, and not Allah in any way."

37. The word *Ghaní* implies that He is the Owner of everything: He is Self-Sufficient and Independent of all: He does not stand in need of anyone's help. The word *Hamíd* implies that He is Self-Praiseworthy: someone may praise Him, or may not, but He alone is worthy of *hamd* (praise and gratitude). These two attributes have been used together because one would be *ghaní* even if one did not do any good to anyone by one's wealth. In such a case one would be *ghaní* but not *hamíd*. One will be *hamíd* only in case one does not draw any benefit for oneself but benefits others in every way from the treasures of one's wealth and resources. Since Allah is perfect in these two attributes, it has been said: "He is not just *Ghaní* (self-sufficient) but such *Ghaní* as is worthy of every kind of praise and

gratitude, for He is fulfilling your needs as well as the needs of all other creatures."

38. That is, "You are not enjoying life on Allah's earth solely by dint of your own power and might. He has the power to remove you from here in no time and raise another people to take your place. Therefore, you should understand your true worth, and should desist from adopting the conduct which has been causing the downfall of the nations. When Allah wills to send someone to his doom, there is no one in the universe, who can stop Him and withhold His decree from being enforced."

39. "Burden": the burden of the responsibilities of actions. It means: In the sight of Allah every one is responsible for his own actions and for no one else's. There is no possibility that Allah will place the burden of one man's responsibility upon the other, nor is there the possibility that a person will take the burden of another's responsibility upon himself and get himself seized for the crime committed by the other. This thing has been said here because the polytheist kinsmen and relatives of the people who were embracing Islam in Makkah, used to urge them, saying, "Give up Islam and return to your ancestral faith. We take the responsibility of any punishment etc. on ourselves."

40. In the preceding sentence, Allah's law of justice has been enunciated, according to which He will not seize any person for the sin committed by another, but will hold everyone responsible for his own sin. In this sentence the Muslims have been told: "Those who urge you to give up faith and commit evil on the assurance that they will take on themselves the burden of your sins on the Day of Resurrection, are in fact giving you a false hope. When Resurrection comes and the people see what fate they are going to meet in consequence of their misdeed, everyone will be concerned only about himself. Brother will turn away from brother and father from son, and no one will be prepared to take even an atom's weight of another's burden on himself."

41. In other words, "Your warnings cannot have any effect on obstinate and stubborn people. Your admonitions can bring only such people to the right path, who have fear of God in their hearts, and who are inclined to bow before their real Master."

42. In these comparisons the present and the future of a believer and a disbeliever have been contrasted. There is a person who has closed his eyes to the realities and does not care to see as to what truth the whole system of the universe and his own existence itself are pointing. There is the other person, whose eyes are open and who clearly sees that everything outside and inside himself bears evidence to the Unity of God and to man's answerability before him. There is a

[Contd. on p. 248

وَّنَذِيْرًا ۚ وَاِنْ مِّنْ اُمَّةٍ اِلَّا خَلَا فِيْهَا نَذِيْرٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَاِنْ يُّكَذِّبُوْكَ فَقَدْ كَذَّبَ
الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ جَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ وَبِالزُّبُرِ وَبِالْكِتٰبِ الْمُنِيْرِ ﴿٢٥﴾
ثُمَّ اَخَذْتُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ۖ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ نَكِيْرِ ﴿٢٦﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ اَنْزَلَ مِنَ
السَّمَآءِ مَآءً ۚ فَاَخْرَجْنَا بِهٖ ثَمَرٰتٍ مُّخْتَلِفًا اَلْوَانُهَا ۚ وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ
بِيْضٌ وَّحُمْرٌ مُّخْتَلِفٌ اَلْوَانُهَا وَغَرَابِيْبُ سُوْدٌ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَمِنَ النَّاسِ وَالدَّوَآبِّ
وَالْاَنْعَامِ مُخْتَلِفٌ اَلْوَانُهٗ كَذٰلِكَ ۗ اِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللّٰهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمٰٓؤُا ۗ اِنَّ
اللّٰهَ عَزِيْزٌ غَفُوْرٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَتْلُوْنَ كِتٰبَ اللّٰهِ وَاَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاَنْفَقُوْا
مِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ سِرًّا وَّعَلَانِيَةً يَّرْجُوْنَ تِجَارَةً لَّنْ تَبُوْرَ ﴿٢٩﴾ لِيُوَفِّيَهُمْ اُجُوْرَهُمْ
وَيَزِيْدَهُمْ مِّنْ فَضْلِهٖ ۗ اِنَّهٗ غَفُوْرٌ شَكُوْرٌ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَالَّذِيْٓ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ مِنَ
الْكِتٰبِ هُوَ الْحَقُّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ ۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِعِبَادِهٖ لَخَبِيْرٌ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٣١﴾
ثُمَّ اَوْرَثْنَا الْكِتٰبَ الَّذِيْنَ اصْطَفَيْنَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا ۚ فَمِنْهُمْ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَ
مِنْهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ ۚ وَمِنْهُمْ سَابِقٌۢ بِالْخَيْرٰتِ بِاِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ۗ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ
الْكَبِيْرُ ﴿٣٢﴾ جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ يَّدْخُلُوْنَهَا يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيْهَا مِنْ اَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ
وَّلُؤْلُؤًا ۚ وَلِبَاسُهُمْ فِيْهَا حَرِيْرٌ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَقَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْٓ اَذْهَبَ عَنَّا
الْحَزَنَ ۗ اِنَّ رَبَّنَا لَغَفُوْرٌ شَكُوْرٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ الَّذِيْٓ اَحَلَّنَا دَارَ الْمُقَامَةِ مِنْ
فَضْلِهٖ ۚ لَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيْهَا نَصَبٌ وَّلَا يَمَسُّنَا فِيْهَا لُغُوْبٌ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا لَهُمْ نَارُ جَهَنَّمَ ۚ لَا يُقْضٰى عَلَيْهِمْ فَيَمُوْتُوْا وَلَا يُخَفَّفُ
عَنْهُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابِهَا ۚ كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِيْ كُلَّ كَفُوْرٍ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَهُمْ يَصْطَرِخُوْنَ فِيْهَا ۚ
رَبَّنَآ اَخْرِجْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا غَيْرَ الَّذِيْ كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ ۗ اَوَلَمْ نُعَمِّرْكُمْ مَّا

Now if they treat you as a liar, those who lived before them also 25-26
treated (their Messengers) as liars. Their Messengers came to them with clear proofs[46] and Scriptures and the enlightening Book.[47] Then I seized those who disbelieved, and behold, how terrible was My punishment !

Do you not see that Allah sends down rainwater from the sky 27-28
and we bring forth thereby a variety of fruits of different colours ? In the mountains also there are streaks, white and red and jetblack, with different hues. And likewise, men, beasts and cattle also have different colours.[48] The fact is that only those of His servants, who possess knowledge, fear Allah.[49] Surely, Allah is All-Mighty, All-Forgiving.[50]

Those who recite the Book of Allah and establish the *Salāt*, and 29-35
spend out of what We have given them, secretly and openly, do hope for a bargain which involves no loss. (They have invested their all in this bargain) so that Allah may give them their full rewards and bless them with even more from His grace.[51] Surely, Allah is Forgiving and Bounteous. [52] (O Prophet,) the Book that We have sent to you by revelation is the very Truth, which confirms the previous Scriptures.[53] Allah is indeed well aware of His servants, and watchful over everything.[54] Then We made those people heirs of this Book, whom We chose (for this inheritance) from among Our servants.[55] Now someone of them is being unjust to his own self, and someone following a middle course, and someone excelling in good deeds by Allah's leave. This is the supreme bounty.[56] There are everlasting Gardens which they shall enter[57] to be decorated with bracelets of gold and pearls, and their dress will be of silk. They will say, "Praise be unto Allah Who has removed sorrow from us[58]: surely, our Lord is Forgiving and Bounteous,[59] Who by His grace has lodged us in an eternal abode[60]: here we do neither experience any trial nor any weariness."[61]

And for those who have disbelieved[62] there is the Fire of Hell: 36-37
neither will it be decreed that they should die, nor will the torment of Hell be lightened for them in any way. Thus do We requite every disbeliever. There they will cry out and say,"Our Lord, take us out from here so that we may do good works other than those which we had been doing." (The reply will be :) "Did We not give you lives long enough so that he who would, could take a warning[63] ? and the warner also had come to you. Now taste (the torment): the wicked will have no

helper here."

(Contd. from p.245)

person, who is wandering blindly in the superstitions of ignorance and the darknesses of presumptions and speculations, and is not inclined to benefit by the light of the candle lit by the Prophet. There is the other person, whose eyes are open and who, as soon as the light spread by the Prophet appears before him, comes to realize that all the ways being followed by the polytheists and the disbelievers and the atheists lead to destruction, and the way to success is only that which has been shown by the Messenger of God. Now how can it be possible that the attitude of the two persons be the same in the world and the two may follow one and the same path together ? And how can this also be possible either that the two should meet the same end and should both end up in the dust after death ? Neither should one be punished for his wrongdoings, nor the other be rewarded for his righteous conduct. The sentence, "the cool shade and the heat of the sun are not alike", points to the same fate. The one will be provided shelter under the shade of Allah's mercy and the other will burn in the fire of Hell. Thus, the notions that the two will ultimately meet the same end is utterly false. In the end, the believer has been likened to the living and the stubborn disbeliever to the dead. That is, the believer is he whose feeling, understanding and perception are alive and whose conscience is making him aware of the distinction between the good and the evil every moment. Contrary to this, the person who has been, wholly lost in the prejudices of disbelief is even worse than the blind person who is wandering about in darkness. Nay, he is like a dead person who has no sense or feeling left in him.

43. That is, "As for the powers of Allah, they are unlimited. He can even make the stones to hear. But it is not within the power of the Messenger to make those people to listen to him whose consciences have become dead and whose ears deaf to every call to the truth. He can only make those people to hear him, who are inclined to listen to every reasonable thing."

44. That is, "Your only duty is to warn the people and nothing else. If even after this a person does not come to his senses, and remains lost in his deviations, you are not to blame for that, for you have not been entrusted with the duty of making the blind to see and the deaf to hear."

45. That there has been no community in the world for whose guidance Allah did not appoint the Prophets, has been stated at several places in the Qur'ān. In Sūrah Ar-Ra'd: 7, it was said: "Every people has its guide ;" in Sūrah Al-Ḥijr: 10: "O Prophet, We have already sent Messengers before you among many of the ancient peoples;" in Sūrah An-Naḥl: 36: "We sent to every community a

Messenger;" and in Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā: 208: "We have never destroyed a habitation unless it had its warners to administer admonition." But, in this connection, one should note two things so that there remains no misunderstanding. First, one and the same Prophet is enough for the lands to which his message may reach. It is not necessary that Prophets be sent to every separate habitation and to every separate community. Second, no new Prophet needs to be sent as long as the message and teaching and guidance given by a previous Prophet remains safe and intact. It is not necessary that a separate Prophet be sent for every race and every generation.

46. "Clear proofs": Proofs which clearly testified that they were Allah's Messengers.

47. "Scriptures" probably consisted of good counsels and moral precepts and "the Book" comprised a complete code of the law.

48. This is meant to impress that in the universe created by Allah nowhere is there homogeneity and uniformity; there is variety everywhere. From the same earth and by the same water different kinds of trees are appearing. Even the two pieces of the fruit of the same tree are not uniform in colour and size and taste. In the same mountain one will see a variety of colours and a great difference in the material composition of its different parts. Even among human beings and animals one will not see two offspring of the same parents exactly alike. If a person seeks uniformity of the temperaments and dispositions and mentalities in this universe and is bewildered at the differences which have been alluded to in vv. 19-22 above, it will be his own perception and understanding to blame. This same variety and difference, in fact, point to the reality that this universe has been created by a Wise Being with great wisdom; its Maker is a Unique Creator and a Matchless Fashioner, Who does not have the same model of everything before Him, but has a variety of countless and limitless designs of everything. Then if one ponders over the differences in human temperaments and minds, in particular, one will see that it is not a mere accident, but in fact the masterpiece of the wisdom of creation. If all human beings had been created with the uniform temperaments and desires and feelings and inclinations and ways of thinking, and no room had been left for any difference, it would have been absolutely useless to bring about a new creation like man in the world. When the Creator decided to bring into existence a responsible creation, a creation having power and authority, the necessary inevitable demand of the nature of the decision was that room for all sorts of differences should be provided in its nature and structure. This is the main proof of the fact that the creation of man is not the result of an accident, but the result of a wonderful and wise plan and design. And obviously, wherever there is a wise plan and design, there must necessarily be a Wise Being working behind it, for the existence of wisdom without a Wise Being would be un-imaginable.

49. That is, the more a person is unaware of the attributes of Allah, the more he will be fearless of Him. Contrary to this, the more a person is aware and conscious of Allah's powers, His knowledge, His wisdom, His vengeance and His omnipotence and His other attributes, the more he will fear His disobedience. Thus, in fact, "knowledge" in this verse does not imply knowledge of academic subjects like philosophy and science and history and mathematics, etc. but the knowledge of Divine attributes, no matter whether one is literate or illiterate. The one who is fearless of God is illiterate merely as regards this knowledge even if he has all the knowledge of the world. And the one who knows the attributes of God and fears Him in his heart, is learned even if he is illiterate. In the same connection, one should also know that in this verse the '*ulamā'* does not imply the scholars in the technical sense, who are termed as religious scholars because of their knowledge of the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* and *Fiqh* and philosophy. They will prove true to this verse only when they possess fear of God in their hearts. The same thing has been said by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, thus: "knowledge is not due to much narration of *Ḥadīth* but due to much fear of Allah." And also by Ḥaḍrat Ḥassan Basri, thus: "The scholar is he who fears Allah though he has not seen Him, and turns to what is approved by Him and keeps away from what makes Him angry."

50. That is, He is All-Mighty, and therefore, can seize the disobedient as and when He likes: no one can escape His grasp. But He is All-Forgiving also and is, therefore, giving respite to the wrongdoers.

51. This kind of conduct and practice of the believers has been likened to a trade bargain because in trade a man invests his money and labour and capabilities in the hope that he will not only get his capital back and his wages for the time and energy spent but in addition some profit as well. Likewise, a believer also invests his wealth and his time and his labour and capabilities in carrying out Allah's Commands and in His service and worship and in the struggle to promote the cause of His Religion in the hope that he will not only get his full rewards for it but Allah will bless him with much more from His bounty as well. But there is a great difference between the two kinds of bargains. In the worldly trade bargains there is the risk of loss also along with the hope of profits. Contrary to this, in the bargain that a sincere servant makes with his God there is no risk of any loss whatever.

52. That is, "Allah's relation with the sincere believers is not that of a miserly master who checks his servant on trivialities and brings all his services and loyalties to nought on account of a minor error. But Allah is the Most Beneficent and Generous Master. He overlooks the errors of His obedient servant and appreciates whatever service he might be able to render."

53. It means: "This Book is not presenting anything new which might be opposed to the teaching brought by the former Prophets, but it is presenting the same eternal Truth which all the Prophets have been presenting from the very beginning."

54. The object of mentioning these auributes of Allah here is to arouse the people to the aims and ideals in which their true well being lies, to the principles which alone can afford the right guidance and to the rules and regulations which are precisely in accordance with them. None can know these except Allah, because He alone is aware of the nature of His servants and its demands, and He alone watches over their well-being and affairs. The people do not know their own selves as much as their Creator knows them. Therefore, the truth is that, and can only be that, which He has taught by Revelation.

55. This implies the Muslims, who have been sorted out from all mankind so that they may become heirs to the Book of Allah, and convey its message to others after the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). Though this Book has been presented before all human beings, those who accepted it in the first instance, were chosen for the honour to become heirs to a great Book like the Qur'ān and the trustees of the teaching and guidance imparted by a great Messenger like the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

56. That is, "All these Muslims are not alike but are divided into three classes:

(1) Those unjust to themselves: They are those who believe sincerely and honestly that the Qur'ān is the Book of Allah and Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) the Messenger of Allah, but in practical life do not fully follow the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger. They are believers but sinful; culprits but not rebellious; weak of faith but not hypocritical and unbelieving at heart. Therefore, although they are "unjust to themselves," they have been included among the chosen servants of God and among the heirs to the Book; otherwise, obviously the rebels and the hypocrites and the unbelieving people could not be so treated and honoured. This class of the believers have been mentioned first of all because they are most numerous among the Muslims.

(2) Those following the middle course: They are the people who fulfil the obligations of this inheritance to some extent but not fully. They are obedient as well as erring. They have not left their self altogether free but try as best as they can to turn it to God's obedience; however, at times they give it undue freedom and become involved in sin. Thus, their life becomes a combination of both the good and the evil actions.

They are less numerous than the first group but more than the third; that is why they have been mentioned second.

(3) Those excelling in good deeds: They are the people of the first rank among the heirs to the Book, and they are the ones who are doing full justice to the inheritance. They are in the forefront in following and adhering to the Book and the *Sunnah;* in conveying the message of God to His servants, in offering the sacrifices for the sake of the true Faith, and in every pious and good work. They are not the ones who would commit a sin deliberately, but if they happened to commit a sin inadvertantly, they would be filled with remorse as soon as they became conscious of it. They are less numerous than the people of the first two groups, and therefore, have been mentioned last, although they merit the first place in the matter of doing justice to the heritage of the Book of Allah.

As for the sentence, "this is the supreme bounty", if it is related with the last sentence, it would mean that to excel in good deeds is the supreme bounty, and the people who excel in good deeds are the best of the Muslim community. And if it is taken to be related with the first sentence, it would mean that to be a heir to the Book of Allah and to be chosen for this heritage is the supreme bounty, and the people who have been so chosen on account of their faith in the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet Muhammad are the best among the human beings created by Allah.

57. One section of the commentators has held the view that this sentence is related with the two sentences immediately preceding it. That is, the ones who excel in good deeds are the best of the people and they alone will enter the Gardens. As for the first two groups, nothing has been stated about them so that they became worried concerning their fate and try to improve their lot. This view has been presented by 'Allāma Zamakhshari forcefully and supported by Imām Rāzi.

But the majority of the commentators opine that it is related with the whole preceding discourse, which means that all the three classes of the *Ummah* shall eventually enter Paradise, whether without accountability, or after the accountability, whether remaining secure from every punishment, or after receiving some punishment. This commentary is supported by the Qur'ānic context, for a little below about those who are contrasted with the heirs of the Book, it has been said: "And for those who have disbelieved, there is the fire of Hell." This shows that there is Paradise for all those who have believed in the Book, and Hell for all those who have refused to believe in it. The same has been supported by the *Hadīth* of the Holy Prophet, which Imām Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn

Abī Ḥātim, Ṭabarānī, Baihaqī and some other traditionists have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abu ad-Dardā'. The Holy Prophet said:

"Those who have excelled in good works shall enter Paradise without; and those who are following the middle course, shall be subjected to accountability; but their accountability shall be light. As for those who have been unjust to themselves, they shall be detained throughout the long period of Resurrection and accountability *(mahshar)*. Then Allah shall cover them also with His mercy. And they are the ones who will say: 'Thanks to Allah Who has removed sorrow from us!'"

In this *Ḥadīth* the Holy Prophet has himself given a complete commentary of the verse under discussion, and stated separately the end to be met by each of the three groups of the believers. The "light accountability" for the ones following the middle course means this: The disbelievers will be punished for their disbelief as well as for each single crime and sin of theirs separately, but, contrary to this, the good and bad deeds of the believers who come with both the good and evil deeds will be judged on the whole: they will not be rewarded for each good deed and punished for each evil deed separately. As for those "who will be detained throughout the period of Resurrection and accountability because they had been unjust to themselves," it means: They will not be thrown into Hell, but will be sentenced to be detained "till the rising of the Court." In other words, they will be exposed to all the severities and rigours of the lengthy Day of Resurrection (and God alone knows how lengthy it will be !) till Allah Almighty will turn to them in His mercy and command at the rising of the Court that they too be admitted into Paradise. The traditionists have cited several sayings to the same effect from many Companions like Ḥaḍrat 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī and Ḥaḍrat Barā bin 'Āzib. And obviously, the Companions could not have said any such thing in such matters unless they had heard it from the Holy Prophet himself.

But from this one should not form the impression that "those who have been unjust to themselves" from among the Muslims will only be sentenced to be detained "till the rising of the Court", and none of them will go to Hell at all. Several crimes have been mentioned in the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*, whose perpetrator will go to Hell in spite of his faith. For instance, Allah Himself has declared that the believer who kills another believer wilfully shall go to Hell. Likewise, Hell has been mentioned as the punishment of those people also who violate the provisions of the Divine Law of Inheritance. Those who devour interest even after its prohibition have been declared to be "the dwellers of Hell." Besides these, some other major sins also have been mentioned in *Ḥadīth*, whose perpetrator shall go to Hell.

[Contd. on p. 256

يَتَذَكَّرَ فِيهِ مَنْ تَذَكَّرَ وَجَآءَكُمُ النَّذِيرُ ۖ فَذُوقُوا فَمَا لِلظّٰلِمِينَ مِنْ
نَّصِيرٍ ﴿37﴾ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ عٰلِمُ غَيْبِ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ إِنَّهُ عَلِيمٌۢ بِذَاتِ
الصُّدُورِ ﴿38﴾ هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلٰٓئِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ فَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهُ ۚ
وَلَا يَزِيدُ الْكٰفِرِينَ كُفْرُهُمْ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا مَقْتًا ۖ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الْكٰفِرِينَ
كُفْرُهُمْ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿39﴾ قُلْ أَرَءَيْتُمْ شُرَكَآءَكُمُ الَّذِينَ تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ
اللّٰهِ ۖ أَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقُوا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ أَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ ۖ أَمْ ءَاتَيْنٰهُمْ
كِتٰبًا فَهُمْ عَلٰى بَيِّنَتٍ مِّنْهُ ۚ بَلْ إِنْ يَعِدُ الظّٰلِمُونَ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا إِلَّا
غُرُورًا ﴿40﴾ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُمْسِكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضَ أَنْ تَزُولَا ۚ وَلَئِنْ زَالَتَآ
إِنْ أَمْسَكَهُمَا مِنْ أَحَدٍ مِّنْ بَعْدِهِ ۚ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا ﴿41﴾ وَ
أَقْسَمُوا بِاللّٰهِ جَهْدَ أَيْمٰنِهِمْ لَئِنْ جَآءَهُمْ نَذِيرٌ لَّيَكُونُنَّ أَهْدٰى مِنْ
إِحْدَى الْأُمَمِ ۖ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ نَذِيرٌ مَّا زَادَهُمْ إِلَّا نُفُورًا ﴿42﴾ اسْتِكْبَارًا فِي
الْأَرْضِ وَمَكْرَ السَّيِّئِ ۚ وَلَا يَحِيقُ الْمَكْرُ السَّيِّئُ إِلَّا بِأَهْلِهِ ۚ فَهَلْ يَنْظُرُونَ
إِلَّا سُنَّتَ الْأَوَّلِينَ ۚ فَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ اللّٰهِ تَبْدِيلًا ۖ وَلَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّتِ
اللّٰهِ تَحْوِيلًا ﴿43﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَٰقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ وَكَانُوٓا أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً ۚ وَمَا كَانَ اللّٰهُ لِيُعْجِزَهُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ فِي
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۚ إِنَّهُ كَانَ عَلِيمًا قَدِيرًا ﴿44﴾ وَلَوْ يُؤَاخِذُ اللّٰهُ
النَّاسَ بِمَا كَسَبُوا مَا تَرَكَ عَلٰى ظَهْرِهَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ وَلٰكِنْ يُؤَخِّرُهُمْ إِلٰٓى
أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۖ فَإِذَا جَآءَ أَجَلُهُمْ فَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ بِعِبَادِهِ بَصِيرًا ﴿45﴾

Surely, Allah is aware of every secret thing in the heavens and 38-39
the earth: He even knows the hidden secrets of the breasts. He it is
Who has made you vicegerents in the earth.[64] Now whoever disbelieves
shall himself bear the burden of his disbelief,[65] and for the disbelievers
their disbelief does not increase anything except the wrath of their Lord
and the disbelievers do not gain anything except an increase in their
loss.

(O Prophet,) say to them, "Have you ever seen those associates 40-41
of yours[66] whom you invoke instead of Allah ? Tell me: What have
they created in the earth, or what is their share in the heavens?" (If
they cannot tell this, ask them :) "Have We given them a writing
affording a clear sanction (for their *shirk*)?"[67] Nay, but these wicked
people are only beguiling one another with delusions.[68] The fact is that
it is Allah alone Who is sustaining the heavens and the earth from
falling into oblivion and if they fall into the abyss there is none to
sustain them after Allah.[69] Indeed, Allah is Forbearing and All-
Forgiving.[70]

These people used to swear on solemn oaths by Allah that if a 42-45
warner had visited them, they would certainly have been better guided
than any other nation in the world.[71] But when a warner did come to
them, it increased them in nothing but aversion to the Truth. They
began to behave even more haughtily in the land and to plot evil,
whereas the plotting of evil recoils only on the plotters themselves.
Now, are these people awaiting that they should be dealt with (by
Allah) in the like way as the preceding nations were dealt with?[72] Well,
you will never find any change in the Way of Allah, nor will you see
that a power can turn the Way of Allah from its appointed course. Have
they never travelled about in the land that they could see the end of
those who have passed before them, and who were far mightier than
they? There is nothing that could make Allah helpless, neither in the
heavens nor in the earth: He knows everything and has power over
everything. If Allah were to seize the people for their misdeeds, He
would not have left alive any living being on the earth. But He is giving
them respite till an appointed time. So, when the appointed time comes,

Allah will Himself see His servants.

Contd. from p. 253]

58. "Sorrow": Sorrow of every kind: sorrows and griefs and worries of the world and of the Hereafter with regard to the final end. It means : "Now we have nothing to worry about: now there can be no question of any sorrow and trouble afflicting us here."

59. That is "He has forgiven us our errors, has appreciated whatever little provision of deeds we had brought and blessed us with His Paradise as a reward."

60. That is, "The world was a stage in our journey of life, which we have crossed, and the plain of Resurrection also is a stage of the same journey, which we have also crossed. Now we have reached a place which is our eternal abode: we have not to go elsewhere from here."

61. In other words, "All our toils and afflictions have come to an end. Now we do not have to perform any work here in carrying out which we might have to experience any rigour or hardship and after carrying out which we might be fatigued."

62. "Who have disbelieved": Who have refused to believe in the Book which Allah has sent down on Muḥammad (upon whom be His peace and blessings).

63. This implies every such age of life in which a person may be able to distinguish between good and evil, truth and falsehood, if he likes to, and turn to right guidance instead of deviation, if he wishes. If a person has died before attaining such an age, he will not be called to any account according to this verse. However, the one who has attained this age will certainly be held answerable for his actions. Then, as long as he lives after attaining this age and gets more and more opportunities for choosing and adopting the right path, his responsibility also will increase accordingly; so much so that the one who does not adopt right guidance even in old age will have no chance left for making any excuse. This same thing has been reported by Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah and Ḥaḍrat Sahl bin Sa'd as-Sā'idī in a *Ḥadīth*, saying: "The one who lives a short life has an excuse to offer, but there is no room for making an excuse for him who lives for 60 years or more." (Bukhārī Aḥmad, Nasā'ī, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Ḥātim).

64. This can have two meanings: (1) "Now He has settled you on His earth after the passing away of the previous generations and nations;" and (2) "the powers and authority that He has given you over different things in the earth are not meant to make you the owners of these things but are meant to enable you to function as the representatives of their real Owner."

65. If the previous sentence is taken to mean that you have been made successors to the previous nations, this sentence would mean this: "The one who did not learn any lesson from the fate of the previous nations and adopted the conduct of disbelief due to which those nations have gone to their doom, will himself see the evil end of his folly." And if the sentence is taken to mean this that Allah has delegated to you powers and authority as His vicegerents in the earth; this sentence would mean: "He who forgot this position of vicegerency and became independent, or he who adopted service of someone else, apart from his real Master, would see the evil end of his rebellious conduct himself."

66. "Associates of yours", because they are not in fact the associates of Allah, but the ones whom the polytheists themselves have made associates of Allah.

67. That is, "Do they possess a written sanction from Us in which We might have indicated that We have given such and such persons the powers to heal the sick, or to get jobs for the jobless, or to fulfil needs of the needy, or that We have made such and such beings Our representatives in such and such parts of the earth and now it is in their hands to make or mar the destinies of the people of those parts; therefore, Our servants now should pray to them and present gifts and offerings before them, and for whatever blessings they receive they should thank those "demigods" only? If you possess any such sanction, produce it. And if you have no such sanction, you should consider on what grounds you have invented these polytheistic creeds and practices. When you are asked as to what sign is there in the heavens and the earth that may point to your self invented gods as being God's associates, you cannot point out any. When you are asked to produce any Divine sanction from any Book of Allah, or from your own possession, or from the possession of your self-invented gods, which may testify to God's having Himself delegated to them those powers which you assign to them, you do not produce any. What then is the basis of your these creeds and concepts? Are you the owners of the Divine rights and powers that you may assign and distribute them to whomsoever you please?"

68. That is, "These religious guides, saints, priests, sorcerers, preachers and attendants of shrines and their agents are befooling the people for selfish motives, and are concocting stories to give them false hopes that if they became the followers of such and such personalities, apart from God, they would have all their wishes and needs fulfilled in the world, and all their sins, no matter how grave and numerous, forgiven by Allah in the Hereafter."

69. That is, "This limitless universe is being sustained by Allah alone. No angel, or jinn, or prophet, or saint can sustain it. Not to speak of sustaining the universe these helpless creatures do not even have the power to sustain their own

selves. Each one of them is entirely dependent on Allah Almighty for his birth and survival every moment. To think that any one of them has any share in the attributes and powers of Divinity is sheer folly and deception."

70. That is, "It is Allah's Clemency and Forbearance that He is not seizing the culprits immediately in punishment in spite of all kinds of disobedience which are being shown towards Him."

71. Before the advent of the Holy Prophet, the same thing used to be said by the Arabs, in general, and by the Quraish, in particular, when they witnessed the moral degeneration of the Jews and the Christians. Mention of this saying of theirs has also been made in Sūrah Al-An'ām :156-157 above, and in Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 167-169 below.

72. That is, this Law of Allah that the nation which repudiates its Prophet, is destroyed should be applied in their case as well.



XXXVI

YĀ SĪN

يٰسٓ



XXXVI

YĀ SĪN

يٰسٓ

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the two letters of the alphabet with which it begins.

Period of Revelation

A study of the style shows that it was either sent down during the last stage of the middle Makkan period, or it is one of those Sūrahs, which were sent down during the last stage of the Holy Prophet's stay at Makkah.

Subject Matter and Theme

The object of the discourse is to warn the Quraish of the consequences of not believing in the Prophethood of Muḥammad (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him) and of resisting and opposing it with tyranny, ridicule and mockery. The aspect of the warning is dominant and conspicuous although along with repeatedly giving the warnings, arguments also have been given for the correct understanding by the people.

Arguments have been given for three things: (1) For *Tauḥīd*, from the signs of the universe and from common sense; (2) for the Hereafter, from the signs of the universe, from common sense and from man's own existence itself; and (3) for the Prophethood of the Prophet Muḥammad, from the fact that he was facing all kinds of hardships in the preaching of his message without any selfish motive, and from that whatever he was inviting the people to was rational and reasonable, accepting which was in the people's own interest.

On the strength of these arguments, themes of reprobation, reproof and warning have been presented repeatedly in a highly forceful manner, so that hearts are shaken up and those which have any capacity for accepting the truth left in them should not remain unmoved.

Imām Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Nasa'ī, Ibn Mājah and Ṭabarānī have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Ma'qil bin Yasār that the Holy Prophet said: "Sūrah Yā Sīn is the heart of the Qur'ān." This is similar to describing the Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah as the *Umm al-Qur'ān* (the essence or core of the Qur'ān), because Al-Fātiḥah contains the sum and substance of the teaching of the whole Qur'ān. The Sūrah Yā Sīn has been called the throbbing heart of the Qur'ān because it presents the message of the Qur'ān in a most forceful manner, which breaks the inertness and stirs the spirit of man to action.

Again Imām Aḥmad, Abū Dā'ūd and Ibn Mājah have related from the same Ma'qil bin Yasār that the Holy Prophet said: "Recite Sūrah Yā Sīn to the dying ones among you." The object is not only to revive and refresh the whole Islamic creed in the mind of the dying

person but also bring before him, in particular, a complete picture of the Hereafter so that he may know what stages he would have to pass through after crossing the stage of this worldly life. In view of this, it would be desirable that along with the recitation of the Sūrah Yā Sīn its translation also is made for the benefit of the person who does not know Arabic so that the purpose of the admonition is duly fulfilled.



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

يٰسٓ ﴿١﴾ وَالْقُرْاٰنِ الْحَكِيْمِ ﴿٢﴾ اِنَّكَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿٣﴾ عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٤﴾
تَنْزِيْلَ الْعَزِيْزِ الرَّحِيْمِ ﴿٥﴾ لِتُنْذِرَ قَوْمًا مَّآ اُنْذِرَ اٰبَآؤُهُمْ فَهُمْ غٰفِلُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾
لَقَدْ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلٰٓى اَكْثَرِهِمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٧﴾ اِنَّا جَعَلْنَا فِيْٓ اَعْنَاقِهِمْ
اَغْلٰلًا فَهِيَ اِلَى الْاَذْقَانِ فَهُمْ مُّقْمَحُوْنَ ﴿٨﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا مِنْۢ بَيْنِ اَيْدِيْهِمْ
سَدًّا وَّمِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ سَدًّا فَاَغْشَيْنٰهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٩﴾ وَسَوَآءٌ عَلَيْهِمْ
ءَاَنْذَرْتَهُمْ اَمْ لَمْ تُنْذِرْهُمْ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ اِنَّمَا تُنْذِرُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ الذِّكْرَ
وَخَشِيَ الرَّحْمٰنَ بِالْغَيْبِ ۚ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِمَغْفِرَةٍ وَّاَجْرٍ كَرِيْمٍ ﴿١١﴾ اِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِ
الْمَوْتٰى وَنَكْتُبُ مَا قَدَّمُوْا وَاٰثَارَهُمْ ۗ وَكُلَّ شَيْءٍ اَحْصَيْنٰهُ فِيْٓ اِمَامٍ
مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿١٢﴾ وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَّثَلًا اَصْحٰبَ الْقَرْيَةِ ۘ اِذْ جَآءَهَا الْمُرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ اِذْ

وقف لازم ۱ ۱۲ ۱۸

اَرْسَلْنَآ اِلَيْهِمُ اثْنَيْنِ فَكَذَّبُوْهُمَا فَعَزَّزْنَا بِثَالِثٍ فَقَالُوْٓا اِنَّآ اِلَيْكُمْ
مُّرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ قَالُوْا مَآ اَنْتُمْ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُنَا ۙ وَمَآ اَنْزَلَ الرَّحْمٰنُ مِنْ شَيْءٍ ۙ
اِنْ اَنْتُمْ اِلَّا تَكْذِبُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ قَالُوْا رَبُّنَا يَعْلَمُ اِنَّآ اِلَيْكُمْ لَمُرْسَلُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَ
مَا عَلَيْنَآ اِلَّا الْبَلٰغُ الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿١٧﴾ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّا تَطَيَّرْنَا بِكُمْ ۚ لَئِنْ لَّمْ تَنْتَهُوْا
لَنَرْجُمَنَّكُمْ وَلَيَمَسَّنَّكُمْ مِّنَّا عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿١٨﴾ قَالُوْا طَآئِرُكُمْ مَّعَكُمْ ۗ اَئِنْ ذُكِّرْتُمْ ۗ
بَلْ اَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ وَجَآءَ مِنْ اَقْصَا الْمَدِيْنَةِ رَجُلٌ يَّسْعٰى قَالَ
يٰقَوْمِ اتَّبِعُوا الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ اتَّبِعُوْا مَنْ لَّا يَسْـَٔلُكُمْ اَجْرًا وَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾

XXXVI

YĀ SĪN

يٰسٓ

Verses: 83 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Yā Sīn.[1] By the wise Qur'ān, you are indeed one of the Messengers,[2] are on the Straight Way, (and this Qur'ān) is the Revelation of the All-Mighty, the All-Merciful One,[3] so that you may warn a people whose forefathers were not warned, and so, they live in heedlessness.[4] 1-6

Most of these people have already deserved the decree of torment; therefore, they do not believe.[5] We have put on their necks fetters which reach to their chins, so they stand with heads upright.[6] We have set a barrier before them and a barrier behind them: We have covered them, so they cannot see anything.[7] It is all the same for them whether you warn them or warn them not, they would not believe.[8] You can only warn him who follows the admonition and fears the Merciful God, though he cannot see Him. Give him the good news of forgiveness and of a generous reward. 7-11

We shall certainly one day raise the dead to life. We are recording all the deeds they have done and also that which they have left behind:[9] We have preserved everything in an open Book. 12

Tell them, for instance, the story of the people of the habitation when the Messengers came to it.[10] We sent to them two Messengers and they denied both. Then We sent a third one to strengthen them, and they all said, "We have been sent to you as Messengers." The people said, "You are no more than men like us,[11] and the Merciful God has sent down nothing:[12] you are only telling a lie." 13-15

16-19 The Messengers said, "Our Lord knows that we have indeed been sent as Messengers to you and our only responsibility is to convey the message plainly"[13] The people said, "We regard you as an evil omen for ourselves. If you do not desist (from this), we shall stone you, and you will receive a painful punishment from us."[14] The Messengers replied, "Your evil omen is with your own selves.[15] Do you say this because you have been admonished? The fact is that you are a people who have transgressed all limits."[16]

20-21 In the meantime a man came running from the remote part of the city, and he said, "O my people, follow the Messengers: follow those who do not ask any reward of you and are on the Right Way.[17]

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1. Ibn 'Abbās, 'Ikrimah, Ḍaḥḥāk, Ḥasan Baṣrī and Sufyān bin 'Uyainah have opined that it means, "O man", or "O person"; some other commentators have regarded it as an abbreviation of *"Yā Sayyid"* as well, which, according to this interpretation, would be an address to the Holy Prophet.

2. To begin a discourse like this does not mean that the Holy Prophet, God forbid, had some doubt about his Prophethood, and Allah had to say this in order to reassure him of it. But the reason is that the disbelieving Quraish at that time were most vehemently refusing to believe in his Prophethood; therefore, Allah at the very beginning of the discourse has said: "You are indeed one of the Messengers," which implies that the people who deny your Prophethood, are misled and mistaken. To further confirm the same, an oath has been taken by the Qur'ān, and the word "wise" has been used as an epithet of the Qur'ān, which means this: "An obvious proof of your being a Prophet is this Qur'ān, which is full of wisdom, This itself testifies that the person who is presenting such wise revelations is most surely a Messenger of God. No man has the power to compose such revelations. The people who know Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) can never be involved in the misunderstanding that he is himself forging these discourses, or reciting them after having learnt them from another man." (For further explanation, see Yūnus: 16-17, 37 39; Banī Isrā'īl: 88; An-Naml: 75; Al-Qaṣaṣ: 44-46, 85-87; Al-'Ankabūt: 49-51; Ar Rūm: 1-5 and the relevant E.N.'s).

3. Here, two of the attributes of the Sender of the Qur'ān have been mentioned. First, that He is All-Mighty; second, that He is All-Merciful. The first attribute is meant to impress the reality that the Qur'ān is not the counsel of a powerless preacher, which if you overlook or ignore, will not bring any harm to you; but this is the Edict of that Owner of the Universe, Who is All-Mighty, Whose decrees cannot be withheld from being enforced by any power, and Whose

grasp cannot be avoided by anyone. The second attribute is meant to make one realize that it is all due to His kindness and mercy that He has sent His Messenger for your guidance and instruction and sent down this great Book so that you may avoid errors and follow the right path which may lead you to the successes of the world and the Hereafter.

4. Another translation can be: "You should warn the people of the same of which their forefathers had been warned, because they live in heedlessness." If the first meaning, as given above in the text, is taken, the forefathers would imply the forefathers of the immediate past, for in the ancient time several Prophets had appeared in Arabia. And if the second meaning is adopted, it would imply this: "Revive and refresh the message that had been conveyed to the forefathers of this nation by the Prophets in the past, for these people have forgotten it." Obviously, there is no contradiction between the two translations, and, as to meaning, each is correct in its own place!

A doubt may arise here: How could the forefathers of a nation to whom no warner had been sent at a particular time in the past, be held responsible for their deviation at that time? The answer is: When Allah sends a Prophet in the world, the influence of his message and teaching spreads far and wide, and is handed down by one generation to the other. As long as this influence remains and there continue arising among the followers of the Prophet such people as keep his message of guidance fresh, the period of time cannot be said to be without the guidance. And when the influence of the Prophet's teaching dies out, or the teaching is tampered with, the appointment of another Prophet becomes inevitable. Before the advent of the Holy Prophet the influence of the teachings of the Prophets Abraham, Ishmael, Shu'aib and Moses and Jesus (peace be upon all of them) could be seen everywhere in Arabia and from time to time there had been arising among the Arabs, or coming from outside, men, who revived their teachings. When the influence was about to die out, and the real teaching was also distorted, Allah raised the Prophet Muhammad, and made such arrangements that his message can neither be wiped out nor tampered with. (For further explanation, see E N. 5 of Sūrah Sabā above).

5. This is about those people who were being obstinate and stubborn with regard to the message of the Holy Prophet and had made up their minds not to listen to him at all. This is because: They have already deserved the torment; therefore, they do not believe." It means: "The people who do not heed the admonition, and persist in their denial and hostile attitude to the truth in spite of the final warning from Allah conveyed through the Prophets, are themselves overwhelmed by the evil consequences of their misdeeds and deprived of every opportunity to believe." The same thing has been expressed more clearly in verse

11 below: "You can only warn him who follows the admonition and fears the Merciful God though he cannot see Him."

6 "Fetters" in this verse implies their own stubbornness which was preventing them from accepting the truth. "Which reach to their chins" and "their standing with heads upright" implies the stiffness of the neck which is caused by pride and haughtiness. Allah means to impress this: "We have made their obstinacy and stubbornness the fetters of their neck, and their pride and haughtiness has made them so stiff-necked that they will not pay heed to any reality, however clear and evident it may be."

7. "Set a barrier before them and a barrier behind them" means that the natural result of their stubbornness and pride is that they neither learn any lesson from their past history nor ever consider the consequences of the future. Their prejudices have so covered them from every side and their misconceptions have so blinded them that they cannot see even those glaring realities which are visible to every right-thinking and unbiased person.

8. This does not mean that it is futile to preach, but it means: "Your preaching reaches every kind of people. Some of them are the ones mentioned above, and some others those who are being mentioned in the next verse. When you come across the people of the first kind and you see that they continue to persist in their denial, pride and antagonism, you should leave them alone, but at the same time you should not feel disheartened so as to give up your mission, for you do not know exactly where among the multitudes of the people are those sincere servants of God, who would heed your admonition and fear God and turn to the right path. The real object of your preaching, therefore, should be to search out and collect this second kind of the people. You should ignore the stubborn people and gather this precious element of the society about you."

9. This shows that three kinds of the entries are made in the conduct-book of men. First, whatever a person does, good or bad is entered in the Divine Register. Second, whatever impressions a man makes on the objects of his environment and on the limbs of his own body itself, become recorded, and all these impressions will at one time become so conspicuous that man's own voice will become audible and the whole history of his ideas and intentions and aims and objects and the pictures of all of his good and bad acts and deeds will appear before him. Third, whatever influences he has left behind of his good and bad actions on his future generation, on his society and on mankind as a whole, will go on being recorded in his account as far as they reach and as long as they remain active and operative. The full record of the good and bad training given by him to his children, the good or evil that he has spread in the society, and its impact on

mankind as a whole, will go on being maintained till the time that it goes on producing good or evil results in the world.

10. The early commentators, generally, have expressed the opinion that the "habitation" implies the Syrian city of Antioch, and the messengers mentioned here were the ones sent by the Prophet Jesus for the preaching of his message there. Another thing that has been mentioned in this connection is that Antiochus was the king of this land at that time. But historically this story which Ibn 'Abbas, Qatādah, 'Ikrimah, Ka'b Ahbār and Wahb bin Munabbih, and others have related on the basis of unauthentic Christian traditions is baseless. There have been 13 kings of the Seleucid dynasty named Antiochus who reigned in Antioch, and the rule of the last king of this name, rather the rule of this dynasty itself, came to an end in 65 B.C. At the time of the Prophet Jesus, the whole land of Syria and Palestine, including Antioch, was under the Romans. Then, no proof is forthcoming from any authentic tradition of the Christians that the Prophet Jesus might himself have sent any of his disciples to Antioch for preaching his message. On the contrary, the Acts of the Apostles (N.T.) shows that the Christian preachers had reached Antioch for the first time a few years after the event of the crucifixion. Now, evidently, the people who were neither appointed messengers by Allah nor sent by His Messenger cannot be regarded as messengers of Allah by any interpretation even if they might have travelled for the purpose of preaching of their own accord. Moreover, according to the Bible; Antioch was the first city where the non-Israelites embraced Christianity in large numbers and where the Christian faith met with great success; whereas the habitation mentioned by the Qur'ān was some such habitation which rejected the invitation of the messengers, and was consequently punished with a Divine torment. History also does not bear any evidence that Antioch was ever afflicted with a destruction, which might be regarded as the result of denying the Prophethood.

On account of these reasons it cannot be accepted that the "habitation" implies Antioch. The habitation has neither been clearly determined in the Qur'ān nor in any authentic *Hadīth;* the identity of the messengers also is not known through any authentic means nor the time when they were appointed. To understand the purpose for which the Qur'ān is narrating this story here, it is not necessary to know the names of the habitation and the messengers. The object is to warn the Quraish, as if to say: "You are following the same path of stubbornness, prejudice and denial of the truth as had been followed by the people of that habitation, and are preparing yourselves to meet the same doom as was met by them."

11. In other words, what they wanted to say was: "Since you are human beings, you cannot be the messengers of God." The same was the view of the

disbelievers of Makkah. They also said; "Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) cannot be a messenger because he is a man."

"They say: what sort of a Messenger is he that he eats food and moves about in the streets." (Al-Furqān: 7).

"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 this sorcery while you perceive it ?" (Al-Anbiyā': 3).

The Qur'ān refutes this erroneous notion of the people of Makkah and says that it is not any new kind of ignorance which these people are displaying, but all the ignorant people since the earliest times have been involved in the misunderstanding that a human being cannot be a messenger and a Messenger cannot be a human being. When the chiefs of the people of the Prophet Noah had rejected his Prophethood, they had said the same thing:

"This person is no more than a human being like yourselves. By this he merely intends to obtain superiority over you. Had Allah willed, He would have sent down angels. Since the time of our forefathers we have never heard (that a human being should come as a Messenger)." (Al-Mu'minūn: 24).

The people of 'Ād had said the same about the Prophet Hūd: "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 will indeed be the losers." (Al-Mu'minūn: 33-34).

The people of Thamūd also said the same about the Prophet Sālih: "Shall we follow a man from among ourselves?" (Al-Qamar: 24). And the same thing happened with almost every Prophet that the disbelievers said: "You are no more than a human being like ourselves," and the Prophets always replied: "It is true that we are no more than human beings like you, but Allah shows His favour to anyone of His servants He pleases." (Ibrāhim: 10-11).

Then the Qur'ān says that this very notion of ignorance has been preventing the people from accepting guidance in every age, and the same has been the cause of every nation's downfall:

"Has not the news reached you of those who had disbelieved before this, and then tasted the evil results of their deeds ? And in the Hereafter there awaits them a painful torment. They deserved this fate because their Messengers came to them with clear Signs, but they said, 'Shall human beings show us guidance ? 'So they refused and turned away." (At-Taghābun: 5-6).

"Whenever guidance came before the people, nothing prevented them from believing in it except this (excuse): they said: 'Has Allah sent a human being as His messenger?' " (Banī Isrā'īl: 94).

Then the Qur'ān says explicitly that Allah has always sent human beings as the Messengers and a human being alone can be a Messenger for the guidance for mankind, and not an angel, or a supernatural being:

"And We sent before you also human beings as Messengers to whom We revealed (Our Message). If you (O objectors) have no knowledge of this, you may ask those who have the knowledge. We did not give them such bodies as could survive without food nor were they immortal." (Al-Anbiyā'; 7-8).

"All the Messengers whom We sent before you also ate food and moved about in the streets." (Al-Furqān: 20).

"O Prophet, say to them: Had angels settled on the earth and moved about in peace, We would certainly have sent an angel as a messenger to them." (Banī Isrā'īl: 95).

12. This is another notion of ignorance in which the disbelievers of Makkah were involved. In it are also involved the so-called rationalists of today and in it have been involved the deniers of Revelation and Prophethood of every age since the earliest times. These people have held the view that Allah does not send down any Revelation at all for the guidance of man. He is only concerned with the affairs of the heavens: He has left the affairs and problems of man to be resolved by man himself.

13. That is, "Our only duty is to convey to you the Message that Allah has entrusted us with. Then it is for you to accept it or reject it. We have not been made responsible to make you accept it forcibly; and if you do not accept it, we shall not be seized in consequence of your disbelief: you will yourselves be answerable for your crimes.

14. What they meant was: "You are an evil omen for us. Our gods have become angry with us on account of what you have been saying against them. Now whatever calamity is befalling us is only because of you." Precisely the same thing used to be said by the disbelievers and the hypocrites of Arabia concerning the Holy Prophet: "If they suffer a loss, they say: this is because of you." (An-Nisā': 77). That is why at several places in the Qur'ān these people have been told that in the ancient times also people used to say such things of ignorance in regard to their Prophets. The people of Thamūd said to their Prophet: "We regard you and your companions as a sign of bad omen." (An-Naml: 47). And the same was

[Contd. on p. 274

وَمَا لِيَ لَآ أَعْبُدُ الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ ءَأَتَّخِذُ مِن

دُونِهِ آلِهَةً إِن يُرِدْنِ الرَّحْمَٰنُ بِضُرٍّ لَّا تُغْنِ عَنِّي شَفَاعَتُهُمْ شَيْئًا وَلَا
23 24 25
يُنقِذُونِ ﴿٢٣﴾ إِنِّي إِذًا لَّفِي ضَلَٰلٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢٤﴾ إِنِّي آمَنتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ فَاسْمَعُونِ ﴿٢٥﴾
26
قِيلَ ادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ ۖ قَالَ يَا لَيْتَ قَوْمِي يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ بِمَا غَفَرَ لِي رَبِّي وَ
27
جَعَلَنِي مِنَ الْمُكْرَمِينَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَمَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ مِن بَعْدِهِ مِن جُندٍ
28
مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَمَا كُنَّا مُنزِلِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ إِن كَانَتْ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ
29
خَامِدُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ يَا حَسْرَةً عَلَى الْعِبَادِ ۚ مَا يَأْتِيهِم مِّن رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ
30
يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ أَلَمْ يَرَوْا كَمْ أَهْلَكْنَا قَبْلَهُم مِّنَ الْقُرُونِ أَنَّهُمْ إِلَيْهِمْ لَا
31 32
يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَإِن كُلٌّ لَّمَّا جَمِيعٌ لَّدَيْنَا مُحْضَرُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَآيَةٌ لَّهُمُ الْأَرْضُ
33
الْمَيْتَةُ ۖ أَحْيَيْنَاهَا وَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهَا حَبًّا فَمِنْهُ يَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا
34
جَنَّاتٍ مِّن نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ وَفَجَّرْنَا فِيهَا مِنَ الْعُيُونِ ﴿٣٤﴾ لِيَأْكُلُوا مِن
ثَمَرِهِ وَمَا عَمِلَتْهُ أَيْدِيهِمْ ۖ أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ سُبْحَانَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْأَزْوَاجَ
36
كُلَّهَا مِمَّا تُنبِتُ الْأَرْضُ وَمِنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ وَمِمَّا لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَآيَةٌ لَّهُمُ
37
اللَّيْلُ ۖ نَسْلَخُ مِنْهُ النَّهَارَ فَإِذَا هُم مُّظْلِمُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ
38
لَّهَا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَّرْنَاهُ مَنَازِلَ حَتَّىٰ عَادَ
كَالْعُرْجُونِ الْقَدِيمِ ﴿٣٩﴾ لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنبَغِي لَهَا أَن تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا الَّيْلُ
40
سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ ۚ وَكُلٌّ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَآيَةٌ لَّهُمْ أَنَّا حَمَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ
41 42
فِي الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُونِ ﴿٤١﴾ وَخَلَقْنَا لَهُم مِّن مِّثْلِهِ مَا يَرْكَبُونَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَإِن نَّشَأْ
43
نُغْرِقْهُمْ فَلَا صَرِيخَ لَهُمْ وَلَا هُمْ يُنقَذُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً مِّنَّا وَمَتَاعًا

Well, why should I not worship the Being Who has created me, 22-25
and to whom all of you have to return?[18] Should I take other gods than
Him? Whereas if the Merciful God intends to harm me, their
intercession cannot avail me anything, nor can they rescue me.[19] If I do
so,[20] I would be involved in manifest error. I have believed in your
Lord:[21] so, you also should listen to me."

(Consequently, they killed the man and) it was said to him, 26-27
"Enter Paradise."[22] He said, "Would that my people knew how my
Lord has forgiven me and included me among the honoured ones!"[23]

After him We did not send any army against his people from 28-32
heaven nor was it needful for Us to send one. There only occurred a
single blast and they all became extinct.[24] Alas for the servants! There
came no Messenger to them but they scoffed at him. Have they not seen
how many nations We have destroyed before them, and they never
returned to them?[25] One day they will all be presented before Us!

The[26] dead land is a Sign for these people.[27] We gave it life and 33-36
produced grain from it, which they eat. We made gardens of date-palms
and grapes in it and caused springs to gush out of it so that they may eat
fruits thereof. It is not their hands which have made all this.[28] Do they
not then give thanks?[29] Glorified is He[30] Who created in pairs all
species, whether of vegetable kingdom or of their own (i.e., human)
kind, or of those things of which they know nothing.[31]

Another Sign for them is the night: We remove the day from 37-40
above it, and they are covered in darkness.[32] And the Sun: it is moving
to its place of rest.[33] This is the decree of the All-Mighty, All-Knowing
God. And the Moon: We have determined stages for it till it again
becomes like an old dry palm-branch.[34] Neither is it possible for the
Sun to overtake the Moon,[35] nor for the night to outstrip the day.[36]
Each is gliding in its own orbit.[37]

Yet another Sign for them is that We bore their progeny in a 41-44
laden vessel,[38] and then made for them similar other vessels which they
board.[39] If We please We can drown them when they would have no
one to hear their cry, nor would they be rescued in any way. It is Our
Mercy alone which sustains them and enables them to enjoy life till an
appointed time.[40]

Contd. from p.271]

the attitude of the people of Pharaoh: "Whenever a good time came, they would say: This is but our due, and when there was a hard time, they would ascribe their calamities to Moses and his companions." (Al-A'rāf: 130).

15. That is, "No one is an evil omen for another. Everyman's augury is hanging around his own neck. If a person sees an evil, it is because of his own self; and if he sees a good, it is also because of his own self. 'We have fastened the augury of every man to his own neck'." (Banī Isra'īl: 13).

16. That is, "You in fact want to avoid the good and you like the deviation instead of the guidance. Therefore, instead of determining the truth and falsehood by means of an argument, you are making these false pretences on account of your superstitious whims."

17. That servant of God, in this one sentence, put together all the arguments required for determining the genuineness of Prophethood. The genuineness of a Prophet can be determined by two things. First, his word and deed; second, his being selfless. What the person meant to say was this: "First, whatever these people are saying is perfectly reasonable, and their own character also is pure; second, no one can prove that they are calling the people to this faith on account of a selfish motive. Therefore, there is no reason why they should not be listened to." By citing this reasoning of the person the Qur'ān set a criterion before the people of how to judge and determine the genuineness of the Prophethood of a Prophet, as if to say: "The word and deed of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) bear full evidence that he is on the right path. Then, no one can point out any selfish motive or interest behind his struggle of preaching his message. Therefore, there is no reason why a sensible person should reject what he presents."

18. This sentence has two parts. The first part is a masterpiece of reasoning, the second of the wisdom of preaching. In the first part he says: "To worship the Creator is the demand of both reason and nature; it would be highly unreasonable that one should worship those who have not created him and should deny to be the servant of Him Who has created him." In the second part he warns his people to the effect: "All of you ultimately have to die and return to that God adoption of Whose service you object to. Therefore, you should consider for yourselves as to what goodness you could expect by turning away from Him."

19. That is, "They are neither such favourites of God that even if I commit grave crimes He will forgive me on their recommendation, nor are they so powerful that they should be able to rescue me if God may please to punish me."

20. "If I do so": "If I make them my gods in spite of knowing all this."

21. This sentence again contains a subtle point of the wisdom of preaching. Saying this the man made the people realize: "The Lord in Whom I have believed is not merely my Lord but your Lord, too. I have committed no error by believing in Him, but you, in fact, are certainly committing an error by not believing in Him."

22. That is, "Immediately following his martyrdom, the man was given the good news of Paradise. As soon as he entered the Next World through the gate of death, there were the angels to receive him, and they gave him the good news that Paradise was awaiting him." The commentators have disputed the meaning of this sentence. Qatādah says, "Allah admitted him into Paradise straightway and he is living in it and receiving his sustenance." And Mujāhid says, "This was told him by the angels as a good news; he will enter Paradise on the day of Resurrection along with the other believers."

23. This is a specimen of the high morality of the believer. He had no ill-will or feeling of vengeance in his heart against the people who had just then killed him so that he should invoke Allah against them. Instead, he was still wishing them well. After death the only wish that he cherished was: "Would that my people could know the good end that I have met, and could learn a lesson from my death, if not from my life, and adopt the righteous way." The noble person did not wish Hell for his murderers but wished that they should believe and become worthy of Paradise. The same thing has been commended in the *Hadīth:* "He wished his people well when living as well as when dead."

Allah has narrated this event in order to warn the disbelievers of Makkah to the effect: "Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his believing Companions are also your well-wishers just as the believer was of his people. They do not cherish any ill-will or feeling of vengeance against you in spite of your persecutions of them. They are not your enemies but enemies of your deviation and error. The only object of their struggle against you is that you should adopt the right way."

This verse also is one of those verses which clearly prove the existence of *barzakh.* This shows that the period of time between death and Resurrection is not a period of non-existence altogether, as some ignorant people think. But in this period the spirit lives without the body, speaks and hears speech, has feelings and desires, feels happy and unhappy, and also continues to be concerned about the people of the world. Had it not been so, the believer would not have been given the good news of Paradise after death, and he could not have wished that his people became aware of his good end.

24. These words contain a subtle satire. In their arrogance and pride of power and their strong antagonism towards the true faith, they thought they would

annihilate the three Prophets and their followers, but, contrary to their plot, they were themselves annihilated by only one stroke of the Divine punishment.

25. That is, they were annihilated so completely that not a trace of them was left behind them. No one in the world even remembers them today. Their civilization as well as their race has become extinct.

26. Until now the disbelieves of Makkah were being warned and reproved for their denial of the truth and their attitude of antagonism which they had adopted towards the Holy Prophet. Now the discourse turns to the basic thing which was the actual cause of the conflict between them and the Holy Prophet, i.e., the doctrine of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter, which the Holy Prophet was presenting and the disbelievers were refusing to accept. In this connection, some arguments have been given, one after the other, to make the people ponder over the realities, as if to say, "Observe these phenomena of the universe, which are ever present before you. Do they not point to the same reality, which this Prophet is presenting before you?"

27. "A Sign": A Sign that *Tauḥīd* is the Truth and *shirk* the falsehood.

28. Another translation of this sentence can be: ".....so that they may eat fruits thereof and what their own hands make." That is, the artificial kinds of food, which the people prepare from the natural products, e.g., bread, curry, jam, pickles, sauces and countless other things.

29. In these brief sentences the vegetable and plant life of the earth has been presented as an argument. Man is eating the products of the earth day and night and regards this as very ordinary. But if he considers it seriously, he will see that the growth of rich crops and lush green gardens from the dry earth and the flowing in it of the springs and rivers is not a simple thing, which might be happening of itself, but there is a great wisdom and power and providence which is working behind it. Consider the reality of the earth. The substances of which it is composed do not possess any power of their own for growth. All these substances individually as well as after every sort of combination, remain inorganic, and thus do not possess any sign of life. The question is: How did it become possible for plant life to emerge from the lifeless earth? If one looks into it, one will see that there are some important factors without whose provision beforehand life here could not have come into existence.

First, in particular regions of the earth, on its outer surface, a layer was arranged of many such substances, which could serve as food for vegetation. This layer was kept soft so that the roots of the vegetation could spread in it and suck food.

Secondly, a system of irrigation was arranged on the earth in different ways so that the food elements could get dissolved in water and absorbed by the roots.

Thirdly, the atmosphere was arranged around the earth which protects it against the calamities of the sky, becomes a means of the rainfall, and possesses gases which are necessary for the life and growth of the vegetation.

Fourthly, a relationship was established between the sun and the earth so as to provide proper temperature and suitable seasons for the vegetation.

With the provision of these main factors (which in themselves are combinations of countless other factors), the coming to life of the vegetation becomes possible. After arranging the suitable conditions the seed of each species of the vegetation was so constituted that as soon as it received favourable soil, water, air and season, vegetable life should begin stirring within it. Besides, inside the same seed a system was so arranged that from the seed of every species a plant precisely of the same species should grow with all the characteristics of its own species and heredity. Then, in addition to this, another wonderful thing was done. Vegetation was not created in twenty, or fifty, or a hundred kinds but in countless species, and they were so made that they should fulfil the requirements of food, medicine and clothing and innumerable other needs of the countless kinds of animals and man, who were to be brought into being after the vegetation on the earth.

Anyone who ponders over this wonderful arrangement, if he is not stubborn and prejudiced, will himself testify that all this could not have come about by itself. There is certainly a wise plan underlying it, according to which harmonies and relationships of the soil, water, air and season with respect to the vegetation, and harmonies and relationships of the vegetation with respect to the needs and requirements of animals and human beings have been determined, keeping in view the finest detail. No sensible person can imagine that these universal, all-embracing relationships could be a mere accident. This same subtle arrangement points to the fact that this cannot be the work of many gods. This is, and can only be, the work of One God, Who is the Creator and Lord of the earth, water, air, sun, vegetation, animals and mankind. If each of these had a separate god, it cannot be imagined that such a comprehensive and universal plan with such deep and wise relationship and harmony could be produced, and should have continued to work with such regularity for millions upon millions of years.

After giving these arguments for Tauḥīd, Allah says: "Do they not then give thanks?" That is: "Are these people so thankless and ungrateful that they do not render thanks to that God Who has provided all this for their survival, but thank others for the blessings and favours done by Him ? Are they so wretched

that instead of bowing before Him they bow before the false gods, who have not created even a blade of grass for them ?"

30. "Glorified is He": "He is free from every defect and fault, from every error and weakness, and that another one should be His associate and partner in His work." The Qur'ān has generally used these words when refuting polytheistic beliefs, because every belief of shirk is, in fact, an imputation of some defect, some weakness and some fault to Allah. When a person says that Allah has an associate, he, in fact, thinks that either Allah is incapable of running and ruling His Kingdom alone, or He is under compulsion to make another His associate in His work. Or, some other beings are so powerful in themselves that they are interfering in God's administration and God is putting up with their interference. Or, God forbid, Allah has the weaknesses of the worldly kings, due to which He is surrounded by an army of ministers, courtiers, flatterers and beloved princes or princesses, and thus many powers of Godhead have become divided among them. Had there been no such notions of ignorance about Allah in the minds, there could be no question of any idea of shirk in the world. That is why it has been stated again and again in the Qur'ān that Allah is free from and exalted far above those defects and faults and weaknesses which the mushriks ascribe to Him."

31. This is still another argument for Tauḥid. Here again certain realities of daily experience have been mentioned and it is suggested that man observes these day and night but does not ponder over them seriously, whereas they contain signs and pointers to the reality. The coming together of the man and woman is the cause of man's own birth. Procreation among the animals also is due to the combination between the male and the female. About vegetation also man knows that the law of sex is working in it. Even among the lifeless substances when different things combine with one another, a variety of compounds come into existence. The basic composition of matter itself has become possible due to the close affinity between the positive and the negative electric charges. This law of the pairs which is the basis of the existence of the entire universe, contains in itself such complexities and finenesses of wisdom and workmanship, and there exist such harmonies and mutual relationships between the members of each pair that an objective observer can neither regard it as the result of an accident, nor can he believe that many different gods might have created these countless pairs and matched their members, one with the other, with such great wisdom. The members of each pair's being a perfect match for each other and coming into being of new things with their combination itself is an explicit argument of the Creator's being One and only One.

32. The alternation of the night and day also is one of those realities which man does not regard as worthy of much attention only because it is a phenomenon of daily occurrence and experience; whereas if he considers how the

day passes and how the night falls, and what is the wisdom in the passing of the day and in the falling of the night, he will himself realize that this is an obvious sign of the existence of an All-Powerful and All-Wise Allah and of His being One and only One. The day cannot pass and the night cannot fall until the sun hides from the earth. The great regularity which is found in the alternation of the day and night, was not possible unless the sun and the earth were bound in one and the same relentless system. Then the deep relationship which exists between the alternation of the day and night and the other creations on the earth clearly points to the fact that this system has been established deliberately by a Being with perfect wisdom. The existence on the earth, of the men and animals and vegetation, and even of water and air and different minerals, is in fact, the result of placing the earth at a particular distance from the sun, with the arrangement that the different parts of the earth should go on successively coming before the sun and hiding from it at definite intervals. If the distance of the earth from the sun had been a little longer, or a little shorter, or there had been a perpetual night on one side of it and a perpetual day on the other, or the alternation of the day and night had been much faster or much slower, or sometimes the day had appeared suddenly and sometimes the night without any system, no life could be possible on this planet, and even the form and appearance of the inorganic substances would have been much different from what it is now. If the mind's eye is not closed, one can clearly perceive in this system the working of a God, Who willed to bring into being this particular kind of creation on the earth and then established relevances, harmonies and relationships between the earth and the sun precisely in accordance with its needs and requirements. If a person regards the concept of the existence of God and His Unity as far removed from reason, he should think for himself and see how much farther removed should it be from reason to ascribe this wonderful creation to many gods, or to think that all this has happened automatically under some deaf and blind law of nature. When a person who can accept without question these latter unreasonable explanations, only on the basis of conjecture and speculation, says that the existence of a system and wisdom and purpose is not a sufficient proof of the existence of God, it becomes difficult for us to believe whether such a person really feels the need and necessity of a rational proof, sufficient or insufficient in any degree whatever, for accepting any concept or creed in the world.

33, "Place of rest" may either mean the place where the sun will ultimately come to a halt, or the time when it will come to a halt. The true meaning of this verse can be determined only when man has attained the full and exact knowledge of the realities of the universe. But man's knowledge is such that it has been changing in every age and what he seems to know today might change tomorrow. The people of the ancient times on the basis of their observations of the

sun believed that it was moving round the earth. Then after further research and observation the view became that the sun was stationary and all the planets of the solar system were revolving round it. But this theory also did not last long. The later observations revealed that not only the sun but all the stars also are moving in a particular direction, at speeds of 10 to 100 miles per second. About the sun the modern astronomers hold the view that it is moving at a speed of 20 kilometres (about 12 miles) per second along with its whole family of the planets. (See "Star" and "Sun" in Encyclopedia Britannica).

34. That is, the phases of the moon go on changing throughout the month. It begins as a crescent, then goes on waxing every day till it becomes the full moon on the 14th of the month. Then it starts waning every day till at last it returns to its original shape of the crescent. The same has been happening for millions of years with perfect regularity, and no change has ever occurred in the phases of the moon. That is why one can always calculate and find out exactly in what phase the moon will be on a particular day. If the movement of the moon had not been bound in a system, estimation of its phases would not have been possible.

35. This sentence can have two meanings and both are correct: (1) The sun does not have the power that it should draw the moon into itself, or enter its orbit and collide with it; and (2) the sun cannot appear in the times which have been appointed for the rising and appearing of the moon. It is not possible that the sun should suddenly appear on the horizon when the moon is shining at night.

36. Nor does this happen either that the night should approach before the appointed period of the day comes to an end, and should start spreading its darkness suddenly during the time when the day is meant to spread its light.

37 The word *falak* in Arabic is used for the orbit of the planets, and it gives a different meaning from the word *samā'* (sky). The sentence, "Each is gliding in its own orbit," points to four realities: (1) That not only the sun and the moon but all the stars and planets and celestial bodies are moving; (2) the *falak*, or orbit, of each one of them is separate; (3) that the orbits are not moving with the stars in them, but the stars are moving in the orbits; and (4) that the movement of the stars in their orbits is similar to the floating of something in a fluid.

These verses are not intended to describe the realities of astronomy, but are meant to make man understand that if he looks around himself, with open eyes, and uses his common sense, he will find countless and limitless proofs of the existence of God and His Unity, and he will not come across a single proof of atheism and shirk. The vastness of the solar system in which our earth is included is such that its parent body, the sun, is 300,000 times bigger than the earth, and its farthest planet Neptune is at least 2,793 million miles distant from the sun. However, if Pluto is taken as the farthest planet, it revolves 4,600 million miles

away round it. Notwithstanding this vastness, the solar system occupies a very insignificant part of a huge galaxy. The galaxy which includes our solar system has about 3,000 million suns in it, and its nearest sun is so distant from our earth that its light takes about four years to reach us. Then this galaxy also is not the whole universe. According to the investigations made so far, it has been estimated that it is one of about 2,000,000 spiral nebulae, and the nearest nebula is about a million light years away from the earth. As for the farthest celestial bodies which are visible through the modern instruments, their light reaches the earth in about 100 million years. Even now it cannot be claimed that man has seen the whole universe. It is a small part of the Kingdom of God which man has yet been able to observe. It cannot be predicted how far and deep man will yet be able to see with greater and more efficient means of observation at his disposal.

All the information that has been gathered so far about the universe proves that this whole world is made up of the same substance of which our tiny earthly world is made, and the same law is working in the universe which is working in the world of our earth; otherwise it was not at all possible, that man should have made observations of the very distant worlds from the earth, measured their distances and estimated their movements. Is it not a clear proof of the fact that this whole universe is the creation of One God and the Kingdom of One Ruler? Then from the order and the wisdom and the excellence of workmanship and the deep relationships which are found in the hundreds of thousands of the galaxies and in the millions and billions of the stars and planets revolving in them no sensible person can imagine that all this has come about automatically. Is it possible that there should be no administrator behind this order and system, no sage behind this wisdom, no designer behind this design and work of art, and no planner behind this planning?

38. "A laden vessel": the Ark of the Prophet Noah. As to boarding of the progeny of man in it, it means that although apparently a few companions of the Prophet Noah had boarded it, in reality all human beings who are to be born till Resurrection were boarding it; all the rest of mankind had been drowned in the Flood, all later human beings are the children of those who were rescued in the Ark.

39. This indicates that the first vessel ever to be made in the world was the one made by the Prophet Noah. Before that time man did not know any method of crossing the rivers and the seas. This method was first of all taught by Allah to the Prophet Noah, and when some servants of Allah were rescued in it from the Flood, their future generations started making boats and ships for their sea journeys.

[Contd. on p. 284

إِلَىٰ حِينٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّقُوا مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيكُمْ وَمَا خَلْفَكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ
تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَمَا تَأْتِيهِم مِّنْ آيَةٍ مِّنْ آيَاتِ رَبِّهِمْ إِلَّا كَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَ
إِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ أَنفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللَّهُ قَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
أَنُطْعِمُ مَن لَّوْ يَشَاءُ اللَّهُ أَطْعَمَهُ إِنْ أَنتُمْ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَيَقُولُونَ
مَتَىٰ هَٰذَا الْوَعْدُ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ مَا يَنظُرُونَ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً
تَأْخُذُهُمْ وَهُمْ يَخِصِّمُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَلَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ تَوْصِيَةً وَلَا إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهِمْ
يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَنُفِخَ فِي الصُّورِ فَإِذَا هُم مِّنَ الْأَجْدَاثِ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يَنسِلُونَ ﴿٥١﴾
قَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا مَن بَعَثَنَا مِن مَّرْقَدِنَا هَٰذَا مَا وَعَدَ الرَّحْمَٰنُ وَصَدَقَ الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾
إِن كَانَتْ إِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَاحِدَةً فَإِذَا هُمْ جَمِيعٌ لَّدَيْنَا مُحْضَرُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾ فَالْيَوْمَ لَا
تُظْلَمُ نَفْسٌ شَيْئًا وَلَا تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ إِنَّ أَصْحَابَ الْجَنَّةِ
الْيَوْمَ فِي شُغُلٍ فَاكِهُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾ هُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُهُمْ فِي ظِلَالٍ عَلَى الْأَرَائِكِ مُتَّكِئُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾
لَهُمْ فِيهَا فَاكِهَةٌ وَلَهُم مَّا يَدَّعُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ سَلَامٌ قَوْلًا مِّن رَّبٍّ رَّحِيمٍ ﴿٥٨﴾ وَ
امْتَازُوا الْيَوْمَ أَيُّهَا الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾ أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَن لَّا تَعْبُدُوا
الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِينٌ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَأَنِ اعْبُدُونِي هَٰذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٦١﴾
وَلَقَدْ أَضَلَّ مِنكُمْ جِبِلًّا كَثِيرًا أَفَلَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ هَٰذِهِ جَهَنَّمُ الَّتِي
كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ اصْلَوْهَا الْيَوْمَ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ الْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلَىٰ
أَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتُكَلِّمُنَا أَيْدِيهِمْ وَتَشْهَدُ أَرْجُلُهُم بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَلَوْ
نَشَاءُ لَطَمَسْنَا عَلَىٰ أَعْيُنِهِمْ فَاسْتَبَقُوا الصِّرَاطَ فَأَنَّىٰ يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَلَوْ نَشَاءُ
لَمَسَخْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ مَكَانَتِهِمْ فَمَا اسْتَطَاعُوا مُضِيًّا وَلَا يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَمَن نُّعَمِّرْهُ

When it is said to them, "Guard against the end which is before you and which you have left behind,[41] so that you are shown mercy," (they pay no heed), whatever Revelation of the Revelations of their Lord reaches them, they turn away from it.[42] And when it is said to them, "Spend also in the way of Allah out of what He has given you," those who disbelieve say to those who believe, "Should we feed those whom Allah Himself could have fed had He so willed? You have utterly gone astray!"[43] 45-47

They[44] say, "When will the threat of Resurrection be carried out? Tell us if you are truthful."[45] In fact, what they are awaiting is a single blast, which will suddenly seize them while they will be disputing (about their worldly affairs). Then they will neither be able to make a will, nor be able to return to their families.[46] Then a Trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come out of their graves forthwith to present themselves before their Lord.[47] Bewildered they will say, "Ah! who has roused us from our sleeping-place?"[48] ---- "This is the same which the Merciful God had promised and the Messengers had spoken the truth."[49] There shall only be a single loud blast and they shall be presented before Us, all together. 48-53

On this Day[50] no one will be wronged in the least, and you will be rewarded exactly according to what you had been doing.——(On this Day) the inmates of Paradise are absorbed in enjoying bliss[51]: they and their wives are in thick shades, reclining upon couches: they have all kinds of tasteful foods and whatever they may desire: they have been greeted with 'Peace' from the Merciful Lord. ——And O criminals, get you apart today![52] Children of Adam, did I not enjoin on you not to worship Satan, who is your open enemy, but to worship Me alone? This is the Straight Way.[53] Yet, in spite of this, he led astray a great multitude of you: did you not have common sense?[54] This is the same Hell with which you used to be threatened. Now be its fuel in consequence of your disbelief in the world. 54-64

On that Day We shall seal their tongues: their hands will speak to Us, and their feet will testify as to what they had been earning in the world.[55] 65

66-68 If We will, We can put out their eyes: then let them strive to seek the way: wherefrom will they see it? If We please, We can so transform them in their places that they would neither be able to go forward nor turn backward.[56] Whomsoever We grant a long life, We just reverse him in nature and constitution.[57] Do they not understand anything (from this)?

Contd. from p.281]

40. The signs till now were mentioned as arguments for *Tauhīd*. This sign has been mentioned to make man realize that whatever powers he has been given over the forces of nature, have been given him by Allah and are not of his own acquirement. And whatever methods he has discovered of exploiting these forces; have been discovered also through the guidance of Allah and not solely by himself. Man did not have the power and strength to have subdued these great forces by his own power, nor the capability to have discovered the secrets of nature himself and known the methods of taking service from them. Then he can use and employ the forces over which he has been given control by Allah only till the time that Allah wills them to remain subdued to him. For when Allah wills otherwise the same forces which were serving man turn against him suddenly and he finds himself utterly helpless before them. To call man's attention to this reality Allah has presented the case of the sea journey only as an example. The whole human race would have perished in the Flood had Allah not taught the method of making the vessel to the Prophet Noah and had his followers not boarded it. Then the scattering of the human race over the whole earth became possible only because the people learnt the principles of building vessels from Allah and became able to cross the rivers and oceans. But from that humble beginning till today in spite of making great strides in the art of building huge ships and attaining every possible perfection in the science of navigation, man cannot claim that he has brought the rivers and the oceans fully under his control and power. Even today the water of God is still in God's own power alone and whenever He wills He drowns man along with his ships in it.

41. "Which you have left behind": Which the peoples before you have seen and experienced.

42. "Revelations": Verses of the Divine Book by which man is admonished, and the Signs which are found in the universe and in man's own self and in his history which serve as object lessons for man, provided he is inclined to learn any lesson.

43. This means to show that disbelief has not only blinded their intellect but has destroyed their moral sense, too. They neither have the right thought about Allah nor do they adopt the right attitude towards the people. They react adversely to every admonition, follow a perverse philosophy in respite of every deviation and immorality and have a ready made pretence for escape from every good.

44. After *Tauḥīd* the other question about which a dispute was raging between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers was the question of the Hereafter. Rational arguments about this have been given in the end of the discourse. Here, before giving the arguments, the Hereafter has been depicted with all its horrors so that the people should know that what they are refusing to believe in cannot be averted by their denial, but they have to meet and experience it one day inevitably.

45. The question did not mean that they wanted to know the exact date of the coming of the Hereafter, and if, for instance, they were told that it would take place on such and such a date in such and such a month and year, their doubts would have been removed and they would have believed in it. Such questions, in fact, were put as a challenge only for the sake of argument. What they meant to say was that there would be no Resurrection whatever, as if to say, "You are threatening us with Resurrection without rhyme or reason." That is why in reply it has not been said that Resurrection will take place on such and such a day, but that it shall come and shall be accompanied by such and such horrors."

46. That is, "The Resurrection will not take place piecemeal so that the people may leisurely watch its coming, but it will come all of a sudden when the people will be engaged in their daily business and they will have no idea whatever that the end of the world had approached. There will be a terrible blast and everyone will fall dead at the spot."

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr and Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah have related a *Ḥadīth* from the Holy Prophet saying: "The people will be walking on the roads as usual, will be buying and selling in the markets, will be disputing matters in their assemblies, when suddenly the Trumpet shall be sounded. Thereupon the one who was buying cloth would collapse and he would not have the time to put down the cloth from his hand; the one who was filling a cistern to water his animals would not have the time to water; and the one who was going to eat, would not have the time to lift the morsel to his mouth and Resurrection will take place."

47. For the explanation of the blowing of the "Trumpet", see E.N. 78 of Sūrah Ṭā Hā. As for the length of the interval between the first blowing of the Trumpet and its second blowing, we have no information. The interval may be of hundreds and thousands of years. Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah has related that the Holy Prophet said: "Isrāfīl has put the Trumpet to his mouth and is looking up to the Divine Throne, awaiting orders for blowing it. The Trumpet will be blown thrice:

On the first blowing (called *nafakhat al-faza'*) everything in the earth and heavens will be struck with terror. On the second blowing *(nafakhat as-Sa'q)* everyone will fall down dead. Then, when none shall remain except Allah, the One, the Everlasting, the earth will be changed altogether and will be spread flat and smooth without a crease or wrinkle in it. Then Allah will administer a rebuke to His Creation, whereupon everyone will rise at the spot where he had fallen dead, on the changed earth, and this will happen on the third blowing of the Trumpet *(nafakhat al qiyām li-Rabbil-'Ālamīn).* This is supported by several allusions in the Qur'ān also.

For example, see Sūrah Ibrāhīm: 48; Sūrah Ṭā Hā: 105-108, and the E.N.'s thereof.

48. That is, "At that time they will not realize that they had been dead and had been raised back to life after a long period, but they will be thinking that they had fallen asleep, and had been woken up suddenly by some terrible catastrophe, and were running away from it." (For further explanation, see Ṭā Hā: 103, Al-Hajj: 1-2).

49. Here, it is not clear as to who will give this answer. It may be that they themselves would realize after some time to their horror that it was the same thing of which the Messengers of God used to inform them and they used to belie them. It may also be that the believers will remove their misunderstanding and tell them that it was not waking up from sleep but the second life after death. And it may also be that they will understand this from the general conditions prevailing on the Day of Resurrection or the angels might tell them this.

50. This is what Allah will tell the disbelievers and the polytheists, the sinners and the culprits, when they will be presented before Him.

51. To understand this one should remember that the righteous believers will not be withheld in the Plain of Resurrection, but in the very beginning they will be sent to Paradise without accountability, or after a mild reckoning, because their record will be clean. There will be no need to keep them waiting during the hearing by the Court. Therefore, Allah will tell the culprits, who will be required to render their accounts, in the Plain of Resurrection: "Look ! the righteous people whom you used to mock and regard as foolish in the world, are today enjoying the pleasures of Paradise because of their wisdom, and you, who in your own judgement were very prudent and sagacious, are being condemned to accountability for your misdeeds."

52. This can have two meanings:(1) "Get you apart from the righteous believers, for in the world even if you belonged to the same community and the same clan and the same brotherhood, here you have no connection and

relationship left with them;" and (2) "get you apart from one another: now you can no longer remain a group: all your parties have been disbanded: all your relations and connections have been severed. Now each of you will be held answerable in your personal capacity for your actions and deeds."

53. Here again Allah has used *'ibādat* in the sense of *itā'at* (obedience). This subject has already been explained above in Al-Baqarah: 172, An-Nisā': 117, Al-An'ām: 121, 137, At-Taubah: 31, Ibrāhīm: 22, Al-Kahf: 52, Maryam: 42, Al-Qasas: 63 and E.N. 63 of Sabā. In this connection, the fine explanation given of it by Imām Rāzī in his *Tafsīr Kabīr is* also noteworthy. He writes: *"Do not worship Satan* means: Do not obey him, the reason being that only falling prostrate before him is not forbidden, but following him and obeying his commands also is forbidden; therefore, *itā'at* (obedience) is *'ibādat* (worship)." After this, the Imām raises the question: If *'ibādat* means *itā'at*, then have the Muslims been commanded to worship the Prophet and the rulers in the verse: *Atī'ullaha wa ati'-ur-rasūla wa ulil-amr-i min-kum?* He himself answers it thus: "If obedience to them is in accordance with the Commands of Allah, it will be Allah's worship *('ibādat)* and His obedience (*itā'at*). Did not the angels fall prostrate before Adam in obedience to Allah's Command ? This was nothing but worship of Allah. Obedience of the rulers will be their worship only in cases where they are obeyed in matters in which Allah has not given leave to obey them." Then he writes: "If a person comes to you and commands you to do something, you should see whether his command is in accordance with the Command of Allah or not. If it is not, Satan is with him; and if you obeyed him in this, you worshipped him and his Satan. Likewise, if your self urges you to do something, you should see whether it is permissible to do it according to the *Sahari'ah* or not. If it is not permissible, your self is Satan itself, or Satan is with it. If you obeyed him, you in fact became guilty of worshipping him." Further on, he writes: "But there are different degrees of the worship of Satan. Sometimes it so happens that a man does a work and his limbs and his tongue also join him in this, and his heart also cooperates. At another time it so happens that a man uses his limbs to do a work but his heart and tongue do not cooperate in this. Some people commit a sin while their heart is disagreeable and their tongue is invoking Allah for forgiveness, and they confess that they are committing an evil. This is Satan's worship with external limbs. There are other people who commit a crime with a cool mind and express pleasure and satisfaction with the tongue also. .....Such people are the worshippers of Satan from outside as well as from inside. *(Tafsīr Kabīr,* vol. VII, pp. 103-104).

54. That is, "If you had been deprived of reason and you had served your enemy instead of your Lord, you could have the reason to offer an excuse. But you, in fact, had been blessed with reason by Allah and you were using it to advantage in all the affairs of the world, and you had been warned by Allah

through the Prophets as well, yet, when you were deceived by your enemy and he succeeded in leading you astray, you could not be excused from the responsibility of your folly."

55. This command will be given in respect of the stubborn culprits, who will refuse to confess their crimes, will belie the witnesses, and will also not acknowledge the genuineness of their conduct-book. Then will Allah Almighty command; "Well, stop your babbling. Just see what your own limbs say about your misdeeds." In this connection, here only the evidence to be given by the hands and the feet has been mentioned. But at other places it has been said that their eyes and their ears and their tongues, and the very skins of their body, will tell how they had been employed in the world. "They should not forget the Day when their own tongues and their own hands and feet will bear testimony to their misdeeds." (An-Nūr: 24) "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." (Ḥā Mīm Sajdah: 20). The question arises: On the one hand, Allah says: "We shall seal their mouths," and on the other, in the verse of Sūrah An-Nūr, He says: "Their tongues will bear testimony against them." How can these two things be reconciled ? The answer is: "To seal the mouths means to deprive them of their power of speech. That is, after this they will not be able to say whatever they like with their tongue. The testimony of their tongues means that their tongues themselves will tell how the wicked people had used them, what blasphemies and lies they had been made to utter, what mischiefs they had invented and what falsehoods they had been made to say on different occasions."

56. After depicting the scene of Resurrection, the people are being warned to this effect: "The Resurrection may seem yet far off to you, but even if you consider seriously your life in this world of which you are so proud, you will see how helpless you are in the powerful grip of Allah. Your eyes by virtue of whose sight you are carrying out all your obligations in the world can be blinded at one command of Allah. Your legs on whose strength you are showing all this activity can become paralyzed as and when Allah wills. As long as the powers and capabilities granted by Allah continue to function, you remain lost in the arrogance of your self, but as soon as one of them fails to function, you come to understand how helpless you are!"

[Contd. on p.290

نُنَكِّسْهُ فِي الْخَلْقِ ۖ أَفَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَمَا عَلَّمْنَاهُ الشِّعْرَ وَمَا يَنْبَغِي لَهُ ۚ إِنْ
هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ وَقُرْآنٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٦٩﴾ لِيُنْذِرَ مَنْ كَانَ حَيًّا وَيَحِقَّ الْقَوْلُ عَلَى
الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا خَلَقْنَا لَهُمْ مِمَّا عَمِلَتْ أَيْدِينَا أَنْعَامًا فَهُمْ لَهَا
مَالِكُونَ ﴿٧١﴾ وَذَلَّلْنَاهَا لَهُمْ فَمِنْهَا رَكُوبُهُمْ وَمِنْهَا يَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ وَلَهُمْ فِيهَا مَنَافِعُ
وَمَشَارِبُ ۖ أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾ وَاتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ آلِهَةً لَعَلَّهُمْ يُنْصَرُونَ ﴿٧٤﴾
لَا يَسْتَطِيعُونَ نَصْرَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُمْ جُنْدٌ مُحْضَرُونَ ﴿٧٥﴾ فَلَا يَحْزُنْكَ قَوْلُهُمْ
إِنَّا نَعْلَمُ مَا يُسِرُّونَ وَمَا يُعْلِنُونَ ﴿٧٦﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرَ الْإِنْسَانُ أَنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ
نُطْفَةٍ فَإِذَا هُوَ خَصِيمٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَضَرَبَ لَنَا مَثَلًا وَنَسِيَ خَلْقَهُ ۖ قَالَ مَنْ
يُحْيِي الْعِظَامَ وَهِيَ رَمِيمٌ ﴿٧٨﴾ قُلْ يُحْيِيهَا الَّذِي أَنْشَأَهَا أَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ ۖ وَهُوَ
بِكُلِّ خَلْقٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٧٩﴾ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الشَّجَرِ الْأَخْضَرِ نَارًا فَإِذَا أَنْتُمْ

We have not taught this (Prophet) poetry nor does poetry behove him.[58] This is only an Admonition and a lucid poetry Book, so that he may warn everyone who is living[59] and the charge is established against the disbelievers. 69-70

Do they not see that out of what Our hands have fashioned,[60] We have created for them cattle of which they are masters? We have so subjected these to them that they ride on some and eat the flesh of others, and in them there are different advantages and drinks for them. Then, will they not be grateful?[61] Yet, they have set up other gods, apart from Allah, hoping that they would be helped. They cannot help them at all; yet do these people stand as an ever ready army at their service.[62] Well, let not their words grieve you; We know whatever they hide and whatever they reveal.[63] 71-76

Does[64] not man see that We created him from a sperm-drop, and yet he stands forth as a manifest adversary?[65] Now he strikes out 77-83

مِّنْهُ تُوْقِدُوْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ أَوَلَيْسَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضَ بِقٰدِرٍ عَلٰٓى
أَنْ يَّخْلُقَ مِثْلَهُمْ ۭ بَلٰى ۚ وَهُوَ الْخَلّٰقُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٨١﴾ إِنَّمَآ أَمْرُهٗٓ إِذَآ أَرَادَ شَيْـًٔا أَنْ
يَّقُوْلَ لَهٗ كُنْ فَيَكُوْنُ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَسُبْحٰنَ الَّذِيْ بِيَدِهٖ مَلَكُوْتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾

likenesses for Us and forgets his own creation.[67] He says, "Who will give life to these bones when they are rotten?" Tell him, "He Who created them in the first instance will give them life again: He is skilled at every kind of creation. He it is Who created fire for you from the green tree, with which you kindle your fuel.[68] Is not He, Who created the heavens and the earth, able to create the like of them ? Why not, when He is the skilful Creator. When He intends anything, He needs only say: 'Be', and it is. Glorified is He in Whose hand is the absolute control of everything, and to Him you shall all be returned.

Contd. from p.288]

57. "Reverse him in nature," means that in old age Allah turns him back to the state of childhood. He becomes unable to stand and walk without the help and support of others; he is fed by others; he urinates and defecates in bed; talks childishly and is laughed at by others. In short, towards the end of life he returns to the same state of weakness with which he had started life in this world."

58. This is a rejoinder to the disbelievers, who slighted the Holy Prophet and his message by branding him a poet when he preached *Tauhīd* and talked of the Hereafter, life-after-death, and Hell and Heaven. (For further explanation, see Ash-Shu'arā: 224-227 and the E.N.'s thereof).

59. "Every living person": Every person who is capable of thinking and understanding, who is not like a stone, which neither hears nor understands nor moves from its place, however rationally and sympathetically one may explain the distinction between the truth and falsehood and give admonition before him.

60. The word "hands" has been used metaphorically for Allah. This does not mean that, God forbid, Allah has a body and He works with the hands like human beings, but it means to impress that Allah has made these things Himself, and none else has any share in the matter of their creation.

61. It is ingratitude to regard a blessing as a gift of someone other than the donor, to be grateful to another for it, and to cherish the hope of receiving it or to seek it from another than the donor. Likewise, it is also ingratitude that one should

use a blessing against the will of the donor. Therefore, a *mushrik* or a disbeliever or a hypocrite or a sinful person cannot be regarded as a grateful servant of God when he utters words of thankfulness only with the tongue. The disbelievers of Makkah did not deny that the cattle had been created by Allah; none of them said that the other deities had any hand in their creation. But despite knowing all this when they paid homage to their deities for the blessings granted by Allah, presented offerings before them and prayed to them for more blessings and offered sacrifices for their sake, their verbal gratitude became meaningless. That is why Allah has regarded them as guilty of ingratitude and thanklessness.

62. That is, the poor false gods themselves are dependent upon their worshippers for their survival and their safety and their needs. But for their multitudes they could not survive as gods even for a day. These people are behaving as their humble servants. They are setting up and decorating their shrines; they carry out propaganda for them; they fight and quarrel with others for their sake. Then only are they recognized as gods. They are not the real God, Who, whether someone recognizes Him or not, is ruling over the whole universe by His own might and authority.

63. The address is to the Holy Prophet. Here the allusion is to the campaign of vilification which the chiefs of the disbelievers of Makkah were carrying on against him. They knew in their hearts and acknowledged in their private assemblies that the charges they brought against him were absolutely baseless. In order to create suspicions against him in the minds of the people, they branded him a poet, sorcerer, magician, madman, etc. But their consciences recognized, and they also acknowledged before one another, that whatever they were uttering Was false, which they were forging only to frustrate his mission. That is why Allah says to His Prophet: "Do not grieve at their absurd and meaningless talk. Those who are opposing and resisting the Truth with falsehood shall ultimately meet with failure in this world and see their evil end in the Hereafter, too."

64. Here the disbelievers' question cited in verse 48 above, is being answered by reason and argument. The question, "When will the threat of Resurrection be carried out?" had not been asked with a view to find out the exact date of the coming of the Hereafter. But they asked it because they thought it was impossible, rather irrational, that human beings would be raised back to life after death. That is why, in reply to their question, arguments are being given for the possibility of the Hereafter.

According to the traditions related by Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah and Sa'īd bin Jubair, one of the chiefs of Makkah, on this occasion, came up with a rotten bone of a dead person, from the graveyard. He broke and crushed it into pieces before the Holy Prophet and scattering its particles in the air, said, "O Muḥammad, you

say that the dead will be raised back to life. Tell us who will give life to these decayed and rotten bones?" The answer was given immediately in the form of these verses.

65. That is, "We caused the sperm-drop which contained nothing but the basic germ of life to develop to an extent that it started moving and eating like the animals. Furthermore, it has developed such powers of intellect and reasoning and disputation and speech, which are not possessed by any animal; so much so that now he dares stand up as an adversary before his Creator !"

66. That is, "He regards Us powerless and weak like the creation, and thinks that just as man cannot raise the dead back to life, so also can't We."

67. "Forgets his own creation": "Forgets that We created the basic germ of life from dead matter, which became the means of his creation; then We caused the germ to develop to such an extent that now he stands before Us as a disputant."

68. It either means that He has placed the inflammable matter in the green trees due to which people kindle fire from the pieces of wood. Or, it is an allusion to the *markh* and *'afār* trees, whose green branches the Arabs struck against each other to produce the sparks. In ancient times the Bedouins used this method of kindling the fire and might even be using the same today.


XXXVII
AṢ-ṢĀĀFFĀT
الصّٰٓفّٰت

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXXVII

AS-SĀĀFFĀT

الصّٰفّٰت

INTRODUCTION

Name

The name is derived from the word *waṣ-ṣāāffāt* with which the Sūrah begins.

Period of Revelation

The subject-matter and the style show that this Sūrah probably was sent down in the middle of the Makkan period, or perhaps in the last stage of the middle Makkan period. The style clearly indicates that antagonism is raging strong in the background and the Holy Prophet and his Companions are passing through very difficult and discouraging circumstances.

Subject-Matter and Theme

The disbelievers of Makkah have been severely warned for their attitude of mockery and derision with which they were responding to the Holy Prophet's message of *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter and for their utter refusal to accept and acknowledge his claim to Prophethood. In the end,

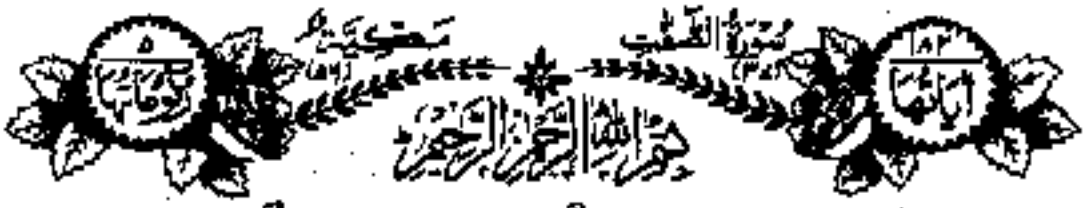
they have been plainly warned that the Prophet whom they are mocking and ridiculing will overwhelm them in spite of their power and pelf and they will find the army of Allah encamping in the very courtyards of their houses (vv. 171-179). This notice was given at a time when there appeared no chance whatever of the Holy Prophet's success and triumph. The Muslims (who have been called Allah's army in these verses) were being made the target of severe persecution. Three-fourth of their population had already emigrated and hardly 40 to 50 of the Companions were left with the Holy Prophet in Makkah who were exrperiencing all sorts of the excesses with utter helplessness. Under such circumstances, in view of the apparent conditions, no one could believe that the Holy Prophet and the handful of his ill-equipped Companions would ultimately attain dominance. The people rather thought that the new movement would end and be buried in the ravines of Makkah. But hardly 15 to 16 years had passed when on the conquest of Makkah precisely the same thing happened of which the disbelievers had been forewarned.

Along with administering warnings, Allah in this Sūrah has done full justice also to the theme of inducement and instruction in a balanced way. Brief but impressive arguments have been given about the validity of the doctrines of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter. Criticism has been made of the creed of the *mushrikīn* to show the absurdity of their beliefs; they have been informed of the evil consequences of their deviations, which have been contrasted with the splendid results of the faith and righteous acts. Then, in continuation of the same, precedents from past history have been cited to show how Allah has been treating His Prophets and their followers: how He has been favouring His faithful servants and punishing their deniers and rejectors.

The most instructive of the historical narratives presented in this Sūrah is the important event of the pious life of the Prophet Abraham, who became ready to sacrifice his only son as soon as he received an inspiration from Allah. In this there was a lesson not only for the disbelieving Quraish, who waxed proud of their blood relationship with him, but also for the Muslims who had believed in Allah and His Messenger. By narrating this event they were told what is the essence and the real spirit of Islam, and how a true believer should be ready to

sacrifice his all for the pleasure and approval of Allah after he has adopted it as his Faith and Creed.

The last verses of the Sūrah were not only a warning for the disbelieves but also a good news for the believers who were passing through highly unfavourable and discouraging conditions on account of their supporting and following the Holy Prophet. In these verses they were given the good news that they should not be disheartened at the hardships and difficulties they had to encounter in the beginning, for in the end they alone would attain dominance, and the standard-bearers of falsehood, who appeared to be dominant at the time would be overwhelmed and vanquished at their hands. A few years later the turn the events took, proved that it was not an empty consolation but an inevitable reality of which they had been foretold in order to strengthen their hearts.



وَالصّٰٓفّٰتِ صَفًّا ۝١ فَالزّٰجِرٰتِ زَجْرًا ۝٢ فَالتّٰلِيٰتِ ذِكْرًا ۝٣ اِنَّ اِلٰهَكُمْ لَوَاحِدٌ ۝٤
رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَرَبُّ الْمَشَارِقِ ۝٥ اِنَّا زَيَّنَّا السَّمَآءَ
الدُّنْيَا بِزِيْنَةِ ِۨالْكَوَاكِبِ ۝٦ وَحِفْظًا مِّنْ كُلِّ شَيْطٰنٍ مَّارِدٍ ۝٧ لَا يَسَّمَّعُوْنَ
اِلَى الْمَلَاِ الْاَعْلٰى وَيُقْذَفُوْنَ مِنْ كُلِّ جَانِبٍ ۝٨ دُحُوْرًا وَّلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ

XXXVII

AṢ-ṢĀĀFFĀT

اَلصّٰٓفّٰت

Verses: 182 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

By those who range themselves in ranks; then by those scold and curse; then by those who recite admonition:[1] your real Deity is but One.[2] ----He Who is Lord of the earth and the heavens and of all that is between them, and Lord[3] of all Easts.[4] 1-5

We have adorned the lower heaven with the adornment of the stars and have secured it against every rebel satan.[6] These satans cannot hear the words of the exalted ones; they are darted at and driven off from every side, and for them there is a perpetual torment. However, if some one snatches away something, a flashing flame follows him.[7] 6-10

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1. The majority of the commentators are agreed that all these three groups imply the groups of the angels, and the same explanation of it has been reported from 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah, Masrūq Sa'id bin Jubair, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid, Suddī, Ibn Zaid and Rabī' bin Anas. Some commentators have

given other commentaries also, but this commentary is more in keeping with the context. The words "range themselves in ranks" refer to the fact that all the angels who are administering the affairs of the universe, are the humble servants of Allah, and are ever ready to carry out any service and implement any command of His. This theme has been further repeated in verse 165 below, where the angels say with regard to themselves: "We are the ranged servants (of Allah)."

As for "scolding and cursing", some commentators think that it refers to those angels who drive the clouds and arrange the rainfall. Although this meaning is not incorrect either, the meaning which is more relevant to the following context is that among these angels there is also a group of those, who scold and curse the disobedient people and the culprits, and this scolding and cursing is not merely verbal but it rains on human beings in the form of natural disasters and calamities.

"To recite admonition" implies that among these angels there are also those, who perform the service of admonition in order to draw the people's attention to the Truth. This they do by bringing about natural calamities from which the needful take heed, and by bringing down the teachings to the Prophets, and in the form of revelations with which the pious men are blessed through them.

2. This is the Truth to impress which an oath has been taken by the angels bearing the above-mentioned qualities. In other words, what is meant to be said is: "The whole system of the universe which is functioning in the service of Allah, and all those manifestations of this universe which bring the evil consequences of deviation from the service of Allah before men, testify that the "Deity" of men is One and only One."

The word *"Ilāh"* applies to two meanings: (1) The deity who is actually being served and worshipped; and (2) the Deity Who, in reality, is worthy of being served and worshipped. Here, the word *"Ilāh"* has been used in the second meaning, for, as far as the first meaning is concerned, men have adopted many other deities. That is why we have translated *"Ilāh"* as the "real Deity".

3. The Truth that has been conveyed in these verses is: "The Master and Ruler of the Universe is the real Deity of men: He alone can be, and should be, the Deity. It would be utterly irrational that the *Rabb* (i.e. Master, Ruler, Guardian and Sustainer) of the man should be one but his *Ilāh* (deity) another. The basic reason for worship is that man should naturally bow down before and acknowledge the superiority of him who can bring him harm and good, who can fulfil his needs and requirements, who can make or mar his destiny and has power over his life and survival itself. If man understands this he will automatically understand that to worship the one who has no power and not to worship Him Who has all the powers are both against reason and nature. The One Who alone is worthy of worship is He Who possesses the powers. As far as the powerless

beings are concerned, they are neither worthy of worship, nor is it in any way profitable to worship and pray to them, for it is not in their power to take any action whatever on man's petitions and prayers. To bow before them humbly and to petition them would be as foolish and meaningless an act as to bow before and petition another one who has himself gone before a ruler to make obeisance and submit his petitions.

4. The sun does not always rise at the same point but at a different point every day. Moreover, it does not rise at one and the same time for the whole world but rises at different times for the different parts of the earth. That is why the plural *"Mashāriq"* (Easts) has been used to indicate the different points at which the sun rises according to the season of the year. The corresponding word *"Maghārib"* (Wests) has not been used because *Mashāriq* itself points to *Maghārib* However, in Sūrah Al-Ma'ārij, the word *maghārib* also has been used along with *mashāriq: Rabb-al-mashāriqi wal-maghārib.*

5. "Lower heaven": The nearer heaven which can be seen with the naked eye, without the help of a telescope. The worlds beyond which can be seen through the telescopes of different powers, and the worlds which have not so far been observed through any means, are the distant heavens. In this connection, one should also note that *"samā"* is not something definite and determined, but man generally has been using this word and its other synonyms for the heavens since the earliest times.

6. That is, "Heaven is not merely empty space so that anyone who likes may enter it, but it has been fortified strongly, and its different regions have been bounded by such strong barriers that it is impossible for any rebel satan to exceed them. Every star and planet in the universe has its own circle and sphere escaping from which, is as difficult as entering it. With the naked eye one can only see empty space, but, in reality, there are countless regions in space which have been even more strongly fortified and protected than they could be by steel walls. One can imagine and estimate the strength of these barriers by the difficulties man is experiencing in the way of reaching the moon, which is our nearest neighbour in space. Similar difficulties prevent the other creation of the earth, the jinns, from ascending towards the heavens.

7. To understand this one should keep in view the fact that in the time of the Holy Prophet, soothsaying was in great vogue in Arabia. The soothsayers used to make predictions, give news of the unseen, tell the whereabouts of the lost

[Contd. on p. 304

وَاصِبٌ ۝٩ إِلَّا مَنْ خَطِفَ الْخَطْفَةَ فَأَتْبَعَهُ شِهَابٌ ثَاقِبٌ ۝١٠ فَاسْتَفْتِهِمْ
أَهُمْ أَشَدُّ خَلْقًا أَمْ مَنْ خَلَقْنَا ۚ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاهُمْ مِنْ طِينٍ لَازِبٍ ۝١١ بَلْ
عَجِبْتَ وَيَسْخَرُونَ ۝١٢ وَإِذَا ذُكِّرُوا لَا يَذْكُرُونَ ۝١٣ وَإِذَا رَأَوْا آيَةً
يَسْتَسْخِرُونَ ۝١٤ وَقَالُوا إِنْ هَٰذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ ۝١٥ أَإِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا
وَعِظَامًا أَإِنَّا لَمَبْعُوثُونَ ۝١٦ أَوَآبَاؤُنَا الْأَوَّلُونَ ۝١٧ قُلْ نَعَمْ وَأَنْتُمْ دَاخِرُونَ ۝١٨
فَإِنَّمَا هِيَ زَجْرَةٌ وَاحِدَةٌ فَإِذَا هُمْ يَنْظُرُونَ ۝١٩ وَقَالُوا يَا وَيْلَنَا هَٰذَا يَوْمُ
الدِّينِ ۝٢٠ هَٰذَا يَوْمُ الْفَصْلِ الَّذِي كُنْتُمْ بِهِ تُكَذِّبُونَ ۝٢١ احْشُرُوا الَّذِينَ
ظَلَمُوا وَأَزْوَاجَهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ ۝٢٢ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ فَاهْدُوهُمْ إِلَىٰ
صِرَاطِ الْجَحِيمِ ۝٢٣ وَقِفُوهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ مَسْئُولُونَ ۝٢٤ مَا لَكُمْ لَا تَنَاصَرُونَ ۝٢٥
بَلْ هُمُ الْيَوْمَ مُسْتَسْلِمُونَ ۝٢٦ وَأَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ يَتَسَاءَلُونَ ۝٢٧
قَالُوا إِنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَأْتُونَنَا عَنِ الْيَمِينِ ۝٢٨ قَالُوا بَلْ لَمْ تَكُونُوا مُؤْمِنِينَ ۝٢٩
وَمَا كَانَ لَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ سُلْطَانٍ ۚ بَلْ كُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا طَاغِينَ ۝٣٠ فَحَقَّ عَلَيْنَا
قَوْلُ رَبِّنَا ۖ إِنَّا لَذَائِقُونَ ۝٣١ فَأَغْوَيْنَاكُمْ إِنَّا كُنَّا غَاوِينَ ۝٣٢ فَإِنَّهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ
فِي الْعَذَابِ مُشْتَرِكُونَ ۝٣٣ إِنَّا كَذَٰلِكَ نَفْعَلُ بِالْمُجْرِمِينَ ۝٣٤ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا إِذَا
قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا إِلَٰهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ ۝٣٥ وَيَقُولُونَ أَئِنَّا لَتَارِكُو آلِهَتِنَا
لِشَاعِرٍ مَجْنُونٍ ۝٣٦ بَلْ جَاءَ بِالْحَقِّ وَصَدَّقَ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ۝٣٧ إِنَّكُمْ لَذَائِقُو
الْعَذَابِ الْأَلِيمِ ۝٣٨ وَمَا تُجْزَوْنَ إِلَّا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ۝٣٩ إِلَّا عِبَادَ اللَّهِ
الْمُخْلَصِينَ ۝٤٠ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمْ رِزْقٌ مَعْلُومٌ ۝٤١ فَوَاكِهُ ۖ وَهُمْ مُكْرَمُونَ ۝٤٢ فِي
جَنَّاتِ النَّعِيمِ ۝٤٣ عَلَىٰ سُرُرٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ ۝٤٤ يُطَافُ عَلَيْهِمْ بِكَأْسٍ مِنْ مَعِينٍ ۝٤٥

Now ask them: What is more difficult: their own creation or of those things which We have created?[8] Of sticky clay We have created them.[9] You marvel (at the wonders of Allah's power), but they are scoffing at it. When they are warned they do not take the warning. When they see a Sign they mock at it, and say, "This is plain magic.[10] What ! when we are dead and have become dust and bones, shall we be raised up to life?. And also our forefathers of ancient times ?" Say to them, "Yes, and you are helpless (against God)."[11] 11-18

There will only be a single shout and suddenly they will be seeing (all of which they are being warned) with their own eyes.[12] Then they will say, "Woe to us! This is the Day of Requital."—"The same Day of Judgement which you used to deny."[13] (It will be commanded): "Gather all the unjust people[14] and their associates[15] together, and those gods whom they used to worship instead of Allah[16]; then show them the way to Hell. And stop them for a while: they have to be questioned: What is the matter? Why don't you help one another? Today, they are surrendering themselves (and others to God)[17] !" Then they will turn to each other for mutual reproaches. (The followers) will say (to their guides): "You used to come to us from the right side."[18] They will reply, "Nay but it was yourselves who did not believe: we had no power over you: you yourselves were a rebellious people. Consequently, we have deserved the verdict of our Lord that we should taste the torment. So we led you astray for we ourselves had gone astray."[19] 19-32

So, on that Day they shall all share the torment.[20] Thus do We deal with the criminals. These were the people that when it was said to them, "There is no god but Allah," they were puffed up with pride and would say, "Should we give up our gods for the sake of a mad poet?" Whereas he had come with the Truth and had confirmed the Messengers.[21] (Then it will be said to them :) "You shall have to taste the painful scourge, and your retribution will be strictly according to the deeds that you have been performing." 33 39

But the chosen servants of Allah will remain safe (from this evil end). For them there is a known provision:[22] tasteful things of all kinds[23] and gardens of delight wherein they shall be lodged with honour. They will sit face to face on couches: cups filled from 40-46

fountains[24] of wine[25] will be passed round to them[26], of crystal white drink, delicious for those who drink it.....

Contd. from p.301]

properties and articles, and the people used to visit them to know the events of their past and future lives. These soothsayers claimed that they had some jinns and satans under their control, who brought them all sorts of news. In this environment when the Holy Prophet was appointed to Prophethood, and he began to recite the verses of the Qur'ān, which described the past history and contained news of the future, and also stated that an angel brought him these verses, his opponents immediately branded him a soothsayer and started telling others that, like the other soothsayers, he too was associated with a satan, who brought him news from the heavens, which he presented as revelations from Allah. To refute this accusation, Allah says: "The satans have no access to heaven. They have no power to hear the conversations of the angels and bring its news for others; if by chance a little of it enters the ear of a satan, and he tries to bring it down, he is followed by a flashing flame." In other words, it means: "The grand system of the universe, which is functioning under the agency of the angels has been firmly guarded and secured against every interference of the satans. Not to speak of interfering in it, they do not even have the power to obtain any kind of information about it." (For further explanation, see Al-Hijr: 17-18 and the E.N's thereof).

8. This is an answer to the suspicions of the disbelievers of Makkah, which they presented about the Hereafter. They thought that the Hereafter was not possible, for it is impossible that the dead men should be recreated. In answer to it, Allah presents arguments for the possibility of the Hereafter and asks: "If you think that the recreation of the dead men is a very difficult task which We do not have the power to accomplish, do you think it is easy to create the earth and the heavens and the countless things that they contain? Why don't you use your common sense ? Do you think that God for Whom it was not at all difficult to create this great Universe and Who has created you in the first instance, will not have the power to create you once again ?"

9. That is, "Man is not a difficult thing to make. He has been created from clay, and can again be created from the same clay." "Created man of sticky clay" means that the first man was created directly from the clay and then his race was perpetuated by means of the sperm-drop. It also means that every man has been created from the sticky clay, for the whole substance of man's body is obtained from the earth. The sperm-drop of which he is created, is a product of the food, and all the substances which make up his physical being, from the time he is conceived till his death, are also supplied by the food. The source of the food, whether animal flesh or vegetable, is ultimately the same earth which, in

combination with water produces corn and vegetables and fruit to become food for man, and nourish the animals, which supply milk and flesh for the use of man.

Thus, the basis of the argument is: Man could not be living today if the earth and clay had not become the source of life for him. And if it is possible today to create life in it, as your own existence is a clear and definite pointer to this possibility, why should it be impossible to bring about your re-creation from the same earth tomorrow ?

10. That is, "This person is talking of the world of magic in which the dead will rise, and will be produced before a court and sent to Heaven and Hell" or, it may also mean: "This person is talking like a madman. What he talks is a clear proof that somebody has worked magic on him; otherwise a sensible person could not talk such things.

11. That is, "Allah can make of you whatever He likes. When He willed, you came into being forthwith; when He wills, you will die at one Command by Him; and then whenever He wills, His one Command will raise you back to life."

12. That is, "When the time comes for this, it will not be difficult to re-establish the whole world. Just a single shout will be enough to make the people to wake up. Here, the word "shout" or "cry" is very meaningful. It depicts the Resurrection as though the people who had died since the beginning of the creation till the last Day, were lying asleep, and a sudden command to them to "wake up", will cause them to rise up all at once."

13. It may be that this is said by the believers, or by the angels; or it may be, as it were, the common expression of the conditions prevailing in the plain of Resurrection or it may as well be another reaction of the people themselves. That is, they may be saying in their hearts. "In the world, you lived in a way as if no Day of Judgement would ever come. Now you have come to your doom! This is the same Day that you used to deny !"

14. "The unjust people" does not only imply those who committed injustices in the world, but as a Qur'ânic term *Ẓālim* implies every such person, who might have adopted the way of rebellion and disobedience against Allah."

15. The word *"azwāj"* in the original might also imply their wives, who were their associates in this rebellion, and also all those people who were rebellious and disobedient like them. Moreover it may also mean that the culprits of different categories will be gathered together in separate groups.

16. "Gods" here implies two kinds of the gods: (1) Those men and satans who themselves desired that the people should worship them instead of Allah; and (2) those idols and trees and stones, etc., which have actually been worshipped in

the world. The first kind of the gods will be included among the culprits themselves and will be led to Hell for punishment; the other kind of them will be thrown into Hell along with their worshippers so that they constantly feel ashamed of and continue to regret their follies. Besides, there is also a third kind of the gods, who have been worshipped in the world, but without their own consent and knowledge; they rather forbade the people to worship anyone but Allah, e.g. the angels, prophets and saints. Obviously, this kind of the gods will not be included among the gods who will be driven to Hell along with their worshippers.

17. The first sentence will be addressed to the culprits, and the second to the common spectators, who will be watching the scene of the culprits' departure for Hell. This sentence itself tells of the general conditions at the time. It tells how the haughty and stubborn culprits of the world will be moving towards Hell meekly and without showing any resistance. Somewhere some kind will be seen being pushed about, and no one from among his courtiers will come forward to rescue "his majesty"; somewhere some conqueror of the world and some dictator will be moving away in humiliation and disgrace, and his brave army itself will deliver him for the punishment; somewhere some saint or some holy father will be seen being thrown into Hell, and no one of his disciples will bother to save him from disgrace; somewhere some leader will be trudging helplessly towards Hell, and those who used to glorify and applaud him in the world, will turn away their eyes from him. So much so that the lover who was ever prepared to sacrifice everything for the beloved in the world, will feel least concerned to save him from his plight. By depicting this scene Allah wants to impress how the relationships of man with man, which are based on rebellion against Allah in the world, will break in the Hereafter, and how the pride of those who are involved in arrogance and conceit here, will be ruined.

18. The word *yamīn* in Arabic is used for several meanings. It may mean use of the force, or well-wishing, or swearing of an oath. Accordingly, the verse would mean: (1) "You compelled us into following error and deviation"; or (2) "you deceived us by posing as our well-wishers"; or (3) "you swore oaths to satisfy us that what you were presenting was the very truth."

19. For explanation, see E.N's 51, 52, 53 of Sūrah Sabā,

20. That is, the followers as well as the guides, misleaders as well as the misled, all shall suffer the same torment. Neither will the followers' excuse be heeded that they did not go astray but had been led astray, nor the guides' excuse accepted that the people themselves were not desirous of following the right way.

21. Confirmation of the Messengers has three meanings and all the three are implied here: (1) That he had not opposed any former Messenger so that the believers of that Messenger could have a rational ground of prejudice against him;

he had rather confirmed all the former Messengers sent by God; (2) that he had not brought any new or novel thing, but he had presented the same that the former Messengers of God had been presenting from the very beginning; and (3) that he truly fulfilled and corresponded to the predictions that the former Messengers had made concerning him.

22. "A known provision": A provision all of whose characteristics have been made known to them, which they are sure to receive, about which they have also the full satisfaction that they will continue to receive it for ever, and about which there is no apprehension that they may or may not get it at some time.

23. In this there is a subtle allusion to this also that in Paradise food will be provided not to serve as food but for pleasure and delight. That is, the food there will not be meant to replenish the bodily deficiencies through diet, for no deficiency whatever will occur in the body in that eternal life, nor will man have appetite, for appetite is caused by the process of assimilation in the body, nor will the body demand food for its survival. That is why the word *fawākih* has been used for the different kinds of food in Paradise, which contains the sense of taste and pleasure more than that of nutrition.

24. That is, "It will not be the kind of wine that is extracted from rotten fruit and corn in the world, but it will flow naturally from fountains like canals. In Sūrah Muhammad, the same thing has been described more clearly, thus: ".....and canals will be flowing in it of wine which will be delightful for the drinkers." (v. 15)

25. Here the word *ka's* (cup) only has been used and there is no mention of the wine. But in Arabic the use of *ka's* always implies wine. The cup which contains milk or water, instead of wine, or is empty, is not called *ka's*. The word *ka's* is used for a cup only when it contains wine.

26. Here it has not been mentioned as to who will take these cups of wine round to the dwellers of Paradise. This has been stated at other places: "And there will go round to them young boys, exclusively appointed for their service, who will be as lovely as well-guarded pearls." (At-Ṭūr :24). "They will be attended by brisk-moving boys who will for ever remain boys. If you saw them, you would think they were pearls, scattered." (Ad-Dahr: 19). Then, its further details are found in the traditions related by Ḥaḍrat Anas and Ḥaḍrat Samurah bin Jundub from the Holy Prophet, according to which: "The children of the *mushrikīn* will be attendants of the dwellers of Paradise." (Abū Dā'ūd Ṭayālisi, Ṭabarāni, Bazzār). Though these traditions are weak as regards their links of transmitters, there are

(Contd. on p. 310

بَيْضَآءَ لَذَّةٍ لِّلشّٰرِبِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ لَا فِيْهَا غَوْلٌ وَّلَا هُمْ عَنْهَا يُنْزَفُوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَعِنْدَهُمْ
قٰصِرٰتُ الطَّرْفِ عِيْنٌ ﴿٤٨﴾ كَاَنَّهُنَّ بَيْضٌ مَّكْنُوْنٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَاَقْبَلَ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلٰى بَعْضٍ
يَّتَسَآءَلُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ قَالَ قَآئِلٌ مِّنْهُمْ اِنِّيْ كَانَ لِيْ قَرِيْنٌ ﴿٥١﴾ يَّقُوْلُ اَئِنَّكَ لَمِنَ
الْمُصَدِّقِيْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ ءَاِذَا مِتْنَا وَكُنَّا تُرَابًا وَّعِظَامًا ءَاِنَّا لَمَدِيْنُوْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ قَالَ هَلْ
اَنْتُمْ مُّطَّلِعُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ فَاطَّلَعَ فَرَاٰهُ فِيْ سَوَآءِ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٥٥﴾ قَالَ تَاللّٰهِ اِنْ كِدْتَّ
لَتُرْدِيْنِ ﴿٥٦﴾ وَلَوْلَا نِعْمَةُ رَبِّيْ لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُحْضَرِيْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ اَفَمَا نَحْنُ بِمَيِّتِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾
اِلَّا مَوْتَتَنَا الْاُوْلٰى وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُعَذَّبِيْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَهُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٦٠﴾
لِمِثْلِ هٰذَا فَلْيَعْمَلِ الْعٰمِلُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ اَذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ نُّزُلًا اَمْ شَجَرَةُ الزَّقُّوْمِ ﴿٦٢﴾ اِنَّا
جَعَلْنٰهَا فِتْنَةً لِّلظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ اِنَّهَا شَجَرَةٌ تَخْرُجُ فِيْٓ اَصْلِ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٦٤﴾ طَلْعُهَا
كَاَنَّهٗ رُءُوْسُ الشَّيٰطِيْنِ ﴿٦٥﴾ فَاِنَّهُمْ لَاٰكِلُوْنَ مِنْهَا فَمَالِـُٔوْنَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُوْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾
ثُمَّ اِنَّ لَهُمْ عَلَيْهَا لَشَوْبًا مِّنْ حَمِيْمٍ ﴿٦٧﴾ ثُمَّ اِنَّ مَرْجِعَهُمْ لَاِلَى الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٦٨﴾
اِنَّهُمْ اَلْفَوْا اٰبَآءَهُمْ ضَآلِّيْنَ ﴿٦٩﴾ فَهُمْ عَلٰٓى اٰثٰرِهِمْ يُهْرَعُوْنَ ﴿٧٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ ضَلَّ
قَبْلَهُمْ اَكْثَرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٧١﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا فِيْهِمْ مُّنْذِرِيْنَ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَانْظُرْ كَيْفَ كَانَ
عَاقِبَةُ الْمُنْذَرِيْنَ ﴿٧٣﴾ اِلَّا عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ نَادٰىنَا نُوْحٌ فَلَنِعْمَ
الْمُجِيْبُوْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَنَجَّيْنٰهُ وَاَهْلَهٗ مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا ذُرِّيَّتَهٗ هُمُ
الْبٰقِيْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْاٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ سَلٰمٌ عَلٰى نُوْحٍ فِي الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾ اِنَّا
كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ اِنَّهٗ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ ثُمَّ اَغْرَقْنَا
الْاٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ وَاِنَّ مِنْ شِيْعَتِهٖ لَاِبْرٰهِيْمَ ﴿٨٣﴾ اِذْ جَآءَ رَبَّهٗ بِقَلْبٍ سَلِيْمٍ ﴿٨٤﴾
اِذْ قَالَ لِاَبِيْهِ وَقَوْمِهٖ مَاذَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ اَئِفْكًا اٰلِهَةً دُوْنَ اللّٰهِ تُرِيْدُوْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾

Neither will they be harmed physically thereby nor become drunk.[27] And beside them there will be chaste women[28] with beautiful eyes, restraining their looks,[29] delicate as the thin skin hidden under the egg shell.[30] 47-49

Then they will turn to one another to ask questions. One of them will say, "I had a friend in the world, who used to say, 'Are you also of those who affirm?[31] What! when we are dead and have become dust and bones, shall we really be rewarded and punished?' "Now, do you want to see where that man is?" Saying this as he will look down, he will see him in the depth of Hell. He will address him, saying, "By God! you had almost ruined me. But for the favour of my Lord, I also should have been among those who have been seized and brought here.[32] Well ! Are we not to die any other than our first death? Are we not to be punished?"[33] 50-59

This indeed is the supreme success. For the like of this, then, should the workers work. Say, "Is this feast better or the *zaqqūm* tree?[34] We have made that tree a trial for the wicked people.[35] It is a tree that grows out from the bottom of Hell. Its buds are like the heads of satans.[36] The dwellers of Hell shall eat it and fill their bellies with it. Then, upon it, they will get boiling water to drink. Then, their return shall be to the same Fire of Hell.[37] These are the people, who found their forefathers astray and they hastened in their footsteps, whereas many people before them had gone astray though We had sent warners among them. Now see what was the end of those who had been warned. Only such servants of Allah were able to avoid this evil end, whom Allah has chosen for Himself. 60-74

(Before this)[39] Noah had called on Us[40]: Just see how excellent Answerers (of the prayers) We were ! We saved him and his household from the great distress[41] and made his progeny to be the only survivors[42] and left for him praise among posterity. Peace be upon Noah among the people of the world.[43] Thus do We reward the righteous. He was indeed one of Our believing servants. Then We drowned the others. 75-82

And Abraham was the one who followed the way of Noah. When he approached his Lord with a sound heart[44]: when he said to his 83-87

father and his people,[45] "What are these things that you worship? Do you seek false gods instead of Allah? What do you think about the Lord of the worlds?"[46]

Contd. from p.307]

several other *Ahādīth* which mean that children who died young, before attaining maturity, will go to Paradise. *Ahādīth* also show that the children whose parents are blessed with Paradise, will live with them so as to be a comfort of the eyes for them. This leaves behind those children whose parents will not go to Paradise. Thus, with regard to them, it seems reasonable that they will be made the attendants of the dwellers of Paradise. (For a detailed discussion of this, see Fath ul-Bārī and 'Umdat ul-Qārī: *Kitāb ul-Janā'iz, Bāb; Māqīla fī aulād il -mushrikīn; Rasā'il-o-Masā'il*, vol. III, pp. 177-187).

27. That is, the wine of Paradise will be free from both the evils which are found in the wine of the world. The wine of the world, first of all, afflicts man with its stink; then it embitters his taste, upsets his stomach, affects his mind and causes giddiness; then it affects the liver and spoils the health generally. Then, when the intoxication is gone, it leaves behind other ill-effects on the body. Its other evil is that man gets drunk with it, talks nonsense and brawls. This is how the wine affects man's mind and reason. Man suffers both these evil effects of the wine only for the sake of delight and pleasure. Allah says that the wine of Paradise will certainly afford and give full pleasure and delight, but it will be free from the kinds of the evils that go with the worldly wine.

28. Probably these will be the girls who died before attaining the age of discretion in the world, and whose parents did not deserve to enter Paradise. This can be said on the basis of analogy that just as the boys similarly placed will be appointed for the service of the dwellers of Paradise, and they will ever remain boys, so will the girls be made the houris and they will ever remain young and beautiful. The correct knowledge, however, is with Allah.

29. "Restraining their looks": Restraining their looks from everyone except their husbands.

30. The words of the Text actually mean this: "As if they were the hidden or well preserved eggs." The commentators have given different interpretations of these words, but the correct commentary is the one which Hadrat Umm Salamah has related from the Holy Prophet. She says that when she asked the meaning of this verse from the Holy Prophet, he said: "Their delicacy and elegance and tenderness will be like the thin skin which is there between the shell of the egg and its fleshy part." (Ibn Jarīr).

31. That is, "Were you also one of those credulous people who put their faith in an irrational and impossible thing like life-after-death ?"

32. This shows how powerful will be man's hearing, seeing and speaking powers in the Hereafter. Sitting in Paradise he bends his head a little and is able to see a person, who is undergoing torment thousands of miles away in Hell, without the agency of a television set. Then, they not only just see each other, but also commune with each other directly without the medium of the telephone or radio and they speak and hear each other over vast distances.

33. The style clearly shows that while speaking to his friend in Hell, the dweller of Paradise suddenly starts talking to himself. He speaks these three sentences in a way as if he found himself in a state much better than that he ever expected and imagined for himself, and now being beside himself with wonder and joy he is engaged in a sort of soliloquy. In such a state the speaker does not speak to an addressee, nor the questions he asks are meant to find out something from somebody, but in this state the man's own feelings find expression through his tongue. The dweller of Paradise, while speaking to the dweller of Hell, suddenly starts feeling how he has been favoured by good fortune: now there is neither death nor any torment: all troubles and distresses have come to an end and he has been blessed with immortality. Under this very feeling he exclaims: "Well ! are we not to die any other than our first death ? Are we not to be punished?"

34. *Zaqqūm* is a tree of the cactus species found in Tihāmah. It is bitter in taste, obnoxious in smell and sheds a milk like juice when cut or broken.

35. That is, "On hearing this the disbelievers get a new opportunity to taunt the Qur'ān and mock the Holy Prophet. They ridicule it saying, 'Listen another strange thing: a tree will grow in the blazing fire of Hell'!"

36. Nobody should have the misunderstanding that since no one has seen the head of Satan, it was no use likening the buds of *zaqqūm* to it. This is, in fact, an imaginative kind of the simile, and is employed in the literature of every language. For example, in order to give an idea of the rare beauty of a woman, it is said she is a fairy, and in order to describe her ugliness, it is said that she is a hag or a demon. Likewise, a pious-looking person is described as an angel and a dreadful-looking person as a devil.

37. This shows that when the dwellers of Hell will be in distress due to hunger and thirst, they will be driven to the side where there would be the *zaqqūm* trees and the springs of boiling water. When they will have eaten and drunk, they will be brought back to Hell.

[Contd. on p. 313

فَمَا ظَنُّكُمْ بِرَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ فَنَظَرَ نَظْرَةً فِي النُّجُوْمِ ﴿٨٨﴾ فَقَالَ إِنِّي سَقِيْمٌ ﴿٨٩﴾
فَتَوَلَّوْا عَنْهُ مُدْبِرِيْنَ ﴿٩٠﴾ فَرَاغَ إِلٰى اٰلِهَتِهِمْ فَقَالَ أَلَا تَأْكُلُوْنَ ﴿٩١﴾ مَا لَكُمْ لَا
تَنْطِقُوْنَ ﴿٩٢﴾ فَرَاغَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضَرْبًا بِالْيَمِيْنِ ﴿٩٣﴾ فَأَقْبَلُوْا إِلَيْهِ يَزِفُّوْنَ ﴿٩٤﴾ قَالَ
أَتَعْبُدُوْنَ مَا تَنْحِتُوْنَ ﴿٩٥﴾ وَاللّٰهُ خَلَقَكُمْ وَمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٩٦﴾ قَالُوا ابْنُوْا لَهٗ بُنْيَانًا
فَأَلْقُوْهُ فِي الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٩٧﴾ فَأَرَادُوْا بِهٖ كَيْدًا فَجَعَلْنٰهُمُ الْأَسْفَلِيْنَ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَقَالَ إِنِّي
ذَاهِبٌ إِلٰى رَبِّي سَيَهْدِيْنِ ﴿٩٩﴾ رَبِّ هَبْ لِي مِنَ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿١٠٠﴾ فَبَشَّرْنٰهُ بِغُلٰمٍ حَلِيْمٍ ﴿١٠١﴾
فَلَمَّا بَلَغَ مَعَهُ السَّعْيَ قَالَ يٰبُنَيَّ إِنِّي أَرٰى فِي الْمَنَامِ أَنِّي أَذْبَحُكَ فَانْظُرْ
مَاذَا تَرٰى ۚ قَالَ يٰأَبَتِ افْعَلْ مَا تُؤْمَرُ ۖ سَتَجِدُنِي إِنْ شَاءَ اللّٰهُ مِنَ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿١٠٢﴾
فَلَمَّا أَسْلَمَا وَتَلَّهٗ لِلْجَبِيْنِ ﴿١٠٣﴾ وَنَادَيْنٰهُ أَنْ يّٰإِبْرٰهِيْمُ ﴿١٠٤﴾ قَدْ صَدَّقْتَ الرُّءْيَا ۚ
إِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٠٥﴾ إِنَّ هٰذَا لَهُوَ الْبَلٰٓؤُا الْمُبِيْنُ ﴿١٠٦﴾ وَفَدَيْنٰهُ بِذِبْحٍ
عَظِيْمٍ ﴿١٠٧﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ فِي الْآخِرِيْنَ ﴿١٠٨﴾ سَلٰمٌ عَلٰٓى إِبْرٰهِيْمَ ﴿١٠٩﴾ كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي
الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١١٠﴾ إِنَّهٗ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١١١﴾ وَبَشَّرْنٰهُ بِإِسْحٰقَ نَبِيًّا مِّنَ
الصّٰلِحِيْنَ ﴿١١٢﴾ وَبٰرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِ وَعَلٰٓى إِسْحٰقَ ۚ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِهِمَا مُحْسِنٌ وَّظَالِمٌ
لِّنَفْسِهٖ مُبِيْنٌ ﴿١١٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ مَنَنَّا عَلٰى مُوْسٰى وَهٰرُوْنَ ﴿١١٤﴾ وَنَجَّيْنٰهُمَا وَقَوْمَهُمَا
مِنَ الْكَرْبِ الْعَظِيْمِ ﴿١١٥﴾ وَنَصَرْنٰهُمْ فَكَانُوْا هُمُ الْغٰلِبِيْنَ ﴿١١٦﴾ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُمَا الْكِتٰبَ
الْمُسْتَبِيْنَ ﴿١١٧﴾ وَهَدَيْنٰهُمَا الصِّرَاطَ الْمُسْتَقِيْمَ ﴿١١٨﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا عَلَيْهِمَا فِي الْآخِرِيْنَ ﴿١١٩﴾
سَلٰمٌ عَلٰى مُوْسٰى وَهٰرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٠﴾ إِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٢١﴾ إِنَّهُمَا مِنْ عِبَادِنَا
الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٢٢﴾ وَإِنَّ إِلْيَاسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٢٣﴾ إِذْ قَالَ لِقَوْمِهٖ أَلَا تَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٢٤﴾
أَتَدْعُوْنَ بَعْلًا وَّتَذَرُوْنَ أَحْسَنَ الْخَالِقِيْنَ ﴿١٢٥﴾ اللّٰهَ رَبَّكُمْ وَرَبَّ اٰبَائِكُمُ

Then[47] he cast a glance at the stars[48] and said, "I am sick."[49] So they left him behind and went away.[50] In their absence, he stole into the temple of their gods and said, "Why don't you eat?[51] What is the matter that you do not even speak?" Then he fell upon them, smiting them with his right hand. (On their return) the people came to him running.[52] He said, "Do you worship those that you have yourselves carved? whereas Allah has created you as well as those (things) which you make." They said to one another, "Prepare for him a bonfire and throw him into the blazing flames." They had designed a plan against him, but We defeated them in their plan.[53] 88-98

Abraham said,[54] "I shall go to my Lord[55]: He will guide me. O my Lord ! grant me a son who should be righteous".[56] (In answer to this prayer) We gave him the good news of a gentle (clement) son.[57] When the boy reached the age to work with him, (one day) Abraham said to him, "My son! I have dreamt that I am sacrificing you.[58] Now tell me what you think of it."[59] He said, "My dear father, do as you are being commanded.[60] You will find me, if Allah so wills, of the patient." At last, when the two had submitted themselves (to Allah) and Abraham had flung his son down on his brow,[61] and We called out[62]: "O Abraham! You have indeed fulfilled your vision.[63] Thus do We reward the righteous.[64] This was indeed a manifest trial."[65] And We ransomed his son for a great sacrifice,[66] and left for him praise among posterity for ever. Peace is upon Abraham. Thus do We reward the righteous. Indeed he was one of Our believing servants; and We gave him the good news of Isaac, a Prophet among the righteous. And we blessed him as well as Isaac.[67] Now among their offspring someone is righteous and someone clearly a sinner against his own self.[68] 99-113

And We showed favour to Moses and Aaron: We delivered them and their people from a great distress[69]: We helped them and so they became triumphant: We gave them a clear Book, and guided them to the Right Way, and left good words for them among posterity. Peace is on Moses and Aaron. Thus do We reward the righteous. Indeed they were among Our believing servants. 114-122

Contd. from p. 311]

38 That is, they never used their own common sense to see whether the way their forefathers had been following was right or wrong; they just blindly adopted the way that they found others following.

39. This theme is related with the preceding sentences. A study of them shows why these stories are being narrated here.

40. This refers to the prayer that the Prophet Noaḥ had at last made to Allah Almighty, being disappointed with his people, after having preached the true Faith to them for a very long period of time, without much success. This prayer has been related in Sūrah Al-Qamar, thus: "He called out to his Lord, saying: I am overcome: take now Thy vengeance." (v. 10).

41. That is, from the severe distress that was being caused to him on account of the continuous opposition and antagonism of a wicked and cruel people. This also contains a subtle allusion that just as the Prophet Noaḥ and his companions were saved from the great distress, so also shall We ultimately save the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his Companions from the great distress that is being caused to them by the people of Makkah.

42. This can have two meanings: (1) That the progeny of the people who were opposing the Prophet Noaḥ was made extinct and the Prophet Noaḥ's progeny alone was allowed to survive; and (2) that the whole human race was made extinct, and only the Prophet Noaḥ's progeny was allowed to inhabit the earth after that. The commentators generally have adopted this second meaning, but the words of the Qur'ān are not explicit in this regard and no one knows the reality except Allah.

43. That is, there is none in the world today, who would talk evil of the Prophet Noaḥ. After the Flood till today the world has been praising and speaking well of him for thousands of years.

44. "Approached his Lord": Turned to his Lord sincerely and exclusively; "with a sound heart": with a heart that was free from all kinds of moral evils and weaknesses of faith, free from every trace of unbelief and *shirk*, doubt and suspicion, from every feeling of disobedience and rebellion, from every crookedness, confusion and complexity, and free from every evil inclination and desire, and a heart that neither cherished any malice and jealousy and ill-will against anyone, nor had any evil intention.

45. For further details of this story of the Prophet Abraham, please see Sūrah Al-An'ām: 72-90; Maryam: 41-60; Al-Anbiyā: 51-75; Ash-Shu'arā; 69-89; Al-'Ankabūt: 16-17, and the E.N's thereof.

46. That is, "Why have you formed such a wrong view of Allah? Do you think that the gods that you have yourselves carved out from wood and stone can be like Him, or can be His associates in his attributes and rights? And are you involved in the misunderstanding that you will somehow manage to escape His punishment after you have indulged in such blasphemy ?"

47. The reference is to a particular incident the details of which have been given in Sūrah Al-Anbiyā': 71-73 and Al-'Ankabūt: 16-27 above.

48. Ibn Abī Ḥātim has cited a saying of the famous commentator Qatādah, an immediate follower of the Companions, to the effect that the Arabic idiomatic expression, "cast a glance at the stars," means that he pondered deeply, or that he started thinking seriously. 'Allāma Ibn Kathīr has preferred this same view, and this is also supported by the common observation: when a person is confronted by a problem that needs serious consideration, he looks upward or to the sky for a while, and then makes a reply, after due consideration.

49. This is one of those three things concerning which it is said that the Prophet Abraham had told three lies in his life, whereas it should be ascertained before declaring it a lie, or anything contrary to fact, whether the Prophet Abraham at that time was not suffering from any illness, and therefore, he had made this excuse only as a pretence. If there is no proof, there is no reason why it should be regarded as a lie. For a detailed discussion, please refer to E.N. 60 of Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' and *Rasā'il-o-Masā'il,* vol. II, pp. 35 to 39.

50. This sentence by itself shows the real state of the affairs. It appears that the people might be going to some fair of theirs. The family of the Prophet Abraham might have asked him also to accompany them. He might have excused himself, saying that he was indisposed, and therefore, could not go. Had it been something contrary to fact, the people of the house would have said: "You look perfectly normal; you are making a false excuse. But when they accepted his excuse and left him behind, it clearly shows that the Prophet Abraham must at that time be suffering from cough and cold or some other such visible illness on account of which the people of the house agreed to leave him behind.

51. This shows that there were different kinds of food placed before the idols in the temple.

52. Here the story has been told in brief. According to the details given in Sūrah Al-Anbiyā', when they returned and found all their idols broken to pieces in the temple, they started making investigations. Some people said that a young man, called Abraham, had been talking such and such things against idol-worship. At this the multitude demanded that he should be immediately seized and brought before them. Therefore, a group of the people went running to him and brought him before the multitude.

53. The words in Sūrah Al-Anbiyā': 69 are to the effect: "We commanded: O fire, be cool and become safe for Abraham," and in Sūrah Al-'Ankbūt: 24, it has been said: "Then Allah saved him from the fire." This proves that those people had actually thrown the Prophet Abraham into the fire, and then

Allah had rescued him from it safe and sound. The words of the verse, "They had designed a plan against him, but We defeated them in their plan," cannot be taken to mean that they had only intended to throw the Prophet Abraham into the fire but could not carry their plan into effect; but when these words are read with the verses cited above, the meaning becomes plain that they had wanted to kill him by casting him into the fire but could not do so, and the Prophet Abraham's miraculous escape proved his superiority and the polytheists were humbled by Allah. The real object of relating this incident is to warn the people of the Quraish to this effect: "The way that you have adopted is not the way of the Prophet Abraham, whose descendants you claim yourselves to be, but his way is the one being presented by the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings). Now, if you plot against him in order to defeat him and frustrate his mission, as the people of the Prophet Abraham had done against him, you alone will be defeated in the end, because you cannot defeat Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace).

54. The Prophet Abraham said these words on his departure after he had been delivered safe from the fire and had decided to leave the country.

55. It mean: "I am leaving my home and country for the sake of Allah, for my people have turned hostile to me only because of my turning to Him exclusively; otherwise there was no worldly dispute between them and me because of which I might have had to leave my country. Moreover, I have no place of refuge in the world, to which I may turn. I am leaving my home with full faith and trust only in Allah: I shall go wherever He leads me."

56. This prayer by itself shows that the Prophet Abraham at that time was childless. From the details given at other places in the Qur'ān, it becomes clear that he had left his country with only one wife and one nephew (the Prophet Lot). Therefore, he naturally desired that Allah should bless him with a righteous child, who could be a source of comfort and consolation for him in a foreign land.

57. From this one should not understand that this good news was given him immediately following his prayer. In the Qur'ān itself, at another place, this saying of the Prophet Abraham has been related: "All praise be to Allah Who has given me sons like Ishmael and Isaac in my old age." (Ibrāhīm: 39). This proves that there was an interval of many years between the prayer and this good news. The Bible says that at the birth of the Prophet Ishmael, the Prophet Abraham was 86 years old (Gen. 16: 16) and at the birth of the Prophet Isaac a hundred years. (Gen. 21: 5).

58. One should note that the Prophet Abraham had dreamt that he was sacrificing his son and not that he had sacrificed him. Although at that time he understood the dream to mean that he should sacrifice his son and on that very

basis, he became ready to sacrifice him, with a cool mind, yet the fine point that Allah had in view in making him see the dream has been explained by Himself in verse 105 below.

59. The object of asking this of the son was not that he would carry out Allah's Command only if he agreed, otherwise not, but the Prophet Abraham, in fact, wanted to find out how righteous, in actual reality, was his child for whom he had prayed to Allah. If the son himself was found to be ready to lay down his life for the sake of Allah's approval and pleasure, it would mean that the prayer had been fully granted, and the son was not his offspring in the natural way only but was morally and spiritually also a true son.

60. The words clearly tell that the son had not taken the dream of his Prophet father to be a mere dream but a Command from Allah. Had it not been a Command actually, it was necessary that Allah should have explicitly or implicitly stated that the son of Abraham had mistaken it for a command. But the whole context is without any such allusion. On this very basis, there is the Islamic belief that the dream of the Prophets is never a mere dream it is also a kind of Revelation. Obviously, if a thing, which could become such a fundamental principle in the Divine *Shari'ah*, had not been based on reality, but had been a mere misunderstanding, it was not possible that Allah should not have refuted it. It is impossible for the one who believes the Qur'ān to be Allah's Word, to accept that such an error and omission could emanate from Allah also.

61. That is, "The Prophet Abraham did not make his son lie flat on his back but made him lie prostrate lest while slaughtering him the sight of his face should arouse compassion and love and make him shaky. Therefore, he wanted to use the knife from under the throat".

62. One section of the grammarians says that here "and" has been used to mean "then"; thus, the sentence would be: "When the two had submitted themselves (to Allah) and Abraham had flung his son down on his brow, then We called out..." But another section of them says that here the answer to the word "when" has been omitted and left for the listener to fill; for it was better to leave such an indescribable thing to the imagination instead of expressing it in words. When Allah amight have seen that the old father who had got a son after long earnest prayers, had become ready to sacrifice him only for His pleasure and approval; and the son also had become ready to get slaughtered, His infinite Mercy might have been aroused at the sight, and the Master might have felt great love for the father and son. All this can only be imagined. No words would ever describe the scene adequately.

63. That is, "We did not make you see in the dream that you had actually slaughtered your son and he had died, but that you were slaughtering him. That

vision you have fulfilled. Now, it is not Our will to take the life of your child: the actual object of the vision has been fulfilled by your submission and preparation to sacrifice him for Our sake."

64. That is, "We do not subject the people who adopt the righteous way to trials in order to involve them in trouble and distress and affliction just for the sake of it, but these trials are meant to bring out their excellencies and to exalt them to high ranks, and then We deliver them also safe and sound from the dilemma in which We place them for the sake of the trial. Thus, your willingness and preparation to sacrifice your son is enough to entitle you to be exalted to the rank that could be attained only by the one who would actually have slaughtered his son for Our approval and pleasure. Thus, We have saved the life of your child as well as exalted you to this high rank."

65. That is, "The object was not to get your son slaughtered through you but to test you to see that you did not hold anything of the world dearer than Us.

66. "A great sacrifice": A ram, as mentioned in the Bible and the Islamic traditions, that Allah's angel presented at the time before the Prophet Abraham, so that he should sacrifice it instead of his son. This has been called "a great sacrifice" because it was to serve as a ransom from a faithful servant like Abraham for a patient and obedient son like Ishmael, and Allah made it a means of fulfilling the intention of an unprecedented sacrifice. Another reason for calling it "a great" sacrifice is that Allah made it a tradition till the Day of Resurrection that all the believers should offer animal sacrifice on the same date in the entire world so as to keep fresh the memory of the great and unique event signifying faithfulness and devotion."

67. Here, the question arises: Who was the son whom the Prophet Abraham had got ready to offer as a sacrifice, and who had willingly offered himself to be slaughtered as a sacrifice? The first answer to this question is given by the Bible, and it is this:

"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: ... Take now thy son thine only *son* Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." (Gen. 22: 1-2).

In this statement, on the one hand, it is being said that Allah had asked for the offering of the Prophet Isaac, and on the other, that he was Abraham's only son, whereas the Bible itself, at other places, conclusively states that the Prophet Isaac was not the only son of the Prophet Abraham. Consider the following statements of the Bible:

"Now Sarai, Abram's wife bore him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name *was* Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abraham, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abraham hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai Abraham's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abraham had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her husband Abram to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived." (Gen .16: 1-4)

"And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold thou *art* with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael." (16: 11)

"And Abraham *was* fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abraham." (16: 16).

"And God said unto Abraham, 'As for Sarai thy wife, ... I will bless her and give thee a son also of her: .....and thou shalt call his name Isaac .....which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year.And Abraham took Ishmael his son and .....every male among the men of Abraham's house; and ..... circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him. And Abraham *was* ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son *was* thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. " (Gen. 17: 15-25).

"And Abraham was an hundred years old, when his son Isaac was born unto him." (Gen. 21: 5).

This brings out the contradictions of the Bible. It is evident that for 14 years the Prophet Ishmael was the only son of the Prophet Abraham. Now if the offering had been asked of the only son, it was not of Isaac but of Ishmael, for he alone was the only son; and if the offering of Isaac had been asked, it would be wrong to say that the offering of the only son had been asked.

Now let us consider the Islamic traditions, and they contain great differences. According to traditions cited by the commentators from the Companions and their immediate followers, one group of them is of the opinion that the son was the Prophet Isaac, and this group contains the following names:

Hadrat 'Umar, 'Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, 'Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat 'Abbās bin 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Qatādah, 'Ikrimah, Ḥaṣan Basri, Sa'id bin Jubair, Mujāhid, Sha'bī, Masrūq, Makhūl, Zuhrī, 'Aṭā, Muqātil, Suddī, Ka'b Aḥbār, Zaid bin Aslam, and others.

The other group says that it was the Prophet Ishmael, and this group contains the names of the following authorities:

Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, Ḥaḍrat Mu'āwiyah, 'Ikrimah, Mujāhid, Yūsuf bin Mahrān, Ḥasan Basrī, Muḥammad bin Ka'b al-Qurzī, Sha'bī, Sa'id bin al-Musayyab, Dahhāk, Muḥammad bin 'Ali bin Ḥussain (Muḥammad al-Bāqir), Rabī' bin Anas, Aḥmed bin Ḥanbal, and others.

When compared, the two lists will be seen to contain several common names: this is due to the reason that from the same person two different views have been reported. For example, from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, 'Ikrimiah has related the saying that the son was the Prophet Isaac, but from him again 'Atā' bin Abi Rabāh relates: "The Jews claim that it was Isaac, but the Jews tell a lie." Likewise, from Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Basrī, one tradition is to the effect that the Prophet Isaac was the son meant to be made the offering, but 'Umar bin 'Ubaid says that Ḥasan Basrī had no doubt regarding that the son whom the Prophet Abraham had been commanded to offer as a sacrifice was the Prophet Ishmael (peace be upon him).

This diversity of tradition has resulted in the diversity of opinion among the scholars of Islam. Some of them e.g. Ibn Jarīr and Qāḍī 'Iyād, have expressed the firm opinion that the son was the Prophet Isaac. Others, like Ibn Kathīr, have given the verdict that it were the Prophet Ishmael. There ware others who are uncertain and wavering, e.g. Jalāluddīn Suyūtī. However, a deep inquiry into the question establishes the fact that the son intended to be offered as a sacrifice was the Prophet Ishmael. The following are the arguments:

(1) As stated by the Qur'ān above, at the time of his emigration from the country, the Prophet Abraham had prayed for a righteous son and in answer to it, Allah had given him the good news of a clement boy. The context shows that this prayer was made at a time when he was childless, and the boy whose good news was given was his first-born child. Then, this also becomes obvious from the Qur'ānic story that when the child grew up to boyhood, he was inspired to offer him as an offering. Now, it is established beyond any doubt that the Prophet Abraham's first-born son was the Prophet Ishmael and not the Prophet Isaac. The Qur'ān itself has stated the order between the two sons, thus: "All praise be to Allah Who has given me sons like Ishmael and Isaac in my old age." (Ibrāhīm: 39).

(2) The words used in the Qur'ān with regard to the Prophet Isaac while giving the good news of his birth are: "And they gave him the good news of the birth of a son, possessing knowledge *('alīm)*." (Adh-Dhāriyāt: 28). "Do not be afraid: we give you the good news of a son, possessing knowledge." (Al-Ḥijr: 53). But the son, the good news of whose birth has been given here; has been called a clement *(ḥalīm)* son.

This shows that the two sons had distinctive qualities, and the offering had been asked of the clement son and not of the son possessing knowledge.

(3) Along with giving the good news of the birth of the Prophet Isaac in the Qur'ān, the good news of the birth of a grandson like Jacob was also given: "Then We gave her the good news of Isaac, and after Isaac of Jacob." (Hūd: 71). Now obviously, if about the son along with the news of whose birth the news of a worthy son to be born to him had also been given, the Prophet Abraham was shown a vision that he was sacrificing him, he would never have understood that he was being inspired to offer that very son as an offering. 'Allāma Ibn Jarīr contends that the Prophet Abraham might have been shown this vision at a time when Jacob had already been born to the Prophet Isaac. But this is, in fact, a very weak reply to the argument. The Qur'ān says: "When the boy became able to work with his father," then he was shown the vision. Anyone who reads these words with an unbiased mind will have the image of an 8 to 10 years lad before him. No one can imagine that these words had been used about a young man having children.

(4) Allah, at the end of the story, says: "We gave him the good news of Isaac, a Prophet among the righteous." This clearly shows that it was not the same son, whom he had been inspired to offer as a sacrifice; but before this the good news of some other son had been given; then when he grew up and became able to work with his father, it was commanded to sacrifice him. Afterwards, when the Prophet Abraham came through this test successfully, he was given the good news of the birth of another son, the Prophet Isaac (may peace be upon him). This order of the events conclusively proves that the son whom the Prophet Abraham had been commanded to sacrifice was not Isaac but another son who had been born several years before him. 'Allāma Ibn Jarīr rejects this express argument, saying that in the beginning only the good news of the birth of the Prophet Isaac had been given. Then, when he became ready to be scarificed for the sake of Allah's approval and pleasure, it was rewarded in the form of the good news of his Prophethood. But this reply to the argument is weaker still. If it had really been so, Allah would not have said: "We gave him the good news of Isaac, a Prophet among the righteous," but "We gave him the good news that this same son of yours would be a Prophet among the righteous."

(5) Authentic traditions confirm that the horns of the ram which was slaughtered as a ransom for the Prophet Ishmael remained preserved in the Holy Ka'bah till the time of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Zubair. Afterwards when Ḥajjaj bin Yūsuf besieged Ibn Zubair in the Ka'bah

and demolished the Kab'bah, the horns also were destroyed. Both Ibn 'Abbās and 'Amir Sha'bī; testify that they had seen the horns in the Ka'bah. (Ibn Kathīr). This is a proof of the fact that the event of the sacrifice had taken place in Makkah and not in Syria, and concerned the Prophet Ishmael. That is why a relic of it had been preserved in the Holy Ka'bah built by the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael.

(6) The Arab traditions confirmed that this event of the sacrfice had taken place in Minā (near Makkah), and it was not only a tradition but practically also it had been a part of the Ḥajj rites for centuries. Even until the time of the Holy Prophet people used to offer the animal sacrifice in Mina at the place where the Prophet Abraham had offered the sacrifice. Afterwards when the Holy Prophet was raised as a Prophet, he also maintained and continued the same tradition; so that even till today sacrifices are offered in Minā on the 10th of Dhil-Ḥajj. This continual practice of 4,500 years or so is an undeniable proof of the fact that the heirs to the tradition of sacrifice made by the Prophet Abraham have been the descendents of the Prophet Ishmael and not of the Prophet Isaac. There has never been any such tradition among the descendents of the Prophet Isaac according to which the whole community might have offered the sacrifice at one and the same time and regarded it as a continuation of the sacrifice made by the Prophet Abraham.

In the face of such arguments it appears strange how the idea of the Prophet Isaac's being the son offered as the sacrifice spread among the Muslim community itself. If the Jews might have tried to attribute the honour to their ancestor, the Prophet Isaac, by depriving the Prophet Ishmael of it, it would be understandable.

But the question is: How did a large number of the Muslims come to accept this wrong notion? A very satisfactory answer to this question has been given by 'Allāma Ibn Kathīr in his commentary. He says: "The reality is known to Allah alone but it appears that all the sayings (in which the Prophet Isaac has been mentioned as the son offered as a sacrifice) are related from Ka'b Ahbār. This man, when he became a Muslim in the time of Hadrat 'Umar, used to relate before him the contents of the ancient Jewish and Christian scriptures, and Hadrat 'Umar would hear them. On this basis, the other people also began to listen to him, and started relating every mixture of the truth and falsehood that they heard from him, whereas this *Ummah* did not stand in need of anything whatever from the store of his knowledge and information."

This thing is further explained by a tradition from Muḥammad bin Ka'b al-Kurzi He says that once during his presence the question whether the son

offered as a sacrifice was the Prophet Isaac or the Prophet Ishmael arose before Ḥaḍrat 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Azīz. Among them at that time was a person who had been a Jewish scholar but had become a sincere Muslim afterwards. He said, "O Commander of the Faithful! By God it was Ishmael, and the Jews know it, but claim on account of their jealousy of the Arabs that it was the Prophet Isaac." (Ibn Jarīr). When the two things are put side by side, it becomes evident that actuaul it was the Jewish propaganda that spread among the Muslims who have always been unbiased in scholastic literary matters, a large number of them accepted the statements of the Jews as a historic truth, which they presented as historical traditions with reference to the ancient scriptures, and did not realize that these were based on prejudice instead of knowledge.

68. This sentence throws light on the real object for which this event of the Prophet Abraham's sacrifice has been related here. From the race of his two sons arose two great nations in the world. First, the children of Israel, from whose house two major religions (Judaism and Christianity) emerged, which dominated and won over large human populations. Second, the children of Ishmael, who were the religious leaders and guides of all the Arabs at the time of the revelation of the Qur'ān, and the tribe of Quraish of Makkah at that time held the most important position among them. Whatever eminence these two branches of the offspring of the Prophet Abraham attained became possible only on account of their connection and relation with the Prophet Abraham and his two illustrious sons; otherwise, God alone knows how many such families have arisen in the world and been assigned to oblivion. Now, Allah relates the most glorious event of the history of this family and makes both its branches realize that whatever honour and eminence they have attained in the world, has been due actually to the great traditions of God-worship and sincerity and obedience, which were set by their ancestors, the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac (may peace be upon them all). He tells them: "The great blessings which We bestowed on them, were not bestowed arbitrarily and haphazardly: We did not just pick out a person and his two sons blindly and blessed them, but they gave definite proofs of their loyalty and faithfulness to their real Master and then became deserving of His favours. Now, you cannot become entitled to those favours merely on the basis of your pride of descent, for We shall see who among you is righteous and who is wicked and then deal with him accordingly."

[Contd. on p. 326

الْاٰوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٢٦﴾ فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَاِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُوْنَ ﴿١٢٧﴾ اِلَّا عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿١٢٨﴾ وَتَرَكْنَا
عَلَيْهِ فِي الْاٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿١٢٩﴾ سَلٰمٌ عَلٰٓى اِلْ يَاسِيْنَ ﴿١٣٠﴾ اِنَّا كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٣١﴾
اِنَّهٗ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿١٣٢﴾ وَاِنَّ لُوْطًا لَّمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٣٣﴾ اِذْ نَجَّيْنٰهُ وَاَهْلَهٗٓ
اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿١٣٤﴾ اِلَّا عَجُوْزًا فِي الْغٰبِرِيْنَ ﴿١٣٥﴾ ثُمَّ دَمَّرْنَا الْاٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿١٣٦﴾ وَاِنَّكُمْ لَتَمُرُّوْنَ
عَلَيْهِمْ مُّصْبِحِيْنَ ﴿١٣٧﴾ وَبِالَّيْلِ ۭ اَفَلَا تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿١٣٨﴾ وَاِنَّ يُوْنُسَ لَمِنَ الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٣٩﴾
اِذْ اَبَقَ اِلَى الْفُلْكِ الْمَشْحُوْنِ ﴿١٤٠﴾ فَسَاهَمَ فَكَانَ مِنَ الْمُدْحَضِيْنَ ﴿١٤١﴾ فَالْتَقَمَهُ
الْحُوْتُ وَهُوَ مُلِيْمٌ ﴿١٤٢﴾ فَلَوْلَآ اَنَّهٗ كَانَ مِنَ الْمُسَبِّحِيْنَ ﴿١٤٣﴾ لَلَبِثَ فِيْ بَطْنِهٖٓ اِلٰى
يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُوْنَ ﴿١٤٤﴾ فَنَبَذْنٰهُ بِالْعَرَآءِ وَهُوَ سَقِيْمٌ ﴿١٤٥﴾ وَاَنْۢبَتْنَا عَلَيْهِ شَجَرَةً مِّنْ
يَّقْطِيْنٍ ﴿١٤٦﴾ وَاَرْسَلْنٰهُ اِلٰى مِائَةِ اَلْفٍ اَوْ يَزِيْدُوْنَ ﴿١٤٧﴾ فَاٰمَنُوْا فَمَتَّعْنٰهُمْ اِلٰى حِيْنٍ ﴿١٤٨﴾
فَاسْتَفْتِهِمْ اَلِرَبِّكَ الْبَنَاتُ وَلَهُمُ الْبَنُوْنَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ اَمْ خَلَقْنَا الْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةَ اِنَاثًا وَّهُمْ
شٰهِدُوْنَ ﴿١٥٠﴾ اَلَآ اِنَّهُمْ مِّنْ اِفْكِهِمْ لَيَقُوْلُوْنَ ﴿١٥١﴾ وَلَدَ اللّٰهُ ۙ وَاِنَّهُمْ لَكٰذِبُوْنَ ﴿١٥٢﴾
اَصْطَفَى الْبَنَاتِ عَلَى الْبَنِيْنَ ﴿١٥٣﴾ مَا لَكُمْ ۣ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿١٥٤﴾ اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١٥٥﴾ اَمْ
لَكُمْ سُلْطٰنٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٥٦﴾ فَاْتُوْا بِكِتٰبِكُمْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿١٥٧﴾ وَجَعَلُوْا بَيْنَهٗ وَ
بَيْنَ الْجِنَّةِ نَسَبًا ۭ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمَتِ الْجِنَّةُ اِنَّهُمْ لَمُحْضَرُوْنَ ﴿١٥٨﴾ سُبْحٰنَ اللّٰهِ عَمَّا
يَصِفُوْنَ ﴿١٥٩﴾ اِلَّا عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿١٦٠﴾ فَاِنَّكُمْ وَمَا تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿١٦١﴾ مَآ اَنْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ
بِفٰتِنِيْنَ ﴿١٦٢﴾ اِلَّا مَنْ هُوَ صَالِ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿١٦٣﴾ وَمَا مِنَّآ اِلَّا لَهٗ مَقَامٌ مَّعْلُوْمٌ ﴿١٦٤﴾ وَ
اِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الصَّاۗفُّوْنَ ﴿١٦٥﴾ وَاِنَّا لَنَحْنُ الْمُسَبِّحُوْنَ ﴿١٦٦﴾ وَاِنْ كَانُوْا لَيَقُوْلُوْنَ ﴿١٦٧﴾ لَوْ
اَنَّ عِنْدَنَا ذِكْرًا مِّنَ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٦٨﴾ لَكُنَّا عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ الْمُخْلَصِيْنَ ﴿١٦٩﴾ فَكَفَرُوْا بِهٖ
فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٧٠﴾ وَلَقَدْ سَبَقَتْ كَلِمَتُنَا لِعِبَادِنَا الْمُرْسَلِيْنَ ﴿١٧١﴾ اِنَّهُمْ لَهُمُ

And Elias also was one of the Messengers.[70] Remember when he said to his people, "Do you not fear ? Do you invoke Ba'al[71] and leave the Best of Creators, that Allah Who is your Lord and Lord of all your forefathers?" But they treated him as a liar, so they will certainly be presented for punishment, except for the true servants of God,[72] and We left good words for Elias among posterity.[73] Peace is upon Elias![74] Thus do We reward the righteous. Indeed he was one of Our believing servants . 123-132

And Lot also was one of the Messengers. Remember when We rescued him and all his household, except for an old woman who was among those who remained behind.[75] Then We destroyed the others completely. Now you pass by their ruins by day and by night[76]: Have you then no sense? 133-138

And indeed Jonah also was one of the Messengers.[77] Remember when he fled to the laden vessel;[78] then he took part in the casting of lots and lost. At last, the fish swallowed him, for he was blameworthy.[79] Had he not been of those who glorify[80](Us), he would have remained in the fish's belly till the Day of Resurrection.[81] At last We cast him on a bare shore in a state of sickness,[82] and caused a creeper[83] to grow over him. Then We sent him to a hundred thousand people, or more[84]; they believed in him and We let them live till an appointed time .[85] 139-148

Just ask the people[86] (whether it appeals to them) that their Lord should have daughters and they should have sons![87] Have We really created the angels females and they are eye-witnesses of it? Note it well: they, in fact, invent a falsehood when they say, "Allah has children." They are utter liars. Did Allah choose daughters for Himself instead of sons? What is the matter with you? How you judge? Will you not have sense? Or, if you have a clear authority for this, then bring your Book if you are truthful.[88] 149-157

They have invented a blood-relationship between Allah and the angels,[89] whereas the angels know full well that these people will be brought up as culprits. (And they say :) "Allah is free from the things which the other people than His true servants attribute to Him. Therefore you and your gods cannot turn anyone from Allah, except him who shall burn in the blazing Fire of Hell.[90] As for ourselves, each 158-166

one of us has an appointed place,[91] and we are the ranged servants and the glorifiers (of Allah)."

Before this they used to say, "If we had the 'Admonition' which 167-173
the earlier people had received, we would have been the chosen servants of Allah."[92] But (when it did come) they denied it. Now, they will soon come to know (the consequences of this attitude). We have already promised Our servants whom We sent that they would certainly be helped, and Our army alone would be triumphant.[93]

Contd from p. 323]

69. "A great distress" the distress in which they were involved at the hands of Pharaoh and his people.

70. The Prophet Elias was from among the Israelite Prophets. He has been mentioned only twice in the Qur'ān, here and in Sūrah Al-An'ām: 85. The present-day scholars have determined his period between 875 and 850 B.C. He was an inhabitant of Gilead, which in ancient days was the territory now under the northern districts of the modern state of Jordan, to the south of the River Yarmūk. In the Bible he has been mentioned as Elijah the Tishbite. Here is briefly his life-story:

After the death of the Prophet Solomon the Israelite kingdom was broken up into two parts due mainly to the unworthiness of his son, Rehoboam. One part which consisted of Jerusalem and southern Palestine remained with the descendants of the Prophet David, while in the second, which comprised northern Palestine, an independent state by the name of Israel was established with Samaria as its capital. Although conditions in both the states were very bad, the state of Israel, from the very beginning, followed the path of depravity due to which the evils of polytheism and idol-worship and tyranny and wickedness went on increasing and multiplying in it endlessly; so much so that when Ahab, the king of Israel, married Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Sidon (mod., Lebanon), the mischief reached its extremity. Under the influence of this polytheistic princess Ahab himself became a polytheist. He built a temple and altar to Ba'al in Samaria, tried his very best to introduce and popularise Ba'al-worship instead of the worship of One God, and consequently, offerings began to be made publicly in the name of Ba'al in the Israelite towns and cities.

This was the time when the Prophet Elijah (peace be upon him) appeared on the scene. He came from Gilead and gave Ahab a notice that in consequence of his sins, the land of Israel would go without rain, even without the dew. This word of the Prophet of Allah proved to be literally true and there fell no rain in

Israel for three and a half years. At last, Ahab came to his senses and he got the Prophet Elijah searched out. But Elijah, before praying for the rain, thought it necessary to make the distinction between Allah, Lord of the worlds, and Ba'al plain before the people of Israel. For this purpose, he commanded that the priests of Ba'al would make an offering in the name of their deity, and he also would make an offering in the name of Allah, Lord of the worlds, in front of the assembled people. Then the one whose offering would be consumed by a fire from heaven, without the agency of the human hand, the truth of his deity would be established beyond doubt. Ahab accepted this proposal. Thus, 850 of the priests of Ba'al assembled on Mt. Carmel to answer the challenge given by the Prophet Elijah. In this encounter the Ba'al worshippers were defeated, and the Prophet Elijah proved that Ba'al was a false god, and the real God is the One God alone Who had appointed him as His Prophet. After this, Elijah got the priests of Ba'al slaughtered in front of the same assembly of the people; then he prayed for the rain, and his prayer was immediately answered and the whole land of Israel was saturated with water

But, despite these miracles, Ahab could not shake off the influence of his polytheistic wife. Jezebel turned hostile to the Prophet Elijah and she swore that he would be put to death just as the Ba'al worshippers had been put to death. Under the circumstances the Prophet Elijah was compelled to leave the country and he remained lodged in a cave at the foot of Mt. Sinai for several years. The lamentation that he made to Allah, on this occasion, has been related in the Bible, in these words:

"The children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away." (I Kings, 19: 10).

About the same time Jehoram, the ruler of the Jewish state of Jerusalem, married the daughter of Ahab, the king of Israel, and under her polytheistic influence the same evils that had spread in Israel also began to spread in Judah. The Prophet Elijah carried out his prophetic duty again and wrote a letter to Jehoram, the following words of which have been reported in the Bible:

"Thus saith the Lord God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah. But hast walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and hast made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also hast slain thy brethren of thy father's house, *which were* better than thyself: Behold, with a great plague will the Lord smite thy people, and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy goods: And thou *shalt have* great sickness by

disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall out by reason of the sickness day by day." (2 Chronicles, 21: 12-15).

Whatever the Prophet Elijah had prophesied in this letter proved true. First, the kingdom of Jehoram was destroyed by the external invaders, and the enemies even carried away his wives, then he himself died of the disease of the bowels.

A few years later the Prophet Elijah again went to Israel and constantly tried hard to bring Ahab, and after him his son, Ahaziah, to the right path, but the evil that had taken root in the house of the royal family of Samaria could not be eradicated. At last, due to the curse of the Prophet the family of Ahab met its doom, and then Allah recalled his Prophet from the world.

For details, see the following books of the Bible: I Kings, chs., 17, 18, 19, 21; 2 Kings, chs., 1, 2; 2 Chronicles, ch. 21.

71. Lexically, *ba'al* means master, chief and possessor. This word was also used for husband, and has been used in this sense at several places in the Qur'ān itself, e.g. in Sūrah Al-Baqarah: 228, An-Nisā': 127, Hūd: 72 and An-Nūr: 31. However, in the ancient times the Semetic nations used it in the meaning of deity or lord; they had even given the name of Ba'al to a special god. The chief male god of the Phoenicians, in particular, was Ba'al and their chief goddess was Ashtoreth, his wife. The scholars differ as to whether Ba'al meant the sun or Jupiter, and Ashtoreth the moon or Venus. In any case, historically it is certain that Ba'al worship was prevalent from Babylon to Egypt throughout the Middle East, and the polytheistic communities of the Lebanon and Syria and Palestine, in particular, had become its devotees. When the Israelites settled in Palestine and Jordan after they came out from Egypt, they started contracting marriage and other social relations with the polytheistic nations round about them, in violation of the strict prohibitive injunctions of the Torah, the disease of idol-worship began to spread among them, too. According to the Bible, this moral and religious decline had started appearing among the Israelites soon after the death of Joshua, son of Nūn, who was the first caliph of the Prophet Moses:

"And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Ba'alim ..... And they forsook the Lord, and served Ba'al and Ashtoreth." (Judges, 2: 11-13).

"And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amonites, and Perizzites and Hivites, and Jebusites. And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods." (Judges, 3: 5-6).

At that time worship of Ba'al had so deeply affected the Israelites that, according to the Bible, in one of their habitations a public altar had been built at which offerings were made to Ba'al. A God-worshipping Israelite could not bear the sight; so he pulled down the altar one night. Next morning a great multitude of the people gathered together and demanded that the man who had cast down the altar be put to death. (Judges, 6:25-32). This evil, at last, was put to an end by Samuel, Saul and the Prophets David and Solomon (peace be upon them); they not only reformed the Israelites generally but also eradicated polytheism and idol-worship from their kingdom. But after the death of the Prophet Solomon the mischief was again revived and the Israelite state of northern Palestine was swept away in the flood of Ba'al-worship.

72. That is "Only those people will be made an exception from the punishment, who did not belie the Prophet Elijah, and whom Allah chose from among the nation for His worship."

73. The treatment that the Israelites meted out to the Prophet Elijah in his life has been referred to above, but after his death they became so enamoured of him that they held him in the highest esteem and reverence after the Prophet Moses. They formed the belief that Elijah (peace be upon him) had been taken up alive into heaven by a whirlwind (2 Kings, ch. 2), and that he will come back to the world again. Thus, in Malachi (O.T.) it is written:

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." (4: 5).

At the time the Prophets John and Jesus (peace be upon them) appeared, the Jews were awaiting the advent of these three men: the Prophet Elias, the Christ and "that Prophet" (i.e. the Holy Prophet Muhammad). When the ministry of the Prophet John began and he started baptizing the people, the Jews sent priests to him to ask, "Are you the Christ?" And he said that he was not the Christ. Then they asked, "Are you Elijah?" And he answered that he was not Elias; then they asked, "Are you 'that Prophet'?" And he answered that he was not "that Prophet" either. Thereupon they said, "If you are neither the Christ, nor Elias, nor that Prophet, why do you then baptize?" (John, 1: 19-26;). Afterwards when the name of the Prophet Jesus spread among the people, the Jews thought that perhaps the Prophet Elias had come. (Mark, 6: 14-15). Even among the disciples of Jesus themselves the idea was common that Elias the Prophet would come, but Jesus removed their misunderstanding, saying, "Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatever they listed." Then the disciples understood that he spoke to them of John the Baptist and not of Elias who had appeared eight hundred years earlier.' (Matthew, 11: 14, and 17: 10 13).

74. The words in the original are: *Salām-un 'alā Il-yā-sīn.* Some commentators say that *Il-yā-sīn* is the other name of the Prophet Elias, just as Abraham is the other name of the Prophet Ibrahīm; some others say that different versions of the Hebrew names were prevalent among the Arabs, e.g. one and the same angel was called Mīchāl and Michā'īl and Mīchā'īn. The same has been the case with the name of the Prophet Elias also. In the Qur'ān itself the same mountain has been called Ṭūr Sīnā' and Ṭūr Sīnīn.

75. This implies the wife of the Prophet Lot, who did not migrate with her illustrious husband, but remained behind with her people and was punished.

76. The reference is to the ruined habitations of the people of Lot by which the Quraishite merchants passed day and night during their trade journeys to Syria and Palestine.

77. This is the third place where the Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him) has been mentioned in the Qur'ān. Before this he has already been mentioned in Sūrah Yūnus and Sūrah Al-Anbiyā'. (For reference, please see Yūnus: 98 and Al-Anbiyā': 87-88 and the E.N.'s thereof).

78. The word *abaqa* in Arabic is used for the flight and escape of a slave from his master's house.

79. This is what one understands from a study of these sentences:

(1) The vessel which the Prophet Jonah boarded was already overloaded.

(2) Lots were drawn in the vessel probably at a time when during the voyage it was felt that the lives of the passengers had been endangered due to the overloading; therefore, lots were cast to pick out a person to be thrown overboard.

(3) The lot fell on the Prophet Jonah, and so he was thrown into the sea, and a fish swallowed him.

(4) The Prophet Jonah was so afflicted because he had fled and abandoned the place of his mission without the permission of his Master (Allah Almighty). This meaning is confirmed by the word *abaqa* as has been explained in E.N. 78 above, and also by the word *mulīm*. *Mulīm* is a blameworthy person, who becomes worthy of blame by himself because of his sin and error, whether somebody else blames himfor it or not. *(Ibn Jarīr).*

80. It has two meanings and both are implied: (1) That the Prophet Jonah was not of the people who are heedless of God, but was of those who glorify and adore Allah constantly and perpetually; and (2) that when he went inside the fish, he turned to Allah alone and glorified Him. In Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' it has been said:

"He invoked Us from the depths of the darkness, saying: 'There is no god but You: Glory be to You: I am indeed blameworthy.'" (v. 87).

81. This does not mean that the fish would have lived till Resurrection and the Prophet Jonah would have remained alive in its belly till then, but that the fish's belly would have become his grave till Resurrection. The famous commentator Qatādah has given this same meaning of this verse. *(Ibn Jarīr).*

82. That is, "When the Prophet Jonah confessed his fault, and began to glorify Allah like a true and sincere believer, the fish spat him up on the beach by Allah's Command. The beach was a bare plain, without any vegetation on it, or anything to provide him shade, or any means of food."

Here, the rationalists have been heard expressing the misgiving that it is impossible for a man to come out alive from the belly of a fish. But, towards the end of the last century, an event took place near the sea-shores of England (the centre of this so-called rationalism), which belies this claim. In August, 1891, some fishermen went to the high sea to hunt whales in a ship called Star of the East. There they injured a great fish which was 20 feet long, 5 feet wide and weighed a hundred tons, but during the struggle the fish swallowed a fisherman, James Bartley, in front of the very eyes of his companions. Next day the same fish was found dead on the sea. The fishermen hauled it up on board and when they cut open its belly, James Bartley came out alive. He had remained in the fish's belly for full 60 hours. (*Urdū Digest,* February, 1964). Obviously, when such a thing is possible in normal circumstances naturally, why should it be impossible under abnormal conditions as a miracle of God ?

83. The Arabic word *yaqtīn* applies to a tree which does not stand on a stem but grows and spreads like a creeper, e.g. a pumpkin, cucumber, water-melon, etc. In any case, a creeper was produced miraculously, so that its leaves should provide shade to the Prophet Jonah and its fruit should serve him both as food and as shade.

84. The mention of "a hundred thousand people or more" does not mean that Allah had any doubt about their number, but it means that a casual observer would have estimated the population to be more than a hundred thousand people in any case. Probably it was the same place which the Prophet Jonah had left and fled. After his departure when the people of the place saw the scourge approaching they believed, but this was only a kind of repentance which was accepted and the scourge averted. Now, the Prophet Jonah was again sent to them so that the people should believe in him as a Prophet and become Muslims formally. To understand this, one should keep in view verse 98 of Sūrah Yūnus.

85. Some people have taken exception to what we have written concerning this story of the Prophet Jonah in our commentary of Sūrahs Yūnus and Al-Anbiyā'. It would therefore be proper that we should reproduce here the explanations given by the other commentators in this regard.

The famous commentator Qatādah in his commentary of verse 98 of Sūrah Yūnus says: "There has been no habitation which disbelieved and might have believed after the arrival of the scourge, and then might have been left unpunished. The only exception were the people of the Prophet Jonah. When they searched for their Prophet and did not find him, and felt that the scourge had approached near at hand, Allah put repentance in their hearts." *(Ibn Kathīr,* vol. II, p. 433).

Commenting on the same verse 'Allāma Ālūsī says: "The Prophet Jonah (peace be upon him) had been sent to the people of Nineveh in the land of Mosul. They were polytheistic people. The Prophet Jonah invited them to believe in Allah, the One, and to give up idol-worship. They refused to believe and belied him. Jonah gave them the news that they would be visited by a scourge after three days and he left the place at midnight before the expiry of the three days. Then, in the day time when the scourge approached..... and the people realized that they would all perish, they began to search for the Prophet but did not find him. At last, they took their families and their cattle and came out in the desert and expressed belief and repentance.....So, Allah showed them mercy and accepted their prayer." *(Rūḥ al-Ma'anī,* vol. XI, p. 170).

Commenting on v. 87 of Sūrah Al-Anbiyā', 'Allāma Ālūsī writes: "The Prophet Jonah's forsaking his people in anger was an act of migration, but he had not been commanded to do so." (*Rūḥ al-Ma*'ānī, vol. XVII, p. 77). Then he explains the meaning of the sentence, *"Innī kun-tu min-az-ẓālimīn"*, of Jonah's prayer, thus: "That is, I was blameworthy in that I hastened to migrate, against the way of the Prophets, before receiving the command for it." This was, in fact, a confession of his sin and expression of repentance so that Allah might remove his affliction. (*Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī,* vol. :XVII, p. 78).

Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānwī's note on this verse is: "He became angry with his people when they did not believe, and forsook them, and did not return to them of his own accord when the scourge had been averted, and did not await Our Command for the migration." (*Bayān al-Qur'ān).*

Maulānā Shabbīr Ahmad 'Uthmānī writes in his note on this verse: "Vexed at the misconduct of his people he left the city in anger, did not await the Divine Command and threatened the people that they would be visited by a torment after three days.....*Innī kun-tu min az-ẓālimīn:* He confessed his error that he had made haste and left the habitation without awaiting Allah's Command

"Explaining these verses of Sūrah Ṣāāffāt, Imām Rāzī writes: "The Prophet Jonah's fault was that when Allah threatened to destroy the people who had belied him, he thought that the scourge would inevitably befall them. Therefore, he did not show patience and abandoned his mission and left the place, whereas he ought to have continued the work of his mission, for there was a possibility that Allah might not destroy those people." *(Tafsīr Kabīr*, vol. VII, p. 158).

Explaining the verse *Idh abaqa*....., 'Allāma Ālūsī writes: "Literally, *abaqa* means the escape of a slave from his master's house. Since Jonah had run away from his people without Allah's leave, the word has been rightly used about him." Then he writes: "When the third day came, the Prophet Jonah left the place without Allah's permission. Thus, when his people did not find him, they came out along with their young and old people and their cattle, and they implored Allah and begged for His forgiveness and Allah forgave them." *(Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*, vol. XXII, p. 13).

Maulānā Ṣhabbīr Ahmad 'Uthmānī has explained the words *wa huwa mulīm*, thus: "The accusation against him was that he had left the city because of an error of judgement, without awaiting the Divine Command, and even specified the day for the coming of the scourge."

Then Maulānā Ṣhabbīr Ahmad's note on v. 48 of Sūrah Al-Qalam is: "Do not be perplexed and agitated with regard to the deniers like the Man of the Fish (i.e. the Prophet Jonah)." And about the sentence: *wa huwa makẓūm* of the same verse, he writes: "That is, he was full of anger against his people, so he prayed for the torment, rather foretold it, in fretful haste."

These explanations by the commentators clearly show that there were three offences on account of which the Prophet Jonah was made to suffer Allah's displeasure: (1) That he himself fixed the day of the torment, whereas Allah had not made any declaration in this regard; (2) that he emigrated from the city even before the day came; whereas a Prophet should not leave the place of his mission until Allah commands him to do so; and (3) that he did not return to his people after the torment had been averted from them.

86. Another theme starts from here. In the preceding theme that started from v. 11, the Quraish had been put this question: "Ask them: what is more difficult: their own creation or of those things that We have created?" Now, they are being asked this second question. The object of the first question was to warn the disbelievers of their deviation because of which they regarded life-after-death and the meting out of rewards and punishments as impossible, and therefore, mocked the Holy Prophet for it. Now they are being asked this second question to warn them of their ignorance due to which they attributed children to

Allah and would join anybody with Allah in any relationship they liked on mere conjecture.

87. Traditions show that in Arabia the tribes of Quraish, Juhainah, Banī Salimah, Khuzā'ah, Banī Mulaih, etc., held the belief that the angels were Allah's daughters. This belief of their ignorance has been referred to at several places in the Qur'ān, e.g. in An-Nisā': 117, An-Naḥl: 57-58, Banī Isra'īl: 40, Az-Zukhruf: 16-19, An-Najm: 21-27.

88. That is, "There can be only two bases for regarding the angels as the daughters of Allah: Either such a thing could be said on the basis of observation, or the one who asserted it should possess a Divine book in which Allah Himself might have stated that the angels were His daughters. Now, if those who held such a belief could neither make a claim to have observed such a thing nor did they possess any divine book that might contain such a thing, there could be no greater stupidity than this that one should base one's religious belief on mere conjecture, and attribute to Allah, Lord of the worlds, such things as were patently ridiculous."

89. Though the word used is *al-jinnah* instead of *al-malā'ikah*, some major commentators have opined that here the word *jinn* has been used for *malā'ikah* in its literal sense (of hidden creation); *malā'ikah* (angels) also are, in reality, a hidden creation, and the following theme also demands that *al-jinnah* here be taken in the sense of *al-malā'ikah*

90. Another translation of this verse can be: "Therefore, you and your worship: on this you cannot tempt into mischief anyone except him ..." According to this second translation, the meaning would be: "O you who have gone astray, by this worship that you are performing before us, and regarding us as the children of Allah, Lord of the worlds, you cannot tempt us into mischief. By this you can only beguile a fool who might be working for his own doom. So, we refuse to fall into the trap that you have set for us."

91. That is, "Not to speak of being Allah's children, we do not have the power to exceed in any way or degree the place and position and status appointed for each of us by Allah."

92. This same thing has already been mentioned in Sūrah Fāṭir: 42 above.

93. "Allah's army": implies the believers who obey Allah's Messenger and side with him. This also includes those unseen powers by which Allah helps the followers of the truth.

[Contd. on p. 335

الْمَنْصُورُونَ ﴿١٧٣﴾ وَإِنَّ جُندَنَا لَهُمُ الْغَالِبُونَ ﴿١٧٤﴾ فَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿١٧٥﴾ وَ
أَبْصِرْهُمْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٧٦﴾ أَفَبِعَذَابِنَا يَسْتَعْجِلُونَ ﴿١٧٧﴾ فَإِذَا نَزَلَ بِسَاحَتِهِمْ فَسَاءَ
صَبَاحُ الْمُنذَرِينَ ﴿١٧٨﴾ وَتَوَلَّ عَنْهُمْ حَتَّىٰ حِينٍ ﴿١٧٩﴾ وَأَبْصِرْ فَسَوْفَ يُبْصِرُونَ ﴿١٨٠﴾
سُبْحَانَ رَبِّكَ رَبِّ الْعِزَّةِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ ﴿١٨١﴾ وَسَلَامٌ عَلَى الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿١٨٢﴾ وَ
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿١٨٢﴾

Therefore, O Prophet, leave them for a while to themselves and watch (them); soon they will see it for themselves.[94] Are they clamouring for our torment? The day when it descends in their courtyards, will be a dreadful day for those who have been warned. So leave them alone for a while and watch ;soon they will themselves see. 174-179

Glorified is your Lord, Lord of Honour, (and free) from all that they attribute to Him., and peace on the Messengers, and all praise is only for Allah, Lord of the Universe. 180-182

Contd. from p. 334]

This help and domination does not necessarily mean that in every age every Prophet of Allah and his followers must attain political dominance, but this dominance has many forms, one of which is political rule as well. Wherever the Prophets of Allah did not attain any such dominance, they did establish their moral superiority even in those places. The nations which did not accept their message and adopted a way contrary to their teachings, were ultimately doomed to destruction. Whatever philosophies of error and misguidance the people invented and whatever corrupt and evil practices of life they enforced died out ultimately after they had their sway for some time. But the truths preached by the Prophets of Allah for thousands of years have been unalterable before as they are unalterable today. No one has been able to disprove them in any way.

94. That is, "It will not take long when they will see their defeat and your victory with their own eyes." This proved to be true as it had been foretold. Hardly 14 to 15 years had passed after the revelation of these verses when the pagans of Makkah witnessed the Holy Prophet enter their city as a conqueror, and then a few years later the same people saw that Islam had overwhelmed not only Arabia but the mighty empires of Rome and Iran as well.



XXXVIII

ṢUĀD

ص

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXXVIII

ṢUĀD

ص

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the alphabetic letter *Ṣuād* with which it begins.

Period of Revelation

As will be explained below, according to some traditions this Sūrah was sent down in the period when the Holy Prophet had started calling the people openly to Islam in Makkah, and this had caused great alarm among the chiefs of the Quraish. If this be true, its period of revelation would be about the 4th year of the Prophethood. According to some other traditions, it was sent down after Ḥaḍrat 'Umar's embracing Islam, and this happened, as is well known, after the migration to Ḥabash. Another chain of the traditions shows that the event which occasioned the revelation of this Sūrah took place during the last illness of Abū Ṭālib. If this be correct, the period of its revelation would be the 10th or 11th year of the Prophethood.

Historical Background

Here is a resume of the traditions related by Imām Aḥmad, Nasa'ī, Tirmidhi, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abī Shaibah, Ibn Abi Ḥātim, Muḥammad bin Isḥāq and others:

When Abū Ṭālib fell ill, and the Quraish chiefs knew that his end was near, they held consultations and decided to approach the old chief with the request that he should solve the dispute between them and his nephew. For they feared that if Abū Ṭālib died and then they subjected Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) to a harsh treatment, after his death, the Arabs would taunt them, saying, "They were afraid of the old chief as long as he lived; now that he is dead they have started maltreating his nephew." At least 25 of the Quraish chiefs including Abū Jahl, Abū Sufyān, Umayyah bin Khalaf, 'Āṣ bin Wā'il, Aswad bin al-Muṭṭalib, 'Uqbah bin Abi Mu'aiṭ, 'Utbah and Shaibah went to Abū Ṭālib. First, they put before him their complaints against the Holy Prophet as usual, then said, "We have come to present before you a just request and it is this: let your nephew leave us to our religion, and we shall leave him to his. He may worship whomever he may please: we shall not stand in his way in this matter; but he should not condemn our gods, and should not try to force us to give them up. Please tell him to make terms with us on this condition". Abū Ṭālib called the Holy Prophet and said, "Dear nephew, these people of your tribe have come to me with a request. They want you to agree with them on a just matter so as to put an end to your dispute with them." Then he told him about the request of the chiefs of the Quraish. The Holy Prophet replied, "Dear uncle: I shall request them to agree upon a thing which, if they accept, will enable them to conquer the whole of Arabia and subject the non-Arab world to their domination."[1] Hearing this the people were first confounded; they did not know how they should turn down such a proposal. Then, after they had considered the matter, they replied: "You speak of one word: we are prepared to repeat ten others like it, but please tell us what it is." The Holy Prophet said: *Lā ilāha Ill-Allāh.* At

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1. This saying of the Holy Prophet has been reported in different words by the different reporters. But in spite of the difference in the wording, the meaning of all the reports is one and the same. He said: "If I present before you a word accepting and following which will enable you to overpower the whole of Arabia and the non-Arab adjacent countries, tell me what would be better: My word or that which you are presenting before me as an equitable thing? Just consider this: Does your well-being lie in accepting and believing in my word or in this that I should leave you in whatever state you are and should myself remain preoccupied in the worship of my God?"

this they got up all together and left the place saying what Allah has narrated in the initial part of this Sūrah.

Ibn Sa'd in his *Ṭabaqāt* has related this event just as cited above, but, according to him, this did not happen during Abū Ṭālib's last illness but at the time when the Holy Prophet had started preaching Islam openly, and the news of the conversion of one person or the other was being heard almost daily in Makkah. In those days the Quraish chiefs had led several deputations to Abū Ṭālib and had asked him to stop Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) from preaching his message, and it was with one of those deputations that this conversation had taken place.

Zamakhshari, Rāzī, Nīsābūrī and some other commentators say that this deputation went to Abū Ṭālib at the time when the chiefs of the Quraish had been upset at Ḥaḍrat 'Umar's embracing Islam; but no reference to its basis is available in any book of the traditions, nor have these commentators cited their source of this information. However, if it be true, it is understandable. For the unbelieving Quraish had already been bewildered to see that the person who had arisen from among themselves with the message of Islam had no parallel in the entire tribe as regarded nobility, purity of character, wisdom and seriousness. Moreover, his right-handman and chief supporter was a man like Abū Bakr, who was well known in and around Makkah as a gentle, righteous and brilliant man. Now when they might have seen that a brave and resolute man like 'Umar also had joined them, they must have felt that the danger was growing and becoming intolerable.

Subject-Matter and Topics

The Sūrah begins with a review of the aforesaid meeting. Making the dialogue between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers as the basis, Allah says that the actual reason with those people for their denial is not any defect in the message of Islam but their own arrogance, jealousy and insistence on following the blind. They are not prepared to believe in a man from their own clan as a Prophet of God and follow him. They want to persist in the ideas of ignorance which they have found their ancestors following. And when a person exposes their this ignorance and

presents the truth before them, they are alarmed and regard it as an oddity, rather as a novel and impossible thing. For them the concept of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter is not only an unacceptable creed but also a concept which only deserves to be ridiculed and mocked.

Then, Allah, both in the initial part of the Sūrah and in its last sentences, has precisely warned the disbelievers, as if to say, "The man whom you are ridiculing today and whose guidance you reject will soon overpower you, and the time is not far when in this very city of Makkah, where you are persecuting him, he will overwhelm you completely."

Then describing nine of the Prophets, one after the other with greater details of the story of the Prophets David and Solomon; Allah has emphasized the point that His Law of Justice is impartial and objective, that only the right attitude of man is acceptable to Him, that He calls to account and punishes every wrongdoer whoever he be, and that He likes only those people who do not persist in wrongdoing but repent as soon as they are warned of it, and pass their life in the world keeping in mind their accountability in the Hereafter.

After this, the final end that the obedient servants and the disobedient people will meet in the Hereafter, has been depicted, and two things have been especially impressed on the disbelievers: (1) That the leaders and guides whom the ignorant people are following blindly in the world, on the way of deviation, will have reached Hell even before their followers in the Hereafter, and the two groups will be cursing each other there; and (2) that the disbelievers will be amazed to see that there is no trace whatever in Hell of the believers whom they used to regard as contemptible in the world and will themselves be involved in its torment.

In conclusion, mention has been made of the story of Adam and *Iblīs* (Satan), which is meant to tell the disbelieving Quraish that the same arrogance and vanity which was preventing them from bowing before Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) had prevented *Iblīs* also from bowing before Adam. *Iblīs* felt jealous of the high rank God had given to Adam and became accursed when he disobeyed His

Command. Likewise, "You, O people of Quraish, are feeling jealous of the high rank God has bestowed on Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and are not prepared to obey him whom God has appointed His Messenger. Therefore, you will be doomed ultimately to the same fate as will be met by Satan."

سُوْرَةُ صٓ (٣٨) مَكِّيَّةٌ

اٰيَاتُهَا ٨٨ رُكُوْعَاتُهَا ٥

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

صٓ وَالْقُرْاٰنِ ذِى الذِّكْرِ ۝١ بَلِ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا فِىْ عِزَّةٍ وَّشِقَاقٍ ۝٢ كَمْ اَهْلَكْنَا
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنْ قَرْنٍ فَنَادَوْا وَّلَاتَ حِيْنَ مَنَاصٍ ۝٣ وَعَجِبُوْٓا اَنْ جَآءَهُمْ
مُّنْذِرٌ مِّنْهُمْ وَقَالَ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ هٰذَا سٰحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ ۝٤ اَجَعَلَ الْاٰلِهَةَ اِلٰهًا
وَّاحِدًا ۚ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَشَىْءٌ عُجَابٌ ۝٥ وَانْطَلَقَ الْمَلَاُ مِنْهُمْ اَنِ امْشُوْا وَاصْبِرُوْا
عَلٰٓى اٰلِهَتِكُمْ ۚ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَشَىْءٌ يُّرَادُ ۝٦ مَا سَمِعْنَا بِهٰذَا فِى الْمِلَّةِ الْاٰخِرَةِ ۖ اِنْ
هٰذَآ اِلَّا اخْتِلَاقٌ ۝٧ ءَاُنْزِلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ مِنْۢ بَيْنِنَا ۭ بَلْ هُمْ فِىْ شَكٍّ مِّنْ
ذِكْرِىْ ۚ بَلْ لَّمَّا يَذُوْقُوْا عَذَابِ ۝٨ اَمْ عِنْدَهُمْ خَزَآئِنُ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّكَ الْعَزِيْزِ
الْوَهَّابِ ۝٩ اَمْ لَهُمْ مُّلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۖ فَلْيَرْتَقُوْا فِى
الْاَسْبَابِ ۝١٠ جُنْدٌ مَّا هُنَالِكَ مَهْزُوْمٌ مِّنَ الْاَحْزَابِ ۝١١ كَذَّبَتْ قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ
نُوْحٍ وَّعَادٌ وَّفِرْعَوْنُ ذُو الْاَوْتَادِ ۝١٢ وَثَمُوْدُ وَقَوْمُ لُوْطٍ وَّاَصْحٰبُ لْـَٔيْكَةِ ۭ
اُولٰٓئِكَ الْاَحْزَابُ ۝١٣ اِنْ كُلٌّ اِلَّا كَذَّبَ الرُّسُلَ فَحَقَّ عِقَابِ ۝١٤ وَمَا يَنْظُرُ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ
اِلَّا صَيْحَةً وَّاحِدَةً مَّا لَهَا مِنْ فَوَاقٍ ۝١٥ وَقَالُوْا رَبَّنَا عَجِّلْ لَّنَا قِطَّنَا قَبْلَ

XXXVIII

ṢUĀD

ص

Verses: 88

Revealed at Makkah

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

Ṣuād.[1] By the Qur'ān which is full of admonition:[2] but the people who have disbelieved, are themselves involved in sheer arrogance and stubbornness.[3] How many a nation have we destroyed before them! (And when their doom approached) they cried out, but that was not the time of being saved. 1-3

These people wondered that a warner from among themselves has come to them.[4] The disbelievers began to say, "He is a sorcerer,[5] a liar! Has he made just One God in place of all the gods? This is indeed a strange thing!" And their chiefs went away,[6] saying, "Go and stand firm in the service of your gods; for this thing[7] is being said with a purpose.[8] We have not heard such a thing from anyone of the people of latter days.[9] This is nothing but a fabrication. Was he the only (fit) person among us to whom Allah's Admonition should have been sent down?" 4-8

The fact of the matter is that they doubt My "Admonition",[10] and they say this because they have not yet tasted My punishment. Do they possess the treasures of the mercy of your Mighty and Bounteous Lord? Do they own the heavens and the earth and all that is between them? If so, let them climb up to the heights of the worldly means![11] 8-10

This is a small host from among the hosts, which shall be routed here.[12] Before them did the people of Noah and 'Ād and the Pharaoh of the stakes,[13] and Thamūd, and the people of Lot and those of Aiykah reject (the Messengers). Hosts were they. Each one of them treated the Messengers as liars, and justly deserved the decree of My chastisement. 11-16

These people too await but a single blast after which there will be no other blast![14] And they say, "Our Lord, hasten to us our share even before the Day of Reckoning."[15]

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1. Although like all other enigmatic letters *(muqatta'āt)* it is difficult to determine the meaning of the letter Ṣuād also, yet the interpretation of it given by Ibn 'Abbās and Dahhāk is quite plausible. According to them, it implies: *Ṣādiq-un fi qauli-hi,* or *Ṣadaqa Muḥammad-un:* Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) is Truthful: whatever he says is the very Truth.

2. The words *dhi-dh-dhikr* of the Text can have two meanings: *(1) Dhi-sharaf:* the noble Qur'ān; and (2) *Dhi at-tadhkir:* the Qur'ān which is full of admonition, or the Qur'ān which serves as a reminder, or arouses a heedless person.

3. If the interpretation given of *ṣuād* by Ibn 'Abbās and Dahhāk is accepted, the sentence would mean this: "By this noble Qur'ān, or by this Qur'ān which is full of admonition, Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is presenting the Truth, but the people who persist in their denial, are in fact, involved in arrogance and stubbornness." And if suād is taken as one of those enigmatic letters whose meaning cannot be determined, then the answer to the oath is omitted, which is indicated by "but" and the sentence following it. The meaning then would be: "The reason for the denial of these disbelievers is not that the religion which is being presented before them is unsound, or that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) has shown some slackness in the matter of presenting the Truth before them, but their own boasting and bragging, their haughtiness and stubbornness, and this is borne out by this Qur'ān itself, which is full of admonition. Every unbiased person who studies it will admit that full justice has been done in it to the task of making the people understand the Truth."

4. That is, "They are so foolish that when a man from their own kind and from their own clan and brotherhood, whom they knew fully well, was appointed to warn them, they wondered at it, whereas it would have been strange if some other kind of creature had been sent down from heaven to warn human beings, or an utter stranger had arisen among them suddenly and started functioning as a prophet. In that case they would have been perfectly justified to say, "What an odd thing! How can this strange creature know our conditions and feelings and requirements that he should guide us? How can we test and find out the truth about the stranger who has suddenly arisen among us and know whether he is trustworthy or not? And how can we decide whether we should or should not believe in him when we have not judged and seen his character and personality?"

5. The disbelievers used the word *sāḥir* (sorcerer, magician) for the Holy Prophet in the sense that whoever came in contact with him was so influenced by him that he would become his follower like a possessed person; he would least mind severing of his connections with others or incurring material losses; the father would give up the son and the son the father; the wife would separate from the husband and the husband from the wife; he would at once be prepared to leave his country if it was so required; he would even be ready to pass through the severest persecutions for the sake of the faith. (For further details, see Sūrah Al-Anbiyā': 3 and E.N. 5 thereof).

6. The allusion is to the chiefs who got up and left Abū Ṭālib when they had heard what the Holy Prophet said.

7. "This thing": the Holy Prophet's asking them to affirm faith in *"Lā ilāha ill-Allāh"* so as to overpower both Arabia and the adjoining lands.

8. What they meant to say was this: "Muḥammad has some vested interests: He is extending this invitation to us in order to subjugate us and rule us as his subjects."

9. That is, "There have been our own elderly people in the recent past; there are Christians and Jews also living in our land and in the adjoining lands; and there are the Zoroastrians abounding in Iran and Iraq and eastern Arabia. None of them has ever preached that man should only believe in One Allah, Lord of the worlds, and in none else beside Him: no one can remain content with one God only: everyone believes in the beloved ones of Allah also: they are all paying obeisance to them, making offerings at their shrines and praying for fulfilment of their needs and requirements. From one place people get children and from another provisions of life, and from yet another whatever they pray for. The whole world believes in their powers and capabilities, and those who have benefited from them tell how the needs of the people are being met and their difficulties being removed through their help and grace. Now this man is telling us a queer thing which we had never heard before. He says that none of these holy men has any share in Godhead and that Godhead wholly belongs only to Allah!"

10. In other words Allah says: " Muḥammad, these people are not belying you but Me. As for your truthfulness, they had never doubted it before; now that they are doubting it, it is because of My Admonition; now that I have entrusted to you the Mission of admonishing them, they have started doubting the truthfulness of the very person whose righteousness and piety they used to swear by." The same theme has also been discussed above in Al-An'ām: 33 and E.N. 21 thereof.

11. This is an answer to this saying of the disbelievers "Was he the only

[Contd. on p. 349

يَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٦﴾ اِصْبِرْ عَلٰى مَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا دَاوٗدَ ذَا الْاَيْدِ ۚ اِنَّهٗ
اَوَّابٌ ﴿١٧﴾ اِنَّا سَخَّرْنَا الْجِبَالَ مَعَهٗ يُسَبِّحْنَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْاِشْرَاقِ ﴿١٨﴾ وَالطَّيْرَ مَحْشُوْرَةً ۭ
كُلٌّ لَّهٗ اَوَّابٌ ﴿١٩﴾ وَشَدَدْنَا مُلْكَهٗ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُ الْحِكْمَةَ وَفَصْلَ الْخِطَابِ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَهَلْ
اَتٰىكَ نَبَؤُا الْخَصْمِ ۘ اِذْ تَسَوَّرُوا الْمِحْرَابَ ﴿٢١﴾ اِذْ دَخَلُوْا عَلٰي دَاوٗدَ فَفَزِعَ مِنْهُمْ ۭ
قَالُوْا لَا تَخَفْ ۚ خَصْمٰنِ بَغٰى بَعْضُنَا عَلٰي بَعْضٍ فَاحْكُمْ بَيْنَنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا
تُشْطِطْ وَاهْدِنَآ اِلٰى سَوَاۗءِ الصِّرَاطِ ﴿٢٢﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَآ اَخِيْ لَهٗ تِسْعٌ وَّتِسْعُوْنَ نَعْجَةً
وَّلِيَ نَعْجَةٌ وَّاحِدَةٌ فَقَالَ اَكْفِلْنِيْهَا وَعَزَّنِيْ فِي الْخِطَابِ ﴿٢٣﴾ قَالَ لَقَدْ ظَلَمَكَ
بِسُؤَالِ نَعْجَتِكَ اِلٰى نِعَاجِهٖ ۭ وَاِنَّ كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ الْخُلَطَاۗءِ لَيَبْغِيْ بَعْضُهُمْ عَلٰي
بَعْضٍ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَقَلِيْلٌ مَّا هُمْ ۭ وَظَنَّ دَاوٗدُ اَنَّمَا
فَتَنّٰهُ فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهٗ وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا وَّاَنَابَ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَغَفَرْنَا لَهٗ ذٰلِكَ ۭ وَاِنَّ لَهٗ عِنْدَنَا
لَزُلْفٰى وَحُسْنَ مَاٰبٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ يٰدَاوٗدُ اِنَّا جَعَلْنٰكَ خَلِيْفَةً فِي الْاَرْضِ فَاحْكُمْ
بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْهَوٰى فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ ۭ اِنَّ
الَّذِيْنَ يَضِلُّوْنَ عَنْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌۢ بِمَا نَسُوْا يَوْمَ
الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاۗءَ وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا بَاطِلًا ۭ ذٰلِكَ
ظَنُّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا ۚ فَوَيْلٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنَ النَّارِ ﴿٢٧﴾ اَمْ نَجْعَلُ الَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ كَالْمُفْسِدِيْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۡ اَمْ نَجْعَلُ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ
كَالْفُجَّارِ ﴿٢٨﴾ كِتٰبٌ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ اِلَيْكَ مُبٰرَكٌ لِّيَدَّبَّرُوْٓا اٰيٰتِهٖ وَلِيَتَذَكَّرَ
اُولُوا الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لِدَاوٗدَ سُلَيْمٰنَ ۭ نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ ۭ اِنَّهٗٓ اَوَّابٌ ﴿٣٠﴾
اِذْ عُرِضَ عَلَيْهِ بِالْعَشِيِّ الصّٰفِنٰتُ الْجِيَادُ ﴿٣١﴾ فَقَالَ اِنِّيْٓ اَحْبَبْتُ

O Prophet, have patience at what they utter,[16] and tell them the story of Our servant David,[17] who was a man of great strength.[18] He turned to Allah in every matter. We had subdued for him the mountains, which joined with him in praise morning and evening. The birds would gather together: they all turned to his (hymns of) praise.[19] We had strengthened his kingdom, had given him wisdom and the ability to pronounce sound judgements.[20] Has the story of the litigants, who had entered into his upper chamber by climbing over the wall, reached you?[21] When they came before David, he was alarmed to see them.[22] They said, "Have no fear: we are two parties in a suit, one of which has wronged the other, so decide between us rightly: do not be unjust and guide us to the right way. This is my brother:[23] he has ninety-nine ewes and I have only one ewe. He said to me, 'Give this ewe also in my charge, and he has prevailed over me in the dispute'."[24] David replied, "This person has certainly wronged you in demanding your ewe to be added to his ewes.[25] And the fact is that the people who live together often wrong one another; the only exception are those who believe and do good works, and they are few." (While he said this) David realized that We had, in fact, tried him. So he asked forgiveness of his Lord and fell down prostrate and turned (to Him).[26] Then We forgave him for his error, and certainly he has a place of nearness with Us and an excellent abode![27] (We said:) "O David, We have made you vicegerent in the earth, so rule among the people with justice and do not follow your lust, for it will lead you astray from Allah's Way." For those who go astray from Allah's Way, there is a severe punishment because they forgot the Day of Reckoning."[28] 17-26

We have not created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, in vain.[29] This is the fancy of those who have disbelieved, and woe to such disbelievers from the Fire of Hell. Should We treat those who believe and do good works like those who spread mischief in the earth? Should We treat the pious as the sinners?[30] ——— This is a highly blessed Book,[31] which We have sent down to you (O Muḥammad), so that these people may ponder over its verses and the men of understanding may learn lessons from it. 27-29

Contd from p. 347]

(fit) person among us to whom Allah's Admonition should have been sent down?" Allah says: "It is for Us to decide whom We should choose and appoint as a

Prophet and whom We should not. These people do not possess any power and authority to exercise choice in this regard. If they wish to attain such an authority they should try to reach the Divine Throne in order to obtain control over the office of sovereignty of the Universe, so that revelation should come down on him whom they regard as deserving their mercy and not on him whom We regard as fit for it. This theme has occurred at several places in the Qur'ān, because the unbelieving Quraish again and again said, "How did Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah' peace) become a Prophet? Did Allah find no better man among the principal leaders of the Quraish worthy of this office?" (See Sūrah Banī Isrā'īl: 100; Az-Zukhruf: 31-32).

12. "Here" implies the city of Makkah. That is, "The time is coming when these people shall be humbled and routed in the very place where they are opposing and mocking you. Then, they will be standing, with heads hung down, before the same men whom they despise and refuse to recognize as a Prophet of Allah."

13. The use of *dhil-autād* (of the stakes) for Pharaoh is either in the sense that his kingdom was very strong as though a stake were firmly driven into the ground, or for the reason that wherever his large armies camped, pegs of the tents were seen driven into the ground on every side, or because he would torture and punish at the stakes anyone with whom he was angry; and possibly the stakes may imply the pyramids of Egypt which seem to be driven into the earth like the stakes.

14. That is, "Only a single blast of the torment will be enough to annihilate them; no other will be needed for the purpose." Another meaning of the sentence can be: "After this they will get no more relief and no more respite."

15. That is, "Allah's torment will be so severe and terrible as mentioned above, but just consider the behaviour of these foolish people: they are telling the Prophet mockingly: 'Do not put off our affairs till the Day of Reckoning with which you are threatening us, but settle our account just now: whatever punishment is to be inflicted on us should be inflicted immediately.'"

16. The allusion is to the absurd conversation of the disbelievers of Makkah, as narrated above, to the effect that the Holy Prophet was a sorcerer and a liar, and to their objection whether he was the only fit person in the sight of Allah to be appointed as a Messenger, and to their some accusation that he had vested interest in preaching the doctrine of *Tauḥīd* to the people and not any religious mission.

17. Another translation of this sentence can be: "Remember Our servant David." According to the first translation, it would mean: "There is a lesson in

this story for these people," and according to the second: "The remembrance of this story will help you too, to have patience." As the narrative is meant to serve both purposes, comprehensive words have been used as contain both meanings. (For the story of the prophet David, see Al-Baqarah :251, Banī Isrā'īl: 55, Al-Anbiyā': 78-81, An-Naml: 15 and the E.N.'s thereof; and E.N.'s 14 to 16 of Sabā).

18. The words in the original are: *dhal-ayd* (possessor of the hands). The word "hand" is used metaphorically for strength and power not only in Arabic but in other languages also. When as an attribute of the Prophet David it is said that he was a "possessor of the hands", it will necessarily mean that he possessed great powers. These powers may mean the physical strength which he displayed during his combat against Goliath, military and political power by which he crushed the neighbouring idolatrous nations and established a strong Islamic empire, moral strength by which he ruled like a poor king and always feared Allah and observed the bounds set by Him, and the power of worship by virtue of which, besides his occupations in connection with rule and government and fighting in the cause of Allah, he fasted every alternate day and spent a third of the night in worship according to a tradition of Bukhārī. Imām Bukhārī in his History has related, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū ad-Dardā', that whenever the Prophet David was mentioned, the Holy Prophet used to say: "He was the greatest worshipper of God."

19. For explanation, see Sūrah Al-Anbiyā' :79 and E.N. 71 thereof.

20. That is, "He was never ambiguous in speech but clear and forthright. Whatever problem he talked about he would lay bare its basic points, and would clearly and precisely determine the real issue under question, and would pass a decisive judgement." This quality is not attained by a person unless he is granted wisdom, understanding and mastery of language of the highest degree.

21. The object why the Prophet David has been mentioned here is to relate the story that begins from here; the object of mentioning his sterling qualities in the introduction was only to point out the high calibre of the Prophet David with whom this incident took place.

22. He was alarmed because the two men had appeared in the private quarters of the ruler of the land suddenly, by climbing over the wall, instead of going before him by the proper entrance.

23. "Brother" does not mean a real brother but a brother-in-faith and a member of one's own clan.

24. To understand what follows one should note that the complainant did not say that the other person had taken away his only ewe and added it to his own

ewes, but said that he was asking for it, and since he was a powerful person he had prevailed over him in the matter and he could not reject his demand, being a weak and poor man.

25. Here, one should not doubt that the Prophet David gave his decision after hearing only what one party had to say. The fact of the matter is that when the respondent kept quiet at the complaint of the complainant and said nothing in defence it by itself amounted to a confession by him. That is why the Prophet David came to the conclusion that the facts of the case were the same as the complainant had stated.

26. There is a difference of opinion as to whether it is obligatory to perform a *sajdah* (prostration) on this occasion or not. Imām Shāfe'ī says that it is not obligatory, for this is only a Prophet' repentance; but Imām Abū Ḥanīfah has opined that prostration here is obligatory. The traditionists have related three traditions from Ibn 'Abbās in this regard. According to 'Ikrimah, Ibn 'Abbās said: "this is not one of those verses on the recitation of which prostration is obligatory, but I have seen the Holy Prophet prostrating himself on this occasion." (Bukhārī, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhi, Nasā'ī, Musnad Aḥmad). The second tradition which Sa'īd bin Jubair has related from Ibn 'Abbās is to the effect: "The Holy Prophet prostrated himself in Sūrah Ṣuād and said: "The Prophet David (on whom be peace) had prostrated himself in order to express his repentance and we prostrate ourselves as a token of gratitude, because his repentance was accepted. (Nasā'ī) In the third tradition that Mujāhid has related from him, he says: "Allah has commanded the Holy Prophet in the Qur'ān: "These were the ones whom Allah had shown the Right Way: therefore, you should follow their way'." (Al-An'ām: 90) Now, since David was a Prophet and he had prostrated himself on this occasion, the Holy Prophet also prostrated himself here only to follow his way. (Bukhārī). These three are the statements of Hadrat Ibn 'Abbās; and Hadrat Abū Sa'īd Khudrī says: "The Holy Prophet once recited Sūrah Ṣuād in his address, and when he came to this verse, he descended from the pulpit and performed a prostration and the audience also did the same along with him. Then, on another occasion, he recited this same Sūrah and when the people heard this verse, they were ready to perform the prostration. The Holy Prophet said 'This is the repentance of a Prophet, but I see that you have got ready to perform the prostration' ——Saying this he descended from the pulpit and prostrated himself and the people also did the same." (Abū Da'ūd). Although these traditions do not provide any absolute argument to prove that it is obligatory to perform the prostration here, yet they prove at least that because the Holy Prophet generally performed a prostration on this occasion, it is in any case commendable to prostrate here.

Another thing that one notices in this verse is that Allah has used the words *kharra rākiʿan* (fell in *rukū'*) here, but all the commentators are agreed that this implies *kharra sājid-an* (fell in *sajdah*: prostration). On this very basis, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and his companions have expressed the opinion that one may perform only a *rukū'* instead of a *sajdah*, when one recites or hears being recited a verse requiring a *sajdah* in the Prayer or outside it. For when Allah has used the word *rukū'* to imply *sajdah*, it becomes obvious that *rukū'* can represent *sajdah*. Imām Khaṭṭābī, a Shāfe'ite jurist, also holds the same opinion. Though this opinion in itself is sound and reasonable, we do not find any precedent in the practices of the Holy Prophet and his Companions that they might have been content with performing a *rukū'* only instead of a *sajdah* on a verse requiring a *sajdah*. Therefore, one should act upon the view only when there is an obstruction in performing the *sajdah*; it would be wrong to make it a practice. Imām Abū Ḥanīfah and his companions themselves also did not intend that it should be made a practice; they only ruled that it was permissible

27. This shows that the Prophet David had certainly committed an error, and it was an error which bore some resemblance with the case of the ewes. Therefore, when he gave a decision on it, he at once realized that he was being put to the test. But the nature of the error was not such as could be forgiven, or if forgiven, it would have deposed him from his high rank. Allah Himself says: "When he fell down prostrate and repented, he was not only forgiven but his high rank in the world and the Hereafter also remained unaffected."

28. This is the warning that Allah gave the Prophet David on accepting his repentance along with giving him the good news of exalting his rank. This by itself shows that the error that he had committed contained an element of the desires of the flesh; it also pertained to the abuse of power and authority; and it was an act which was unworthy of a just and fair-minded ruler.

We are confronted with three questions here:

(1) What was the error that the Prophet David committed?

(2) Why has Allah made only tacit allusions to it instead of mentioning it openly and directly?

(3) What is its relevance to the present context?

The people who have studied the Bible (the Holy Book of the Jews and Christians) are not unaware that in this Book the Prophet David has been accused clearly of committing adultery with the wife of Uriah the Hittite and then marrying her after having Uriah intentionally slain in a battle. It has also been alleged that this same woman, who had surrendered herself to the Prophet David, while being another man's wife, was the mother of the Prophet Solomon. This story is found

with all its details in chapters 11 and 12 of the Second Book of Samuel in the Old Testament. It had been included in it centuries before the revelation of the Qur'ān. Any Jew or Christian who read his Holy Book anywhere in the world, or heard it read, was not only aware of this story but also believed in it as true. It spread through them, and even in the present time no book is written in the West on the history of the Israelites and the Hebrew religion, in which this charge against the Prophet David is not repeated. This well known story also contains the following:

"And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich *man* had exceeding many flocks and herds: But the poor *man* had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man' lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, *As* the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this *thing*, and because he had no pity. And Nathan said to David, Thou *art* the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if *that had* been too little, I would moredver have given unto thee such and such things. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife *to be* thy *wife*, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon." (2 Samuel, ch 12: 1-9).

When this story was so well known among the people there was no need that a detailed account of it should have been given in the Qur'ān, nor is it the way of Allah to mention such things openly in His Holy Book. That is why only tacit allusions have been made to it here as well as pointed out what the actual event was and what the people of the Book have turned it into. The actual event as one clearly understands from the aforesaid statement of the Qur'ān was:

"The Prophet David (peace be upon him) had only expressed this desire before Uriah (or whatever be the name of the man) that he should divorce his wife; as this desire had been expressed not by a common man but by an illustrious king and a great Prophet before a member of the public, the man was finding himself constrained to yield to it even in the absence of any compulsion. On this occasion, before the man could act as the Prophet David had desired, two righteous men of the nation suddenly made their appearance before David and

presented before him this matter in the form of an imaginary case. At first, the Prophet David thought it was a real case, and so gave his decision after hearing it. But as soon as he uttered the words of the decision, his conscience gave the warning that the parable precisely applied to the case between him and the person, and that the act which he was describing as an injustice had issued forth from his own person. As soon as he realized this, he fell down prostrate, repented and reversed his decision."

The question, as to how this event took the ugly shape as related in the Bible, also becomes obvious after a little consideration. It appears that the Prophet David had come to know of the unique qualities of the woman through some means and had started thinking that she should be the queen of the country instead of being the wife of an ordinary officer. Overwhelmed by the thought he expressed the desire before her husband that he should divorce her. He did not see any harm in it because it was not looked upon as anything improper among the Israelites. It was an ordinary thing among them that if a person happened to like the wife of another, he would freely request him to give her up for him. Nobody minded such a request, and often it so happened that friends would divorce their wives for each other's sake of their own accord, so that the other may marry her. However, when the Prophet David expressed this desire, he did not realize that the expression of such a desire could be without compulsion and coercion when expressed by a common man, but it could never be so when expressed by a king. When his attention was drawn to this aspect of the matter through a parable, he gave up his desire immediately, and the thing was forgotten. But afterwards when, without any desire or planning on his part, the woman's husband fell martyr on the battlefield, and he married her, the evil genius of the Jews started concocting stories and this mischievous mentality became even more acute after a section of the Israelites turned hostile to the Prophet Solomon. (Please see E.N. 56 of An-Naml). Under these motives the story was invented that the Prophet David, God forbid, had seen Uriah's wife washing herself from the roof of his palace. He had her called to his house and committed adultery with her and she had conceived. Then he had sent Uriah on the battle-front to fight the children of Ammon, and had commanded Joab, the army commander, to appoint him in the forefront of the battle where he should be killed. And when he was killed, he married his widow, and from the same woman the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) was born. The wicked people described all these false accusations in their "Holy Book", so that they should go on reading it generation after generation and slandering the two most illustrious men of their community, who were their greatest benefactors after the Prophet Moses.

A section of the commentators of the Qur'ān has almost entirely accepted these tales that have reached them through the Israelites. They have dropped only

that part of these traditions in which mention has been made of the accusation of adultery against the Prophet David and the woman's having conceived. The rest of the story as found in the traditions reproduced by them is the same as it was well known among the Israelites. Another group of the commentators has altogether denied that any such act was ever committed by the Prophet David, which bore any resemblance with the case of the ewes. Instead of this, they have put forward such interpretations of this story as are wholly baseless, unauthentic and without relevance to the context of the Qur'ān itself. But among the Muslim commentators themselves there are some who have accepted the truth and the facts of the story through the clear references made to it in the Qur'ān. Here are, for instance, some of their views:

Both Masrūq and Sa'īd bin Jubair have related this saying of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, "The only thing that the Prophet David did was that he expressed his desire before the woman' husband that he should give up his wife for him." *Ibn Jarīr).*

'Allāma Zamakhsharī writes in his commentary *Al-Kashshāf:* "The way Allah has narrated the story of the Prophet David indicates that he had only expressed his desire before the man that he should leave his wife for him."

'Allāma Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣās has expressed the opinion that the woman was not the other man's wedded wife but was only his betrothed. The Prophet David had also asked for the same woman's hand in marriage. This earned him Allah's displeasure, for he had asked for her hand in spite of the fact that another Muslim had already asked for her hand, and the Prophet David had several wives already with him in his house. *(Aḥkām al-Qur'ān).* Some other commentators also have expressed the same opinion, but this does not entirely conform to what the Qur'ān has said. The words of the suitor as related in the Qar'ān are to the effect: "I have only one ewe; he says: Give this ewe also in my charge." The Prophet David also said the same thing in his decision: "This person has certainly wronged you in demanding your ewe to be added to his ewes." This parable could apply to the case between the Prophet David and Uriah only in case the woman was the latter's wife. Had it been the case of asking for the woman's hand when another Muslim had already asked for her hand, the parable would have been like this: "I desired to have an ewe, and this man said: leave this also for me."

Qāḍī Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabi has discussed this question in detail in his *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* and concluded: "What actually happened was just that the Prophet David asked one of his men to leave his wife for him and made this demand seriously ...The Qur'ān does not say that the man gave up his wife on this demand and the Prophet David then married her and the Prophet Solomon was born of her womb ...What displeased Allah was that he asked the woman's

husband to leave her for him. This act, even if otherwise lawful, was unworthy of the office of Prophethood; that is why he earned Allah's displeasure and was admonished."

This commentary fits in well with the context in which this story has been told. A little consideration of the context shows that it has been related in the Qur'ān on this occasion for two objects. The first object is to exhort the Holy Prophet to patience, and for this purpose he has been addressed and told: "Have patience on what these people say against you, and remember Our servant David." That is, "You are being accused only of sorcery and lying, but Our servant David was even accused of adultery and having a person killed wilfully, by the wicked people; therefore, bear up against what you may have to hear from these people." The other object is to warn the disbelievers to the effect: "You are committing all sorts of excesses in the world with impunity, but the God in Whose Godhead you are committing these misdeeds does not spare anyone from being called to account. Even if a favourite and beloved servant of His happens to commit but a minor error, He calls him to strict accountability. For this very object the Holy Prophet has been asked: 'Tell them the story of Our servant David, who was a man of high character, but when he happened to commit sin, We did not even spare him but condemned him severely'."

In this regard, there is another misunderstanding which must also be removed. The suitor in his parable said that his brother had 99 ewes and he had only one ewe, which he was demanding from him. From this one gets the idea that perhaps the Prophet David had 99 wives, and by having another he wanted to make their number 100. But, in fact, it is not necessary that every minor part of the parable should be literally applicable to the case between the Prophet David and Uriah the Hittite. In common idiom the numbers ten, twenty, fifty, etc. are mentioned to express plurality and not to indicate the exact number of something. When a man tells another that he has told him something ten times over, he only means to stress that he has been told that thing over and over again. The same is also true here. By means of the parable the suitor wanted the Prophet David to realize that he already had several wives with him, and even then he desired to have the only wife of the other man. This same thing has been cited by the commentator Nīsābūrī from Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Basri: "The Prophet David did not have 99 wives: this is only a parable." (For a detailed and well-reasoned discussion of this story, see our book *Tafhīmāt*, vol. II, pp. 29-44).

29. That is, "We have not created anything in the world merely in sport and fun so that it may be without any wisdom and purpose and justice, and there may accrue no result from any act, good or bad." This is the conclusion of the

[Contd. on p. 360

حُبَّ الْخَيْرِ عَنْ ذِكْرِ رَبِّيْ ۚ حَتّٰى تَوَارَتْ بِالْحِجَابِ ﴿٣٢﴾ رُدُّوْهَا
عَلَيَّ ۖ فَطَفِقَ مَسْحًۢا بِالسُّوْقِ وَالْاَعْنَاقِ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا سُلَيْمٰنَ وَاَلْقَيْنَا
عَلٰى كُرْسِيِّهٖ جَسَدًا ثُمَّ اَنَابَ ﴿٣٤﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِيْ وَهَبْ لِيْ مُلْكًا لَّا يَنْۢبَغِيْ
لِاَحَدٍ مِّنْۢ بَعْدِيْ ۚ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَسَخَّرْنَا لَهُ الرِّيْحَ تَجْرِيْ بِاَمْرِهٖ
رُخَآءً حَيْثُ اَصَابَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَالشَّيٰطِيْنَ كُلَّ بَنَّآءٍ وَّغَوَّاصٍ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَّاٰخَرِيْنَ مُقَرَّنِيْنَ
فِي الْاَصْفَادِ ﴿٣٨﴾ هٰذَا عَطَآؤُنَا فَامْنُنْ اَوْ اَمْسِكْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَاِنَّ لَهٗ عِنْدَنَا
لَزُلْفٰى وَحُسْنَ مَاٰبٍ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَاذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَآ اَيُّوْبَ ۘ اِذْ نَادٰى رَبَّهٗٓ اَنِّيْ مَسَّنِيَ الشَّيْطٰنُ
بِنُصْبٍ وَّعَذَابٍ ﴿٤١﴾ اُرْكُضْ بِرِجْلِكَ ۚ هٰذَا مُغْتَسَلٌۢ بَارِدٌ وَّشَرَابٌ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَوَهَبْنَا لَهٗٓ
اَهْلَهٗ وَمِثْلَهُمْ مَّعَهُمْ رَحْمَةً مِّنَّا وَذِكْرٰى لِاُولِي الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَخُذْ بِيَدِكَ
ضِغْثًا فَاضْرِبْ بِّهٖ وَلَا تَحْنَثْ ۗ اِنَّا وَجَدْنٰهُ صَابِرًا ۚ نِعْمَ الْعَبْدُ ۚ اِنَّهٗٓ اَوَّابٌ ﴿٤٤﴾
وَاذْكُرْ عِبٰدَنَآ اِبْرٰهِيْمَ وَاِسْحٰقَ وَيَعْقُوْبَ اُولِي الْاَيْدِيْ وَالْاَبْصَارِ ﴿٤٥﴾ اِنَّآ
اَخْلَصْنٰهُمْ بِخَالِصَةٍ ذِكْرَى الدَّارِ ﴿٤٦﴾ وَاِنَّهُمْ عِنْدَنَا لَمِنَ الْمُصْطَفَيْنَ الْاَخْيَارِ ﴿٤٧﴾
وَاذْكُرْ اِسْمٰعِيْلَ وَالْيَسَعَ وَذَا الْكِفْلِ ۗ وَكُلٌّ مِّنَ الْاَخْيَارِ ﴿٤٨﴾ هٰذَا ذِكْرٌ ۗ وَاِنَّ
لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ لَحُسْنَ مَاٰبٍ ﴿٤٩﴾ جَنّٰتِ عَدْنٍ مُّفَتَّحَةً لَّهُمُ الْاَبْوَابُ ﴿٥٠﴾ مُتَّكِـِٕيْنَ فِيْهَا
يَدْعُوْنَ فِيْهَا بِفَاكِهَةٍ كَثِيْرَةٍ وَّشَرَابٍ ﴿٥١﴾ وَعِنْدَهُمْ قٰصِرٰتُ الطَّرْفِ اَتْرَابٌ ﴿٥٢﴾
هٰذَا مَا تُوْعَدُوْنَ لِيَوْمِ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٥٣﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَا لَرِزْقُنَا مَا لَهٗ مِنْ نَّفَادٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ هٰذَا ۗ
وَاِنَّ لِلطّٰغِيْنَ لَشَرَّ مَاٰبٍ ﴿٥٥﴾ جَهَنَّمَ ۚ يَصْلَوْنَهَا ۚ فَبِئْسَ الْمِهَادُ ﴿٥٦﴾ هٰذَا ۙ فَلْيَذُوْقُوْهُ
حَمِيْمٌ وَّغَسَّاقٌ ﴿٥٧﴾ وَّاٰخَرُ مِنْ شَكْلِهٖٓ اَزْوَاجٌ ﴿٥٨﴾ هٰذَا فَوْجٌ مُّقْتَحِمٌ مَّعَكُمْ ۚ لَا
مَرْحَبًۢا بِهِمْ ۚ اِنَّهُمْ صَالُوا النَّارِ ﴿٥٩﴾ قَالُوْا بَلْ اَنْتُمْ ۚ لَا مَرْحَبًۢا بِكُمْ ۚ اَنْتُمْ قَدَّمْتُمُوْهُ

And to David We gave (a son like) Solomon,[32] an excellent servant, who turned to his Lord over and over again. Worthy of mention is the occasion when, one evening, well-bred horses were presented before him,[33] and he said, "I have adopted the love of this wealth[34] because of the remembrance of my Lord." So, when the horses disappeared from sight, (he commanded:) "Bring them back to me." Then he began to stroke their shanks and necks.[35] And (note that) We put Solomon too to the test and placed a mere body on his throne. Then he turned (to Allah), and said, "My Lord, forgive me and grant me a kingdom as may belong to no one else after me. Indeed, Thou art the real Giver."[36] So, We subdued to him the wind, which blew gently at his bidding wherever he directed it;[37] and We subjected to him the satans: all kinds of builders and divers and others who were bound in chains.[38] (We said to him:) "This is Our gift: you may give to whomsoever you will and withhold from whomsoever you will, without reckoning."[39] Surely, he has a place of nearness to Us and an excellent resort.[40] 30-40

And make mention of Our servant Job[41] when he called upon his Lord, (saying), "Satan has afflicted me with great distress and torment."[42] (We commanded him:) "Stamp your foot on the ground: this is cool water for washing and drinking."[43] We restored to him his family and as many more with them,[44] as a mercy from Ourself, and an admonition for the men of understanding.[45] (And We said to him:) "Take a handful of straw and strike therewith: do not break your oath."[46] We found him patient, an excellent servant, who turned to his Lord over and over again.[47] 41-44

And make mention of Our servants, Abraham and Isaac and Jacob: they were men of great power and insight.[48] We had chosen them because of a pure quality —the remembrance of the abode of the Hereafter.[49] Indeed, they are, in Our sight, included among the chosen, the righteous. And make mention of Ishmael and Elisha[50] and Dhul-Kifl:[51] they were all of the righteous. 45-48

This was an admonition. (Now listen:) for the righteous there is indeed an excellent resort: everlasting Gardens whose gates shall remain open to them.[52] Therein they shall be reclining, calling for plentiful of fruit and drink, and beside them there will be modest wives 49-54

of equal age.[53] These are the things which you are being promised for the Day of Reckoning. This is Our provision: it will never come to an end.

55-60 This is (the recompense) for the righteous. And for the rebellious, there is a most evil home—Hell in which they will burn, the worst abode! This is for them: so let them taste boiling water and pus blood[54] and other things of the same sort. (When they see their followers coming towards Hell, they will say to one another:) "This is a host coming in to you: there is no welcome for them: they will burn in the Fire." They will reply, "Nay, but you yourselves are burning: there is no welcome for you (either): it is you who have brought us to this end. What an evil resting-place!"

Contd. from p.357]

preceding discourse as well as an introduction to the following theme. The object of this statement as a conclusion to the discourse is to impress the following truth: "Man has not been left to wander about at will in the world, nor is this world a lawless kingdom that one may do here whatever one likes with impunity." As an introduction to the following theme, the sentence is meant to say: "The person who does not believe in the meting out of the rewards and punishments, and thinks that both the good and the evil people will ultimately end up in the dust after death and that nobody will be called to account, nor will anyone be rewarded for good or punished for evil, in fact, regards the world as a plaything and its Creator a senseless player, and thinks that by creating the world and man in it, the Creator of the Universe has committed a useless thing. The same thing has been stated in different ways at several places in the Qur'ān, e.g. "Did you think that We created you without any purpose, and that you would never be brought back to Us?" (Al-Mu'minūn: 115).

"We have not created the heavens and the earth and whatever lies between them merely in sport: We have created them with the truth, but most of them do not know. For the resurrection of them all the appointed time is the Day of Decision." (Ad-Dukhān: 38-40).

30. That is, "Do you think it is reasonable and fair that both the pious and the wicked should be treated alike in the end? Do you regard this concept as satisfying that the pious man should not get any reward for his piety and the wrongdoer should not receive any punishment for his sins? Obviously, if there is to be no Hereafter, and there is to be no accountability and no rewards and no punishments for human acts, it negates both Allah's wisdom and His justice, and

the entire order of the Universe becomes a blind order. On this assumption there remains no motive for doing good and no deterrent against evil. God forbid, if the Godhead of God should be such a lawless kingdom, the one who leads a pious life in the face of all kinds of hardships in the world and endeavours to reform the people, would be a foolish person, and the one who gains benefits by committing all kinds of excesses and enjoys sinful pleasures of life, would be a wise man."

31. The Qur'ān has been called a blessed Book in the sense that it is highly useful for man: it gives him the best guidance to improve and reform his life: by following it he has only to gain and nothing to lose.

32. The Prophet Solomon has been mentioned already at the following places: Al-Baqarah: 102, Banī Isrā'īl: 5, Al-Anbiyā': 78-82, An-Naml: 15-44, Sabā: 12-14.

33. The words *as-sāfināt-ul-jiyād* in the original imply the horses, which are very calm and quiet when they stand, and very fast-moving when they run.

34. The Arabic word *khair* in the Text is used for abundance of wealth as well as for horses metaphorically. As the Prophet Solomon had kept these horses for fighting in the way of Allah, he called them "*khair*".

35. There is a difference of opinion among the commentators about the translation and commentary of these verses.

One section of them interprets them as follows:

The Prophet Solomon became so absorbed in reviewing the horses and watching their races, that he forgot to offer his 'Aṣr Prayer, or according to some others, to perform certain devotions that he used to perform before the sunset. Then when the sun went down, he commanded that the horses be brought back, and when they came back, the Prophet Solomon started slashing them with the sword, or in other words, slaughtering them as a sacrifice to Allah, because they had caused him to become heedless of the remembrance of Allah. Accordingly, the verses have been translated thus: "And he said: I so preferred the love of this wealth that I became heedless of the remembrance (the 'Aṣr Prayer, or the special devotions) of my Lord till (the sun) went down (behind the veil of the west). (Then he commanded :) bring them back, (and when the horses came back) he began to stroke their shanks and necks (with the sword)." Although this commentary has been given by some major commentators, it is not plausible for the reason that in this the commentator has to add three things from himself, which have no basis whatever. In the first place, he has to assume that the Prophet Solomon's 'Aṣr Prayer was lost in the occupation, or some special devotions that he used to perform at that time, whereas the words of the Qur'ān are only to the effect: "I so preferred this wealth that I became heedless of the remembrance of

my Lord." In these there is no ground for taking any word for the 'Aṣr Prayer or the special devotions. Secondly, he also assumes that the sun set, whereas there is no mention of the sun whatever. On the contrary, when one reads the words *ḥattā tawārat bil-ḥijāb* (when they disappeared from sight) one's mind automatically turns to *as-sāfināt ul-jiyād* (well-bred horses) which have been mentioned in the preceding verse. Thirdly, he also has to assume that the Prophet Solomon did not simply stroke the shins and necks of the horses with the hand but stroked them with the sword, whereas the Qur'ān does not contain the words *masḥan-bis-saif* or any other pointer from which stroking may be taken to mean stroking with the sword. We have a fundamental difference with this kind of the commentary. In our opinion, only in four cases it would be right to interpret the words of the Qur'ān in other than their normally accepted meaning: (1) Either there should be a pointer to it in the words of the Qur'ān itself; or (2) there should be an allusion to it at some other place in the Qur'ān; or (3) an explanation of it should be afforded by some authentic *Ḥadīth;* or (4) it should have some other reliable source, e.g., if it pertains to history, there should be an historical evidence to support it; if it pertains to the manifestations of the universe, there should be authentic scientific knowledge to substantiate it; and if it pertains to the *Sharī'ah* values, the sources of Islamic law should explain it. In the absence of any of these, we do not think it is right to invent a story on the basis of one's own imagination and add it to the words of the Qur'ān.

One section of the commentators has differed a little from the above translation and commentary. They say that the pronoun in both *ḥattā tawārat bil-ḥijāb* and *ruddū-hā 'alayya* turns only to the sun. That is, when the 'Aṣr Prayer was lost and the sun went down behind the veil of the west, the Prophet Solomon said to the workers of destiny: "Turn the sun back so that the 'Aṣr time comes back for me to offer the Prayer." So, the sun retreated and he performed his Prayer. But this commentary is even more unacceptable than the previously mentioned one not because Allah is powerless to bring the sun back, but because Allah has made no mention of it anywhere. On the contrary, if such a wonderful miracle had actually been worked for the sake of the Prophet Solomon, it would certainly be worthy of mention. Moreover, if the extraordinary event of the returning of the sun after having set had actually taken place, the history of the world would never be without it. In support of this commentary these commentators present some *Ahadith* also in order to prove that the returning of the sun after having set is not a rare event that happened only once, but it has happened several times. There is the mention of bringing the sun back in connection with the Holy Prophet's Ascension (mi'rāj); the sun was also brought back on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench for the Holy Prophet, and also for Ḥaḍrat 'Ali, when the Holy Prophet was sleeping with his head in Ḥaḍrat Ali's lap

and his 'Aṣr Prayer was lost: then the Holy Prophet had prayed for the return of the sun and it had returned. But the reasoning from these traditions is even weaker than the commentary in support of which they have been presented. Ibn Taimiyyah has proved as fabricated the tradition about Ḥaḍrat 'Alī after a detailed discussion of its chains and transmitters. Imām Ahmad says it has no basis, and Ibn Jauzī says that it is without any doubt a forged tradition. The tradition of the sun's being brought back on the occasion of the Battle of the Trench also is weak according to some traditionists and fabricated according to others. As far as the tradition regarding the event of the Ascension is concerned, the truth about it is that when the Holy Prophet was describing what had happened in the Night of Ascension, before the disbelievers of Makkah, they asked for a proof of it. The Holy Prophet replied that on the way from Jerusalem he had seen a caravan at such and such a place, which had met with such and such an accident. When asked as to when that caravan would reach Makkah, the Holy Prophet named the day. When the day came, the people of the Quraish waited for the caravan all day till the sun began to set. On this occasion the Holy Prophet prayed that the sun should not set till the caravan had arrived. So, the caravan actually arrived before the sunset. Some reporters even have stated that the day on that occasion had been enhanced by an hour, and the sun had stood still for that long. The question is: Are such traditions sufficient evidence for the proof of such an extraordinary event? As we have said above, the returning of the sun, or its standing still for an hour, is no ordinary event. Had such an event actually taken place, it would have become well known the world over. Its mention and narration could not remain restricted to only a few reporters.

The third section of the commentators interprets these verses as any unbiased person would interpret them from these words. According to this commentary, what actually happened was this: When a squadron of fine, well-bred horses was presented before the Prophet Solomon, he said: "I love this wealth not for the sake of personal glory or desire but for the cause of raising the Word of my Lord." Then he ordered that the horses run a race, and they disappeared from sight. Then he ordered that they be brought back, and when they were brought back, according to Ibn 'Abbās: "He started passing his hand on their necks and shanks with love." This same commentary is correct in our opinion, because it corresponds to the words of the Qur'ān, and for the sake of the full meaning, nothing needs to be added to it, which may neither be in the Qur'ān, nor in any authentic *Ḥadīth*, nor in the Israelite history.

Besides, one should also note that Allah has narrated this event immediately after using epithets like *ni'm al-'abd, inna-hū awwāb* (an excellent servant, who turned to His Lord over and over again) for the Prophet Solomon. This clearly shows that the object is to relate this message: Behold, what a good

servant of Ours he was! He loved the means of kingly pomp and glory not for the sake of the world but for Our sake! After watching and reviewing his grand cavalry he did not boast of his power and grandeur like the worldly rulers but even at that time he remembered only Us.

36. In view of the contest, the real object here is to relate this event; the preceding verses are an introduction to it. Just as above this, first the Prophet David was praised, then the event narrated by which he was put to temptation, then it was said that Allah Almighty does not spare even such a beloved servant from accountability, then about his noble nature it was said that as soon as he was warned of the temptation, he repented and bowed before Allah and withheld himself from the act, so also here the sequence is like this: First, the Prophet Solomon's high rank and his deep sense of devotion has been mentioned, then it is said that he also was put to the test, then it has been stated that when a mere body was placed on his throne, he immediately felt warned on his error, and pleading the forgiveness of his Lord, withdrew from the act, because of which he was involved in the temptation. In other words, Allah by means of these two stories wants to impress two things upon the reader simultaneously: (1) Not to speak of the common men, even high-ranking Prophets were not spared from His strict accountability; and (2) the right attitude for man is not to brag and feel proud after committing an error, but to bow down humbly before his Lord as soon as he realizes his sin. It was the result of this attitude that Allah not only forgave the mistakes of those illustrious men but blessed them with still more favours and kindness.

Here, the question again arises as to what was the temptation in which the Prophet Solomon was involved; what is the meaning of placing a mere body on his throne, and what was the nature of the warning on the occurrence of which he repented? In reply to this the commentators have adopted four different points of view:

One section of them has related a long story whose details are disputed, but their resume is this: The error committed by the Prophet Solomon was either that one of his wives continued to worship the idols in the palace for forty days and he remained unaware of it, or that he remained confined to his residence for a few days and did not attend to redressing of the oppressed people's grievances. For this he was punished as follows: A satan somehow made away with his ring by which he ruled over the jinns, men and wind. As soon as he lost the ring he was deprived of his powers and he remained wandering from place to place for forty days; in the interval the satan continued to rule in the guise of Solomon. The placing of a mere body on Solomon's throne implied this very satan, who had sat on his throne. Some people have gone to the extent to say that during that period even the chastity of the women in the royal household did not remain safe from

the satan. At last from his conduct the ministers and the chiefs and the scholars of the court began to doubt that he was not Solomon. Therefore, when they opened the Torah before him, he fled. On the way the ring fell from his hand in the sea, or he cast it into the sea himself, and a fish swallowed it. Then, somehow the Prophet Solomon came by the fish. When in order to cook it, he cut open its belly he found his ring in it. Then, no sooner did he get the ring than the jinns and men presented themselves humbly before him.—— This whole story, from the beginning to the end, is nonsensical and absurd, which the converts from among the Jews and Christians took from the Talmud and other Israelite traditions and spread it among the Muslims. It is strange that some of our well known scholars took these traditions as authentic and cited them as the explanation of the allusions of the Qur'ān, whereas neither is there any truth in Solomon's ring, nor could his glorious works be attributed to any ring, nor had the satans been given the power that they might disguise themselves as Prophets and mislead the people, nor can it be imagined about Allah that He would punish a Prophet for an error in such a manner as to enable a satan to corrupt and destroy a whole community, disguised as a prophet. The Qur'ān itself repudiates this commentary. In the verses that follow Allah says: When Solomon met with the trial, and he asked Our forgiveness for it, then We subdued the wind and the satans to him. But, on the contrary, according to the above commentary, the satans were already under his control by virtue of the ring. It is strange that the scholars who have made this commentary did not care to consider what the subsequent verses say.

The second section of them says that a son was born to the Prophet Solomon after twenty years. The satans feared that if he became king after Solomon, they would continue to remain slaves as they were under him. Therefore, they plotted to kill him. When Solomon came to know of this plot, he hid the child in the clouds so that he was brought up there. This was the temptation in which he was involved; he placed reliance on the protection of the clouds instead of having trust in Allah. For this he was punished in this way that the child died and fell on his throne as a mere body .... This tale also is baseless and is expressly against the Qur'ān, for in this also it has been assumed that the winds and satans were already under the Prophet Solomon's control, whereas the Qur'ān in clear words has stated their subjection to be an event that took place after the trial.

The third section says that the Prophet Solomon one day swore that he would go in to his 70 wives that night, and from each a warrior would be born, who would fight in the cause of Allah, but while he said this he did not say: *In sha'Allah:* if Allah so wills. Consequently, only one wife conceived and from her also a defective child was born, whom the midwife brought and placed on his throne. This *Ḥadīth* has been reported by Ḥadrat Abū Harairah from the Holy

Prophet and it has been related by Bukhārī and Muslim and other traditionists in several ways. In Bukhārī itself this tradition has been related at different places in different ways. At one place the number of the wives has been stated as 60 and at others 70 or 90 or 99 or 100. As far as the chains of the transmitters are concerned, most of the traditions have strong chains, and their authenticity cannot be disputed from the point of view of the principles of reporting. But the subject-matter of the *Hadith is* patently against reason, and proclaims aloud that such a thing could not have been said by the Holy Prophet, as reported. But, on the contrary, he might have probably mentioned it as an example of the foolish and nonsensical tale-telling of the Jews, and the hearer might have misunderstood that the Holy Prophet himself had stated it as an event. To force the people to accept such traditions only on the strength of their chains of transmitters would be making religion a matter of mockery and jest. Everyone can calculate for himself that even in the longest night of winter the interval between the 'Isha' and the Fajr Prayers cannot be of more than ten to eleven hours. If the minimum number of the wives be 60, it would mean that the Prophet Solomon (peace be upon him) went on having intercourse with them continuously for 10 to 11 hours that night at the rate of six wives per hour, without having a moment's rest. Is it practically possible? And can it be expected that the Holy Prophet might have related it as an event? Then in the *Hadith* nowhere has it been said that the body that had been placed on Solomon's throne, as stated in the Qur'ān, implied the malformed child. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that the Holy Prophet had narrated this event as a commentary of this verse. Furthermore, though it is understandable why the Prophet Solomon asked for Allah's forgiveness on the birth of the child, one fails to understand why, along with the prayer for forgiveness, he prayed: "My Lord, grant me a kingdom as may belong to no one else after me."

Another commentary which Imām Rāzī has preferred is this: The Prophet Solomon was afflicted with a serious disease, or on account of an impending danger his body had been reduced to a mere skeleton. But this commentary also does not conform to the words of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān says: "We put Solomon to the test and placed a mere body on his throne. Then he turned (to Allah)." From these words no one can understand that the mere body implied the body of the Prophet Solomon himself. They clearly show that putting to the test implied some error that he happened to commit. On this, the way he was given the warning was that a mere body was placed on his throne, and when he realized his error he turned to Allah.

As a matter of fact, this is one of the most difficult places of the Qur'ān, and we do not find any indisputable ground for giving a definite and absolute commentary of it. But if the words of the Prophet Solomon's prayer: "My Lord, forgive me, and grant me a kingdom as may belong to no one else after me," are

read in the light of the Israelite history, it appears that probably he cherished in his heart the desire that his son should succeed him on the throne so that His kingdom and sovereignty should continue in his own race after him. This same thing has been called a "temptation" for him by Allah, and he realized this when his heir Rehoboam grew up into an unworthy young man, whose ugly manners clearly foretold that he would not be able to sustain the mighty kingdom of the Prophets David and Solomon (peace be upon them) even for a few days. "Placing a mere body on his throne" probably means that the son whom he wanted to succeed him on the throne, was an unworthy person. Therefore, he restrained his desire, asked for Allah's forgiveness and prayed that the kingdom should end with him, and he would curb his desire to have it continued in his dynasty. The Israelite history also shows the same thing. The Prophet Solomon did not make any will about his successor, nor made it binding for the people to obey a particular person. After him his ministers put Rehoboam on the throne, but not long afterwards ten tribes of Israel took northern Palestine and broke away, and only the tribe of Judah remained loyal to the throne of Jerusalem.

37. For explanation, see Sūrah Al-Anbiyā': 81 and E.N. 74 thereof. However, there is one thing which requires further explanation here. In Sūrah AlAnbiyā' where mention has been made of subjecting the wind for the Prophet Solomon, it has been described as "the strongly blowing wind," but here "which blew gently at his bidding". This means that the wind in itself was strong and violent as is needed for moving the sailing-ships but it had been made gentle for the Prophet Solomon in the sense that it blew whither-so-ever he wanted it to blow for his commercial fleets.

38. For explanation, see Al-Anbiyā': 82, An-Naml: 17, 39 and the E.N.'s thereof. "The satans" imply the jinns, and "the satans bound in chains" imply the serving satans, who were fettered and imprisoned as a punishment for making mischief. It is not necessary that the fetters and chains in which those satans were bound might be made of iron and they might appear as bound in them like the human prisoners. In any case, they were imprisoned in a manner that they could neither escape nor were able to commit further mischief.

39. This verse can have three meanings: (1) "This is Our unlimited gift: you have the authority to give of it freely to whomsoever you like and keep it from whomsoever you like;" (2) "this is Our gift: you may give of it to whomsoever you like and keep it from whomsoever you like: you will not be called to account for giving it or keeping it from the people;" and (3) Another meaning of it given by some commentators is: The satans have been placed entirely under your control: you may set free whomsoever you like and restrain whomsoever you like: you will not be held accountable for this."

40. Here, the object is to tell that just as a servant's arrogance causes Allah's displeasure and wrath, so does his humility earns Allah's pleasure and approval for him. If a servant commits an error and becomes even more arrogant when warned, he is led to the same fate as is being mentioned in connection with the story of Adam and Satan below. Contrary to this, if a servant happens to commit an error and he repents and bows down before his Lord humbly, he is blessed with such bounties as the Prophets David and Solomon were blessed with. The prayer that Solomon had made after seeking Allah's forgiveness, was literally fulfilled and Allah actually granted him a kingdom as had neither been granted to anyone before him nor bestowed on anyone after him. Having control over the winds and the jinns is an extraordinary power, which has been granted only to the Prophet Solomon and to none else in human history.

41. This is the fourth place in the Qur'ān where the Prophet Job has been mentioned. Before this he has been mentioned in An-Nisā: 163, Al-An'ām: 84 and Al-Anbiyā': 83-84 above. For the details about him, please see E.N.'s 76 to 79 of Sūrah Al-Anbiyā'.

42. This does not mean that Satan has afflicted me with illness and brought distress upon me, but it means: "The affliction of the severities of illness, the loss of property and wealth, and the desertion of the near and dear ones, is not so great a torment and trouble for me as the temptation of Satan, who is exploiting my condition to despair me of my Lord and wants that I should turn ungrateful to Him and become desperate and impatient." This meaning of the lamentation of the Prophet Job is preferable for two reasons: (1) According to the Qur'ān, Allah has granted Satan only the power of temptation: He has not given him the power to afflict with illness the worshippers of Allah and compel them to deviate from the way of service and obedience by causing them physical ailments. (2) In Surah Al-Anbiyā' when the Prophet Job puts before Allah his complaint about illness and disease, he does not mention Satan at all, but says only: "I have been afflicted with the disease and You are most Merciful."

43. That is, "As soon as he stamped his foot on the ground, a spring gushed forth by Allah's Command, drinking from which and washing with which was the remedy of the Prophet Job's disease." Most probably he was suffering from some skin disease. According to the Bible also: "Satan smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown." (Job, 2: 7).

44. Traditions show that during this illness everyone except his wife had deserted the Prophet Job; even his children had turned away. To this Allah has alluded, saying: "When We granted him health, the whole family returned to him, and then We granted him even more children."

45. That is, in it there is a lesson for an intelligent man: "Neither should man forget God and become arrogant in good times nor despair of Him in bad times: Good fortune and misfortune are entirely in the Power of Allah, the One. If He wills He can change the best times of man into the worst times and the worst into the best. Therefore, a wise person should trust in Him alone in all sorts of circumstances and should pin all his hopes on Him."

46. A careful study of these words shows that the Prophet Job during illness had been annoyed with somebody (according to traditions, his wife) and sworn to beat him or her by giving so many stripes. When Allah restored him to health and the anger of the illness was gone, he became worried as how to fulfil the oath. For if he carried out the oath, he would be inflicting pain on an innocent person, and if he did not, he would be committing the sin of breaking the oath. Allah took him out of the difficult situation by the Command: "Take a broom containing as many sticks of straw as the number of the stripes you had sworn to give; then strike the person just once with the broom so as both to fulfil your oath and to avoid giving undue trouble to the person concerned."

Some jurists hold the view that this concession was specially meant for the Prophet Job, and some others think that other people also can take advantage of it. The first view has been cited by Ibn 'Asākir from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās and by Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣās from Mujāhid, and Imām Mālik also held the same view. The second view has been adopted by Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, Imām Abū Yūsuf, Imām Muḥammad, Imām Zufar and Imām Shāfe'ī. They say that if a person, for instance, has sworn to give his servant ten stripes, and afterwards combines ten whips and strikes him only once in a way that some part of each whip strikes him, his oath will be fulfilled.

Several *Aḥādīth* show that the Holy Prophet, in order to inflict the prescribed punishment on a fornicator who was too ill or too weak to receive a hundred stripes, also adopted the method taught in this verse. 'Allāma Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣās has related a tradition on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Saīd bin Sa'd bin 'Ubādah to the effect that a person from the tribe of Banī Sā'idah happened to commit fornication, and he was a sick man and a mere skeleton. Thereupon the Holy Prophet commanded: "Take a branch of the palm tree with a hundred twigs on it and strike him therewith once and for all." *(Aḥkām al Qur'ān)*. In Musnad Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Nasā'i, Ibn Mājah, Ṭabarānī, 'Abdur Razzāq and other collections of *Ḥadīth* also there are several *Aḥādīth* supporting it, which conclusively proves that the Holy Prophet had devised this very method for inflicting the prescribed punishment on a sick or weak person. However, the jurists lay the condition that some part of every twig or piece of straw must strike the culprit, and even if only one stroke, it must also hurt the culprit; that is, it is not enough just to touch him but he must be struck with it.

Here the question also arises that if a person has sworn to do something and afterwards he comes to know that it is improper, then what should he do? There is a tradition from the Holy Prophet to the effect that in such a case one should do only that which is better, and the same is the atonement for the oath. Another tradition from him says that one should do something good instead of the improper thing and should atone for his oath. This verse supports this second tradition, for if keeping oneself from an improper thing had been the atonement for the oath, Allah would not have told the Prophet Job to strike the broom once and fulfil his oath, but would have said: "Do not do this improper thing, and your restraint itself is the atonement for your oath."

This verse also shows that it is not necessary to carry out immediately what one has sworn to do. The Prophet Job had sworn an oath in the state of illness, and fulfilled it after complete recovery, and not immediately even after the recovery.

Some people have regarded this verse as an argument for practising pretence under the *Sharī'ah*. No doubt it was a pretence which the Prophet Job had been taught but it had been taught not for evading anything obligatory but for avoiding an evil. Therefore, in the *Sharī'ah* those pretences only are lawful, which are adopted to remove injustice and sin and evil from one's own self or from another person, otherwise practice of pretence is highly sinful if it is employed for the purpose of making the unlawful lawful, or evading the obligatory duties and righteous acts. For a person who practises pretence for such impious objects, in fact, tries to deceive God. For example, a person who transfers his wealth to another before the completion of a year on it, only for the purpose of evading payment of the *Zakāt* on it, not only evades an obligatory duty, but also thinks that Allah will get deceived by this trickery and will consider him as relieved of his duty. The jurists who have mentioned such pretences in their books, do not mean that one should practise them in order to evade the *Sharī'ah* obligations, but they mean to point out that a judge or ruler cannot take to task a person who escapes the consequences of a sin under a legal cover for his affair is with Allah.

47. The Prophet Job has been mentioned in this context to impress the reader that when the righteous servants of Allah are afflicted with hardships and calamities, they do not complain of their distress to Allah but endure the tests and trials set by Him patiently and invoke only Him for help. They do not despair of God and do not turn to others for help if their distress is not removed after making invocations to God for some time, but they believe that whatever they will get, they will get only from Allah. Therefore, they remain hopeful of His mercy, no matter how long they might have to suffer the distress. That is why they are honoured and blessed with the favours and bounties with which the Prophet Job was honoured and blessed in his life. So much so that if they get involved in a

moral dilemma due to a state of agitation, Allah shows them a way out of it in order to save them from evil, as He showed a way to the Prophet Job.

48. The actual words in the Text mean "Those who possessed the hands and the insights." The hand, as we have explained above, implies power and capability. To describe these Prophets as "men of great power and insight" means that they were practical men: they possessed great power to obey Allah and to abstain from sin, and they had made great efforts for raising the Word of Allah in the world. "Insight" does not mean eye-sight but the vision of the heart and mind. They could see and recognize the Truth: they did not live like the blind in the world, but they walked the straight path of guidance, in the full light of knowledge, with open eyes. In these words, there is a subtle allusion to this also that the people who commit evil, and have gone astray, are in fact, deprived of the hands as well as the eyes. He only, who works in the cause of Allah, possesses the hands, and he, who distinguishes between the light of the Truth and the darkness of falsehood, only possesses the eyes.

49. That is, "The real cause for their success and eminence was that there was no tinge of worldliness in their character: all their efforts, mental and physical, were directed towards the Hereafter. They remembered it themselves and urged others also to remember it. That is why Allah exalted them to such high ranks as have never been attained by those who remained absorbed in earning worldly wealth and prosperity. In this regard, one should also keep in view the subtle point that Allah here has only used the word *ad-dār* (that abode, or the real abode) for the Hereafter. This is meant to impress the truth that this world is no abode for man, but only a passage and a rest house, which man has to leave in any case. The real abode is the abode of the Hereafter. He who works to adorn that abode is the man of insight and such a one should inevitably be a commendable person in the sight of Allah. As for him who in order to adorn his transitory abode in this rest house behaves in a way as to ruin his real abode in the Hereafter, is foolish, and naturally cannot be liked by Allah.

50. The Prophet Al-Yas'a has been mentioned only twice in the Qur'ān, in Sūrah Al-An'ām: 86 and here, without any detail about him; only his name appears in the chain of the Prophets. He was one of the major Prophets of Israel, belonged to Abel Meholah, a place on the river Jordan, and is well known as Elisha among the Jews and Christians. When the Prophet Elijah (peace be upon

[Contd. on p. 373

لَنَا ۚ فَبِئْسَ الْقَرَارُ ﴿٦٠﴾ قَالُوا رَبَّنَا مَنْ قَدَّمَ لَنَا هٰذَا فَزِدْهُ عَذَابًا ضِعْفًا فِي
النَّارِ ﴿٦١﴾ وَقَالُوا مَا لَنَا لَا نَرَىٰ رِجَالًا كُنَّا نَعُدُّهُمْ مِنَ الْأَشْرَارِ ﴿٦٢﴾ أَتَّخَذْنَاهُمْ
سِخْرِيًّا أَمْ زَاغَتْ عَنْهُمُ الْأَبْصَارُ ﴿٦٣﴾ إِنَّ ذٰلِكَ لَحَقٌّ تَخَاصُمُ أَهْلِ النَّارِ ﴿٦٤﴾
قُلْ إِنَّمَا أَنَا مُنْذِرٌ ۖ وَمَا مِنْ إِلٰهٍ إِلَّا اللَّهُ الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ﴿٦٥﴾ رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ
الْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا الْعَزِيزُ الْغَفَّارُ ﴿٦٦﴾ قُلْ هُوَ نَبَؤٌا عَظِيمٌ ﴿٦٧﴾ أَنْتُمْ عَنْهُ مُعْرِضُونَ ﴿٦٨﴾
مَا كَانَ لِيَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ بِالْمَلَإِ الْأَعْلَىٰ إِذْ يَخْتَصِمُونَ ﴿٦٩﴾ إِنْ يُوحَىٰ إِلَيَّ إِلَّا أَنَّمَا
أَنَا نَذِيرٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٧٠﴾ إِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰئِكَةِ إِنِّي خَالِقٌ بَشَرًا مِنْ طِينٍ ﴿٧١﴾ فَإِذَا
سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سٰجِدِينَ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَسَجَدَ الْمَلٰئِكَةُ
كُلُّهُمْ أَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٧٣﴾ إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ ۖ اسْتَكْبَرَ وَكَانَ مِنَ الْكٰفِرِينَ ﴿٧٤﴾ قَالَ يٰإِبْلِيسُ مَا
مَنَعَكَ أَنْ تَسْجُدَ لِمَا خَلَقْتُ بِيَدَيَّ ۖ أَسْتَكْبَرْتَ أَمْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الْعَالِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾
قَالَ أَنَا خَيْرٌ مِنْهُ ۖ خَلَقْتَنِي مِنْ نَارٍ وَخَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ طِينٍ ﴿٧٦﴾ قَالَ فَاخْرُجْ مِنْهَا
فَإِنَّكَ رَجِيمٌ ﴿٧٧﴾ وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكَ لَعْنَتِي إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ ﴿٧٨﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ فَأَنْظِرْنِي إِلَىٰ
يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾ قَالَ فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْمُنْظَرِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ ﴿٨١﴾ قَالَ
فَبِعِزَّتِكَ لَأُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٨٢﴾ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمُ الْمُخْلَصِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ قَالَ فَالْحَقُّ
وَالْحَقَّ أَقُولُ ﴿٨٤﴾ لَأَمْلَأَنَّ جَهَنَّمَ مِنْكَ وَمِمَّنْ تَبِعَكَ مِنْهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٨٥﴾ قُلْ
مَا أَسْأَلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ أَجْرٍ وَمَا أَنَا مِنَ الْمُتَكَلِّفِينَ ﴿٨٦﴾ إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا ذِكْرٌ
لِلْعٰلَمِينَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَلَتَعْلَمُنَّ نَبَأَهُ بَعْدَ حِينٍ ﴿٨٨﴾

Then they will say, "Our Lord, give him who has brought this 61-64
fate on us a double punishment in Hell." And they will say to one another, "How is it that we do not see those whom we regarded as bad people in the world?[55] Did we treat them as such in ridicule, or are they hidden from sight?" Indeed, this is the Truth! Such will be the disputes among the dwellers of Hell.

(O Prophet,)[56] say to them, "I am only a warner:[57] there is no 65-68
real god but Allah, the One, the All-Mighty, Lord of the heavens and the earth and of all that is between them, the Mighty, the Forgiving." Say to them, "This is a great News from which you turn away."[58]

(Say to them,) "I had no knowledge of the time when the 69-85
exalted ones were disputing among themselves. I am informed of all this by revelation because I am an open warner." When your Lord said to the angels,[59] "I am about to create man from clay:[60] then, when I have fashioned him duly, and have breathed into him of My Spirit,[61] prostrate yourselves before him."[62] Accordingly, the angels prostrated themselves, all in obedience, but Iblīs assumed arrogance, and became one of the disbelievers.[63] The Lord said, "O Iblis, what has prevented you from prostrating yourself before him whom I have made with both My hands?[64] Are you assuming arrogance, or are you one of the high ones?" He replied, "I am better than he: You have created me from fire and him from clay." (The Lord) said: "Then get you gone from here:[65] you are accursed,[66] and My curse shall be on you till the Day of Judgment."[67] He said, "My Lord, if so, then give me respite till the time when these people shall be raised (back to life)." (The Lord) said: "Well, you are given respite till the Day of appointed time." He said, "By Thy Honour! I shall certainly lead them astray except those of Thy servants whom Thou hast chosen."[68]—(The Lord) said, "The truth is this, and the truth only I speak, that I shall fill Hell with you[69] and with all those who follow you from among mankind."[70]

(O Prophet,) say to them, "I do not ask any recompense of you 86-88
for this message,[71] nor am I an impostor.[72] This is only an admonition for all the people of the world, and after a while you shall yourself come to know all about it."[73]

Contd. from p.371]

him) had taken refuge in the Sinâi peninsula, he was commanded to return to Syria and Palestine for some important works, one of which was to prepare the Prophet

Elisha for his successorship. Accordingly, when the Prophet Elijah came to his town, he found Elisha ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth. The Prophet Elijah passed by him and cast his mantle upon him, and he left the oxen and followed him. (I Kings, 19:15-21). He remained under training with him for 10 to 12 years. Then, when Allah recalled Elijah, he was appointed Prophet in his place. (2 Kings, ch.2). The Second Book of the Kings gives a detailed account of the Prophet Elisha (chs., 2 to 13), which shows that when the Israeli state of northern Palestine got lost in polytheism and idol-worship and moral evils, Elisha a nointed Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, king of Israel against the royal dynasty due to whose misdeeds those evils had spread in Israel. jehu not only put an end to Ba'al-worship, but also condemned to death every member of the wicked family, including its children. But in spite of this reformist revolution the evils that had taken root in Israel could not be completely eradicated, and after the death of the Prophet Elisha they assumed enormoue propertions; so much so that the Assyrians begn to invade Samaria whenever they pleased. (For further details, see E.N. 7 of Sūrah Banī-Isrā'īl and E.N.'s 70, 71 of Sūrah As-Ṣāāffāt).

51. Dhul-Kifi also has been mentioned only twice in the Qur'ān, in Al-Anbiyā': 85 and here. For our research about him see E.N. 81 of Al-Anbiyā'.

52. The words *mufattahat-al-lahum-ul-abwāb* may have several meanings: (1) They will go about in the Gardens (Paradise) freely without any hesitation; (2) no effort will have to be made to open the gates of Paradise: they will open automatically as soon as they will have the desire to enter them; (3) the angels appointed for keeping Paradise will open the gates for them as soon as they see them. This third meaning has been expressed more clearly at another place in the Qur'ān, thus: "When they arrive there, and its gates shall already have been opened, its keepers will say: Peace be upon you: you have fared well: enter here to dwell for ever." (Az-Zumar: 73)

53. "Wives of equal age" may mean that they will be of equal age among themselves, and also that they will be of the same age as their husbands.

54. Several meanings of the word *ghassāq*, as used in the original, have been given by the lexicographers: (1) Any moisture that is discharged by the body in the form of pus, blood, or mixture of pus and blood, etc. and this includes tears as well; (2) something extremely cold; and (3) something stinking and giving out offensive smell. However, the word is generally used in the first meaning only, though the other two meanings also are correct lexically.

55. This implies the believers whom the disbelievers used to look down upon as bad people in the world. It means: They will look around bewildered and will find only themselves and their guides in Hell but will find no trace of those

people of whom they used to talk disparagingly in the world, and whom they used to mock in their meetings for talking about God, the Messenger and the Hereafter.

56. Now the discourse turns to the same theme with which it began. One should read it with vv. 1-14 in order to understand the meaning fully.

57. In verse 4 it was said: "The people wonder that a warner from among themselves has come to them." Here it is being said: "Tell them: I am only a warner. " That is, "I do not command an army that I may forcibly pull you from a wrong way and put you on the Right Way. If you do not listen to me and do not accept my message, you will only be causing a loss to yourselves. If you like to remain ignorant, you may continue to be heedless, for you will see your end yourselves."

58. This is the answer to what the disbelievers said in verse 5: "Has he made just One God in place of all the gods? This is indeed a strange thing." It means: "You may frown and scowl as you like, but this is a reality of which I am informing you, and your frowning and scowling cannot change it."

This answer not only contains the statement of the truth, but it also contains the argument for it. The *mushriks* said: "Deities are many of whom one is Allah also. How is it that you have done away with all other deities and kept only One Allah?" In answer it was said: "The real Deity is One Allah alone, for He is dominant over everything: He is the Owner of the earth and the heavens, and everything in the Universe belongs to Him. Every being other than Him, whom you have set up as other gods in the Universe, is dominated and subdued before Him; therefore, the subservient beings cannot be associates in the Godhead of the Dominant and All-Mighty God. Therefore, there is no ground for which they may be regarded as deities."

59. This is the explanation of the dispute referred to above, and the dispute implies Satan's dispute with God, as becomes evident from the verses that follow. In this regard, one should bear in mind the fact that "the exalted ones" implies the angels, and the dialogue between Allah and Satan was not direct but it took place through some angel. Therefore, no one should have the misunderstanding that Allah also was included among the exalted ones. This story has already been narrated at the following places above: Al-Baqarah: 30-39, Al-A'rāf: 11-25, Al-Ḥijr: 26-44; Banī Isrā'īl: 61-65, Al-Kahf: 50, Ṭā Hā: 116-126.

60. Lexically, *bashar* means a gross body whose surface is bare and uncovered by anything else. After the creation of man this word has been used for man himself, but mentioning him by the word *bashar* before his creation and making him from clay clearly means: "I am about to make an image of clay,

which will be without any feathers and hair, etc., whose skin will not be covered by wool or hair or feathers like the skin of other animals."

61. For explanation, see Al-Hijr: 29-30, and E.N. 16 of Sūrah As-Sajdah.

62. For explanation, see Al-Baqarah: 34, Al-A'rāf: 11 and the E.N.'s thereof.

63. For explanation, see Al-Baqarah: 34, Al-Kahf: 50 and the E.N.'s thereof.

64. These words have been used to point out the honour, rank and glory bestowed on man by his Creator. In other words, Allah did not get man created through his angels but created him Himself because his creation was a highly noble task. Therefore, what is meant to be said is: "What has prevented you from prostrating yourself before him whom I have made directly Myself?"

The words "both hands" probably are meant to refer to the fact that this new creation combines in itself two important aspects of Allah's power of creation: (1) That man has been given an animal body on account of which he belongs to the animal kingdom; and (2) that on account of the Spirit breathed into him, he has been characterised with qualities which place him in honour and merit above all earthly creations and creatures.

65. "From here": from the place where Adam was created and where the angels were commanded to bow down before Adam, and where Iblīs committed disobedience of Allah.

66. Lexically, the word *rajīm*, as used in the original, means "cast off" or "smitten"; in common usage it is used for the person, who has been thrown down from a place of honour and humiliated. In Sūrah Al-A'rāf, the same thing has been expressed thus: "Get out: you are indeed one of those who wish themselves ignominy." (v. 13).

67. This does not mean that there will be no curse on him after the Day of Judgment, but rather it means: "He will remain accursed till the Day of Judgment because of his disobedience, and after the Day of Judgment he will be punished for the sins which he will have committed from the creation of Adam till Resurrection."

68. This does not mean "I will not lead Your chosen servants astray," but this: "I shall have no power over Your chosen servants."

69. "With you" is not only addressed to *Iblīs* but to the whole species of satans; that is, *Iblīs* and his whole army of the satans who will be joining him in misleading mankind till Resurrection.

70. This whole story has been related in answer to this saying of the chiefs of the Quraish: "Was he the only (fit) person among us to whom Allah's Admonition should have been sent down?" Its first answer was the one given in vv. 9-10, saying: "Are you the owners of the treasures of the mercy of your Mighty and Bounteous Lord? And does the kingdom of the heavens and the earth belongs to you, and is it for you to decide as to who should be appointed God's Prophet and who should not be appointed?" The second answer is: In this the chiefs of the Quraish have been told: "Your jealousy, your pride and arrogance against Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) are similar to the jealousy and arrogance of *Iblís* against Adam (peace be upon him). *Iblís* also had refused to acknowledge the right of Allah to appoint anyone He pleased His vicegerent, and you also are refusing to acknowledge His right to appoint anyone He pleases as His Messenger: he disobeyed the Command to bow down before Adam, and you are disobeying the Command to follow Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). Your resemblance with him does not end here, but your fate also will be the same as has been pre-ordained for him, i.e. the curse of God in the world and the fire of Hell in the Hereafter."

Besides, in connection with this story, two other things also have been stressed: (1) Whoever is disobeying Allah in this world, is in fact, falling a prey to *Iblís*, his eternal enemy, who has resolved to mislead and misguide mankind since the beginning of creation; and (2) the one who disobeys Allah on account of arrogance and persists in His disobedience is under His wrath: such a one has no forgiveness from Him.

71. That is, "I am a selfless person: I have no vested interest in preaching this message."

72. That is, "I am not one of those who arise with false claims for the sake of vanity and pose to be what actually they are not." The Holy Prophet has not been made to say this merely for the information of the disbelievers of Makkah but this is testified by his whole life which he lived among the same people for forty years before his advent as a Prophet. Every child of Makkah was a witness that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) was not an impostor. Never had anybody from among the people of Makkah ever heard anything from him, which might have caused somebody the doubt that he aspired to be a great man and was planning and scheming for that end.

73. That is, "Those of you who live will see for themselves within a few years that what I am saying is fulfilled; those who die will come to know as soon as they pass through the gate of death that the truth is the same which I am preaching."


XXXIX
AZ-ZUMAR
الزُّمَر

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XXXIX

AZ-ZUMAR

الزمر

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah derives its name from verses 71 and 73 in which the word *zumar* has occurred.

Period of Revelation

In verse 10 *(wa ardullah-i-wāsi'atun:* and Allah's earth is vast) there is abundant evidence that this Sūrah was sent down before the migration to Ḥabash. Some traditions provide the explanation that this verse was sent down in respect of Ḥaḍrat Ja'far bin Abī Ṭālib and his companions when they made up their mind to emigrate to Ḥabash. *(Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī*, vol. XXII, p. 226).

Theme and Subject-matter

The entire Sūrah is a most eloquent and effective address which was given some time before the emigration to Ḥabash in an environment filled with tyranny and persecution, ill-will and antagonism, at Makkah. It is a sermon whose addressees mainly are the unbelieving Quraish, although here and there the believers also have been addressed. In it the real aim of the invitation of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) has been enunciated, which is:

Man should adopt Allah's servitude sincerely, and should not pollute his God-worship with the service of any other. Presenting this cardinal principle in different ways over and over again, the truth of *Tauhid* and the excellent results of accepting it, and the falsehood of *shirk* and the evil consequences of following it, have been explained in a most forceful way, and the people exhorted to give up their wrong way of life and return to the mercy of their Lord. In this very connection, the believers have been instructed, as if to say: "If a place has become narrow for the worship and service of Allah, His earth is vast: you may emigrate to some other place in order to save your faith: Allah will reward you for your patience." On the other hand, the Holy Prophet has been encouraged, so as to say: "Tell the disbelievers plainly that they may do whatever they like, but their persecutions and tyrannies will never deter you from the way of Islam; that they may go on doing their worst to obstruct your way, but you will continue to perform your mission in spite of the adverse conditions and circumstances."

سُوْرَةُ الزُّمَر ٣٩ — مَكِّيَّة — رُكُوعَاتُهَا ٨ — اٰيَاتُهَا ٧٥

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

تَنْزِيْلُ الْكِتٰبِ مِنَ اللّٰهِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَكِيْمِ ۝١ اِنَّآ اَنْزَلْنَآ اِلَيْكَ الْكِتٰبَ بِالْحَقِّ
فَاعْبُدِ اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصًا لَّهُ الدِّيْنَ ۝٢ اَلَا لِلّٰهِ الدِّيْنُ الْخَالِصُ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا
مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اَوْلِيَآءَ ۘ مَا نَعْبُدُهُمْ اِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُوْنَآ اِلَى اللّٰهِ زُلْفٰى ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَحْكُمُ
بَيْنَهُمْ فِيْ مَا هُمْ فِيْهِ يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِيْ مَنْ هُوَ كٰذِبٌ كَفَّارٌ ۝٣
لَوْ اَرَادَ اللّٰهُ اَنْ يَّتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا لَّاصْطَفٰى مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ ۙ سُبْحٰنَهٗ ؕ هُوَ اللّٰهُ
الْوَاحِدُ الْقَهَّارُ ۝٤ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ يُكَوِّرُ الَّيْلَ عَلَى النَّهَارِ وَيُكَوِّرُ
النَّهَارَ عَلَى الَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ؕ كُلٌّ يَّجْرِيْ لِاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ؕ اَلَا هُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ
الْغَفَّارُ ۝٥ خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ نَّفْسٍ وَّاحِدَةٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَاَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ
الْاَنْعَامِ ثَمٰنِيَةَ اَزْوَاجٍ ؕ يَخْلُقُكُمْ فِيْ بُطُوْنِ اُمَّهٰتِكُمْ خَلْقًا مِّنْۢ بَعْدِ خَلْقٍ فِيْ
ظُلُمٰتٍ ثَلٰثٍ ؕ ذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ ؕ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ فَاَنّٰى تُصْرَفُوْنَ ۝٦
اِنْ تَكْفُرُوْا فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَنِيٌّ عَنْكُمْ ۚ وَلَا يَرْضٰى لِعِبَادِهِ الْكُفْرَ ۚ وَاِنْ تَشْكُرُوْا
يَرْضَهُ لَكُمْ ؕ وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِّزْرَ اُخْرٰى ؕ ثُمَّ اِلٰى رَبِّكُمْ مَّرْجِعُكُمْ فَيُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا
كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ؕ اِنَّهٗ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ۝٧ وَاِذَا مَسَّ الْاِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَا
رَبَّهٗ مُنِيْبًا اِلَيْهِ ثُمَّ اِذَا خَوَّلَهٗ نِعْمَةً مِّنْهُ نَسِيَ مَا كَانَ يَدْعُوْٓا اِلَيْهِ مِنْ
قَبْلُ وَجَعَلَ لِلّٰهِ اَنْدَادًا لِّيُضِلَّ عَنْ سَبِيْلِهٖ ؕ قُلْ تَمَتَّعْ بِكُفْرِكَ قَلِيْلًا ۖ اِنَّكَ
مِنْ اَصْحٰبِ النَّارِ ۝٨ اَمَّنْ هُوَ قَانِتٌ اٰنَآءَ الَّيْلِ سَاجِدًا وَّقَآئِمًا يَّحْذَرُ الْاٰخِرَةَ
وَيَرْجُوْا رَحْمَةَ رَبِّهٖ ؕ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِيْنَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ؕ

XXXIX

AZ-ZUMAR

الزُّمَر

Verses: 75 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

The revelation of this Book is from the All-Mighty, the All-Wise Allah.[1] 1

(O Muḥammad,) We have sent down this Book to you with the truth[2]; so worship Allah alone, making your religion His exclusively.[3] Beware! Religion is exclusively Allah's right.[4] As for those who have taken other guardians besides Him (and justify their conduct, saying): "We worship them only that they may bring us closer to Allah."[5] Allah will surely judge between them concerning all that in which they differ.[6] Allah does not show guidance to any liar and denier of the truth[7] 2-3

Had Allah willed to take a son, He would have chosen anyone He pleased out of His creation.[8] Glorified is He (that He should have a son)! He is Allah, the One, the Omnipotent.[9] He has created the heavens and the earth with the truth.[10] He it is Who wraps the night about the day and the day about the night . He has so subjected the sun and the moon that each is moving till an appointed time. Note it well: He is the All-Mighty, the All-Forgiving.[11] It is He Who created you from a single being, then from that being He created its mate,[12] and it is He Who created for you eight heads of cattle, male and female.[13] He shapes you in your mothers' wombs, giving you one form after the other, under three dark veils.[14] This same Allah (Whose works are these) is your Lord:[15] sovereignty is His:[16] there is no god but He.[17] Whence are you, then, being turned away?[18] 4-6

If you disbelieve, Allah is independent of you;[19] yet He does not approve of disbelief for His servants;[20] and if you are thankful, He approves it for you.[21] No bearer will bear the burden of another;[22] 7

ultimately, all of you have to return to your Lord. Then He will tell you what You have been doing. He knows even the secrets of the hearts.

8-9 When an affliction befalls man,[23] he calls upon his Lord, turning to Him (in penitence);[24] then, when his Lord blesses him with his favour, he forgets the affliction for which he was calling upon Him before,[25] and sets up others as equals with Allah,[26] to lead astray from His way.[27] (O Prophet,) Tell him, "Enjoy your disbelief for a while: you shall certainly go to Hell." (Whose conduct is better: of this man or of him) who is obedient, who passes the hours of night standing and prostrating (in worship), and who dreads the Hereafter and hopes for the mercy of his Lord? Ask them, "Can those who know and those who do not know ever be equal?"[28] Only men of understanding do accept the admonition.

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1. This is a brief introduction to the Sūrah which only stresses the point that the Qur'ān is not Muhammad's word, as the disbelievers assert, but it is Allah's Word, which He Himself has sent down. Along with this, two of Allah's attributes have been mentioned to warn the listeners of two realities so that they do not underestimate this Word but understand its full importance: (1) That Allah Who has sent it down, is All-Mighty; that is, He is so powerful that no power can prevent His will and decisions from being enforced and none can dare resist Him in any way; (2) that He is All-wise; that is, the guidance He is giving in this Book, is wholly based on wisdom, and only an ignorant and foolish person can turn away from it. (For further explanation, see E.N. 1 of Sūrah As-Sajdah).

2. That is, it contains nothing but the truth, and there is no element of falsehood in it.

3. This is a very important verse, which states the real objective of the message of Islām. Therefore, one should not pass over it superficially, but should try to understand its meaning and intention well. It has two basic points without grasping which one cannot understand the verse: (1) That the demand is to worship Allah; and (2) that the demand is of such worship as may be performed by making religion exclusively Allah's.

'Ibādat is derived from *'abd*, and this word is used as an antonym of "freeman" for the "slave" and 'bondsman" in Arabic. Accordingly, *'ibādat* contains two meanings: (1) Worship and devotion; and (2) humble and willing obedience, as is borne out by the well-known and authoritative Arabic Lexicon, *Lisān al-'Arab*. Thus, according to the authentic lexical explanation, the demand

is not only of Allah's worship but also of willing and sincere obedience to His Commands and His Law.

The Arabic word *dīn* contains several meanings:

(1) Domination and sovereignty, rulership and political power and authority to enforce one's decisions on others.

(2) Obedience, compliance with commands and servitude.

(3) The practice and the way that a man follows.

In view of these three meanings, *dīn* in this verse means: "The way of life and attitude which a man adopts after acknowledging the supremacy and accepting the obedience of another;" and "to worship Allah making one's religion exclusively His" means that one should refrain from combining another's worship with the worship of Allah, but should worship Allah alone, should follow His Guidance alone, and should comply with His Commands and injunctions only.

4. This is an actual fact and reality, which has been presented as an argument for the above demand. It means: "You should worship Allah, making *dīn* exclusively His, for it is only Allah's right that He should be obeyed and worshipped sincerely and exclusively." In other words, there is no one else who may deserve to be worshipped so that he also should be served and worshipped besides Allah and his commands and laws also obeyed. If a person serves another, apart from Allah, sincerely and exclusively, he does wrong. Likewise, if he combines the worship of another with his worship of Allah, this also is against the truth. The best commentary of this verse is the *Ḥadīth* which Ibn Mardūyah has related from Yazīd ar-Raqāshī. He says: A person asked the Holy Prophet: "We give away our wealth so that we become well-known. Shall we get a reward for this?" The Holy Prophet replied: No. He asked: "What, if one has the intention both of Allah's reward and of reputation in the world?" The Holy Prophet replied: "Allah does not accept any deed unless it is performed exclusively for His sake." After this he recited this same verse.

5. The disbelievers of Makkah said, and the polytheists the world over generally say the same, "We do not worship other beings regarding them as our creators: the Creator is only Allah, and He alone is the real Deity; but He is too high for us to have access to Him. Therefore, we make these saintly beings a means to convey our prayers and our petitions to Allah."

6. One should understand it well that unity and concord is possible only through *Tauḥīd*: there can be no unity through *shirk*. The polytheists the world over have never agreed as to which beings are the definite means of access to Allah. Some people have taken some particular gods and goddesses as the means.

but even among them there is no agreement on all the gods and goddesses; some others have taken the moon, the sun, Mars, Jupiter, etc. as the means, and they also are not agreed as to which of them holds what rank and which is the real means of approach to Allah; some others have taken the dead saints as the means, but they also differ widely about them: one believes in one saint and another in another. The reason is that the belief about these different beings is neither based on any knowledge, nor has Allah ever sent down a list telling that such and such persons are His special favourites; therefore, they only should be made the means to have access to Him. This is a creed which has spread among the people only on account of superstitions and whims and blind imitation of the elders. Hence the differences.

7. Here, Allah has used two words for these people, *kāzib* (liar) and *kaffār* (denier). They have been called *kāzib* because they have falsely invented this creed by themselves, and then they spread falsehood among others. As for *kaffār*, it has two meanings: (1) A stubborn disbeliever, i.e. the people who insist on their false creed even after the doctrine of *Tauḥīd* has come before them; and (2) ungrateful for blessings, i.e. they are receiving all kinds of blessings from Allah, but are thanking those other beings about whom they have assumed that these blessings are reaching them through their agency and influence.

8. That is, "It is just impossible that Allah should have begotten a son. The only possibility is that Allah should choose someone for Himself; and whomever He chooses will inevitably be from among the creatures, for everything in the world, apart from Allah, is His creation. Now, evidently, however exalted and chosen a creature might be, it cannot have the position of the offspring. For between the Creator and the created there exists a great disparity of nature and essence and character, and parenthood necessarily demands that there should be the unity of nature and essence between a father and his offspring."

Besides, one should also bear in mind the point that the words: "Had Allah willed to take a son, He would....." themselves give the meaning that Allah has never willed so. Here the object is to impress that not to speak of taking a son, Allah has never even willed so.

9. The following are the arguments by which the doctrine of parenthood has been refuted:

First, that Allah is free from every defect and fault and weakness. Obviously, children are needed by the one who is defective and weak; the one who is mortal stands in need of them, so that his progeny should continue to live after him in the world. Likewise, he who adopts a son does so either because he feels the need of having an heir, being childless himself, or he adopts a son being overpowered by love of somebody. Attributing such human weaknesses to Allah

and forming religious creeds on their basis is nothing but ignorance and short-sightedness.

The second argument is that Allah in His essence and Being is unique: He is not a member of a species, whereas, evidently, offspring must necessarily belong to a species. Furthermore, there can be no concept of offspring without marriage, and marriage can take place only between homogeneous individuals. Therefore, the one who proposes offspring for the Unique and Matchless Being like Allah, is ignorant and foolish.

The third argument is that Allah is Omnipotent, i.e. whatever is there in the world is subdued to Him and is held in His powerful grasp. No one in this Universe has any resemblance with Him in any way or degree on account of which it may be imagined that he has some relation with Allah.

10. For explanation, see Ibrāhīm: 19, An-Nahl: 3, Al-'Ankabūt: 44, and the E.N.'s thereof.

11. That is, "He is All-Mighty: if He wills to punish you, no power can resist Him. But it is His kindness that He does not seize you forthwith in spite of your arrogant and insolent behaviour, but He goes on giving you respite after respite." Here, Allah's making no haste in seizing people in punishment and His giving them respite has been called forgiveness.

12. This does not mean that first He created the human beings from Adam and then created his wife, Eve. But here, instead of the chronological order, there is the order of presentation, examples of which are found in every language. For instance, we say, "Whatever you did today is known to me, and whatever you did yesterday is also in my knowledge." This cannot mean that what happened yesterday has happened after today.

13. That is, the camel, cow, sheep and goat whose four males and four females together make eight heads of cattle.

14. The three dark veils are: the belly, the womb and the caul or membrane enclosing the foetus.

15. "Your Lord": your Master, Ruler and Providence.

16. That is, "All powers and authority rest with Him and it is He Who is ruling over the whole Universe."

17. In other words, the reasoning is this: "When Allah alone is your Lord and His is the sovereignty, then inevitably your Deity also is He. How can another be your deity when he has neither any share in providence nor any role in sovereignty? After all, how can it be reasonable for you to take others as your

deities when Allah alone is the Creator of the heavens and the earth, when Allah alone has subjected the sun and the moon for you, when He alone brings the day after the night and the night after the day, and when He alone is your own Creator and Lord as well as of all animals and cattle?"

18. These words need deep consideration. It has not been said: "Where are you turning away?" but "where are you being turned away?" That is, "There is someone else who is misleading you, and being thus deceived you do not understand such a simple and reasonable thing." The other thing which by itself becomes evident from the style is: The word "you" is not addressed to the agents but to those who were turning away under their influence. Their is a subtle point in this which can be understood easily after a little thought. Those who were working to turn away others (from the Right Way) were present in the same society and were doing whatever they could openly and publicly. Therefore, there was no need to mention them by name. It was also useless to address them, for they were trying to turn away the people from the service of Allah, the One, and entrapping them for the service of others, and keeping them entrapped for selfish motives. Obviously, such people could not be made to see reason by argument, for it lay in their own interest not to understand and see reason, and even after understanding they could hardly be inclined to sacrifice their interests. However, the condition of the common people who were being deceived and cheated, was certainly pitiable. They had no interest involved in the business; therefore, they could be convinced by reasoning and argument, and after a little understanding they could also see what advantages were being gained by those who were showing them the way to other deities, after turning them away from Allah. That is why the address has been directed to the common people, who were being misguided rather than those few who were misguiding them.

19. That is, "Your disbelief cannot cause any decrease or deficiency in His Kingdom. He will be God if you believe in Him, and He will still be God if you deny Him. He is ruling over His Kingdom by His own power; your believing or denying Him does not affect His Sovereignty in any way." According to a *Ḥadīth*, Allah says: "O My servants, if all of you, the former and the latter, the men and the jinns, become like the heart of a most sinful person among you, it will cause no deficiency whatever in My Kingdom." (Muslim).

20. That is, "He does not approve, not for any interest of His own but for the interest and benefit of the servants themselves, that they should disbelieve, for disbelief is harmful for them." Here, one should bear in mind the fact that Allah's will is one thing and His approval and pleasure another. Nothing in the world can happen against Allah's will, but many things can happen against His approval, and are happening day and night. For example, the dominance of the tyrants and the wicked in the world, the existence of thieves and robbers, the presence of

murderers and adulterers, are possible only because Allah has made room for the occurrence of these evils and the existence of these criminals in the scheme of things ordained by Him. Then He provides opportunities also of committing evil just as He provides opportunities to the good of doing good. Had He made no room for these evils and had provided no opportunities of committing wrongs to the evildoers, no evil would have ever occurred in the world. All this is based on Allah's Will. But the occurrence of an act under Divine Will does not mean that Allah's approval also goes with it. This may be explained by an example. If a person tries to obtain his living only by lawful means, Allah provides him his living through those means. This is His will. But providing for the thief or the robber or the corrupt person under the will does not mean that Allah also likes stealing and robbery and taking of bribes. Allah says the same thing here, as if to say: "If you want to disbelieve, you may do so: We will not stop you from this nor make you believe forcibly. But We do not approve that you should deny your Creator and Providence, being His servants, for it is harmful for yourselves: Our Godhead is not harmed and affected by it in any way."

21. The word *shukr* (gratitude) has been used here as against *kufr* (disbelief) instead of *Imān* (belief). This by itself shows that *kufr* is, in fact, ingratitude and disloyalty, and faith is the necessary requirement of gratitude. The person who has any feeling of the favours of Allah Almighty, cannot adopt any other way than that of belief and faith. Therefore, gratitude and faith are correlatives: wherever there is gratitude there will be faith also. On the contrary, wherever there is disbelief, there will be no question of gratitude at all, for gratitude along with disbelief is meaningless.

22. It means this: "Each one of you is himself responsible for his deeds. If a person adopts disbelief in order to please others, or to avoid their displeasure, those others will never bear the burden of his disbelief, but will leave him to bear his own burden. Therefore, anyone who comes to know that disbelief is wrong and belief is right, should give up the wrong attitude. and adopt the right attitude, and avoid making himself liable for Allah's punishment by associating himself with his family or brotherhood or nation."

23. "The man": the disbeliever who adopted the way of ingratitude.

24. That is, "At that time he does not remember those other deities whom he used to invoke in good times; but he despairs of them all and turns only to Allah, Lord of the worlds." This is a clear proof of the fact that in the depths of

[Contd. on p. 394

إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٩﴾ قُلْ يَا عِبَادِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمْ ۚ لِلَّذِينَ
أَحْسَنُوا فِي هَٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ ۗ وَأَرْضُ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةٌ ۗ إِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصَّابِرُونَ
أَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿١٠﴾ قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ الدِّينَ ﴿١١﴾ وَ
أُمِرْتُ لِأَنْ أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٢﴾ قُلْ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ
عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٣﴾ قُلِ اللَّهَ أَعْبُدُ مُخْلِصًا لَهُ دِينِي ﴿١٤﴾ فَاعْبُدُوا مَا شِئْتُمْ مِنْ دُونِهِ ۗ قُلْ
إِنَّ الْخَاسِرِينَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَهْلِيهِمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۗ أَلَا ذَٰلِكَ هُوَ
الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿١٥﴾ لَهُمْ مِنْ فَوْقِهِمْ ظُلَلٌ مِنَ النَّارِ وَمِنْ تَحْتِهِمْ ظُلَلٌ ۚ
ذَٰلِكَ يُخَوِّفُ اللَّهُ بِهِ عِبَادَهُ ۚ يَا عِبَادِ فَاتَّقُونِ ﴿١٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ اجْتَنَبُوا الطَّاغُوتَ
أَنْ يَعْبُدُوهَا وَأَنَابُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ لَهُمُ الْبُشْرَىٰ ۚ فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ ﴿١٧﴾ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ
الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ الَّذِينَ هَدَاهُمُ اللَّهُ وَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمْ أُولُو
الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿١٨﴾ أَفَمَنْ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِ كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ ۚ أَفَأَنْتَ تُنْقِذُ مَنْ فِي النَّارِ ﴿١٩﴾ لَٰكِنِ
الَّذِينَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ لَهُمْ غُرَفٌ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا غُرَفٌ مَبْنِيَّةٌ ۙ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا
الْأَنْهَارُ ۚ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ ۚ لَا يُخْلِفُ اللَّهُ الْمِيعَادَ ﴿٢٠﴾ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ
مَاءً فَسَلَكَهُ يَنَابِيعَ فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعًا مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهُ ثُمَّ
يَهِيجُ فَتَرَاهُ مُصْفَرًّا ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ حُطَامًا ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَذِكْرَىٰ لِأُولِي
الْأَلْبَابِ ﴿٢١﴾ أَفَمَنْ شَرَحَ اللَّهُ صَدْرَهُ لِلْإِسْلَامِ فَهُوَ عَلَىٰ نُورٍ مِنْ رَبِّهِ ۚ فَوَيْلٌ
لِلْقَاسِيَةِ قُلُوبُهُمْ مِنْ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۚ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ اللَّهُ نَزَّلَ أَحْسَنَ
الْحَدِيثِ كِتَابًا مُتَشَابِهًا مَثَانِيَ ۖ تَقْشَعِرُّ مِنْهُ جُلُودُ الَّذِينَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ ۖ
ثُمَّ تَلِينُ جُلُودُهُمْ وَقُلُوبُهُمْ إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ ۚ ذَٰلِكَ هُدَى اللَّهِ يَهْدِي بِهِ

(O Prophet:) Say, "O My servants, who have believed, fear your Lord.[29] There is good for those who have adopted the righteous attitude in this world,[30] and God's earth is vast.[31] Those who endure with patience shall be rewarded without measure."[32] 10

(O Prophet,) say to them, "I have been commanded to serve Allah, making religion sincerely His, and I have been commanded to be a Muslim myself first of all."[33] Say, "If I disobey my Lord, I fear the torment of a dreadful Day." Say; "I shall serve Allah alone, making my religion sincerely His. As for you, you may serve whomever you please besides Him." Say, "The real losers are those who would risk loss for themselves and for their families on the Day of Resurrection." Note it well: this is the real bankruptcy.[34] They shall have the canopies of fire covering them from above them and also from beneath them. This is the doom of which Allah frightens His servants. So, O My servants, avoid My wrath. Contrary to this, those who refrained from serving *tāghūt*[35] and turned to Allah, for them there is good news. So (O Prophet,) give good news to those of My servants who listen to the word carefully and follow what is best in it.[36] These are they whom Allah has shown guidance and these are the ones who possess understanding. 11-18

(O Prophet,) who can protect the person for whom the torment has already been decreed?[37] Can you rescue him who has already fallen into the fire? Of course, those who truly feared their Lord, for them there are high mansions, built with storey upon storey, beneath which there will be canals flowing. This is Allah's promise: Allah never fails in His promise. 19-20

Do you not see that Allah sent down rainwater from the sky,then made it to flow in the earth in the form of springs and fountains and rivers,[38] then He brings forth thereby a variety of crops of different kinds; then they ripen and wither and you see them turn yellow, and then, finally, He reduces them to straw? Indeed, there is a lesson in this for the men of understanding.[39] Now, can the person whose breast Allah has opened for Islam[40] and he is walking in the light shown by his Lord[41] (be like the one who has learnt no lesson from these things)? Woe to those whose hearts became even more hardened[42] from Allah's admonition! They are in manifest error. 21-22

23 Allah has sent down the best of discourses, a Book all whose parts are uniform in style[43] and whose themes have been repeated over and over again. Those who fear their Lord are filled with awe when they hear it, and then their bodies and their hearts soften and turn to the remembrance of Allah. This is Allah's guidance, whereby He guides to the Right Way whomever He wills; and the one whom Allah does not guide has no guide whatever.

Contd. from p.391]

his heart he has the feeling that all other deities are helpless, and the realization that Allah alone is the Possessor of all powers and authority, lies buried and hidden deep in his mind."

25. That is, "He again forgets the bad times when abandoning all other deities he was invoking only Allah, the One."

26. That is, "He again starts serving others: he obeys them, prays to them and makes offerings before them."

27. That is, "He is not content with his own self having gone astray, but also leads others astray, telling them that the affliction which had befallen him, had been averted by the help of such and such a pious man or saint, or god and goddess." Thus, many other people also put their faith in these deities besides Allah, and are further misled as the ignorant and foolish people describe their experiences before them.

28. It should be noted that two kinds of the men are being contrasted here. First, those who turn to Allah when a calamity befalls them, but worship others than Allah normally. Second, those who have made it their permanent way of life to obey Allah and worship and serve Him, and their worshipping Him in solitude during the night is a proof of their sincerity. The first kind of the men have been called ignorant by Allah, even if they might have devoured whole libraries. And the second kind of the men have been called the learned, even if they might be illiterate. For the real supremely important thing is the knowledge of the Truth and man's action according to it, and on this depends his true success. Allah asks: How can these two be equal? How can they possibly follow the same way together in the world, and meet with the same end in the Hereafter?

29. That is, "Do not rest content with belief but follow it up with piety and fear of God. Act according to what Allah has enjoined and avoid what He has forbidden and live in the world fearing His accountability."

30. Good and well-being both of this world and of the Hereafter.

31. That is, "If one city, territory or land has become difficult for the worshippers of Allah, they may emigrate to another place where they may not have to face any such hardship."

32. "Those ... measure": Those who brave all kinds of hardships and persecutions in following the way of God-worship and piety but do not abandon the way of the Truth. This also includes those people who emigrate to other countries and experience hardships in the foreign land for the sake of religion and faith, and those also who continue to face every kind of temptation and calamity firmly and patiently in the land where they are being persecuted."

33. That is, "My mission is not only to exhort others but also to practise what I preach myself: I first myself follow the way which I call others to follow."

34. Bankruptcy is loss of a person's capital and failure of his business so that he is unable to pay his debts in full. This same metaphor Allah has used here for the disbelievers and polytheists. The sum total of whatever man has got in this world—his life, his intellect, body, powers, capabilities, means and opportunities—is in fact, the capital, which he invests in the business of the worldly life. If a person invested this whole capital on the hypothesis that there is no God, or that there are many gods, whose servant he is, and that he is not accountable to anyone, or that someone else will rescue him on Judgment Day, it would mean that he made a losing bargain and lost all his capital. This is his first loss. His second loss is that in everything that he did, on the basis of the wrong hypothesis, he went on wronging himself and many other men, and the coming generations and many other creatures of Allah, throughout his life. Thus, he got into countless debts, but has no money with which he may fully pay his debts. Over and above this, he has not only himself incurred this loss, but has caused the same loss to his children and near and dear ones and friends and fellow countrymen by his wrong education and training and wrong example. It is these three losses together which Allah has called *khusrān-i-mubīn* (utter bankruptcy) in this verse.

35. *Ṭāghūt* is from *ṭughyān* and means rebellion. If someone is called *ṭāghūt* (rebellion) instead of *ṭāghī* (rebel), it would mean that he is a rebel incarnate. For example, if a person is called *ḥusn* (beauty) instead of *ḥasīn* (beautiful), it would mean that he has reached perfection in beauty. The other deities than Allah have been called *ṭāghūt* because it is rebellion to worship others besides Allah, but the one who has others worship him, is a rebel of the worst kind. (For further explanation, see Al-Baqarah: 256, Al-Nisā: 60, 76, An-Naml: 36 and the E.N.'s thereof).

36. This verse can have two meanings: (1) That they do not follow every voice but ponder over what every man says and accept only what is right and true:

and (2) that they do not try to give a false meaning to what they hear but adopt its good and righteous aspects.

37. That is, the person who has made himself worthy of Allah's punishment and about whom Allah has already decided that he will be punished.

38. The word *yanābi'* in the Text is comprehensive and applies to all the three sources of water.

39. That is, "A man of understanding learns this lesson from it that the life of this world and its adornments are all transitory: the end of every spring is autumn; the fate of every youth is weakness and death; and every rise has a fall. Therefore, this world is not something of which one should be charmed and enamoured so as to forget God and the Hereafter and should conduct himself here in a manner as to ruin his Hereafter, only for the sake of enjoying the short lived pleasures of this world. Then a man of understanding also learns this lesson from these phenomena that the spring and autumn of this world are only under Allah's control: Allah allows to grow and prosper whomever He wills and ruins and lays waste whomever He wills. Neither it is in anybody's power to stop the growth of someone whom Allah wills to grow, nor has anyone the power to save him from destruction whom Allah wills to destroy.

40. "Whose breast ... Islam": Whom Allah helps to learn a lesson from these realities and to be satisfied with Islam as based on the Truth. Opening of a man's breast for something is, in fact, a state in which there remains no anxiety or ambiguity or suspicion and doubt in his mind about the thing, nor has he the feeling of any danger and loss in accepting and adopting it, but he decides with full satisfaction of the heart that it is the Truth; therefore, he must follow it whatever be the consequences. Having made such a decision when a person adopts the way of Islam, he obeys whatever Command he receives from Allah and His Messenger willingly and with pleasure, without any hesitation. He accepts whatever beliefs and ideas, rules and regulations, he comes across in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet as if they were the voice of his own heart. He does not feel any compunction on giving up an unlawful gain, because he believes that it was no gain for him at all; it was rather a loss from which Allah saved him by His grace. Likewise, even if he incurs a loss while following the way of righteousness, he does not feel sad about this but bears it with patience and regards it as an ordinary loss as compared to the loss of turning away from the Way of Allah. The same is his behaviour on confronting dangers. He believes that there is no other way for him, which he may follow in order to avoid the danger. The Straight Way of Allah is only one, which he has to follow in any case: if there is a danger in following it, let it be.

41. "In the light shown by his Lord": In the light of the knowledge of the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet, by the help of which he sees clearly at every step which is the straight path of the Truth among the countless by-paths of life.

42. As against the opening of the breast there can be two other states of man's heart: (1) The state of narrowing of the breast and squeezing of the heart; and in this state there still remains some room for the truth to permeate it; and (2) the state of hardening or petrifying of the heart; in this there is left no room whatever for the truth to permeate. About this second state Allah says that the person who reaches such a stage is totally ruined. This means that if a person becomes inclined to accept the truth, even though with an unwiling and squeezed heart, there remains some possibility for him to be redeemed. This second theme becomes obvious from the style and tenor of the verse itself, though Allah has not stated it directly. For the real intention of the verse was to warn those who were bent upon stubbornness in their antagonism towards the Holy Prophet, and had made up their mind not to listen to him at all. For this they have been warned, as if to say: "You take pride in this stubbornness of yours, but, as a matter of fact, there cannot be a greater misfortune and unworthiness of man than that his heart should become even more hardened, instead of becoming soft, when he hears Allah being mentioned and the admonition sent by Him."

43. That is, there is no contradiction and disagreement between them. The whole Book, from the beginning to the end, projects one and the same aim, one and the same belief, and one and the same system of thought and action. Each of its parts confirms and supports and explains the other themes; and there is perfect consistency in it both in meaning and in style.

مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ۭ وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ هَادٍ ۝ اَفَمَنْ يَّتَّقِيْ بِوَجْهِهٖ سُوْۗءَ
الْعَذَابِ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ۭ وَقِيْلَ لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ ذُوْقُوْا مَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْسِبُوْنَ ۝ كَذَّبَ
الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَاَتٰىهُمُ الْعَذَابُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ۝ فَاَذَاقَهُمُ
اللّٰهُ الْخِزْيَ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَلَعَذَابُ الْاٰخِرَةِ اَكْبَرُ ۘ لَوْ كَانُوْا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝
وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِيْ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ۝
قُرْاٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا غَيْرَ ذِيْ عِوَجٍ لَّعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُوْنَ ۝ ضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا رَّجُلًا
فِيْهِ شُرَكَاۗءُ مُتَشٰكِسُوْنَ وَرَجُلًا سَلَمًا لِّرَجُلٍ ۭ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيٰنِ مَثَلًا ۭ
اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ ۭ بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝ اِنَّكَ مَيِّتٌ وَّاِنَّهُمْ مَّيِّتُوْنَ ۝
ثُمَّ اِنَّكُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ عِنْدَ رَبِّكُمْ تَخْتَصِمُوْنَ ۝

فَمَنْ اَظْلَمُ مِمَّنْ كَذَبَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ وَكَذَّبَ بِالصِّدْقِ اِذْ جَاۗءَهٗ ۭ

اَلَيْسَ فِيْ جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْكٰفِرِيْنَ ۝ وَالَّذِيْ جَاۗءَ بِالصِّدْقِ وَصَدَّقَ بِهٖٓ
اُولٰۗىِٕكَ هُمُ الْمُتَّقُوْنَ ۝ لَهُمْ مَّا يَشَاۗءُوْنَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۭ ذٰلِكَ جَزٰۗؤُا الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ۝
لِيُكَفِّرَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمْ اَسْوَاَ الَّذِيْ عَمِلُوْا وَيَجْزِيَهُمْ اَجْرَهُمْ بِاَحْسَنِ الَّذِيْ
كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ۝ اَلَيْسَ اللّٰهُ بِكَافٍ عَبْدَهٗ ۭ وَيُخَوِّفُوْنَكَ بِالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ ۭ
وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ هَادٍ ۝ وَمَنْ يَّهْدِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ مُّضِلٍّ ۭ
اَلَيْسَ اللّٰهُ بِعَزِيْزٍ ذِي انْتِقَامٍ ۝ وَلَىِٕنْ سَاَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ
الْاَرْضَ لَيَقُوْلُنَّ اللّٰهُ ۭ قُلْ اَفَرَءَيْتُمْ مَّا تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اِنْ اَرَادَنِيَ
اللّٰهُ بِضُرٍّ هَلْ هُنَّ كٰشِفٰتُ ضُرِّهٖٓ اَوْ اَرَادَنِيْ بِرَحْمَةٍ هَلْ هُنَّ مُمْسِكٰتُ
رَحْمَتِهٖ ۭ قُلْ حَسْبِيَ اللّٰهُ ۭ عَلَيْهِ يَتَوَكَّلُ الْمُتَوَكِّلُوْنَ ۝ قُلْ يٰقَوْمِ اعْمَلُوْا عَلٰى

الجزء ٢٤

Now, how can you imagine the plight of the one who will receive the severe punishment of the Day of Resurrection on his face?[44] To such wrongdoers it will be said, "Taste now (the fruit of) what you had been earning."[45] Many a people before them also denied likewise. Consequently, the scourge overtook them from whence they least expected. Then Allah made them to taste disgrace even in their worldly life, but the punishment of the Hereafter is far more terrible. Would that they knew it! 24-26

We have cited for the people in this Qur'ân every kind of parable, so that they may take heed. It is a Qur'ân in Arabic[46] without any crookedness in it,[47] so that they may guard against the evil end. Allah cites a parable: There is a man who is shared by many harsh masters, each pulling him to himself, and there is the other man who entirely belongs to one master. Can the two be alike in comparison?[48]—Praise be to Allah![49] But most of the people have no knowledge.[50] (O Prophet,) you shall die, and they, too, shall die.[51] Then on the Day of Resurrection, you all will present your disputes before your Lord. Then, who could be more wicked than the one who invented a falsehood against Allah, and denied the Truth when it came before him? Is not there in Hell a place for such disbelievers? And the one who came with the Truth, and those who confirmed it, they indeed shall remain secure from the torment.[52] They shall get from their Lord whatever they will desire.[53] This is the compensation of those who do right, so that Allah may wipe off from their account their worst deeds and reward them according to their best deeds[54] 27-35

(O Prophet:) Is not Allah enough for His servant? These people frighten you with others besides Him,[55] whereas there is none to guide him whom Allah lets go astray, and there is none to misguide him whom He guides aright. Is not Allah Mighty and capable of revenge?[56] If you ask them, "Who created the heavens and the earth?" they will say, "Allah." Ask them, "When the fact is this, do you think that if Allah wills harm for me, these goddesses, whom you invoke instead of Allah, will avert His harm from me? Or, if Allah wills to show me mercy, will they be able to withhold His mercy?" Therefore, tell them, "Allah is enough for me. In Him do those who trust place their trust."[57] Tell them plainly, "O my people: Do whatever you can,[58] so 36-41

shall I. Soon you shall come to know as to whom comes the disgraceful torment and who gets the enduring punishment." (O Prophet:) We have sent down to you for all mankind this Book with the truth. Now whosoever adopts the right way, will do so for his own sake, and whosoever goes astray, will himself bear the burden of his deviation: you are not responsible for them.[59]

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44. One takes a blow on one's face only when one is absolutely helpless and powerless, otherwise until one has some power to resist, one goes on receiving the blows on the other parts of one's body but saves one's face. Therefore, here the extreme state of helplessness of a person has been depicted, saying that he will receive the severe punishment on his face.

45. The word *kasab*, in the Qur'ānic terminology, implies one's deserving and earning a reward and punishment in consequence of one's actions and deeds. The real earning of a doer of good is that he becomes worthy of Allah's reward, and the earning of the evil-doer is the punishment that he will receive in the Hereafter.

46. That is, "It has not been sent down in a foreign language so that the people of Makkah and Arabia should stand in need of a translator or interpreter, but it is in their own language, which they can understand directly."

47. That is, "There is nothing of double-dealing in it so that a common man should find it difficult to understand, but everything has been presented in it in a straightforward manner, from which everyone can know what this Book states as wrong and why, what it states as right and on what ground, what it wants the people to accept and what it wants them to reject, and what it enjoins and what it forbids."

48. Allah in this parable has explained the difference between *shirk* and *Tauhīd* and the impact each has on human life so clearly that it is not possible to put across such a vast theme so concisely and effectively in other words. Everyone will admit that the person who has many masters, each one pulling him to himself, and the masters also so ill-tempered that no one spares him time in his service to obey the other, and no one rests content only with threatening and cursing him if he fails to carry out his command from among the contradictory commands of the other masters, but is bent upon punishing him, his life would certainly be in great anguish. On the contrary, the person who is the slave or servant of only one master, would be living a life of ease and comfort because he will not have to serve and seek the pleasure of another master. This is such a straightforward thing which does not need deep consideration for its understanding. After this it remains no longer difficult for a person to understand that the peace of mind and

satisfaction that accrue to him from the service of One God, can never accrue from the service of many gods.

Here, it should be understood well that the parable of many ill-tempered and contesting masters cannot apply to the images of stone, but it only applies to living masters, who practically give contradictory commands to man and keep pulling him to themselves in actual reality. One such master sits in one's own self, which presents before him desires of every kind and compels him to fulfil them. Other countless masters are there in the house, in the family, in the brotherhood, in the society, among the religious guides and the rulers and legislators, in the business and economic circles and among the dominant powers of civilization whose contradictory demands and requirements keep on pulling man to themselves at all times; then any god whose demand he fails to fulfil in any way, does not let him go unpunished in his own circle. However, each one's instrument of punishment is different. Someone causes a heart-break, another takes offence, another humiliates, another boycotts, another bankupts, another makes a religious or a legal attack. Man has no other way of being saved from this anguish and agony but to adopt the Way of *Tauḥíd* and become the slave of One God, and throw off the yoke of servitude of every other god.

Adoption of the Way of *Tauḥíd* also has two forms, which lead to different results:

First, that an individual should decide to become the servant of One God individually but his environment is hostile. In this case the external conflict and his anguish and agony might increase, but if he has adopted the Way sincerely, internal peace and satisfaction will necessarily accrue. He will turn down every such desire of the self as goes against the Divine Commands, or whose fulfilment may clash with the demands of God-worship. He will also reject every such demand of the family, society, nation, government, religious guides and economic powers that conflicts with the Divine Law. Consequently, he might have to face extreme hardships, rather he will surely face, but his heart will have full satisfaction that he is fulfilling the demand of the servitude of that God Whose servant he actually is, and that those whose servant he is not, have no right on him, because of which he may have to serve them against the Command of his God. No power of the world can deprive him of this satisfaction of the heart and peace of mind; so much so that even if he has to go to the gallows for its sake, he will go to it with a clear conscience, and he will have no compunction as to why he did not save his life by bowing before the false gods.

The second form is that the whole society be established on the basis of the *Tauḥíd* imbibing the principles of morality, civilization, culture, education, religion, law, social custom, politics, economics in every sphere of life as a creed,

which the Master of the Universe has given through His Book and His Messenger. The law should declare as a crime everything which God's religion has declared sinful and the government administration should try to eradicate the same; the system of education and training should prepare the minds and character to avoid the same; the same should be condemned from the religious pulpit, and regarded as vicious and forbidden in every economic enterprise. Likewise, everything that Allah's religion has declared as good and virtuous should be protected and defended by the law, developed by the administrative forces, impressed in the minds and instilled in character by the entire system of education and training, infused from the religious pulpit, admired by the society and followed by it practically and enforced in every economic enterprise. This is how man can attain to perfect internal and external peace and satisfaction, and all the doors to material and spiritual progress are thrown open, for the conflict in it between God-worship and the worship of others would be reduced to the minimum.

Although Islam invites every single individual to adopt *Tauhīd* as his creed and to worship Allah alone, braving every danger and hardship, even in the absence of the established order, it cannot be denied that Islam's ultimate aim and object is to establish this second order, and the same has been the objective of the endeavors of all the Prophets: to bring into existence a community of the Muslims, who should follow Allah's religion collectively, free from the domination and influence of unbelief and the unbelievers. No one, unless he is unaware of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and senseless, can say that the objective of the Prophets' struggle has been only the faith and obedience of the individual, and that it has never been their aim to enforce and establish Islam in the society and state.

49. Here, in order to understand the real significance of *al-ḥamdu-lillah* (praise be to Allah), one should visualise this scene: after presenting the above question before the people the speaker observed a pause so that the opponents of *Tauhīd* could give an answer to it if they had any. Then, when they could not give any answer, and from nowhere it was said that both were equal, the speaker said: *"Al-ḥamdu-lillah:* Thank God that you too appreciate the difference between the two situations and none among you can dare say that slavery to many masters is better than slavery to one master, or that both are equal."

50. That is, "You fully understand and appreciate the difference between slavery to one master and slavery to many masters, but when you are made to understand the difference between God-worship and the worship of many gods, you show lack of understanding."

51. There is a subtle gap between the preceding sentence and this, which can be filled by every intelligent person himself by a little consideration of the context. It contains this theme: "You are making every effort to make the people

understand a simple thing in a simple way, but they are not only showing stubbornness with regard to what you say and rejecting it but are also bent upon harming you in order to suppress the manifest truth. Well, neither you are immortal nor they : both you and they have to die one day: then, each of you will experience his own end."

52. It means this: "As to who will receive punishment in the trial before Allah on the day of Resurrection, you should note it well that the punishment inevitably will be inflicted on those wicked people who invented a false creed that there were other associates also with Allah, who had a share in His Being, authority, powers and rights, and worse than that, when the truth was presented before them, they not only paid no heed to it, but, on the contrary, treated the one who presented it as an impostor. As far as the person who came with the truth, and those who affirmed faith in him, are concerned there can obviously be no question of their receiving any punishment from the Court of Allah."

53. One should note that the words used here are *'inda Rabbi-him* (with their Lord) and not *fil-jannah* (in Paradise), and obviously man reaches in the presence of his Lord just after death. Therefore, the intention of the verse seems to be: Not only after entering Paradise but right from the time of death till his entry into Paradise also Allah will treat the righteous believer in the same kind manner. The believer will certainly desire to be saved from the torment of *barzakh*, from the severities of the Day of Resurrection and Judgment, from the humiliation of the Plain of Gathering and from the punishment of his errors and shortcomings, and Allah Almighty will fulfil all his desires.

54. The people who believed in the Holy Prophet had happened to commit most heinous sins, both ideological and moral, in the days of ignorance, and after affirmation of the faith the good that they did was not only that they gave up the falsehood they had been professing and accepted the Truth that the Holy Prophet had presented, but in addition, they had performed the best righteous acts in morality, devotion and in their dealing's with others, Allah says: The worst deeds that they had committed in the days of ignorance will be wiped off from their account, and they will be rewarded for the best of their deeds found in their conduct book.

55. The disbelievers of Makkah used to say to the Holy Prophet, "You behave insolently in respect of our deities and utter rude words against them : you do not know how powerful they are and what miraculous powers they possess. Anybody who dishonoured them was ruined. If you also do not desist from what you say against them, you too will be annihilated."

[Contd. on p. 405

مَكَانَتِكُمْ إِنِّي عَامِلٌ ۚ فَسَوْفَ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿39﴾ مَنْ يَأْتِيهِ عَذَابٌ يُخْزِيهِ وَ
يَحِلُّ عَلَيْهِ عَذَابٌ مُقِيمٌ ﴿40﴾ إِنَّا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ لِلنَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ ۖ فَمَنِ
اهْتَدَىٰ فَلِنَفْسِهِ ۖ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ۖ وَمَا أَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيلٍ ﴿41﴾
اللَّهُ يَتَوَفَّى الْأَنْفُسَ حِينَ مَوْتِهَا وَالَّتِي لَمْ تَمُتْ فِي مَنَامِهَا ۖ فَيُمْسِكُ
الَّتِي قَضَىٰ عَلَيْهَا الْمَوْتَ وَيُرْسِلُ الْأُخْرَىٰ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ
لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿42﴾ أَمِ اتَّخَذُوا مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ شُفَعَاءَ ۚ قُلْ أَوَلَوْ
كَانُوا لَا يَمْلِكُونَ شَيْئًا وَلَا يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿43﴾ قُلْ لِلَّهِ الشَّفَاعَةُ جَمِيعًا ۖ لَهُ مُلْكُ
السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۖ ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿44﴾ وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ اشْمَأَزَّتْ
قُلُوبُ الَّذِينَ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِالْآخِرَةِ ۖ وَإِذَا ذُكِرَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ إِذَا هُمْ
يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ ﴿45﴾ قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ فَاطِرَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ عَالِمَ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ
أَنْتَ تَحْكُمُ بَيْنَ عِبَادِكَ فِي مَا كَانُوا فِيهِ يَخْتَلِفُونَ ﴿46﴾ وَلَوْ أَنَّ لِلَّذِينَ
ظَلَمُوا مَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ لَافْتَدَوْا بِهِ مِنْ سُوءِ الْعَذَابِ
يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ ۖ وَبَدَا لَهُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَمْ يَكُونُوا يَحْتَسِبُونَ ﴿47﴾ وَبَدَا لَهُمْ
سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿48﴾ فَإِذَا مَسَّ
الْإِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ دَعَانَا ثُمَّ إِذَا خَوَّلْنَاهُ نِعْمَةً مِنَّا قَالَ إِنَّمَا أُوتِيتُهُ عَلَىٰ
عِلْمٍ ۚ بَلْ هِيَ فِتْنَةٌ وَلَٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿49﴾ قَدْ قَالَهَا الَّذِينَ مِنْ
قَبْلِهِمْ فَمَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿50﴾ فَأَصَابَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا
وَالَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْ هَٰؤُلَاءِ سَيُصِيبُهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا كَسَبُوا وَمَا هُمْ بِمُعْجِزِينَ ﴿51﴾
أَوَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَقْدِرُ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ

It is Allah Who takes the souls at death and the soul of the one, who has not yet died, during sleep.[60] Then He withholds that for whom He decrees death and restores the souls of others till an appointed time. In this there are many signs for the people who reflect.[61] What! Have they taken besides Allah others as intercessors?[62] Say to them, "Will they intercede even if they have no power whatever nor understanding?" Say, "Intercession is wholly in the power of Allah:[63] His is the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth. Then, to Him you will be returned." 42-44

When Allah alone is mentioned, the hearts of those who do not believe in the Hereafter, are filled with anguish; but when others beside Him are mentioned, they are at once filled with joy.[64] Say, "O God! Creator of the heavens and the earth, Knower of the unseen and the seen! You alone shall judge between Your servants concerning that in which they have been differing." Even if the wicked people possessed all the wealth of the earth, and as much more, they would be prepared to offer it all as ransom to escape the terrible punishment of the Day of Resurrection; yet from Allah there would appear before them that which they would never have imagined. There, all the evil results of their deeds shall become manifest to them, and the same which they had been mocking shall encompass them completely. 45-48

Man[65] is such that when a little affliction touches him, he calls upon Us, and when We bestow Our favour on him, he says, "I have been given this because of my knowledge!"[66] Nay, it is a trial, but most of them do not know.[67] The same was said also by those who went before them, but whatever they earned did not avail them anything.[68] So, they met the evil consequences of their deeds, and the wicked ones among these people, too, shall soon meet the evil consequences of their deeds. They cannot frustrate Us. And do they not know that Allah provides abundantly for whom He wills and sparingly for whom He wills?[69] In this there are signs for those who believe. 49-52

Contd. from p. 403]

56. That is, "This also is a result of their lack of guidance that the foolish people esteem highly the power and honour of their deities but they never think that Allah also is Almighty and they can also be punished for insulting Him by the *shirk* they are committing against Him."

57. Ibn Abi Ḥātim has related from Ibn 'Abbās that the Holy Prophet said: "The person who desires that he should become most powerful among men should repose his trust in Allah; and the person who desires that he should become the wealthiest among men should have more trust in that which is with Allah than that which is in his own hand; and the person who desires that he should become most honourable among men should fear Allah Almighty."

58. That is, "You may go on doing what you can in order to harm me and do not give me any respite."

59. That is, "It is not for you to bring them to the Right Path. Your only duty is to present the Right Path before them. If they prefer to remain astray after that, you are not responsible for it."

60. "Taking the souls during sleep" implies the suspension of the powers of feeling and consciousness, understanding and will.

61. By this Allah wants every man to realize how life and death are entirely in His own hand. No one has the guarantee that he will certainly get up alive in the morning when he goes to sleep at night. No one knows what disaster could befall him within a moment, and whether the next moment would be a moment of life for him or of death. At any time, while asleep or awake, in the house or outside it, some unforeseen calamity, from inside his body or from outside, can suddenly cause his death. Thus, man who is so helpless in the hand of God, would be foolish if he turned away from the same God or became heedless of Him.

62. That is, "In the first place, these people have foolishly presumed that there are some beings who wield great influence with Allah, and whose intercession is never turned down, whereas there is no proof of their being intercessors at all, nor has Allah ever said that they hold such a position with Him, nor did these beings themselves ever claim that they would use their influence with Allah and help them out in every case. Another folly of these people is that they have ignored the real Master and have believed the imaginary beings to be all-powerful, who deserve to receive all their devotion and dedication."

63. That is, "Not to speak of getting his intercession granted, no one has the power to stand before Allah as an intercessor. The right to grant or not to grant anyone the permission to intercede with Him exclusively rests with Allah. Then He may allow intercession for whomever He may please and forbid for whomever He may please." (For understanding the difference between the Islamic concept of intercession and the polytheistic concept, see Al-Baqarah: 255, Al-An'ām: 51, Yūnus: 3, 18, Hūd: 105, Ar-Ra'd 11, An-Naml: 73, 84, Ṭā Hā: 109-110, Al-Anbiyā': 23, Al-Ḥijr: 76, and the E.N.'s thereof and E.N. 40 of Sabā.

64. This evil is common to almost all polytheistic people of the world, and even some unfortunate Muslims also suffer from it. They profess with the tongue that they believe in Allah, but when One Allah alone is mentioned before them, their faces are distorted, and they say, "This man certainly does not believe in the saints and holy men; that is why he talks of Allah and Allah alone." And if others besides Allah are mentioned, they are delighted, and their faces brighten up with joy. Their this attitude shows as to who is the actual object of their love and esteem. 'Allāma Ālūsī, in his commentary *Rūh al-Ma'ānī*, has related his own experience here. He says: "One day I saw that a man was invoking the help of a dead saint in his affliction. I said; O bondsman of Allah, invoke Allah, for He Himself says: 'If My servants ask you, O Prophet, concerning Me, tell them I am quite near to them. I hear and answer the prayer of the supplicant when he calls to Me." (Al-Baqarah: 186). Hearing this the man became angry, the people told me afterwards that he said: This man is a denier of the saints; and some others heard him also say: The saints answer the prayers more promptly than does Allah."

65. "The man": the one who has aversion to Allah and whose face is distorted on hearing Allah alone being mentioned.

66. This sentence can have two meanings: (1) "That Allah knows that I am worthy of this blessing; that is why He has given me all this, otherwise He would not have blessed me if I had been an evil and wicked person in His sight;" and (2) "that I have attained to this by virtue of my ability."

67. People ignorantly think that whoever is being blessed by Allah in some way is being so blessed necessarily on account of his worth and ability and that the same is a sign or proof of his being a favourite in His sight; whereas the fact is that whoever is being given something here, is being given it for the sake of a trial by Allah. This is a means of the test, and not any reward for ability, otherwise many able and worthy people would not be living in poverty and many unworthy people would not be rolling in prosperity. Likewise, these worldly blessings are not a sign of one's being a favourite with Allah either. Everyone can see that many good people whose goodness is unquestionable are living in hardships in the world, and many wicked people whose evil-doing is well known are enjoying the pleasures of life. Now, can a sensible man take the affliction of the one and the life of ease and comfort of the other as an argument to say that Allah hates the good man and prefers the bad man?

68. That is, "When they were seized for evil-doing, the ability of which they were so proud, did not avail them anything, and this also became known that they were not Allah's favourites. Evidently, if their earning had been due to their capability and their being favourites with Allah, they would not have been seized for evil-doing at all."

[Contd. on p.410

لِقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٥٢﴾ قُلْ يٰعِبَادِيَ الَّذِيْنَ اَسْرَفُوْا عَلٰٓى اَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا تَقْنَطُوْا
٥ ع ١١ ٩ ٣
مِنْ رَّحْمَةِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوْبَ جَمِيْعًا ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٥٣﴾
وَاَنِيْبُوْٓا اِلٰى رَبِّكُمْ وَاَسْلِمُوْا لَهٗ مِنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَكُمُ الْعَذَابُ ثُمَّ لَا
تُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿٥٤﴾ وَاتَّبِعُوْٓا اَحْسَنَ مَآ اُنْزِلَ اِلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ رَّبِّكُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَكُمُ
الْعَذَابُ بَغْتَةً وَّاَنْتُمْ لَا تَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ اَنْ تَقُوْلَ نَفْسٌ يّٰحَسْرَتٰى عَلٰى مَا
فَرَّطْتُّ فِيْ جَنْۢبِ اللّٰهِ وَاِنْ كُنْتُ لَمِنَ السّٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾ اَوْ تَقُوْلَ لَوْ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ
هَدٰىنِيْ لَكُنْتُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ اَوْ تَقُوْلَ حِيْنَ تَرَى الْعَذَابَ لَوْ اَنَّ لِيْ
كَرَّةً فَاَكُوْنَ مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ بَلٰى قَدْ جَآءَتْكَ اٰيٰتِيْ فَكَذَّبْتَ بِهَا وَاسْتَكْبَرْتَ
وَكُنْتَ مِنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ وَيَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ تَرَى الَّذِيْنَ كَذَبُوْا عَلَى اللّٰهِ وُجُوْهُهُمْ
مُّسْوَدَّةٌ ؕ اَلَيْسَ فِيْ جَهَنَّمَ مَثْوًى لِّلْمُتَكَبِّرِيْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ وَيُنَجِّي اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا
بِمَفَازَتِهِمْ ۫ لَا يَمَسُّهُمُ السُّوْٓءُ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ اَللّٰهُ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۫
وَّهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّكِيْلٌ ﴿٦٢﴾ لَهٗ مَقَالِيْدُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ
٦ ع ١١ ٩ ٣
كَفَرُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ اُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الْخٰسِرُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ قُلْ اَفَغَيْرَ اللّٰهِ تَاْمُرُوْٓنِّيْٓ اَعْبُدُ اَيُّهَا
الْجٰهِلُوْنَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ اُوْحِيَ اِلَيْكَ وَاِلَى الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ۚ لَئِنْ اَشْرَكْتَ
لَيَحْبَطَنَّ عَمَلُكَ وَلَتَكُوْنَنَّ مِنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٥﴾ بَلِ اللّٰهَ فَاعْبُدْ وَكُنْ مِّنَ
الشّٰكِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَمَا قَدَرُوا اللّٰهَ حَقَّ قَدْرِهٖ ۖ وَالْاَرْضُ جَمِيْعًا قَبْضَتُهٗ يَوْمَ
الْقِيٰمَةِ وَالسَّمٰوٰتُ مَطْوِيّٰتٌۢ بِيَمِيْنِهٖ ؕ سُبْحٰنَهٗ وَتَعٰلٰى عَمَّا يُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿٦٧﴾ وَ
نُفِخَ فِي الصُّوْرِ فَصَعِقَ مَنْ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَنْ فِي الْاَرْضِ اِلَّا مَنْ شَآءَ
اللّٰهُ ؕ ثُمَّ نُفِخَ فِيْهِ اُخْرٰى فَاِذَا هُمْ قِيَامٌ يَّنْظُرُوْنَ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَاَشْرَقَتِ الْاَرْضُ

(O Prophet,) say, "O My servants,[70] who have wronged their own souls: Do not despair of Allah's mercy: surely Allah forgives all sins: He is the All-Forgiving, the All-Merciful.[71] Return to your Lord and submit to Him before the scourge overtakes you, and then you may get no help from anywhere. And follow the best aspect[72] of the Book sent down by your Lord, before the scourge comes down upon you suddenly while you are unaware, lest afterwards someone should say, "Alas for the negligence (in duty) I showed towards Allah! Indeed, I was among those who mocked." Or: "Would that Allah had shown me guidance so that I too would have been among the righteous!" Or, when he sees the torment: "Would that I could get another chance so that I also should be among the doers of good!" (And then he should get this answer:) "Why not! My Revelations did come to you; then you denied them, and showed arrogance, and you were among the disbelievers." You will see that on the Day of Resurrection the faces of those who have invented falsehoods against Allah, will be blackened. Is not there in Hell enough room for the arrogant? On the contrary, those who have adopted righteousness here, Allah will rescue them because of their means of success. No evil shall touch them nor will they grieve. 53-61

Allah is the Creator of everything and over every thing He is the Guardian.[73] To Him belong the keys of the treasures of the heavens and the earth; and the losers are only those who disbelieve His Revelations. (O Prophet,) say to them, "Ignorant people! Do you bid me worship others than Allah?" (Tell them plainly this because) the Revelation sent to you and to all the Prophets before you has been this: "If you commit *shirk*, all your works will be rendered vain[74] and you will be among the losers." Therefore, (O Prophet), you should worship only Allah and be among His grateful servants. 62-66

These people have not recognized the true worth of Allah as His worth should truly be recognized.[75] (As for His Omnipotence) the entire earth on the Day of Resurrection shall be in His grasp and the heavens shall be rolled up in His right hand.[76] Glorified is He and Exalted above what they associate with Him.[77] And the Trumpet shall be blown on that Day[78] and all those who are in the heavens and the earth shall fall down dead except those whom Allah may allow to live. 62-66

Then the Trumpet shall be blown again and they will all stand up, looking around.[79]

Contd. from p.407]

69. That is, "The Abundance or restriction of the provisions is based on another law of Allah, which has some other wisdom. The distribution of the provisions does not at all depend on man's worthiness and ability, or on his being a favourite of Allah, or for being under His wrath." (For details, see At-Taubah: 55, 69, 85; Yūnus: 17; Hūd: 3, 27; Ar-Ra'd: 26; Al-Kahf: 34-36; Ṭā Hā: 131-132; Al-Anbiyā': 105; Al-Mu'minūn: Introduction and vv. 55-56; Ash-Shu'arā': 111; Al-Qaṣaṣ: 78, 89 and the E N. thereof, and E.N.'s 54 to 60 of Sabā).

70. Some commentators have given a strange interpretation to these words. They say that Allah Himself has commanded the Holy Prophet to address the people as "My servants" therefore, all men are the servants of the Holy Prophet. This interpretation is no interpretation at all but a worst distortion of the meaning of the Qur'ān and indeed tampering with the Word of Allah. If this interpretation were correct, it would falsify and negate the whole Qur'ān.

For the Qur'ān, from the beginning to the end, establishes the concept that men are the servants of Allah alone, and its whole message revolves around the point that they should serve none but One Allah alone. The Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself was Allah's servant. Allah had sent him not as *rabb* (sustainer, providence) but as a Messenger so that he should himself serve Him and teach the other people also to serve Him alone. After all, how can a sensible person believe that the Holy Prophet might have one day stood up before the disbelieving Quraish of Makkah and made the sudden proclamation: "You are in fact the slaves of Muhammad and not of al-'Uzzah and ash-Shams." (We seek Allah's refuge from this).

71. The address here is to all mankind. There is no weighty argument to regard only the believers as the addressees. As has been observed by 'Allāma Ibn Kathīr, to address such a thing to the common men does not mean that Allah forgives all sins without repentance, but Allāh Himself has explained in the following verses that sins are forgiven only when the sinner turns to Allah's worship and service and adopts obedience to the message sent down by Him. As a matter of fact, this verse brought a message of hope for those people who had committed mortal sins like murder, adultery, theft, robbery, etc. in the days of ignorance, and had despaired whether they would ever be forgiven. To them it has been said: "Do not despair of Allah's mercy: whatever you might have done in the past, if you sincerely turn to your Lord's obedience, you will be forgiven every sin." The same interpretation of this verse has been given by Ibn 'Abbās,

Qatādah, Mujāhid and Ibn Zaid. (Ibn Jarir, Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhi). For further explanation, see Al-Furqān: 70-71 and the E.N.'s thereof.

72. "To follow the best aspect of the Book of Allah" means that one should carry out the Commands Allah has given and refrain from what He has forbidden, and learn lessons from what He has brought out in the parables and narratives. As against this, the one who turns away from Allah's Commands, indulges in the forbidden things, and does not heed His admonitions, follows the worst aspect of the Book of Allah, i.e. that aspect which the Divine Book has declared as the most evil.

73. That is, "He did not just create the world and then left it alone, but He is constantly guarding and watching over everything. Just as everything in the world came into being by His act of creation so everything is living and surviving by His leave, and flourishing and functioning only under His protection and care."

74. That is, "No act which is performed along with *shirk* will be adjudged as a righteous act, and no one who, being a *mushrik*, performs many acts as good acts in his personal judgement, will deserve any reward for them, and his whole life work will be deemed to have gone waste."

75. That is, "They have no conception of the greatness and glory of Allah; they have never tried to understand how high is the position of the Lord of the Universe and how insignificant are the beings whom these foolish people have made associates in Godhead and worthy of their worship."

76. This is a figurative way of describing the complete control and authority of Allah over the earth and heavens. Just as a man encloses a small ball in the hollow of his hand with perfect ease, or a person rolls up an handkerchief in his hand without any difficulty, so will all men (who fail to conceive the greatness and glory of Allah) see with their own eyes, on the Day of Resurrection, that the earth and the heavens are like an ordinary ball and a small scroll in the hand of Allah. Traditions have been related in Musnad Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Jarīr and others, on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar and Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah, that once during a sermon the Holy Prophet recited this verse and then said: "Allah will hold the heavens and the earths (i.e. the planets) in His grasp and will roll them about in such a way as a child rolls a ball, and will say: 'I am God, the One: I am the King: I am the All Mighty, Owner of glory: Where are the kings of the world? Where are the tyrants? Where are the arrogant?' —Saying these words he started so shaking that we feared that he might topple over along with the pulpit."

[Contd. on p. 413

بِنُوْرِ رَبِّهَا وَ وُضِعَ الْكِتٰبُ وَ جِایْٓءَ بِالنَّبِیّٖنَ وَ الشُّهَدَآءِ وَ قُضِیَ بَیْنَهُمْ
بِالْحَقِّ وَ هُمْ لَا یُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۶۹﴾ وَ وُفِّیَتْ كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا عَمِلَتْ وَ هُوَ اَعْلَمُ بِمَا
یَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿۷۰﴾ وَ سِیْقَ الَّذِیْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اِلٰى جَهَنَّمَ زُمَرًا ؕ حَتّٰۤى اِذَا جَآءُوْهَا
فُتِحَتْ اَبْوَابُهَا وَ قَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَاۤ اَلَمْ یَاْتِكُمْ رُسُلٌ مِّنْكُمْ یَتْلُوْنَ
عَلَیْكُمْ اٰیٰتِ رَبِّكُمْ وَ یُنْذِرُوْنَكُمْ لِقَآءَ یَوْمِكُمْ هٰذَا ؕ قَالُوْا بَلٰى وَ لٰكِنْ حَقَّتْ
كَلِمَةُ الْعَذَابِ عَلَى الْكٰفِرِیْنَ ﴿۷۱﴾ قِیْلَ ادْخُلُوْۤا اَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِیْنَ فِیْهَا ۚ
فَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِیْنَ ﴿۷۲﴾ وَ سِیْقَ الَّذِیْنَ اتَّقَوْا رَبَّهُمْ اِلَى الْجَنَّةِ زُمَرًا ؕ
حَتّٰۤى اِذَا جَآءُوْهَا وَ فُتِحَتْ اَبْوَابُهَا وَ قَالَ لَهُمْ خَزَنَتُهَا سَلٰمٌ عَلَیْكُمْ طِبْتُمْ
فَادْخُلُوْهَا خٰلِدِیْنَ ﴿۷۳﴾ وَ قَالُوا الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِیْ صَدَقَنَا وَعْدَهٗ وَ اَوْرَثَنَا
الْاَرْضَ نَتَبَوَّاُ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ حَیْثُ نَشَآءُ ۚ فَنِعْمَ اَجْرُ الْعٰمِلِیْنَ ﴿۷۴﴾ وَ تَرَى
الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ حَآفِّیْنَ مِنْ حَوْلِ الْعَرْشِ یُسَبِّحُوْنَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ ۚ وَ قُضِیَ بَیْنَهُمْ
بِالْحَقِّ وَ قِیْلَ الْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِیْنَ ﴿۷۵﴾

The earth will shine forth with the light of her Lord and the conduct book will be laid open, and the Prophets and the witnesses[80] shall be brought in, and the people shall be judged with full justice, and none shall be wronged. And every living being shall be recompensed fully for whatever it had done. Allah knows full well what the people do. 71-72

(After this Judgement) those who had disbelieved, shall be driven towards Hell, in groups, till, when they have reached there, its gates will be opened,[81] and its keepers will say to them, "Did not Messengers come to you from among yourselves, who recited to you the Revelations of your Lord, and warned you that you shall have to encounter this Day?" They will reply, "Yes, they did come, but the sentence of punishment proved true against the disbelievers." It will be said, "Enter the gates of Hell, to dwell therein for ever. What an evil abode for the arrogant!" 71 72

And those who had refrained from the disobedience of their Lord shall be led towards Paradise, in groups, till, when they arrive there, and its gates shall already have been opened, its keepers will say, "Peace be upon you: you have fared well. Enter herein to dwell for every" And they will say, "Praise is for Allah, Who has proved true to us His promise and made us heirs of the earth:[82] now we can dwell in Paradise wherever we like."[83] How excellent a reward for the virtuous![84] 73-74

And you will see the angels circling around the Throne, glorifying their Lord with His praises; and the people shall be judged with full justice, and it will be proclaimed: "Praise is for Allah; Lord of the worlds!"[85] 75

Contd. from p.411]

77. That is, there is no comparison whatever between Allah's greatness and glory and the insignificance of those who are associated with Him in Godhead.

78. For the explanation of Sūr (Trumpet), see Al-An'ām: 73, Ibrāhīm: 48, Al-Kahf: 99, Ṭā Hā: 102-103, Al-Ḥajj: 1, Al-Mu'minūn: 101, An-Naml: 87 and the E.N.'s thereof.

79. Here, mention has been made of the Trumpet's being blown only twice. Besides, in Sūrah An-Naml there is the mention of another blowing of the Trumpet before these two, on hearing which everything in the earth and the heavens will be struck with terror (v. 87). On this very basis, the *Aḥādīth* mention that the Trumpet will be blown thrice: (1) *Nafakhat al-Fazz'* on hearing which everything will be struck with terror, (2) *nafakhat as-Sa'q*, on which everyone will fall down dead, and (3) *nafakhat al-qiyām li-Rabbil-'ālamin*, i.e. the Trumpet on the blowing of which all dead men will return to life and arise from their graves to present themselves before their Lord.

80. "The witnesses": those who will bear witness to the effect that the Message of Allah had been conveyed to the people as well as those who will bear witness to the acts and deeds of the people. It is not necessary that these witnesses will be only human beings. The angels, the jinns, the beasts, men's own limbs, their dwelling places and the trees and stones, will all be included among the witnesses.

81. That is, the gates of Hell will not have already been opened but will be opened on their arrival there just as the gate of a prison is opened on the arrival of the culprits and is closed as soon as they have entered it.

82. For explanation, see Ṭā Hā: 106-107, 124; Al-Anbiyā': 106-107 and the E.N.'s thereof.

83. That is, "The Paradise which has been granted to each of us, is now our property and we possess full rights over it."

84. Maybe this is said by the dwellers of Paradise, or maybe this sentence is added by Allah to what the dwellers of Paradise will say.

85. That is, the entire Universe will proclaim the praises of Allah Almighty.



XL

AL-MU'MIN

المؤمن

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XL

AL-MU'MIN

المؤمن

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name *Al-Mu'min* from verse 28, implying thereby, that it is a Sūrah in which *Al-Mu'min* (the Believer of Pharaoh's people) has been mentioned.

Period of Revelation

According to Ibn 'Abbās and Jābir bin Zaid, this Sūrah was sent down consecutively after Sūrah Az-Zumar, and its present position in the order of the Sūrahs in the Qur'ān is the same as its chronological order.

Background of Revelation

There are clear indications in the subject-matter of this Sūrah to the conditions in which it was revealed. The disbelievers of Makkah at that time were engaged in two kinds of activities against the Holy

Prophet. First, they were creating every kind of suspicion and misgiving in the minds of the people about the teaching of the Qur'ān and the message of Islam and about the Holy Prophet himself by starting many disputes and discussions, raising irrelevant objections and bringing ever new accusations so that the Holy Prophet and the believers were sick of trying to answer them. Second, they were preparing the ground for putting an end to the Holy Prophet himself. They were devising one plot after the other, and on one occasion had even taken the practical steps to execute a plot. Bukhārī has related a tradition on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Amr bin 'As saying that one day when the Holy Prophet was offering his Prayer in the precincts of the Ka'bah, suddenly Uqbah bin Abi Mu'ait, rushed forward and putting a piece of cloth round his neck started twisting it so as to strangle him to death. Ḥaḍrat Abu Bakr, who happened to go there in time, pushed him away. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah says that when Abū Bakr was struggling with the cruel man, he was saying words to the effect: Would you kill a man only because he says: Allah is my Lord?" With a little variation this event has also been mentioned in Ibn Hishām, Nasā'ī and Ibn Abī Ḥātim.

Theme and Topics

Both aspects of this have been clearly stated at the very outset, and then the whole following discourse is a most effective and instructive review of them.

As an answer to the conspiracies of murder the story of the Believer of the people of Pharaoh has been narrated (vv. 23-55) and through this story three different lessons have been taught to the three groups:

(1) The disbelievers have been admonished: "Whatever you intend to do against Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), the same did the Pharaoh with his might intend against the Prophet Moses. Now, would you like to meet with the same fate with which he met by plotting such conspiracies?"

(2) The Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his followers have been taught the lesson: "These wicked people may apparently be very strong and powerful and you very weak and helpless against them, yet you should rest assured that the might of that God Whose Word you are trying to raise high is superior

to every other power. Therefore, you should only seek Allah's refuge in response to every and any dreadful threat that they utter against you, and then busy yourself after this in fearlessly performing your mission. The God-worshipper has only one answer to every threat of the tyrant: 'I have taken refuge in my Lord and your Lord against every arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning.' (v. 27) Thus, if you go on performing your mission fearless of every danger and with full trust in God, His succour will ultimately reach you, and the Pharaohs of today shall be doomed just as the Pharaohs of yesterday. Till that time you will have to face and bear patiently every wave of persecution and tyranny that may be directed against you.

(3) Besides these two, there was a third group of the people also in the society, who had been convinced in their hearts that the Truth was only on the side of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), and that the disbelieving Quraish were being unjust and cruel. But in spite of the conviction they were watching quietly and unconcerned the conflict between the Truth and falsehood. Allah here has aroused their conscience as if to say: "When the enemies of the Truth have openly plotted, in front of your very eyes, it would be a sad reflection on you if you still remained indifferent. Under such conditions, unless a person's conscience has wholly become dead, he should rise and perform the duty, which a righteous man from among the courtiers of Pharaoh himself had performed at a time when the Pharaoh had made up his mind to kill the Prophet Moses. The circumstances that prevent you from raising your voice had also obstructed the way of the Believer, but he had full faith in Allah and disregarded all expediency; then note that the Pharaoh was not able to do him any harm."

Now as for the conspiracies, which were continuing in Makkah day and night to defeat the Truth, on the one hand, arguments have been given to prove the doctrines of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter as true, which were the real basis of the dispute between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers, and it has been stated plainly and openly that the disbelievers are wrangling over those truths without any knowledge. On

the other, the motives which were the real cause of the Quraishite chiefs' conflict against the Holy Prophet, have been exposed. Apparently they were trying to have the common people believe that they had some genuine objections against the teaching of the Prophet and his claim to prophethood; that is why they were not prepared to listen to him. But, in fact, this was their struggle for power. In verse 56, they have been openly warned, so as to say: "The real cause of your denial is your arrogance and vanity. You think that if you acknowledge the prophethood of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), your power and authority will come to an end. That is why you are straining every nerve to frustrate and defeat him."

In the same connection, the disbelievers have been warned again and again to the effect: "If you do not desist from wrangling against the Revelations of Allah, you will be doomed to the same fate as the nations of the past. Much worse torment awaits you in the Hereafter. Then you will repent, but it will be too late.



حٰمٓ ۝١ تَنْزِيْلُ الْكِتٰبِ مِنَ اللّٰهِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْعَلِيْمِ ۝٢ غَافِرِ الذَّنْۢبِ وَقَابِلِ
التَّوْبِ شَدِيْدِ الْعِقَابِ ذِي الطَّوْلِ ۭ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۭ اِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيْرُ ۝٣ مَا يُجَادِلُ
فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا فَلَا يَغْرُرْكَ تَقَلُّبُهُمْ فِي الْبِلَادِ ۝٤ كَذَّبَتْ
قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمُ نُوْحٍ وَّالْاَحْزَابُ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ ۠ وَهَمَّتْ كُلُّ اُمَّةٍۢ بِرَسُوْلِهِمْ
لِيَاْخُذُوْهُ وَجٰدَلُوْا بِالْبَاطِلِ لِيُدْحِضُوْا بِهِ الْحَقَّ فَاَخَذْتُهُمْ ۡ فَكَيْفَ كَانَ

XL

AL-MU'MIN

المؤمن

Verses: 85 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

1-3 Ḥā-Mīm. The revelation of this Book is from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing, the Forgiver of sin and Acceptor of repentance. He is stern in punishment and is highly Bountiful. There is no deity beside Him. To Him shall all return.[1]

4-6 None dispute about the Revelations of Allah[2] but those who have disbelieved:[3] so let not their strutting about in the lands deceive you.[4] Before them the people of Noah also denied, and so did many a host after them. Every nation fell upon its Messenger to seize him: they all tried to defeat the Truth by means of falsehood, but, at last, I seized them. Then, just see, how severe was My punishment! Likewise has this judgement of your Lord also proved true against those people who have denied that they would go to Hell.[5]

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1. This is the introduction to the discourse. By this the listener has been forewarned to the effect: "What is being presented before you, is not the word of an ordinary being but of that God Who has infinite power." After this, some of

Allah's attributes have been mentioned, one after the other, which bear a deep relevance to the following theme:

First, that He is "All-Mighty", i.e. He is Dominant over everything. His every decree concerning anybody is always enforced; none can fight Him and win; none can escape His grasp. Therefore, a person who expects to be successful after turning away from His Command and expects to frustrate His Message after having a dispute with Him is himself foolish. Such notions are only deceptions.

Second, that He is "All-Knowing", i.e. He does not say anything on mere conjecture, but has the direct knowledge of everything. Therefore, whatever information He gives about the supernatural realities, is true, and the one who does not accept it, is following nothing but ignorance. Likewise, He knows in what lies the true success of man and what rules and laws and commands are necessary for his well-being. His every teaching is based on wisdom and correct knowledge, which does not admit of any error. Therefore, if a person does not accept His guidance, he only wants to follow the path of his own ruin. Then, nothing from the acts and deeds of man can remain hidden from Him; so much so that He even knows the intentions of man, which are the real motives of his deeds. Therefore, man can never escape His punishment.

The third attribute is that He is "Forgiver of sin and Acceptor of repentance." This attribute brings hope and causes inducement, which has been mentioned so that the people who have led lives of sin, should not despair but should reform themselves with the hope that if they refrained from their behaviour even now, they could still be redeemed by Allah's mercy. Here, one should understand well that forgiving of sins and accepting of repentance are not necessarily one and the same thing, but in most cases Allah forgives sins even without the repentance. For example, a person commits errors as well as does good, and his good acts become the means of forgiveness for his mistakes, whether or not he had opportunity to show repentance for the errors, but might even have forgotten them. Likewise, all the troubles and hardships and diseases and calamities that afflict man and cause him grief in the world, serve as penance for his mistakes. That is why mention of forgiveness of sins has been made separately from the acceptance of repentance. But one should remember that the concession of forgiveness of errors without repentance only refers to those believers, who are free from defiance and who committed sins due to human weakness and not persistence in pride and sin.

The fourth attribute is that "He is stern in punishment." By this the people have been warned that just as Allah is Merciful for those who adopt the way of His service, so He is stern for those who adopt an attitude of rebellion against Him. When a person (or persons) transgresses the limits where he can still deserve

pardon and forgiveness from Allah, then he becomes worthy of His punishment, and His punishment is so dreadful that only a fool would persist in his wrongdoing.

The fifth attribute is that "He is Bountiful", i.e. He is Generous and Beneficent: all creatures are being showered with His blessings and favours every moment: whatever the servants are getting, they are getting only through His bounty and beneficence.

After these five attributes, two realities have been stated expressly: (1) That none but Allah is the Deity no matter how many false gods the people might have set up; and (2) that to Him everyone must return: there is no other deity which can call the people to account and reward or punish them. Therefore, if somebody makes another his deity, apart from Him, he will himself face the consequences of his folly.

2. "To dispute" means using crooked arguments in reasoning, raising irrelevant objections, isolating a word or a sentence from its context, subjecting it to hair-splitting and making it the basis of doubts and accusations, misconstruing words from their true sense and intention so that neither should one understand the meaning oneself nor let others understand it. Such a way of dispute is adopted only by those whose difference of opinion is based on ill-will and malice. If a well-intentioned opponent disputes a point, he does so for the sake of arriving at the truth, and wants to be satisfied through discussion whether his own point of view is correct. Such a discussion is engaged in quest of truth and not for refutation. Contrary to this, the real purpose of the malicious opponent is not to understand anything nor to help others to understand, but to degrade and humiliate the other man; he joins a discussion only with the intention that he would not let the other man carry his point. That is why he never faces the real problems but launches his attacks only on the irrelevant issues

3. Here, the word *"kufr"* has been used in two meanings: for ingratitude and for denial of the truth. According to the first meaning, the sentence would mean: As against the Revelations of Allah this sort of behaviour is adopted only by those who have forgotten His bounties and who have even lost the feeling that it is by His bounty that they are flourishing. According to the second, it would mean: "This sort of behaviour is adopted only by those who have turned away from the truth and are determined not to accept it. " From the context it becomes obvious that here the disbeliever does not imply every non-Muslim, for a non-Muslim who disputes a point in good faith for the sake of understanding Islam, and who tries to grasp thoroughly those things which he finds hard to follow, although a non-Muslim technically, yet that which has been condemned in this verse does not apply to him.

4. There is a gap between the previous sentence and this, which has been left for the listener to fill. From the context and style it becomes evident that those who adopt the attitude of disputation as against the Revelations of Allah Almighty, can never escape the punishment. Therefore, they shall inevitably meet their doom. Now, if one sees that those people, even after adopting such an attitude, are strutting about, their business is flourishing, their governments functioning in a grand style, and they are enjoying the good things of life, one should not be misled into thinking that they have escaped Allah's punishment, or that war against Allah's Revelations is a sport which can be adopted as a pastime and its evil consequences warded off easily. This, in fact, is a respite which they have been granted by Allah. Those who abuse this respite for doing more mischief are indeed preparing for an ignominious end.

5. That is, "The torment that seized them in the world was not their final punishment, but Allah has also decreed that they shall go to Hell." Another meaning can be: "Just as the nations of the past have gone to their doom, so will those people also who are committing disbelief go to Hell, according to the fixed decree of Allah."

عِقَابِ ۝٥ وَكَذٰلِكَ حَقَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْٓا اَنَّهُمْ اَصْحٰبُ
النَّارِ ۝٦ اَلَّذِيْنَ يَحْمِلُوْنَ الْعَرْشَ وَمَنْ حَوْلَهٗ يُسَبِّحُوْنَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَ
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهٖ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَ لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ۚ رَبَّنَا وَسِعْتَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ رَّحْمَةً وَّ
عِلْمًا فَاغْفِرْ لِلَّذِيْنَ تَابُوْا وَاتَّبَعُوْا سَبِيْلَكَ وَقِهِمْ عَذَابَ الْجَحِيْمِ ۝٧ رَبَّنَا
وَاَدْخِلْهُمْ جَنّٰتِ عَدْنِ ِالَّتِيْ وَعَدْتَّهُمْ وَمَنْ صَلَحَ مِنْ اٰبَآئِهِمْ وَاَزْوَاجِهِمْ
وَذُرِّيّٰتِهِمْ ۚ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ۝٨ وَقِهِمُ السَّيِّاٰتِ ۚ وَمَنْ تَقِ السَّيِّاٰتِ
يَوْمَىِٕذٍ فَقَدْ رَحِمْتَهٗ ۚ وَذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ۝٩ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا يُنَادَوْنَ
لَمَقْتُ اللّٰهِ اَكْبَرُ مِنْ مَّقْتِكُمْ اَنْفُسَكُمْ اِذْ تُدْعَوْنَ اِلَى الْاِيْمَانِ فَتَكْفُرُوْنَ ۝١٠
قَالُوْا رَبَّنَآ اَمَتَّنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ وَاَحْيَيْتَنَا اثْنَتَيْنِ فَاعْتَرَفْنَا بِذُنُوْبِنَا فَهَلْ اِلٰى
خُرُوْجٍ مِّنْ سَبِيْلٍ ۝١١ ذٰلِكُمْ بِاَنَّهٗٓ اِذَا دُعِيَ اللّٰهُ وَحْدَهٗ كَفَرْتُمْ ۚ وَاِنْ يُّشْرَكْ
بِهٖ تُؤْمِنُوْا ۚ فَالْحُكْمُ لِلّٰهِ الْعَلِيِّ الْكَبِيْرِ ۝١٢ هُوَ الَّذِيْ يُرِيْكُمْ اٰيٰتِهٖ وَيُنَزِّلُ لَكُمْ
مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ رِزْقًا ۚ وَمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ اِلَّا مَنْ يُّنِيْبُ ۝١٣ فَادْعُوا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ
الدِّيْنَ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ۝١٤ رَفِيْعُ الدَّرَجٰتِ ذُو الْعَرْشِ ۚ يُلْقِي الرُّوْحَ مِنْ
اَمْرِهٖ عَلٰى مَنْ يَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهٖ لِيُنْذِرَ يَوْمَ التَّلَاقِ ۝١٥ يَوْمَ هُمْ بٰرِزُوْنَ ۚ لَا
يَخْفٰى عَلَى اللّٰهِ مِنْهُمْ شَيْءٌ ۚ لِمَنِ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ ۚ لِلّٰهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ ۝١٦ اَلْيَوْمَ
تُجْزٰى كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ ۚ لَا ظُلْمَ الْيَوْمَ ۚ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَرِيْعُ الْحِسَابِ ۝١٧ وَ
اَنْذِرْهُمْ يَوْمَ الْاٰزِفَةِ اِذِ الْقُلُوْبُ لَدَى الْحَنَاجِرِ كٰظِمِيْنَ ۚ مَا لِلظّٰلِمِيْنَ
مِنْ حَمِيْمٍ وَّلَا شَفِيْعٍ يُّطَاعُ ۝١٨ يَعْلَمُ خَآئِنَةَ الْاَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُوْرُ ۝١٩
وَاللّٰهُ يَقْضِيْ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖ لَا يَقْضُوْنَ بِشَيْءٍ ۚ

The angels who bear the Divine Throne and those who stand around it, all are glorifying their Lord with His praises. They affirm faith in Him, and ask forgiveness for the believers.[6] They say, "Our Lord, You embrace everything in Your mercy and knowledge,[7] so forgive and save from the torment of Hell[8] those who have repented and followed Your Way.[9] Admit them, Our Lord, to the eternal Gardens which You have promised them,[10] and (admit therein also) of their parents and wives and children who are righteous.[11] You are surely All-Mighty, All-Wise. And deliver them from evils,[12] for whomever You delivered from evils on the Day of Resurrection,[13] to him You showed great mercy. This is indeed the supreme success." 7-9

To those who have disbelieved, it will be proclaimed, on the Day of Resurrection: "Allah's wrath against you was greater than is your own anger against yourselves today, when you were called to belief and you disbelieved."[14] They will answer, "Our Lord, You indeed gave us death twice and life twice.[15] Now we confess our sins.[16] Is there any way out from here?"[17] (They will be answered:) "You have incurred this fate because when you were called towards Allah, the One, you refused to believe, and when others were associated with Allah, you readily believed. Now the Judgement rests with Allah, the High, the Great!"[18] 10-12

It is He Who shows you His Signs[19] and sends down for you sustenance from heaven,[20] but only such a one learns lesson (from the observation of these Signs) who turns to Allah again and again.[21] (Therefore, O you who turn to Him: "Invoke Allah alone, making your religion sincerely His,[22] although the disbelievers may dislike your conduct." 13-14

Exalted in ranks[23] and Master of the Throne,[24] He sends down the Spirit by His Command upon whomsoever of His servants He pleases,[25] to give warning of the Day of Meeting,[26] the Day when all people shall be naked, and nothing of them will be hidden from Allah. (On that Day it will be asked:) "Whose is the Kingdom today?"[27] (The whole universe will cry out:) Of Allah, the One, the Omnipotent (It will be said): "Today every living being shall be recompensed for what it has earned: none shall be wronged today.[28] And Allah is swift at reckoning."[29] O Prophet, warn them of the Day that has approached 15-20

near,[30] when the hearts will leap up to the throats and the people will be standing mute, grief stricken: the wrongdoers will neither have any kindly friend[31] nor any intercessor who may be listened to.[32] Allah is aware of the treachery of the eyes and even of the secrets that the breasts keep hidden, and Allah shall judge with full justice. As for those whom they (the *mushriks)* invoke instead of Allah, they shall judge nothing. Indeed, Allah alone hears everything and sees everything.[33]

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6. This thing has been said for the consolation of the Holy Prophet's Companions, who were feeling greatly discouraged at the impudence and rebellious attitude of the disbelievers of Makkah as against their own helplessness, as if to say: "Why do you feel grieved at what these mean and worthless people say? You have the support of the angels who bear the Divine Throne and of those who stand around it; they are interceding with Allah for you." The mention of the angels who bear the Divine Throne and of those who stand around it, has been made, instead of the common angels, to impress the fact that not to speak of the common angels of Divine Kingdom, even the angels who are the pillars of this Kingdom, being nearest in rank and station to Allah, bear deep sympathy and regard for you. Then the words: "They affirm faith in Him and ask forgiveness for the believers", show that the relationship of the faith is the real relationship, which has joined the heavenly creatures and the earthly creatures together, and which has induced sympathy and esteem in the angels stationed around the Throne for the mortal humans inhabiting the earth, who affirm faith in Allah just like them. The angels' affirming the faith in Allah does not mean that they could disbelieve, and they adopted belief instead of disbelief, but it means that they believe in the sovereignty of Allah, the One, alone there is no other being that may be commanding them and they submit before it in utter obedience. When the same attitude and behaviour was adopted by the human believers, a strong relationship of cherishing a common creed and faith was established between them and the angels in spite of the great disparity in species and remoteness in rank and station.

7. That is, "The weakness, lapses and errors of Your servants are not hidden from You: You indeed know everything, but like Your knowledge Your Mercy also is infinite; therefore, forgive the poor creatures in spite of knowing their errors." Another meaning can be: "Forgive by Your Mercy all those about whom by Knowledge You know that they have repented sincerely and have, in reality, adopted Your Way."

8. To forgive and to save from the torment of Hell are although relatives, and there seems to be no need to mention the other when one has

been mentioned, this style, in fact, reflects the deep interest the angels have in the believers. It is customary that when a person who is deeply involved in a matter, finds an opportunity to make submissions before a judge, he presents the same petition humbly over and over again, in different ways, and does not rest content with making the petition just once.

9. "Who . . . way": "Who have given up disobedience and rebellion, adopted obedience and followed the way which You Yourself have shown."

10. Here again there is the same state of solicitude as referred to in E.N. 8 above. Obviously, forgiving and saving from Hell by itself amounts to admitting to Paradise. And then soliciting Allah for granting the believers the same Paradise which He Himself has promised them, seems to be unnecessary, but the angels are so earnest in their desire of well-being for the believers that they go on repeating their good wishes for them although they know that Allah will certainly bless them with these favours in the Hereafter.

11. That is, "Join with them their parents and their wives and children for the comfort of their eyes." This same thing Allah Himself has stated as among the blessings which the believers will be granted in Paradise. For this see Ar-Ra'd: 23 and At-Ṭūr: 21. In the verse of Sūrah Ṭūr, there is also the explanation that if a person will deserve a higher rank in Paradise, which his parents will not deserve, he will not be lowered in rank to be joined with them but Allah will raise them to join him in the higher station.

12. The word *sayyi'āt* (evils) is used in three different meanings and all three are implied here: (1) False beliefs, perverted morals and evil deeds; (2) consequences of deviation and evil deeds; and (3) calamities, disasters and suffering in this world, or in *barzakh*, or on the Day of Resurrection. The object of the angels' prayer is that they be saved from everything which may be evil for them.

13. "Evils on the Day of Resurrection" implies the dread and terror of the Day, deprivation of the shade and every other comfort, severity of accountability, the ignominy of exposing every secret of life before all mankind, and other humiliations and hardships which the guilty ones will experience in the Hereafter.

14. That is, "When the disbelievers will see on the Day of Resurrection that they had committed a grave folly by founding their entire life-work on polytheism and atheism, denial of the Hereafter and opposition to the Messenger, and due to the folly they were now doomed to that evil end, they will bite at their fingers and will curse themselves fretfully. At that time the angels will proclaim to them: "Today you are being angry with yourselves, but in the world when the Prophets of Allah and the other good people invited you to the right path to save

you from this evil end, you turned down their invitation, Allah's wrath against you then was even greater."

15. This same thing has already been mentioned in Al-Baqarah: 28 above. It implies this: "How can you disbelieve in Allah? He granted you life when you were lifeless; then He will give you death, and then will again raise you back to life." The disbelievers do not deny the first three of these conditions, because they are perceptible and therefore un-deniable. But they refuse to accept the occurrence of the fourth condition, for they have not yet experienced it, and only the Prophets have foretold it. On the Day of Resurrection when the fourth condition also will be practically experienced by them, then they will acknowledge that the same which the Prophets had foretold had actually happened.

16. That is, "We confess that we made a grave mistake when we denied this after-life; our life was filled with sins when we followed falsehood."

17. That is, "Is there any possibility now that our confession of sins be accepted and we be rescued from this state of torment in which we have been seized?"

18. That is, "The Judgement now rests entirely with that God alone, Whose Godhead you did not acknowledge, and those others whom you persistently regarded as associates and partners in the powers of Godhead, have no share whatever in the judgement." (For a fuller understanding of this point, please see verse 45 of Az-Zumar and its E.N. 64). This sentence by itself gives the meaning that there would be no possibility of any way out for the disbelievers from the state of torment, for they did not only deny the Hereafter but they had aversion to their Creator and Sustainer, and they were not satisfied until they had associated others with Him.

19. "Signs" imply those Signs which point to the great truth that the Fashioner, Ruler and Administrator of the Universe is One and only One God.

20. "Sustenance" here implies the rain, for every kind of the sustenance that man gets in the world, depends ultimately on the rainfall. Allah presents this one single Sign out of His countless Signs, as if to draw the people's attention to the fact: "If you only consider and ponder over the arrangement of this one thing, you will understand that the concept being presented in the Qur'ān of the administration of the Universe, is true. This arrangement could exist only if the Creator of the earth and its creatures and of water and air and the sun and the heat and cold was only One God, and this arrangement could continue to exist for millions and millions of years with perfect regularity only if the same Eternal God caused it to exist continually. And the One Who brought this arrangement into existence could only be an All-Wise and All-Merciful Lord, Who along with

creating men, animals and vegetables in the earth, also created water precisely according to their needs and requirements, and then made these wonderful arrangements for transporting and spreading that water to different parts of the earth with perfect regularity. Now, who can be more unjust than the one who sees all this and yet denies God, or associates some other beings also with Him in Godhead?"

21. That is, "A person who has turned away from God and whose intellect has been clouded and corrupted by heedlessness or prejudice, cannot learn any lesson from any Sign. He will see with his animal eyes that the winds blew, the clouds gathered, the lightning thundered and flashed and the rain fell; but his human eyes will never perceive why all this happened, who caused it, and what rights He has on him."

22. For the explanation of "making one's religion sincerely Allah's", see E.N. 3 of Az-Zumar.

23. That is, "He is exalted far above all the creations of the world. Anything that exists in the Universe, whether an angel or a prophet or a saint, or some other creation, may be very exalted and superior to other creations, but it cannot be imagined to have a station anywhere near the highest rank and position of Allah, not to speak of its being an associate in His attributes and powers and authority."

24. That is, He is King and Ruler of the whole Universe, and Master of the Throne of the Kingdom of the Universe. (For explanation, see Al-A'rāf: 54 and E.N. 41 thereof; Yūnus: 3, Ar-Ra'd: 2, Ṭā Hā: 5 and the E.N.'s thereof).

25. "The Spirit" implies Revelation and Prophethood. (For explanation, see An-Nahl 2, Banī Isrā'īl: 85 and the E.N.'s thereof). And the words: "Allah sends down the Spirit by His Command upon whomsoever of His servants He pleases" mean this: "Nobody has a monopoly over the bounties of Allah. Just as no one has a right to object as to why was so and so given beauty, and so-and-so extraordinary powers of memory or intelligence, so also no one has the right to object as to why so-and-so only was chosen to be a prophet and why a person of some one's own choice was not made a prophet."

26. "The Day of Meeting": the Day when all mankind, jinn and satans will be gathered together before their Lord simultaneously and the witnesses of their acts and deeds also will be present to bear the witness.

27. That is, "Thougth in the world many vain and self-conceited people publicly proclaimed to be the kings and sovereigns, whose, in fact, is the Kingdom today? Who is the Owner of the powers and authority and Whose is the Command?" If a person hears these words in his right senses, he will be filled

with terror, no matter how mighty a king or dictator he might be posing himself to be, and will immediately come to his senses. Here the mention of an historical event will not be out of place. When the Sāmānid ruler, Nasr bin Ahmad (301-331 A.H.), entered Nishāpur, he held a court and after ascending the throne desired that the proceedings be started with recitation from the Holy Qur'ān. At this an elderly pious man came forward and recited this very section of this Sūrah. When he came to this verse, Nasr was struck with awe; he descended the throne trembling, took off the crown and fell down in prostration, saying: "O my Lord, Kingdom is Thine, not mine!"

28. That is, "None shall be wronged in any way whatever today." It should be noted that in respect of recompense, injustice can have several forms; (1) A person may deserve a reward but he is not given it; (2) he is given a lesser reward than what was due to him; (3) he is given a punishment although he is not liable to any punishment; (4) the one who is liable to punishment is not given any punishment; (5) the one who is liable to a lesser punishment is given a greater punishment; (6) the oppressor goes scot-free; and (7) one is seized for the sin committed by another. What Allah means to say is that none of these different kinds of injustices will be allowed to take place in His Court.

29. It means: "It will take Allah no time to do the reckoning. Just as He is providing for every creature of the universe simultaneously and He is not so occupied in providing for one that He may have no time to provide for others, and just as He is seeing everything in the universe simultaneously, and hearing everything simultaneously, is managing every small and big affair simultaneously, and nothing absorbs His attention so completely that He may be unable to give attention to others, at the same time, so He will subject to reckoning every single individual simultaneously and the hearing of one case will not make Him so occupied as to render Him unable to hear other countless cases at the same time. Then, in His Court no delay also will be allowed to take place due to any difficulty in the investigation of the facts of the case and the availability of the witnesses. The Judge of the Court will Himself be aware of all the facts directly. Each party in every case will stand completely exposed before Him, and clear, undeniable evidence of the events and deeds, with each minor detail, will come forward without any delay. Therefore, each case will be settled and decided instantaneously.

30. In the Qur'ān the people have been made to realize again and again that Resurrection is not far off but has approached near at hand, and can take place any moment. In An-Nahl: 1, it has been said: "Allah's Judgement has come, so do not clamour for hastening it;" in Al-Anbiyā': 1: "The time of the reckoning of the people has drawn near, and yet they are turning away in heedlessness;" in Al-Qamar: 1: "The Hour of Resurrection has drawn near and the moon has split

asunder;" and in An-Najm: 57: "That which is coming is near at hand: none but Allah can avert it." All this is meant to warn the people to the effect that they should not become fearless of Resurrection thinking it to be yet far away, but should mend their ways and reform themselves at once.

31. The word *hamīm* as used in the original implies such a friend of a person as is aroused to action when he sees him being beaten, and rushes forward to protect and save Him.

32. This thing has been said to refute the concept of intercession held by the disbelievers. As a matter of fact, the wicked people will have no intercessor at all, for permission to intercede, if at all granted, can be granted only to the righteous servants of Allah, and Allah's righteous servants can never make friends with the disbelievers, polytheists and sinners so that they should even think of intruding on their behalf to save them. But as the disbelievers have generally held, and still hold, the belief that the saints, whose disciples they are, will not allow that they go to Hell, but will see that they are forgiven. Therefore, it has been said: "There will be no such intercessor there, who may have to be listened to, and whose recommendation Allah may have to accept necessarily."

33. That is, "He is not a blind and deaf god like your deities that He may be unaware of the misdeeds of a person about whom He is passing judgement."

إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ ﴿٢٠﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنظُرُوا كَيْفَ
كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِينَ كَانُوا مِن قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ كَانُوا هُمْ أَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً وَآثَارًا
فِي الْأَرْضِ فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ بِذُنُوبِهِمْ ۖ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ مِن وَاقٍ ﴿٢١﴾
ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّهُمْ كَانَتْ تَّأْتِيهِمْ رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَكَفَرُوا فَأَخَذَهُمُ اللَّهُ ۚ إِنَّهُ
قَوِيٌّ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مُوسَىٰ بِآيَاتِنَا وَسُلْطَانٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٢٣﴾ إِلَىٰ
فِرْعَوْنَ وَهَامَانَ وَقَارُونَ فَقَالُوا سَاحِرٌ كَذَّابٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاءَهُم بِالْحَقِّ
مِنْ عِندِنَا قَالُوا اقْتُلُوا أَبْنَاءَ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مَعَهُ وَاسْتَحْيُوا نِسَاءَهُمْ ۚ وَ
مَا كَيْدُ الْكَافِرِينَ إِلَّا فِي ضَلَالٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَقَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ ذَرُونِي أَقْتُلْ مُوسَىٰ وَلْيَدْعُ
رَبَّهُ ۖ إِنِّي أَخَافُ أَن يُبَدِّلَ دِينَكُمْ أَوْ أَن يُظْهِرَ فِي الْأَرْضِ الْفَسَادَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَ
قَالَ مُوسَىٰ إِنِّي عُذْتُ بِرَبِّي وَرَبِّكُم مِّن كُلِّ مُتَكَبِّرٍ لَّا يُؤْمِنُ بِيَوْمِ
الْحِسَابِ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مُّؤْمِنٌ مِّنْ آلِ فِرْعَوْنَ يَكْتُمُ إِيمَانَهُ أَتَقْتُلُونَ
رَجُلًا أَن يَقُولَ رَبِّيَ اللَّهُ وَقَدْ جَاءَكُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ مِن رَّبِّكُمْ ۖ وَإِن يَكُ كَاذِبًا
فَعَلَيْهِ كَذِبُهُ ۖ وَإِن يَكُ صَادِقًا يُصِبْكُم بَعْضُ الَّذِي يَعِدُكُمْ ۖ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا
يَهْدِي مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ كَذَّابٌ ﴿٢٨﴾ يَا قَوْمِ لَكُمُ الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ ظَاهِرِينَ فِي
الْأَرْضِ فَمَن يَنصُرُنَا مِن بَأْسِ اللَّهِ إِن جَاءَنَا ۚ قَالَ فِرْعَوْنُ مَا أُرِيكُمْ إِلَّا
مَا أَرَىٰ وَمَا أَهْدِيكُمْ إِلَّا سَبِيلَ الرَّشَادِ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِي آمَنَ يَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي
أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُم مِّثْلَ يَوْمِ الْأَحْزَابِ ﴿٣٠﴾ مِثْلَ دَأْبِ قَوْمِ نُوحٍ وَعَادٍ وَثَمُودَ
وَالَّذِينَ مِن بَعْدِهِمْ ۚ وَمَا اللَّهُ يُرِيدُ ظُلْمًا لِّلْعِبَادِ ﴿٣١﴾ وَيَا قَوْمِ إِنِّي أَخَافُ
عَلَيْكُمْ يَوْمَ التَّنَادِ ﴿٣٢﴾ يَوْمَ تُوَلُّونَ مُدْبِرِينَ ۖ مَا لَكُم مِّنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ عَاصِمٍ ۗ

Have they never travelled in the land that they could see the end of those who have gone before them? They were stronger than they in power and have left mightier traces in the land, but Allah seized them because of their sins and there was none to save them from Allah. They met this doom because their Messengers came to them with clear Signs[34] and they refused to believe in them. Consequently, Allah seized them. Indeed, He is Mighty and very stern in punishment. 21-22

We sent Moses[35] to Pharaoh and Hāmān[36] and Korah with Our Signs and a clear authority of appointment,[37] but they said, "He is a sorcerer, a liar."[38] Then, when he brought them the truth from Ourself, they said, "Kill the sons of those who have believed and joined him[1] and spare their daughters."[39] But the disbelievers' plot ended in vain.[40] 23-25

One day[41] Pharaoh said to his courtiers, "Let me alone that I may kill this Moses[42] and let him call to his Lord. I fear he will change your religion, or cause mischief to appear in the land."[43] 26

Moses said, "I have taken refuge in my Lord and your Lord against every arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning."[44] 27

At this, a believing man from among the kinsfolk; of Pharaoh, who had kept his faith hidden, spoke out, "Would you kill a man merely because he says: My Lord is Allah? whereas he has brought clear Signs to you from your Lord.[45] If he is a liar, his lie will recoil on him;[46] but if he is truthful, some of the dreadful things with which he threatens you, will certainly befall you. Allah does not guide the one who is a transgressor and a liar.[47] O my people, today you possess the kingdom and are dominant in the land, but who will help us if we are visited by Allah's scourge?"[48] 28-29

Pharaoh said, "I am telling you the same which I think is proper, and I am only guiding you to the way which is right."[49]

The man who had believed, said, "O my people! I fear that you also may be overtaken by the day that has already overtaken many hosts, a day that overtook the people of Noah and 'Ād and Thamūd and the peoples after them. And the fact is that Allah does not seek to wrong His servants.[50] O my people! I fear for you the day of wailing, 30-33

when you will cry out to one another and run about, but there will be none to protect you from Allah; the truth is that there is none to guide the one whom Allah lets go astray.

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34. *Bayyināt* means three things: (1) The clear signs which pointed to the Messengers' being appointed by Allah; (2) the convincing arguments which were a clear proof of their teachings being based on the Truth; and (3) the clear guidance and instructions about the problems and affairs of life which could enable every reasonable person to see that such pure teachings could not be given by an impostor.

35. For the other details of the story of the Prophet Moses, see Al-Baqarah: 49-61; An-Nisā: 164; Al-Mā'idah: 20-26; Al-A'rāf: 103-162; Yūnus: 75-92; Hūd 17, 96-97, 110; Introduction to Sūrah Yūsuf; Ibrāhīm: 5-8; Banī Isrā'īl: 101-104; Al-Kahf: 60-82; Maryam: 51-53; Ṭā Hā: 9-98; Al-Mu'minūn: 45-49; Ash-Shu'arā': 10-68; An-Naml: 7-14; Introduction to Sūrah Al-Qaṣaṣ and Al-Qaṣaṣ: 3-44; Al-Aḥzāb: 69; Aṣ-Ṣaff: 114-122 and the E.N.'s thereof.

36. For a reply to the critics' objections about Hāmān, see E.N. 8 of Al-Qasas above.

37. "A clear authority of appointment": With such clear Signs as left no doubt that he had been sent by Allah, and he had Allah, Lord of the worlds' power at his back. From a careful study of the details of the Prophet Moses' story, as given in the Qur'ān, it becomes obvious as to what were those Signs which are being described here as "a clear authority of his appointment" as a Prophet by Allah. In the first place, even this was strange that a person who, a few years earlier, had fled the country after killing a man of Pharaoh's nation and whose warrants of arrest had been issued, should make a sudden appearance directly in the full-packed court of Pharaoh, with a staff in hand, and should boldly and fearlessly address the king and his nobles and demand that they should acknowledge him as the representative of Allah, Lord of the worlds, and should act according to what he says, and none dares to lay his hands on him, whereas the nation to which Moses belonged, had been so suppressed under slavery that if he had been apprehended immediately on the charge of murder, no one would have voiced even a protest, not to speak of rising in rebellion. This shows that Pharaoh and his courtiers had been awe-inspired just at the appearance of the Prophet Moses, even before they witnessed the miracles of the staff and the shining hand, and they had realized in the very beginning that he had some greater power behind him. Then each of the wonderful miracles that he performed, one after the other, was enough to bring about the conviction that it was not a manifestation of magic but of Divine Power. After all, what power of magic could cause a staff to change into a serpent? or cause a whole country to suffer from

famine? or cause different sorts of disasters to strike vast areas of the land on a sudden notice by Moses and be removed on a notice by him? That is why, according to the Qur'ān, Pharaoh and all the responsible people of his kingdom had been convinced in their hearts, whether they might be refusing to profess with the tongue, that Moses had indeed been appointed a Prophet by Allah. (For details, see Al-A'rāf: 106-117; Ṭā Hā: 56 78; Ash-Shu'arā': 30-51; An-Naml: 10-13).

38. "The truth": the miracles and signs by which the Prophet Moses proved that he was a Messenger sent by Allah and the strong arguments by which he showed that he was wholly in the right.

39. As already mentioned in Al-A'rāf: 127 above, Pharaoh's courtiers had said to him: "Will you leave Moses and his people free to spread disorder in the land?" And he himself had said: "I will have their sons slain and let their daughters live." This verse states that this order was at last issued from Pharaoh's court. It was, in fact, meant to so terrify the Prophet Moses himself and his supporters and followers that they should abandon him out of fear.

40. Another meaning of this sentence can be: "Whatever the disbelievers had plotted, was aimed at deviation, tyranny and antagonism to the truth. That is, even after being convinced of the truth in their hearts, they continued to show stubbornness and did not hesitate to adopt any mean device whatever in order to defeat and frustrate the Truth.

41. The event which is being related here is a very important event of the Israelite history, which the Israelites themselves have totally forgotten. Both the Bible and the Talmud are without it, and no mention of it is found in the other Israelite traditions either. Only through the Qur'ān has the world come to know that during the conflict between Pharaoh and the Prophet Moses this event had taken place at some time. Anybody who reads this story, provided that he has not been blinded by prejudice against Islam and the Qur'ān, cannot but realize that from the viewpoint of the invitation to the Truth this story is very valuable, and this thing by itself also is in no way against reason that a person from among the nobles of the kingdom of Pharaoh himself might have quietly believed in his heart, having been influenced by the personality of the Prophet Moses, his preaching and the wonderful miracles shown by him, and might not have been able to restrain himself when he saw that Pharaoh was planning to kill him. But the way the Western orientalists, in spite of their tall claims to knowledge and research, try to repudiate the self-evident truths of the Qur'ān, on account of prejudice, can be judged from this that the author of the article "Mūsā" in the Encyclopaedia of Islam writes in respect of this story:

"The Kur'ānic story of a believer at the court of Pharaoh who wants to save Mūsā is not quite clear (xl, 28). Ought we to compare Jethro in the Haggada who advises clemency at Pharaoh's court?"

In other words, these so-called researchers have one thing settled with them: they must find fault with everything that the Qur'ān presents. Now, if they do not find any ground for criticising a statement of it, they should at least say this much out of mischief that the story is not entirely clear, and also should incidentally create this doubt in the reader's mind that the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) might have heard from somewhere the story of Jethro mentioned in the Haggada taking place even before the birth of Prophet Moses, and inserted it here in this form. This is the type of "literary research" which these people have adopted with regard to Islam and the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace).

42. In this sentence Pharaoh tries to give the impression as if some people were restraining him from killing the Prophet Moses. Had they not stood in his way, he would have killed him long ago, whereas in fact there was no external power to restrain him; it was the fear of his own heart which was preventing him from laying his hands on the Messenger of Allah.

43. That is, "I fear a revolution from him, and even if he is unable to bring it about, there is at least the danger that he will cause mischief to appear in the country by his activities. Therefore, even if he doesn't commit a crime punishable with death, he should be put to death only for the sake of the maintenance of public order. As for this whether there is a real danger to the public order from him, the king's satisfaction in this regard is enough. If his majesty is convinced that he is dangerous, it should be declared that he is really dangerous and punishable with death."

Here, the meaning of "changing the religion" also should be understood well, on account of which Pharaoh wanted to put the Prophet Moses to death. *Dīn* here implies the system of government, and what Pharaoh meant to say was this: "I fear that he will change your king." *(Ruḥ al-Ma'ānī,* vol. XXIV, p. 56). In other words, the *dīn* of the land was the religious, political, cultural and economic system that was prevalent in Egypt on the basis of Pharaoh's and his family's sovereignty, and Pharaoh was afraid that Moses' message would change that very *dīn*. But like the cunning and deceitful rulers of every age he also did not say that he feared being deposed from his position of authority and, therefore, he wanted to kill Moses, but he presented the case like this: "O people, the danger is for you, not for me; for if Moses' movement succeeded your *dīn* would change. I am not worried for myself: I am worried for your sake as to what would become of you when you have been deprived of the protection of my authority. Therefore,

the wicked man who poses such a danger should be put to death, for he is an enemy of the state."

44. Here, there are two equal probabilities and there is no ground for preferring one to the other. The first probability is that the Prophet Moses might himself be present in the court at the time and Pharaoh might have expressed his intention to kill him in his presence, and the Prophet might have given this direct answer there and then, addressing him and his courtiers. The other probability is that Pharaoh might have expressed this intention in the absence of Moses in a meeting with the responsible people of his government and a report of this conversation might have been conveyed to the Prophet by some of the believers, whereupon he might have said these words in some gathering of his followers. Whatever be the case, it is apparent from the words that the threat of Pharaoh could not cause any state of fear in Moses' heart and with trust in Allah he flung his threat back at Pharaoh. The context in which this event has been related in the Qur'ān by itself shows that the same also was the reply from the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) to those wicked people who, being fearless of the Day of Reckoning, were devising plots to kill him.

45. That is, "He has shown such manifest Signs to you as have made it absolutely clear that he is a Messenger sent by your Lord." The Believer, from among the people of Pharaoh, was obviously referring to the Signs the details of which have already been given in Al-A'rāf: 107-117,130-133; Banī Isrā'īl: 101-102; Ṭā Hā: 56-73; Ash-Shu'arā': 30-51; An-Naml :10-13).

46. That is, "If in spite of such manifest Signs as he has shown you, you regard him as a liar, you should leave him alone, for the alternative probability, and a very strong probability too, is that he is truthful, and therefore you may involve yourselves in God's torment by laying your hands on him. Therefore, even if you think that he is a liar, you should leave him to himself. For if he is lying, in the name of Allah, Allah Himself will take him to task." Similar words had the Prophet Moses himself said to Pharaoh before this: "If you do not believe in me, do not harm me." (Ad-Dukhān: 21)

Here, one should keep in mind that the Believer of the people of Pharaoh had not openly disclosed in the beginning that he had affirmed faith in the Prophet Moses, but he spoke as if he also belonged to Pharaoh's side, and was only wishing his people well. But when Pharaoh and his courtiers did not seem to see reason and continued to behave stubbornly, he at last disclosed the secret of his faith, as becomes obvious from his speech in vv. 38-44.

[Contd. on p. 440]

وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ هَادٍ ﴿33﴾ وَلَقَدْ جَآءَكُمْ يُوْسُفُ مِنْ قَبْلُ
بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَمَا زِلْتُمْ فِيْ شَكٍّ مِّمَّا جَآءَكُمْ بِهٖ ؕ حَتّٰۤى اِذَا هَلَكَ قُلْتُمْ لَنْ
يَّبْعَثَ اللّٰهُ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهٖ رَسُوْلًا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ مَنْ هُوَ مُسْرِفٌ مُّرْتَابُ ﴿34﴾
الَّذِيْنَ يُجَادِلُوْنَ فِيْۤ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطٰنٍ اَتٰىهُمْ ؕ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَ
عِنْدَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ يَطْبَعُ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ قَلْبِ مُتَكَبِّرٍ جَبَّارٍ ﴿35﴾ وَقَالَ
فِرْعَوْنُ يٰهَامٰنُ ابْنِ لِيْ صَرْحًا لَّعَلِّيْۤ اَبْلُغُ الْاَسْبَابَ ﴿36﴾ اَسْبَابَ السَّمٰوٰتِ فَاَطَّلِعَ
اِلٰۤى اِلٰهِ مُوْسٰى وَاِنِّيْ لَاَظُنُّهٗ كَاذِبًا ؕ وَكَذٰلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِفِرْعَوْنَ سُوْٓءُ عَمَلِهٖ وَ
صُدَّ عَنِ السَّبِيْلِ ؕ وَمَا كَيْدُ فِرْعَوْنَ اِلَّا فِيْ تَبَابٍ ﴿37﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْۤ اٰمَنَ
يٰقَوْمِ اتَّبِعُوْنِ اَهْدِكُمْ سَبِيْلَ الرَّشَادِ ﴿38﴾ يٰقَوْمِ اِنَّمَا هٰذِهِ الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا
مَتَاعٌ ۫ وَّاِنَّ الْاٰخِرَةَ هِيَ دَارُ الْقَرَارِ ﴿39﴾ مَنْ عَمِلَ سَيِّئَةً فَلَا يُجْزٰۤى اِلَّا
مِثْلَهَا ۚ وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ اَوْ اُنْثٰى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ يَدْخُلُوْنَ
الْجَنَّةَ يُرْزَقُوْنَ فِيْهَا بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ ﴿40﴾ وَيٰقَوْمِ مَا لِيْۤ اَدْعُوْكُمْ اِلَى النَّجٰوةِ وَ
تَدْعُوْنَنِيْۤ اِلَى النَّارِ ﴿41﴾ تَدْعُوْنَنِيْ لِاَكْفُرَ بِاللّٰهِ وَاُشْرِكَ بِهٖ مَا لَيْسَ لِيْ بِهٖ
عِلْمٌ ۫ وَّاَنَا اَدْعُوْكُمْ اِلَى الْعَزِيْزِ الْغَفَّارِ ﴿42﴾ لَا جَرَمَ اَنَّمَا تَدْعُوْنَنِيْۤ اِلَيْهِ لَيْسَ
لَهٗ دَعْوَةٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَا فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ وَاَنَّ مَرَدَّنَاۤ اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَاَنَّ الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ
هُمْ اَصْحٰبُ النَّارِ ﴿43﴾ فَسَتَذْكُرُوْنَ مَاۤ اَقُوْلُ لَكُمْ ؕ وَاُفَوِّضُ اَمْرِيْۤ اِلَى اللّٰهِ ؕ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ بَصِيْرٌۢ بِالْعِبَادِ ﴿44﴾ فَوَقٰىهُ اللّٰهُ سَيِّاٰتِ مَا مَكَرُوْا وَحَاقَ بِاٰلِ فِرْعَوْنَ
سُوْٓءُ الْعَذَابِ ﴿45﴾ اَلنَّارُ يُعْرَضُوْنَ عَلَيْهَا غُدُوًّا وَّعَشِيًّا ۚ وَيَوْمَ تَقُوْمُ السَّاعَةُ ۫
اَدْخِلُوْۤا اٰلَ فِرْعَوْنَ اَشَدَّ الْعَذَابِ ﴿46﴾ وَاِذْ يَتَحَآجُّوْنَ فِي النَّارِ فَيَقُوْلُ الضُّعَفٰٓؤُا

Before this Joseph had brought to you clear Signs, but you continued to be in doubt concerning his teachings. Then, when he died, you said, "Allah will never send another Messenger after him."[51]— Likewise,[52] Allah lets go astray the transgressors and doubters who dispute concerning the Revelations of Allah even without any authority having come to them.[53] Such an attitude is abhorred by Allah and the believers. Thus does Allah set a seal on the heart of every arrogant, self-exalting person.[54] 34-35

Pharaoh said, "O Hāmān, build for me a tower that I may reach the paths, the paths of the heavens, and peep at the God of Moses, for I think that Moses is a liar."[55]—Thus the misdeeds of Pharaoh were made seem fair to him and he was barred from the Right Way; all his scheming only led to (his own) ruin. 36-37

The man who had believed, said, "O my people! Follow me: I shall show you the right way. O my people! the life of this world is temporary:[56] only the abode of the Hearafter is everlasting. Whoever does evil shall be recompensed to the extent of the evil done; and whoever does good, whether man or woman, provided that he is a believer, all such people shall enter Paradise wherein they shall be provided without measure. O my people! How it is that I call you to salvation and you call me to the Fire! You call me to deny Allah and associate with Him those whom I do not know,[57] while I am calling you to the All-Mighty, the All-Forgiving God. Nay, the truth is, and it cannot be otherwise, that those to whom you call me, can neither be called to in this world nor in the Hereafter,[58] and to Allah have we all to return, and the transgressors[59] shall go to Hell. Soon you will remember what I am telling you today. To Allah I entrust my affairs: He is ever Watchful over His servants."[60] 38-44

At last, Allah saved the Believer from all those evil plots that the people devised against him,[61] and the companions of Pharaoh themselves were encompassed by the horrible scourge.[62] It is the fire of Hell before which they are presented morning and evening. And when the Hour of Resurrection comes, it will be commanded: "Admit the people of Pharaoh to the severest torment."[63] Then imagine the time when these people will be disputing with one another in Hell. The weak ones will say to the haughty one, "We were your followers: now, can 45-47

you save us from some part of our punishment in Hell?"[64]

Contd. from p. 437]

47. This sentence can have two meanings and probably the Believer had intentionally employed it, because he did not yet want to express his belief openly. Its one meaning is: "One and the same person cannot combine righteousness and lying and falsehood. You can clearly see that Moses is a man of very sublime and pure character. Therefore, how can you believe that, on the one hand, he should be such a liar as to lay a baseless claim to prophethood in the name of Allah, and on the other, Allah should bless him with such high morals?" The other meaning is: "If you are bent upon taking the life of Moses (peace be upon him) by transgressing all limits and will execute your evil designs by bringing false accusations against him, you should remember that Allah will never show you the way to success."

48. That is, "Why are you being ungrateful to Allah for His blessing of granting you domination in the land and are inviting His scourge to visit you?"

49. From this answer of Pharaoh it appears that he had not yet found out that thenoble of his court had become a Believer in his heart. That is why he did not show any displeasure at what he said, but made clear that he was not inclined to change his opinion even after hearing what he had to say.

50. That is, "Allah has no enmity with His servants that He should destroy them without any reason: He sends calamities upon them only when they have transgressed all limits, and sending the torment then is the very demand of justice."

51. That is, "Your deviation, and then your stubbornness, is such that before Moses (peace be upon him) there came in your land the Prophet Joseph about whom you yourselves admit that he was a man of the highest morals, and you also admit that by giving the right interpretation of the king's dream he saved you from the dreadful effects of the seven-year-long famine, which had struck Egypt in his time; and your entire nation also acknowledges that Egypt has never witnessed a period of greater justice and prosperity than the period of his rule. But in spite of knowing and recognizing all his merits and high qualities you did not believe in him during his life time, and when he died, you said: "Never will the like of him come again!" That is, you recognized his excellences only for an excuse to deny every prophet who came after him. This means that you would not accept guidance in any case."

52. It so appears that the next few sentences are an addition by Allah and an explanation of the words of the Believer of the people of Pharaoh.

53. That is, "Allah allows only those people to go astray who possess the following three qualities: (1) They transgress all limits in their evildoing, and then develop such a taste for it that they do not feel inclined to accept any invitation to reform their morals; (2) their permanent attitude in respect of the Prophets is characterised by doubt and suspicion. The Prophets of God may bring any clear Signs before them, yet they doubt their Prophethood as well as view with suspicion those truths which they present with regard to *Tauhid* and the Hereafter; and (3) they try to resist the Revelations of the Book of Allah with crooked arguments instead of considering them rationally, and these objections are neither based on any sound reason nor on the authority of a revealed Book, but from the beginning to the end their only basis is obstinacy and stubbornness. When a group of the people develops these three evils, Allah hurls it into the deep pit of Hell-fire wherefrom no power can then rescue them.

54. That is, "The seal is not set on the heart of anybody without a reason. This seal of curse is set only on the heart of the one who is filled with arrogance and spirit of violence and tyranny."

55. Pharaoh addresses these words to Hāmān, his minister, interposing in the speech of the Believer in a way as though he has no regard for what he was saying. Therefore, he turns away from him arrogantly and says to Hāmān, "Build me a high tower so that I may climb it to see where the God of whom this Moses speaks, lives." (For explanation, see Al-Qaṣaṣ: 38 and E.N.'s thereof).

56. That is, "You are being forgetful of Allah on account of your pride in the transient wealth and prosperity of this world; this is your folly."

57. That is, "About whom I have no scientific proof that they are God's associates, why should I then accept such a stupendous thing blindly that they also have a share in Godhead and that I have to serve them too along with Allah?"

58. This sentence can have several meanings: (1) That they neither possess here nor in the Hereafter any right that the people should be invited to acknowledge their godhead; (2) that they have been made gods by the people themselves without any reason, for they have neither claimed godhead for themselves in this world nor will they put forward any such claim in the Hereafter that they also were gods and should have been acknowledged as such; and (3) that it is no use invoking them here nor in the Hereafter, for they are absolutely powerless and invoking them is of no avail at all.

59. A "transgressor" is every such person who recognizes the godhead of others than Allah, or assumes godhead for himself, or rebels against God and adopts an attitude of independence in the world, and then commits excesses against himself, against other creatures of God and against everything else with

which he has to deal. Such a person, in fact, transgresses all limits of reason and justice.

60. This sentence clearly shows that while saying all this the Believer was certain that he would have to bear the brunt of the wrath of the entire kingdom of Pharaoh in consequence of his speaking the Truth, and that he would have to lose all his honours and privileges, even his life. But in spite of knowing all this he performed his duty only with his trust in Allah, according to the call of his conscience, on this critical occasion.

61. This shows that the Believer was such an important man in the kingdom of Pharaoh that although he spoke out the truth in the face of Pharaoh, in the full-packed court, yet none could have the courage to punish him publicly. That is why, Pharaoh and his supporters had to make secret plans to kill him, but these plans also were frustrated by Allah.

62. It so appears from the style that this event of the Believer's speaking out the truth had taken place in the last stage of the conflict between the Prophet Moses and Pharaoh. Probably being fed up and disgusted with the long drawn out conflict, Pharaoh might have at last made up his mind to kill the Prophet Moses. But he might have felt from the truthfulness of that influential person of his kingdom that the Prophet Moses' influence had even reached the higher circles of his government. Therefore, he might have decided that before taking the extreme step against Moses he should find out who among the chiefs and nobles and higher officials of the kingdom had been influenced by the movement, and should seize Moses after having punished them. But while he was still busy devising his plans, Allah commanded the Prophet Moses and his companions to migrate, and it was while pursuing them that Pharaoh was drowned in the sea along with his hosts.

63. This verse is an express proof of the torment of *barzakh*, which has often been mentioned in the Traditions as the torment of the grave. Allah here has in clear words mentioned two stages of the torment; a lesser torment, which is being given now to Pharaoh and his people before the coming of Resurrection, and it is this that they are presented before the fire of Hell morning and evening, which strikes terror in their hearts and they see the Hell which they will have to enter ultimately. After this when Resurrection comes, they will be given the real and greater punishment which is destined for them, i.e. they will be hurled into the same Hell, which they are being made to witness since the time they were drowned till today, and will continue to witness it till the Hour of Resurrection. And such a treatment is not especially meant for Pharaoh and his people: all the culprits continue to witness the evil end, from the hour of death till Resurrection, which is awaiting them. On the other hand, the righteous people are made to see continually the pleasant picture of the good end, which Allah has got ready for

them. A Tradition has been related in *Bukhārī, Muslim,* and *Musnad Aḥmad* on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar, saying that the Holy Prophet said: "Whoever from among you dies is shown his final resting place morning and evening continually, whether he be a dweller of Paradise or of Hell. It is said to him: This is the place which you will enter when Allah will raise you back to life on the Day of Resurrection and will call you into His presence." (For further details, see Al-Anfāl: 50-51; An-Naḥl: 28-32; Al-Mu'minūn: 99-100 and the E.N.'s thereof, and E.N.'s 22, 23 of Sūrah Yā Sīn).

64. This they will not say in any hope that their previous guides or rulers or leaders would actually be able to save them from the torment, or would have it reduced. At that time they will have fully realized that those people could not avail them anything there. But they will say this in order to humiliate them, as if to say: "In the world you ruled over us with great show of power and authority: now save us also from this disaster which has befallen us only because of you."

لِلَّذِيْنَ اسْتَكْبَرُوْٓا اِنَّا كُنَّا لَكُمْ تَبَعًا فَهَلْ اَنْتُمْ مُّغْنُوْنَ عَنَّا نَصِيْبًا مِّنَ النَّارِ ﴿٤٧﴾ 47
قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اسْتَكْبَرُوْٓا اِنَّا كُلٌّ فِيْهَآ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ قَدْ حَكَمَ بَيْنَ الْعِبَادِ ﴿٤٨﴾ 48 وَقَالَ
الَّذِيْنَ فِي النَّارِ لِخَزَنَةِ جَهَنَّمَ ادْعُوْا رَبَّكُمْ يُخَفِّفْ عَنَّا يَوْمًا مِّنَ الْعَذَابِ ﴿٤٩﴾ 49
قَالُوْٓا اَوَلَمْ تَكُ تَاْتِيْكُمْ رُسُلُكُمْ بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ ۭ قَالُوْا بَلٰى ۭ قَالُوْا فَادْعُوْا ۚ وَمَا دُعٰٓؤُا
الْكٰفِرِيْنَ اِلَّا فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ ﴿٥٠﴾ 50 اِنَّا لَنَنْصُرُ رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَيَوْمَ يَقُوْمُ الْاَشْهَادُ ﴿٥١﴾ 51 يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ مَعْذِرَتُهُمْ وَلَهُمُ اللَّعْنَةُ
وَلَهُمْ سُوْۗءُ الدَّارِ ﴿٥٢﴾ 52 وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْهُدٰى وَاَوْرَثْنَا بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَاۗءِيْلَ
الْكِتٰبَ ﴿٥٣﴾ 53 هُدًى وَّذِكْرٰى لِاُولِي الْاَلْبَابِ ﴿٥٤﴾ 54 فَاصْبِرْ اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ وَّ
اسْتَغْفِرْ لِذَنْۢبِكَ وَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ بِالْعَشِيِّ وَالْاِبْكَارِ ﴿٥٥﴾ 55 اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ
يُجَادِلُوْنَ فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ بِغَيْرِ سُلْطٰنٍ اَتٰىهُمْ ۙ اِنْ فِيْ صُدُوْرِهِمْ اِلَّا كِبْرٌ
مَّا هُمْ بِبَالِغِيْهِ ۚ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّٰهِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْبَصِيْرُ ﴿٥٦﴾ 56 لَخَلْقُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضِ اَكْبَرُ مِنْ خَلْقِ النَّاسِ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾ 57 وَمَا
يَسْتَوِي الْاَعْمٰى وَالْبَصِيْرُ ۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَلَا الْمُسِيْۗءُ ۭ
قَلِيْلًا مَّا تَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ 58 اِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَاٰتِيَةٌ لَّا رَيْبَ فِيْهَا وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا
يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾ 59 وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمُ ادْعُوْنِيْٓ اَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ ۭ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ عَنْ
عِبَادَتِيْ سَيَدْخُلُوْنَ جَهَنَّمَ دٰخِرِيْنَ ﴿٦٠﴾ 60 اَللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الَّيْلَ لِتَسْكُنُوْا
فِيْهِ وَالنَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَذُوْ فَضْلٍ عَلَى النَّاسِ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَ
النَّاسِ لَا يَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿٦١﴾ 61 ذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمْ خَالِقُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۡ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ ۚ
فَاَنّٰى تُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٦٢﴾ 62 كَذٰلِكَ يُؤْفَكُ الَّذِيْنَ كَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ يَجْحَدُوْنَ ﴿٦٣﴾ 63 اَللّٰهُ

The haughty ones will say, "We are all in the same state here, and Allah already has passed judgement between His servants."[65] Then these dwellers of Hell will say to its keepers, "Pray to your Lord to relieve us of the torment for only one day." They will ask, "Did not your Messengers come to you with clear Signs?" They will say, "Yes". The keepers of Hell will say, "Then pray (for help) yourselves. But the prayer of the disbelievers only ends in vain."[66] 48-50

Believe it that We do help Our Messengers and the Believers in the life of this world,[67] and so shall We help them on that Day also when the witnesses shall stand up,[68] and the excuses of the wrongdoers shall not avail them anything. They shall have the curse on them and the worst abode. Just consider this: We showed Moses guidance[69] and made the children of Israel to inherit the Book, which was guidance and admonition for the men of understanding.[70] So, be patient,[71] O Prophet: Allah's promise is true.[72] Ask forgiveness of your errors,[73] and glorify your Lord morning and evening with His praise.[74] The fact is that the hearts of those who are disputing concerning the Revelations of Allah without any authority having come to them, are filled with pride,[75] but they shall never attain to their ambitions.[76] So, seek Allah's refuge.[77] He hears everything and sees everything. 51-56

Surely[78] the creation of the heavens and the earth is a greater thing than the creation of man, but most people do not know.[79] And the blind and the seeing cannot be equal, nor are the believing and righteous men equal to the wicked, but you people understand only a little.[80] The Hour of Resurrection is sure to come; there is no doubt about it, but most people do not believe.[81] 57-59

Your[82] Lord says: "Call upon Me. I will answer your prayers.[83] Those who disdain My worship on account of pride, shall certainly enter Hell, disgraced."[84] 60

It is Allah Who made the night for you to rest in it, and made the day bright. The fact is that Allah is highly Bounteous to the people, yet most people are not thankful.[85] The same Allah (Who has done all this for you) is your Lord, the Creator of everything. There is no god but He.[86] Whence then are you being deluded?[87] Likewise were all 61-63

those people deluded, who denied the Revelations of Allah.[68]

65. That is, "Both you and we have already been sentenced and Allah has passed His judgement regarding each of us. Now it does not lie in anyone's power to change the sentence of Allah, or to make any increase or decrease in the punishment awarded by Him."

66. That is, "When the fact is this that the Messengers had come to you with the clear Signs, and you have already been sentenced to suffer punishment here, because you had refused to believe in them, it is not possible for us to pray for you to Allah. For obviously there should be some plea for such a prayer, and you have exhausted every plea by your misconduct. So, you pray for yourselves if you so like; but we would tell you beforehand that the prayers of the people who had disbelieved in the world like you have been of no avail.

67. For explanation, see E.N. 93 of Aṣ Ṣāāffāt.

68. That is, when Allah's Court will be established and the witnesses will be produced before Him.

69. That is, "We did not just leave Moses alone when We sent him against Pharaoh, but We gave him guidnece at every step till success." This contains a subtle allusion to the effect: "O Muḥammad, We shall help you too in the same manner. We have neither left you alone after raising you as a Prophet in the city of Makkah and the tribe of Quraish so that these wicked people may treat you as they like, but We Ourselves are at your back and are giving you guidance at every step."

70. That is, "Just as those who disbelieved Moses were deprived of this blessing and the Israelites who believed in him were made heirs to the Book, so will also those who deny you be deprived and only those who believe in you will have the good fortune to inherit the Qur'ān and rise in the world as the standard-bearers of guidance."

71. "Be patient": "Bear up with a cool mind against these hardships through which you are passing."

72. The allusion is to the promise made above in the sentence: "We do help Our Messengers and the Believers in the life of this world."

73. A study of the context shows that here "error" implies the state of impatience that was being caused to the Holy Prophet on account of the severe antagonism, especially the persecution of his followers. He earnestly desired that either some miracle should be shown, which should convince the disbelievers, or something else should soon come down from Allah, which should quell the storm of opposition. Though this desire in itself was not a sin, which should have called

for repentance, the high rank with which Allah had blessed the Holy Prophet demanded great grit and will power; so the little impatience shown by him was regarded as inconsistent with his high rank. Therefore, he was required to ask Allah's forgiveness for showing the weakness and was told to stand his ground like a rock as a man of a high rank like him should.

74. That is, "Glorification of Allah with His praises is the only means by which those who work for the sake of Allah can get the strength to resist and overcome the hardships faced in the way of Allah." Glorifying the Lord morning and evening can have two meanings: (1) "Remembering Allah constantly and perpetually;" and (2) "performing the Prayers at the specific times." And in this second case, the allusion is to the five times of the Prayers, which were enjoined on all the believers as a duty some time after the revelation of this Sūrah. For the word *'ashiyy* in Arabic is used for the time from the declining of the sun till the early part of night, which covers the times of the four Prayers from Zuhr to 'Isha'; and *ibkār* is the time from dawn to the rising of the sun, which is the time of the Fajar Prayer. (For further details, see Al-Baqarah: 3, 43, 45, 238; Hūd: 114; Al-Ḥijr: 98-99; Introduction to Banī Isrā'īl and vv. 78-79; Ṭā Hā: 130; An-Nūr: 56-58; Al-'Ankabūt: 45; Ar-Rūm: 17-18, 31 and the E.N.'s thereof).

75. That is, "The real cause for their opposition without any argument and their irrational, crooked argumentation is not that they do not understand the truths and the themes of goodness and reform being presented before them in the form of the Revelations of Allah; therefore, they dispute about them in good faith in order to understand them; but the actual reason for their wrong attitude is that their self-conceit does not permit them tolerate that while they are living in Arabia the guidance and leadership of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) be accepted and acknowledged and ultimately one day they themselves should have to accept the leadership of the person as against whom they think they have a greater right to be the chiefs and leaders. That is why they are straining every nerve not to let Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) have his way, and they do not hesitate to use any mean device whatever for the purpose.

76. In other words it means: "He whom Allah has made great, will remain great, and the efforts of the small people who are trying to establish their superiority, will ultimately end in failure."

77. That is, "Just as Moses had become free from fear and anxiety after invoking Allah Almighty's help and refuge against Pharaoh's threats, so should you also seek His help and refuge against the threats and conspiracies of the chiefs of the Quraish, and then should busy yourself in raising His word being free from every anxiety."

78. After reviewing the conspiracies and plots of the chiefs of the Quraish in vv. 21-56, the address is now being directed towards the common people, and they are being made to understand that the truths to which Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is inviting them, are absolutely rational, as if to say: "Your own good and well-being lies in accepting them and rejecting them is ruinous for your own selves." In this connection, first of all arguments have been given for the doctrine of the Hereafter, for the disbelievers regarded this very doctrine as most bewildering and incomprehensible.

79. This is an argument for the possibility of the Hereafter. The disbelievers thought it was impossible for man to be resurrected after death. In answer to this, it is being said: "Those who talk like this are, in fact, ignorant. If they use their common sense, they will easily understand that for that God Who has created this wonderful Universe it cannot at all be difficult to create men once again."

80. This is an argument for the necessity of the Hereafter. In the preceding sentence it was said that the Hereafter can take place, and its occurrence is not impossible; in this it is being said that the Hereafter should take place; it is the demand of both reason and justice that it should occur, and its non-occurrence is against reason and justice, not its occurrence. After all, how can a reasonable man believe it to be right that those who live like the blind in the world and fill God's earth with mischief by their immoral and wicked deeds, should not see the evil end of their misdeeds and wrong conduct; likewise, those people who pass their lives in the world with open eyes, and believe and do good works, should be deprived of seeing a good result of their righteousness? If this is expressly against reason and justice, then the belief of denying the Hereafter also should be against reason and justice, for the non-occurrence of the Hereafter means that the good and the bad should both become dust after death and meet with one and the same end. For in this case, not only are reason and justice destroyed but morality also is proved to be meaningless and absurd. For if good and evil have one and the same end and destiny, then the evildoer would be highly wise, because he gratified all his desires before his death, and the good man highly foolish because he kept himself subjected to every sort of moral restoration without any reason.

81. This is the absolute assertion about the occurrence of the Hereafter, which can be made only on the basis of knowledge and not on the basis of reasoning, and in no other discourse than of Revelation this assertion can be made with such absoluteness. That which can be said without Revelation only on the basis of intellecual reasoning is that Resurrection can take place and it should take place. Beyond this, to assert that Resurrection will certainly take place, can be said only by that Being Who knows that Resurrection will occur, and that Being is

none but Allah. It is here that it becomes explicit and evident that if Religion can be based on pure knowledge, instead of speculation and reasoning, it can only be on the knowledge obtained through Divine Revelation

82. After the Hereafter the discourse now turns to *Tauhid* which was the second point of dispute between the Holy Prophet and the disbelievers.

83. That is, "All the powers to answer our prayers vest in Me only; so you should not pray to others but pray to Me." To understand the spirit of this verse well, three points should be comprehended properly:

First, man prays only to that being whom he regards as All-Hearing and All-Seeing and Possessor of supernatural powers. And the real motive of prayer for man is the internal feeling that the natural means and resources of the material world are not enough to remove any of his troubles and to fulfil any of his needs, or are not proving to be enough. Therefore, it is inevitable that he should turn to a being who is possessor of supernatural powers and authority. Man invokes that Being even without having seen Him; he invokes Him at all times, at all places, and under all circumstances; he invokes Him in solitude, aloud as well as in a low voice, and even in the depths of his heart. He does so inevitably on the basis of the belief that that Being is watching him everywhere, is also hearing whatever he has in his heart, and possesses such absolute powers that, it can come to the help of the supplicant wherever he is, and can help him out of every trouble and difficulty. After having known this truth about the prayer, it remains no longer difficult for man to understand that the one who invokes another than Allah for help, commits *shirk* absolutely and purely and clearly, for he believes those attributes to be belonging to the other being, which only belong to Allah. Had he not believed the other being to be an associate of Allah in the Divine attributes, he would never have even thought of invoking it for help.

Second, one should fully understand that man's merely thinking about a being that it is the possessor of powers and authority, does not necessitate that it should actually become possessor of the powers and authority. Being possessor of powers and authority is a factual matter, which is not dependent on somebody's understanding or not understanding it. The one who is actually the Possessor of the powers will in any case remain the Possessor whether man regards Him so or not. And the one who is not in reality the possessor, will not be able to have any share whatever in the powers only because man has believed it to be possessing the powers. Now, the fact of the matter is that the Being Who is All-Powerful, All-Hearing, All-Seeing, and Who is actually controlling the whole Universe is only Allah, and He alone is Possessor of all powers and authority. There is none else in this Universe, who may have any power to hear the prayers and to answer them or reject them. As against this factual matter if some people of themselves

start entertainting the belief that some prophets, saints, angels, jinns, planets or imaginary gods also are share-holders in the powers, the reality will not change in any way whatever. The Owner will remain the Owner and the helpless servants the servants.

Thirdly, the one who invokes others than Allah behaves like the supplicant who takes his petition to a government office, but leaving aside the real officer who has authority, presents it before one of the other supplicants who may be present there with his petition, and then starts imploring him humbly, saying, "Sir, you possess all the powers, and yours is the only authority here; so, you alone can fulfil my needs." Such a conduct, in the first place, is in itself highly foolish, but in a case like this it also amounts to high insolence, because the real officer who has the authority, is present and before his very eyes applications and petitions are being made before another, apart from him. Then this ignorance and folly reaches its height when the person before whom the petition is being presented makes the petitioner understand over and over again that he himself is a petitioner like him and possesses no power at all, and that the real officer who has the powers is present, and he should make his petition before him. But in spite of this counsel and warning, the foolish person goes on saying: "Sir, you are my lord: you alone can fulfil my need."

Keeping these three things in view, one should try to understand what Allah has said here: "Call upon Me: I shall answer your prayers: it is for Me to accept them."

84. Two things deserve special attention in this verse: (1) *Du'ā* (prayer) and *'ibādat* (worship) have been used as synonyms here. The "prayer" of the first sentence has been called "worship" in the second. This makes it explicit that prayer itself is worship, rather the essence of worship; and (2) the words "they disdain My worship on account of pride" have been used for those who do not pray to Allah. This shows that praying to Allah is the very requirement of one's servitude to Him, and turning away from Him amounts to being vain and arrogant. According to Ḥaḍrat Nu'mān bin Bashīr, the Holy Prophet said: "The prayer is the very essence of worship. Then he recited this verse." (Aḥmad, Tirmidhi, Abu Da'ūd, Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah, Ibn Abū Ḥātim, Ibn Jarīr). According to Ḥaḍrat Anas, the Holy Prophet said. "Prayer is the marrow of worship." (Tirmidhi) Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah says that the Holy Prophet said: "Allah becomes angry with him who does not ask Him for anything." (Tirmidhi)

In the light of the above, the enigma that often causes confusion in the minds is also resolved. In connection with prayer, people say that when the evil or the good destiny is in the control of Allah, and whatever He has already decreed in accordance with His dominant wisdom and expedience has to take place

inevitably, what is then the use of the prayer? This is a serious misunderstanding which destroys the importance of prayer from the heart of man, and with this false notion even if man prays, his prayer would be soulless. The above verse of the Qur'ān removes this misunderstanding in two ways:

In the first place, Allah says in clear words: "Call upon Me: I will answer your prayers." This proves that fate or destiny is not something which, God forbid, might have tied the hands of Allah Himself also, and the powers to answer the prayer might have been withdrawn from Him. The creatures have no doubt no power to avert or change the decrees of Allah; but Allah Himself certainly has the power to change His decrees and decisions on hearing a servant's prayer and petition. The other thing that has been stated in this verse is that whether a prayer is accepted or not, it is never without an advantage. The servant by presenting his petition before his Lord and by praying to Him acknowledges His Lordship and Supremacy and admits his own servitude and helplessness before Him. This expression of servitude is in itself "worship", rather the essence of worship of whose reward the servant will in no case be deprived, irrespective of whether he is granted the particular thing for which he had prayed or not.

We get a full explanation of these two themes in the Sayings of the Holy Prophet. The following Traditions throw light on the first theme:

Ḥaḍrat Salmān Fārsī (relates that the Holy Prophet said: "Nothing can avert destiny but the prayer." (Tirmidhi) that is, no one has the power to change the decisions of Allah but Allah Himself can change His decisions, and this happens when the servant prays to Him.

Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah says that the Holy Prophet said: "Whenever man prays to Allah, Allah either gives him the same which he prayed for, or prevents a calamity of the same degree from befalling him provided that he does not pray for a sin or for severing relations with the kindred." (Tirmidhi) Another *Ḥadīth* on the same subject has been reported by Hadrat Abu Sa'īd Khudri in which the Holy Prophet said: "Whenever a Muslim prays, unless it be a prayer for a sin or for severing relations with a kindred, Allah grants it in one of the three ways: Either his prayer is granted in this very world, or it is preserved for rewarding him in the Hereafter, or a disaster of the same degree is prevented from befalling him." (Musnad Aḥmad)

Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah says that the Holy Prophet said: "When-ever one of you prays, he should not say: O God, forgive me if You so please, show me mercy if You so please, grant me provisions if You so please, but he should say definitely: O God, fulfil my such and such need." (Bukhāri). According to another

[Contd. on p. 454

الَّذِیْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْاَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَّ السَّمَآءَ بِنَآءً وَّصَوَّرَكُمْ فَاَحْسَنَ صُوَرَكُمْ
وَرَزَقَكُمْ مِّنَ الطَّیِّبٰتِ ؕ ذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبُّكُمْ ۚ فَتَبٰرَكَ اللّٰهُ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِیْنَ ﴿۶۴﴾ هُوَ
الْحَیُّ لَاۤ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ فَادْعُوْهُ مُخْلِصِیْنَ لَهُ الدِّیْنَ ؕ اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ رَبِّ
الْعٰلَمِیْنَ ﴿۶۵﴾ قُلْ اِنِّیْ نُهِیْتُ اَنْ اَعْبُدَ الَّذِیْنَ تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ لَمَّا
جَآءَنِیَ الْبَیِّنٰتُ مِنْ رَّبِّیْ ۪ وَ اُمِرْتُ اَنْ اُسْلِمَ لِرَبِّ الْعٰلَمِیْنَ ﴿۶۶﴾ هُوَ الَّذِیْ
خَلَقَكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ عَلَقَةٍ ثُمَّ یُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ثُمَّ
لِتَبْلُغُوْۤا اَشُدَّكُمْ ثُمَّ لِتَكُوْنُوْا شُیُوْخًا ۚ وَ مِنْكُمْ مَّنْ یُّتَوَفّٰى مِنْ قَبْلُ وَلِتَبْلُغُوْۤا
اَجَلًا مُّسَمًّى وَّ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿۶۷﴾ هُوَ الَّذِیْ یُحْیٖ وَ یُمِیْتُ ۚ فَاِذَا قَضٰۤى اَمْرًا
فَاِنَّمَا یَقُوْلُ لَهٗ كُنْ فَیَكُوْنُ ﴿۶۸﴾ اَلَمْ تَرَ اِلَى الَّذِیْنَ یُجَادِلُوْنَ فِیْۤ اٰیٰتِ اللّٰهِ ؕ
اَنّٰى یُصْرَفُوْنَ ﴿۶۹﴾ اَلَّذِیْنَ كَذَّبُوْا بِالْكِتٰبِ وَ بِمَاۤ اَرْسَلْنَا بِهٖ رُسُلَنَا ۚ فَسَوْفَ یَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿۷۰﴾ معانقة ۱۳
اِذِ الْاَغْلٰلُ فِیْۤ اَعْنَاقِهِمْ وَ السَّلٰسِلُ ۬ یُسْحَبُوْنَ ﴿۷۱﴾ فِی الْحَمِیْمِ ۙ ثُمَّ فِی النَّارِ
یُسْجَرُوْنَ ﴿۷۲﴾ ثُمَّ قِیْلَ لَهُمْ اَیْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تُشْرِكُوْنَ ﴿۷۳﴾ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ قَالُوْا
ضَلُّوْا عَنَّا بَلْ لَمْ نَكُنْ نَّدْعُوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ شَیْـًٔا ؕ كَذٰلِكَ یُضِلُّ اللّٰهُ الْكٰفِرِیْنَ ﴿۷۴﴾
ذٰلِكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْرَحُوْنَ فِی الْاَرْضِ بِغَیْرِ الْحَقِّ وَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَمْرَحُوْنَ ﴿۷۵﴾
اُدْخُلُوْۤا اَبْوَابَ جَهَنَّمَ خٰلِدِیْنَ فِیْهَا ۚ فَبِئْسَ مَثْوَى الْمُتَكَبِّرِیْنَ ﴿۷۶﴾ فَاصْبِرْ اِنَّ
وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ ۚ فَاِمَّا نُرِیَنَّكَ بَعْضَ الَّذِیْ نَعِدُهُمْ اَوْ نَتَوَفَّیَنَّكَ فَاِلَیْنَا
یُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿۷۷﴾ وَ لَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلًا مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْهُمْ مَّنْ قَصَصْنَا عَلَیْكَ وَ
مِنْهُمْ مَّنْ لَّمْ نَقْصُصْ عَلَیْكَ ؕ وَ مَا كَانَ لِرَسُوْلٍ اَنْ یَّاْتِیَ بِاٰیَةٍ اِلَّا بِاِذْنِ
اللّٰهِ ۚ فَاِذَا جَآءَ اَمْرُ اللّٰهِ قُضِیَ بِالْحَقِّ وَ خَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْمُبْطِلُوْنَ ﴿۷۸﴾ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِیْ

It is Allah Who made the earth a resting-place for you[89] and the sky a canopy over it,[90] Who shaped you, and shaped you so well, and Who provided you with pure things.[91] The same Allah (Who did all this) is your Lord. Highly blessed is Allah, Lord of the Universe. He is the Living One:[92] there is no god but He. Call upon Him alone, making your religion sincerely His.[93] All praise is only due to Allah, Lord of the Universe.[94] 64-65

O Prophet, tell the people, "I have been forbidden to worship those whom you invoke instead of Allah.[95] (How can I do this) when clear Signs have come to me from my Lord? I have been commanded to submit to the Lord of all creation." 66

He it is Who created you from dust, then from a sperm, then from a clot of blood, then He delivers you as an infant, then He makes you to grow up to attain to full strength, then makes you to grow further to reach old age, though some one of you is recalled earlier.[96] This is done so that you may reach an appointed time[97] and may understand the reality.[98] He it is Who gives life and ordains death. Whatever He decrees, He only commands it to be and it is. 67-68

Have you seen how those who dispute concerning Allah's Revelations are being turned about?[99] Those who deny this Book and those Books which We sent with Our Messengers,[100] shall soon know when, with fetters round their necks and chains, they shall be dragged towards boiling water and then cast into the fire of Hell.[101] Then they will be asked, "Where are those other gods than Allah, whom you associated?"[102] They will answer, "They have been lost to us; nay, we did not call upon anything before this."[103] Thus will Allah establish the deviation of the disbelievers. It will be said to them, "You have met this fate because you rejoiced on the earth in things other than the Truth, and then exulted in it.[104] Enter now the gates of Hell to live therein for ever. What an evil abode for the arrogant! So, be patient.[105] O Prophet: Allah's promise is true. Whether We let you witness a part of the evil consequences with which We are threatening them, or recall you from the world (before this), they have to return to Us.[106] 69-77

O Prophet, We have sent many a Messenger before you. Of them there are some whose stories We have related to you, and of others We have not related. Yet it was not in the power of any 78

Messenger to have himself brought a Sign,[108] without Allah's leave. Then, when Allah's Command came, the judgement was passed with justice, and the wrongdoers then incurred loss.[109]

Contd. from p.451]

Tradition from Abu Hurairah, the Holy Prophet said: "Pray to Allah with the certainty that He will answer it." (Tirmidhī). In still another Tradition Ḥaḍrat Abū Hurairah has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "The servant's prayer is granted provided that he does not pray for a sin or for severing connections with the kindred, and is not hasty. It was asked: What is being hasty, O Messenger of Allah? He replied: Being hasty is that man should say: I have prayed much, too much, but I see that my prayer is not being answered. Then he should be tired of it and give up praying." (Muslim).

The other theme is explained by the following Traditions:

Ḥaḍrat Abu Hurairah relates that the Holy Prophet said: "Nothing is as praiseworthy in the sight of Allah as the prayer." (Tirmidhi, Ibn Mājah).

Ḥaḍrat Ibn Mas'ūd says that the Holy Prophet said: "Ask of Allah His bounty, because Allah likes that He should be asked." (Tirmidhi)

Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Umar and Ḥadrat Mu'ādh bin Jabal state that the Holy Prophet said: "The prayer is in any case beneficial, both with respect to those calamities which have descended and with respect to those which have not yet descended. So, O servants of Allah, you must always pray." (Tirmidhi, Musnad Aḥmad).

Ḥaḍrat Anas says that the Holy Prophet said: "Each one of you should ask his every need of Allah; so much so that even if his shoe-lace breaks, he should pray for it to Allah." (Tirmidhi). That is, even in matters which man feels are in his own power, he should invoke Allah's help for it before planning his own devices for it, for in no matter can man succeed only on the basis of his own devices without the help and succour of Allah, and praying before devising plans means that the servant is at all times acknowledging the supremacy of Allah and admitting his own helplessness.

85. This verse comprises two important themes: First, the night and the day have been presented in it as an argument for *Tauḥīd*, because their alternating regularly means that One God alone is ruling over the earth and the sun, and their alternation's being beneficial for man and other earthly creatures is an express proof of the fact that the same One God is also the Creator of all these things and has devised this system with such great wisdom that it should be beneficial and useful for all His creatures. Secondly, in this verse the atheists and the polytheists

have been made to realize how great a blessing has Allah bestowed on them in the shape of the night and the day, and what ungrateful wretches they are that while they are benefiting from this blessing of His, they are being disloyal and rebellious to Him day and night. (For further explanation, see Yūnus: 87, Al-Furqān: 62, An-Naml: 86, Al-Qaṣaṣ: 71-73, Ar-Rūm. 23, Luqmān: 29, Yā Sīn: 37 and the E.N.'s thereof).

86. That is, "The alternation of the night and day has proved that Allah alone is your Creator as well as of everything else, and the great advantage and benefits that accrue from this alternation for your life, prove that He is your highly Beneficent Lord. After this, it automatically follows that He is your real Deity too. For it would be wholly against reason and justice that your Creator and Providence should be Allah and your deities others."

87. That is, "Who is misleading you to think that those who are neither the creators nor providers should deserve to be worshipped by you?"

88. That is, "In every age the common people have been deluded by the misguides only because the people did not believe in the Revelations that Allah sent down through His Messengers to make them understand the Truth. Consequently, they were trapped by the selfish, dishonest people, who had set up shrines of false gods as a business."

89. For explanation, see An-Naml: 61 and E.N. 74 on it.

90. That is, "You have not been exposed to outer space so that heavenly calamities should rain on you and annihilate you completely, but We have built over the earth a fully fortified celestial system (which appears like a dome to the eye), which does not allow any destructive element to reach you; so much so that even the destructive cosmic rays cannot reach you and that is how you are living peacefully on the earth."

91. That is, "We had provided for you such a safe and peaceful place of rest even before your creation. Then We created you and gave you a fine body with most appropriate limbs and physical and mental powers of a high calibre. You did not create this erect stature, these hands and feet, these eyes and nose and ears, this talking tongue and this brain, which is a treasure-house of great capabilities, nor were these created by your mother and father, nor had a prophet or a saint or a god the power to create them. Their Maker and Creator was the All-Wise, All-Merciful, All-Mighty Sovereign, Who created Man with this wonderful body to function in the world, when He decided to bring him into being. Then as soon as you were created, you found by His beneficence a vast table laid out with pure provisions containing items of pure food which is not poisonous but health-giving, which is not bitter and tasteless but tasty, which is not

rotten and stale and stinking but goodsmelling, which is not lifeless dregs but rich in vitamins and useful organic substances, so essential for the proper development and nourishment of your body. Who has provided in such abundance this water, and corn, vegetables, fruits, milk, honey, meat and condiments, which not only add relish to your food but also provide you vitality and pleasures of life? And who has made the arrangements that these measureless granaries of food should go on coming out from the earth endlessly and their supply should never fail? Just consider this: What would have become of life if there had been no arrangement of food and man had been brought into existence suddenly? Is this not a clear proof that Your Creator is not merely a Creator but is an All-Wise Creator and All-Merciful Lord? (For further explanation, see Hūd: 6, An-Naml 60-66 and the E.N.'s thereof).

92. That is, "His is the real and true life. He only is living by virtue of His own power. No one else has the eternal and everlasting life but He. All others have borrowed and temporary life, which is destined to death and perishable."

93. For explanation, see E.N.'s :3, 4 of Az-Zumar.

94. That is, "There is none else the hymns of whose praise may be sung and who may be thanked."

95. Here again *'ibādat* (worship) and *du'ā* (prayer) have been used as synonyms.

96. That is, "Someone dies before birth, and someone before attaining youth, and someone before reaching old age."

97. "An appropriate time" may either imply the time of death, or the time when all human beings will be resurrected and presented before their Lord. In the first case, the meaning would be: Allah passes every man through different stages of life and takes him to the specific time which He has appointed for everyone's return. Before that time even if the whole world joins to kill him, it cannot kill him; and when that time has arrived, none can keep him alive even if all the powers of the world join together to do so. In the second case, it would mean: This gamut of life has not been brought about so that man may end up in the dust and be completely annihilated, but Allah passes him through different stages of life so that all human beings may present themselves before Him at the time which He has appointed for the purpose.

98. That is, "You are not being passed through these different stages of life so that you may live as the animals live and die as they die, but for the purpose that you may use your common sense which Allah has granted you and may understand the system in which you are living. The creation of a wonderful thing like life from the lifeless substances of the earth, then the coming into being

of a marvellous creation like man from the microscopic germ of the sperm, then its developing inside the mother's womb, from the time of conception till delivery, in such a manner that its sex, its form and appearance, its bodily structure, its mental qualities and characteristics, and its faculties and capabilities should be determined therein, un-influenced by any external factor or agency. Then the one who is to be eliminated by abortion does fall a prey to abortion, the one who is to die in infancy, does die in infancy, whether he be the child of a king, and the one who is to reach maturity or old age, does reach that age, even through highly dangerous conditions, in which death should be certain, and the one who is to die in a particular stage of life, does die in that stage even if he is given the best medical attention and treatment in the best hospitals by the best doctors. Are not all these things pointing to the truth that the ultimate control of our life and death is in the hand of an All-Mighty Sovereign? And when the reality is this that an All-Powerful Being is controlling our life and death, then how did a prophet or a saint or an angel or a star or planet become worthy of our worship and service? When did a creature attain the rank that we should pray to it, and accept it as the maker and un-maker of our destiny? And how did a human power have the status that we should obey its commands and prohibitions and its self-made law about the lawful and the unlawful, without question? (For further explanation, see Al-Ḥajj: 5-7 and the E.N.'s on it).

99. That is, "Have you not understood even after the above discourse what is the real source of these people's misunderstanding and misconduct, and what has caused them to go astray? "(One should note that the addressee here is not the Holy Prophet but every such person who reads these verses or hears them read).

100. This is the real cause of their going astray. Their denial of the Qur'ān and the teachings brought by the Messenger of Allah and their resisting by disputation the Revelations of Allah instead of pondering over them seriously, was the basic cause, which has led them astray and exhausted all possibilities of their adopting the Right Way.

101. That is, "When compelled by the intensity of thirst they will ask for water, the keepers of Hell will drag them by the chains towards the springs of boiling water, and when they will have drunk from them, they will drag them back to be cast into the fire of Hell."

102. That is, "If they really were gods or associates in Godhead, and you worshipped them in the hope that they would help you in the evil time, then why don't they come to rescue you now?"

103. They do not mean to say, "We did not associate them with God in the world," but they mean: "Now we have understood well that those whom we invoked in the world, were nothing and mere nonentities."

104. That is, "You not only followed that which was untrue and false, but you became so enamoured of the untruth that when the Truth was presented before you, you paid no heed to it, but continued to exult in your worship of the falsehood."

105. That is, "You should have patience at what those people say and do, who are opposing you by disputation and wrangling and want to defeat you by mean devices."

106. That is, "It is not necessary that We should punish every such person who has tried to harm you, in this world and during your lifetime. Whether a person receives his punishment here or not, he cannot in any case escape Our grasp: he has to return to Us after death. Then he will receive full punishment of his misdeeds."

107. A new theme starts from here. The disbelievers of Makkah said to the Holy Prophet, "We would not believe you to be Allah's Messenger unless you showed us the miracle that we ask you to show us." In the following verses an answer is being given to this very demand without mentioning it. (For the type of the miracles they demanded, see Hūd: 12, Al-Ḥijr 7, Banī Isrā'īl: 90-93, Al-Furqān: 21 and the E.N.'s thereof).

108. That is, "No Prophet ever showed a miracle by his own will and desire, nor had any Prophet the power to show a miracle by himself. Whenever a miracle was shown through a Prophet, it was shown when Allah willed it to be shown through him to the disbelievers." This is the first answer to the disbelievers' demand.

109. That is, "A miracle has never been shown for the mere fun of it. It is a decisive thing. If a nation does not believe even after a miracle has been shown, it is destroyed. You are demanding a miracle only for the sake of fun, but you have no idea that by making such a demand you are, in fact, inviting your own doom.". This is the second answer to their demand. (For details, please see Al-Ḥijr: 8, 58-60, Banī Isrā'īl 59, Al-Anbiyā': 5-9, Al-Furqān: 22-23, Ash-Shua'rā': 66-67 and the E.N.'s thereof).

جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْاَنْعَامَ لِتَرْكَبُوْا مِنْهَا وَمِنْهَا تَاْكُلُوْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَلَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَنَافِعُ وَ
لِتَبْلُغُوْا عَلَيْهَا حَاجَةً فِيْ صُدُوْرِكُمْ وَعَلَيْهَا وَعَلَى الْفُلْكِ تُحْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ وَيُرِيْكُمْ
اٰيٰتِهٖ ۖ فَاَيَّ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ تُنْكِرُوْنَ ﴿٨١﴾ اَفَلَمْ يَسِيْرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ
كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۚ كَانُوْٓا اَكْثَرَ مِنْهُمْ وَاَشَدَّ قُوَّةً وَّاٰثَارًا فِي
الْاَرْضِ فَمَآ اَغْنٰى عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُهُمْ
بِالْبَيِّنٰتِ فَرِحُوْا بِمَا عِنْدَهُمْ مِّنَ الْعِلْمِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ
يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ فَلَمَّا رَاَوْا بَاْسَنَا قَالُوْٓا اٰمَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَحْدَهٗ وَكَفَرْنَا بِمَا كُنَّا بِهٖ
مُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿٨٤﴾ فَلَمْ يَكُ يَنْفَعُهُمْ اِيْمَانُهُمْ لَمَّا رَاَوْا بَاْسَنَا ۖ سُنَّتَ اللّٰهِ الَّتِيْ
قَدْ خَلَتْ فِيْ عِبَادِهٖ ۚ وَخَسِرَ هُنَالِكَ الْكٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾

It is Allah Who has provided the cattle that you may ride on some and eat the flesh of others. Then you have many other uses also in them: you ride on them to places that you desire in your hearts to reach, and you are carried on them as well as on ships. Allah shows you these Signs of His. Then, which Signs of His will you still deny?[110] 79-81

Well,[111] have they not travelled in the earth that they could see the fate of those who have gone before them? They were more in number and stronger-in might and have left behind greater traces of their power in the land; yet what they earned did not avail them anything. When their Messengers came to them with clear Signs, they remained stuck to the knowledge that they already had,[112] and then were encompassed by the same thing that they mocked. When they saw Our scourge, they cried out, "We now believe in Allah, the One, and we reject all those gods whom we used to associate with Him." But after having seen Our scourge, their belief could be of no avail to them, because the same has been the standing law of Allah to eal with His servants, in the past, [113] and then the disbelievers only incurred loss. 82-85

110. It means this: "If you are not demanding a miracle only for the sake of fun and amusement, but want to have the satisfaction whether that to which

Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is inviting you(i.e. *Tauhīd* and the Hereafter) is true or not,then God's those Signs which you are observing and experiencing at all times, are quite enough.For there remains no need for other signs when there are these Signs to help you understand theTruth." This is the third answer to their demand of the miracles. This answer also has been given at several places in the Qur'ān and we have given detailed commentary on it. (Please see Al-An'ām: 37-39; Yūnus: 101; Ar-Ra'd: 7-13;.Ash-Shua'rā': 4-9 and the F.N.'s thereof).

The animals which serve man on the earth, especially the cow, ox, buffalo, sheep, goat, camel and horse, have been created with such nature by the Creator that they easily become man's domestic pet servants and he uses them to fulfil countless of his needs. He rides on them, employs them for carrying loads and in agriculture, gets milk from them, which he drinks and also uses it for making curd, butter, ghee, condensed milk, cheese and different sorts of confectionaries; eats their flesh, uses their fat, and puts to good uses their wool and hair and skin and intestines and bones, even their blood and dung. Is it not a manifest proof that the Creator of man had created these animals even before creating him in view of his countless needs, on a special pattern so that he may use them to advantage?

The three-fourths of the earth's surface is under water and only one-fourth is dry land. In the dry parts also there are small and wide tracts of land which are separated by water. The spreading of human populations on the dry lands and the establishment of commercial and other relations between them could not be possible unless water and oceans and winds were made subject to such laws as would make navigation possible, and such materials were made available on the earth, which man could employ for building ships. Is it not an express sign that there is One God and only One All-Powerful, All-Merciful and All-Wise Lord, Who has made man and earth and water and oceans and winds .and everything on the earth according to His own special scheme? Rather, if man only considers from the viewpoint of navigation how the positions of the stars and regular movements of the planets are helpful in it, he will have the testimony that not only of the earth but of the heavens too the Creator is the same One Bountiful Lord.

Then, consider also this: Can you in your right senses imagine that the All-Wise God, Who has given His countless things in the control of man and has granted him all these provisions for his well-being, will be, God forbid, so blind of the eye and so thoughtless as would never call man to account after giving him all this?

111. This is the conclusion to the discourse. While studying this please also keep in view vv. 4-5 and v. 21 of this Sūrah.

112. That is, "They took their philosophy and their science, their law, their secular sciences and their mythology and theology invented by their religious guides as the real knowledge, and regarded the Knowledge brought by the Prophets of Allah as worthless and therefore paid no heed to it."

113. "The standing Law of Allah": the Law that repentance and faith are beneficial only till the time man is not seized by the torment of Allah or death. Believing or repenting after the torment has arrived or the signs of death have appeared, is not acceptable to Allah.



XLI

ḤĀ-MĪM AS-SAJDAH

حٰمٓ السَّجدة

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XLI

ḤĀ-MĪM AS-SAJDAH

حٰمٓ السَّجدة

INTRODUCTION

Name

The name of this Sūrah is composed of two words, *Ḥa-Mīm* and *As-Sajdah,* which implies that it is a Sūrah which begins with *Ḥā Mīm* and in which a verse requiring the performance of *sajdah* (prostration) has occurred.

Period of Revelation

According to authentic Traditions, it was sent down after the affirmation of the Faith by Ḥaḍrat Ḥamzah and before the affirmation of the Faith by Ḥaḍrat 'Umar. Muḥammad bin Isḥāq, the earliest biographer of the Holy Prophet, has related on the authority of Muḥammad bin Ka'b al-Qurzi, the famous follower of the Companions, that one day some of the Quraish chiefs were sitting in their assembly in the Masjid al-Ḥarām, while in another corner of the Mosque there was the Holy Prophet sitting by himself. This was the time when Ḥaḍrat

Hamzah had already embraced Islam and the people of the Quraish were feeling upset at the growing numbers of the Muslims. On this occasion, 'Utbah bin Rabi'ah (the father-in-law of Abu Sufyān) said to the Quraish chiefs: "Gentlemen, if you like I would go and speak to Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) and put before him some proposals; maybe that he accepts one of them, to which we may also agree, and so he stops opposing us." They all agreed to this, and 'Utbah went and sat by the Holy Prophet. When the Holy Prophet turned to him, he said: "Nephew, you know the high status that you enjoy in the community by virtue of your ancestry and family relations, but you have put your people to great trouble: you have created divisions among them and you consider them to be fools: you talk ill of their religion and gods, and say things as though all our forefathers were pagans. Now listen to me and I shall make some suggestions. Consider them well: maybe that you accept one of them." The Holy Prophet said: "Abul Walīd, say what you want to say and I shall listen to you." He said, "Nephew, if by what you are doing, you want wealth, we will give you enough of it so that you will be the richest man among us; if you want to become an important man, we will make you our chief and will never decide a matter without you; if you want to be a king, we will accept you as our king; and if you are visited by a jinn, whom you cannot get rid of by your own power, we will arrange the best physicians and have you treated at our own expense." 'Utbah went on speaking in this strain and the Holy Prophet went on listening to him quietly. Then he said, "have you said, O Abul Walīd, what you had to say?" He replied that he had. The Holy Prophet said: "Well, now listen to me." Then pronouncing *Bismillah ir-Reḥmān-ir-Raḥim* he began to recite this very Sūrah, and 'Utbah kept on listening to it, putting his hands behind his back and leaning on them as he listened. Coming to the verse of prostration (v. 38) the Holy Prophet prostrated himself; then raising his head, said, "This was my reply, O Abul Walīd, now you may act as you please." When 'Utbah arose and walked back towards the chiefs, the people saw him from afar, and said: "By God! 'Utbah's face is changed. He does not look the same man that he was when he went from here." Then, when he came back and sat down, the people asked, "What have you heard?" He replied, "By God! I have heard something the like of which I had never heard before. By God, it's neither poetry, nor sorcery, nor magic. O chiefs of the Quraish, listen to what I say and leave this man to

himself. I think what he recites is going to have its effect. If the other Arabs overcome him, you will be saved from raising your hand against your brother, and the others will deal with him. But if he overcame Arabia, his sovereignty would be your sovereignty and his honour your honour." Hearing this the chiefs spoke out: "You too, O father of Walīd, have been bewitched by his tongue." 'Utbah replied, "I have given you my opinion; now you may act as you please." (Ibn Hishām, vol. I, pp. 313-314).

This story has been narrated by several other traditionists also on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Jābir bin 'Abdullah in different ways, with a little variation in wording. In some traditions it has also been related that when during the recitation the Holy Prophet had come to verse 13, viz. "If they turn away, say to them: I warn you of a thunderbolt the like of which had visited the 'Ad and the Thamūd," 'Utbah had spontaneously placed his hand on the Holy Prophet's mouth, and said: "For God's sake, have mercy on your people." Afterwards he justified his action before the Quraish chiefs, saying: "You know that whatever Muḥammad says is always fulfilled; therefore, I feared lest a torment should descend on us." (For details, see *Tafsīr* Ibn Kathīr vol. IV, pp. 90-91; *Al-Bedāyah wan-Nihāyah*, vol. III, p. 62).

Theme and Subject-Matter

In the discourse that Allah sent down in response to what 'Utbah said, no attention whatever was paid to the absurd proposals that he had made to the Holy Prophet. For what he had said was, in fact, an attack on the Holy Prophet's intention and his intellect. His assumption was that as there was no possibility of his being a Prophet and the Qur'ān's being Allah's Revelation, inevitably the motive of his invitation must either be the desire to obtain wealth and political power, or, God forbid, he had lost his reason. In the first case, he wanted to make a bargain with the Holy Prophet; in the second, he was insulting him when he said that the Quraish chiefs would have been cured of his madness at their own expense. Obviously, when the opponents come down to such absurd things, no gentleman would like to answer them, but would ignore them and say what he himself had to say.

Therefore, ignoring what 'Utbah said, this Sūrah makes antagonism its subject of discussion, which the unbelieving Quraish were

showing stubbornly and wickedly in order to defeat the message of the Qur'ān. They would say to the Holy Prophet, "You may try however hard you may: we would not listen to you. We have put coverings on our hearts and we have closed our ears. There is a wall between you and us, which would never let us meet together."

They had given a clear notice to the holy Prophet to the effect: "You may continue your mission of inviting the people to yourself, but we would go on opposing you as hard as we can to frustrate your mission."

For this object they had devised the following plan: Whenever the Holy Peophet or a follower of his would try to recite the Qur'ān before the people, they would at once raise such a hue and cry that no one could hear anything.

They were desperately trying to misconstrue the verses of the Qur'ān and spread every kind of misunderstanding amoag the people. They misconstrued everything and found fault even with the straight forward things. They would isolate words and sentences from their right context, from here and there, and would add their own words in order to put new meanings on them so as to mislead the people about the Qur'ān and the Messenger who presented it.

They would raise strange objections a specimen of which has been presented in this Sūrah. They said, "If an Arab presents a discourse in Arabic, what could be the miracle in it? Arabic is his mother tongue. Anyone could compose anything that he pleased in his mother tongue and then make the claim that he had received it from God. It would be a miracle if the person would suddenly arise and make an eloquent speech in a foreign tongue which he did not know. Then only could one say that the discourse was not of his own composition but a revelation from God."

Here is a resume of what has been said in answer to this deaf and blind opposition:

(1) The Qur'ān is most certainly the Word of God, which He has sent down is Arabic. The ignorant people do not find any light of knowledge in the truths that have been presented in it plainly and clearly, but the people of understanding are seeing this light as

well as benefiting by it. It is surely Allah's mercy that He has sent down this Word for the guidance of man. If a person regarded it as an affliction, it would be his own misfortune. Good news is for those who benefit by it and warning for those who turn away from it.

(2) If you have put coverings on your hearts and have made yourselves deaf, it is none of the Prophet's job to make the one hear who does not want to hear, and the one who does not want to understand, understand forcibly. He is a man like you; he can make only those to hear and understand, who are inclined to hear and understand.

(3) Whether you close down your eyes and ears and put coverings on your hearts, the fact, however, is that your God is only One God, and you are not the servant of any one else. Your stubbornness cannot change this reality in any way. If you accept this truth and correct your behaviour accordingly you will do good only to yourselves, and if you reject it, you will only be preparing your own doom.

(4) Do you have any understanding as to whom you disbelieve and with whom you associate others in divinity? It is with regard to that God Who has created this limitless universe, Who is the Creator of the earth and heavens, from Whose blessings you are benefiting on the earth, and on Whose provisions you are being fed and sustained. You set up His mean creatures as His associates and when you are made to understand the truth you turn away in stubbornness.

(5) If you still do not believe, then be aware that a sudden torment is about to visit you, the like of which had visited the 'Ād and the Thamūd, and this torment also will not be the final punishment of your crimes, but there is in addition the accountability and the fire of Hell in the Hereafter.

(6) Wretched is the man who gets as company such satans from among men and jinn, who show him nothing but green and pleasant, who make his follies seem fair to him, who neither let him think aright himself nor let him hear right from others. But on the Day of Reckoning when their doom overtakes them, each

one of them will say that if he happened to get hold of those who had misled and deceived him in the world, he would trample them under his foot.

(7) This Qur'ān is an unchangeable Book. You can not defeat it by your machinations and falsehoods. Whether falsehood comes from the front or makes a secret and indirect attack from behind, it cannot succeed in refuting it.

(8) Today when this Qur'ān is being presented in your own language so that you may understand it, you say that it should have been sent down in some foreign tongue. But had We sent it in a foreign tongue for your guidance, you would yourselves have called it a joke, as if to say, "What a strange thing! The Arabs are being given guidance in a non-Arabic language, which nobody understands." This means that you, in fact, have no desire to obtain guidance. You are only inventing ever new excuses for not affirming the faith.

(9) Have you ever considered that if it became established that the Qur'ān was really from Allah, then what fate you would meet by denying it and opposing it so vehemently as you do?

(10) Today you do not believe but soon you will see with your own eyes that the message of this Qur'ān has pervaded the whole world and you have yourselves been overwhelmed by it. Then you will come to know that what you were being told was the very truth.

Besides giving these answers to the opponents, attention has been paid to the problems which the believers and the Holy Prophet himself were facing in that environment of active resistance. Not to speak of preaching the message to others, the believers were even finding it difficult to follow the way of the Faith. Any one about whom it became known that he had become a Muslim, life would become an agony. As against the dreadful combination of the enemy and its all-pervading power, they were feeling utterly helpless and powerless. In this state, in the first place, they were consoled and encouraged, as if to say: "You are not, in fact, helpless and powerless, for any person who believes in God as his Lord and adheres to this belief and way of life resolutely, God's angels descend on him and help and support him at every stage,

from the life of this world till the Hereafter." Then they were encouraged with the consolation: "The best man is he who does good, invites others to God and proclaims firmly that he is a Muslim."

The question that was vexing the Holy Prophet at that time was as to how he should carve out a way of preaching his message when he had to face such heavy odds on every side. The solution he was given to this question was: "Although apparently the obstacles seem to be insurmountable, the weapon of good morals and character can smash and melt them away. Use this weapon patiently, and whenever Satan provokes you and incites you to use some other device, seek refuge in Allah."



حٰمٓ ﴿١﴾ تَنْزِيْلٌ مِّنَ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ ﴿٢﴾ كِتٰبٌ فُصِّلَتْ اٰيٰتُهٗ قُرْاٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا
لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣﴾ بَشِيْرًا وَّنَذِيْرًا ۚ فَاَعْرَضَ اَكْثَرُهُمْ فَهُمْ لَا يَسْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾ وَ
قَالُوْا قُلُوْبُنَا فِيْٓ اَكِنَّةٍ مِّمَّا تَدْعُوْنَآ اِلَيْهِ وَفِيْٓ اٰذَانِنَا وَقْرٌ وَّمِنْۢ بَيْنِنَا وَ
بَيْنِكَ حِجَابٌ فَاعْمَلْ اِنَّنَا عٰمِلُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾ قُلْ اِنَّمَآ اَنَا بَشَرٌ مِّثْلُكُمْ يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيَّ
اَنَّمَآ اِلٰهُكُمْ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ فَاسْتَقِيْمُوْٓا اِلَيْهِ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوْهُ ۗ وَوَيْلٌ لِّلْمُشْرِكِيْنَ ﴿٦﴾
الَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْتُوْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَهُمْ بِالْاٰخِرَةِ هُمْ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿٧﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَهُمْ اَجْرٌ غَيْرُ مَمْنُوْنٍ ﴿٨﴾ قُلْ اَئِنَّكُمْ لَتَكْفُرُوْنَ بِالَّذِيْ
خَلَقَ الْاَرْضَ فِيْ يَوْمَيْنِ وَتَجْعَلُوْنَ لَهٗٓ اَنْدَادًا ۗ ذٰلِكَ رَبُّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٩﴾ وَجَعَلَ

XLI

ḤĀ-MĪM AS-SAJDAH

حٰمٓ السَّجدة

Verses: 54

Revealed at Makkah

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

Ḥā-Mīm. This is a Revelation from the All-Compassionate, the All-Merciful God, a Book whose verses are well-expounded, an Arabic Qur'ān for those who have knowledge, a giver of good news and a warner.[1] 1-4

Yet most of these people have turned away from it, and they pay no heed. They say, "Our hearts are covered with veils from that to which you are calling us;[2] our ears have become deaf, and between us and you there is a curtain:[3] so do as you please; we shall do as we 4-5

will."[4]

6-8 O Prophet, say to them I am only a man, like you,[5] I am told by revelation that your God is only One God:[6] therefore, turn straight to Him alone[7] and ask for His forgiveness.[8] Woe to the *mushriks* who do not pay the *Zakāt*[9] and deny the Hereafter. As for those who have believed and done right, for them there is surely an unfailing reward.[10]

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1. This is a brief introduction to the Sūrah. A study of the following discourse can show what relevance the things mentioned in it have with the theme that follows.

The first thing said is that this Word is being sent down by God, as if to say: "You, O people, may go on saying again and again that this Word is being composed by Muḥammed (upon whom be Allah's peace) but the fact is that its revelation is from God, Lord of the worlds." Furthermore, the addressees have also been warned, so as to say: "If you express your displeasure on hearing this discourse, this displeasure is not against Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) but against God. If you reject it, you reject Allah's Word, not of a man, and if you turn away from it, you do not turn away from a man but from Allah."

Secondly, that the one sending it down is that God, Who is extremely Merciful *(Raḥmān* and *Raḥīm)* to His creatures. The mention of the attribute of mercy of the Sender of Revelation, instead of any other attributes, points to the truth that He has sent down this Word under the requirement of His mercifulness. By this the addressees have been warned, so as to say: "If someone spurns this Word, or rejects it, or expresses displeasure at it, he in fact is his own enemy. This is indeed a supreme blessing, which God has sent down, out of this infinite mercy, for the guidance and well-being and happiness of man. If God were merciless to mankind, He would have left them to wander about in darkness and would have least cared what pit they fell into. But this is His bounty and beneficence that along with bringing men into existence and providing for them He has taken on Himself the responibility to show them the light of knowledge also in order to adorn their lives, and is sending down this Word to a servant of His for the same purpose. Now, who could be more ungrateful and a greater enemy of himself than the one who instead of benefiting from this mercy made up his mind to fight it?"

Thirdly, that the verses of this Book are well-expounded. That is, there is nothing confusing and ambiguous in it so that somebody might excuse himself from accepting it on the ground that he was unable to understand the contents of the Book.It has been plainly told in it what is the truth and what is the falsehood,

what are the right beliefs and what are the wrong beliefs, what is good and what is evil, what is high morality and wha is vice, in what way lies the good of man and in what he incurs loss for himself. If a person rejects such clear and manifest guidance, or pays no heed to it, he cannot offer any excuse for it. His attitude clearly implies that he wants to remain in the wrong wilfully.

Fourthly, that this is an Arabic Qur'ān, which implies this: "If this Qur'ān had been sent down in some other language, the Arabs would have presented the excuse that they were ignorant of the language in whcih God had sent His Book. But this is their own language. They cannot put forward the excuse that they cannot understand it. (Here, one should keep in view verse 44 also, in which the same theme has been expressed in a different way, and the suspicion that in that case there is a reasonable excuse for the non-Arabs not to accept the message of the Qur'ān, we have already removed in our commentary of Sūrah Yūsuf: 2 and E.N. 2 on it. Please also see Rasā'il-o-Masā'il. Vol. I, pp. 19-23).

Fifthly, that this Book is for those who possess knowledge. That is, only the people of understanding can draw any benefit from this Book. For the ignorant it is as useless as a precious diamond for the one who cannot distinguish it from a mere stone.

Sixthly, that this Book gives good news and administers warning. That is, it does not consist of mere fantasy, or a philosophy, or a specimen of good literary composition, which one may accept or reject without entailing any consequence, but it is openly administering a warning to the whole world that the results of accepting and believing in it are marvellous and of rejecting it very dreadful. Thus only a fool could reject it with scant attention.

2. That is, "It has no way open to reach our hearts."

3. That is, "This invitation has divided us: it has cut us off from you: it has become a hindrance for us to join you."

4. It has two meanings: (1) "That we have nothing to do with you ;" and (2) "that if you do not desist from your preaching, you may go on doing your mission, we also will not stop our opposition to you, and we will do whatever we can to defeat and frustrate your mission."

5. That is, "It is not in my power to remove the covering that envelops your hearts, open your ears, and tear away the curtain which you have drawn between me and yourselves. I am only a man: I can make only him understand who is inclined to listen, and can only meet him who is ready to meet me."

6. That is, "You may if you so like put coverings on your hearts and make your ears deaf, but the fact is that you don't have many gods; there is only One

[Contd. on p. 478

فِيْهَا رَوَاسِيَ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبٰرَكَ فِيْهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيْهَآ اَقْوَاتَهَا فِيْٓ اَرْبَعَةِ اَيَّامٍ ؕ
سَوَآءً لِّلسَّآئِلِيْنَ ﴿١٠﴾ ثُمَّ اسْتَوٰٓى اِلَى السَّمَآءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْاَرْضِ
ائْتِيَا طَوْعًا اَوْ كَرْهًا ؕ قَالَتَآ اَتَيْنَا طَآئِعِيْنَ ﴿١١﴾ فَقَضٰىهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمٰوَاتٍ فِيْ
يَوْمَيْنِ وَاَوْحٰى فِيْ كُلِّ سَمَآءٍ اَمْرَهَا ؕ وَزَيَّنَّا السَّمَآءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيْحَ ۖ وَ
حِفْظًا ؕ ذٰلِكَ تَقْدِيْرُ الْعَزِيْزِ الْعَلِيْمِ ﴿١٢﴾ فَاِنْ اَعْرَضُوْا فَقُلْ اَنْذَرْتُكُمْ صٰعِقَةً
مِّثْلَ صٰعِقَةِ عَادٍ وَّثَمُوْدَ ﴿١٣﴾ اِذْ جَآءَتْهُمُ الرُّسُلُ مِنْۢ بَيْنِ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَمِنْ
خَلْفِهِمْ اَلَّا تَعْبُدُوْٓا اِلَّا اللّٰهَ ؕ قَالُوْا لَوْ شَآءَ رَبُّنَا لَاَنْزَلَ مَلٰٓئِكَةً فَاِنَّا بِمَآ
اُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهٖ كٰفِرُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ فَاَمَّا عَادٌ فَاسْتَكْبَرُوْا فِي الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَقَالُوْا
مَنْ اَشَدُّ مِنَّا قُوَّةً ؕ اَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَهُمْ هُوَ اَشَدُّ مِنْهُمْ قُوَّةً ؕ
وَكَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا يَجْحَدُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ فَاَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيْحًا صَرْصَرًا فِيْٓ اَيَّامٍ نَّحِسَاتٍ
لِّنُذِيْقَهُمْ عَذَابَ الْخِزْيِ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ؕ وَلَعَذَابُ الْاٰخِرَةِ اَخْزٰى
وَهُمْ لَا يُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَاَمَّا ثَمُوْدُ فَهَدَيْنٰهُمْ فَاسْتَحَبُّوا الْعَمٰى عَلَى الْهُدٰى
فَاَخَذَتْهُمْ صٰعِقَةُ الْعَذَابِ الْهُوْنِ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَنَجَّيْنَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَيَوْمَ يُحْشَرُ اَعْدَآءُ اللّٰهِ اِلَى النَّارِ فَهُمْ يُوْزَعُوْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ حَتّٰٓى
اِذَا مَا جَآءُوْهَا شَهِدَ عَلَيْهِمْ سَمْعُهُمْ وَاَبْصَارُهُمْ وَجُلُوْدُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوْا
يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَقَالُوْا لِجُلُوْدِهِمْ لِمَ شَهِدْتُّمْ عَلَيْنَا ؕ قَالُوْٓا اَنْطَقَنَا اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْٓ
اَنْطَقَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَّهُوَ خَلَقَكُمْ اَوَّلَ مَرَّةٍ وَّاِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ
تَسْتَتِرُوْنَ اَنْ يَّشْهَدَ عَلَيْكُمْ سَمْعُكُمْ وَلَآ اَبْصَارُكُمْ وَلَا جُلُوْدُكُمْ وَلٰكِنْ
ظَنَنْتُمْ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَعْلَمُ كَثِيْرًا مِّمَّا تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَذٰلِكُمْ ظَنُّكُمُ الَّذِيْ

O Prophet, say to them, "Do you deny that God, and set up 9-12
others as equals with Him, Who created the earth in two days? He indeed is the Lord of all creation. He set mountains over the earth (after its creation) and bestowed blessings on it,[11] and provided in it means of sustenance adequately according to the needs and demands of all those who ask.[12] This was done in four days.[13] Then He turned to the heaven, which was only smoke at that time.[14] He said to the heaven and the earth: "Come into being, whether you like it or not." They both said, "We do come in submission."[15] Then in two days He made the seven heavens, and in each heaven He ordained its law, and We adorned the lower heaven with lights and made it fully secure.[16] Such is the design of the One, Who is the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing.

Now if they turn away,[17] say to them, "I warn you of a 13-14
thunderbolt of punishment the like of which had descended upon the 'Ād and the Thamūd. When the Messengers of God came to them from every side, from front and from behind,[18] saying, "Worship none but Allah", they said, "Had our Lord so willed, He would have sent down angels; therefore, we deny what you have been sent with."[19]

As for the 'Ād, they became arrogant with pride in the land, 15-16
without any right, and said, "Who is stronger than us in might?" Did they not see that God, Who had created them, is stronger than they in might? Yet they continued to deny Our Revelations. Consequently, We sent upon them a stormy wind over a few ill-omened days[20] so that We might make them taste a disgraceful scourge in the life of this world,[21] but the scourge of the Hereafter is even more disgraceful; there they shall have none to help them.

As for the Thamūd, We presented before them the right way, 17-18
but they preferred to remain blind rather than see the way. Consequently, a humiliating scourge overtook them all of a sudden on account of their misdeeds, and We saved those, who had believed and refrained from error and wrongdoing.[22]

And imagine the time when the enemies of Allah will be 19-23
gathered together to be driven to Hell.[23] Their former generations will be withheld till their later generations also will join them.[24] 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 this world.[25] 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.[26] He it is, Who created you in the first instance, and now to Him you are being brought back. When in the world you hid yourselves while committing crime, you never thought that your ears and your own eyes and your own skins would ever bear witness against you. Rather you thought that even Allah had no knowledge of many of your deeds. This same thought that you had concerning your Lord, has ruined you, and on the same count you have incurred loss."[27]

[Contd. from p. 475]

God, whose servants you are. And this is no philosophy, which I might have thought out myself, and which might have equal probability of being true or false, but this reality has been made known to me through revelation, which cannot admit of any likelihood of error."

7. That is, "Do not make any other your God; do not serve and worship any other deity: do not invoke and bow to any other for help: and do not obey and follow the customs and laws and codes made and set by others."

8. "Ask for His forgiveness": Ask for His forgiveness for the unfaithfulness that you have been showing so far towards Him, for the *shirk* and disbelief and disobedience that you have been committing till now, and for the sins that you happened to comit due to forgetfulness of God.

9. Here, the meaning of the word *zakāt* has been disputed by the commentators. Ibn 'Abbās and his illustrious pupils, 'Ikrimah and Mujāhid, say that *zakāt* here implies the purity of the soul and self which accrues from belief in *Tauḥīd* and obedience to Allah. According to this explanation, the translation of the verse would be: "Woe to the *mushriks*, who do not adopt purity." The other group which includes commentators like Qatādah, Suddī, Ḥasan Baṣri, Ḍaḥḥāk, Muqātil and Ibn as-Sā'ib take this word here also in the meaning of the *zakāt* on property and wealth. According to this explanation, the verse means: "Woe to those who do not fulfil the right of Allah by committing *shirk* and the right of the men by withholding the *zakāt*."

10. The words *ajrun ghairu mamnūn* in the original have two other meanings also: (1) That it will be a reward which will never decrease and diminish; and (2) that this reward will not be given with reminders of good done, like the gift made by a miserly person, who keeps on reminding the beneficiary of his favour if at all he gives away anything.

11. "Blessings of the earth" imply those measureless and countless things which have been continuously coming out of it since millions and millions of years, and are fulfilling the ever increasing needs and requirements of all the creatures from the microscopic germs to the highly civilized man. Among these the principal blessings are the air and the water by which alone vegetable, animal and then human life became possible on the earth.

12. This sentence has been interpreted by the commenators in different ways:

Some of them interpret it to mean: "The provisions of the earth were placed in it precisely according to the needs and requirements of those who ask, in exactly four days." That is, it took exactly four days, neither more nor less.

Ibn 'Abbās, Qatādah and Suddi interpret it to mean: "The provisions of the earth were placed in it in four days. The answer to those who ask is completed." That is, whoever asks as to how long it took, his complete answer is that it took four days.

According to Ibn Zaid it means: "The provisions of the earth were placed in it for those who ask within four days, precisely in accordance with the demand and need of everyone."

As far as the rules of the language are concerned, the words of the verse admit of all these three meanings, but in our opinion the first two meanings have no merit. In view of the context, it is immaterial whether the work was completed in exactly four days and not in more or less four days. There is no need whatever for such an addition to make up for any deficieney in supporting the description of Allah's perfect power, perfect providence and perfect wisdom. Likewise, the commentary: "The answer to those who ask is completed," is a very weak commentary. There is no indication in the theme preceding the verse and following it, to show that at that time somebody had asked the question as to how long it had taken for those works to be completed, and this verse was sent down as an answer to it. That is why we have adopted the third meaning in our translation. In our opinion the correct meaning of the verse is this: "Allah placed within the earth the full provisions of food precisely and exactly in accordance with the demands and needs of every kind of creature that Allah had to create in the earth from the beginning of the creation till Resurrection. There are countless kinds of vegetation found on land and in water and the food requirements of each kind are different from those of other kinds. Allah has created countless species of living creatures in the air and on land and in water, and every species demands a different kind of food. Then unique among all these is the species of man, who requires different kinds of food not only for the development and nourishment of his body but also for the satisfaction of his taste. Who beside Allah could know

how many members of the different kinds of creatures would be born on this globe, from the beginning of life till its end, and when and where they would be born and how much and what kind of food would be required for their nourishment? Just as He had made the plan of creating those creatures who stood in need of food in His scheme of creation, so He made full arrangements of food also to meet their requirements and demands.

In the modern age, the people who have brought out the Islamic edition of the Marxist conception of Socialism in the name of "the Qur'ānic order of providence", translate the words *sawā-al-lis-sā'-ilīn* as "equal for all those who ask", and raise the edifice of reasoning on it, saying that Allah has kept equal provisions for all the people in the earth; therefore, in order to fulfil the intention of the verse a system of the state is needed which may provide equal rations of food to everybody. For in the system of individual ownership the equality which the "Qur'ānic law" demands cannot be established. But these people, in their enthusiasm to press the Qur'ān in the service of their theories, forget that "those who ask", who have been mentioned in this verse, are not only human beings but all those different species of animals and plants who need food for survival. Has Allah really established equality among all of them, or even among all the members of each different species of the creatures, in the matter of the provision of food? Do you find anywhere in this entire system of nature the arrangement of the distribution of equal rations of food? If that is not the case, it means that in the vegetable and animal kingdom, where the distribution of the provisions is directly being arranged by the State of Allah, and not by the human state, Allah Himself is violating His own this "Qur'ānic law", rather, God forbid, is practicing injustice! Then, they also forget that "those who ask" also include those animals which man domesticates and arranging provisions for which is also his responsibility, e.g. sheep, goats, cows, buffaloes, horses, asses, mules, camels, etc. If the Qur'ānic law is that equal food be given to all those who ask, and to enforce the same law a state is needed, which may administer the order of providence, will that state establish economic equality between men and animals also?

13. Here, the commentators generally have been confronted with this question: If it is admitted that the creation of the earth took two days and the setting up of the mountains and placing of the provisions and blessings in it took four days, and the creation of the heavens, as mentioned below, took another two days, the total number of the days would be eight, whereas at several places in the Qur'ān Allah has said that the creation of the earth and heavens took six days in all. (For example, see Al-A'rāf: 54, Yūnus: 3, Hud: 7, Al-Furqān: 59). On this very basis, almost all the commentators agree that these four days include the two days of the creation of the earth. That is, two days were taken for the creation of the earth and two days for the creation of the rest of the things within the earth, as

mentioned below. Thus, the earth along with its provisions became complete in four days in all. But this not only is against the apparent words of the Qur'ān, but the difficulty also is, in fact, an imaginary difficulty, to avoid which need for this interpretation has been felt. The two days of the creation of the earth are, in fact, not separate from the two days in which this universe as a whole was created. If we consider the following verses, we see that in them the creation of both the earth and the heavens has been mentioned together, and then it has been stated that Allah made the seven heavens in two days. These seven heavens imply the whole universe, one part of which is also our earth. Then, when like the other countless stars and planets of the universe this earth also took the shape of a unique globe within two days, Allah began to prepare it for animate creatures, and in four days created in it all those provisions which have been mentioned in the above verse. What development works were carried out in the other stars and planets in these four days have not been mentioned by Allah, for not to speak of the man of the period of the revelation of the Qur'ān, even the man of the present age does not have the capability to digest and assimilate this information.

14. Three things need to be explained here:

First, by "heaven" is meant the whole universe, as becomes obvious from the following sentences. In other words, "turning to the heaven" means that Allah turned to the creation of the universe.

Second, by "smoke" is implied the initial and primary stage of matter, in which it lay diffused in space in a shapeless, dustlike condition before the formation of the universe. Scientists of the modern age describe the same thing as nebulae, and the same also is their view about the beginning of the universe: that is, before creation the matter of which the universe was built lay diffused in smoke-like nebulous form.

Third, it would be wrong to interpret "then He turned to the heaven" to mean that first He created the earth, then set mountains in it, then arranged blessings and provisions of food in it, and then, at the end, He turned towards the creation of the universe. This misunderstanding is removed by the following sentence: "He said to the heavens and the earth: Come into being; and they said: we come in submission." This makes it clear that in this verse and in the following verses, mention is being made of the time when there was neither the earth nor the heaven, but the creation of the universe was being started. Only the word *thumma* (then) cannot be made the argument to say that the earth had been created before the heavens. There are several instances of this in the Qur'ān that the word *thumma* is not necessarily used to show the chronological order but it is also used for the order of Presentation. (Please see E.N. 12 of Sūrah Az-Zumar).

Among the earliest commentators the dispute has been going on for ages as to what was created first according to the Qur'ān, the earth or the heavens. One group of them argues on the basis of this verse and verse 29 of Al-Baqarah that the earth was created first. The other group argues from verses 27-33 of An-Nāzi'āt that the heavens were created first, because there it has been clearly stated that the earth was created after the heavens. But the fact is that nowhere in the Qur'ān has the mention of the creation of the universe been made to teach Physics or Astronomy, but while inviting towards belief in the doctrines to *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter, like countless other Signs, the creation of the heavens and the earth also has been presented as food for thought. For this purpose it was not at all necessary that the chronological order of the creation of the heavens and the earth should have been presented, and it should have been told whether the heavens were created first or the earth. No matter whether this was created first or that, in any case both are an evidence of Allah Almighty's being the One and only Deity, and are a testimony that their Creator has not created this whole universe as a plaything for a care-free person. That is why the Qur'ān sometimes mentions the creation of the earth first and sometimes the creation of the heavens first. Where the object is to make man realize the blessings of God, there generally it has mentioned the earth first, for it is closer to man; and where the object is to give man the concept of God's greatness and His omnipotence there it has generally mentioned the heavens first, for the scene of the revolving heavens has always been awe-inspiring for man.

15. In these words Allah has described the nature of His method of creation in a manner as to differentiate between Divine creation and human workmanship. When man wants to make something, he prepares a plan for it in his mind; then gathers together the necessary material; then works persistently hard to mould the material according to his plan, and in the process of his effort the material which he wants to mould according to his mental plan constantly resists him; so much so that sometimes the resistance of the material succeeds and the thing is not made precisely according to the desired plan, and sometimes man's effort overcomes the resistance and he succeeds in giving it the desired form and shape. For example, when a tailor wants to make a shirt, he first conceives in his mind the shape of the shirt, then arranging the cloth he tries to cut and sew it according to his concept of the shirt, and during this effort, he has constantly to face the resistance of the cloth, for it does not easily yield to be moulded according to the tailor's concept; so much so that sometimes the resistance of the cloth dominates and the shirt doesn't take the desired shape, and sometimes the tailor's effort dominates and he is able to shape it precisely according to his concept. Now, consider Allah's mode of creation. The matter of the universe lay scattered and diffused in the form of smoke. Allah willed to give it the shape of

the universe as it is now. For this purpose, He did not have to sit down, like a human artisan, and chisel and mould the earth and the moon and the sun and the other stars and planets, but He only commanded the scheme of the universe that was in His Mind to come into being, i.e. the smoke-like diffused matter to take the shape of the galaxies and stars and planets, which He wanted to create. This matter did not have the power to resist the Command of Allah. Allah did not have to make any effort to give it the shape of the universe. No sooner was the Command given than the matter started contracting and condensing and taking shape obediently according to the scheme of its Master, so that the whole universe including the earth became ready in 48 hours.

This same scheme of Allah's method of creation has been described at several other places in the Qur'ān like this: When Allah decides to do something He only commands it to be and it is done. (See Al-Baqarah: 117, Āl-'Imrān: 47, 59; An-Naḥl: 40, Maryam: 35, Yā Sīn: 82, Al-Mu'min: 68).

16. To understand these verses well, it would be useful to study the following portions of the *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān:* Al-Baqarah: 29, Ar-Ra'd: 2, Al-Ḥijr: 16-18, Al-Anbiyā': 30-33, Al-Ḥajj: 65, Al-Mu'minūn: 17, Yā Sīn: E.N. 37, and E.N.'s 5, 6 of Aṣ-Ṣāāffāt.

17. That is, "If they do not believe that God and Deity is One and only One, who has created this earth and the whole universe, and still persist in their ignorance that they would make others also, who are in fact His creatures and slaves, deities beside Him, and regard them as His associates in His Being and rights and powers."

18. This sentence can have several meanings: (1) That the Messengers continued to come to them one after the other; (2) that the Messengers tried in every way to make them understand the truth and did not leave any stone unturned to bring them to the Right Path; and (3) that the Messengers came to them in their own country as well as in the adjoining countries.

19. That is, "If Allah had disapproved of our religion, and had willed to send a messenger to us to keep us away from it, He would have sent the angels. As you are not an angel but a man like us, we do not believe that you have been sent by God, and sent for the purpose that we give up our religion and adopt the way of life that you are presenting." The disbelievers' saying that they deny "what you have been sent with", was only sarcastic. It does not mean that they believed him to have been sent by God and then denied what he said. But this is a sarcastic expression of the type that Pharaoh had uttered before his courtiers about the Prophet Moses: "This messenger of yours, who has been sent to you, seems to be utterly mad." (Ash-Shua'rā' 27). For further explanation, see E.N. 11 of Sūrah Yā Sīn.

20. "Ill-omened days" does not mean that the days in themselves were ill-omened, and the torment came because the people of 'Ād met with those ill-omened days. If this were the meaning and there were some ill omen in the days themselves, the torment would have visited all the nations of the world. The correct meaning, therefore, is that since in those days God's torment descended on this nation, the days were ill-omened for the people of 'Ād. It is not correct to argue on the basis of the verse that some days are ill-omened and some auspicious.

The lexicographers have disputed the meaning of the words *rīh-an sarsar-an*, which have been used for the stormy wind. Some say that they imply an intensely hot wind; others say that they imply an extremely cold wind; and some others say that they imply a wind which produces a great noise when it blows. In any case, they all agree that the words are used for a severe storm.

The details of this torment given at other places in the Qur'ān show that this wind continued to rage for seven nights and eight days consecutively. It swept the people off the ground and they fell down dead and lay scattered here and there like hollow trunks of the palm-tree. (Al-Ḥāāqqah: 7). It left rotting everything on which it blew. (Adh-Dhariyāt 42). When the people of 'Ād saw it advancing, they rejoiced with the hope that the dense clouds would bring much rain, which would water their withering crops. But when it came it laid waste the entire land." (Al-Aḥqāf: 24-25).

21. This ignominious torment was an answer to their arrogance and vanity because of which they had assumed greatness in the land without any right, and would boast that there was none more powerful than they on the entire earth. Allah disgraced them and destroyed the major part of their population along with their civilization. The remnant of their population was humbled and debased before those very nations whom they used to overawe by their show of power and might (for the details of the story of 'Ād see Al-A'rāf: 65-72; Hūd: 50-60; Al-Mu'minūn: 32-41; Ash-Shua'rā' : 123-140; Al-'Ankabūt; 40 and the relevant E.N.'s).

22. For the details of the story of Thamūd see Al-A'rāf: 73-79; Hūd: 61.68; Al-Ḥijr: 80-84; Banī Isrā'īl: 59; Ash-Shua'arā' :141.159; An-Naml: 45-53 and the E.N.'s.

23. What is meant to be said here is: "When they will be rounded up to be presented in the Court of Allah," though the words used are to the effect: "When they will be gathered to be driven to Hell," for Hell in any case will be their final destination.

24. That is, all the former and latter generations and races will be gathered together at a time and called to account together. For whatever a person

does in his lifetime, whether good or evil, its influence and impact does not end with his life, but continues to operate even after his death for long periods of time, for which he is totally responsible. Likewise, whatever a generation does in its own time, its influence continues to affect the later generations for centuries, and it is responsible for its heritage. It is inevitable to examine all these influences and their results and to collect their evidences. For that very reason, generation after generation of the people will go on arriving and will be withheld. The Court will start its work when all the former and latter generations will have assembled together in the Plain of Resurrection. (For further explanation, see Al-A'rāf: 38-39 and E.N. 30 on it).

25. The explanation of this given in the *Ḥadīth* is that when a stubborn culprit will go on denying his crimes, and will even belie all the witnesses, then the limbs of his body will bear the witness, one after the other, by the Command of Allah, and will tell what offences he had committed through them. This thing has been reported by Ḥaḍrat Anas, Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā Ash'ari, Ḥaḍrat Abū Sa'īd Khudri and Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās from the Holy Prophet, and traditionists like Muslim, Nasā'i, Ibn Jarīr, Ibn Abi Ḥatim, Bazzār and others have related these in their books. (For further explanation, see E.N. 55 of Sūrah Yā Sīn).

This verse is one of those many verses which prove that the Hereafter will not only be a spiritual world but human beings will be resurrected with the body and soul as they are now in this world. Not only this: they will be given the same body in which they live now. The same particles and atoms which composed their bodies in the world, will be collected on the Day of Resurrection, and they will be resurrected with the same previous bodies in which they had lived and worked in the world. Evidently, the limbs of man can bear the witness in the Hereafter only in case they are the same limbs with which he committed a crime in his previous life. This subject is borne out decisively and absolutely by the following verses of the Qur'ān: Banī Isrā'īl: 49 51, 98; Al-Mu'minūn: 35-38, 82-83; An-Nūr: 24; As-Sajdah: 10; Yā Sīn: 65, 78, 79; Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 16-18; Al-Wāqi'ah: 47-50; An-Nāzi'āt: 10-14.

26. This shows that not only man's own limbs will bear witness on the Day of Resurrection, but every such thing before which man would have committed any crime will also speak out. The same thing has been said in Sūrah Al-Zilzāl, thus: "The earth will cast out all the burdens, which lie within her, and man will say: what has befallen her? On that Day shall she relate whatever had

[Contd. on p. 486

ظَنَنْتُمْ بِرَبِّكُمْ اَرْدٰىكُمْ فَاَصْبَحْتُمْ مِّنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَاِنْ يَّصْبِرُوْا فَالنَّارُ مَثْوًى
لَّهُمْ ۚ وَاِنْ يَّسْتَعْتِبُوْا فَمَا هُمْ مِّنَ الْمُعْتَبِيْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَقَيَّضْنَا لَهُمْ قُرَنَآءَ فَزَيَّنُوْا
لَهُمْ مَّا بَيْنَ اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ وَحَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ فِيْٓ اُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ
مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْاِنْسِ ۚ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا خٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
لَا تَسْمَعُوْا لِهٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنِ وَالْغَوْا فِيْهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَغْلِبُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ فَلَنُذِيْقَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا عَذَابًا شَدِيْدًا ۙ وَّلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ اَسْوَاَ الَّذِيْ كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ ذٰلِكَ
جَزَآءُ اَعْدَآءِ اللّٰهِ النَّارُ ۚ لَهُمْ فِيْهَا دَارُ الْخُلْدِ ۭ جَزَآءًۢ بِمَا كَانُوْا بِاٰيٰتِنَا
يَجْحَدُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا رَبَّنَآ اَرِنَا الَّذَيْنِ اَضَلّٰنَا مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَ
الْاِنْسِ نَجْعَلْهُمَا تَحْتَ اَقْدَامِنَا لِيَكُوْنَا مِنَ الْاَسْفَلِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْا
رَبُّنَا اللّٰهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوْا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ اَلَّا تَخَافُوْا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوْا وَ
اَبْشِرُوْا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِيْ كُنْتُمْ تُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿٣٠﴾ نَحْنُ اَوْلِيٰٓؤُكُمْ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا
وَفِي الْاٰخِرَةِ ۚ وَلَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَا تَشْتَهِيْٓ اَنْفُسُكُمْ وَلَكُمْ فِيْهَا مَا تَدَّعُوْنَ ﴿٣١﴾
نُزُلًا مِّنْ غَفُوْرٍ رَّحِيْمٍ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَمَنْ اَحْسَنُ قَوْلًا مِّمَّنْ دَعَآ اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَعَمِلَ
صَالِحًا وَّقَالَ اِنَّنِيْ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلَا تَسْتَوِي الْحَسَنَةُ وَلَا السَّيِّئَةُ ۭ اِدْفَعْ
بِالَّتِيْ هِيَ اَحْسَنُ فَاِذَا الَّذِيْ بَيْنَكَ وَبَيْنَهٗ عَدَاوَةٌ كَاَنَّهٗ وَلِيٌّ حَمِيْمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَمَا
يُلَقّٰىهَآ اِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوْا ۚ وَمَا يُلَقّٰىهَآ اِلَّا ذُوْ حَظٍّ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَاِمَّا يَنْزَغَنَّكَ
مِنَ الشَّيْطٰنِ نَزْغٌ فَاسْتَعِذْ بِاللّٰهِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهِ
الَّيْلُ وَالنَّهَارُ وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ ۭ لَا تَسْجُدُوْا لِلشَّمْسِ وَلَا لِلْقَمَرِ وَ
اسْجُدُوْا لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَهُنَّ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ اِيَّاهُ تَعْبُدُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ فَاِنِ اسْتَكْبَرُوْا فَالَّذِيْنَ

As such, whether they are patient (or not), the Fire will still be their abode, and if they want to make amends, they will not be allowed to do so.[28] We had set upon them companions who made everything, in front of them and behind them, seem fair to them.[29] At last, the same Decree of punishment proved true against them, which had proved true against the jinn and the men who had gone before them. Certainly they were the losers. 24-25

The disbelievers say, "Do not listen to this Qur'ān, and when it is recited, cause interruption in it, so that you might attain the upper hand."[30] We shall certainly make these disbelievers to taste a severe chastisement, and shall fully requite them for the worst of their misdeeds. That is Hell, the requital of the enemies of Allah, wherein they shall live for ever. This is the punishment of the crime that they denied Our Revelations. There the disbelievers will say, "Our Lord, show us the jinn and the men, who led us astray. We shall trample them under our feet so that they are utterly disgraced."[31] 26-29

Those[32] who said, "Allah is our Lord," and then stood steadfast,[33] angels descend on them[34] and say, "Fear not nor grieve,[35] and rejoice in the good news of Paradise that has been promised to you: we are your companions in the life of this world, and in the Hereafter, too. There you will have whatever you desire, and whatever you ask for will be yours---an entertainment from the One, Who is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful." 30-32

And who could be better of speech than the one who called to Allah and did right and said, "I am a Muslim."[36] 33

And O Prophet, goodness and evil are not equal. Repel evil with what is best. You will see that he with whom you had enmity, has become your closest friend.[37] But none can attain to this quality except those who endure with patience,[38] and none can attain to this rank except those who are men of great good fortune.[39] And if you feel an incitement from Satan, seek refuge in Allah:[40] He hears everything and knows everything.[41] 34-36

Among[42] the signs of Allah are the night and the day and the sun and the moon.[43] Do not prostrate yourselves before the sun and the moon, but prostrate yourselves before that God, Who created them, if 37-38

you really are His worshippers.[44] But it does not matter if these people show arrogance and still persist in their way,[45] for the angels who are nearest to your Lord, glorify Him day and night and never feel wearied.[46]

Contd. from p. 485

happened (on her), because your Lord will have commanded her (to do so)." (vv. 2-5).

27. Hadrat Hasan Basri (may Allah bless him) has explained this verse thus "Every man's attitude and conduct is determined by the thought and conjecture that he has about his God. The conduct of a righteous believer is right because his thought and conjecture about his Lord is right, and the conduct of a disbeliever and a hypocrite and a sinful person is wrong because his thought and conjecture about his Lord is wrong." This same theme has the Holy Prophet expressed in a comprehensive and brief *Hadith*, thus: "Your Lord says: I am with the thought and conjecture that My servant holds about Me." (Bukhari, Muslim).

28. It can also mean this: "If they would want to return to the world, they would not be able to return," and this: "If they would want to come out from Hell, they would not be able to come out of it," and this: "If they would want to offer an excuse or repentance, it would not be accepted."

29. This is the permanent and eternal way of Allah that He does not let the men with evil intentions and desires have good companions, but lets them have bad companions according to their own inclinations. Then, as they go on descending into the depths of vice, more and more evil and wicked men and devils go on joining them as their associates and advisers and companions. Some people's saying that so-and-so is himself a very good man but happens to have bad companions is, in fact, contrary to fact. The law of nature is that every man gets the same sort of friends as he himself is. If bad people happen to be associated with a good man, they cannot remain associated with him for long. Likewise, if good and noble men happen to be associated with evil intentioned and immoral men by chance, their association cannot last long. An evil man naturally attracts only evil men to himself and only evil men become attracted towards him just as filth attracts flies and flies are attracted by the filth.

The meaning of: "They made every thing, in front of them and behind them, seem fair to them," is this: They assured them that their past had been glorious and their future would also be bright; they made them see everything attractive and pleasant on every side; they told them that those who criticised them were foolish, because they were not doing anything novel or strange: those who had made any progress in the world before them had been doing the same that

they were doing; ahead of them there was no Hereafter at all in which they might have to be called to account for their deeds, but if at all the Hereafter did take place, as some foolish people assert it would, the God who was blessing them in the world, would bless them there too. Hell had not been made for them but for those whom God had deprived of His blessings here.

30. This was one of those plans of the disbelievers of Makkah with which they wanted to frustrate the Holy Prophet's mission of preaching his message. They knew fully well how impressive was the Qur'ān, how high was the character of the man presenting it, and how effective and inspiring the style of his preaching. They knew that anyone who heard such matchless discourses in such an attractive style from such a noble person could not help being lured and charmed. Therefore, they planned that they should neither hear it themselves nor let anyone else hear it; whenever Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) should start reciting it, they should create noise, clap hands, pass taunting remarks and raise all sorts of objections and such a hue and cry as to drown his voice. By this plan they hoped they would be able to defeat the Prophet of Allah.

31. That is, "In the world these people were at the beck and call of their leaders and religious guides and deceitful devils, but when on the Day of Resurrection they will come to know where their leaders had led them, they will curse them and would wish that they should somehow get hold of them so that they may trample them under their foot."

32. After warning the disbelievers of the consequences of their opposition to the truth and their stubbornness, the address now turns to the believers and the Holy Prophet.

33. That is, they did not call Allah their Lord merely incidentally, nor were they involved in the error to regard Allah as their Lord and at the same time others as well as their lords, but they embraced the Faith sincerely and stood by it steadfastly: neither adopted a creed contrary to it later nor mixed it up with a false creed, but they fulfilled the demands of the doctrine of *Tauḥīd* in their practical lives as well.

"Standing steadfast on *Tauḥīd*" has been explained by the Holy Prophet and the eminent Companions thus:

Ḥaḍrat Anas has reported that the Holy Prophet said: "Many people called Allah their Lord, but most of them became disbelievers. Firm and steadfast is he who remained firm on this creed till his death." (Ibn Jarīr, Nasā'i, Ibn Abi Ḥātim).

Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him) has explained it thus: "Then he did not associate another with Allah: did not attend to any other deity beside Him." (Ibn Jarīr).

Ḥaḍrat 'Umar (may Allah be pleased with him) once recited this verse on the pulpit and said: "By God, the steadfast are those who remained firm on obedience to Allah: did not run about from place to place like foxes." (Ibn Jarīr).

Ḥaḍrat 'Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) says "Performed his deeds sincerely for the sake of Allah only." (Kashshāf)

Ḥaḍrat 'Alī (may Allah be pleased with him) says: "Performed the duties enjoined by Allah faithfully and obediently." (Kashshāf)

34. It is not necessary that the coming down of the angels may be perceptible, and the believers may see them with the eyes, or hear their voices with the ears. Although Allah also sends the angels openly for whomever He wills, generally their coming down for the believers, especially in hard times when they are being persecuted by the enemies of the Truth, takes place in imperceptible ways and their voices penetrate into the depths of the heart as peace and tranquillity instead of just striking the ear-drums. Some commentators have regarded this coming down of the angels as restricted to the time of death or grave, or the Plain of Resurrection. But if the conditions in which these verses were sent down are kept in view there remains no doubt that the real object of stating this thing here is to mention the coming down of the angels on those who struggle with their lives in this world in the cause of the Truth, so that they are consoled and encouraged and they rest assured that they are not helpless but the angels of Allah are at their back. Although the angels also come to receive the believers at the time of death and they also welcome them in the grave (in the state of *barzakh),* and they will also accompany them constantly on the Day of Resurrection, from the time Resurrection takes place till their entry into Paradise, yet their company is not particularly restricted to the Hereafter but remains available in this world also. The context clearly shows that in the conflict between the Truth and falsehood just as the worshippers of falsehood are accompanied by the devils and mischievous people, so are the believers accompanied by the angels. On the one hand, the companions of the worshippers of falsehood show their misdeeds seem fair to them and assure them that the tyrannical and dishonest acts that they are committing are the very means of their success and through them only will their leadership and dominance remain safe in the world. On the other, the angels come down to the worshippers of the Truth and give them the message that is being mentioned in the following sentences.

35. These are very comprehensive words, which contain a new theme of consolation and peace for the believers, in every stage of life, from the world till

the Hereafter. This counsel of the angels in this world means: "No matter how strong and powerful be the forces of falsehood, you should not be afraid of them, and whatever hardships and deprivations you may have to experience on account of your love of the Truth, you should not grieve on account of them, for ahead there lie in store for you such things against which every blessing of the world is insignificant." When the angels say the same words at the time of death, they mean this: "There is no cause of fear for you in the destination you are heading for, for Paradise awaits you there, and you have no cause of grief for those whom you are leaving behind in the world, for we are your guardians and companions here." When the angels will say these very words in the intermediary state between death and Resurrection and in the Plain of Resurrection, they will mean: "Here, there is nothing but peace for you. Do not grieve for the hardships you had to suffer in the world, and do not fear what you are going to face in the Hereafter, for we are giving you the good news of Paradise, which used to be promised to you in the world."

36. After consoling and encouraging the believers, now they are being exhorted towards their real duty. In the preceding verse they were told: "Being firm in the service to Allah and standing steadfast on this way after adopting it is by itself the basic good, which makes man a friend of the angels and worthy of Paradise." Now they are being told: "The next thing which wins man the highest place of honour is that he should do good deeds himself and should invite others to the service of Allah, and even in the environment of severe antagonism where to proclaim Islam is tantamount to inviting hardships for oneself, one should firmly say that one is a Muslim." To understand the full significance of these words, one should keep in view the conditions in which they were said. The conditions were that anyone who proclaimed to be a Muslim, would feel as if he had stepped into a jungle of beasts, where everyone was rushing at him to tear him into pieces. More than that: if anyone opened his mouth to preach Islam he would feel as if he had called on the beasts to come and devour him. Such were the conditions when it was said: "A person's believing in Allah as his Lord and adopting the Right Way and standing steadfast on it is indeed a great and fundamental good, but the greatest good is that man should boldly say that he is a Muslim and should invite others towards Allah's service, fearless of the consequences, and while performing this duty should remain so pure and pious in conduct and character that no one should have a cause to find fault with Islam and with those who uphold it.

37. To understand the full significance of these words also, one should keep in view the conditions in which the Holy Prophet and, through him, his followers were given this instruction. The conditions were that the invitation to the Truth was being resisted and opposed with extreme stubbornness and severe antagonism, in which all bounds of morality, humanity and decency were being

transgressed. Every sort of lie was being uttered against the Holy Prophet and his Companions; every kind of evil device was being employed to defame him and to create suspicions against him in the minds of the people; every kind of accusation was being levelled against him and a host of the propagandists were busy creating doubts against him in the hearts; in short, he and his Companions were being persecuted in every possible way because of which a substantial number of the Muslims had been compelled to emigrate from the country. Then the programme that had been prepared to stop him from preaching was that a band of the mischievous people was set behind him, who would raise such a hue and cry that no one should be able to hear anything as soon as he opened his mouth to preach his message. In such discouraging conditions when apparently every way of extending invitation to Islam seemed to be blocked, the Holy Prophet was taught this recipe for breaking the opposition.

First, it was said that goodness and evil are not equal, as if to say: "Although apparently your opponents might have raised a dreadful storm of mischief and evil, as against which goodness might seem absolutely helpless and powerless, yet evil in itself has a weakness which ultimately causes its own destruction. For as long as man is man, his nature cannot help hating evil. Not only the companions of evil, even its own upholders know in their hearts that they are liars and wicked people and are being stubborn for selfish motives. Not to speak of creating dignity and honour for them in the hearts of others, it lowers them in their own esteem, and causes their morale to be weakened and destroyed in the event of every conflict. As against this evil, the good which appears to be utterly helpless and powerless, goes on operating and working and it becomes dominant in the long run. For, in the first place, the good has a power of its own which wins the hearts and no man however perverted and corrupted, can help esteeming it in his own heart. Then, when the good and evil are engaged in a face to face conflict and their nature and merits become apparent and known, after a long drawn out struggle, not many people would be left, who would not start hating the evil and admiring the good.

Second, it was said that evil should be resisted not by the mere good but by a superior good, as if to say: "If a person treats you unjustly and you forgive him, it is the mere good. The superior good is that you treat the one who ill-treats you with kindness and love."

The result would be that "your worst enemy would become your closest friend," for that is human nature itself. If you remain quiet in response to an abuse, it will be mere goodness but it will not silence the abuser. But if you express good wishes for him in response to his abuses, even the most shameless opponent will feel ashamed, and then would hardly ever be able to employ invectives against you. If a person doesn't miss any opportunity to harm you, and

you go on tolerating his excesses, it may well make him even bolder in his mischiefs. But if on an occasion he gets into trouble and you come to his rescue, he will fall down at your feet, for no mischief can hold out against goodness. However, it would be wrong to take this general principle in the meaning that every enemy will necessarily become a close friend when you have treated him with the superior good. There are such wicked people also in the world, whose inimical nature will never change for the better no matter how tolerantly you may overlook their excesses and how benevolently you may react and respond to every evil committed by them. But such devil-incarnates are as few in the world as the embodiments of goodness are.

38. Although a very efficacious recipe, it is not easy to use. It requires a great will power, resolution, courage, power of endurance and full control over one's own self. A man may act benevolently in response to an evil done, on an impulse, and there is nothing extraordinary in it. But when a person has to fight for years and years, for the sake of the Truth, those mischievous worshippers of falsehood, who do not feel any hesitation in violating any bond of morality, and are also intoxicated with power, it requires extraordinary grit to go on resisting the evil with good, and that too with the superior good, without ever showing any lack of restraint and self-control. Such a work can be accomplished only by him who has resolved with a cool mind to work for the cause of upholding the Truth, who has subdued his self to intellect and sense and in whom good and righteousness have taken such deep roots that no malice and mischief of the opponents can succeed in deposing him from his high position.

39. This is a law of nature. Only a man of very high rank is characterised by these qualities, and the one who possesses these qualities cannot be prevented by any power of the world from attaining to his goal of success. It is in no way possible that the depraved people may defeat him with their mean machinations and shameless devices.

40. Satan feels grieved when he sees that in the conflict between the Truth and falsehood meanness is being resisted with nobility and evil with goodness. He wants that he should somehow incite the fighters for the sake of the Truth and their prominent men in particular, and especially their leaders, to commit such a mistake, even if once, on the basis of which he may tell the common people that evil is not being committed by one side only; if mean acts are being committed by one side, the people of the other side also are not morally any better: they too have committed such and such a shameless act. The common people do not have the capability that they may assess and counterbalance fairly the excesses being committed by one party by the reactions of the other. As long as they see that while the opponents are adopting every mean act yet these people do not swerve at all from the path of decency and nobility, goodness and righteousness, they

continue to regard and esteem them highly. But if at some time they happen to commit an unworthy act, even if it is in retaliation against a grave injustice, both the sides become equal in their esteem, and the opponents also get an excuse to counter one blameable act with a thousand abuses. That is why it has been said: "Be on your guard against the deceptions of Satan. He will incite you as a well-wisher to take note of every abuse and every insult and attack and urge you to pay the opponent in the same coin, otherwise you would be regarded as a coward and weaken your image of strength." On every such occasion whenever you feel any undue provocation, you should take care that this is an incitement of Satan who is arousing you to anger and wants you to commit a mistake. And after having been warned do not be involved in the misunderstanding that you have full control over yourself, and Satan cannot make you commit any mistake. This high opinion of one's own power of judgement and will is another and more dangerous deception of Satan. Instead of it you should seek Allah's refuge, for man can save himself from mistakes only if Allah helps and grants him protection.

The best commentary of this subject is the event which Imām Aḥmad has related in his Musnad on the authority of Ḥaḍrat Abū Huraīrah. He says that once a man started uttering invectives against Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr, in the presence of the Holy Prophet. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr kept on hearing the invectives quietly and the Holy Prophet kept on smiling at it. At last, when Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr could restrain himself no longer, he also uttered a harsh word for the person in response. No sooner did he utter the word than the Holy Prophet was seized by restraint, which appeared on his face, and he rose and left the place immediately. Ḥaḍrat Abū Bakr also rose and went behind him. On the way he asked, "How is it that as long as the person went on abusing me, you kept quiet and smiling, but when I also said a word in retaliation, you were annoyed?" The Holy Prophet replied, "Until you were quiet an angel remained with you, who went on replying to him on your behalf, but when you spoke out Satan came in place of the angel: I could not sit with Satan."

41. After seeking Allah's refuge against the storm of opposition, the thing that brings patience and peace and tranquility to the heart of the believer is this conviction: "Allah is not unaware: He knows whatever we are doing as well as that which is being done against us. He is hearing whatever we and our opponents utter and watches the conduct of both of us." On the basis of this very conviction the believer entrusts his own and the opponents of the truth's affair to Allah and remains satisfied.

This is the fifth place where the Holy Prophet and, through him, the believers have been taught this wisdom of preaching and reforming the people. For the other four places, see Al-A'rāf: 199-204, An-Naḥl: 125-128, Al-Mu'minūn: 96-98, Al-'Ankabūt: 46-47 and the E.N.'s.

42. Now the discourse turns to the common people and they are made to understand the truth in a few sentences.

43. That is, "They are not the objects of Divine power that you may start worshipping them, thinking that Allah is manifesting Himself in their form, but they are the Signs of Allah by pondering over which you can understand the reality of the universe and its system, and can know that the doctrine of the Oneness of God which the Prophets are teaching is the actual Reality. The mention of the night and day before the sun and moon has been made to give the warning that the hiding of the sun and appearing of the moon at night, and the hiding of the moon and appearing of the sun in the day clearly point to the fact that neither of them is God or object of Divine power, but both are helpless and powerless objects, and are moving subject to the law of God.

44. This is an answer to the philosophy that the intelligent among the polytheists generally used to propound to prove that polytheism was rational. They said that they did not bow to these objects but bowed to God through them. An answer to this has been given, so as to say: "If you really are Allah's worshippers, there is no need of these intermediaries: why don't you bow down to Him directly?"

45. "If they show arrogance": If they think it is beneath them to listen to you and persist still in the ignorance in which they are involved.

46. It means this: "The system of this whole universe, whose agents these angels are, is running on the basis of Allah's Oneness and His servitude. The angels who are its agents are testifying every moment that their Lord is pure and exalted far above that another should be His associate in His Divinity and worship. Now, if a few foolish persons do not believe even after admonition, and turn away from the way that is being followed by the whole universe and persist in following the way of *shirk* only, let them remain involved in their folly."

The consensus is that it is obligatory to perform *sajdah* (prostration) here, but the jurists differ as to which of the two preceding verses requires the performance of *sajdah*. Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd performed the *sajdah* at the end of v. 37, while Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, Sa'id bin Musayyab, Masrūq, Qatādah, Ḥaṣan Baṣrī, Abū 'Abdur Raḥmān as-Sulamī, Ibn Sīrīn, Ibrahīm Nakha'ī and several other prominent jurists have expressed the opinion that it should be performed at the end of v. 38. The same also is the

[Contd. on p. 498

عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ يُسَبِّحُوْنَ لَهٗ بِالَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَهُمْ لَا يَسْـَٔمُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖٓ
اَنَّكَ تَرَى الْاَرْضَ خَاشِعَةً فَاِذَآ اَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَآءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ ؕ اِنَّ
الَّذِيْٓ اَحْيَاهَا لَمُحْيِ الْمَوْتٰى ؕ اِنَّهٗ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ يُلْحِدُوْنَ
فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِنَا لَا يَخْفَوْنَ عَلَيْنَا ؕ اَفَمَنْ يُّلْقٰى فِي النَّارِ خَيْرٌ اَمْ مَّنْ يَّاْتِيْٓ اٰمِنًا
يَّوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ ؕ اِعْمَلُوْا مَا شِئْتُمْ ۙ اِنَّهٗ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٤٠﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا
بِالذِّكْرِ لَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ ۙ وَاِنَّهٗ لَكِتٰبٌ عَزِيْزٌ ﴿٤١﴾ لَّا يَاْتِيْهِ الْبَاطِلُ مِنْۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ
وَلَا مِنْ خَلْفِهٖ ؕ تَنْزِيْلٌ مِّنْ حَكِيْمٍ حَمِيْدٍ ﴿٤٢﴾ مَا يُقَالُ لَكَ اِلَّا مَا قَدْ قِيْلَ
لِلرُّسُلِ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ؕ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ لَذُوْ مَغْفِرَةٍ وَّذُوْ عِقَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَلَوْ جَعَلْنٰهُ
قُرْاٰنًا اَعْجَمِيًّا لَّقَالُوْا لَوْلَا فُصِّلَتْ اٰيٰتُهٗ ؕ ءَاَعْجَمِيٌّ وَّعَرَبِيٌّ ؕ قُلْ هُوَ لِلَّذِيْنَ
اٰمَنُوْا هُدًى وَّشِفَآءٌ ؕ وَالَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ فِيْٓ اٰذَانِهِمْ وَقْرٌ وَّهُوَ عَلَيْهِمْ
عَمًى ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ يُنَادَوْنَ مِنْ مَّكَانٍۢ بَعِيْدٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا مُوْسَى الْكِتٰبَ
فَاخْتُلِفَ فِيْهِ ؕ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ لَقُضِيَ بَيْنَهُمْ ؕ وَاِنَّهُمْ لَفِيْ
شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مُرِيْبٍ ﴿٤٥﴾ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ اَسَآءَ فَعَلَيْهَا ؕ
وَمَا رَبُّكَ بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيْدِ ﴿٤٦﴾

اِلَيْهِ يُرَدُّ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ ؕ وَمَا تَخْرُجُ مِنْ ثَمَرٰتٍ مِّنْ اَكْمَامِهَا ۚ وَمَا

تَحْمِلُ مِنْ اُنْثٰى وَلَا تَضَعُ اِلَّا بِعِلْمِهٖ ؕ وَيَوْمَ يُنَادِيْهِمْ اَيْنَ شُرَكَآءِيْ ؕ
قَالُوْٓا اٰذَنّٰكَ ۙ مَا مِنَّا مِنْ شَهِيْدٍ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَانُوْا يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ
قَبْلُ وَظَنُّوْا مَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ مَّحِيْصٍ ﴿٤٨﴾ لَا يَسْـَٔمُ الْاِنْسَانُ مِنْ دُعَآءِ الْخَيْرِ ۖ وَ
اِنْ مَّسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَيَـُٔوْسٌ قَنُوْطٌ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَلَئِنْ اَذَقْنٰهُ رَحْمَةً مِّنَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ ضَرَّآءَ

And among the Signs of Allah is this that you see the earth dry and desolate; then as soon as We send down rain on it, it stirs (to life) and swells. Surely the God Who gives the dead earth life will raise the dead men also to life.[47] Indeed, He has power over everything. 39

Those[48] who misconstrue Our Revelations[49] are not in any way hidden from Us.[50] Just consider who is better: he who will be cast into the Hell-Fire, or he who will appear on the Day of Resurrection in full security? Do as you please; Allah is watching over everything you do. These are the people who refused to believe in the Admonition when it came to them. But the fact is that this is a mighty Book.[51] Falsehood can neither come at it from before it nor from behind it:[52] it is a Revelation from the All-Wise, All-Praiseworthy One. 40-42

O Prophet, nothing is being said to you that has not already been said to the Messengers before you. Surely your Lord is highly forgiving,[53] yet stern in inflicting a painful punishment. 43

Had We sent this Qur'ān in a foreign tongue, the people would have said, "Why have not its verses been well expounded? What! the scripture in a foreign language and the listeners are Arabs?"[54] Say to them, "This Qur'ān is a guidance and a healing for the believers, but to those who do not believe, it is a plug in their ears and a covering over their eyes. It is as though they are being summoned from afar.[55] Before this We had given to Moses the Book, and it was similarly disputed.[56] If your Lord had not already decreed a thing, the judgement would have been passed between the disputants;[57] and the fact is that they are involved in an anxious doubt about it.[58] 44-45

Whoever does good will do so for his own self, and whoever does evil will himself bear its consequences: your Lord is never unjust to His servants.[59] 46

To Allah is remitted[60] the knowledge of the Hour:[61] He alone knows all the fruits that come out from their sheaths: He alone knows which female has conceived and which has given birth.[62] Then on the Day when He will call out to the people, asking, "Where are those associates of Mine"? they will say, "We have submitted: there is none of us to bear witness to that".[63] At that time, all those gods whom they used to invoke before this, shall be lost to them,[64] and they will realize 47-48

that they have no refuge.

[Contd. from p. 495]

opinion of Imām Abu Hanīfah, and the Shāfe'ites also have held the same view as preferable.

47. For explanation, see An-Naḥl: 65, Al-Ḥijr: 5-7, Ar-Rūm: 19 and E.N. 19 of Al-Fāṭir.

48. After telling the common people in a few sentences that the doctrine of *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter to which Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is inviting them, is rational and the signs of the universe testify to its being right and true, the discourse again turns to the opponents who were determined to oppose it stubbornly.

49. The word *yulḥidūn* in the original is derived from *ilḥād* which means to deviate, to turn away from the right to the wrong path, to adopt crookedness. Thus, *ilḥād* in the Revelations of Allah would mean that instead of understanding them in their clear and straightforward meaning one should misconstrue them and go astray and also lead others astray. One of the devices being adopted by the disbelievers of Makkah to defeat the message of the Qur'ān was that they would hear the verses of the Qur'ān and then would isolate one verse from its context, tamper with another, misconstrue a word or a sentence and thus raise every sort of objection and would mislead the people, saying that the Prophet had said such and such a thing that day.

50. These words imply a severe threat. The All-Powerful Ruler's saying that the acts of such and such a person are not hidden from Him by itself contains the meaning that he cannot escape their consequences.

51. "A mighty Book": An unchanging Book, which cannot be defeated by tricks and cunning devices, which the worshippers of falsehood are employing against it. It has the force of the Truth in it, the force of true knowledge, the force of argument and reason, the force of eloquence and style, the force of Divinity of God Who sent it, and the force of the personality of the Messenger who presented it. No one, therefore, can defeat it by falsehood and hollow propaganda .

52. "Falsehood .... from before it" means that none can succeed in proving anything wrong or any teaching false in the Qur'ān by making a frontal attack on it; " .... nor from behind it" means that nothing can be discovered till Resurrection which may be opposed to the truths and realities presented by the Qur'ān; no new science, if it is really a "science", can be propounded, which may contradict the knowledge contained in the Qur'ān; no new experiment or observation can be made to prove that the guidance given to man by the Qur'ān in

respect of the beliefs, morality, law, civilization or culture, and economic, social and political life is wrong. That which this Book has declared as the Truth can never be proved to be falsehood and that which it has declared as falsehood can never be proved to be the truth. Furthermore, it also means that whether falsehood makes a frontal attack, or makes a surprise attack by deception, it cannot defeat the message which the Qur'ān has brought. In spite of all sorts of open and secret machinations of the opponents the message will spread and none shall be able to defeat and frustrate it.

53. That is, "It is all due to His clemency and forgiveness that although His Messengers were opposed, abused and persecuted yet He went on giving respite to their opponents for years and years on end."

54. This is the kind of the stubbornness that the Holy Prophet was confronting. The disbelievers said, "Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is an Arab. Arabic is his mother tongue. How can one believe that the Arabic Qur'ān that he presents has not been forged by himself but has been revealed to him by God? The Qur'ān could be believed to be the Revelation of God if he had started speaking fluently in a foreign language unknown to him, like Persian, Latin, or Greek." This argument of theirs has been refuted by Allah, saying, "Now when the Qur'ān has been sent down in their own tongue so that they may understand it, they raise the objection: Why has it been sent down to an Arab in Arabic? But if it had been sent down in a foreign tongue, these very people would have said, 'How strange! An Arab Messenger has been sent to the Arabs, but the Revelations being sent to him are in a tongue which is neither understood by him nor by his people'."

55. When a person is summoned from afar, he hears a voice but does not understand what is being said to him. This is a wonderful simile which fully depicts the psychology of the stubborn opponents. Naturally when you talk to a person who is free from prejudice, he will listen to you, will try to understand what you say, will accept it if it is reasonable, with an open mind. On the contrary, the person who is not only prejudiced against you but is also malicious and spiteful, will not at all listen to you however hard you may try to make him understand your viewpoint. In spite of hearing you all the time he will not understand at all what you had been saying.

56. That is, some people had believed in it and some others had made up their minds to oppose it.

57. It has two meanings: (1) If Allah had not already decreed that the people would be given enough respite for consideration the disputants would have long been destroyed; (2) if Allah had not already decreed that the disputes would

finally be decided on the Day of Judgement, the reality would have been made plain as to who is in the right and who is in the wrong.

58. In this brief sentence the spiritual disease of the disbelievers of Makkah has been clearly diagnosed. It says that they are involved in doubt about the Qur'ān and the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), and this doubt has caused them great anguish and confusion. That is, although apparently they deny the Qur'ān's being Allah's Word and the Holy Prophet's being His Messenger very vehemently, yet this denial is not based on any coviction, but their minds are afflicted with great vacillation, and doubt. On the one hand, their selfish motives, their interests and their prejudices demand that they should belie the Qur'ān and the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and oppose them strongly; on the other, their hearts are convened from within, that the Qur'ān is, in fact, a unique and un-paralleled Word the like of which has never been heard from any literary man or poet. Neither can the insane utter such things in their madness, nor can devils come to teach God-worship, piety and righteousness to the people. Likewise, when they say that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is a liar, their hearts from within put them to shame, and ask: Can such a person ever be a liar? When they brand him a madman, their hearts cry out from within and ask: Do you really think that he is mad? When they accuse that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is not interested in the truth but is working for selfish motives, their hearts from within curse them and ask: Do you call this virtuous man selfish, whom you have never seen striving for the sake of wealth and power and fame, whose life has been free from every trace of self-interest, who has always been working to bring about goodness and piety, but has never acted from any selfish motives.

59. That is, "Your Lord can never be so unjust as to let go to waste the good deeds of a good man and fail to punish the evil-doers for their evil."

60. That is, "None but Allah knows when the Hour would occur." This is the answer to the disbelievers' question as to when the threat being given them of meeting with the consequences of their evil deeds will be carried out. Allah has answered their question without citing it.

61. "The Hour": the Hour of Resurrection, i.e. the Hour when the evildoers will be punished for their evil and the grievances of the oppressed good people will be redressed.

62. By this the listeners have been made to realize two things: (1) That not only of Resurrection but the knowledge of all unseen things is reserved for Allah alone; there is no other knower of the unseen; and (2) that God Who possesses the detailed knowledge of the most minor things cannot remain unaware of the acts and deeds of anybody. Therefore, no one in His Kingdom should act

fearlessly, with impunity. Only according to this second meaning the sentence becomes relevant to what follows. If one studies the following sentences the theme that immediately becomes obvious is: "Don't concern your selves about finding out the date of the coming of Resurrection; you should, however, be anxious about the consequences of your deviations you will have to bear when it comes. "This same thing had the Holy Prophet once said to a person, who asked him the date of the coming of Resurrection. All the major collections of *Hadith* contain a commonly reported Tradition to the effect: "Once when the Holy Prophet was on a journey, a man on the way shouted his name from a distance. The Holy Prophet asked what he wanted to say. He said: When will Resurrection come? The Holy Prophet replied: It must come in any case! What preparations have you made for it?"

63. That is, "Now we have realized that what we had in our minds was absolutely wrong. Now none among us is of the view that there is another one also who is Your associate in Godhead." The words "we have submitted" show that on the Day of Resurrection the disbelievers will be asked again and again, on every occasion, "In the world you went on refusing to believe what the Messengers of God said: now say who was in the right: they or you? And the disbelievers will every time confess that the truth indeed was that which the Messengers preached and they themselves were in the wrong because they forsook the knowledge and persisted in their own ignorance.

64. That is, "In their utter hopelessness they will look around to see if they could find any one of those whom they used to serve and worship in the world, who could come to their rescue and save them from God's torment, or at least have their punishment reduced, but they will find no helper on any side."

مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُوْلَنَّ هٰذَا لِيْ ۙ وَمَآ اَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَآئِمَةً ۙ وَّلَئِنْ رُّجِعْتُ اِلٰى
رَبِّيْٓ اِنَّ لِيْ عِنْدَهٗ لَلْحُسْنٰى ۚ فَلَنُنَبِّئَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِمَا عَمِلُوْا وَلَنُذِيْقَنَّهُمْ
مِّنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيْظٍ ۝٥٠ وَاِذَآ اَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْاِنْسَانِ اَعْرَضَ وَنَاٰ بِجَانِبِهٖ ۚ وَاِذَا
مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَذُوْ دُعَآءٍ عَرِيْضٍ ۝٥١ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ
كَفَرْتُمْ بِهٖ مَنْ اَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ هُوَ فِيْ شِقَاقٍ بَعِيْدٍ ۝٥٢ سَنُرِيْهِمْ اٰيٰتِنَا فِي الْاٰفَاقِ
وَفِيْٓ اَنْفُسِهِمْ حَتّٰى يَتَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ اَنَّهُ الْحَقُّ ۗ اَوَلَمْ يَكْفِ بِرَبِّكَ اَنَّهٗ عَلٰى كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ شَهِيْدٌ ۝٥٣ اَلَآ اِنَّهُمْ فِيْ مِرْيَةٍ مِّنْ لِّقَآءِ رَبِّهِمْ ۗ اَلَآ اِنَّهٗ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيْطٌ ۝٥٤

Man is never wearied of praying for good,[65] and when an evil befalls him, he loses hope and becomes desperate. But when We let him taste Our mercy after the hardship, he says, "I deserve this,[66] and I do not think that the Hour (of Resurrection) will ever come. But if I am really brought back to my Lord, I shall have good reward with Him, too." The fact, however, is that We shall certainly tell the disbelievers what they had done, and We shall make them taste a most degrading Chastisement. 49-50

When We bless man, he turns away and grows stiffnecked;[67] but when an evil touches him, he comes with lengthy supplications.[68] 51

O Prophet, say to them, "Did you ever consider this: If this Qur'ān were really from Allah, And you went on denying it, who could be more astray than the one who had gone far off in antagonism towards it?"[69] 52

Soon shall We show them Our Signs in the World around them, as well as in themselves, till it becomes clear to them, that this Qur'ān is indeed the Truth.[70] Is it not enough that your Lord watches everything?[71] Look! these people are in doubt about the meeting with their Lord: [72]Listen! He encompasses everything![73] 53-54

Contd. from p. 501]

65. "For good": For prosperity, abundance of provisions, good health, well-being of children, etc. And "man" here does not imply every human being,

for it also includes the Prophets and the righteous people, who are free from this weakness as is being mentioned below. But here it implies the mean and shallow person, who starts imploring God humbly when touched by harm and is beside himself with joy when he receives the good things of life. As most human beings are involved in this weakness, it has been called a weakness of man.

66. That is, "I have got all this because of my being worthy of it: it is my right that I should receive all this."

67. That is, "He turns away from Our obedience and worship, and thinks it is below his dignity to bow to Us."

68. For other verses on this subject, see Yūnus: 12, Banī Isrā'īl: 83, Ar-Rūm: 33-36, Az.Zumar: 8-9, 49 and the E.N.'s.

69. It does not mean that they should believe in it only owing to the danger that if it were really from Allah they would be inviting their own doom by denying it, but it means this "It is not wisdom that you should be bent upon opposing it stubbornly without seriously trying to understand what it says. You cannot assert that you have come to know that this Qur'ān is not from God, and you have known with certainty that God has not sent it. Obviously, your refusal to believe in it as Divine Word is not based on knowledge, but on conjecture, which may possibly be right as well as wrong. Now consider both the possibilities. If your conjecture were right, then, according to your own thinking, both the believers and the unbelievers would be equal, because both will become dust after death, and there is no life hereafter where belief and unbelief might be distinguished. But, if their Qur'ān were really from God, and that of which it is forewarning did really take place, then think what doom you would invite for yourselves by denying it and opposing it like that. Therefore, your own interest demands that you should give up stubbornness and consider this Qur'ān seriously; if even after due consideration, you decide not to believe in it, you may not, but you should not oppose it to the extent that you start employing falsehood and deception and persecution to bar the way of its message and prevent others from believing in it, not being content with your own unbelief.

70. This verse has two meanings and both have been given by the major commentators:

First, that they will soon see with their own eyes that the message of the Qur'ān has spread in all the adjoining lands, and they themselves have yielded to it. Then they will realize that what they are being told today, which they are denying, was absolutely true. Some people have objected to this meaning, saying that a message's being dominant and overwhelming vast areas is no argument to prove that it is the truth. False messages also become dominant and their adherents

also go on subduing one country after the other. But this is a superficial objection which has been raised without a thorough study of the matter. The wonderful conquests that Islam achieved in the period of the Holy Prophet and the rightly-guided Caliphs, were not the Signs of Allah only in the sense that the believers conquered one country after the other, but in the sense that this conquest of the countries was not like other conquests of the world, which make one man or one family or one nation master of the life and property of others and God's earth is filled with tyranny and injustice. Contrary to this, this conquest brought with it a great religious, moral, intellectual, cultural, political, economic and social revolution; whose influence, wherever it reached, elicited what was best in man and suppressed what was worst in him. This revolution developed and nurtured the moral excellences which the world could hope to see only in the hermits and the meditating recluses and could never imagine that they could also be found among the people responsible for running the worldly affairs—in the politics of the rulers, in the chambers of justice, in the wars and conquests of the commanders of forces, in the work of the tax collectors and in the commerce of the big businessmen. This revolution so raised the common people in the society created by it in respect of the sense of morality, character, cleanliness and purity that even the select people of other societies seemed to be much inferior to them. It took man out of the labyrinths of superstition and whim and put him on the broad highway of scientific research and rational thought and action. It treated and cured these diseases of the collective life of whose treatment no idea existed in the other systems, or if at all they tried to treat them, they did not succeed in it. For example, separation between men on the basis of colour, race, country and language, classification of men in the same society and discrimination among them, non existence of legal rights and equality in practical life, degeneration of women and their deprivation of the basic rights, prevalence of crime, liqour drinking and use of all intoxicating drugs, the governments being above criticism and accountability, deprivation of the fundamental human rights the masses', disrespect of agreements in international relations, barbarism in wars, and such other diseases. In Arabia itself this revolution brought about order in place of chaos, peace in place of bloodshed and anarchy, piety in place of wickedness, justice in place of tyranny and injustice, purity and culture in place of filth and indecency, knowledge in place of ignorance, brotherhood and love in place of long-standing feuds, and it made a nation whose people could not dream of anything beyond chiefship of their tribe, leaders of the world. These were the Signs which the very generation before whom the Holy Prophet had recited this verse for the first time, saw with their own eyes, and after that till today Allah has been constantly showing those Signs. The Muslims, even during their downfall, displayed such high morals as could never be attained by those people who represent as the leaders of civilization and culture. No precedent can be found from any period of the history of the Muslims

of the tyrannical treatment that has been meted out by the European nations to the subdued nations of Africa, America, Asia and of Europe itself. This is the blessing of the Qur'ān which has so humanised Muslims that they could not become so tyrannical even when they had attained domination as the non-Muslims have been in all periods of history and are even today. A person who has eyes can himself see how the Muslims treated the Christians in Spain when they ruled it for centuries, and how the Christians treated the Muslims when they gained power there; how the Muslims behaved towards Hindus during their eight hundred year long rule in India and how the Hindus are now treating them after they have attained power; how the Muslims treated the Jews during the past 1300 years and how the Jews are treating the Muslims in Palestine.

The other meaning of this verse is that Allah will show the people in the external world around them as well as in their own selves such signs as will make manifest that the teaching the Qur'ān is giving is the very truth. Some people have raised the objection that the people even at that time were observing the world around them and also their own selves; therefore, it would be meaningless to show them any such Signs in the future. But this objection also is as superficial as the objection against the first meaning. No doubt, the external world is the same as man has been seeing in the past and his own self also is of the same nature as has been seen in every age, yet in these the Signs of God are so numerous that man has never comprehended them fully nor will ever be able to do so. In every age man has met with many new Signs and this will go on happening till the Resurrection Day.

71. That is, "Is it not enough to warn the people of their evil end that Allah is watching whatever they are doing to belie and defeat the Message of the truth?"

72. That is, "The basic cause of their attitude and conduct is that they are not sure that they will ever have to appear before their Lord and be held accountable for their deeds and actions."

73. That is, "They cannot escape His grasp nor can anything of their deeds be prevented from being recorded by Him."



XLII

ASH-SHŪRĀ

الشُّورىٰ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

XLII

ASH-SHŪRĀ

الشُّوریٰ

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the sentence, *we amru-hum shūrā baina-hum*, of verse 38, implying thereby that it is a Sūrah in which the word *shūrā* has occurred.

Period of Revelation

Although it could not be known from any authentic traditions, yet one feels after a study of its subject-matter that this Sūrah might have been sent down consecutively after Ḥā-Mīm As-Sajdah, for it seems to be, in a way, a supplement to it. This will become clear to every person who first studies Sūrah Ḥā-Mīm As-Sajdah carefully and then goes

through this Sūrah. He will see that in that Sūrah the Quraish chiefs had been taken to task for their deaf and blind opposition so that anyone in Makkah and in its out-skirts, who had any sense of morality and nobility left in him, should know how unreasonably the chiefs of the people were opposing Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), and as against them, how serious he was in everything he said, how rational was his standpoint and how noble his character and conduct. Immediately after that warning this Sūrah was sent down, which did full justice to teaching and instruction, and made the truth of the Holy Prophet's message plain in such an impressive way that anyone who had any element of the love of the truth in him and who had not been blinded by the errors of ignorance, could not help being influenced by it.

Theme and Subject-Matter

The discourse begins in a way as if to say: "Why are you expressing surprise and amazement at what Our Prophet is presenting before you? What he says is not new or strange, nor anything novel, which might have been presented for the first time in history: that Revelation should come down to a man from God and he should be given instructions for the guidance of mankind. Allah has been sending similar Revelations with similar instructions to the former Prophets before this. It is not surprising that the Owner of the Universe should be acknowledged as Deity and Ruler, but what is strange is that one should accept another as divine and deity in spite of being His subject and slave. You are being angry with him who is presenting *Tauḥīd* before you, whereas the *shirk* that you are practicing with regard to the Master of the Universe is such a grave crime as may cause the heavens to break asunder. The angels are amazed at this boldness of yours and fear that the wrath of Allah might descend on you any moment."

After this the people have been told that a person's being appointed to Prophethood and presenting himself as a Prophet does not mean that he has been made master of the people's destinies and he has come to the world with that very claim. Allah has kept the destinies in His own hand. The Prophet has come only to arouse the heedless and guide the strayed ones to the Right Path. To call to account those who do not listen to him and to punish or not to punish them is Allah's own responsibility, and not a part of the Prophet's work. Therefore, they

should take it out of their head that the prophet has come with a claim similar to those that are made by their so-called religious guides and saints to the effect that he who would not listen to them, or would behave insolently towards them, would be burnt to death. In this very connection, the people have also been told that the Prophet has not come to condemn them but he is their well-wisher; he is warning them that the way they are following will only lead to their own destruction.

Then, an answer has been given to the question: Why didn't Allah make all human beings righteous by birth, and why did He allow the difference of viewpoint owing to which the people start following each and every way of thought and action? The answer given is: Owing to this very fact has it become possible for man to attain to the special Mercy of Allah, which is not meant for other dumb creatures, but is only meant for those endowed with power and authority, who should take Allah as Patron and Guardian not instinctively but consciously by willing choice. Allah supports the man who adopts this way and guides and helps him to do good and right and admits him into His special Mercy. On the contrary, the man who misuses his option and makes his patron those who are not, in fact, the guardians, and cannot be, are deprived of Divine Mercy. In this connection, it has also been made clear that only Allah is the Patron of man and of all other creatures. Others are neither the patron nor have the power to do full justice to patronage. Man's success depends only on that he should make no mistake in choosing a patron for himself by the use of his free choice, and should take only Him his Guide Who, in reality, is the real Patron.

After this, it has been explained what the *Dīn* being presented by the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) really is:

Its primary basis is that as Allah Almighty is the Creator, Master and Real Patron of the Universe and Man, He alone is Man's Ruler, He alone has the right to give Man Faith (*Dīn*) and Law (system of belief and practice) and judge the disputes of man and tell what is Truth and what is falsehood. No other being has any right whatever to be man's lawgiver. In other words, like the natural sovereignty, the sovereignty with regard to lawmaking also is vested only in Allah. No man or creature, apart from Allah, can be the bearer of this sovereignty. And if

a person does not recognize and accept this Divine rule of Allah, it is merely futile for him to recognize the natural Sovereignty of Allah.

On this very basis has Allah ordained a *Dīn* (True Religion) for Man from the very beginning. It was one and the same Religion that was vouchsafed in every age to all the Prophets. No Prophet ever founded any separate religion of his own. The same one Religion has been enjoined by Allah for all mankind since the beginning of creation, and all the Prophets have been following it and inviting others to follow it.

This Religion and Creed was not sent so that man may rest content only with believing in it, but it was sent with the purpose and intention that it alone should be introduced, established and enforced in the world, and no man made religion be made to prevail in Allah's earth apart from His Religion. The Prophets had not been appointed only to preach this Religion but to establish it particularly in the world.

This same was the original Religion of mankind, but after the death of the Prophets, selfish people created new creeds by creating schisms for vested interests due to self-conceit, vanity and ostentation. All the different religions and creeds found in the world today have resulted from corruption of the original Divine Truth.

Now, the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) has been sent so that he may present before the people the same original Religion in place of the various practices and artificial creeds and man-made religions, and may try to establish the same. On this, if instead of being grateful, you feel angry and come out to fight him, it is your folly; the Prophet will not abandon his mission only because of your foolishness. He has been enjoined to adhere to his faith at all costs and to carry out the mission to which he has been appointed. Therefore, the people should not cherish any false hope that in order to please them he would cater to the same whims and superstitions of ignorance which has corrupted Allah's Religion before.

You do not understand how great an impudence it is against Allah to adopt a man-made religion and law instead of the Religion and Law enjoined by Allah. You think it is an ordinary thing and there is nothing wrong with it. But in the sight of Allah it is the worst kind of *shirk* and a grave crime whose punishment will be imposed on all those

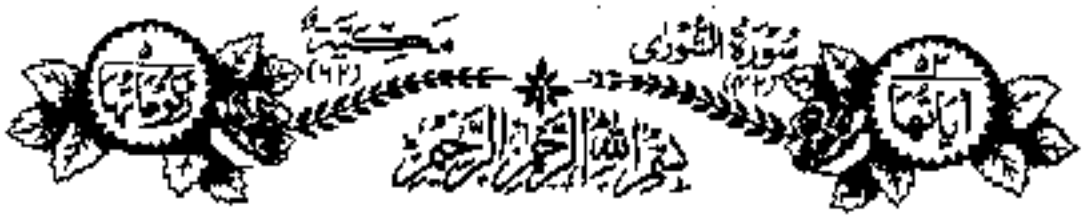
who enforced their own religion on Allah's earth and those who adopted and followed their religion.

Thus, after presenting a clear and visible concept of Religion it is said: "The best possible method that could be employed for your instruction and for bringing you to the Right Path has already been employed. On the one hand, Allah has sent down His Book, which is teaching you the truth in a most impressive way in your own language; and on the other, the lives of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and his Companions are present before you by which you can see for yourselves what kind of men are prepared by the guidance given in this Book. Even then if you do not accept this guidance, nothing else in the world can bring you to the Right Path. The only alternative, therefore, is that you should be allowed to persist in the same error in which you have remained involved for centuries, and made to meet with the same doom which has been destined by Allah for such wrongdoers."

While stating these truths, brief arguments have been given, here and there, for *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter, the world-worshippers have been warned of the evil consequences and their punishment in the life hereafter, and the disbelievers have been criticised for the moral weaknesses, which were the real cause of their deviation from the truth. The Sūrah has been concluded with two important themes:

First, that the Holy Prophet was wholly unaware of this concept of the "Book" or the True Faith during the first forty years of his life, and then his sudden appearance before the people with those two things, is a manifest proof of his being a Prophet.

Secondly, his presenting his own teaching as the teaching of God does not mean that he claims to have spoken to God, face to face, but God has conveyed to him this Guidance, as in the case of all other Prophets, in three ways: He speaks to His Prophets either through Revelation, or from behind a veil, or He sends an angel with the message. This thing was clarified so that the opponents did not have an opportunity of accusing the Holy Prophet of claiming to have spoken to God, face to face, and the lovers of the truth should know by what methods Allah gave instruction to the man whom He had appointed to the mission of Prophethood.



حٰمٓ ﴿١﴾ عٓسٓقٓ ﴿٢﴾ كَذٰلِكَ يُوْحِيْٓ اِلَيْكَ وَاِلَى الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكَ ۙ اللّٰهُ الْعَزِيْزُ الْحَكِيْمُ ﴿٣﴾
لَهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۭ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٤﴾ تَكَادُ السَّمٰوٰتُ
يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْ فَوْقِهِنَّ وَالْمَلٰۗىِٕكَةُ يُسَبِّحُوْنَ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّهِمْ وَيَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَ لِمَنْ
فِي الْاَرْضِ ۭ اَلَآ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٥﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ
اَوْلِيَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ حَفِيْظٌ عَلَيْهِمْ ۡ وَمَآ اَنْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ بِوَكِيْلٍ ﴿٦﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ اَوْحَيْنَآ
اِلَيْكَ قُرْاٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا لِّتُنْذِرَ اُمَّ الْقُرٰى وَمَنْ حَوْلَهَا وَتُنْذِرَ يَوْمَ الْجَمْعِ لَا
رَيْبَ فِيْهِ ۭ فَرِيْقٌ فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَفَرِيْقٌ فِي السَّعِيْرِ ﴿٧﴾ وَلَوْ شَاۗءَ اللّٰهُ لَجَعَلَهُمْ
اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً وَّلٰكِنْ يُّدْخِلُ مَنْ يَّشَاۗءُ فِيْ رَحْمَتِهٖ ۭ وَالظّٰلِمُوْنَ مَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ
وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا نَصِيْرٍ ﴿٨﴾ اَمِ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اَوْلِيَاۗءَ ۚ فَاللّٰهُ هُوَ الْوَلِيُّ وَهُوَ
يُحْيِ الْمَوْتٰى ۡ وَهُوَ عَلٰي كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٩﴾ وَمَا اخْتَلَفْتُمْ فِيْهِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ

XLII
ASH-SHŪRĀ
الشُّورٰى

Verses: 53 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Hā Mīm 'Ain Sīn Qāf. Likewise has Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise, been inspiring you and those (Messengers) before you.[1] Whatever is in the heavens and the earth is His. He is the High, the Great![2] Near it is that the heavens should break asunder from above.[3] The angels are glorifying their Lord with His praise and begging 1-6

forgiveness for those on the earth.[4] Listen! Allah is indeed All-Forgiving, All-Merciful.[5] Those who have taken some others than Him as guardians[6], Allah is watching them; you are not responsible for their conduct[7].

7 Yes: thus have We revealed to you, O Prophet, this Arabic Qur'ān[8] so that you may warn those who dwell in the centre of habitations (i.e. Makkah) and around it,[9] and warn them of the Day of Gathering[10] which is sure to come: one group shall go to Paradise and the other to Hell.

8-9 Had Allah so willed, He would have made all of them a single nation, but He admits into His mercy whomever He wills; and the wrongdoers have neither any protector nor helper.[11] What! Have (the foolish people) taken other guardians besides Him? Guardian is Allah alone: He alone gives life to the dead, and He has power over everything.[12]

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1. The style of the opening verses by itself shows that in the background there are the misgivings, wonder and amazement which were being expressed at that time in every assembly, every meeting place, every street and every house and shop of Makkah at the message of the Holy Prophet and the themes of the Qur'ān. The people said, "Wherefrom is this man bringing us new revelations everyday? The like of these we had never heard nor seen before. How strange that he rejects as false the religion that our forefathers have been following in the past, the religion that is still being followed by all of us, and the traditions and ways that have been prevalent in the country for so many centuries; and he says that the religion that he presents only is right and true." They said: "Had he presented even this new religion in a way as to substitute some of the falsehood he found in the ancestral paganism and prevalent customs with certain others which might be the result of his own thought, there could be a dialogue with him. But he says that what he recites is Divine Word. How can we accept this? Does God visit him, or does he visit God? Or does some dialogue take place between him and God?" It is in the background of such expression of wonder and doubt that although the address is apparently directed to the Holy Prophet, the disbelievers have in fact been told: "Yes: these very things are being revealed by the Almighty, All-Wise Allah, and with the same themes has its Revelation been coming down to all the former Prophets."

Lexically, *waḥī* means "swift and secret instruction", i.e. an inspiration which is made with such haste and speed that none may know it except the inspirer and the one being inspired. As a term this word has been used for the guidance

and instruction that is put in the mind of a man by Allah like a flash of lightning. What is meant to be said here is this: "There is no question of Allah's visiting somebody or somebody's visiting Allah and speaking face to face with Him. He is All-Mighty and All-Wise. Whenever He pleases to have a contact with a servant for the guidance and instruction of mankind, nothing can obstruct His will and intention, for He adopts the method of revelation for the purpose by His wisdom." This very theme has been repeated in the last verses of the Sūrah with greater clarity and detail.

As to the people's objection that the Holy Prophet was presenting strange and novel things, it has been said: There is nothing strange and novel in what Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) presents; Allah has been giving the same guidance and instruction to the Prophets who came before him in the world."

2. These introductory sentences are not meant to be said merely in praise of Allah Almighty, but their each word has a deep link with the background in which these verses were sent down. The foremost basis of the objections of the people who were expressing wonder and doubts against the Holy Prophet and the Qur'ān was that he was inviting them to *Tauḥīd* and they were being alarmed at this and saying that if Allah alone is the Creator, Sustainer and Ruler, what would be the position of their saints and holy men? At this it has been said: "This whole Universe belongs to Allah. How can therefore the godhead of another work and operate in the kingdom of the real Sovereign, particularly when those others whose godhead is acknowledged, are themselves also His subjects?" Then, it has been said: "He is the High, the Great!" That is, He is far above that somebody else should be equal to Him in rank and should become His associate in His Being, attributes, powers or rights."

3. That is, "It is not a trivial matter that a creature should be joined in lineage with Allah and regarded as His son or daughter; another regarded as fulfiller of the needs and the answerer of the petitions so that the people should start invoking him for help; another taken as the maintainer of the entire world, and his devotees should start proclaiming that their holy saint heard the prayer of everyone at all places at all times and comes to his help and answers his petition; another invested with the authority to enjoin and prohibit things and declare them as lawful and unlawful, and the people should start obeying his commands, instead of the Commands of God, as if he alone was their God. These boldnesses against God are such that they may well cause the heavens to break asunder." (This same theme has also been presented in Sūrah Maryam: 88-91 above).

4. It means: "The angels shudder with disgust when they hear such nonsense being uttered by the people in respect of their Lord, and they regard it as a rebellion against Him." They say: "Glorified be Allah! No one can have the

position that he should become an associate with Allah, Lord of the worlds, in Divinity and Command; there is none beside Him who may be our and all other servants' benefactor so that hymns be sung in his praise and he be thanked." So, they feel that it is a grave crime being committed in the world, and it may provoke Allah Almighty's wrath any moment. Therefore, they implore Allah for mercy again and again for the dwellers of the earth, who have forgotten themselves and their God, and pray that they may yet be spared from the torment and given more respite to mend their ways.

5. That is, "It is only Allah's clemency, mercifulness and forgiveness that the people who have touched the extreme limits in disbelief, polytheism, atheism, sinfulness and tyranny, have been receiving respite after respite for years and years, even for centuries; yet they not only go on receiving their sustenance but are also acclaimed as the great people of the world and they are provided with such adornments of the worldly life as cause the ignorant people the misunderstanding that this world perhaps has no God."

6. The word *auliyā' (sing. wali)* as used in the Text is very comprehensive in meaning. The different beliefs and all sorts of diverse practices with regard to the false deities held and worshipped by the polytheistic people, have been described as "taking others as auliyā' (guardians) instead of Allah" in the Qur'ān. According to the Qur'ān, a person takes such a one his *walī:* (1) whom he obeys in all matters, whose instructions he carries out and Whose ways and customs and rules he follows in all affairs of life (An-Nisā: 118-120; Al-A'rāf: 3, 27-30); (2) in whose guidance he has full faith, and who he thinks will lead him aright and save him from error and deviation (Al-Baqarah: 257, Banī Isrā'īl: 97, Al-Kahf: 17 50. Al-Jāthiah: 19); (3) about whom he trusts he will protect him from the torment of God in the Hereafter if it really existed (An Nisā: 123, 173; Al-An'ām: 51, Ar-Ra'd: 37, Al-'Ankabūt: 22, Al-Aḥzāb: 65, Az-Zumar: 3); (4) about whom he has the belief that he helps him in the world in supernatural ways, protects him from disaster and afflictions, gets him jobs, blesses him with children, and fulfils his desires and all other needs. (Hūd: 20, Ar-Ra'd: 16, Al-'Ankabūt: 41).

At some places in the Qur'ān the word *walī* has been used in one of these senses and at others in all its meanings. The verse being commented upon is one of such verses. In it, taking others as guardians instead of Allah implies regarding them as one's patron and supporter and helper in all the four above-mentioned meanings.

7 "Allah is watching them": Allah sees whatever they are doing and is recording their conduct. It is His responsibility to call them to account and punish them. As for the words "You are not responsible for their conduct", these have been addressed to the Holy Prophet. They mean: "Their destiny has not been

placed under your control so that you may burn to ashes anyone who does not listen to you, or depose him from power, or annihilate him." This, however, does not mean that, God forbid, the Holy Prophet regarded himself as such, and this was said in order to remove his misunderstanding or self-conceit, but this was meant for the disbelievers. Although apparently the Holy Prophet himself is the addressee, the real object is to tell the disbelievers that the Prophet of Allah has made no such claims as were usually made by their so-called saints who posed to possess great spiritual powers. Among the ignorant people it is generally thought that the so-called "holy men" have the power to ruin the destiny of anyone who behaves insolently towards them in any way; so much so that even after their death if somebody happened to dishonour their grave, or if nothing else, only nursed an evil thought about them in his mind, they destroyed him completely. Such a thought is in most cases spread by the "holy men" themselves. As for the good men who do not themselves say any such thing, their names are exploited by some other clever people, who spread such thoughts about them in order to promote their business. In any case this is regarded as a necessary corollary of spirituality and piety among the common people that one should possess the powers of making and marring destinies. To destroy the spell of this same fraud, Allah is addressing His Holy Messenger, as if to tell the disbelievers: "You are no doubt Our Messenger and We have blessed you with Our Revelations, but your duty is only to guide the people to the Right Path. Their destinies have not been placed under your control; they are in Our hand; therefore, to watch over the deeds and acts of the servants and to punish or not to punish them is Our own responsibility."

8. The same thing which had been said in the beginning of the discourse has been said again with greater emphasis, and by making mention of the "Arabic Qur'ān", the listeners have been warned to the effect: "The Qur'ān is not in any foreign language but in your own language: you can understand it yourself directly; study its themes and see for yourself that the pure and selfless guidance that is being given in it can be from none other than the Lord of the Universe."

9. That is, "Arouse them from slumber and warn them that there is nothing but destruction in store for them in consequence of the errors of morality and conduct in which they are involved and of the perverse principle on which they have ordered their individual and collective lives."

10. That is, "Tell them also that this destruction is not confined only to this world but the Day has to come when Allah will gather together all mankind and subject them to accountability. Even if a person escaped the evil consequences of his deviation and wickedness in the world, there will be no chance of his escape on that Day, and highly unfortunate is he, who is doomed to a tragic fate both in this world and in the Hereafter."

11. This theme has three objects in this context:

First, it is meant to instruct and console the Holy Prophet, as if to say: "Do not grieve so much at the ignorance and deviation of the disbelievers of Makkah and their stubbornness and obduracy. It is Allah's will that man should be granted the freedom of choice and action: then whoever desires to have guidance should be given guidance, and whoever wants to remain astray should be allowed to go astray. Had this not been Allah's will, there was no need whatever of sending the Prophets and the Book; for this only a creative hint of Allah Almighty's was enough: all human beings would have become as obedient as the rivers, mountains, trees, stones, and all other creatures." (In this connection, please also see Al-An'ām: 35-36, 107).

Secondly, its addressees are all those people who were involved in the confusion, and even now are, that if Allah really had wanted to show guidnce to human beings and He did not like the differences of creed and practice that were prevalent among the people, and wanted to have the people adopt the way of the Faith and Islam, there was no need of the Revelation and the Book and the Prophethood. He could have easily achieved this object by creating everyone a believer and Muslim by birth. Another result of this confusion was also this reasoning: "When Allah has not done so, the different ways that we are following, are approved by Him, and whatever we are doing, is according to His will. Therefore, nobody has any right to object to it." (To remove this misunderstanding also this theme has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'ān. Please see Al-An'ām: 112, 137, 148-149; Yūnus : 99; Hūd: 118-119; An-Naḥl: 9, 35 and the relevant E.N.'s).

Thirdly, its object is to make the believers realize the truth about the difficulties that one generally faces in the way of preaching religion and reforming the people. Those people who do not understand the reality of the God, given freedom of choice and will and of the resulting differences of temperament and methods, sometimes become despondent at the slow progress of the reformatory work and wish that some supernatural things should appear from Allah, which should change the hearts of the people, and are sometimes inclined to adopt unsound methods of bringing about reformation, owing to excessive enthusiasm. (For this object also this theme has occurred at some places in the Qur'ān, for which see Ar-Ra'd: 31, An-Naḥl: 91-93).

To highlight these objects a very important theme has been expressed in these brief sentences. Allah's real vicegerency in the world and His Paradise in the Hereafter is not an ordinary blessing, which may be distributed over creatures of the rank of the earth and stones and donkeys and horses as a common blessing. This is indeed a special blessing and a blessing of a very high order for which

even the angels were not considered fit. That is why Allah created man as a creature endowed with power and authority and placed vast means of His earth under his control and blessed him with these special powers so that he may pass through the test, success in which alone can entitle a servant to His blessings. This blessing is Allah's own; no one has a monopoly over it, nor can anyone claim to have it on the basis of a personal right, nor has anyone the power to take it by force. He who presents service before Allah, who takes Him as his Guardian and comes under His protection, alone can have it. Then Allah blesses him with help, guidnace and grace to pass this test, so that he may enter His Mercy. As for the unjust man who turns away from Allah Himself and instead takes others as his patrons, Allah Has no need that he should become his guardian by force. And the others whom He takes as his guardians do not possess any knowledge and power and authority that they may enable him to achieve success by dint of their guardianship of him.

12. That is, "Guardianship is not a thing of one's personal choice and satisfaction that one may take anyone one may please as one's guardian, and the other may also become one's real and true guardian and may do full justice to the function of guardianship. This is an actual reality, which does not change with the whims of the people; the Guardian is He Who is really the Guardian, whether someone regards and acknowledges Him as his Guardian or not, and the one who is not in reality the guardian is not the guardian, no matter whether someone continues to regard and acknowledge him as his guardian till the last moment. Now, as for the question: What is the proof of only Allah's being the real Guardian and of no one else's being the guardian? the answer is: Man's real Guardian can be the one who changes death into life, who has created a living man by breathing life into inorganic substances, and who also possesses the powers and authority to do full justice to the function of Guardianship. If there is such a one, apart from Allah, he may be made the guardian, and if He is Allah alone, then taking another beside Him as one's guardian is nothing but ignorance and folly and self-destruction.

فَحُكْمُهٗۤ اِلَى اللّٰهِ ؕ ذٰلِكُمُ اللّٰهُ رَبِّیْ عَلَیْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ ۬ؕ وَ اِلَیْهِ اُنِیْبُ ﴿۱۰﴾ فَاطِرُ السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَ الْاَرْضِ ؕ جَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا وَّ مِنَ الْاَنْعَامِ اَزْوَاجًا ۚ یَذْرَؤُكُمْ
فِیْهِ ؕ لَیْسَ كَمِثْلِهٖ شَیْءٌ ۚ وَ هُوَ السَّمِیْعُ الْبَصِیْرُ ﴿۱۱﴾ لَهٗ مَقَالِیْدُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ
الْاَرْضِ ۚ یَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَنْ یَّشَآءُ وَ یَقْدِرُ ؕ اِنَّهٗ بِكُلِّ شَیْءٍ عَلِیْمٌ ﴿۱۲﴾ شَرَعَ
لَكُمْ مِّنَ الدِّیْنِ مَا وَصّٰی بِهٖ نُوْحًا وَّ الَّذِیْۤ اَوْحَیْنَاۤ اِلَیْكَ وَ مَا وَصَّیْنَا بِهٖۤ
اِبْرٰهِیْمَ وَ مُوْسٰی وَ عِیْسٰۤی اَنْ اَقِیْمُوا الدِّیْنَ وَ لَا تَتَفَرَّقُوْا فِیْهِ ؕ كَبُرَ عَلَی
الْمُشْرِكِیْنَ مَا تَدْعُوْهُمْ اِلَیْهِ ؕ اَللّٰهُ یَجْتَبِیْۤ اِلَیْهِ مَنْ یَّشَآءُ وَ یَهْدِیْۤ اِلَیْهِ
مَنْ یُّنِیْبُ ﴿۱۳﴾ وَ مَا تَفَرَّقُوْۤا اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَهُمُ الْعِلْمُ بَغْیًۢا بَیْنَهُمْ ؕ وَ لَوْ
لَا كَلِمَةٌ سَبَقَتْ مِنْ رَّبِّكَ اِلٰۤی اَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّی لَّقُضِیَ بَیْنَهُمْ ؕ وَ اِنَّ الَّذِیْنَ
اُوْرِثُوا الْكِتٰبَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِهِمْ لَفِیْ شَكٍّ مِّنْهُ مُرِیْبٍ ﴿۱۴﴾ فَلِذٰلِكَ فَادْعُ ۚ وَ اسْتَقِمْ
كَمَاۤ اُمِرْتَ ۚ وَ لَا تَتَّبِعْ اَهْوَآءَهُمْ ۚ وَ قُلْ اٰمَنْتُ بِمَاۤ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ مِنْ كِتٰبٍ ۚ وَ
اُمِرْتُ لِاَعْدِلَ بَیْنَكُمْ ؕ اَللّٰهُ رَبُّنَا وَ رَبُّكُمْ ؕ لَنَاۤ اَعْمَالُنَا وَ لَكُمْ اَعْمَالُكُمْ ؕ لَا
حُجَّةَ بَیْنَنَا وَ بَیْنَكُمْ ؕ اَللّٰهُ یَجْمَعُ بَیْنَنَا ۚ وَ اِلَیْهِ الْمَصِیْرُ ﴿۱۵﴾ وَ الَّذِیْنَ یُحَآجُّوْنَ
فِی اللّٰهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا اسْتُجِیْبَ لَهٗ حُجَّتُهُمْ دَاحِضَةٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ وَ عَلَیْهِمْ
غَضَبٌ وَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِیْدٌ ﴿۱۶﴾ اَللّٰهُ الَّذِیْۤ اَنْزَلَ الْكِتٰبَ بِالْحَقِّ وَ الْمِیْزَانَ ؕ
وَ مَا یُدْرِیْكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ قَرِیْبٌ ﴿۱۷﴾ یَسْتَعْجِلُ بِهَا الَّذِیْنَ لَا یُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِهَا ۚ
وَ الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مُشْفِقُوْنَ مِنْهَا ۙ وَ یَعْلَمُوْنَ اَنَّهَا الْحَقُّ ؕ اَلَاۤ اِنَّ الَّذِیْنَ یُمَارُوْنَ
فِی السَّاعَةِ لَفِیْ ضَلٰلٍۢ بَعِیْدٍ ﴿۱۸﴾ اَللّٰهُ لَطِیْفٌۢ بِعِبَادِهٖ یَرْزُقُ مَنْ یَّشَآءُ ۚ وَ هُوَ الْقَوِیُّ
الْعَزِیْزُ ﴿۱۹﴾ مَنْ كَانَ یُرِیْدُ حَرْثَ الْاٰخِرَةِ نَزِدْ لَهٗ فِیْ حَرْثِهٖ ۚ وَ مَنْ كَانَ یُرِیْدُ

It[13] is for Allah to give judgement in whatever you may differ.[14] The same Allah[15] is my Lord: in Him did I put my trust, and to Him I turn.[16] He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. Who made for you pairs from your own kind, and pairs also of the cattle (from their own kind) so as to multiply you. There is nothing like Him in the universe:[17] He hears everything and sees everything.[18] To Him belong the keys of the treasures of the heavens and the earth: He gives abundantly to whomsoever He wills and sparingly to whomsoever He wills: He has knowledge of everything.[19] 10-12

He has appointed for you the same Way of life which He had ordained for Noah and which (O Muhammad) We have now revealed to you, and which We had already enjoined on Abraham and Moses and Jesus, stressing: "Establish this Way and be not divided in it."[20] The same thing to which you (O Muhammad) are calling the *mushriks* has set them ill at ease. Allah chooses for Himself whomever He wills, and He guides to His Way only him who turns to Him (in penitence).[21] 13

The people became divided only after the Knowledge had come to them[22] just because they wanted to wrong one another.[23] Had your Lord not already issued the Word to defer their punishment till an appointed time, the matter would surely have been settled between them.[24] And the fact is that those who were made to inherit the Book after them, are involved in a disquieting doubt concerning it.[25] 14

Because of this, therefore, O Muhammad, you should call them to the same Way, and hold fast to it yourself as you have been commanded, and do not follow their whims.[26] Say to them, "I have believed in whatever Book Allah has sent down,[27] and I have been commanded to do justice between you.[28] Allah is our Lord as well as your Lord. For us are our deeds and for you your deeds.[29] There is no dispute between us.[30] Allah shall gather us all together one day and to Him we shall all return." 15

After Allah's invitation has been accepted, those who dispute (with those who have accepted it) concerning Allah's religion,[31] their argument is absurd in the sight of their Lord, and on them is His wrath and for them there is a severe punishment. 16

17-18 It is Allah Who has sent down this Book with the truth and the Balance;[32] and what will make you understand that the Hour of Judgement might well have drawn near at hand?[33] Those who do not believe in its coming, seek to hasten it, but those who believe in it, dread it, and know that it is sure to come. Note it well that those who dispute concerning the coming of the Hour, in order to create doubts about it, have gone far astray.

19-20 Allah is very Kind to His servants:[34] He gives whatever He pleases to whom He wills:[35] He is the All-Powerful, the All-Mighty.[36] Whoever seeks the harvest of the Hereafter, We do increase his harvest; and whoever seeks the harvest of this world, We do give him of it here, but in the Hereafter he will have no share whatever.[37]

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13. From here to the end of verse 12, though the whole discourse is a Revelation from Allah, the speaker is not Allah but the Holy Messenger of Allah. In other words, Allah Almighty is telling His Prophet to make this proclamation to the people. Such themes in the Qur'ān sometimes begin with *qul* (say, O Prophet) and sometimes without it. only the style indicates that the speaker at a place is not Allah but Allah's Messenger. Even at some places though the words are Allah's, the speaker are the believers, as for example in Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah; or, the speaker are the angels as in Sūrah Maryam: 64-65.

14. This is the natural and logical demand of Allah Almighty's being the Master of the Universe and His being the real Guardian. When Sovereignty and Guardianship belong to Him only inevitably He alone is also the Ruler, and it is for Him to judge human beings' mutual disputes and differences. Those who restrict it only to the Hereafter make a mistake. There is no argument to prove that Allah's position as a Ruler has no effect in this world but is meant only for the life hereafter. Likewise, those who restrict it only to beliefs and a few questions of "religious nature" are also in the wrong. The words are general and they clearly proclaim Allah as having the sole right to judge all disputes and differences. According to them, just as Allah is the Master of the Day of Judgement in the Hereafter, so He is the best of Judges in this world too; and just as He is the Settler of the differences pertaining to beliefs as to what is the Truth and what is falsehood, so also in legal matters He is the Settler of differences as to what is pure for man and what is impure, what is lawful and desirable for him and what is forbidden and undesirable, what is evil and vicious in morals and what is good and virtuous, what are the rights of the people in their mutual dealings and what are the right practices in social, political and economic life and what are wrong. On this very basis the Qur'ān has declared this principle as the fundamental of law:

"If there arises any dispute between you about anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger." (An-Nisā: 59). And: "It does not behove a believing man and a believing woman that when Allah and His Messenger have given their verdict in a matter, they should exercise an option in that matter of theirs." (Al-Aḥzāb: 36). And: "O people, follow what has been sent down to you from your Lord and do not follow other patrons beside Him." (Al-A'rāf: 3).

Then, in the context in which this verse has occurred, it gives another meaning also and it is: "To decide differences is not only Allah's legal right on accepting or rejecting which depends man's being a believer or an unbeliever, but Allah, in fact, practically also is deciding between the truth and falsehood due to which falsehood and its worshippers are ultimately being destroyed and the truth and the faithful are being honoured and exalted, no matter how delayed the enforcement of this decision may seem to be. This theme occurs in verse 24 below, and has been expressed at several places above in the Qur'ān. For this please see Ar-Ra'd: 17, 41; Ibrāhīm: 24-27; Banī Isrā'īl 81; Al-Anbiyā': 18, 44; and the E.N.'s.

15. "The same Allah", Who is the real Settler of disputes.

16. These are two verbs one of which is in the past tense and the other in the present which contains the sense of perpetuity. In the past verb it was said: "In Him did I put my trust," i.e. "I decided once and for all that as long as I live I have to rely on His help, on His guidance, on His support and protection, and on His decision." Then in the present verb it was said: "To Him I turn," i.e. "Whatever situation I face in life, I turn only to Allah in it. I do not look towards others in an affliction or trouble or difficulty but invoke only Him for help; I seek only His refuge when I face a danger and depend on His protection; I turn to Him for guidance whenever I am confronted by a problem and seek its solution in His teaching and guidance; and I look up only to Him when I have a dispute with somebody with the belief that He alone will give the final decision, and have the faith that whatever decision He gives will be the right one."

17. Literally, "Nothing is like His likeness," which implies this: Even if there were a likeness of Allah, nothing would be like it not to speak of being like unto Allah Himself.

18. That is, "At one and the same time He is hearing everybody and seeing everything in the Universe."

19 These are the arguments to prove why Allah alone is the true Guardian and why putting trust in Him alone is right and correct and why He alone should be turned to in all matters. (For explanation, see An-Naml: 60-66, Ar-Rūm: 20-22 and the E.N.'s).

20. Here the same thing as already mentioned in the first verse has been further elaborated. It clearly states that Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is not the founder of any new religion, nor was any of the Prophets a founder of a separate religion, but it has been one and the same Religion which all the Prophets have been presenting from Allah from the very beginning, and the same is being presented by Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). In this regard, the first name mentioned is of the Prophet Noaḥ, who was the first Prophet after the Flood. After him the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) has been mentioned, who is the last of the Prophets; then the Prophet Abraham has been mentioned, whom the Arabs acknowledged as their guide, and last of all, the Prophets Moses and Jesus have been mentioned to whom the Jews and the Christians attribute their religions. This does not mean that only these five Prophets had been enjoined this Religion, but what is meant to be said is that all the Prophets who came to this world, brought one and the same Religion and the names of the five illustrious Prophets have been mentioned only as examples through whom the world received the most well known codes of Divine Law.

As this verse throws important light on *Dīn* (Religion) and its aim, it is necessary that we should study it to understand it well.

Lexically, the word *shara'a* in *shara'a la-kum* (ordained for you) means to make the way. As a term it implies appointing a way, a code and a rule. Accordingly, in Arabic the words *tashrī'* and *sharī'at* and *shāri'* are understood as the synonyms of legislation and law and law giver respectively. This Divine legislation, in fact, is the natural and logical result of the fundamental truths which have been stated in verses 1, 9 and 10 above: that Allah alone is the Owner of everything in the Universe, and He alone is man's real Guardian and it is for Him to judge the disputes that arise between human beings. Now, when Allah alone is the Owner and Guardian and Ruler, inevitably He alone is entitled to make the code of law for man and it is His responsibility that He should give this code of law to man. So, He has carried out His responsibility like this.

Then the words *min-ad-dīn* (of the nature of *dīn*) denote that the way appointed by Allah is legislation pertaining to *dīn*. If the explanation of the word *dīn* that we have given in E.N. 3 of Sūrah Zumar above, is kept in view, there can be no difficulty in understanding that *dīn* means nothing but acknowledging the sovereignty and leadership of someone and obeying his commands. And when this word is used in the meaning of the way, it implies the way which man must regard as obligatory for himself to follow and the one appointing it as the one whom he ought to obey. On this basis, calling God-appointed Way as legislation pertaining to *dīn* clearly means that it is not merely recommendatory in nature or a mere counsel, but it is a law enjoined by the Master, which must necessarily be obeyed by the servants and disobedience of which is tantamount to rebellion, and the one

who does not obey it, in fact, denies Allah's being the Sovereign and Ruler and his own position of a servant.

Then, it has been said that this legislation which pertains to dīn is the same as was enjoined on Noah, Abraham and Moses (peace be upon them all) and the same now has been enjoined on Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). This contains several points: (1) That Allah did not send this legislation of His directly to every man, but appointed Whenever He deemed proper and necessary a person as His Messenger and consigned the legislation to him; (2) that this legislation has been the same from the beginning: it did not so happen that in one age one particular *dīn* was appointed for a nation, and in another age another and contradictory *dīn* was sent for another nation. Allah did not send many *dīns* but on every occasion He sent one and the same *dīn;* (3) that it is an essential part of this *dīn* to acknowledge the apostleship of those men through whom the legislation has been sent and the Revelation in which the legislation has been couched, besides acknowledging the Sovereignty of Allah; and it is the demand of reason and logic too, that it should be a necessary part of it, for a man cannot obey this legislation at all unless he is satisfied that it is authentically from Allah.

Then it has been said that the Prophets were given this legislation pertaining to *dīn",* with the express instruction: *"Aqīm-ud-dīn";* "Establish this *dīn*", or "Keep this *dīn* established," as variously translated by Shāh Waliullah, Shāh Rafi'uddīn and Shāh 'Abdul Qādir. Both these translations are correct, for *iqāmat* means both to establish and to keep established, and the Prophets were appointed to perform both the functions. Their first duty was to establish this *dīn* wherever it was not established, and the second that they should keep it established after they had established it, or had found it already established in a place. Obviously, a thing can be kept established only when it has already been established, otherwise the primary requirement would be to establish it first, and then make continuous effort to keep it established.

Here, two questions arise : First, what is the meaning of establishing the *dīn?* Second, what is *dīn* itself, which we have been enjoined to establish and then keep it established? Let us try to understand these questions well.

The word *iqāmat* (to establish) when used in respect of a material or physical object implies causing it to rise from the sitting or lying positions or assembling the scattered parts of a thing and raising it up high. But when *iqāmat* is used in respect of a thing which is not material but spiritual in nature it does not merely imply preaching it, but also acting according to it as best as one can, introducing it and enforcing it practically. For example, when we say that so-and-so established his rule, it does not mean that he invited others to his government but that he subdued the people of the land and organised the different departments

of the government in a way that the administration of the country began to function according to his orders. Similarly, when we say that courts have been established in the country, it means that judges have been appointed to do justice and they are hearing the cases and giving judgements, and not that hymns in praise of justice are being sung and the people being impressed. Likewise, when the Qur'ān enjoins the establishment of the Prayer (*Ṣalāt*), it does not imply that one should merely preach and exhort others to the Prayer but that one should not only perform it oneself, observing all its conditions, but should also strive to make arrangement so that it becomes a regular practice among the believers. There should be mosques, there should be arrangements for offering the Prayer collectively and for the Friday congregational Prayer, and for making calls to the Prayer punctually; there should be the *Imāms* to lead the Prayers and the scholars to give sermons, and the people should visit the mosques regularly and punctually and make offering the Prayer an essential part of their daily routine. After this explanation, there should remain no difficulty in understanding that when the Prophets were enjoined to establish the *dīn* and to keep it established, it did not simply mean that they should practise it themselves and not even this that they should preach it to others so that the people may accept its truth, but also that when the people have accepted it, steps should be taken to introduce and enforce the entire *dīn* practically among them so that they may start living according to it for ever afterwards. No doubt preaching is the primary necessary stage of this work without which there can be no second stage, but every intelligent person can himself see that in this Command preaching has not been made the object, but the real object is to establish the *dīn* and keep it established. Preaching is certainly a means to the end but not the end in itself, but nobody can say that it was the only and foremost object of the mission of the Prophets.

Now, let us take the second question. When some people saw that the *dīn* which has been enjoined to be established is common among all the Prophets, and their *sharī'ahs* have been different, as Allah Himself says: "We appointed for each community among you a law and a way of life", they formed the view that inevitably this *dīn* did not imply the *sharī'ah* commandments, rules and regulations but only the acceptance of *Tauḥīd*, the Hereafter and the Book and the Prophethood and performance of certain acts of devotion to Allah, or at the most, it included some of the major moral principles which have been common to all the *sharī'ahs*. But this is a superficial view, which has been formed after having a cursory glance over the unity of religion and the difference of the *sharī'ahs*. This is, however, a dangerous view, which if not corrected in time, may well lead to the separation between *dīn* (religion) and *sharī'ahs* (law). It was this very view in which St. Paul was involved, who presented the doctrine of the *dīn* (religion) without *sharī'ah* (law), and corrupted the community of the Prophet Jesus (peace

be upon him). For, if *sharī'ah* (law) is something separate from *dīn* (religion) and the command is only for establishing the *dīn* and not the *sharī'ah*, inevitably the Muslims also, like the Christians, would regard the *sharī'ah* as unimportant and overlook its establishment as not being the real object by itself, and would remain content with only beliefs and a few important moral principles. Instead of determining the meaning of *dīn* from such speculations, let us turn to the Qur'ān itself and see whether the *dīn* which we have been enjoined here to establish implies the beliefs and a few important moral principles only, or the *sharī'ah* values and commandments as well. When we explore the Qur'ān we find that what it regards as *dīn* includes the following things as well:

(1) "And the only Command they were given was to worship Allah, making their *dīn* sincerely His, turning all their attention towards Him, and to establish the *Ṣalāt* and to pay the *Zakāt*: this alone is the true and right *dīn*." (Al-Bayyinah: 5). This shows that the *Ṣalāt* and the *Zakāt* are included in this *dīn*, whereas the commandments pertaining to both have been different in the different *sharī'ahs*. No one can say that in all the previous *sharī'ahs* the *Ṣalāt* has had the same form, the same elements, the same number of the *rak'ahs*, the same direction of the *qiblah*, the same times and the same other commands concerning it. Likewise, no one can claim also about the *Zakāt* that in all the *sharī'ahs the* same has been the exemption limit, the same rates and the same injunctions concerning its collection and distribution. But in spite of the difference of the *sharī'ahs*, Allah has regarded both these as part of *dīn*.

(2) "You are forbidden carrion and blood, the flesh of swine and of that animal which has been slaughtered in any other name than of Allah, and of the strangled animal, and of that beaten to death or killed by a fall or gored to death or mangled by a beast of prey---save of that you duly slaughtered while it was still alive — and of that which is slaughtered at (ungodly) shrines. It is also unlawful for you to try to find your fortune by means of divining devices, for all these things are sinful acts. Today the disbelievers have despaired of (vanquishing) your religion; therefore do not fear them but fear Me. Today I have perfected your *dīn* for you and completed My blessing on you and approved Islam as the *dīn* (way of life) for you." (Al-Mā'idah: 3). This shows that all these *sharī'ah* commandments are also *dīn*.

(3) "Fight with those from among the people of the Book, who do not believe in Allah nor in the Last Day; who do not make unlawful what Allah and His Messenger have made unlawful, and do not adopt the right *dīn* as their *dīn*." (At Taubah: 29). This shows that besides belief in Allah and the Hereafter it is also *dīn* to accept and follow the Commands about the lawful and the unlawful, which have been given by Allah and His Messenger.

(4) "The woman and the man guilty of fornication, flog each one of them with a hundred stripes, and let not any pity for them restrain you in regard to a matter prescribed in the *dīn* of Allah, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day." (An-Nūr: 2). "It did not behove Joseph to seize his brother by the king's *dīn*." (Yūsuf: 76). This shows that the criminal law is also dīn. If a man follows the criminal law prescribed by God, he is a follower of God's *dīn* and if he follows a king's law, he is a follower of the king's *dīn*.

These are the four specimens in which the *sharī'ah* commandments have been described as *dīn* in clear words. But, besides these, a careful study shows that the eradication of the sins for which Allah has held out the threat of Hell (e.g. adultery, taking of interest, killing of a believer, consuming the property of the orphan, taking possession of the other peoples properties in unlawful ways etc.), and the crimes which become the cause of God's torment, e.g. sodomy (the act of Lot's people) and dishonesty in business dealings (as practised by the Prophet Shu'aib's people) should necessarily be included in *dīn*, for if *dīn* cannot save one from Hell and Allah's torment, what use could it be ? Likewise, those *sharī'ah* commandments also should be part of the *dīn* violation of which has been regarded as cause of entry into the Fire, e.g. injunctions relating to inheritance, after stating which it has been said: "And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger and transgresses the limits prescribed by Him, Allah will cast him into the Fire wherein he will have a disgraceful torment." (An-Nisā: 14,). Likewise, the prohibition of those things whose prohibition Allah has mentioned with great emphasis and absoluteness, e.g. prohibition of the mother, sister and daughter and prohibition of wine, theft, gambling, false evidence, etc. if not included in the establishment of the *dīn*, it would mean that Allah has given some unnecessary Commands also, which are not meant to be introduced and enforced. Similarly, establishing those things which Allah has made obligatory, e g. fasting and pilgrimage, cannot be excluded from the establishment of *dīn* only on the pretext that the 30 fasts of Ramadān had not been enjoined in the previous *sharī'ah*, and pilgrimage to the Ka'bah was enjoined only in the *Sharī'ah* which was inherited by the Ishmaelite branch of the Prophet Abraham's progeny.

As a matter of fact, the misunderstanding was caused only because the verse: "We appointed for each community among you a law and a way of life", has been misconstrued to mean that since the *sharī'ah* appointed for every community was separate, and the command given was only to establish the *dīn* (way of life) which was common to all the Prophets, the establishment of the *sharī'ah* was not included in the establishment of the *dīn*, whereas the real meaning of this verse is just the opposite of it. If the context (vv. 41-50) in which this verse has occurred in Sūrah Al-Mā'idah is studied carefully, it will be seen that the correct meaning of this verse is: Whatever *sharī'ah* was given by Allah to

the community of a Prophet, was the *dīn* for that community, and the establishment of the same *dīn* was the object during his Prophethood. And since now is the period of the Holy Prophet Muḥammad's Prophethood, the *sharī'ah* which has been given to the Ummah of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is the *dīn* of this time, and to establish the same is to establish the *dīn*. As for the difference of the *sharī'ah*, it does not mean that the *sharī'ahs* sent by God were mutually contradictory, but it means that in their details there have been some differences owing to the different environments, take, for instance, the Prayer and the Fast. The Prayer has been obligatory in all the *sharī'ahs*, but the *qiblah* of all the *sharī'ahs* was not the same, and there was a difference in its times and *rak'ahs* and elements as well. Likewise, the Fast was obligatory in every *sharī'ah*, but the 30 fasts of Ramadān were not there in the other *sharī'ahs*. From this it is not correct to conclude that the Prayer and the Fast as such are included in the establishment of *dīn* but performing the Prayer in a particular way and observing the Fast at a particular time is excluded from it. However, the correct conclusion that one can draw is: To perform the Prayer and observe the Fast according to the rules and procedures that had been appointed for the people in the *sharī'ah* of every Prophet amounted to establishment of *dīn* in his time. In the present age the establishment of the *dīn* is that these acts of worship be performed according to the procedures enjoined in the *Sharī'ah* of the Prophet Muhammad. The same is true about all other *Sharī'ah* commandments as well.

Whoever studies the Qur'ān carefully will see that this Book does not envisage that its adherents will live as subjects of the disbelievers and will pass a religious life under them, but it openly proclaims that it will have its own rule established; it demands from its followers that they should struggle with their lives for the intellectual, cultural, legal and political supremacy of the true Faith; and it gives them a programme for the reformation of human life, the major part of which can be acted upon only when political power and authority is in the believers' hand. As stated by itself, the object of this Book's being sent down is: "We have sent down this Book to you with the Truth so that you may judge between the people in accordance with the light that Allah has shown you." (An-Nisā: 105). The Commandments given in this Book about the collection and distribution of the *Zakāt* expressly envisage a government who should be responsible for collecting the *Zakāt* and distributing it among the deserving people according to a laid down procedure. (At-Taubah:60,103). The prohibition of interest that has been enjoined in this Book and the declaration of war that has been made against those who do not abstain from taking interest (Al-Baqarah: 275-279) can be enforced only when the political and economic system of the country is entirely in the believers' hand. The Law of Retribution for murder (Al-Baqarah: 178), cutting off of the hand for theft (Al-Mā'idah 38) and carrying out

of the prescribed punishment for adultery and calumny (An-Nūr: 2-4) have not been enjoined on the assumption that the believers will remain subject to the police and courts of the disbelievers. The Command to fight the disbelievers (Al-Baqarah: 190, 216) has not been given with the idea that the followers of this *dīn* will carry out this Command by getting enlisted in the army of disbelief. The command to take *Jizyah* from the followers of the former Books (At-Taubah: 29) has not been given on the assumption that the Muslims will take *Jizyah* from them while being their subjects and will be responsible for their protection. And this thing is not true only about the Madinite Sūrahs; in the Makkan Sūrahs as well a discerning eye can clearly see that the scheme envisaged from the very beginning was of Islam's supremacy and dominance and not of Islam's and the Muslims' subjugation under an un Islamic rule. See, for instance, Banī Isrā'īl: 76-89; Al-Qaṣaṣ: 85-86; Ar-Rūm: 1-6; Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 171-179; Ṣuād: Introduction, v. 11 and E.N. 12 on it.

Above all, this misinterpretation clashes with the great work that the Holy Prophet himself accomplished during the 23 years of his Prophethood. Who can deny the fact that he subdued entire Arabia by means of both preaching and the sword and established in it a full fledged system of government with a detailed law, covering all aspects of life, from beliefs and rites of worship to personal conduct, collective morality, culture and civilization, economic and social life, politics and judiciary, peace and war. If this entire work of the Holy Prophet is not accepted as a commentary of the Command of *"iqāmat dīn"* (establishment of *dīn*) which, according to this verse, he had been enjoined to undertake like all other Prophets, then it could have one of the two meanings: That earlier, God forbid, the Holy Prophet should be blamed that he had been appointed only to preach and teach beliefs and a few important moral rules but he exceeded his mandate and established a government of his own whim and laid down a code of law, which was different from the common law of the Prophets as well as in excess of it; or that Allah should be blamed that after having made the above-mentioned declaration in Sūrah Ash-Shūrā, He went back on His own word, and made His Last Prophet do something which was not only much over and above and different from the objective of *"iqāmat dīn"* as stated in this Sūrah but on the completion of this mission He also made this declaration, contrary to His first declaration: "Today I have perfected your *dīn* for you." (Al-Mā'idah:3). May Allah keep us safe from this! Apart from these two, if there is any third alternative, which makes this interpretation of *"iqāmat dīn"* plausible and also does not lay any blame on Allah or His Messenger, we would like to know it.

After giving the Command for *"iqāmat dīn"*, the last thing that Allah has stated in this verse is this: *Lā tatafarraqū fī-hi:* "Do not create schisms in the *dīn*: Be not divided in it" Creating schisms in *dīn* implies that one should introduce

something new in religion for which there exists no sound basis, and then should insist that belief and unbelief depend on the acceptance of the innovation, and should separate along with those who have accetped it from those who have not accetped it. This new thing can be of several kinds: (1) To introduce something entirely new into *dīn;* (2) to exclude from *dīn* something which actually belonged to it; (3) to tamper with the fundamentals of *dīn* by misinterpretations and introduce new beliefs and novel practices; and (4) to distort the *dīn* by making changes of fundamental nature in it, for example, by reducing what was important in it to un-important, by raising what was at most permissible to the position of imperative and obligatory, even to the position of the most fundamental pillar of Islam. Owing to such innovations, divisions first appeared in the communities of the Prophets; then gradually the creeds of the sects developed into wholly separate and mutually exclusive religious systems whose followers now do not have any idea that once they all belonged to one and the same origin. These divisions have nothing to do with the permissible and reasonable difference of opinion which naturally takes place among the scholars when they are engaged in understanding and studying the injunctions and fundamentals of the *dīn* for the purpose of deriving and extracting points of law, and for which there is room in the words of the Book of Allah itself owing to the considerations of lexicon, idiom and rules of grammar. (For a detailed discussion of this subject, see Al-Baqarah: 213, Āl-'Imrān: 19, 50; An-Nisā: 171, Al-Mā'idah: 77; Al-An'ām; 159; An-Naḥl: 118-124; Al-Anbiyā': 92-93; Al-Ḥajj: 67; Al Mu'minūn: 53-54; Al-Qaṣaṣ: 53; Ar-Rūm: 32 and the E.N.'s)

21. Here the same thing as stated in vv. 8-9 above, has been reiterated, and we have explained it in E.N. 11 above. The object of repeating it here is as if to say: "You are presenting the clear highway of religion before them but the foolish people, instead of appreciating the blessing, are becoming annoyed over it. But even among them there are the people of their own tribe, who are turning to Allah, and Allah also is drawing them closer to Himself. But one should understand that Allah's bestowal of His blessings is not blind: He draws only him towards Himself who is inclined to be drawn and not him who runs away from Him."

22. That is, "The divisions were created not because Allah had failed to send the Prophets and the Books, and therefore, the people could not know the Right Way and so invented their own separate religions, sects, schools of thought and systems of life, but divisions appeared after knowledge had come to them from Allah. Therefore, Allah is not responsible for it, but the people who abandoned the clear principles of religion and commands of the *Shari'ah* and created their own creeds and religions are themselves responsible for it".

23. That is, "The motive for creating the divisions was not good, but they resulted from the desire for ostentation, love of an independent entity, mutual rivalry and stubbornness, the urge to humiliate and defeat one another, and greed for worldly wealth and position. When the clever and ambitious saw that if the godly people followed the true religion honestly, there would only be One God before whom the people would bow, there would be one Messenger whom they would acknowledge as their guide and leader, there would be one Book which they would turn to and there would be a clearly defined creed and code of life which they would be following. In such a system there could be no place of distinction for themselves, on the strength of which they could have their own leadership flourish so that the people should rally round them, and bow to them and also make rich offerings to them. This was the real cause which became the motive of the invention of new creeds and philosophies, new ways and rites of worship and new systems of life, and diverted a large part of humanity from the highway of Divine Religion and misled them into blind alleys. Then the mutual disputes of the factions and their religious, economic and political conflicts gave rise to intense bitterness, which in turn led to bloodshed and violence among humanity."

24. That is, all such people who were guilty of inventing false systems and followed them would have been annihilated in the world itself by a torment, and only the righteous ones allowed to survive, which should have indicated as to who was a follower of the Truth and who of falsehood in the sight of Allah. But Allah has deferred this plain decisions till Resurrection, for after such a decision in the world, the trial of mankind becomes meaningless.

25. It means: "After the passage of the time of every Prophet and his closest followers when the Divine Book reached the later generations, they did not receive it with faith and conviction but were involved in doubts and suspicions and confusions about it. There were many causes for this state of affairs, which can be easily understood by a study of the case of the Torah and the Gospel. The earlier generations have not conveyed both these Books to the later generations well preserved in their original state and in their original words and language. They mixed up the Divine Word in them with the human word in the form of their commentary, history, verbal traditions and juristic hair-splitting. They made their translations prevail until the original was lost and only the translations remained. Their historical authenticity also was ruined; so much so that nobody now can say with certainty that the Book in his hand is the same that the world had once received through the Prophet Moses or the Prophet Jesus. Then their elders in the different periods of history initiated such discussions on religion, divinity, philosophy, law, physics, psychology and sociology and invented such systems of thought that the people were lost in them and it became impossible for them to

decide as to which was the straight highway of the Truth among the countless crooked ways. And since the Divine Book did not exist in its original, reliable state, they could neither turn to any authority that could help them to distinguish the truth from falshood.

26. That is, "Do not make any change nor effect any increase or decrease in this religion only to please them. Do not resort to any compromises with the misguided people on the principle of "give and take": Do not make any room in the Religion for their whims, prejudices and practices of ignorance in the hope that they would embrace Islam. Let the one who wants to accept, accept the original, pure Religion of God, as sent down by Him, straight forwardly; otherwise let him go and enter any hell that he chooses for himself. The Religion of God cannot be changed for the sake of the people; if the people are desirous of their own well-being and true success, let them change their ways and mould themselves according to it."

27. In other words, "I am not like those schismatic people who believe in some Books sent down by God and disbelieve in others; I believe in every Book sent down by Him."

28. This pithy sentence has several meanings:

(1) "I have been appointed to discard the schisms and adopt true impartiality: I do not like to harbour prejudice in favour of one and against the other schism: I have one and the same kind of relationship with all human beings, and it is the relationship of justice and equity. I am a companion and supporter of everyone who follows the truth, whether he is an utter stranger for me, and an opponent of everyone who follows falsehood, whether he is a neighbour or a close kinsman.

(2) "There is no place of distinction for anybody in the system of truth, which I have been appointed to present before you. It honours everyone equally. It does not contain separate sets of the rights for the kindred and the stranger, the big and the small, the poor and the rich, the noble and the humble. Whatever is good in it is good for everyone; and whatever is sinful and unlawful and criminal in it is sinful, unlawful and criminal for everybody. In its just system, there is no exception even for my own self."

(3) "I have been appointed to establish justice in the world. I have been entrusted with the mission of doing justice between the people and should put an end to their excesses and injustice, which are prevalent in your society."

Besides, there is a fourth meaning also of this sentence, which remained hidden in Makkah life but became clear after emigration to Madīnah, and it was: "I am a judge appointed by God: I am responsible to do justice between you."

29. That is, "Each one of us is himself responsible and accountable for his deeds. If you do good, you will yourself profit by its good results, and not we. If we do evil, we ourself shall bear all its evil consequences and not you. The same thing has been stated in Al-Baqarah: 139, Yūnus: 41, Hūd: 35, and Al-Qaṣaṣ: 55 above.

30. That is, "We have done our best in conveying to you the message in a rational way. Now there is no use wrangling and disputing; therefore, even if you try to have a dispute with us, we have no desire to join in."

31. This is an allusion to the state of affairs that was being experienced in Makkah at that time almost daily. Whenever it became known about somebody that he had become a Muslim, the people would start treating him mercilessly: they would worry and vex him, would neither let him have peace in the house nor in the street nor in society; wherever he went, they would start an endless discussion with the object to somehow make him abandon Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) and return to the same creed of ignorance which he had rejected.

32. *Mīzān* (Balance): the *Sharī'ah* of Allah, which, like a balance, brings out clearly the distinction between the right and the wrong, the Truth and falsehood, justice and injustice, and righteousness and wickedness. In verse 15 above, the Holy Prophet has been made to say: "I have been commanded to do justice between you." Here, it has been told that with this Holy Book the "Balance" has come by which justice will be established.

33. That is, "The one who is inclined to mend his ways, must mend his ways forthwith; he should not lose time under the delusion that the Hour of Judgement is yet far off. Man cannot be sure whether he will be able to take another breath or not: his present breath may be his last."

34. The word "Kind" cannot fully convey the meaning of the word "*Laṭīf*" as used in the original. This word contains two meanings: First, that Allah is very Kind and Compassionate to His servants; second, that He is a subtle observer and keeps in view even their minutest and most ordinary needs, which none else can see, and He fulfils them in such ways that they themselves do not perceive as to which need of theirs has been fulfilled at what time and by whom. Then the "servants" here does not imply only the believers but all servants. That is, Allah is Kind and Compassionate to all His servants."

35. It means: The demand of His general kindness and compassion is not this that all the servants should be given everything equally. For although He is providing for each and every one from His treasures, there is no equality and uniformity in the measure of His provisions. He has given one thing to one and

another to another: He has provided someone with something in a greater measure and another with another thing more generously.

36. That is, "His system of providence is functioning under His own might. No one has the power to change it, or take away something forcibly from Him, or prevent Him from providing for somebody."

37. Two of the truths have been mentioned in the previous verse, which we are observing everywhere at all times: (1) That Allah is Kind and Compassionate to all His servants; and (2) that the measure of His provisions is not the same for everybody, but it varies from man to man. Now, in this verse it is being told that although the partial differences in kindness and measures of provisions are countless, there is also a difference of fundamental nature, which is: there is one kind of the provision for the seeker of the Hereafter and of another kind for the seeker of the world.

This is a very important truth which has been stated here briefly. Let us understand it fully, for it helps every man to determine his attitude to life.

Both the seeker of the Hereafter and the seeker of the world have been likened to the farmer in this verse, who labours persistently hard right from the time he prepares the soil till the time his crop is ready for harvesting. He puts in all his labour so that he may reap and gather the crop of the seeds he sowed. But because of the difference of the intention and objective and also the difference of the attitude and conduct, to a large extent, a vast difference takes place between the farmer who sows for the Hereafter and the farmer who sows for this world. Therefore, Allah has ordained different results and consequences of the labours of each, although the place of activity of both is this very earth.

As to the farmer who is sowing for the Hereafter, Allah has not said that he will get no share from the world. The world, in a more or less measure, he will get in any case, for he also has a share in the common provisions being bestowed by Allah, and every person, good or bad, is getting his sustenance here. But Allah has not given him the good news of the harvest of this world but that his harvest of the Hereafter will be increased, for he is a seeker of the same, and is concerned about his end there. There are several ways in which this harvest can be increased; for example, as he will go on doing righteous deeds with sincere intentions, he will be blessed with the grace to do more and more righteous deeds and his breast will be opened out for more and more good works. When he will make up his mind to adopt pure means for achieving pure aims, he will be blessed with pure means only and Allah will not let it so happen that all doors to goodness be closed and only doors to evil to remain open for him. Above all, his each good

[Contd. on p.540]

حَرْثَ الدُّنْيَا نُؤْتِهٖ مِنْهَا وَمَا لَهٗ فِي الْاٰخِرَةِ مِنْ نَّصِيْبٍ ﴿٢٠﴾ اَمْ لَهُمْ شُرَكٰٓؤُا
شَرَعُوْا لَهُمْ مِّنَ الدِّيْنِ مَا لَمْ يَاْذَنْ بِهِ اللّٰهُ ۭ وَلَوْلَا كَلِمَةُ الْفَصْلِ لَقُضِيَ
بَيْنَهُمْ ۭ وَاِنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢١﴾ تَرَى الظّٰلِمِيْنَ مُشْفِقِيْنَ مِمَّا
كَسَبُوْا وَهُوَ وَاقِعٌۢ بِهِمْ ۭ وَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ فِيْ رَوْضٰتِ الْجَنّٰتِ ۚ
لَهُمْ مَّا يَشَاۗءُوْنَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ ۭ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْكَبِيْرُ ﴿٢٢﴾ ذٰلِكَ الَّذِيْ يُبَشِّرُ
اللّٰهُ عِبَادَهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ ۭ قُلْ لَّآ اَسْـَٔلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ اَجْرًا اِلَّا
الْمَوَدَّةَ فِي الْقُرْبٰى ۭ وَمَنْ يَّقْتَرِفْ حَسَنَةً نَّزِدْ لَهٗ فِيْهَا حُسْنًا ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ
شَكُوْرٌ ﴿٢٣﴾ اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ افْتَرٰى عَلَي اللّٰهِ كَذِبًا ۚ فَاِنْ يَّشَاِ اللّٰهُ يَخْتِمْ عَلٰي قَلْبِكَ ۭ
وَيَمْحُ اللّٰهُ الْبَاطِلَ وَيُحِقُّ الْحَقَّ بِكَلِمٰتِهٖ ۭ اِنَّهٗ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوْرِ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَ
هُوَ الَّذِيْ يَقْبَلُ التَّوْبَةَ عَنْ عِبَادِهٖ وَيَعْفُوْا عَنِ السَّيِّاٰتِ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا
تَفْعَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَيَسْتَجِيْبُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَيَزِيْدُهُمْ مِّنْ
فَضْلِهٖ ۭ وَالْكٰفِرُوْنَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيْدٌ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَلَوْ بَسَطَ اللّٰهُ الرِّزْقَ لِعِبَادِهٖ لَبَغَوْا
فِي الْاَرْضِ وَلٰكِنْ يُّنَزِّلُ بِقَدَرٍ مَّا يَشَاۗءُ ۭ اِنَّهٗ بِعِبَادِهٖ خَبِيْرٌۢ بَصِيْرٌ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَهُوَ
الَّذِيْ يُنَزِّلُ الْغَيْثَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا قَنَطُوْا وَيَنْشُرُ رَحْمَتَهٗ ۭ وَهُوَ الْوَلِيُّ
الْحَمِيْدُ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهٖ خَلْقُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَثَّ فِيْهِمَا مِنْ دَاۗبَّةٍ ۭ
وَهُوَ عَلٰي جَمْعِهِمْ اِذَا يَشَاۗءُ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَمَآ اَصَابَكُمْ مِّنْ مُّصِيْبَةٍ فَبِمَا كَسَبَتْ
اَيْدِيْكُمْ وَيَعْفُوْا عَنْ كَثِيْرٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَمَآ اَنْتُمْ بِمُعْجِزِيْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۚ وَمَا لَكُمْ
مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ وَّلَا نَصِيْرٍ ﴿٣١﴾ وَمِنْ اٰيٰتِهِ الْجَوَارِ فِي الْبَحْرِ
كَالْاَعْلَامِ ﴿٣٢﴾ اِنْ يَّشَاْ يُسْكِنِ الرِّيْحَ فَيَظْلَلْنَ رَوَاكِدَ عَلٰي ظَهْرِهٖ ۭ اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ

Have they set up such associates of God, who have laid down for them a (religious) way of life, which Allah has not permitted?[38] Had the word of judgement not already been issued, their case would long have been settled.[39] Surely for these wrongdoers there is a painful torment. You will see that at that time these wicked people will be fearing the consequence of their deeds, and it will certainly befall them. Contrary to this, those who have believed and done righteous deeds, shall be in the Gardens of Paradise; they shall have with their Lord whatever they will desire. This is the greatest bounty. This is that of which Allah gives good news to His servants, who believed and did good works. O Prophet, say to them: "I do not ask of you any reward for this work;[40] however, I do seek the love of the kindred."[41] Whoever earns a good deed, We shall increase its good for him. Indeed, Allah is All-Forgiving and Appreciative.[42] 21-23

Do they say, "He has forged a lie against Allah?"[43] If Allah so wills, He may seal up your heart.[44] He blots out falsehood and proves the truth to be true by His Words:[45] He even knows the secrets hidden in the breasts.[46] It is He Who accepts repentance from His servants and overlooks sins although He knows whatever you do.[47] He answers the prayers of those who believe and do good works and gives them even more out of His bounty. As for the disbelievers, there is a severe punishment for them. 24-26

If Allah had given His provisions abundantly to all His servants, they would have rebelled in the earth, but He sends down in due measure what He wills. He is well informed of His servants and watches over them.[48] He it is Who sends down the rain when the people have lost all hope, and spreads His mercy, and He alone is the Praiseworthy Guardian.[49] Among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the living things, which He has scattered in both;[50] He can gather them all together whenever He wills.[51] Whatever affliction has befallen you, it is for what your own hands have earned, and there is many a sin that He pardons.[52] You cannot frustrate your God in the earth, and you do not have any protector and helper against Allah. Among His signs are the ships which look like mountains in the sea. If Allah so wills He can still the wind and leave them motionless on its back.—In this there are many signs for every such person who 27-35

patiently endures and is grateful.[53] ——Or, forgiving many of the sins (of the voyagers), He may drown them in consequence of a few of their misdeeds, and then those who dispute about Our Revelations, may realize that they have no refuge.[54]

Contd. from p. 537]

work, however small and insignificant, will at least be increased ten times over in the Hereafter, and there is no limit to this increase. Allah will increase it hundreds of thousands of times for whomever He may please.

As for the one who is only sowing for this world, and is not at all concerned about the Hereafter, Allah has plainly told him of two of the results of his labours: (1) That, however hard he may struggle and strive, he will not get the whole of what he is trying for, but only a fraction of it, which Allah has ordained for him; and (2) that whatever he has to get, he will get only in this world: there is no share for him in the good things of the Hereafter.

38. In this verse the word *shurakā* (associates) obviously does not mean those beings whom the people invoke, or those in whose names they make offerings, or those before whom they carry out rites of worship, but inevitably it refers to those men whom the people regard as associates in the authority and sovereignty of Allah, whose thoughts, creeds, ideologies and philosophies they believn in, whose values they admit, whose moral precepts and norms of civilization and culture they accept, and whose laws and rules and regulations they adopt in their rituals and rites of worship, in their personal and collective lives, in their trade and business dealings, in their politics and governments, as if they constituted the *sharī'ah* that they had to follow faithfully. This is a complete code of life which the inventors invented against the legislation of Allah, Lord of the worlds, without His sanction and followed by the followers. This is the same sort of *shirk* as prostrating oneself before another and invoking another than Allah. (For further explanation, see An Nisā: 60; Al-Mā'idah: 87; Al.An'ām: 121, 136, 137; At-Taubah: 31; Yūnus: 59; Ibrāhīm: 22; An-Nahl: 115-116; Al.Kahf: 52; Al-Qaṣaṣ: 62.64 ; Sabā : 41; Yā Sīn: 60 and the relevant E.N.'s).

39. That is, "This is such a boldness against Allah that had not judgement been deferred till Resurrection, the torment would have been sent down on every such person, who in spite of being Allah's servant, enforced his own religion and way of life on Allah's earth, and those people also would have been visited by it, who forsook Allah's Religion and accetped the religion invented by others."

40. "This work": Every effort that the Holy Prophet was making to save the people from Allah's punishment and to enable them to become worthy of the promise of Paradise.

41. The word *qurbā* in the original has been interpreted differently by the different commentators. One section of them takes it in the meaning of kinship and has given this meaning to the verse: "I do not ask of you any reward for this service, but I do desire that you (O people of Quraish) should show some regard for the kinship that there is between me and you. You should have accetped my invitation, but if you do not accept it, you should not be so hard-hearted as to become my bitterest enemies in the entire land of Arabia." This is the interpretation given by Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, which has been cited by Imām Aḥmad, Bukhārī, Muslim, Tirmidhī, Ibn Jarīr, Ṭabarānī, Baihaqi, Ibn Sa'īd and others on the authority of many reporters and the same commentary has been given by Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah, Qatādah, Suddī, Abū Mālik, 'Abdur Reḥmān bin Zaid bin Aslam, Ḍaḥḥāk, 'Atā bin Dinār and the other major commentators.

The other section takes *qurbā* in the meaning of nearness and interprets the verse to mean: "I do not seek from you any other reward than this that you should develop in yourselves a desire for attaining nearness to Allah. That is, you should be reformed. That is my only reward." This commentary has been reported from Hasan Basri and a saying of Qatādah also has been cited in support of this; so much so that in a tradition by Tabarānī this saying has also been attributed to Ibn 'Abbās. In the Qur'ān itself, at another place, this same subject has been treated, thus: "Tell them: I do not seek of you any reward for this work: I only ask of the one who will, to adopt the way of his Lord." (Al-Furqān: 57).

The third group takes *qurbā* in the meaning of the kindred, and interprets the verse to mean this: "I do not seek from you any other reward than this that you should love my near and dear ones." Then, some of the commentators of this group interpret "the kindred" to mean all the children of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, and some others restrict it to Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Fāṭimah and their children. This commentary has been reported from Sa'īd bin Jubair and 'Amr bin Shu'aib, and in some traditions it has been attributed to Ibn 'Abbās and Ḥaḍrat 'Alī bin Ḥusain (Zain al-'Ābedīn), but this interpretation cannot be accetped for several reasons. Firstly, when Sūrah Ash-Shūrā was sent down at Makkah, Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Fāṭimah had not yet been married and, therefore, there could be no question of their children. As for the children of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib, they were not all following the Holy Prophet but some of them had openly joined with his enemies, and the enmity of Abu Lahab is too well known. Second, "the kindred" of the Holy Prophet were not only the children of 'Abdul Muṭṭalib but he had his kindred among all the families of the Quraish through his mother and his father and his wife, Ḥaḍrat Khadījah. In all these clans he had his best supporters as well as his staunch enemies. Third, and this is the most important point, in view of the high position of a Prophet from which he starts his mission of inviting the people towards Allah, it does not seem fitting that he would ask the people to love his

kindred in return for his services in connection with his great Mission. No person of fine taste could imagine that Allah would have taught His Prophet such a mean thing, and the Prophet would have uttered the same before the Quraish. In the stories that have been narrated of the Prophets in the Qur'ān, we find that a Prophet after a Prophet stands up before his people and says: "I do not ask of you any reward: my reward is with Allah, Lord of the worlds." (Yūnus: 72; Hūd: 29, 51; Ash-Shu'arā': 109, 127, 145, 164, 180). In Sūrah Yā Sīn the criterion given of a Prophet's truthfulness is that he gives his invitation without any selfish motive. (v. 21). In the Qur'ān the Holy Prophet himself has been made to say again and again words to the effect: "I demand no reward from you for this message." (Al-An'ām: 90, Yūsuf: 104, Al-Mu'minūn: 72, Al-Furqān: 57, Sabā: 47, Ṣuād: 86, At-Ṭur: 40, Al Qalam: 46). After this, what could be the occasion for the Holy Prophet to tell the people that in return for his service of inviting them to Allah, they should love his relatives. Then it seems all the more irrelevant when we see that the addressees here are the disbelievers and not the believers. The whole discourse, from the beginning to the end, is directed to them. Therefore, there could be no question in this regard of asking the opponents for any reward, for a reward is asked of those who show some appreciation for the services that a person has rendered for them. The disbelievers were not at all appreciative of the Holy Prophet's services: on the contrary, they regarded them as a crime and had turned bitterly hostile to him.

42. That is, "Contrary to the culprits who commit disobedience knowingly, Allah's affair with the servants who strive to do good, is like this: (1) He makes them even more righteous than they could be solely by their own efforts; (2) He overlooks the weaknesses that remain in their work, and the sins that are committed by them inadvertently, in spite of striving to become good; and (3) Allah appreciates whatever little provision of the good deeds they bring and rewards them richly and generously for it."

43. In this interrogative sentence the style is of severe reproach. It means: "O Prophet: Have these people become so bold and fearless that they do not feel any shame in accusing you of inventing a lie, and that too of a heinous sin of a lie against Allah? They calumniate you that you are forging the Qur'ān yourself and then falsely attributing to Allah."

44. That is, "Such big lies are only uttered by those whose hearts have been sealed up. If Allah wills, He may include you also among them, but it is His mercy that He has kept you away from them. This answer contains a severe satire against the people who were so accusing the Holy Prophet. It means this: "O Prophet, they think that you are a man like them. Just as they are in the habit of uttering any big lie only for the sake of a selfish motive, so they thought you also

must have forged a lie for selfish ends. But it is Allah's mercy that He has not sealed up your heart as He has sealed up theirs."

45. That is, "It is Allah's way that He does not grant stability to falsehood, and in the long run proves the truth to be true. Therefore, O Prophet, you should go on doing your mission, without paying any attention to their false accusations. A time will come when this whole falsehood will vanish like dust, and the truth of that which you are presenting will become visible and manifest."

46. That is, "He knows why you are being thus falsely accused and what are the actual motives that are working behind all this struggle that is being made to frustrate and defeat you."

47. Calling the people's attention to repentance immediately after the preceding verse by itself gives the meaning, as if to say: "O wicked people: Why are you making yourselves still more worthy of God's punishment by falsely accusing the true Prophet? If you desist from your misdeeds even now, and offer true repentance Allah will forgive you." Repentance means that one should feel remorse for the evil one has done, and should refrain and desist from it in the future. Moreover, it is also an inevitable demand of true repentance that one should try one's utmost to compensate for the evil one has done in the past, and wherever compensation is not possible, one should seek Allah's forgiveness and should do more and more good to wipe off the blot from oneself. But no repentance can be true repentance unless it is offered with the intention of pleasing Allah. Giving up an evil for some other reason or intention is no repentance at all.

48. If the context in which this thing has been said is kept in view, it appears that Allah here is alluding to the basic factor that was working in the rebellion of the disbelievers of Makkah. Although they were insignificant as against the mighty Roman and Iranian Empires and their position among the nations of the neighbouring countries was no more than of a commercial tribe of a backward people, the relative prosperity and glory that they enjoyed among the other Arabs had made them so proud and arrogant that they were not inclined even to listen to the Prophet of Allah, and their chiefs of the tribes regarded it below their dignity that Muḥammad bin 'Abdullah (upon whom be Allah's peace) should be their guide and they his followers. On this it is being said "If We had actually opened up the gates of provisions for these mean people, they would have burst with pride. But We are watching over them, and are providing for them only sparingly so as to keep them within limits." According to this meaning this verse, in other words, is touching on the same subject which has already been treated in At-Taubah: 68-70, Al-Kahf: 32-42, Al-Qaṣaṣ: 75-82, Ar-Rūm: 9, Sabā: 34-36 and Al-Mu'min: 82-85 above.

[Contd. on p. 546

لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَكُوْرٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ اَوْ يُوْبِقْهُنَّ بِمَا كَسَبُوْا وَيَعْفُ عَنْ كَثِيْرٍ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَّ
يَعْلَمَ الَّذِيْنَ يُجَادِلُوْنَ فِيْٓ اٰيٰتِنَا ۭ مَا لَهُمْ مِّنْ مَّحِيْصٍ ﴿٣٥﴾ فَمَآ اُوْتِيْتُمْ مِّنْ
شَيْءٍ فَمَتَاعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَمَا عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ خَيْرٌ وَّاَبْقٰى لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا
وَعَلٰي رَبِّهِمْ يَتَوَكَّلُوْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ يَجْتَنِبُوْنَ كَبٰٓئِرَ الْاِثْمِ وَالْفَوَاحِشَ وَاِذَا
مَا غَضِبُوْا هُمْ يَغْفِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اسْتَجَابُوْا لِرَبِّهِمْ وَاَقَامُوا الصَّلٰوةَ ۠
وَاَمْرُهُمْ شُوْرٰى بَيْنَهُمْ ۠ وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنٰهُمْ يُنْفِقُوْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ وَالَّذِيْنَ اِذَآ اَصَابَهُمُ
الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ وَجَزٰٓؤُا سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا ۚ فَمَنْ عَفَا وَاَصْلَحَ
فَاَجْرُهٗ عَلَي اللّٰهِ ۭ اِنَّهٗ لَا يُحِبُّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ وَلَمَنِ انْتَصَرَ بَعْدَ ظُلْمِهٖ فَاُولٰۗىِٕكَ
مَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ سَبِيْلٍ ﴿٤١﴾ اِنَّمَا السَّبِيْلُ عَلَي الَّذِيْنَ يَظْلِمُوْنَ النَّاسَ وَيَبْغُوْنَ
فِي الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ ۭ اُولٰۗىِٕكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ
اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْاُمُوْرِ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ وَّلِيٍّ مِّنْۢ
بَعْدِهٖ ۭ وَتَرَى الظّٰلِمِيْنَ لَمَّا رَاَوُا الْعَذَابَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ هَلْ اِلٰى مَرَدٍّ مِّنْ
سَبِيْلٍ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَتَرٰىهُمْ يُعْرَضُوْنَ عَلَيْهَا خٰشِعِيْنَ مِنَ الذُّلِّ يَنْظُرُوْنَ مِنْ طَرْفٍ
خَفِيٍّ ۭ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِنَّ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ خَسِرُوْٓا اَنْفُسَهُمْ وَاَهْلِيْهِمْ يَوْمَ
الْقِيٰمَةِ ۭ اَلَآ اِنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ فِيْ عَذَابٍ مُّقِيْمٍ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَمَا كَانَ لَهُمْ مِّنْ اَوْلِيَاۗءَ
يَنْصُرُوْنَهُمْ مِّنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ۭ وَمَنْ يُّضْلِلِ اللّٰهُ فَمَا لَهٗ مِنْ سَبِيْلٍ ﴿٤٦﴾ اِسْتَجِيْبُوْا
لِرَبِّكُمْ مِّنْ قَبْلِ اَنْ يَّاْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَّا مَرَدَّ لَهٗ مِنَ اللّٰهِ ۭ مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ مَّلْجَاٍ يَّوْمَىِٕذٍ
وَّمَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ نَّكِيْرٍ ﴿٤٧﴾ فَاِنْ اَعْرَضُوْا فَمَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ عَلَيْهِمْ حَفِيْظًا ۭ اِنْ عَلَيْكَ
اِلَّا الْبَلٰغُ ۭ وَاِنَّآ اِذَآ اَذَقْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً فَرِحَ بِهَا ۚ وَاِنْ تُصِبْهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ

Whatever you have been given, is merely a provision for the transitory life of this world,[55] and that which is with Allah is better as well as more lasting.[56] That is for those who have believed and put their trust in their Lord;[57] who refrain from gross sins and indecencies;[58] who, when they are angry, forgive;[59] who obey their Lord,[60] establish the *Ṣalāt*, and conduct their affairs by mutual consultation;[61] who spend out of what We have given them as sustenance;[62] who, when they are oppressed, help and defend themselves.[63]—The recompense[64] of evil is a like evil;[65] then whoever pardons and seeks reconcilement, his reward is with Allah.[66] Allah does not like the wrongdoers.[67] And those who avenge themselves after they have been wronged, cannot be held blameworthy, for blameworthy indeed are those who oppress others and commit excesses in the land without any right. For such people there is a painful torment. However, the one who practices patience and is forgiving, these indeed are works of great courage and resolution.[68] 36-43

The one whom Allah lets go astray, has no protector after Him.[69] You will see that when the wrongdoers see the torment, they will say, "Is there any way back?"[70] And you will see that when they are brought before Hell, they shall be downcast with disgrace and shall look at it with stealthy glances.[71] At that time those who had believed, will say, "The real losers indeed are those who have lost themselves and their followers on this Resurrection Day." Beware! The wrongdoers shall suffer an everlasting torment, and they will have no protectors and guardians, who could come to their help against Allah. The one whom Allah lets go astray has no way of escape. 44-46

Answer your Lord before there comes the Day of which there is no chance of being averted by Allah.[72] On that Day you will have no place of refuge, nor will there be any who could change your condition.[73] Now if they turn away, We have not sent you, O Prophet, to be a keeper over them:[74] your only responsibility is to convey the Message. Man is such that when We let him taste Our mercy, he exults at it, and if an evil befalls him in consequence of what his own hands have done before, he turns utterly ungrateful.[75] 47-48

Contd. from p. 545]

49. Here, the word *walī* implies the Being who is the Governor of the affairs of all His creations, Who has taken the responsibility of fulfilling all the needs and requirements of His servants.

50. "In both": In both the earth and the heavens. This is a clear pointer to the fact that life does not only exist on the earth but on other planets as well.

51. That is, "Just as He has the power to scatter them, so He has also the power to gather them all together. Therefore, it is wrong to think that Resurrection cannot take place, and all the former and the latter generations cannot be raised up and gathered all together."

52. One should note that here the cause of all human afflictions is not being stated but the address is directed to the people who were at that time committing disbelief and disobedience at Makkah. They are being told: "Had Allah seized you for all your sins and crimes, He would not have even allowed you to live, but the calamities (probably the allusion is to the famine of Makkah) that have descended on you, are only a warning so that you may take heed and examine your actions and deeds to see as to what attitude and conduct you have adopted as against your Lord, and try to understand how helpless you actually are against God against Whom you are rebelling, and know that those whom you have taken as your patrons and supporters, or the powers that you have relied upon, cannot avail you anything against the punishment of Allah."

For further explanation it is necessary to state that as regards the sincere believer, Allah's law for him is different. All the calamities and hardships that befall him go on becoming an atonement for his sins, errors and deficiencies. There is an authentic *Ḥadīth* to the effect: "Whatever sorrow and suffering, distress and grief, and affliction and worry that a Muslim experiences, even if it be a thornprick, it is made an atonement by Allah for one or the other of his errors." (Bukhārī, Muslim). As for the hardships that a believer faces in the way of raising Allah's Word, they do not merely become an atonement for his deficiencies but also a means of the exaltation of ranks with Allah. In this connection, it cannot even be imagined that they descend as a punishment for sins."

53. "Who patiently endures": who keeps himself fully under control and remains steadfast on the path of servitude under all circumstances, good or bad; who does not forget himself so as to become rebellious against God and cruel to the people, when favoured with good times, and loses heart and stoops to anything when visited by evil times. A "gratefull person" is every such person who regards it as a bounty of Allah and not the result of any merit or excellence in himself when he is exalted to any high place of honour in life by a Divine decree, and keeps his mind concentrated on the blessings which remain available to man even under the worst circumstances instead of his deprivations when deposed to the

lowest of the low position. Thus, he continues to thank his Lord in both prosperity and adversity with his tongue and heart.

54. The Quraish, in connection with their business and trade, had also to visit Ḥabash and the coastal lands of Africa, and in these journeys they used sailing ships and boats for crossing the Red Sea, which is a very dangerous sea. It is generally stormy and abounds in submerged rocks which are a serious hazard for navigation especially during the storms. Therefore, the state that has been depicted here by Allah could be fully realized by the people of the Quraish in the light of their personal experiences.

55. That is, "It is not a thing at which man should exult. Whatever worldly wealth a person has in his possession, he has it only for a short time. He uses it for a few years and then leaves the world empty-handed. Then, although the amount of the wealth may be very high in the ledgers, practically only a fraction of it is used by the man himself. To exult at such wealth does not behove a man who understands the truth about himself, about his wealth and this world itself."

56. That is, that wealth is far more superior as regards its nature and quality; and is also eternal and everlasting.

57. Here, trust *(tawakkul)* in Allah has been regarded as an inevitable demand of the faith and a necessary characteristic for success in the Hereafter. *Tawakkul* means: (1) That man should have full confidence in the guidance of Allah, and should understand that the knowledge of the truth, the principles of morality, the bounds of the lawful and the unlawful, and the rules and regulations of passing life in the world, that Allah had enjoined, are based on the truth and in following them alone lies man's good and well being; and (2) that man should not place reliance on his own powers and abilities, means and resources, plans and schemes and the help of others than Allah, but he should keep deeply impressed in his mind the fact that his success in every thing, here and in the Hereafter, actually depends on the help and succour of Allah, and that he can become worthy of Allah's help and succour only if he works with the object of winning His approval, within the bounds prescribed by Him; (3) that man should have complete faith in the promises that Allah has made with those who would adopt the way of faith and righteousness and work in the cause of the truth instead of falsehood, and having faith in the same promises would discard all those benefits, gains and pleasures that may seem to accrue from following the way of falsehood, and endure all those losses, hardships and deprivations that may become his lot on account of following the truth steadfastly. From this explanation of the meaning of *tawakkul* it becomes obvious how deeply it is related with the faith, and why those wonderful results that have been promised to the believers who practice *tawakkul*, cannot be obtained from the mere empty affirmation of the faith.

58. For explanation, see An-Nisā: 31, Al-An'ām: 151, An-Naml: 90, An-Najm: 32 and the E.N.'s.

59. That is, they are not wrathful and crazy but are temperate and cool-minded; they are not revengeful but forbearing and forgiving by nature. If ever they feel angry at something they control their rage. This characteristic is the best of man's qualities, which has been highly commended in the Qur'ān (Āl-'Imrān: 134) and regarded as a major factor of the Holy Prophet's success (Al-'Imrān: 159). According to Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah, "The Holy Messenger of Allah never avenged himself on anybody; however, when a thing enjoined to be held sacred by Allah was desecrated, he would award the punishment." (Bukhārī, Muslim)

60. Literally: "Who answer the call of their Lord". That is they hasten to do whatever Allah enjoins them to do, and accept whatever Allah invites them to accept.

61. This thing has been counted here as the best quality of the believers, and has been enjoined in Sūrah Āl-'Imrān: 159. On this basis, consultation, is an important pillar of the Islamic way of life, and to conduct the affairs of collective life without consultation is not only the way of ignorance but also an express violation of the law prescribed by Allah. When we consider why consultation has been given such importance in Islam, three things become obvious:

First, that it is injustice that a person should decide a matter by his personal opinion and ignore others when it involves the interests of two or more persons. No one has a right to do as he likes in matters of common interest. Justice demands that all those whose interests are involved in a matter be consulted, and if it concerns a large number of the people, their reliable representatives should be made a party in consultation.

Second, that a man tries to do what he likes in matters of common interest either because he wants to usurp the rights of others for selfish ends, or because he looks down upon others and regards himself as a superior person. Morally both these qualities are equally detestable, and a believer cannot have even a tinge of either of these in himself. A believer is neither selfish so that he should get undue benefits by usurping the rights of others, nor he is arrogant and self-conceited that he should regard himself as all-wise and all-knowing.

Third, that it is a grave responsibility to give decisions in matters that involve the rights and interests of others. No one who fears God and knows what severe accountability for it he will be subjected to by his Lord, can dare take the heavy burden of it solely on himself. Such a boldness is shown only by those who are fearless of God and heedless of the Hereafter. The one who fears God and has the feeling of the accountability of the Hereafter, will certainly try that in a matter

of common interest he should consult all the concerned people or their authorised representatives so as to reach, as far as possible, an objective and right and equitable decision, and if there occurs a mistake one man alone should not be held responsible for it.

A deep consideration of these three things can enable one to fully understand that consultation is a necessary demand of the morality that Islam has taught to man, and departure from it is a grave immorality which Islam does not permit. The Islamic way of life requires that the principle of consultation should be used in every collective affair, big or small. If it is a domestic affair, the husband and the wife should act by mutual consultation, and when the children have grown up, they also should be consulted. If it is a matter concerning the whole family, the opinion of every adult member be solicited. If it concerns a tribe or a fraternity or the population of a city, and it is not possible to consult all the people, the decision should be taken by a local council or committee, which should comprise the trustworthy representatives of the concerned people according to an agreed method. If the matter concerns a whole nation, the head of government should be appointed by the common consent of the people, and he should conduct the national affairs in consultation with the leaders of opinion, whom the people regard as reliable, and he should remain at the helm of affair only as long as the people themselves want him to remain in that position. No honest man can try to assume the headship of a nation by force, or desire to continue in that position indefinitely, nor can think of coming into power by deception and then seek the people's consent by coercion, nor can he devise schemes so that the people may elect representatives to act as his advisers not by their own free choice but according to his will. Such a thing can be desired only by the one who cherishes evil intentions, and such a fraud against the Islamic principle of consultation can be practiced only by him who does not feel any hesitation in deceiving both God and the people whereas the fact is that neither can God be deceived nor the people be so blind as to regard the robber, who is committing robbery in the bright day light openly, as their well-wisher and servant.

The principle of consultation as enshrined in *amru-hum shūrā bainu-hum* by itself demands five things:

(1) The people whose rights and interests relate to collective matters, should have full freedom to express their opinion and they should be kept duly informed of how their affairs are being conducted; they should also have the full right that if in the conduct of the affairs they see an error, a weakness or a deficiency, they can check it and voice a protest, and if they do not see any change for the better, they can change their rulers. To conduct the people's

affairs by keeping them silent and un-informed is sheer dishonesty which no one can regard as adherence to the principle of consultation in Islam.

(2) The person who is to be entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the collective affairs, should be appointed by the people's consent, and this consent should be their free consent, which is not obtained through coercion, temptation, deception, and fraud, because in that case it would be no consent at all. A nation's true head is not he who becomes its head by trying every possible method, but he whom the people make their head by their own free choice and approval.

(3) The people who are appointed as advisers to the head of the state should be such as enjoy the confidence of the nation, and obviously the people who win representative positions by suppression or by expending wealth, or by practising falsehood and fraud, or by misleading the people cannot be regarded as enjoying the confidence in the real sense.

(4) The advisers should give opinion according to their knowledge and faith and conscience and they should have full freedom of such expression of opinion. Wherever this is not the case, wherever the advisers give advice against their own knowledge and conscience, under duress or temptation, or under party discipline, it will be treachery and dishonesty and not adherence to the Islamic principle of consultation.

(5) The advice that is given by a consensus of the advisers, or which has the support of the majority of the people, should be accepted, for if a person (or a group of persons) behaves independently and acts on his own whims, even after hearing the advice of others, consultation becomes meaningless. Allah does not say: "They are consulted in their affairs", but says: "They conduct their affairs by mutual consultations". This instruction is not implemented by mere consultation, but for its sake it is necessary that the affairs be conducted according to what is settled by consensus or by majority opinion in consultation.

Along with this explanation of the Islamic principle of consultation, this basic thing also should be kept in view that this consultation is not independent and autocratic in conducting the affairs of the Muslims, but necessarily subject to the bounds that Allah Himself has set by His legislation, and is subject to the fundamental principle: "It is for Allah to give a decision in whatever you may differ," and "if there arises any dispute among you about anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger." According to this general principle, the Muslims can hold consultations in *Shari'ah* matters with a view to determining the correct meaning of a text or verse and to find out the ways of implementing it so as to fulfil its requirements rightly but they cannot hold consultations in order to give an

independent judgement in a matter which has already been decided and settled by Allah and His Messenger.

62. It has three meanings:

(1) "They spend only out of what lawful provisions We have given them: they do not touch unlawful things for supplementing their expenditure."

(2) "They do not set aside the provisions granted by us, but spend them."

(3) "They spend out of what they have been given in the cause of Allah also: they do not reserve everything for personal use only."

The first meaning is based on this that Allah calls the lawful and pure provisions only as "the provisions granted by Him"; He does not call the provisions earned in impure and unlawful ways His provisions. The second meaning is based on that whatever Allah provides for man is provided so that he may spend it and not that he may set it aside and hoard it up like a miser. The third meaning is based on that according to the Qur'ān, spending does not mean spending merely on one's own self and for one's personal needs, but it also contains the meaning of spending for the sake of Allah in His way. On account of these three reasons Allah here is counting spending of wealth among the best qualities of the believers because of which the blessings of the Hereafter have been reserved only for them.

63. This also is one of the best characteristics of the believers: they do not fall a prey to the tyrants. Their tender heartedness and forgiving nature is not the result of any weakness. They have not been taught to live humbly and meekly like the hermits and ascetics. Their nobility demands that when they are victors they should forgive the errors of the vanquished; when they possess the power, they should avoid vengefulness and when a weak or subdued person happens to commit a mistake they should overlook it; but when a powerful person, drunk with authority, commits violence against them, they should resist and fight him with all their might. A believer is never cowed by a wicked person nor bows to an arrogant man. For such people he proves to be a hard nut which breaks the teeth of those who try to break it.

64. The passage from here to the end of verse 43 is an explanation of verse 39.

65. This is the first fundamental principle which must be borne in mind in retaliation. The right limit of retaliation is that one should return the same sort of ill treatment that one has received; one has no right to return a greater ill treatment.

66. This is the second principle. It means: Although it is permissible to retaliate against the one who has committed a violence, wherever pardoning can be conducive to reconcilement, pardoning is better for the sake of reconcilement than retaliation. And since man pardons the other by suppressing his own feelings, Allah says that the reward of such a one is with Him, for he has suppressed his own self for the sake of reforming the evil-doers.

67. In this warning allusion has been made to a third principle about retaliation, and it is this: One should not become a wrongdoer oneself in the process of avenging a wrong done by the other. It is not permissible to do a greater wrong in retaliation for the wrong done. For example, if a person gives another a slap, the other can return only one slap; he cannot shower blows and kicks. Likewise, it is not right to commit a sin in retaliation for a sin. For example, if a wicked man has killed the son of someone, it is not right to go and kill the son of the former. Or, if a mean person has violated the chastity of a person's sister or daughter, it is not lawful for him to commit rape on the former's sister or daughter.

68. One should note that the qualities of the believers that have been mentioned in these verses, practically existed in the lives of the Holy Prophet and his Companions, and the disbelievers of Makkah were their eye-witnesses. Thus, Allah has, in fact, told the disbelievers: "The real wealth is not the provisions that you have received for passing the transitory life of the world, and are bursting with pride of it, but the real wealth are the morals and characteristics which the believers from your own society have developed by accepting the guidance given by the Qur'ān."

69. That is, "Allah sent the best Book like the Qur'ān for the guidance of the people, which is giving them the knowledge of the reality in a rational and effective way and guiding them to the right way of life. He sent a Prophet like Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings) for their guidance, a man of better character than whom they had never seen before. And then Allah also showed them the results of the teaching and training of this Book and this Messenger in the lives of the Believers. Now, if after witnessing all this, a person turns away from the guidance, Allah casts him into the same deviation from which he has no desire to come out. And when Allah Himself has driven him away, who else can take the responsibility of bringing him to the Right Way."

70. That is, "Today when there is a chance of coming back, they are refusing to come back. Tomorrow when the judgement will have been passed and the sentence enforced, then seeing their fate they will wish to come back."

71 By nature man is such that when a dreadful scene comes before him and he knows that soon he is going to fall a prey to it, he closes his eyes forthwith

in fear. Then, when he cannot hold himself any longer, he tries to see what kind of the calamity it is and how far away it is from him. But he does not find the courage to lift up his head and have a full view of it. Therefore, he opens his eyes a little again and again and sees it from the corner of the eye, and then again closes his eyes from fear. The same state of those who will be driven to Hell has been depicted here.

72. That is, neither will Allah Himself avert it, nor has anyone else the power to avert it.

73. This sentence has several other meanings also: (1) "You will not be able to deny any of your misdeeds"; (2) "you will not be able to hide yourself even in disguise ;" (3) "you will not be able to protest or show any displeasure against any treatment that is meted out to you;" (4) "it will not be in your power to change the condition in which you are placed."

74. That is, "You have not been made responsible that you must bring them to the right path anyhow, nor will you be held accountable as to why these people did not come to the right path."

75. "Man" here implies the mean and shallow people who are the subject of the discourse here, who have got a measure of the worldly provisions and are exulting in this, and who do not pay any attention when they are admonished to come to the right path. But when they are visited by a disaster in consequence of their own misdeeds, they start cursing their fate, and forget all those blessings which Allah has blessed them with, and do not try to understand how far they themselves are to be blamed for the condition in which they are placed. Thus, neither does prosperity become conducive to their reformation nor can adversity teach them a lesson and bring them to the right path. A study of the context shows that this is, in fact, a satire on the attitude of the people who were the addressees of the above discourse, but they have not been addressed to tell them of their weakness directly, but the weakness of man has been mentioned in a general way and pointed out that what is the real cause of his sad plight. This gives an important point of the wisdom of preaching: the weaknesses of the addressee should not be made the target directly, but they should be mentioned in a general way so that he is not provoked, and if his conscience has still some life in it, he may try to understand his shortcoming with a cool mind.

بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ اَيْدِيْهِمْ فَاِنَّ الْاِنْسَانَ كَفُوْرٌ ﴿48﴾ لِلّٰهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ
يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ ۚ يَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ اِنَاثًا وَّيَهَبُ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ الذُّكُوْرَ ﴿49﴾ اَوْ
يُزَوِّجُهُمْ ذُكْرَانًا وَّاِنَاثًا ۚ وَيَجْعَلُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ عَقِيْمًا ۚ اِنَّهٗ عَلِيْمٌ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿50﴾
وَمَا كَانَ لِبَشَرٍ اَنْ يُّكَلِّمَهُ اللّٰهُ اِلَّا وَحْيًا اَوْ مِنْ وَّرَآئِ حِجَابٍ اَوْ يُرْسِلَ
رَسُوْلًا فَيُوْحِيَ بِاِذْنِهٖ مَا يَشَآءُ ۚ اِنَّهٗ عَلِيٌّ حَكِيْمٌ ﴿51﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ
رُوْحًا مِّنْ اَمْرِنَا ۚ مَا كُنْتَ تَدْرِيْ مَا الْكِتٰبُ وَلَا الْاِيْمَانُ وَلٰكِنْ جَعَلْنٰهُ
نُوْرًا نَّهْدِيْ بِهٖ مَنْ نَّشَآءُ مِنْ عِبَادِنَا ۚ وَاِنَّكَ لَتَهْدِيْٓ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿52﴾
صِرَاطِ اللّٰهِ الَّذِيْ لَهٗ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۗ اَلَآ اِلَى اللّٰهِ تَصِيْرُ الْاُمُوْرُ ﴿53﴾

ع ١٦

To Allah belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth;[76] He creates whatever He wills: He gives daughters to whom He wills, and sons to whom He wills; or He gives both sons and daughters to whom He wills and makes barren whom He wills. Indeed. He knows everything and has power over everything.[77] 49-50

It[78] is not given to any mortal that Allah should speak to him, face to face. He speaks either through revelation (secret instruction),[79] or from behind a veil,[80] or He sends a messenger (an angel), who by His Command, reveals whatever He wills:[81] He is the Exalted, the All-Wise.[82] Even so We have, (O Muhammad), revealed a Spirit to you by Our Command.[83] You did not know at all what was the Book and what was the Faith,[84] but We made that Spirit a light by which We show the way to any of Our servants We will. You are indeed guiding to the Right Way, the Way of God, to Whom belongs everthing in the heavens and the earth. Beware! All affairs tend to Allah alone![85] 51-53

Contd. from p. 555]

76. That is, "If the people who are involved in disbelief and polytheism do not believe even after the admonition, they may not, for the truth is the truth. The kingdom of the earth and heavens has not been entrusted to the so called kings and despots and chiefs of the world nor has any prophet, saint, god or goddess any share in it, but its Master is One Allah alone. His rebel can neither

succeed by his own power, nor can any of the beings whom the people look upon as owners of divine powers by their own folly, come to their rescue and aid."

77. This is a manifest proof of Allah's Sovereignty being absolute. No man, whether he be posing as owner of the highest worldly authority, or regarded as owner of great spiritual powers, has ever been able to produce children for himself according to his own choice and desire, not to speak of providing children for others. The one whom Allah made barren could not have children through any medicine, any treatment, any amulet or charm. The one whom Allah gave only daughters could not get a single son by any device, and the one whom Allah gave only sons could not have a single daughter by any means. In this matter everyone is absolutely helpless. So much so that before the birth of a child no one could know whether a son was taking shape in the mother's womb or a daughter. Even after seeing all this if some one posed to be all-powerful in God's Kingdom, or regarded another as a possessor of the powers, it would be his own short-sightedness for which he himself will suffer, the truth will not change at all.

78. In conclusion, the same theme with which the discourse began has been reiterated. To understand it fully, please see the first verse of this Sūrah and the E.N. on it.

79. Here, *wahī* means to inspire somebody with something, or to show something to somebody in a vision as were the Prophets Abraham and Joseph shown. (Yūsuf: 4, 100; Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 102).

80. That is, "One may hear a voice without seeing the speaker, just as it happened in the case of the Prophet Moses when he suddenly began to hear a voice from a tree on Mount Ṭūr, while the Speaker was hidden from him." (Tā Hā: 11-48, An Naml: 8-12, Al-Qaṣaṣ: 30-35).

81. This is the form of *wahī* by which all Divine Scriptures have actually reached the Prophets of Allah. Some people have misinterpreted this sentence and given it this meaning: "Allah sends a messenger who by His Command conveys His message to the common people." But the words of the Qur'ān *fa-yūḥiya bi-idhni-hī mā yashā'u* (then He reveals by His Command whatever He wills) show that this interpretation is absolutely wrong. The Prophets' preaching before the common people has neither been called *wahī* anywhere in the Qur'ān, nor is there any room in Arabic for describing a man's speaking to another man openly by the word *wahī*. Lexically, *wahī* means secret and swift instruction. Only an ignorant person will apply this word to the common preaching by the Prophets.

82. That is, He is far above that He should speak to a man face to face, and His wisdom is not helpless that He may adopt another method of conveying His instructions to a servant of His than of speaking to him face to face.

83. "Even so" does not refer only to the last method of *waḥī*, but to all the three methods as mentioned in the preceding verses, and a "Spirit" implies *waḥī* (Revelation), or the teaching given to the Holy Prophet by revelation. Both the Qur'ān and the *Ḥadīth* confirm that the Holy Prophet was given instruction by all these three methods:

(1) In a *Ḥadīth* Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah has stated that Revelation in the beginning came to the Holy Prophet in the form of true visions. (Bukhāri, Muslim) This continued in later life also. Traditions mention many visions in which he was given some teaching or informed of something and in the Qur'ān also a vision of his has been clearly mentioned (Al Fatḥ: 27). Besides, several Traditions also mention that the Holy Prophet said, "I have been inspired with such and such a thing, or I have been informed of this and this or I have been enjoined this, or I have been forbidden this." All such things relate to the first kind of the *waḥī* and the Divinely inspired Traditions *(Aḥādīth Qudsī)* mostly belong to this category of the Traditions.

(2) On the occasion of the *Mi'rāj* (Ascension) the Holy Prophet was honoured with the second kind of the *waḥī* also. In several authentic Traditions the way mention has been made of the Commandment of the *Ṣalāt* five times a day and the Holy Prophet's making submissions in that regard again and again clearly shows that at that time a similar dialogue took place between Allah Almighty and His servant Muḥammad (upon whom be His peace and blessings) as had taken place between Allah and the Prophet Moses at the foot of Mount Ṭūr.

(3) As for the third kind, the Qur'ān itself testifies that it was conveyed to the Holy Prophet through Angel Gabriel, the Trustworthy. (Al-Baqarah: 97, Ash-Shu'arā' : 192-195).

84. That is, "Before his appointment to Prophethood, the Holy Prophet had never had any idea that he was going to receive a Book, or that he should receive one, but he was wholly unaware of the heavenly Books and the subjects they treated. Likewise, although he believed in Allah, intellectually he was not aware of the requirements of the Faith in Allah, nor did he know that along with that belief it was also necessary that he should believe in other things-the angels, the Prophethood, the Divine Books and the Hereafter. Both these things---were such as were not hidden even from the disbelievers of Makkah. No one belonging to Makkah could bear witness that he had ever heard anything pertaining to a Divine Book from the Holy Prophet before his sudden proclamation of the Prophethood, or any such thing that the people should believe in such and such things. Obviously if a person had already been looking forward to becoming a prophet, it could not be that the people who remained socially associated with him day and night for 40 years should not have even so much as heard the word Book

and the Faith from him, and after 40 years he should suddenly have started making fiery speeches on the same themes.

85 This is the final warning that has been given to the disbelievers. It means: "The Prophet said something and you heard and rejected it. The matter would not end there. Whatever is happening in the world, will be presented before Allah, and ultimately He Himself will decide what should be the end of each and every person."


XLIII
AZ-ZUKHRUF
الزُّخرُف

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XLIII

AZ-ZUKHRUF

الزُّخرُف

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the word *zukhruf-an* which occurs in verse 35 of this Sūrah.

Period of Revelation

It could not be known from any authentic tradition, but a study of its subject-matter shows that this Sūrah also was sent down in the same period in which the Sūrahs Al-Mu'min, Ḥā-Mīm As-Sajdah and Ash-Shūrā, were sent down. It appears that the revelation of this series of the Sūrahs began when the disbelievers of Makkah were planning to put an end to the Holy Prophet's life. Day and night they were holding consultations in their assemblies as how to eliminate him, and even an attack on his life also had been made as has been clearly referred to in vv. 79-80.

Theme and Topics

In this Sūrah a forceful and severe criticism has been made of the Quraish's and the common Arabs' creeds and superstitions of ignorance in which they persisted, and their stubbornness has been exposed in a firm and effective way, so that every member of the society, who was reasonable in some degree, should be made to consider the evils in which the community was involved and its tyrannical treatment of the person who was trying to redeem it.

The discourse starts in a way as if to say: "You, by means of your mischiefs, want that the revelation of this Book should be stopped, but Allah has never withheld the appointment of His Prophets and the revelation of His Books because of the mischiefs of the people, but has destroyed the wicked people, who obstructed the way of His guidance. The same He will do again. A little further in vv. 41-43 and 79-80 the same thing has been reiterated. Though the people who were plotting against his life are meant, the Holy Prophet has been addressed to the effect: "Whether you remain alive or not, We will certainly punish the wicked," and the people themselves have been plainly warned to the effect: "If you have decided to take an action against Our Prophet, We too will take a decisive action."

Then, it has been told what is the reality of the religion that the people are following so devotedly and what are the arguments on whose strength they are resisting Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace and blessings).

They themselves admit that the Creator of the earth and heavens and of themselves and their deities is only Allah. They also know and admit that the blessings they are benefiting from, have been bestowed by Allah; yet they insist on making others associates of Allah in His Godhead.

They regard the servants as the children of Allah, and that too daughters, whom they regard as disgraceful for themselves.

They believe that the angels are goddesses; they have carved their images as females; they adorn them with female dresses and ornaments, and call them daughters of Allah: they worship them and invoke them

for the fulfilment of their needs. How did they know that the angels were female?

When they are rebuked for these superstitions, they present the pretence of destiny and say: "Had Allah disapproved of these practices, we could not have worshipped these images, whereas the means of finding out whether Allah had approved of something or not, are His Books and not those things which are happening in the world according to His Will. For under His Will not only idol-worship but crimes like theft and adultery, robbery, murder, etc. also are being committed. Can this argument be used to justify as right and proper this commission of every crime and evil in the world?

When it is asked: Have you any other authority, apart from this wrong argument, for the polytheism of yours? they reply, "The same has been the practice since the time of our forefathers." In other words, this in their opinion is a strong enough argument for a creed's being right and true, whereas the Prophet Abraham, descent from whom is the only basis of their pride and distinction, had rejected the religion of his elders and left his home, and he had discarded every such blind imitation of his forefathers, which did not have the support of any rational argument. Then, if these people had to follow their elders only, for this also they selected their most ignorant elders and abandoned their most illustrious elders like the Prophets Abraham and Ishmeal (on whom be peace).

When they are asked: "Has ever a Prophet or a Book sent down by God also given this teaching that others beside Allah too are worthy of worship? they present this practice of the Christians as an argument that they took Jesus son of Mary as son of God and worshipped him; whereas the question was not whether the community of a Prophet had committed *shirk* or not, but that whether a Prophet had himself taught *shirk*. Jesus son of Mary had never said that he was son of God and that the people should worship him. His own was the same teaching which every other Prophet had given: "My Lord as well as your Lord is Allah: so worship Him alone."

They were disinclined to believe in the Prophethood of the Holy Prophet because he was neither a rich man nor a person of high worldly position and rank. They said. "Had Allah willed to appoint a prophet

among us, he would have appointed one of the great men of our two cities (Makkah and Ṭā'if)." On that very basis, Pharaoh also had looked down upon the Prophet Moses and said: "If Allah, the King of the heavens, had to send a messenger to me, the king of the earth, He would have sent him with bracelets of gold and a company of angels in attendance. Wherefrom has this mendicant appeared? I am superior to him, for the kingdom of Egypt belongs to me, and the canals of the River Nile are flowing under my control. What is the status of this man as against me? He has neither wealth nor authority."

Thus, after criticising each practice of ignorance of the disbelievers and rejecting it with rational arguments, it has been pointed out: "Neither has God any offspring, nor are there separate gods of the earth and heavens, nor is there any intercessor who may be able to protect from His punishment those who adopt deviation knowingly. Allah is far above that He should have children. He alone is the God of the whole Universe: all others are His servants and not associates in His attributes and powers, and only such men can intercede with Him, who are themselves followers of the Truth and they also can intercede only for those who may have adopted obedience of the Truth in the world."



حٰمٓ ۝١ وَالْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ ۝٢ اِنَّا جَعَلْنٰهُ قُرْءٰنًا عَرَبِيًّا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَعْقِلُوْنَ ۝٣ وَاِنَّهٗ
فِيْٓ اُمِّ الْكِتٰبِ لَدَيْنَا لَعَلِيٌّ حَكِيْمٌ ۝٤ اَفَنَضْرِبُ عَنْكُمُ الذِّكْرَ صَفْحًا اَنْ كُنْتُمْ
قَوْمًا مُّسْرِفِيْنَ ۝٥ وَكَمْ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ نَّبِيٍّ فِي الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ۝٦ وَمَا يَاْتِيْهِمْ مِّنْ
نَّبِيٍّ اِلَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ۝٧ فَاَهْلَكْنَآ اَشَدَّ مِنْهُمْ بَطْشًا وَّمَضٰى مَثَلُ
الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ۝٨ وَلَئِنْ سَاَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ لَيَقُوْلُنَّ خَلَقَهُنَّ
الْعَزِيْزُ الْعَلِيْمُ ۝٩ الَّذِيْ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْاَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَّجَعَلَ لَكُمْ فِيْهَا سُبُلًا
لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُوْنَ ۝١٠ وَالَّذِيْ نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مَآءًۢ بِقَدَرٍ ۚ فَاَنْشَرْنَا بِهٖ بَلْدَةً
مَّيْتًا ۚ كَذٰلِكَ تُخْرَجُوْنَ ۝١١ وَالَّذِيْ خَلَقَ الْاَزْوَاجَ كُلَّهَا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ مِّنَ
الْفُلْكِ وَالْاَنْعَامِ مَا تَرْكَبُوْنَ ۝١٢ لِتَسْتَوٗا عَلٰى ظُهُوْرِهٖ ثُمَّ تَذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَةَ رَبِّكُمْ

XLIII
AZ-ZUKHRUF
الزُّخْرُف

Verses: 89 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Ḥā-Mīm. By this lucid Book, We have made it an Arabic Qur'ān so that you (O people) may understand it.[1] And, in fact, it is inscribed in Umm al-Kitāb,[2] a Book truly sublime and full of wisdom with Us.[3] 1-4

Now, should We despair and stop sending this Admonition to you only because you are a people who have transgressed (all limits)?[4] Many a Prophet have We sent among the ancient peoples, too. Never 5-8

did it so happen that a Prophet came to his people and they did not mock him.[5] So, We destroyed them though they were much stronger than these in might; there have gone before the examples of the ancient peoples.[6]

9-14 If you ask them, "Who has created the heavens and the earth?" they will surely say, "The Almighty, the All-Knowing One has created them." He it is Who made this earth a cradle for you[7] and made in it paths[8] for you so that you may be guided to your destinaions[9]; Who sent down water from heaven in due measure[10] and revived thereby the dead earth—even so shall you be brought out from the earth[11]; Who created all these pairs[12]; and Who made ships and animals as conveyance for you to ride on their back, so that when you sit on them, you may remember your Lord's favour, and say, "Glorified is He Who has subjected them to us, otherwise we could not have brought them under control,[13] and one day we have to return to our Lord."[14]

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1. The object of taking an oath by the Qur'ān is to impress this fact: "We are the Author of this Book and not Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace)," and the attribute of the Qur'ān chosen for the oath is that it is a "lucid Book". To swear by the Qur'ān itself with its this attribute in order to impress that the Qur'ān is Divine Word by itself implies this: "O people, this is an open Book before you. Read it intelligently. Its clear and un-ambiguous themes, its language and literary style, its teaching which distinguishes the truth from falsehood, all are testifying to the fact that none but the Lord of the Universe could be its Author." Then the sentence: "We have made it an Arabic Qur'ān so that you may understand it." has two meanings:(1) "It is not in any foreign tongue but in your own language; therefore, you can have no difficulty in assessing its value and worth. Had it been in a non-Arabic language, you could have offered the excuse that you could not determine its being Divine, or otherwise, for you did not understand it. But you cannot offer this excuse about this Arabic Qur'ān. Its each word is clear to you: its each passage and discourse, both in language and in theme, is plain for you. Now you may see it for yourself whether this could be the word of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) or of some other Arab." (2) "We have sent this Book in Arabic because We are addressing the Arabs, who can only understand an Arabic Qur'ān. The person who disregards this expressly rational ground for sending down the Qur'ān in Arabic and regards it as the word of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) instead of Divine Word only because Muḥammad's mother tongue is also Arabic, commits a grave injustice." (To understand this second meaning, please see Sūrah Ḥā-Mīm As-Sajdah: 44 and its E.N.'s).

2. "*Umm al-Kitāb*": the "Original Book": the Book from which all the Books sent down to the Prophets have been derived. In Sūrah Al-Wāqi'ah the same thing has been described as *Kitāb-um-Maknūn* (the hidden and preserved Book) and in Sūrah Al-Burūj 22 as *Lauḥ-i Maḥfūẓ* (the Preserved Tablet), that is, the Tablet whose writing cannot be effaced, which is secure from every kind of interference. By saying that the Qur'ān is inscribed in *Umm al-Kitāb*, attention has been drawn to an important truth. Different Books had been revealed by Allah in different ages to different Prophets for the guidance of different nations in different languages, but all these Books invited mankind to one and the same Faith; they regarded one and the same thing as the Truth; they presented one and the same criterion of good and evil; they propounded the same principles of morality and civilization; in short, they brought one and the same *Dīn* (Religion). The reason was that their source and origin was the same, only words were different; they had the same meaning and theme which is inscribed in a Source Book with Allah, and whenever there was a need, He raised a Prophet and sent down the same meaning and subject-matter clothed in a particular diction according to the environment and occasion. Had Allah willed to raise the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be His peace) in another nation instead of the Arabs, He would have sent down the same Qur'ān in the language of that nation. In it the meaning and content would have been expressed according to the environments and conditions of the people and land; the words would have been different and the language also different but the teaching and guidance the same basically, and it would be the same Qur'ān though not the Arabic Qur'ān. This same thing has been expressed in Sūrah Ash-Shu'arā, thus: "This (Book) has been revealed by the Lord of the worlds. The trustworthy Spirit 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; and this is also contained in the scriptures of the former peoples." (vv. 192-196). (For explanation, see Ash-Shu'arā: 192-196 and the E.N.'s on it).

3. This sentence is related both to *Kitāb-i mubīn* and to *Umm al-Kitāb*. Thus, it is in praise of both the Qur'ān and the Original Book from which the Qur'ān has been derived. This praise is meant to impress the fact that if a person does not recognize the true worth of this Book and does not benefit from its wise teachings because of his own folly, it would be his own misfortune. If someone tried to degrade it and found fault with it, it would be his own meanness. It cannot become worthless on account of someone's lack of appreciation of it, and its wisdom cannot be eclipsed by anyone's throwing dust at it. This is by itself a glorious Book, which stands exalted by its matchless teaching, miraculous eloquence, faultless wisdom and the sublime personality of its great Author. Therefore, none can succeed in minimizing its value and worth. In verse 44 below

the Quraish in particular and the Arabs in general have been told that the revelation of the Book for which they are showing such lack of appreciation had provided them a unique opportunity of honour, which if they lost, would subject them to a severe accountability before God. (Please see E.N. 39 below).

4. In this one sentence the whole history that had taken place since the time the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) had proclaimed to be a Prophet till the revelation of these verses during the past few years has been compressed. This sentence depicts the following picture: A nation has been involved in ignorance, backwardness and depravity for centuries. Suddenly, Allah looks at it with favour. He raises in it an illustrious guide and sends down His own Word to take it out of the darkness of ignorance so that it is aroused from slumber, it gives up superstitions of ignorance and it becomes aware of the truth and adopts the right way of life. But the ignorant people of the nation and the tribal chiefs turn hostile to the guide, and try their utmost to defeat him and his mission. With the passage of time their hostility and mischief go on increasing; so much so that they make up their mind to kill him. At this, it is being said: "Should We stop making any efforts to reform you because you are proving to be un-worthy people? Should We withhold sending down this Admonition, and leave you lying in the same wretched state in which you have been lying since centuries ? Do you really think that should be the demand of Our Mercy ? Have you ever considered what doom you would meet when you have turned down the bounty of Allah and persisted in falsehood after the truth has come before you?"

5. That is, if such absurdity and senselessness had barred the sending of a Prophet or a Book, no Prophet would ever have come to any nation nor a Book sent to it,

6. That is, the result of the senselessness of some particular people could not be that the entire mankind should be deprived of the guidance of the Prophethood and the Book, but its result always has been that the worshippers of falsehood who, being drunk with the pride of power, did not desist from mocking the Prophets, were ultimately destroyed. When Allah's wrath descended even the people, who possessed thousands of times greater power than that possessed by the puny chiefs of the Quraish, were crushed to annihilation like mosquitoes and fleas.

7. At other places the earth has been described as a bed, but here as a cradle. That is, just as a child lies resting in its cradle, so is this great globe meant to be a place of rest for you, which is suspended in space, which is spinning on its axis at a speed of 1,000 miles an hour, which is revolving around the sun at a speed of 66,000 miles an hour. Its interior is so intensely hot that it can melt the stones and it manifests its power sometimes in the form of volcano eruptions. But, in spite of that, the Creator has made it so tranquil that one sleeps on it in full

peace and there is no jerk whatever. One lives on it and does not at all feel that this globe is suspended and one is hanging from it with one's head pointing downward. One moves about on it with satisfaction and never thinks that one is riding on a vehicle moving faster than a bullet. You dig it at will and turn it inside out and beat it as you like to obtain your sustenance, whereas a little shaking of it in an earthquake makes you feel what a terrible giant it is, which Allah has subdued for you. (For further explanation, see Al-Naml: 61 and E.N. 74 on it).

8. The passes in the mountains and the rivers in the hill and plain regions are the natural paths, which Allah has provided on the surface of the earth. Man has spread on the earth by means of these. If the mountainous ranges had been created erect, without a crevice, and there had been no rivers and streams, man would have been confined to the same areas where he was born. Then, Allah through another grace has not made the whole surface of the earth uniform in nature, but has created different marks of distinction by means of which man recognizes different lands and feels the difference between one land and another. This is the second important means by which man became able to move about on the earth. This blessing can be appreciated by the one who has had a chance of going on a vast desert, where for thousands of miles the earth is without any land-marks and one does not know where one has reached and where one has to go.

9. This sentence gives two meanings simultaneously: (1) "That by means of these natural paths and land-marks you may find your way and reach the place you want to reach:" and (2) "that you may obtain guidance from the observation of this craftsmanship of Allah Almighty: may reach the underlying reality and understand that this system of the earth is not functioning haphazardly, nor has been devised by many gods jointly, but there is one All-Wise Creator, Who has made these paths in the hills and on the plains in view of the needs and requirements of His creatures, and has given each region of the earth a different form in countless different ways by means of which man can distinguish one region from the other.

10. That is, "For each region He has ordained an average measure of the rain, which falls year after year for long ages regularly. It does not happen that an area may have two inches of the rainfall one year and 200 inches of it the next year. Then He spreads the rainfall over different places in different times in such a way that it becomes beneficial on the whole for the products of the earth. And this is also His wisdom that He has deprived some parts of the earth of the rainfall almost wholly and turned them into dry, barren deserts, and in some other parts, He sometimes causes famines to occur and sometimes sends torrential rains so that man may know what a great blessing the rain and its general regularity is for the populated areas, and he may also remember that this system is under the control of another power, whose decrees cannot be changed by anyone. No one has the

power that he may change the general average of the rainfall of a country, or effect a variation in its distribution over vast areas of the earth, or avert an impending storm, or attract the displeased clouds towards one's own land and compel them to rain." (For further explanation, see Al Ḥijr: 21-22, Al-Mu'minūn: 18-20).

11. Here, the birth of vegetation in the earth by means of water has been presented as an argument for two things simultaneously: (1) That these things are happening by the power and wisdom of One God; no one else is His associate in these works; and (2) that there can be life after death, and it will be. (For further explanation, see An-Naḥl: 65-67, Al-Ḥajj: 5-7, An-Naml: 60, Ar-Rūm: 19, 24; Fāṭir: E.N. 19 and Yā Sīn: E.N. 29).

12. Pairs here does not imply only pairs of men and women among human beings and of males and females among animals and vegetation, but there are countless other things which the Creator has made as matching partners of each other and by whose coming together and combination new and ever new things come into being in the world. For example, among the elements, some can be combined with others and some cannot be. The combination of these which can combine is resulting into various compositions, e.g. the negative and positive charges in electricity are the matching partners of each other and their mutual attraction is causing wonderful things to happen in the world. If man considers the structure and the mutual relationships and the different forms of cooperation and the results of the combination of this and other countless pairs which Allah has created among countless of His creations. He cannot help testifying to the truth that this great workshop of the world is the creation of one and only one Almighty, All-Wise Designer, and is functioning only under His care and control. Only a man of mean intelligence could suppose that all this happened, and is happening, without a Wise Being, or there is the possibility in it of the agency and interference of more gods than one.

13. That is, "Only man from among all the creatures of the earth was not given this power by Allah to use boats and ships and animals as conveyance so that he may be loaded on them like bags of grain and should never think as to who it is who created possibilities for him to run boats in the mighty oceans, and who created some animals of the countless kinds of animals, with a nature that they become his servants in spite of being far stronger than him in power, and he rides on them and drives them wherever he likes. To benefit by these blessings and to forget the Benefactor is a sign of the heart's becoming dead and the conscience's being insensitive. For when a man endowed with a living heart and a sensitive conscience will sit on these conveyances, he will be filled with the feelings of the blessings and with the gratitude for it, and will cry out: "Glorified is the Being Who subjected these things to me: Glorified is He from that another should be His

associate in His Being and attributes and powers: Glorified is He and free from the weakness that He should become helpless of performing the functions of His Godhead by Himself and should stand in need of other associate gods: Glorified is He that I should make another an associate with Him in rendering thanks for these blessings."

The best practical commentary of the intention and meaning of this verse are the words that the Holy Prophet (upon whom be Allah's peace) used to pronounce at the time he sat on the conveyance. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar says that whenever the Holy Prophet sat on a conveyance for a journey, he would pronounce *Allah-u Akbar* thrice, then would recite this verse, and then pray: "O God, I implore You to grant me in this journey the grace of goodness and piety and such acts as may please You. O God, make the journey easy and roll up the long distance for us; O God, You alone are the Companion during the journey and Guardian of the family in our absence. O God, take care of us during the journey and our household in our absence." (Musnad Aḥmad, Muslim, Abu Da'ūd, Nasā'i, Dārimi, Tirmidhī).

Ḥaḍrat 'Alī says: Once the Holy Prophet put his foot in the stirrup with *bismillah*, and then, after riding, said: *Al-ḥamd-u lillāh, ṣubḥán-alladhi sakhkhara lanā ḥādhā* ...., then pronounced *al-ḥamd-u-lillah* thrice, and *Allah-u Akbar* thrice; then said: *Subḥāna-ka, lā-ilāha illā anta, qad ẓalamtu nafsi fagh fir-lī*. Then he laughed. I asked: What made you laugh, O Messenger of Allah? He replied: When a servant says: *Rabb-igḥfir-lī*, Allah Almighty is very pleased with this. He says: My servant knows that there is none beside Me who can forgive sins." (Aḥmad, Abū Da'ūd, Tirmidhī, Nasā'ī, and others).

Abū Mijlaz says: "Once I rode on my animal and recited this verse: *Subḥān-alladhī sakhkhara lanā hādhā* ...; Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan (may Allah be pleased with him) said: Have you been commanded to say so ? I said: What should I say then? He replied: Say, thank God, Who guided us to Islam: Thanks to Him, Who did us a favour by sending Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace): Thanks to Him, Who admitted us into the best community that has been raised for the people; then recite this verse." *(Ibn Jarīr, Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by Jaṣṣāṣ)

14. That is, "While embarking on every journey one should remember that there is ahead a longer and final journey also. Besides there is the possibility in the use of every conveyance that an accident may turn that very journey into one's last journey; therefore, every time one should remember one's return to one's Lord so that if something untoward happens, one does not die unawares.

[Contd. on p. 572]

13
إِذَا اسْتَوَيْتُمْ عَلَيْهِ وَتَقُولُوا سُبْحٰنَ الَّذِي سَخَّرَ لَنَا هٰذَا وَمَا كُنَّا لَهُ مُقْرِنِينَ ﴿١٣﴾
وَإِنَّا إِلٰى رَبِّنَا لَمُنْقَلِبُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ وَجَعَلُوا لَهُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ جُزْءًا ۚ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ
لَكَفُورٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٥﴾ أَمِ اتَّخَذَ مِمَّا يَخْلُقُ بَنَاتٍ وَأَصْفٰكُمْ بِالْبَنِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَإِذَا بُشِّرَ
أَحَدُهُمْ بِمَا ضَرَبَ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ مَثَلًا ظَلَّ وَجْهُهُ مُسْوَدًّا وَهُوَ كَظِيمٌ ﴿١٧﴾ أَوَ
مَنْ يُنَشَّؤُا فِي الْحِلْيَةِ وَهُوَ فِي الْخِصَامِ غَيْرُ مُبِينٍ ﴿١٨﴾ وَجَعَلُوا الْمَلٰٓئِكَةَ الَّذِينَ
هُمْ عِبٰدُ الرَّحْمٰنِ إِنَاثًا ۚ أَشَهِدُوا خَلْقَهُمْ ۚ سَتُكْتَبُ شَهَادَتُهُمْ وَيُسْـَٔلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾
وَقَالُوا لَوْ شَاءَ الرَّحْمٰنُ مَا عَبَدْنٰهُمْ ۚ مَا لَهُمْ بِذٰلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ ۖ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا
يَخْرُصُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ أَمْ آتَيْنٰهُمْ كِتٰبًا مِنْ قَبْلِهِ فَهُمْ بِهِ مُسْتَمْسِكُونَ ﴿٢١﴾ بَلْ قَالُوا إِنَّا
وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلٰٓى أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلٰٓى آثٰرِهِمْ مُهْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَكَذٰلِكَ مَا أَرْسَلْنَا
مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِي قَرْيَةٍ مِنْ نَذِيرٍ إِلَّا قَالَ مُتْرَفُوهَا ۙ إِنَّا وَجَدْنَا آبَاءَنَا عَلٰٓى
أُمَّةٍ وَإِنَّا عَلٰٓى آثٰرِهِمْ مُقْتَدُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قٰلَ أَوَلَوْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِأَهْدٰى مِمَّا وَجَدْتُمْ
عَلَيْهِ آبَاءَكُمْ ۖ قَالُوا إِنَّا بِمَا أُرْسِلْتُمْ بِهِ كٰفِرُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ ۖ فَانْظُرْ
كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ إِبْرٰهِيمُ لِأَبِيهِ وَقَوْمِهِ إِنَّنِي
بَرَآءٌ مِمَّا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِي فَطَرَنِي فَإِنَّهُ سَيَهْدِينِ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَجَعَلَهَا كَلِمَةً
بَاقِيَةً فِي عَقِبِهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ بَلْ مَتَّعْتُ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ وَآبَاءَهُمْ حَتّٰى
جَآءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ وَرَسُولٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمُ الْحَقُّ قَالُوا هٰذَا سِحْرٌ
وَإِنَّا بِهِ كٰفِرُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَقَالُوا لَوْلَا نُزِّلَ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنُ عَلٰى رَجُلٍ مِنَ
الْقَرْيَتَيْنِ عَظِيمٍ ﴿٣١﴾ أَهُمْ يَقْسِمُونَ رَحْمَتَ رَبِّكَ ۚ نَحْنُ قَسَمْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ
مَعِيشَتَهُمْ فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۚ وَرَفَعْنَا بَعْضَهُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجٰتٍ لِيَتَّخِذَ

(In spite of knowing and recognizing all this) these people have made some of His servants to be part of Him.[15] The fact is that man is manifestly ungrateful. 15

Did Allah choose from His creation daughters for Himself and blessed you with sons? whereas when the birth of the offspring whom they ascribe to the Merciful God, is announced to any of them, his face grows black and he is filled with grief.[16] Would they assign to Allah the offspring who is brought up among ornaments and is even unable to make itself clear in disputation?[17] 16-18

They have regarded the angels, who are themselves servants of the Merciful God,[18] as females. Have they seen them in person?[19] Their evidence will be recorded and they will be called to account for it. 19

They say, "Had the Merciful God willed (that we should not worship them), We would never have worshipped them."[20] They do not at all know the fact of the matter: they only conjecture. Did We give them a Book before this of which they hold an authority (for their angel-worship)?[21] Nay! but they say, "We found our forefathers on a way and we are only walking in their footsteps."[22] Even so, whenever before you We sent a warner to a habitation, its people of means said, "We have found our forefathers on a way and we are only following in their footsteps."[23] Every Prophet asked them, "Will you still go on following the same old way even if I guide you to a more right way than that you found your forefathers following?" They replied, "We disbelieve the religion with which you have been sent." Consequently, We took vengeance on them. Just consider what was the end of those who denied (the Truth) ! 20-25

Recall the time when Abraham had said to his father and his people :[24] "I have nothing to do with those whom you worship. I worship only Him Who created me: He alone will guide me."[25] And Abraham left behind the same Word[26] among his descendants so that they should turn to it.[27] (In spite of that when the people started worshipping others, I did not annihilate them), but I went on providing sustenance of life to them and to their forefathers until the Truth came to them and a Messenger who expounded everything clearly.[28] But when the Truth came to them, they said, "This is a sorcery[29] and we refuse to believe in it." 26-30

31-32 They say, "Why was not this Qur'ân sent down to one of the great men from the two cities?"[30] Is it they who distribute the mercy of your Lord? It is We Who have distributed the means of their sustenance in the life of this world and raised some of them above others in ranks so that they may take one another in service;[31] and your Lord's Mercy is far greater in worth than the wealth which (their chiefs) are amassing.[32]

Contd. from p. 571]

Let us pause here for a while and consider the moral results of this teaching. Can one imagine that a person who while sitting on a conveyance starts his journey consciously with full remembrance of Allah and his return and accountability before Him, would commit sins and injustices and tyrannies on the way? Can a person think or utter these words from his mouth when he intends to go to meet a prostitute, or to visit a club for the purpose of drinking and gambling? Can a ruler, or a government official, or a merchant who has stepped out of his house with such thoughts and such words at his lips, usurp the rights of others when he reaches his destination? Can a soldier utter these words while boarding his aircraft or tank when he goes out to shed blood of the innocent and deprive the weak of their freedom? If not, then this one thing alone is enough to bar every movement undertaken for the commission of a sin.

15. "To make part of Allah" implies declaring a servant of Allah His offspring, for an offspring inevitably is homogeneous with and a part of the father's body, and regarding somebody as Allah's son or daughter means that he or she is being made a partner in Allah's Being. Besides, another form of making a creature a part of Allah is that it should be regarded as possessor of the attributes and powers as are specifically Allah's own, and it should be invoked under the same concept, or rites of worship performed before it, or its sanctities observed and regarded as imperative and binding, for in that case man divides divinity and providence between Allah and His servants and hands over a part of it to the servants.

16. Here, the folly of the polytheists of Arabia has been fully exposed. They said that the angels were the daughters of Allah. They had carved out their images as females, and these were their goddesses whom they worshipped. About this Allah says: In the first place, in spite of knowing and recognizing that the Creator of the earth and heavens is Allah and it is He Who has made this earth a cradle for you and it is He Who sends down the rain from the sky and it is He Who has created these animals for your service, yet you have taken others as gods beside Him, whereas those whom you serve as deities are not God but creatures of

God. Then, further more, you have made some of the servants associates of Allah not only in His attributes but in His Being as well, and invented the creed that they were Allah's offspring. Then, not resting content with this, you assigned to Allah that kind of the offspring which you regard as disgraceful for your own selves: When a daughter is born in your house, your face grows dark, you feel distressed, and sometimes you bury her alive. This offspring you assign to Allah and reserve for yourselves the sons, whom you regard as a source of joy and pride. Even then you claim that you believe in Allah.

17. In other words, "You have assigned to Allah the offspring that is by nature delicate, weak and frail, and adopted for yourselves the offspring that is bold, courageous and fearless."

This verse shows permissibility of the ornaments for the women, for Allah has mentioned the ornaments as a natural thing for them. The same is also confirmed by the *Ḥadith*. Imam Aḥmad, *Abū* Da'ūd and Nasā'ī have related on the authority of Ḥaḍrat 'Ali that the Holy Prophet took silk in one hand and gold in the other and said that both were forbidden to be used in dress by the men of his *Ummah*. Tirmidhī and Nasā'ī have related from Ḥaḍrat Abu Musa Ash'ari a tradition, saying that the Holy Prophet said: "Silk and gold have been forbidden for the men but made lawful for the women of my *Ummah*." 'Allāma Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣāṣ has discussed this question in his *Aḥkām al-Qur'an* and related the following traditions:

Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah says: Once Usāmah, son of Zaid bin Ḥārithah, was hurt and started bleeding. The Holy Prophet loved him like his own children. He sucked his blood and spat it out, and cheered him saying, "Had Usāmah been a daughter we would have adorned him with ornaments! Had Usāmah been a daughter, we would have dressed him in fine clothes !"

Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā Ash'arī has related that the Holy Prophet said: "Wearing of silken clothes and ornaments of gold is unlawful for the men of my *Ummah* but lawful for the women."

Ḥaḍrat 'Amr bin 'Āṣ has related: "Once two women came before the Holy Prophet, and they were wearing bracelets of gold. He said: Would you like that Allah should make you wear bracelets of the fire instead of these? They replied that they would not. Thereupon he said: Pay their dues, i.e. the *zakāt* due on them."

Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'isha has stated that there is no harm in wearing the ornaments if the *zakāt* due on them is paid.

Ḥaḍrat 'Umar wrote to Ḥaḍrat Abū Mūsā Ash'arī: Order the Muslim women who live in the areas under your administrative control that they should pay the *zakāt* dues on their ornaments.

Imam Abū Ḥanīfah has related the following traditions on the authority of 'Amr bin Dīnār: Ḥaḍrat 'Ā'ishah had arranged ornaments of gold for her sisters and Ḥadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Umar for his daughters.

After citing all these traditions 'Allama Jaṣṣāṣ writes: "The traditions that have been related from the Holy Prophet and the Companions about the permissibility and lawfulness of gold and silk for the women are better known and more common than those that are there about their unlawfulness, and the above verse also points to their lawfulness. Then the practice of the Muslims also from the time of the Holy Prophet and his Companions till our time (i.e. till the latter part of the 4th century of *hijrah)* has been the same, and no one ever objected to it. In such matters, no objection can be admitted on the basis of the isolate reports *(Akhbār āhād)*."

18. That is, who are free from this that they should be males or females.

19. Another translation can be: "were they present at the time of their creation?"

20. This was their reasoning from destiny to cover up their deviation and error, and this has been the argument of the wrong-doers in every age. They argued that their worshipping the angels became possible only because Allah allowed them to do so. Had He not willed so they could not have done it; and then it had been a practice with them for centuries and no torment from Allah had descended on them, which meant that Allah did not disapprove of their this practice.

21. It means this: "These ignorant people think that whatever is happening in the world has the approval of Allah for it, because it is happening according to His will. This argument, however, is wrong. For it is not only *shirk* which is being committed in the world, but countless other crimes like stealing, robbery, murder, bribery, etc. also are taking place, which nobody likes. Then, can it be said by the same reasoning that all such acts are lawful and good only because Allah is letting them happen in His world, and when He allows them to happen, He must have approved of them also? The means of knowing what Allah likes and what He hates are not the events that are happening in the world, but the Book of Allah, which comes through His Messenger and in which Allah Himself states as to what beliefs, what deeds and what morals He likes and what He dislikes. If these people have a Book, which came before the Qur'ān, and which tells that Allah has appointed the angels also as deities beside himself and that they should

worship them also, they should cite it." (For further explanation, see Al-An'ām: 107, 112, 137, 148-149; Al-A'rāf: 28; Yūnus: 99; Hūd: 118-119; Ar-Ra'd: 31; An-Naḥl: 9, 35-36, 93; and E.N. 20 of Az-Zumar and E.N. 11 of Ash-Shūrā).

22. That is, "They have no authority of any divine book; the only authority they have is that it has been the practice since the time of their forefathers; therefore, they have taken the angels as goddesses in imitation of them."

23. Here, the point worth consideration is why the well-to-do people of every community only have resisted the Prophets and upheld the imitation of their forefathers in every age. Why have they alone been in the forefront to oppose the Truth and to endeavour to maintain the established falsehood and to beguile and incite the common people against them ? Its basic causes were two: (1) The well-to-do and affluent people are so absorbed in making and enjoying the world of their own that they are not inclined to bother themselves about the useless debate (as they assume it to be) between the Truth and falsehood. Their love of ease and mental lethargy renders them so heedless of religion and conservative that they want the established order, no matter whether it is based on truth or falsehood, to remain in force so that they do not have to take the trouble of thinking about the new order at all for themselves. (2) Their interests become so dependent on the established order that when they get the first glimpse of the order presented by the Prophets they start feeling that if it came, it would not only put an end to their leadership but also would deprive them of the freedom to consume the lawful and commit the unlawful. (For further details, see Al-An'ām: 103; Al-A'rāf: 66-70, 75, 88, 109, 127; Hūd: 27-28; Banī Isrā'īl : 16; Al-Mu'minūn: 24-33, 46; Sabā: 34 and the corresponding E.N.'s).

24. For details, see Al-Baqarah 124-133, Al-An'ām 74-84, Ibrāhīm: 35-41, Maryam: 41-50, Al-Anbiyā': 51-73, Ash-Shu'arā: 69-89, Al-'Ankabūt: 16-27, Aṣ-Ṣāffāt: 83-100 and the corresponding E.N 's.

25. In these words not only did the Prophet Abraham state his creed but also gave the argument for it. The reason for not having any connection with the other deities is that they neither have created nor they give right guidance in any matter, nor they can; and the reason for having a connection only with Allah Almighty is that He alone is the Creator and He alone gives, and can give, the right guidance to mankind.

26. "The same word": the word that none but the Creator is worthy of worship in the world.

27. That is, "Whenever they swerve from the right path, this word should be there to guide them so that they return to it again." This event has been

mentioned here in order to expose the foolishness of the disbelieving Quraish and to put them to shame, as if to say: "When you have adopted obedience of your ancestors, you have selected the most depraved of them for the purpose instead of the most righteous and illustrious, who were the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael (peace be upon them)." The basis of the leadership of the Quraish in Arabia was that they were the descendants of the Prophets Abraham and Ishmael and were the attendants of the Ka'bah built by them. Therefore, they should have followed them and not their ignorant forefathers who had given up the way of the Prophets and adopted polytheism from the neighbouring idol-worshippers. Furthermore, by mentioning this event another error of those people has been pointed out. That is, if the blind imitation of the fore-fathers, without the distinction of good and evil, had been the right thing, the Prophet Abraham should have done so in the first instance. But he had plainly told his father and his people that he could not follow their creed of ignorance in which they had abandoned the Creator and made those imaginary beings their deities, who were not the creator. This shows that the Prophet Abraham did not believe in following the forefathers, but his creed was that before one followed the forefathers one should see whether they were following the right way or not, and if it became known by reason that they were following the wrong way, one should give up their way and adopt the way that was proved right.

28. Another meaning of the word *"rasūlum-mubīn* can be: "A Messenger whose being a Messenger was obvious and apparent: whose life before and after the Prophethood clearly testified that he was certainly Allah's Messenger."

29. For explanation, see Sūrah Al-Anbiyā':3 and E.N. 5 on it, and E.N. 5 of Sūrah Suād.

30. "The two cities": Makkah and Ṭā'if. What the disbelievers meant was: "Had Allah really willed to send a messenger and intended to send down a book to him, He would have selected a great man from our these central cities for the purpose. For Allah could not have selected for this great mission a person who was born an orphan, who did not inherit much property, who passed his youth by tending goats, who even at present earned his living through business with his wife's money, and who was neither the chief of a tribe nor the head of a family. Were not there well known chiefs like Walīd bin Mughīrah and 'Utbah bin Rabī'ah in Makkah, and nobles like 'Urwah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥabīb bin 'Amr, Kinānah bin 'Abd-i -'Amr and Ibn 'Abd Yālil in Ṭā'if? This was their reasoning. in the first instance, they were also not inclined to believe that a man could be a Messenger. But when the Qur'ān refuted this misconception by argument and reason and they were told that in the past only men had come as Messengers and a man only could be a Messenger for the guidance of the people, and not another kind of being and the Messenger who came did not descend, suddenly from

heavens, but were born in the same ordinary dwellings, walked about in the streets, had children and families and stood in need of food and drink (see An-Naḥl: 43, Banī Isrā'īl: 94-95, Yūsuf: 109, Al-Furqān: 7, 20; Al-Anbiyā: 7-8; Ar-Ra'd: 38), they took this stand, saying: "Well, even if a human being, he should be a big man, who should be wealthy, influential and awe-inspiring and having a large following. How could Muḥammad bin 'Abdullah (upon whom be Allah's peace) be fit for this appointment?"

31. This is the answer to their objection, which briefly mentions many important things: First, it asks: "Since when have these people become responsible for distributing the mercy of your Lord ? Is it for them to decide whom Allah should favour with His mercy and whom He should not ? (Here, by Allah's mercy is implied His general mercy from which everyone has a share).

Second, Allah says: "Prophethood is a great blessing: We have even kept the distribution of the common means of life in the world in Our own hand, and have not entrusted it to anyone else. We create someone beautiful and another ugly, someone with a sweet voice and another with a harsh voice, someone robust and strong and another weak and frail, someone intelligent and another dull, someone with a strong memory and another forgetful, some with healthy limbs and another a cripple, or blind or deaf and dumb, someone in a rich family and another among the poor, someone in an advanced country and another in a backward community. No one can do anything about this destiny concerning birth. One is compelled to be what We have made him. And it is in no one's power to avert the impact one's circumstances of birth have on one's destiny. Then it is We ourself Who are distributing provisions, power, honour, fame, wealth, government, etc. among men. No one can degrade the one whom We have blessed with good fortune, and no one can save from ruin the one whom We have afflicted with misfortune. All plans and schemes of man become ineffective against Our decrees. In this universal Divine System, therefore, how can these people decide as to whom should the Master of the universe make His Prophet and whom He should not?

Thirdly, "An abiding principle that We have kept in view in this Divine System is that everything should not be given to one and the same person, or everything should not be given to everybody. If you look around carefully, you will see that great differences exist between the people in every respect. We have given one thing to one person but deprived him of another, and given the same to another one. This is based on the wisdom that no human being should become

[Contd. on p. 582

بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضًا سُخْرِيًّا ۗ وَرَحْمَتُ رَبِّكَ خَيْرٌ مِّمَّا يَجْمَعُوْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَلَوْلَآ اَنْ
يَّكُوْنَ النَّاسُ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً لَّجَعَلْنَا لِمَنْ يَّكْفُرُ بِالرَّحْمٰنِ لِبُيُوْتِهِمْ سُقُفًا مِّنْ
فِضَّةٍ وَّمَعَارِجَ عَلَيْهَا يَظْهَرُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَلِبُيُوْتِهِمْ اَبْوَابًا وَّسُرُرًا عَلَيْهَا يَتَّكِـُٔوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾
وَزُخْرُفًا ۗ وَاِنْ كُلُّ ذٰلِكَ لَمَّا مَتَاعُ الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا ۗ وَالْاٰخِرَةُ عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ
لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾ وَمَنْ يَّعْشُ عَنْ ذِكْرِ الرَّحْمٰنِ نُقَيِّضْ لَهٗ شَيْطٰنًا فَهُوَ لَهٗ
قَرِيْنٌ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَاِنَّهُمْ لَيَصُدُّوْنَهُمْ عَنِ السَّبِيْلِ وَيَحْسَبُوْنَ اَنَّهُمْ مُّهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾
حَتّٰٓى اِذَا جَآءَنَا قَالَ يٰلَيْتَ بَيْنِىْ وَبَيْنَكَ بُعْدَ الْمَشْرِقَيْنِ فَبِئْسَ الْقَرِيْنُ ﴿٣٨﴾
وَلَنْ يَّنْفَعَكُمُ الْيَوْمَ اِذْ ظَّلَمْتُمْ اَنَّكُمْ فِى الْعَذَابِ مُشْتَرِكُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اَفَاَنْتَ تُسْمِعُ
الصُّمَّ اَوْ تَهْدِى الْعُمْىَ وَمَنْ كَانَ فِىْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٤٠﴾ فَاِمَّا نَذْهَبَنَّ بِكَ
فَاِنَّا مِنْهُمْ مُّنْتَقِمُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ اَوْ نُرِيَنَّكَ الَّذِىْ وَعَدْنٰهُمْ فَاِنَّا عَلَيْهِمْ مُّقْتَدِرُوْنَ ﴿٤٢﴾
فَاسْتَمْسِكْ بِالَّذِىْٓ اُوْحِىَ اِلَيْكَ ۚ اِنَّكَ عَلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَاِنَّهٗ لَذِكْرٌ
لَّكَ وَلِقَوْمِكَ ۚ وَسَوْفَ تُسْـَٔلُوْنَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَسْـَٔلْ مَنْ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رُّسُلِنَآ
اَجَعَلْنَا مِنْ دُوْنِ الرَّحْمٰنِ اٰلِهَةً يُّعْبَدُوْنَ ﴿٤٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ اَرْسَلْنَا مُوْسٰى بِاٰيٰتِنَآ
اِلٰى فِرْعَوْنَ وَمَلَا۟ئِهٖ فَقَالَ اِنِّىْ رَسُوْلُ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَلَمَّا جَآءَهُمْ بِاٰيٰتِنَآ
اِذَا هُمْ مِّنْهَا يَضْحَكُوْنَ ﴿٤٧﴾ وَمَا نُرِيْهِمْ مِّنْ اٰيَةٍ اِلَّا هِىَ اَكْبَرُ مِنْ اُخْتِهَا ۖ
وَاَخَذْنٰهُمْ بِالْعَذَابِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٤٨﴾ وَقَالُوْا يٰٓاَيُّهَ السّٰحِرُ ادْعُ لَنَا
رَبَّكَ بِمَا عَهِدَ عِنْدَكَ ۖ اِنَّنَا لَمُهْتَدُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾ فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُمُ الْعَذَابَ اِذَا
هُمْ يَنْكُثُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ وَنَادٰى فِرْعَوْنُ فِىْ قَوْمِهٖ قَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اَلَيْسَ لِىْ مُلْكُ
مِصْرَ وَهٰذِهِ الْاَنْهٰرُ تَجْرِىْ مِنْ تَحْتِىْ ۚ اَفَلَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ ﴿٥١﴾ اَمْ اَنَا خَيْرٌ مِّنْ

But for the fear that all mankind would follow the same way, 33-35
We would have made for those who disbelieve in the Merciful God,
houses with roofs of silver and gold, and stairways by which they go to
upper chambers, and their doors and their couches on which they
recline (all of silver and gold).[33] But all this is merely a provision of
this worldly life; and the Hereafter with your Lord is only for the
righteous.

He who does not heed the admonition of the Merciful,[34] We set 36-39
a satan upon him, and he becomes his companion. These satans hinder
such people from the right way while they think that they are guided
aright. Ultimately, when he comes to Us, he will say to his satan
companion, "would that between me and you there were the distance of
the East and the West: you turned out to be a most evil companion."
Then it will be said to them, "When you have done wrong, it will avail
you nothing today as you and your satans are partners in the same
torment."[35]

Now, O Prophet, will you make the deaf to hear you, or show 40-45
the way to the blind and those who are involved in manifest deviation?[36]
Now We have to punish them, whether We take you away from the
world, or let you see their end, which We have promised them: We
have full power over them.[37] So, hold fast to the Book that has been
revealed to you: you are surely on the Straight Way.[38] The fact is that
this Book is a great honour for yon and your people, and soon you shall
be called to account for it.[39] You may ask all other Messengers whom
We sent before you if We ever had appointed any other gods to be
worshipped besides the Merciful God.[40]

We[41] sent Moses with Our Signs[42] to Pharaoh and his chiefs, 46-53
and he said to them, "I am a Messenger of the Lord of the worlds".
Then? when he showed Our Signs to them, they laughed at him. We
showed them Sign after Sign, each greater than the one preceding it,
and We seized them with the torment that they might give up their
attitude.[43] Whenever a torment visited them, they said, "O sorcerer,
pray to your Lord for us by virtue of the appointment you hold from
Him: we shall surely take the right way." But whenever We removed
the torment from them, they would go back on their word.[44] One day
Pharaoh proclaimed among his people,[45] "O my people: Is not the

kingdom of Egypt mine? And are not these canals flowing beneath me? Can you not see who is better:[46] I or this contemptible, wretched person,[47] who can hardly express himself clearly?[48] Why were not bracelets of gold sent down on him, or a company of angels as attendants?"[49]

Contd. from p. 579]

independent of others, but everyone should remain dependent on the other in one way or the other. Now it would be foolish on your part to think that We should have given the Prophethood also to the same person whom We had blessed with wealth and nobility. Likewise, will you also say that wisdom, knowledge, wealth, beauty, power, authority and all other excellences should be assembled in one and the same person, and the one who has not been given one thing, should not be given anything else?"

32. "Your Lord's mercy": the Prophethood. It means: "Your leaders and chiefs whom you regard as big people because of their wealth and dignity and chiefship, are not worthy of this wealth, which has been given to Muḥammad bin 'Abdullah (upon whom be Allah's peace). This wealth is far superior to that and for this the criterion is different. If you think that every noble and rich man is worthy of becoming a prophet, it would only show your own thinking. Why do you expect Allah to be so ignorant and simple?"

33. That is, "This silver and gold whose possession by somebody is the highest blessing and the very climax of good fortune in your sight, is so base and contemptible a thing in the sight of Allah that had there been no danger of all human beings being inclined towards unbelief, He would have made every disbeliever's house of gold and silver. Since when has the abundance of this worthless commodity become proof of man's nobility and his piety and his spiritual purity? This kind of wealth is even found in the possession of those foul and wicked people whose filthy characters make the whole society stink. And this you have made the criterion of man's greatness of character."

34. "*Dhikr* of the Merciful": His remembrance as well as His admonition and the Qur'ān.

35. That is, "In this there is no aspect of consolation for you that the one who misguided you is being punished, for you also are receiving the same punishment for accepting and following the deviation."

36. It means to say: "Pay attention to those who are inclined to listen and have not closed their eyes to the realities, and do not consume yourself in showing the way to the blind and making the deaf to hear, nor consume yourself with the

grief as to why your near and dear ones are not coming to the right path, and why they are making themselves worthy of Allah's torment."

37. This thing can be understood fully only by keeping in view the background in which it was said. The disbelievers of Makkah thought that the person of the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) had become a source of trouble for them. If they could somehow get rid of him, matters would become normal. On the basis of this evil thought they were holding consultations day and night and planning to kill him. At this, Allah addresses His Prophet so as to tell them indirectly: "It doesn't make any difference whether you remain among them or not: if you live, you will see them meet their doom with your own eyes; if you are recalled from the world, they will be sent to their doom in your absence, because they cannot in any case escape the consequences of their misdeeds."

38. That is, "You should not worry as to what punishment do those who are resisting and opposing the truth with injustice and dishonesty receive and when, nor should you worry whether Islam flourishes during your lifetime or not. For you this satisfaction is qute enough that you are on the Right Path. Therefore, you should go on fulfilling your mission unconcerned about the results, and leave it to Allah whether He defeats falsehood in front of you or after you."

39. That is, "There can be no greater good fortune for a person than that Allah should choose him from among all men to become the recipient of His Book, and there can be no greater good fortune also for a nation than that Allah should raise His Prophet in it, apart from all other nations of the world, and should send down His Book in its tongue, and give it the opportunity to rise as the standard-bearer of Divine Message in the world. If the Quraish and the people of Arabia have no sense of this great honour, and spurn it, a time will come when they will be called upon to account for it."

40. "Ask the Messengers": Find out from the Books brought by them. Just as the meaning of: "If there arises any dispute among you about anything, refer it to Allah and His Prophet," is not that the dispute should be taken before Allah and His Messenger, but that one should turn to the Book of Allah and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger for a decision, so "asking the Messengers" also does not mean that one should approach all the Messengers who have left the world and ask them, but the right meaning is: "Discover what teachings the Messengers of Allah have left in the world as to which of them taught that another than Allah also is worthy of worship and service."

41. This story has been narrated here for three objects: (1) That when Allah sends His Prophet to a country and nation and affords it the opportunity which He has now given to the Arabs by appointing the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) to Prophethood, and it, instead of taking advantage of it,

commits the folly of Pharaoh and his people, it meets the same fate which has become an object lesson in history. (2) That just as Pharaoh also on account of his arrogance and pride of kingdom and grandeur and wealth and possessions had belittled the Prophet Moses as mean and contemptible, so the unbelieving Quraish now are regarding Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) as insignificant as against their chiefs. But God's judgement was different which ultimately proved who was really great. (3) That to mock Allah's Revelations and show stubbornness against His warnings is not a mere joke, but a very serious sin. If you do not learn a lesson from the fate of those who have been doomed on account of this, you also would go to your doom on account of the same."

42. This implies the signs with which the Prophet Moses had gone to the court of Pharaoh, i.e. the Signs of the staff and the shining hand. (For explanation, see Al-A'rāf: 107-108, Ṭā Hā: 20-22, Ash-Shu'arā: 32-33, An-Naml: 10-12, Al-Qaṣaṣ: 31-32).

43. This implies the Signs which Allah showed them through the Prophet Moses afterwards, and these were the following:

(1) A public encounter of Allah's Prophet with the magicians, who believed after their defeat. For details, see Al-A'rāf: 112-126, Ṭā Hā: 68-73, Ash-Shu'arā: 37-51.

(2) A severe famine which hit the land of Egypt according to the Prophet Moses' announcement and which left the country only on his prayer.

(3) Dreadful rain and hail-storms accompanied by lightning and thunder struck the country even as the Prophet had announced, which destroyed the crops and dwellings and which also was removed only on his prayer.

(4) The sudden appearance of locusts in the land. This calamity also was not removed till the Prophet prayed to Allah.

(5) Lice and weavils spread throughout the country according to the announcement made by Moses, which afflicted men and animals on the one hand, and destroyed granaries on the other. This torment also was averted when the Prophet Moses was requested to pray for its removal.

(6) Frogs appeared everywhere in the country according to the warning given by Moses, which put the whole population to great distress; this calamity also did not retreat till the Prophet prayed for it.

(7) The torment of blood appeared precisely as foretold by Moses, which turned the water of all canals, wells, springs, pools and cisterns into blood. The fish died and the water smelled so bad that the Egyptians could not drink from it for a full week. This evil also was averted when the

Prophet Moses was asked to pray for its removal. For details, see Al-A'rāf: 130-136. An-Naml: 12 and E.N. 37 of Al-Mu'min.

Chapters 7 to 10 of Exodus also contain the details of these calamities, but it is a combination of gossip and truth. It says that when the calamity of blood appeared, the magicians also worked a similar miracle, but when the calamity of the lice came, the magicians could not produce lice in response, and they said that it was God's work. Even more strange than this is that when the storm of the frogs came, the magicians also brought about frogs, but in spite of that Pharaoh requested only the Prophet Moses to pray to God to take away the frogs. The question is when the magicians could produce frogs, why didn't Pharaoh get the frogs taken away through them? And how did it become known which of the frogs were Allah's work and which of the magicians'? The same question arises about the blood. When according to the warning of Moses water became blood everywhere, which water did the magicians turn into blood? And how was it known that the water of a particular place had turned blood by the power of the magicians? Such are the things which show that the Bible does not consist of purely Divine revelation, but the people who wrote it mixed up many things in it from their own imagination. The pity, however, is that the authors also were people of ordinary intelligence, who did not even know how to invent a story.

44. The stubbornness of Pharaoh and the chiefs of his people can be judged from the fact that when distressed by the torment they wanted the Prophet Moses to pray for its removal, even then they did not recognize him as a Prophet but addressed him as a magician, whereas they were not unaware of the truth about magic, and they also knew that those miraculous things could not be brought about by the power of magic. The most that a magician can do is that in a limited area he can so influence the people present in front of him as to make them feel that water has become blood, or frogs are coming out in large numbers or swarms of locusts are advancing. And within this limited place also no water will actually become blood, but water will remain water as soon as it comes outside it; no frog will be produced in actual fact, but will prove to be an imaginary thing as soon as brought outside the circle; locusts also would be imaginary: they would not be able to destroy any crop. As for this that a famine appears throughout a country, or that the canals and springs and wells of the country are filled with blood, or that swarms of locusts spread over thousands of square miles and eat up crops growing over lakhs of acres, this has neither been accomplished by a magician so far, nor can it ever happen by the power of magic. Should such magicians be there in the service of a king, he need not keep forces and fight wars; he could conquer the whole world by the power of magic. Even if the magicians possessed such power, they would not seek service under the kings, but would assume kingship themselves.

هٰذَا الَّذِیْ هُوَ مَهِیْنٌ ۙ وَّ لَا یَكَادُ یُبِیْنُ ﴿۵۲﴾ فَلَوْ لَاۤ اُلْقِیَ عَلَیْهِ اَسْوِرَةٌ مِّنْ
ذَهَبٍ اَوْ جَآءَ مَعَهُ الْمَلٰٓئِكَةُ مُقْتَرِنِیْنَ ﴿۵۳﴾ فَاسْتَخَفَّ قَوْمَهٗ فَاَطَاعُوْهُ ؕ اِنَّهُمْ
كَانُوْا قَوْمًا فٰسِقِیْنَ ﴿۵۴﴾ فَلَمَّاۤ اٰسَفُوْنَا انْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ فَاَغْرَقْنٰهُمْ اَجْمَعِیْنَ ﴿۵۵﴾
فَجَعَلْنٰهُمْ سَلَفًا وَّ مَثَلًا لِّلْاٰخِرِیْنَ ﴿۵۶﴾ وَ لَمَّا ضُرِبَ ابْنُ مَرْیَمَ مَثَلًا اِذَا قَوْمُكَ
مِنْهُ یَصِدُّوْنَ ﴿۵۷﴾ وَ قَالُوْۤا ءَاٰلِهَتُنَا خَیْرٌ اَمْ هُوَ ؕ مَا ضَرَبُوْهُ لَكَ اِلَّا جَدَلًا ؕ بَلْ
هُمْ قَوْمٌ خَصِمُوْنَ ﴿۵۸﴾ اِنْ هُوَ اِلَّا عَبْدٌ اَنْعَمْنَا عَلَیْهِ وَ جَعَلْنٰهُ مَثَلًا لِّبَنِیْۤ
اِسْرَآءِیْلَ ﴿۵۹﴾ وَ لَوْ نَشَآءُ لَجَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ مَّلٰٓئِكَةً فِی الْاَرْضِ یَخْلُفُوْنَ ﴿۶۰﴾ وَ اِنَّهٗ
لَعِلْمٌ لِّلسَّاعَةِ فَلَا تَمْتَرُنَّ بِهَا وَ اتَّبِعُوْنِ ؕ هٰذَا صِرَاطٌ مُّسْتَقِیْمٌ ﴿۶۱﴾ وَ لَا
یَصُدَّنَّكُمُ الشَّیْطٰنُ ۚ اِنَّهٗ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُّبِیْنٌ ﴿۶۲﴾ وَ لَمَّا جَآءَ عِیْسٰی بِالْبَیِّنٰتِ
قَالَ قَدْ جِئْتُكُمْ بِالْحِكْمَةِ وَ لِاُبَیِّنَ لَكُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِیْ تَخْتَلِفُوْنَ فِیْهِ ۚ
فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَ اَطِیْعُوْنِ ﴿۶۳﴾ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ رَبِّیْ وَ رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوْهُ ؕ هٰذَا صِرَاطٌ
مُّسْتَقِیْمٌ ﴿۶۴﴾ فَاخْتَلَفَ الْاَحْزَابُ مِنْۢ بَیْنِهِمْ ۚ فَوَیْلٌ لِّلَّذِیْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مِنْ عَذَابِ
یَوْمٍ اَلِیْمٍ ﴿۶۵﴾ هَلْ یَنْظُرُوْنَ اِلَّا السَّاعَةَ اَنْ تَاْتِیَهُمْ بَغْتَةً وَّ هُمْ لَا
یَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿۶۶﴾ اَلْاَخِلَّآءُ یَوْمَىٕذٍۭ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ اِلَّا الْمُتَّقِیْنَ ﴿۶۷﴾ یٰعِبَادِ
لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَیْكُمُ الْیَوْمَ وَ لَاۤ اَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿۶۸﴾ الَّذِیْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِاٰیٰتِنَا وَ كَانُوْا
مُسْلِمِیْنَ ﴿۶۹﴾ ادْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ اَنْتُمْ وَ اَزْوَاجُكُمْ تُحْبَرُوْنَ ﴿۷۰﴾ یُطَافُ عَلَیْهِمْ
بِصِحَافٍ مِّنْ ذَهَبٍ وَّ اَكْوَابٍ ۚ وَ فِیْهَا مَا تَشْتَهِیْهِ الْاَنْفُسُ وَ تَلَذُّ الْاَعْیُنُ ۚ
وَ اَنْتُمْ فِیْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿۷۱﴾ وَ تِلْكَ الْجَنَّةُ الَّتِیْۤ اُوْرِثْتُمُوْهَا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿۷۲﴾
لَكُمْ فِیْهَا فَاكِهَةٌ كَثِیْرَةٌ مِّنْهَا تَاْكُلُوْنَ ﴿۷۳﴾ اِنَّ الْمُجْرِمِیْنَ فِیْ عَذَابِ جَهَنَّمَ

He took his people to be light, and they obeyed him, for they were indeed a sinful people.[50] At last, when they had annoyed Us, We took vengeance on them and drowned them all together, and made them a precedent and an object lesson for the later generations.[51] 54-56

And when the son of Mary was cited as an example, your people raised a clamour at it, saying, "Are our gods better, or is he?"[52] They have cited this example to you only in the spirit of dispute. The fact is that they are a quarrelsome people. The son of Mary was no more than a servant whom We favoured and made an example of Our power for the children of Israel.[53] If We please We can create angels from you[54] to succeed you in the earth. And he is, in fact, a Sign of the Hour;[55] therefore, do not have any doubt about it, and follow Me: this is the Straight Way. Let not Satan hinder you from this[56]: he is your open enemy. And when Jesus had come with clear Signs, he had said, "I have brought wisdom to you, and have come to make plain to you the reality of those things in which you differ: so fear Allah and follow me. The fact is that Allah is my Lord and your Lord, too. Worship Him alone: this is the Straight Way."[57] But (in spite of his clear teachings) the sects disagreed among themselves.[58] So, woe to those who committed evil from the punishment of a painful Day. 57-65

Do these people now only await the Hour (of Resurrection) that it should come upon them suddenly while they are unaware? When the Day comes all friends shall become enemies of one another except the righteous.[59] On that Day it will be said to those who had believed in Our Revelations and surrendered themselves, "O My servants ! Today you have nothing to fear, nor will there be any cause for you to grieve. Enter Paradise, you and your wives[60]: you will be made happy !" There they shall have platters and cups of gold passed round to them and there they shall have everything that the souls can desire and the eyes can delight in. It will be said to them, "You shall live here for ever. You have inherited this Paradise by virtue of the deeds you did in the world. You have abundance of fruit here, which you will eat." As for the criminals, they shall endure for ever the torment of Hell; their punishment will never be lightened for them, and there they shall remain, despairing. We did not wrong them, but they themselves were the wrongdoers. They will call out, "O Mālik,[61] let your Lord put an end to us!" He will answer, "Here you must remain! We had brought 66-78

the Truth to you, but most of you abhor the Truth."[62]

Contd. from p. 585

The commentators in general have been perplexed as to why Pharaoh and his courtiers addressed the Prophet Moses as "O sorcerer," when they requested him to pray for the removal of the calamity, for the one who seeks another's help in a hard time flatters him and does not condemn him. They have given the interpretation that sorcery in the Egypt of those days was held as a very respectable art, and when they addressed Moses as "O sorcerer" they did not condemn him, but honoured him because it amounted to calling him as "O learned man" But this interpretation is absolutely wrong on the ground that wherever at other places in the Qur'ān Pharaoh's sayings have been cited in which he had called the Prophet Moses a sorcerer and the miracles presented by him sorcery, the sense of condemnation and contempt becomes apparent, and it becomes manifestly clear that sorcery was false in his sight, which he imputed to the Prophet Moses so as to prove his claim to the Prophethood to be false !Therefore, it cannot be acceptable that suddenly at this time "sorcerer" became the title of an honourable and learned man in his sight. As for the question: Why did the Prophet Moses accede to his request at all when even while requesting him for the prayer, Pharaoh insulted him publicly, the answer is that the object before the Prophet Moses was to strengthen the case against those people by Allah's command. Their request to him to pray for the removal of the torment by itself proved that in their heart of hearts they had come to know why the torments were occurring, who was sending them and who could avert them. In spite of that, when they called him a "sorcerer" stubbornly, and went back on their word of following the right way as soon as the torment was averted, they in fact, did not do any harm to Allah's Prophet, but only caused the case and argument to be strengthened against themselves, which Allah at last decided against them with their total destruction. When they called him a sorcerer, this did not mean that they believed in their hearts as well that the torments against them were coming by the power of sorcery, but they realized it fully well that those were Allah's Signs and yet they denied them deliberately. The same thing has been said in Sūrah An-Naml: 14: "They rejected those Signs out of sheer injustice and vanity, whereas in their heart of hearts they were convinced."

45. Pharaoh probably sent heralds to the cities and towns throughout the country to proclaim what he said in his address to his ministers and courtiers in the capital. Pharaoh could not have availed of the services of a sycophantic press, controlled news agencies and official radio.

46. The words of the proclamation clearly show that ground was slipping from under the Pharaoh's feet. The miracles performed one after the other by the

Prophet Moses had caused the common people's beliefs in their gods to waver and the Pharaoh's spell under which their dynasty was ruling over Egypt as representatives of the gods, was shattered. Thereupon, Pharaoh cried out: "O wretched people, can't you see who is ruling over this land and under whose control are the canals which have been dug out from the Nile, upon which depends your whole economy ? All these developments in this country have been brought about by me and my predecessors, but you are being devoted, charmed and fascinated by this pauper!"

47. "Wretched person": the person who has neither wealth, power nor authority. This same objection had been raised by the disbelieving Quraish against the Holy Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace).

48. Some commentators have expressed the opinion that Pharaoh referred to the impediment of speech from which the Prophet Moses suffered since childhood. But this is not a correct opinion. As has been mentioned in Sūrah Ṭā Hā above, when the Prophet Moses was being appointed to Prophethood, he had implored Allah Almighty to remove the defect from his tongue so that the people might understand his speach, and at that very time his request had also been granted along with his other requests (vv. 27-36). Moreover, orations of the Prophet Moses that have been cited at different places in the Qur'ân, point to his perfect eloquence and fluency. Therefore, the basis of Pharaoh's objection was not any impediment of speech from which Moses might be suffering but what he meant was: "This person talks confusedly at least I have never been able to understand what he says."

49. In the ancient times when a person was appointed to be governor of a land or sent as an ambassador to a foreign country, a robe of honour was conferred on him by the king, which also included bracelets of gold, and he was also accompanied by a contingent of soldiers and servants for over-awing the people and for showing the glory and grandeur of the king who had appointed him. What Pharaoh meant to say was: "If the King of the heavens had really sent Moses (peace be upon him) as His ambassador to His counterpart on the earth, he should have been dressed in a robe of honour and come with several contingents of angels in attendance. How strange that a poor man should appear with a staff in his hand and say that he was the messenger of the Lord of the worlds!"

50. A tremendous reality has been expressed in this brief sentence. When a person wishes to become autocratic in a country, and contrives every plan openly to achieve his object—practises every deception and trick, buys and sells consciences, and persecutes and crushes ruthlessly those who cannot be purchased—he, in fact, shows by his actions, whatever he may say to the contrary, that he takes the people of the country to be light as regards their

intellect, morals and manliness, and has formed the impression that he can drive the foolish, unscrupulous and cowardly people wherever he likes. Then, when he has succeeded in his designs and the people have become his obedient servants, they prove by their conduct and behaviour that they are actually what the wicked man had taken them to be, and the main cause of their depravity is that they are basically a "sinful people." They are not in the least concerned as to what is the truth and what is falsehood, what is justice and what is injustice, whether the noble traits of character are truthfulness and honesty or falsehood and dishonesty and meanness. Instead of this, only their personal interests are of real importance to them, for the sake of which they remain ever ready to cooperate with every wicked person, to yield to every tyrant, to accept every falsehood and to suppress every protest that is voiced in favour of the truth.

51. That is, "They are a precedent for those who do not learn any lesson from their example, and an object lesson for those who are keen to learn a lesson."

52. In verse 45 above, it was said: "You may ask all other Messengers whom We sent before you whether We had appointed any other gods to be worshipped beside the Merciful God." When this discourse was being presented before the people of Makkah, a person called 'Abdullah ibn az-Ziba'rā in the traditions, put forward the objection: "Well, is it not a fact that the Christians regard the son of Mary as the son of God and worship him ? What is then wrong with our gods?" This caused much laughter among the crowd of the disbelievers and they started clamouring for an answer to this objection. But at this foolish behaviour, the continuity of the revelation was not broken, but was first completed and then the objection of the questioner was taken up. (It should be borne in mind that this incident has been reported in the books of commentaries in different ways which contain great variations, but after a study of the context and the traditions the real incident in our view is the same as we have mentioned above).

53. "Making an example of Our power" implies causing the Prophet Jesus to be born without a father, and then granting him such miracles as had not been granted to anyone before him nor to anyone after him. He would make a bird of clay and then breathe into it and it would become a living bird; he would give sight to those born blind; he would cure the lepers; so much so that he would raise the dead back to life. What Allah means to say is: "It is wrong to worship him as son of God and regard him as above servitude only because of his extraordinary birth and the great miracles granted to him. He was no more than a mere servant, whom We had blessed and made an example of Our power." (For details, see Āl-'Imrān: 42-49, 59; An-Nisā: 156; Al-Mā'idah: 17, 110; Maryam: 17-35; Al-Anbiyā': 91, Al-Mu'minūn: 50).

54. Another translation can be: ".....make some of you angels."

55. Another translation of this sentenee can be: "He is a means of the knowledge of Resurrection." Here the question arises: What is implied by "he"? According to Ḥaḍrat Ḥasan Basri and Sa'id bin Jubair it implies the Qur'ān. That is, one can learn from the Qur'ān that Resurrection will come. But this commentary is irrelevant to the context. There is nothing in the context on the basis of which it may be said that it refers to the Qur'ān. Other commentators almost unanimously have expressed the opinion that it implies the prophet Jesus Christ, and this is suitable to the context. Now the question is: In what sense has Jesus Christ been called a Sign or a means of the knowledge of Resurrection? Ibn 'Abbās, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah, Qatādah, Suddī, Ḍaḥḥāk, Abul 'Āliyah and Abu Mālik say that this refers to the second coming of the Prophet Jesus as has been foretold in a large number of the Traditions, and the verse means that when he comes the second time to the world, it will become known that Resurrection is not far behind. But in spite of the great authority that these scholars hold it is difficult to believe that in this verse the second advent of the Prophet Jesus has been called a Sign of Resurrection, or a means of its knowledge. For it is contradicted by the next verse. His second advent, indeed, can be a means of the knowledge of Resurrection only for those people who will be living in that future period or will be born after that. How could he be regarded as a means of the knowledge for the pagans of Makkah, who are being asked "not to have any doubt about it"? Therefore, the correct interpretation in our opinion is the one that has been given by some other commentators, according to which the Prophet Jesus' birth without a father and his making a bird out of clay and his raising the dead back to life has been presented as a proof of the possibility of Resurrection. So, the Divine Words would mean: why do you think it is impossible for God to raise you and all mankind from death when He can create a child without a father and a servant of His can breathe life into an image of clay and raise the dead back to life?"

56. "..... hinder you from this": hinder you from believing in Resurrection.

57. That is, "The Prophet Jesus himself had never claimed that he was God or son of God, and that the people should worship him, but, on the contrary, his message was the same as of all other Prophets, the same as was now being conveyed to you through Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace)." (For explanation, see Āl-'Imrān: 50-51, An-Nisā: 171-172, Al-Mā'idah: 72, 116-117, Maryam: 30-36).

58. That is, one group of the people denied him and in their antagonism went to the extent of accusing him of illegitimate birth and got him crucified as they thought; the other group believed in him but owing to exaggerated reverence

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خٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿٧٤﴾ لَا يُفَتَّرُ عَنْهُمْ وَهُمْ فِيْهِ مُبْلِسُوْنَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَمَا ظَلَمْنٰهُمْ وَلٰكِنْ
كَانُوْا هُمُ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ﴿٧٦﴾ وَنَادَوْا يٰمٰلِكُ لِيَقْضِ عَلَيْنَا رَبُّكَ ۭ قَالَ اِنَّكُمْ مّٰكِثُوْنَ ﴿٧٧﴾
لَقَدْ جِئْنٰكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ وَلٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَكُمْ لِلْحَقِّ كٰرِهُوْنَ ﴿٧٨﴾ اَمْ اَبْرَمُوْٓا اَمْرًا فَاِنَّا
مُبْرِمُوْنَ ﴿٧٩﴾ اَمْ يَحْسَبُوْنَ اَنَّا لَا نَسْمَعُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوٰىهُمْ ۭ بَلٰى وَرُسُلُنَا
لَدَيْهِمْ يَكْتُبُوْنَ ﴿٨٠﴾ قُلْ اِنْ كَانَ لِلرَّحْمٰنِ وَلَدٌ ۖ فَاَنَا اَوَّلُ الْعٰبِدِيْنَ ﴿٨١﴾
سُبْحٰنَ رَبِّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُوْنَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَذَرْهُمْ
يَخُوْضُوْا وَيَلْعَبُوْا حَتّٰى يُلٰقُوْا يَوْمَهُمُ الَّذِيْ يُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿٨٣﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ فِي
السَّمَاۗءِ اِلٰهٌ وَّفِي الْاَرْضِ اِلٰهٌ ۭ وَهُوَ الْحَكِيْمُ الْعَلِيْمُ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَتَبٰرَكَ الَّذِيْ لَهٗ
مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۚ وَعِنْدَهٗ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ ۚ وَاِلَيْهِ
تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿٨٥﴾ وَلَا يَمْلِكُ الَّذِيْنَ يَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِهِ الشَّفَاعَةَ اِلَّا مَنْ شَهِدَ
بِالْحَقِّ وَهُمْ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٨٦﴾ وَلَىِٕنْ سَاَلْتَهُمْ مَّنْ خَلَقَهُمْ لَيَقُوْلُنَّ اللّٰهُ ۚ فَاَنّٰى
يُؤْفَكُوْنَ ﴿٨٧﴾ وَقِيْلِهٖ يٰرَبِّ اِنَّ هٰٓؤُلَاۗءِ قَوْمٌ لَّا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٨٨﴾ فَاصْفَحْ عَنْهُمْ
وَقُلْ سَلٰمٌ ۭ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٨٩﴾

79-80 Have they decided to contrive a plan?[63] Well, we too, shall contrive. Do they think that We do not hear their secret talk and their whisperings? We hear everything and Our angels at their sides are recording it.

81-83 Say to them, "If the Merciful really had a son, I would be the first to worship him."[64] Exalted is the Ruler of the heavens and the earth, Lord of the Throne, above what they ascribe to Him! Well, let them remain absorbed in their falsehoods and sport, till they see that Day of theirs with which they are being threatened.

He alone is God in heavens anal God on earth: He is the All-Wise, the All-Knowing.[65] Highly blessed is He to Whom belongs the Kingdom of the heavens and the earth and of all that lies between them.[66] He alone has the knowledge of the Hour of Resurrection, and to Him you shall all be returned.[67] 84-85

Those whom they call upon beside Him, have no power of intercession except that one may testify to the Truth by virtue of knowledge.[68] 86

And if you ask them who created them, they will surely say, "Allah."[69] Whence then are they being deluded? By this word of the Messenger: "O my Lord, these are a people who would not believe."[70] 87-88

Well, O Prophet, bear with them and say, "Peace to you!"[71] Soon they shall know. 89

Contd. from p. 591]

made him son of God, and then the question of man's being God became such a riddle for it that every effort to resolve it caused it to be divided into countless sects. (For explanation, see An-Nisā: 171, Al-Mā'idah 17, 77,116-117 and the corresponding E.N.'s),

59. In other words, only those friendships will remain unaffected which are based on righteousness and piety in the world; all other friendships will turn into enmities, and those who are cooperating with one another in deviation, tyranny and wickedness today, will on the Day of Resurrection, put the blame on others and try to escape. This subject has been treated repeatedly at many places in the Qur'ān so that every person in this very world may fully realize with whom it would be beneficial for him to cooperate and with whom it is harmful

60. The word *azwāj* as used in the original can be used both for the wives and for those people who are a person's close associates, friends and peers. This comprehensive word has been used so as to cover both the meanings. The believers will be accompanied both by their believing wives and by their believing friends in Paradise.

61. "Mālik": a keeper of Hell as is evident from the context.

62. That is, "We made the reality plain to you, but you were fond of the imaginary, and you had an aversion to the truth. Now, why do you lament at the fate of your foolish choice?" It may be a part of the Hell-keeper's answer, and it may also be that his answer ended with: "Here you must remain !" and this

second sentence an addition by Allah. In the first case, the keeper's saying: "We had brought the Truth to you," is just like an official's using the word "we" on behalf of his government, when he wants to say, "Our government did this or gave such and such an order."

63. The allusion is to the plans that the chiefs of the Quraish were devising in their secret assemblies in order to take a decisive action against the Holy Prophet.

64. It means: "My rejection of somebody's being God's offspring and my refusal to worship those whom you regard as His offspring is not due to any stubbornness and obduracy. My reason for the refusal is only this that God has no son or daughter, and your such beliefs are against the reality; otherwise I am such a faithful servant of my Lord that if at all the reality had been the same as you state I would have submitted myself in worship before you."

65. That is, "The gods of the heavens and the earth are not separate, but there is only One God of the entire universe. It is His wisdom that is working in the whole system of the universe and only He has the knowledge of all realities."

66. That is, "He is far above it that another should be His associate in Godhead and may have any share whatever in ruling this great universe. Whatever is there in the earth and the heavens, whether the Prophets, the saints, the angels, jinn, spirits, stars or planets, they are His servants and slaves and subjects. It is impossible for them to be characterised with a Divine attribute or be possessed with a Divine power."

67. That is, "You may have taken anyone as your helper and patron in the world, but after death you will have to face only One God and render an account of your deeds before Him alone."

68. This sentence has several meanings:

(1) Those whom the people have made their deities in the world, will not at all be their intercessors before Allah. Those of them who were wicked, will themselves be presented as culprits there. However, those who had borne witness to the Truth by virtue of knowledge (and not unconsciously) will certainly be able to intercede for others.

(2) Those who will be permitted to intercede, will be able to do so only for those who had testified to the Truth consciously (and not heedlessly). They will neither intercede of their own will, nor will have the permission to intercede for anyone who had gone and been led astray from the Truth in the world, or had been affirming the faith in Allah as the only Deity unconsciously as well as serving other deities at the same time

(3) If a person says that those whom he has made gods necessarily possess the powers of intercession, and they wield such an influence with Allah that they can have anyone they like forgiven, irrespective of his beliefs and deeds, is totally wrong. No one enjoys such a position with Allah. If the one who claims that another has such powers of intercession, can testify to the truth of this matter by virtue of knowledge, one should have the courage to say so. But if one is not in a position to bear such a testimony, and one is certainly not, it would be sheer folly to invent such a creed on the basis of mere hearsay, or conjecture, and risk one's life hereafter relying only on an imaginary support.

Incidentally, this verse also gives two important principles: First, it shows that bearing a testimony to the truth without knowledge may be reliable in the world, but it is not so before Allah. In the world, whoever affirms the Faith verbally will be regarded as a Muslim and treated as such unless he openly commits an act expressly contradictory to belief. But as before Allah only such a one will be counted as a Muslim, who has uttered *Lā ilāha ill-Allāh* consciously, with full understanding of what he is denying and what he is affirming according to his best knowledge.

Secondly, it gives this principle of the law of evidence that knowledge is a pre-requisite of bearing the evidence. If the bearer of an evidence has no knowledge of the event to which he is bearing evidence, his evidence is meaningless. The same is borne out by a decision given by the Holy Prophet. He said to a witness: "If you saw what happened with your own eyes as you are seeing the sun, then you may bear the witness, otherwise not." *(Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by al Jaṣṣās).

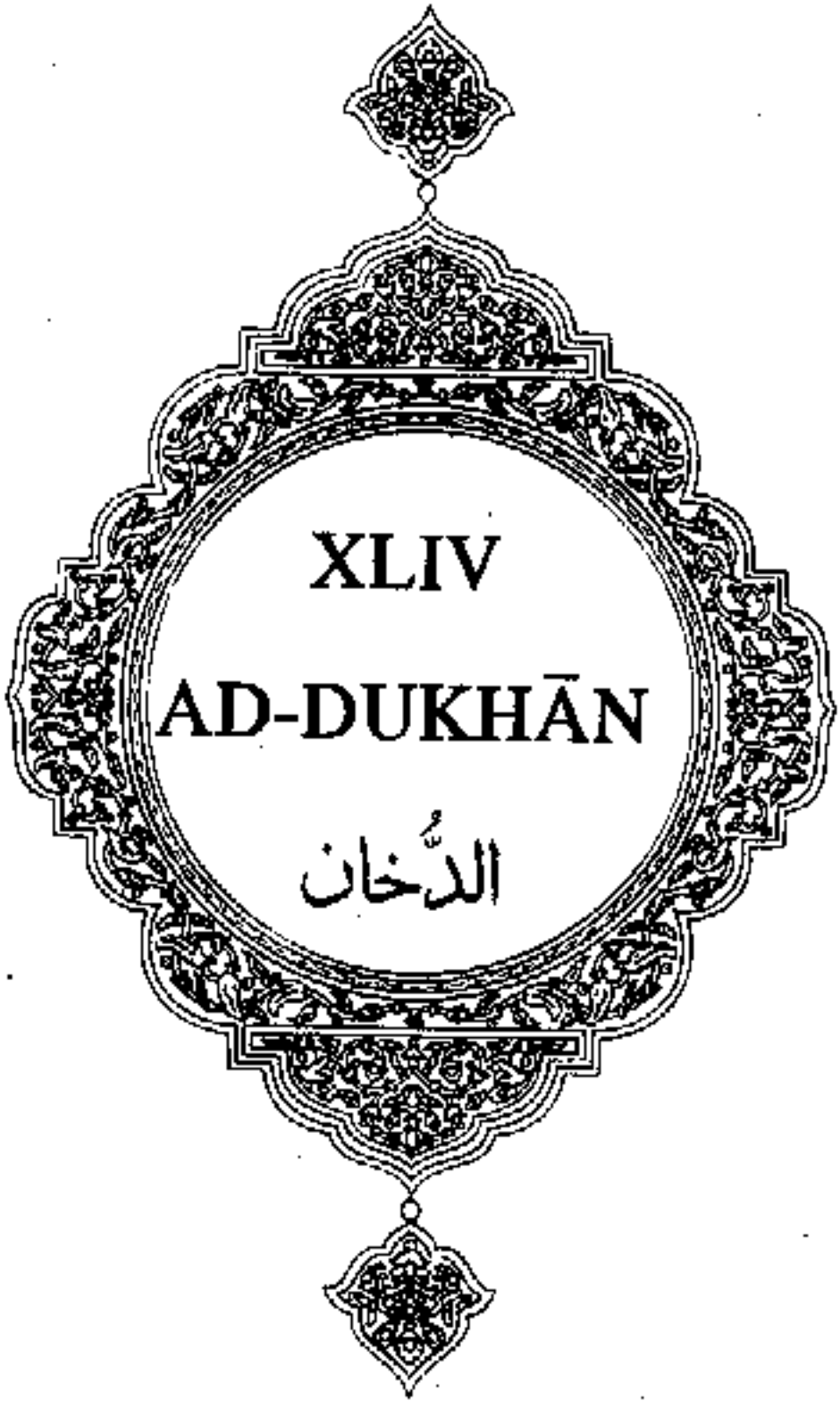
69. This verse has two meanings: (1) "If you ask them who has created them, they will say: Allah"; and (2) "If you ask them who is the Creator of their gods, they will say: Allah."

70. This is one of the most difficult verses of the Qur'ān as it involves the complicated syntactic question of the kind of *wāw* that has been used in *wa qīl-i-hī*. From the translation of Shah 'Abdul Qādir it appears that the *wāw* here is not conjunctive but for taking oath, and is related to *fa-anna yu'fakūn*, and the pronoun in *qīli-hī* turns to the Holy Prophet of Allah. Therefore, the verse means this: "By this saying of the Messenger: 'O my Lord, these are a people who would not believe'": they are so utterly deluded that although they themselves admit that Allah alone is their Creator and Creator of their gods, yet they abandon the Creator and persist in worshipping His creatures."

The object of swearing by this saying of the Messenger is that the conduct of the people clearly shows that they are, in fact, stubborn, for the foolishness of

their attitude is apparent from their own admission, and such an irrational attitude can be adopted only by such a person, who is resolved not to believe. In other words, the oath implies: "The Messenger has rightly said so: indeed these people would not believe."

71. That is, "You should neither curse them for their scornful words and attitude of mockery and derision, nor respond with harsh words: just wish them well and take your leave."


XLIV
AD-DUKHĀN
الدُّخان

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XLIV
AD-DUKHĀN
الدُّخان

INTRODUCTION

Name

The Sūrah takes its name from the word *dukhān* which occurs in verse 10.

Period of Revelation

Its period of revelation also could not be determined from any authentic tradition, but the internal evidence of the subject-matter shows that this Sūrah too was sent down in the same period in which Sūrah Zukhruf and a few other earlier Sūrahs had been revealed. However,

this Sūrah was sent down somewhat later. Its historical background is this: When the disbelievers of Makkah became more and more antagonistic in their attitude and conduct, the Holy Prophet prayed: O God, help me With a famine like the famine of Joseph. He thought that when those people would be afflicted with a calamity they would remember God, their hearts would soften and they would accept the admonition. Allah granted his prayer, and the whole land was overtaken by such a terrible famine that the people were sorely distressed. At last, some of the Quraish chiefs among whom Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has particularly mentioned the name of Abu Sufyān came to the Holy Prophet and requested him to pray to Allah to deliver his people from the calamity. On this occasion Allah sent down this Sūrah.

Subject-Matter and Topics

The introduction to the address revealed on this occasion for the admonition and warning of the people of Makkah contained some important points, which are as follows:

(1) "You, O people of Makkah, are wrong in thinking that the Qur'ān is being composed by Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace). This Book by itself bears the clear testimony that it is not the composition of a man but of Allah, Lord of the worlds."

(2) "You are making a wrong estimate of the worth of this Book. You think it is a calamity that has descended on you, whereas the Hour when Allah, out of sheer mercy, decided to send His Messenger and His Book to you was highly blessed."

(3) "You are foolishly involved in the misunderstanding that you will fight this Messenger and this Book and will win, whereas the fact is that the Messenger has been raised and the Book sent down in that particular Hour when Allah decides the destinies, and Allah's decisions are not so weak that they may be changed to a person's liking, nor are they based on ignorance and folly that there may be the likelihood of a mistake or error or weakness in them. They are rather the firm and unalterable decisions of the Ruler of the Universe, Who is All-Hearing, All-Knowing and All-Wise. Therefore, they cannot be treated lightly.

(4) "You yourselves acknowledge that Allah alone is the Master and Lord of the earth and heavens and of everything in the Universe and also admit that life and death are only in His power, yet you insist on making others your deities, for which the only argument you offer is that it has been the practice since the time of your forefathers, whereas if a person has the conviction that Allah alone is the Master, Sustainer and Giver of life and death, he can never entertain the doubt that there can be other gods also beside Him, who can be worthy of worship. If your forefathers had committed this folly, there is no reason why you also should continue committing it blindly. As a matter of fact, their Lord too was only One God, Who is your Lord, and they also should have worshipped only Him, Whom you should worship."

(5) "The only demand of Allah's Providence and Mercifulness is not that He should feed you, but also that He should arrange guidance for you. For this very guidance He has sent His Messenger and His Book."

After this introduction, the question of the famine that was raging in Makkah has been discussed. As already mentioned, this famine had occurred on the Holy Prophet's prayer, and he had prayed for it so that when the calamity befell it would break the stubbornness of the disbelievers and then they would listen to the rebuke. It looked as if this expectation was being fulfilled to some extent, for some of the most stubborn enemies of the Truth, on account of the severities of the famine, had cried out: "O Lord, avert this torment from us and we will believe." At this, on the one hand, the Holy Prophet has been foretold: "These people will not learn any lesson from such calamities. When they have turned away from the Messenger, whose life, character, works and speech clearly show that he is Allah's true Messenger, how will a mere famine help remove their disbelief?" On the other, the unbelievers have been addressed, so as to say: "You lie when you say that you will believe as soon as the torment is removed from you. We shall just remove it to see how sincere you are in your promise. There is a graver disaster about to fall upon you. You need a much more crushing blow: minor misfortunes cannot set you right."

In this very connection, a reference has been made a little below to Pharaoh and his people, implying that those people also had met with precisely the same trial as the chiefs of the disbelieving Quraish are now afflicted. To them also a similar noble and honourable Messenger had come; they also had seen those express pointers and signs which clearly showed that he had been appointed by Allah; they also had gone on witnessing one sign after the other but they did not give up their stubbornness, till at last they made up their mind to put an end to the Messenger's life, and they met their doom, which has since become an object lesson for the people for ever.

After this the theme of the Hereafter has been taken up, which the disbelievers of Makkah vehemently denied. They said: "We have never seen anyone rising back to life after death. Raise our forefathers back to life if you are true in your claim about the life hereafter." In response to this, two arguments for the Hereafter have been presented briefly (1) That the denial of this creed has always proved destructive for the morals; and (2) that the universe is not a plaything of a thoughtless diety, but it is a wise system and no work of wisdom is ever vain or useless. Then the disbelievers' demand to bring their forefathers back to life has been answered, thus: "This cannot be done every day to meet the demand of the individuals, but Allah has appointed a time when He will resurrect all mankind simultaneously and will subject them to accountability in His Court. If one has to protect oneself there, one should think about it here. For no one will be able to save himself there by his own power, nor by the power of any one else."

In connection with this Court of Allah, mention has been made of the fate of those who will be declared as culprits and of the rewards of those who will be declared as successful. The discourse has been concluded with this warning: "This Qur'ān has been revealed in simple language in your own tongue so that you may understand it; yet if you do not understand it and insist on seeing your evil end, you may wait; Our Prophet too is waiting. Whatever is to happen, will happen at its own appointed time."



حٰمٓ ۝١ وَالْكِتٰبِ الْمُبِيْنِ ۝٢ اِنَّآ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ فِيْ لَيْلَةٍ مُّبٰرَكَةٍ اِنَّا كُنَّا مُنْذِرِيْنَ ۝٣
فِيْهَا يُفْرَقُ كُلُّ اَمْرٍ حَكِيْمٍ ۝٤ اَمْرًا مِّنْ عِنْدِنَا ۭ اِنَّا كُنَّا مُرْسِلِيْنَ ۝٥ رَحْمَةً
مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ ۭ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ۝٦ رَبِّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۭ
اِنْ كُنْتُمْ مُّوْقِنِيْنَ ۝٧ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ يُحْيٖ وَيُمِيْتُ ۭ رَبُّكُمْ وَرَبُّ اٰبَاۗىِٕكُمُ

XLIV

AD-DUKHĀN

الدُّخان

Verses: 59 *Revealed at Makkah*

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

Hā-Mīm. By this lucid Book, We have sent it down in a highly blessed night, for We intended to warn the people.[1] This was a night in which every matter is decided wisely[2] by Our Command.[3] We had to send a Messenger, as a mercy from your Lord.[4] Indeed, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing,[5] Lord of the heavens and the earth, and Lord of all that lies between them, if you would really believe.[6] There is no god but He.[7] It is He Who gives life and death.[8] He is your Lord and Lord of your ancestors who have gone before.[9] (But, in fact, they have no faith:) nay, they play about in doubt.[10] 1-9

1. The meaning of taking an oath by "the lucid Book" has been explained in E.N. 1 of Sūrah Zukhruf. Here also what has been sworn by is that Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) is not the author of this Book but "We", and this Book by itself is enough to provide a proof of this. Furthermore, it has been said that the night in which it was sent down was full of blessings. That is, the foolish

and ignorant people, who have no idea of their own well-being or otherwise, regard the revelation of this Book as a disaster for themselves and are deeply anxious as how to get rid of it. But, as a matter of fact, the Hour when "We" decided to send down this Book to arouse the heedless, was highly blessed for them and for all mankind.

Some commentators have expressed the opinion that the meaning of sending down the Qur'ān in that night is that its revelation began during that night, and some others think that the whole of the Qur'ān was transferred from *Umm al-Kitāb* and entrusted to the bearers of Revelation (angels), and then revealed to the Holy Prophet as and when required and demanded by the occasion and circumstances during 23 years. As to what actully happened Allah alone has the best knowledge.

The night implies the same night which has been called *lailat-ul qadr* in Sūrah Al-Qadr (97), There it has been said: "We sent it down in a Night of Glory," and here: "We sent it down in a blessed Night." Then the Qur'ān itself has told that it was a night of the month of Ramadān (Al-Baqarah).

2. The word *amr in-ḥakīm* as used in the Text has two meanings: (1) That the Command is wholly based on wisdom: there is no likelihood of any error or weakness in it; and (2) that it is a firm and stable decision: it lies in no one's power to change it.

3. In Sūrah Al-Qadr, this same thing has been expressed thus: "The angels and the Spirit (Angel Gabriel) descend in it with every decree, by the leave of their Lord." This shows that it is such a Night in the Divine administration of Allah in which He decides the destinies of the individuals and nations and countries and entrusts His decisions to His angels, who then implement them accordingly. Some commentators among whom Ḥaḍrat 'Ikrimah is most prominent, have been involved in the misunderstanding that this is the 15th night of Sha'bān, for in some traditions it has been said that the destinies of people are decided during that night. But Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, Mujāhid, Qatādah, Ḥasan Baṣri, Sa'id bin Jubair, Ibn Zaid, Abū Mālik, Ḍaḥḥāk and many other commentators are agreed that this is the same night of Ramadān, which has been called *lailat-ul-qadr*, *for* the Qur'ān itself has stated this, and where any Qur'ānic statement exists, no other view can be formed on the basis of random reports. Ibn Kathir says, "The traditions that Imām Zuhri has related from 'Uthmān bin Muḥammad that destinies are decided from one Sha'bān to the next Sha'bān is an indirect tradition and such traditions cannot be cited as against the clear texts of the Qur'ān." Qāḍi Abū Bakr Ibn al-'Arabi says: "No *Ḥadith* in respect of the 15th of Sha'bān is reliable, either in respect of its merit, or about this that decisions

with regard to the destinies are taken in it; therefore, they do not merit attention. *(Aḥkām ul-Qur'ān).*

4. That is, "It was not only a demand of wisdom to send a Messenger with this Book but also of Allah's mercy, for He is the Providence, and Providence requires that not only should arrangements be made for nourishing the servants' bodies but they should also be afforded right guidance by knowledge, that they should be made aware of the distinction between right and wrong and that they should not be left wandering in darkness."

5. The object of mentioning these two attributes of Allah in this context is to warn the people of the truth that He alone can give correct knowledge for He alone knows all the realities. Not to speak of one man, even if all men join to determine a way of life for themselves, there can be no guarantee of its being the right way, for even the whole of mankind together cannot become all-hearing and all-knowing. It does not lie in its power to comprehend all those realities whose knowledge is essential for determining a correct way of life. This knowledge is only with Allah: He alone is All-Hearing and All-Knowing. Therefore, He alone can tell what is guidance for man and what is falsehood, what is the Truth and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil.

6. The Arabs themselves admitted that Allah alone is the Lord (Master and Providence) of the Universe and of everything in it. Therefore, it has been said to them: "If you are not admitting only verbally but are really conscious of His being the Providence and are convinced of His being the Master, you should admit that: (1) It is the very demand of His Mercifulness and Providence that He should send a Book and a Messenger for the guidance of man; and (2) it is His right as the Master and your duty as His servants that you should obey every Guidance and submit to every Command that comes from Him."

7. The real God Who alone has the right that He should be worshipped and served.

8. That is, "There is no god other than Allah, nor can there be. Therefore, it is against reason that you should disdain the worship of Him Who breathed life into dead matter and made you a living man, and Who possesses full powers to keep you alive as long as He likes and bring your life to an end whenever He likes, or you serve any other than Him, or start worshipping others besides Him."

9. There is a subtle allusion in it to this: "He was also Lord of those of your ancestors who took other gods besides Allah; they had not done the right thing by giving up their real Lord and serving others that you should be justified in imitating them and regard their conduct as an argument for the soundness of your creed. They ought to have served only Him, because He alone was their Lord. But

الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿٥﴾ بَلْ هُمْ فِيْ شَكٍّ يَّلْعَبُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾ فَارْتَقِبْ يَوْمَ تَاْتِي السَّمَآءُ بِدُخَانٍ
مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿١٠﴾ يَّغْشَى النَّاسَ ؕ هٰذَا عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿١١﴾ رَبَّنَا اكْشِفْ عَنَّا الْعَذَابَ اِنَّا
مُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ اَنّٰى لَهُمُ الذِّكْرٰى وَ قَدْ جَآءَهُمْ رَسُوْلٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿١٣﴾ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّوْا
عَنْهُ وَ قَالُوْا مُعَلَّمٌ مَّجْنُوْنٌ ﴿١٤﴾ اِنَّا كَاشِفُوا الْعَذَابِ قَلِيْلًا اِنَّكُمْ عَآئِدُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾
يَوْمَ نَبْطِشُ الْبَطْشَةَ الْكُبْرٰى ۚ اِنَّا مُنْتَقِمُوْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَ لَقَدْ فَتَنَّا قَبْلَهُمْ قَوْمَ
فِرْعَوْنَ وَ جَآءَهُمْ رَسُوْلٌ كَرِيْمٌ ﴿١٧﴾ اَنْ اَدُّوْۤا اِلَيَّ عِبَادَ اللّٰهِ ؕ اِنِّيْ لَكُمْ رَسُوْلٌ
اَمِيْنٌ ﴿١٨﴾ وَّ اَنْ لَّا تَعْلُوْا عَلَى اللّٰهِ ۚ اِنِّيْۤ اٰتِيْكُمْ بِسُلْطٰنٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿١٩﴾ وَ اِنِّيْ عُذْتُ
بِرَبِّيْ وَ رَبِّكُمْ اَنْ تَرْجُمُوْنِ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَ اِنْ لَّمْ تُؤْمِنُوْا لِيْ فَاعْتَزِلُوْنِ ﴿٢١﴾ فَدَعَا رَبَّهٗۤ
اَنَّ هٰۤؤُلَآءِ قَوْمٌ مُّجْرِمُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ فَاَسْرِ بِعِبَادِيْ لَيْلًا اِنَّكُمْ مُّتَّبَعُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَ اتْرُكِ
الْبَحْرَ رَهْوًا ؕ اِنَّهُمْ جُنْدٌ مُّغْرَقُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾ كَمْ تَرَكُوْا مِنْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّ عُيُوْنٍ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَّ زُرُوْعٍ
وَّ مَقَامٍ كَرِيْمٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَّ نَعْمَةٍ كَانُوْا فِيْهَا فٰكِهِيْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ كَذٰلِكَ ۫ وَ اَوْرَثْنٰهَا قَوْمًا اٰخَرِيْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾
فَمَا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّمَآءُ وَ الْاَرْضُ وَ مَا كَانُوْا مُنْظَرِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ وَ لَقَدْ نَجَّيْنَا بَنِيْۤ
اِسْرَآءِيْلَ مِنَ الْعَذَابِ الْمُهِيْنِ ﴿٣٠﴾ مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ ؕ اِنَّهٗ كَانَ عَالِيًا مِّنَ الْمُسْرِفِيْنَ ﴿٣١﴾
وَ لَقَدِ اخْتَرْنٰهُمْ عَلٰى عِلْمٍ عَلَى الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَ اٰتَيْنٰهُمْ مِّنَ الْاٰيٰتِ مَا فِيْهِ بَلٰٓؤٌا مُّبِيْنٌ ﴿٣٣﴾
اِنَّ هٰۤؤُلَآءِ لَيَقُوْلُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ اِنْ هِيَ اِلَّا مَوْتَتُنَا الْاُوْلٰى وَ مَا نَحْنُ بِمُنْشَرِيْنَ ﴿٣٥﴾
فَاْتُوْا بِاٰبَآئِنَاۤ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٣٦﴾ اَهُمْ خَيْرٌ اَمْ قَوْمُ تُبَّعٍ ۙ وَّ الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ ۛ
اَهْلَكْنٰهُمْ ۫ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا مُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَ مَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضَ وَ مَا بَيْنَهُمَا
لٰعِبِيْنَ ﴿٣٨﴾ مَا خَلَقْنٰهُمَاۤ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَ لٰكِنَّ اَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٣٩﴾ اِنَّ يَوْمَ
الْفَصْلِ مِيْقَاتُهُمْ اَجْمَعِيْنَ ﴿٤٠﴾ يَوْمَ لَا يُغْنِيْ مَوْلًى عَنْ مَّوْلًى شَيْـًٔا وَّ لَا هُمْ

Well, wait for the Day when the sky shall appear with a visible smoke, which shall envelope mankind: this is a painful punishment. (Now they say:) "Our Lord, remove this torment from us: we do now believe." How can they rid themselves of their heedlessness? Even when a manifest Messenger[11] came to them, they paid no heed to him, and said, "He is a madman taught by others."[12] Were We to remove the torment a little, you would revert to the same that you were doing before. The Day We inflict the severest stroke shall be the Day when We shall take Our vengeance[13] 10-16

Before them We put the people of Pharaoh to the same test. A noble Messenger[14] came to them, and said,[15] "Deliver to me the servants of Allah ;[16] I am a trustworthy Meseenger to you :[17] Do not rebel against Allah: I present before you a clear authority[18] (of my appointment), and I have taken refuge in my Lord and your Lord lest you should assault me. If you do not believe in me, do not harm me."[19] At last, he called to his Lord, saying, "These are criminals."[20] (The reply came:) "Set forth with My servants by night[21] for you will be pursued.[22] Leave the sea as it is: the whole host shall be drowned."[23] How many were the gardens and springs and cornfields and grand palaces that they left behind, and how many means of luxury and comfort, which they used to enjoy ! This was their end, and We made others to inherit those things.[24] Then neither did the heaven weep on them nor the earth,[25] and they were not given the least respite. Even so We delivered the children of Israel from an abasing scourge, from Pharaoh,[26] who was indeed a most prominent man among the transgressors,[27] and We exalted them, knowing them to be so, above the other nations of the world,[28] and showed them such Signs as were clearly a trial (for them).[29] 17-33

These people say, "There is nothing beyond our first death, and we are not going to be raised back to life.[30] Bring back our forefathers if you are truthful."[31] Are they better or the people of Tubba'[32] and those before them ? We destroyed them only because they had become wicked.[33] We have not created the heavens and the earth and whatever lies between them merely in sport: We have created them with the truth, but most of them do not know.[34] For the resurrection of them all, the appointed time is the Day of Decision,[35] the Day when a kinsman shall not avail his kinsman[36] anything at all, nor shall they receive any 34-42

help from anywhere except that Allah Himself may show His mercy to some one: He is the All-Mighty, the All-Merciful.[37]

Contd. from p.607]

10. In this brief sentence an allusion has been made to an important truth. Even atheists or polytheists do come across occasions when their heart from within says: There is somewhere some weakness in the creed that you have adopted. The atheist may apparently be very firm in his denial of God, his heart at one or the other time does bear the testimony that this wonderful and wise system which extends from the particle of dust to the galaxies and from a blade of grass to the creation of man, could not come into existence without an All-Wise Designer. Likewise, a polytheist may be deeply submerged in his polytheism, his heart also sometimes cries out: Those whom you have adopted as deities cannot be God. But this testimony of the heart neither leads the atheist and the polytheist to the conviction about, the existence and Oneness of God, nor to conviction and satisfaction about their creed of atheism and polytheism itself. Instead, their religion, in fact, is based on doubt, no matter how convinced they might appear to be of its truth. As for the question: Why doesn't this doubt make them restless, and why don't, they seek the truth seriously so as to obtain a satisfactory ground for their convictions? the answer is: they lack seriousness in religious matters. What they really regard as important are the worldly earnings and acquisitions and their enjoyment, in search of which they expend all their powers and abilities of the heart and mind and body. As for the religious matters, they are in fact no more than fun, a mere pastime, amusement, or a mental diversion for them, for which they cannot spare even a few moments of serious study. Religious rites are being performed as an entertainment; discussions about denial and atheism are being engaged in as an amusement; no one can spare a few moments from his worldly pursuits to consider whether he has turned away from the Truth, and if so, what would be its consequences.

11. *Rasūl-i-mubīn* has two meanings: (1) His being a Messenger is quite evident from his character, his morals and his works; and (2) he has made every effort to make the truth plain and clear.

12. What they meant was: "This was a simple man, some others have incited and deceived him: they secretly forge and teach him verses of the Qur'ān, and he comes and recites them before the people: they sit back in peace and leave him alone to receive the abuses and be pelted with stones." They would make a mockery of all the arguments, the admonitions and the serious teachings which the Holy Prophet had been presenting since several years and was growing weary. Neither they paid any attention to the rational things being expressed in the Qur'ān nor recognized the extraordinary character of the man who was presenting them,

nor took any trouble to think what nonsense they were uttering when they imputed such things to the Holy prophet. Obviously, if there had been another person who gave secret instruction to the Holy Prophet, he could not have remained hidden from Ḥaḍrat Khadījah and Abu Bakr, 'Alī and Zaid bin Ḥārithah and other early Muslims, who were the closest and constant Companions of the Holy Prophet. Then, how it is that these very people only became his most devoted and dedicated followers, whereas if the business of prophethood had depended on the secret instruction of some other person, these very people would have been in the forefront to oppose him (For further explanation, see An-Naḥl: 103, Al-Furqān: 4-6 and the corresponding E.N.'s).

13. The commentators have seriously disputed the meaning of these verses, and the difference of opinion existed even in the time of the Companions. Masrūq, the well-known pupil of Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, states: One day when we entered the mosque of Kufah, we saw a preacher addressing the people. He recited the verse: *Yauma ta'tis-samā-u bidukhān-im-mubīn*, then asked: "Do you know what kind of smoke it is ? This smoke will appear on the Day of Resurrection and will make the disbelievers and the hypocrites blind and deaf, but the believers will be affected only to the extent as if they had caught cold." Hearing this commentary we went to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd and reported to him what the preacher had said. Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah at that time was lying down. On hearing this commentary he sat up startled and said: "When a person does not have the knowledge he should ask those who have it. The fact is that when the people of the Quraish went on refusing to accept Islam and continued to oppose the Holy Prophet, the Holy Prophet prayed: O God, help me with a famine like the famine of Joseph (peace be upon him); consequently, a very severe famine overtook Makkah and the people were forced to eat bones, skins and carrion. The conditions became so bad that whoever looked up to the sky would see nothing but smoke due to intensity of hunger. At last, Abū Sufyān came to the Holy Prophet and said: "You tell the people to treat their kindred kindly: your own people are starving: kindly pray to God to remove this calamity." This was the time when the people of the Quraish had started saying: "O God, if You remove this torment from us, we will believe." This same event has been referred to in these verses; and the severest blow implies the calamity that was inflicted on the Quraish in the Battle of Badr." This tradition has been related by Imām Ahmād, Bukhārī Tirmidhi, Nasā'i, Ibn Jarīr and Ibn Abī Ḥātim from Masrūq with several chains of authorities. Besides Masrūq, Ibrahīm Nakha'ī Qatādah, 'Āsim and 'Amir also have related that Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd had given the same commentary of this verse. Therefore there cannot be any doubt that Ibn Mas'ūd actually held this same opinion. Among the immediate followers of the Companions, Mujāhid,

Qatādah, Abul 'Āliyah, Muqātil, Ibrahim Nakha'ī, Ḍaḥḥāk and 'Atiyyah al-'Aufi and others have also concurred with Ibn Mas'ūd in this commentary.

On the contrary, scholars like Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ibn 'Umar, Ibn 'Abbās, Abū Sa'īd Khudrī, Zaid bin 'Alī, and Ḥasan Baṣrī say that in these verses mention has been made of the time just before Resurrection, and the smoke that has been foretold will envelop the earth at that time. This commentary is further strengthened by the Traditions that have been reported from the Holy Prophet. Hudhaifah bin Asīd al-Ghifārī says: One day when we were talking about Resurrection, the Holy Prophet came out to us and said: "Resurrection will not be established till ten Signs have appeared one after the other: Rising of the sun in the west, smoke, the beast, emergence of God and Magog, descent of Jesus son of Mary, sinking of the earth in the East, in the West and in the Arabian Peninsula, and the appearance of a fire from Yaman, which will drive the people away." (Muslim) This is confirmed by Abū Mālik Ash'arī's tradition which has been related by Ibn Jarīr and Ṭabarānī, and Abū Sa'īd Khudrī's tradition which has been related by Ibn Abī Ḥātim. Both these traditions show that the Holy Prophet regarded the smoke as one of the Signs of Resurrection and also said that when that smoke will spread, it will affect the believer only like a cold, but will infuse every nerve of the disbeliever and come out from every part of his body.

A study of the verses under consideration can remove the disparity between the two commentaries. As for the commentary of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, it is a fact that a severe famine had hit Makkah resulting from the Holy Prophet's prayer and it had unnerved the disbelievers considerably and they had requested the Holy Prophet to pray for its removal, as referred to at several places in the Qur'ān. (See Al-An'ām: 43, Al-A'rāf: 94-95, Yūnus: 21, Al-Mu'minūn: 75-77 and the corresponding E.N.'s). In these verses also there is a clear pointer to the same conditions. The disbelievers' saying: "Our Lord, remove this torment from us: we will believe," Allah's saying: "How can they rid themselves of their heedlessness? Even when a manifest Messenger came to them, they paid no heed to him, and said: He is a madman taught by others," then saying: "Were We to remove the torment a little, you would revert to the same that you were doing before." all this can be relevant only if it refers to the conditions of the Holy Prophet's time. To apply them to what will happen near the time of Resurrection, is not correct. Therefore, in view of this, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd's commentary seems to be correct, but its this part that "the smoke" also had appeared in that very time, in that when the people in their extreme state of hunger looked up to the sky, they could see nothing but smoke, does not seem to be correct. It also does not conform to the apparent words of the Qur'ān and is against the Traditions as well. The Qur'ān does not say: the sky brought forth the smoke and it spread over the people; but it says: "Wait for the Day when the sky

will appear with a visible smoke, and it will envelop mankind." A study of the subsequent verses clearly points to this meaning: "When you do not believe even after the Messenger's admonition, nor take heed from the warning given in the shape of the famine, then you should wait for Resurrection. At that time when you see your doom confronting you, you will fully realize what was the truth and what was falsehood." Therefore, as for the smoke, the correct view is that it has nothing to do with the time of the famine, but it is a Sign of Resurrection and the same is also confirmed by the *Ḥadīth*. It is surprising that those commentators who confirmed what Hadrat Ibn Mas'ūd said confirmed him wholly and those who refuted what he said refuted him wholly, whereas a study of the verses and the *Ḥadīth* clearly shows how far he was correct and how far he was wrong.

14. The words *rasūl-un karīm* in the original imply a man who is characterised with most noble traits of character and highly praiseworthy qualities.

15. One should note that the sayings of the Prophet Moses being cited here, are not parts of a continuous address delivered by him at any one time, but they are a summary in a few sentences of what he said to Pharaoh and his courtiers on different occasions during many years. For the details, see Al-A'rāf: 103-136, Yūnus: 75-92, Ṭā Hā : 45-76, Ash-Shua'rā: 10-68, An-Naml: 7-14, Al-Qaṣaṣ: 32-42, Al-Mu'min: 23-46, Az-Zukhruf: 46-56 and the corresponding E.N.'s.

16. That is, "Leave the children of Israel to go with me." This demand is synonymous with the demand made in Al-A'rāf: 105, Ṭā Hā: 47 and Ash-Shur'rā: 17. Another translation that has been reported from Hadrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās is: "Servants of Allah, fulfil my right," i.e. "Accept what I say : believe in me: follow my guidance. This is my right on you from Allah." The following sentence: "I am a trustworthy Messenger to you," is more in keeping with the second meaning.

17. That is, "I am a reliable Messenger: I do not forge anything from myself, nor am I the one who would present something based on personal interest or desire, or forge a command or law, in the name of Allah. Rest assured that I shall convey to you intact only that which my Sender has commanded." (It should be noted that these two sentences belong to the time when the Prophet Moses first started preaching His Message).

18. In other words, it means: "Your rebellion against me is in fact rebellion against Allah, for what annoys you is not what I say but what Allah says, and I only present those things as His Messenger. If you doubt whether I have really been sent by Him or not, I present before you a clear authority of my appointment from Allah." This authority does not imply any one miracle but a long series of the miracles which the Prophet Moses continued to show to Pharaoh

and his people for years since the time he arrived in the court of Pharaoh till his last days in Egypt. Whatever Sign they denied, was followed up by a greater Sign of authority by him. (For explanation, see E.N.'s 42, 43 of Az-Zukhruf).

19. This was said at the time when, as against all the Signs presented by the Prophet Moses, Pharaoh was still showing stubbornness, but was feeling upset and confounded at the realization that all classes of the Egyptian society were rapidly being influenced by those Signs. In that period first of all he made the speech before his full packed court as mentioned in vv. 51-53 of Sūrah Zukhruf above (see E,N.'s 45 to 49). Then, when he felt the ground slipping from under his feet, he made up his mind to kill Allah's Messenger. At that time the Prophet said the words as mentioned in Sūrah Al-Mu'min: 27 , to the effect: "I have taken refuge in my Lord and your Lord against every arrogant person who does not believe in the Day of Reckoning." Here, the Prophet Moses is referring to that same thing and telling Pharaoh and his chiefs: "Look, I have sought Allah's refuge against all sorts of violence from you ; now you cannot harm me: but if you wish yourselves well, do not harm me. If you do not want to believe what I say, you may not, but you should never lay your hands on me, otherwise you will meet with catastrophic consequences".

20. This is the final report that the Prophet Moses presented before his Lord, saying: "These are criminals." That is, their being the criminals has been confirmed finally and absolutely. They have exhausted every chance of concession and respite for reformation. It is time that the final fatal decision be passed against them.

21. "With my servants": with all those people who have believed, including both the Israelites and the Egyptian Copts who had become Muslims since the time of the Prophet Joseph till that of the Prophet Moses, and those also who had been influenced by the Signs shown by Moses and His preaching and accepted Islam from among the Egyptians. (For explanation, see Sūrah Yūsuf: E.N. 68).

22. This was the initial command given to the Prophet Moses for the migration. (For explanation, see Ṭā-Hā: 77, Ash-Shu'arā': 52-68 and the corresponding E.N.'s).

23. This command was given when the Prophet Moses had crossed the sea along with his caravan and wanted that he should restore the sea to its former state by smiting it with the staff so that Pharaoh and his hosts should not pursue them on the dry path created by the miracle. At that times it was said: "Leave the sea divided as it is, so that Pharaoh and his armies should descend into it; then the sea will be restored and they will be drowned all together."

24. Ḥadrat Ḥasan Baṣri says that "others" here implies the children of Israel, whom Allah made heirs of the land of Egypt after Pharaoh's people, and Qatādah says it implies the other people who inherited Egypt after the people of Pharaoh, for the Histories do not make any mention that the Israelites ever returned to Egypt after the exodus and inherited it. This same point has been disputed by the later commentators also. (For a detailed discussion, see Ash-Shuʿarā: 57-59 and the E.N.'s on it).

25. That is, "When they were the rulers, they were known for their glory and grandeur: hymns were sung of their praise, flatterers flattered them to such an extent as if the whole world was devoted to them for their excellences and indebted to them for their favours and there was none more popular in the world than they. But when they fell there was none to shed a tear on their fall; rather the world felt relieved that a cause of distress had been removed. Obviously, they had neither done any good to the people that the dwellers of the earth might weep on them, nor anything for the sake of Allah's pleasure that the dwellers of the heavens might grieve over their ruin. As long as Allah continued to give them rope by His will, they enjoyed life as they pleased; but when they transgressed all limits in their crimes, they were cast aside like so much rubbish.

26. That is, Pharaoh by himself was an abasing torment for them and all other torments were indeed offshoots of the same great torment .

27. There is a subtle satire in it on the chiefs of the disbelieving Quraish. It means to say this: "You do not enjoy any place of distinction among the transgressors against Allah. Pharaoh indeed was a rebel of the highest order who was ruling on the throne of the largest kingdom of the time as a god. When he was swept away like straw, how can you prevent the Divine wrath?"

28. That is, "Allah was well aware both of the qualities and of the weaknesses of the children of Israel. He had not chosen them blindly. For when he chose them from among the contemporary nations to become the standard-bearers of His message and His *Tauḥīd,* they were the most suitable people in His knowledge for the purpose."

29. For explanation, see Al-Baqarah :49-74, An-Nisā: 153-160, Al-Māʾidah: 20-26, Al-Aʿrāf: 138-171, Ṭā-Hā: 80-97 and the corresponding E.N.'s.

30, That is, "When we die the first time, we shall be annihilated: there will be no other life after that".

31. This was their reasoning: We have never seen a dead person resurrected to life. Therefore, we believe that there will be no other life after death. If you claim that there will be another life, then resurrect our forefathers from their graves, so that we are convinced of the life-after-death. If you do not

do this, we would think that your claim is false. This was, as they thought, a very strong argument for the refutation of life-after-death, whereas it was absurd. Nobody had told them that the dead would return to this very world after being raised back to life, nor the Holy Prophet, nor any Muslim, had ever claimed that he could raise the dead back to life.

32. *Tubba'* was the title of the kings of the Himyarites, like the titles of Khosroes, Caesar, Pharaoh etc. which have been associated with the kings of different countries. They were a branch of the Sabaeans, who attained domination over Sabā in 115 B.C. and ruled it till 300 A.D. They have been a well known people of Arabia for centuries. (For details, see E.N. 37 of Sūrah Sabā).

33. This is the first answer to the disbelievers' objection; it means: No individual group or nation which denies the Hereafter can help becoming criminal. Perversion of the morals is its inevitable result, and human history bears evidence that whichever nation adopted this view of life ultimately perished. As for the question: Are they better or the people of Tubba' or the people before them? it means this: The disbelievers of Makkah have not been able to attain to the prosperity and splendour that became the lot of the people of Tubba' and of the people of Sabā and of the people of Pharaoh and others before them. But this material prosperity and worldly splendour could not save them from the consequences of their moral degeneration. How will then the chiefs of the Quraish be saved from destruction on the strength of their puny resources and wealth? (For details, see E.N.'s 25 to 36 of Sūrah Sabā).

34. This is the second answer to their objection; it means: "Whoever denies life-after-death and the rewards and punishments of the hereafter, in fact, regards this world as a plaything and its Creator as a foolish child. This is why he has formed the view that man, after raising all sorts of the storms in the world, will end up in the dust one day and none of his good or bad acts will bear any fruit. The fact, however, is that this universe is the creation of an All-Wise Creator and not of a frivolous being, and it cannot be expected from an All-Wise Creator that he would perform a useless and vain act." (For a detailed explanation, see Al-An'ām: 73, Yūnus: 5-6, Al-Anbiyā: 16-18, Al-Mu'minūn: 115, Ar-Rūm: 8-9 and the corresponding E.N.'s).

35. This is the answer to their demand: "Bring back our forefathers if you are truthful." It means: "Life-afer-death is not a trivial matter; it cannot be that whenever somebody denies it, a dead person may he raised immediately from the graveyard and presented before him. For it a time has been fixed by the Lord of the worlds, when He will resurrect to life all the former and the latter

[Contd. on p. 616

يُنْصَرُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾ اِلَّا مَنْ رَّحِمَ اللّٰهُ ؕ اِنَّهٗ هُوَ الْعَزِيْزُ الرَّحِيْمُ ﴿٤٢﴾ اِنَّ شَجَرَتَ الزَّقُّوْمِ ﴿٤٣﴾
طَعَامُ الْاَثِيْمِ ﴿٤٤﴾ كَالْمُهْلِ ۚ يَغْلِيْ فِي الْبُطُوْنِ ﴿٤٥﴾ كَغَلْيِ الْحَمِيْمِ ﴿٤٦﴾ خُذُوْهُ فَاعْتِلُوْهُ
اِلٰى سَوَآءِ الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٤٧﴾ ثُمَّ صُبُّوْا فَوْقَ رَاْسِهٖ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْحَمِيْمِ ﴿٤٨﴾ ذُقْ ۚ اِنَّكَ
اَنْتَ الْعَزِيْزُ الْكَرِيْمُ ﴿٤٩﴾ اِنَّ هٰذَا مَا كُنْتُمْ بِهٖ تَمْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾ اِنَّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ فِيْ
مَقَامٍ اَمِيْنٍ ﴿٥١﴾ فِيْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّعُيُوْنٍ ﴿٥٢﴾ يَّلْبَسُوْنَ مِنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَّاِسْتَبْرَقٍ
مُّتَقٰبِلِيْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾ كَذٰلِكَ ۫ وَزَوَّجْنٰهُمْ بِحُوْرٍ عِيْنٍ ﴿٥٤﴾ يَدْعُوْنَ فِيْهَا بِكُلِّ فَاكِهَةٍ
اٰمِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾ لَا يَذُوْقُوْنَ فِيْهَا الْمَوْتَ اِلَّا الْمَوْتَةَ الْاُوْلٰى ۚ وَوَقٰىهُمْ عَذَابَ
الْجَحِيْمِ ﴿٥٦﴾ فَضْلًا مِّنْ رَّبِّكَ ۚ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيْمُ ﴿٥٧﴾ فَاِنَّمَا يَسَّرْنٰهُ بِلِسَانِكَ
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٥٨﴾ فَارْتَقِبْ اِنَّهُمْ مُّرْتَقِبُوْنَ ﴿٥٩﴾

The zaqqūm-tree[38] shall be the sinner's food, like the dregs of oil.[39] It will boil in the belly like the boiling of hot water. "Seize him and drag him into the midst of Hell, and pour over his head the chastisement of boiling water. Taste this: a mighty and honourable man that you are! This is the same thing about which you entertained doubts." 43-50

The God-fearing shall be in a secure place,[40] in the gardens and springs, dressed in silk and brocade,[41] sitting face to face. Such will be their station! And We shall wed to them fair-complexioned, gazelle-eyed women.[42] There, in full peace, they shall ask for all kinds of tasty things.[43] There they shall never taste death, after their first death in the world, and Allah by His grace will protect them from the torment of Hell.[44] This is the supreme success! 51-57

O Prophet, We have made this Book easy in your own tongue so that they may take counsel Wait then, as they too are waiting.[45] 58-59

Contd. from p. 615]

generations, gather them together in His Court and will decide their cases. You

may believe in it or may not, but this will in any case happen on its own pre ordained time. If you believe in it, it will be to your own advantage, for, being forewarned, you will make preparations to fare well in that Court. If you do not believe in it, you will incur loss for yourselves, for you will expend your whole life in the misunderstanding that good and evil are confined only to this worldly life; after death there is going to be no court where our good or bad deeds might have to be judged for any permanent results."

36. The Arabic word *"maulā"* is used for a person who supports another person either because of kinship, or friendship, or some other relationship.

37. These sentences portray the nature of the Court that will be established on the Day of Decision. It will be a Court where nobody's help or support will help rescue any culprit nor have his sentence reduced. All powers will rest with the real Sovereign Whose decisions cannot be withheld from being enforced nor influenced by any power. It will entirely depend on His own discretion whether He forgives somebody mercifully, or awards him a lesser punishment; it indeed behoves Him to exercise justice mercifully and not mercilessly, but whatever decision He gives in any case, will be enforced entirely and completely. After this portrayal of the nature of the Divine Court, in the following few sentences it has been stated what will be the fate of those who will be found guilty in that Court, and what will be conferred on those about whom it will be established that they had been refraining from Allah's disobedience in the world out of fear of Him.

38. For the explanation of *zaqqūm*, see E.N. 34 of Sūrah Aṣ-Ṣāāffāt.

39. The word *al-muhl* in the original has several meanings: molten metal, pus-blood, molten tar, lava, dregs of oil. These are the different meanings given by the lexicographers and commentators, but if this word is understood with reference to *zaqqūm* (cactus), it may mean its juice which will probably be like the dregs of oil.

40. "A secure place": A place safe from every kind of fear, grief, worry and danger, hardship and trouble. According to a *Ḥadīth*, the Holy Prophet said: "It will be proclaimed to the dwellers of Paradise: You will remain in good health, will never fall ill; will live for ever: will never die; will ever remain happy and prosperous and will never meet with a misfortune; will ever remain youthful, will never become old." (Muslim, on the authority of Abū Hurairah and Abū Sa'īd Khudri).

41. *Sundus* and *istabraq* in the original are fine silk cloth and thick silk cloth respectively.

42. In the original, *ḥūr-un 'īn* : fair complexioned, large-eyed women. (For further explanation, see E.N.'s 26,29 of Aṣ-Ṣaaffat).

43. That is, they will order the attendants in Paradise to bring anything they would like in any measure they would demand, and it will be presented before them. In this world, a man cannot ask for a thing in a hotel, or even his own things in his own house, with the freedom and satisfaction as he will ask for these in Paradise, for in the world nothing is found anywhere in un-limited measure; whatever man uses here, he has to pay for it. In Paradise, things will belong to Allah, and the servants will enjoy full freedom to use them. Neither will there be the danger of the failure of the supply, nor the necessity of a bill to pay.

44. Two things are worthy of notice in this verse.

First, after mentioning the blessings of Paradise special mention has been made of being secure from Hell separately whereas a person's entry into Paradise by itself amounts to his being safe from Hell. This is because man can feel the worth of the reward of obedience fully only when he is informed what end the disobedient people have met and from what evil end he himself has been saved.

Secondly, Allah is mentioning those people's safety from Hell and their entry into Paradise as a result of His own grace. This is meant to warn man of the truth that this success cannot be achieved by any person unless he is blessed by Allah's grace. Although man will be rewarded for his own good deeds, in the first place he cannot do good unless favoured by Allah's succour; then even the best deed that man is able to perform, cannot be absolutely perfect and none can claim that it is flawless and faultless. It is only Allah's bounty that He should overlook the servant's weaknesses and defects in his actions and accept his services and bless him with rewards; otherwise if He resorts to minute accountability no one can dare claim to win Paradise only on the strength of his own deeds. The same thing has been said by the Holy Prophet in a *Ḥadīth* to the effect: "Act and try to act as righteously as you possibly can, but know that the action of a person alone will not make him enter Paradise. It was asked: What about your own action, O Messenger of Allah? He replied: Yes, even I won't enter Paradise on the strength of my actions, unless, of course, my Lord covers me up in His mercy."

45. That is, "If they do not accept the admonition even now, you should wait to see how they are visited by their doom; and they also are waiting to see what becomes of the message that you are giving them."


XLV
AL-JĀTHIYAH
الجاثيه

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XLV

AL-JĀTHIYAH

الجاثیہ

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the sentence *wa tarā kullu ummat-in jāthiyat-un* of verse 28, implying thereby that it is the Sūrah in which the word jāthiyah has occurred.

Period of Revelation

The period of the revelation of this Sūrah also has not been mentioned in any authentic tradition, but its subject-matter clearly shows that it was revealed consecutively after Sūrah Ad-Dukhān. The close resemblance between the contents of the two Sūrahs makes them look like the twin Sūrahs.

Subject-Matter and Topics

It answers the doubts and objections of the disbelievers of Makkah about *Tauḥīd* and the Hereafter and warns them for their attitude that they had adopted against the message of the Qur'ān.

The discourse begins with the arguments for *Tauḥīd*. In this connection, reference has been made to the countless Signs that are found in the world, from man's own body to the earth and heavens and it is pointed out that everywhere around him man finds things which testify to *Tauḥīd* which he refuses to acknowledge. If man sees carefully the variety of animals, the day and night, the rainfall and the vegetation thereby, the winds and his own creation, and ponders over them intelligently, without prejudice, he will find these Signs sufficiently convincing of the truth that this universe is not Godless, nor under the control of many gods, but it has been created by One God, and He alone is its Controller and Ruler. However, the case of the person who is determined not to acknowledge and wants to remain involved in doubts and suspicions is different. He cannot be blessed with the faith and conviction from anywhere in the world.

A little below, in the beginning of the second section, it has been reiterated that the things man is exploiting in the world, and the countless forces and agencies that are serving his interests in the universe, did not come into being just accidentally, nor have they been provided by the gods and goddesses, but it is One God alone, Who has supplied and subjected these to him from Himself. If only a person uses his mind properly and rightly, his own intellect will proclaim that God alone is man's real Benefactor and He alone deserves that man should pay obeisance to Him.

After this, the disbelievers of Makkah have been taken to task and reproved for their stubbornness, arrogance, mockery and insistence on disbelief with which they were resisting the invitation of the Qur'ān; they have been warned that this Qur'ān has brought the same blessing which had been granted to the children of Israel before, by virtue of which they became distinguished above all the people of the world. But, when they failed to recognize the true worth of this blessing and disputed their religion and lost it, this blessing now has been sent to them. This is such a code of guidance which shows the clear highway of

Religion to man. The people who would turn it down by their own folly, would only prepare for their own doom, and only such people would become worthy of God's succour and mercy who would adopt obedience to it and lead a life of piety and righteousness.

In this connection, the followers of the Holy Prophet have been instructed that they should forbear and pardon the absurd and foolish behaviour towards them of the people fearless of God, for if they showed patience God Himself would deal with their opponents and would reward them for their fortitude.

Then, there is a criticism of the erroneous ideas that the disbelievers held about the Hereafter. They said that life was only this worldly life; there was no life hereafter. Man dies in the course of time just as a watch stops functioning suddenly. The body is not survived by any soul, which might be seized and then breathed again into the human body some time in the future. In this regard, they challenged the Holy Prophet, saying: "If you lay a claim to this, then raise our dead forefathers back to life." In answer to this, Allah has given the following arguments:

(1) "You do not say this on the basis of any knowledge but are uttering this grave thing on the basis of conjecture. Do you really have the knowledge that there is no other life after death, and the souls are not seized but are annihilated?"

(2) "Your this claim rests mainly on that you have not seen any dead person rising back to life and returning to the world. Is this basis strong enough for a person to make a claim that the dead people will never rise to life? When you do not experience and observe a thing, does it mean that you have the knowledge that it does not exist at all?"

(3) It is utterly against reason and justice that the good and the bad, the obedient and the disobedient, the oppressor and the oppressed, should be made equal ultimately. Neither a good act should bear a good result nor an evil act an evil result; neither the grievances of the oppressed be redressed nor the oppressor be punished, but everyone should meet with the same fate ultimately. Whoever has formed this view about the universe of God, has formed a patently wrong view. The unjust and wicked

people adopt this view because they do not want to face the evil results of their deeds, but this world of God is not a lawless kingdom; it is rather a system based on the Truth, in which there can be no question of the injustice of regarding the good and the bad as equal.

(4) That the creed of the denial of the Hereafter is highly destructive of morals. This is adopted only by such people as are the slaves of their lusts, and for the reason that they should have full freedom to serve their lusts. And, when they have adopted this creed, it goes on making them more and more perverse till at last their moral sense becomes dead and all avenues of guidance are closed against them

After giving these arguments Allah says most emphatically: "Just as you did not become living of your own accord, but became living by Our power, so you do not die of your own accord, but die when We send death on you. And a time is certainly coming when you will all be gathered together. If you do not believe in this because of your ignorance and folly today, you may not; when the time arrives, you will see for yourself that you are present before your God and your whole book of conduct is ready accurately, which bears evidence against each of your misdeeds. Then you will come to know how dearly has your denial of the Hereafter and your mockery of it cost you."



حٰمٓ ﴿١﴾ تَنْزِيْلُ الْكِتٰبِ مِنَ اللّٰهِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَكِيْمِ ﴿٢﴾ اِنَّ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ
لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ﴿٣﴾ وَفِيْ خَلْقِكُمْ وَمَا يَبُثُّ مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ اٰيٰتٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿٤﴾
وَاخْتِلَافِ الَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَمَآ اَنْزَلَ اللّٰهُ مِنَ السَّمَآءِ مِنْ رِّزْقٍ فَاَحْيَا بِهِ
الْاَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَتَصْرِيْفِ الرِّيٰحِ اٰيٰتٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّعْقِلُوْنَ ﴿٥﴾ تِلْكَ اٰيٰتُ اللّٰهِ
نَتْلُوْهَا عَلَيْكَ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ فَبِاَيِّ حَدِيْثٍ بَعْدَ اللّٰهِ وَاٰيٰتِهٖ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٦﴾ وَيْلٌ
لِّكُلِّ اَفَّاكٍ اَثِيْمٍ ﴿٧﴾ يَّسْمَعُ اٰيٰتِ اللّٰهِ تُتْلٰى عَلَيْهِ ثُمَّ يُصِرُّ مُسْتَكْبِرًا كَاَنْ لَّمْ
يَسْمَعْهَا ۚ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِعَذَابٍ اَلِيْمٍ ﴿٨﴾ وَاِذَا عَلِمَ مِنْ اٰيٰتِنَا شَيْـًٔا اتَّخَذَهَا هُزُوًا ۚ
اُولٰٓئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِيْنٌ ﴿٩﴾ مِنْ وَّرَآئِهِمْ جَهَنَّمُ ۚ وَلَا يُغْنِيْ عَنْهُمْ مَّا كَسَبُوْا

XLV

AL-JĀTHIYAH

الجاثیہ

Verses: 37 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Hā-Mīm. The revelation of this Book is from Allah, the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.[1] 1-2

The fact is that there are countless Signs in the heavens and the earth for those who believe.[2] And in your own creation and in the animals, whom Allah is scattering (all over the earth), there are signs for those who affirm faith.[3] And in the difference of the night and day,[4] and in the provisions[5] that Allah sends down from the heaven, whereby He revives the earth after its death,[6] and in the circulation of the winds,[7] there are many signs for those who use their common sense. These are the Revelations of Allah, which We are rehearsing to you 3-6

accurately. Then, what is there after Allah and His Revelations in which they will believe.[8]

7-10 Woe to every lying, sinful person before whom the Revelations of Allah are recited and he hears them, yet he persists in his disbelief arrogantly as if he never heard them.[9] Give such a one the good news of a painful torment. When something of Our Revelations comes to his knowledge, he takes it in jest.[10] For all such people there is an abasing torment. They have Hell in front of them.[11] Nothing of what they have earned in the world will avail them anything, nor those whom they have taken for guardians instead of Allah.[12] There is a great punishment for them.

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1. In this brief introduction to the Sūrah, the listeners have been warned of two things: (1) That this Book is not the composition of Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) himself, but it is being sent down to him by Allah; and (2) that it is being sent down by that Allah Who is All-Mighty as well as All-Wise. His being the Almighty demands that man should not dare disobey His Commands, for if he disobeys Him, he cannot escape His punishment; and His being the All-Wise demands that man should obey and follow His Guidance and His Commands with full satisfaction and willingness of the heart, for there can be no possibility of His teachings being wrong or inadequate or harmful in any way.

2. To begin the discourse like this after the introduction, indicates that in the background there are the objections of the people of Makkah, which they were raising against the teachings of the Holy Prophet. They said: "After all, how can we believe this one man when he says that all those great beings to whose shrines we have been dedicated and devoted so far, are nothing and that Godhead belongs to only One God ?" About this it is being said that the world is replete with the signs of the Reality to which they are being invited. If only they saw with open eyes, they would find those signs in themselves and outside them everywhere, which testify that this whole universe is the creation of One and only One God, and He alone is its Master and Ruler and Controller. It didn't need to be pointed out what was the nature of the signs in the earth and heavens, for the dispute at that time centred around the point that the polytheists were insisting on believing in other gods and deities also besides Allah and the Qur'ān gave the message that there was neither a god nor a deity beside One God. Therefore, it was apparent by itself from the context that the signs were of the truth of *Tauḥīd* and of the refutation of *shirk*.

As for the sentence: "The signs are for those who believe," it means that although the signs are meant for all human beings, only those people can reach the

right conclusion from their observation, who are inclined to believe; as for the heedless people, who live like animals and the stubborn people who are resolved not to believe, the existence and the non-existence of the signs is equal. The splendour and beauty of the garden is for those who can see; a blind man cannot perceive any splendour and beauty; for him even the existence of the garden is meaningless.

3. That is, "The case of those who have made up their minds not to believe, or of those who have chosen for themselves to remain lost in the blind alleys of doubt, is different, but when those who have not locked up their hearts against belief and conviction, will consider seriously their own creation, the structure of their own body, and the variety of animals found on the earth, they will see countless such signs as will leave no doubt in their minds that all this did not come into being without a God, or that it stood in need of more than one God for its creation. (For explanation, see Al An'ām: 37-38, An-Naḥl: 5,8, Al-Ḥajj: 5-7, Al Mu'minūn: 12-14, Al-Furqān: 54, Ash-Shu'arā': 78-81, An-Naml: 64, Ar-Rūm: 20-21, 54, E.N.'s 14 to 18 of As-Sajdah, Yā Sīn: 71-73, Az-Zumar: 6, and E.N.'s 97, 98,110 of Al-Mu'min).

4. The difference of the night and day is a sign because one follows the other with full regularity, because one is bright and the other dark, because over a certain period the day goes on shortening and the night lengthening gradually till the two become equal in duration, then again the day goes on lengthening and the night shortening till the two again become equal in duration. These different kinds of variations found in the night and the day and the great aspects of wisdom that accrue from these, are a clear pointer to the fact that the Creator of the sun and the earth and of every thing on the earth is one and that one All-Powerful Being is keeping both these spheres under His control; that that Being is not deaf and blind and unwise but All-Wise, Who has established this unalterable system and made His earth a suitable place for the countless species of life, which He has created here in the form of vegetables, animals and men. (For explanation, see Yūnus: 67, An Naml: 86, Al-Qaṣaṣ: 71-73, Luqmān: 29 and E.N. 50, Yā Sīn: 37 and E.N. 32)

5. "Provisions": rainfall as becomes evident from the following sentence.

6. For explanation, see Al-Mu'minūn: 18-20, Al-Furqān: 48-49, Ash-Shu'arā': 7, An-Naml: 61, Ar-Rūm: 24, 48, Yā Sīn: E.N.'s 26 to 31.

7. The circulation of the winds implies the circulation of the different kinds of winds at different times, on different parts of the earth and at different heights, which cause change of the seasons. What deserves attention is not only that above the surface of the earth there is a thick atmosphere, which contains all those elements needed by living beings for breathing, and this thick covering has kept

the earth's population safe from many of the heavenly calamities. Besides, another noteworthy thing is that the air is not just filled inertly in the atmosphere, but it blows occasionally in different ways. Sometimes a cool wind blows and sometimes a hot wind; sometimes it stops blowing and sometimes it starts blowing; sometimes it blows soft and sometimes strong, and sometimes it assumes the proportions of a storm, sometimes a dry wind blows and sometimes a moist wind; sometimes it brings the rain and sometimes it drives away the clouds. These different kinds of the winds do not blow without a purpose, but under a law and a system, which testifies that this arrangement is based on perfect wisdom, and it is serving great objectives. Then it is deeply related with coolness and heat, which go on increasing and decreasing according to the changing conditions and relationships between the earth and the sun. Furthermore, it has a deep relation with the seasonal changes and the distribution of the rain. All these facts proclaim that these arrangements have not been made haphazardly by some blind nature, nor have the sun and the earth and the air and water and vegetation and animals separate controllers, but inevitably One God alone is the Creator of them all, and it is His Wisdom that has established this system for a great objective, and it is His power that it is functioning regularly according to a pre-ordained law.

8. That is, "When these people have not believed even after Allah's own arguments have been presented for His Existence and His Unity, what else can be there by which they will gain the faith? For Allah's Word is the final thing by which a person can attain to this blessing, and the maximum of the rational arguments that could possibly be given to convince someone of an unseen reality have been presented in this Divine Word. In spite of this if a person is bent upon denial, he may persist in his denial, for his denial cannot change the reality."

9. In other words, there is a marked difference between the person who listens to Allah's Revelations sincerely with an open mind and ponders over them seriously and the person who listens to them resolved that he would deny them, and then persists in the resolve already made without any serious thought. If the first person does not believe in the Revelations immediately, it does not mean that he wants to remain an unbeliever, but because he wants to have greater satisfaction. Therefore, even if he is taking time to believe, it is just possible that another Revelation might enter his heart and he might believe sincerely with full satisfaction. As for the other person, he would never believe in any Revelation whatever, for he has already locked his heart up to every Revelation of Allah. In this state such people generally are involved as are characterised by the following three qualities: (1) They are liars; therefore, the truth does not appeal to them; (2) they are wrongdoers; therefore, it is very hard for them to believe in a teaching or guidance that may impose moral restrictions on them; and (3) they are involved in the conceit that they know everything, and that none can teach them anything;

therefore, they do not regard as worthy of attention and consideration Allah's Revelations that are recited to them, and it is all the same for them whether they listen to them or not.

10. That is, "He does not rest content with mocking any one particular Revelation, but mocks all the Revelations. For example, when he hears that a particular thing has been mentioned in the Qur'ān, he does not take it in its straight-forward meaning, but first puts a crooked meaning on it in order to make it a subject of ridicule and mockery, then after making fun of it, says: "These are strange things: one daily hears one or the other funny thing from them."

11. The word *warā' is* used for every such thing as is hidden from man, whether it is before him or behind him. Therefore, another translation can be: "They have Hell behind them." In the first case, the meaning would be: "They are unconsciously running on this way and have no idea that there is Hell in front of them in which they would fall ;" in the second case, it would mean: "They are engaged in this mischief of theirs, thoughtless of the Hereafter, and they have no idea that Hell is in pursuit of them."

12. Here, the word *walī* (guardian) has been used in two meanings; (1) For those gods and goddesses and living and dead guides about whom the polytheists thought that anybody who was devoted to them, would escape Allah's punishment, whatever he might have done in the world, for their intercession will save them from Allah's wrath; and (2) for those chiefs and leaders and rulers whom the people took as their guides and patrons independent of God and followed them blindly and tried to please them even if they had to displease God. This verse warns all such people that when they will face Hell in consequence of this way of life, neither of the two kinds of the guardians will come forward to save them from it. (For further explanation, see E.N. 6 of Sūrah Ash- Shūrā).

شَيْئًا وَّلَا مَا اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ اَوْلِيَآءَ ۚ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيْمٌ ﴿١٠﴾ هٰذَا
هُدًى ۚ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِاٰيٰتِ رَبِّهِمْ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مِّنْ رِّجْزٍ اَلِيْمٌ ﴿١١﴾ اَللّٰهُ
الَّذِيْ سَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْبَحْرَ لِتَجْرِيَ الْفُلْكُ فِيْهِ بِاَمْرِهٖ وَلِتَبْتَغُوْا مِنْ فَضْلِهٖ وَ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَمَا فِي الْاَرْضِ جَمِيْعًا مِّنْهُ ۚ
اِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَّتَفَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ قُلْ لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا يَغْفِرُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ لَا
يَرْجُوْنَ اَيَّامَ اللّٰهِ لِيَجْزِيَ قَوْمًا بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا
فَلِنَفْسِهٖ ۚ وَمَنْ اَسَآءَ فَعَلَيْهَا ۚ ثُمَّ اِلٰى رَبِّكُمْ تُرْجَعُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ اٰتَيْنَا بَنِيْٓ
اِسْرَآءِيْلَ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْحُكْمَ وَالنُّبُوَّةَ وَرَزَقْنٰهُمْ مِّنَ الطَّيِّبٰتِ وَفَضَّلْنٰهُمْ عَلَى
الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ وَاٰتَيْنٰهُمْ بَيِّنٰتٍ مِّنَ الْاَمْرِ ۚ فَمَا اخْتَلَفُوْٓا اِلَّا مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مَا جَآءَهُمُ
الْعِلْمُ ۢ بَغْيًۢا بَيْنَهُمْ ۭ اِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَقْضِيْ بَيْنَهُمْ يَوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ فِيْمَا كَانُوْا فِيْهِ
يَخْتَلِفُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ ثُمَّ جَعَلْنٰكَ عَلٰى شَرِيْعَةٍ مِّنَ الْاَمْرِ فَاتَّبِعْهَا وَلَا تَتَّبِعْ اَهْوَآءَ
الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ اِنَّهُمْ لَنْ يُّغْنُوْا عَنْكَ مِنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْـًٔا ۭ وَاِنَّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ
بَعْضُهُمْ اَوْلِيَآءُ بَعْضٍ ۚ وَاللّٰهُ وَلِيُّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ ﴿١٩﴾ هٰذَا بَصَاۗىِٕرُ لِلنَّاسِ وَهُدًى
وَّرَحْمَةٌ لِّقَوْمٍ يُّوْقِنُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ اَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِيْنَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّاٰتِ اَنْ نَّجْعَلَهُمْ
كَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ ۙ سَوَاۗءً مَّحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ ۭ سَاۗءَ مَا يَحْكُمُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾
وَخَلَقَ اللّٰهُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ بِالْحَقِّ وَلِتُجْزٰى كُلُّ نَفْسٍۢ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ وَهُمْ
لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ اَفَرَءَيْتَ مَنِ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰهَهٗ هَوٰىهُ وَاَضَلَّهُ اللّٰهُ عَلٰي عِلْمٍ وَّخَتَمَ
عَلٰي سَمْعِهٖ وَقَلْبِهٖ وَجَعَلَ عَلٰي بَصَرِهٖ غِشٰوَةً ۭ فَمَنْ يَّهْدِيْهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ اللّٰهِ ۭ
اَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ وَقَالُوْا مَا هِيَ اِلَّا حَيَاتُنَا الدُّنْيَا نَمُوْتُ وَنَحْيَا وَمَا يُهْلِكُنَا

This Qur'ān is true Guidance, and for those who have refused to believe in the Revelations of their Lord, there is the torment of a terrible scourge. 11

Allah it is Who subjected to you the ocean so that ships may sail in it by His Command,[13] and you may seek His bounty[14] and be grateful to Him. He subjected to you everything that the heavens and the earth contain,[15] all from Himself.[16] There are many signs in this for those who think.[17] 12-13

O Prophet, tell the believers to pardon the errors of those who do not fear the coming of the evil days from Allah,[18] so that Allah may Himself recompense a group for what they have earned.[19] Whoever does good will do so for himself, and whoever does evil will himself bear its burden. To your Lord you have all to return! 14-15

Before this We had bestowed on the children of Israel the Book and the Judgement[20] and the Prophethood. We blessed them with good things of life; We exalted them above all the people of the world,[21] and gave them clear instructions with regard to religion. Then they differed among themselves (not because of ignorance but) after the Knowledge had come to them, only because they wanted to wrong one another.[22] Your Lord will judge between them on the Day of Resurrection concerning the matters in which they have been differing. After this We have set you, O Prophet, upon a clear highway (of the *Shari'ah)* concerning religion:[23] so follow it, and do not follow the lusts of those who have no knowledge. They cannot avail you at all against Allah.[24] The wrongdoers are companions of one another and the Companion of the righteous is Allah. These are the lights of discernment for all mankind and guidance and mercy for those who affirm the faith.[25] 16-20

Do[26] those who have committed evil, think that We shall hold them and those who have believed and done right as equal, so that their life and their death should be alike ? Evil indeed are the judgements they pass![27] Allah has created the heavens and the earth with the truth[28] in order that each living being be rewarded for what it has earned. The people shall not be wronged at all.[29] 21-22

Then, have you ever considered the case of the person who made his lust his god,[30] and Allah, in spite of knowledge,[31] let him go 23

astray and set a seal upon his heart and ears and laid a covering on his eyes ?[32] Who is there after Allah Who can guide him? Do you learn no lesson?[33]

Contd. from p.629]

13. For explanation, see Banī Isrā'īl: 66-67, Ar-Rūm: 46 and the corresponding E.N.'s, and E.N. 55 of Luqmān, E.N. 110 of Al Mu'min, and E.N. 54 of Ash-Shūrā.

14 "Seek His bounty": Seek lawful provisions by trade, fishing, diving, navigation and other means in the sea.

15. For explanation, see Ibrahīm: 32 and E.N. 44 on it, and E.N. 35 of Luqmān.

16. This sentence has two meanings: (1) "This gift and favour of Allah is not like the gift of the worldly kings, who favour their favourites with the wealth that they have collected from the people themselves, but, on the contrary, all the good things, in the universe have been created by Allah Himself, and He has granted these to man from Himself;" and (2) "neither is anyone a partner of Allah in the creation of these good things, nor has anyone anything to do in making them subservient to man. Allah alone is their Creator and He alone has granted these to man from Himself."

17. That is, "In their subjection and in making them beneficial for man there are many signs for those who think and reflect. These signs clearly point to the truth that the Creator and Master and Administrator of everything and of every power in the universe, from the earth to the heavens, is One God alone Who has subjected them to a law; and that God alone is Lord of man Who has made all these things and powers favourable and helpful for man's life his sustenance, his convenience, his development and his civilization and social life by His power and wisdom and mercy, and that God alone is worthy of man's service and gratitude and devotion and not some other beings, who have neither any share in creating the things and powers nor anything to do with subjecting them to man and making them beneficial for him."

18. Literally: "Who do not except the days of Allah." But in Arabic usage on such occasions *ayyām* does not merely mean days but those memorable days in which important historical events may have taken place. For example, the word *ayyām-ul 'Arab* is used for the important events of the history of the Arabs and the major battles of the Arab tribes, which the later generations remember for centuries. Here, *ayyām-Allah* implies the evil days of a nation when the wrath of Allah may descend on it and ruin it in consequence of its misdeeds. That is why

we have translated it: "Those who do not fear the coming of evil days from Allah," i.e. those who do not fear that a day will come when they will be called to account for their actions and deeds, and this same fearlessness has made them bold and stubborn in acts of wickedness.

19. The commentators have given two meanings of this verse and the words of the verse admit of both: (1) "That the believers should pardon the excesses of this wicked group so that Allah may reward them for their patience and forbearance and nobility from Himself and recompense them for the persecutions they have suffered for His sake." (2) "That the believers should pardon these people so that Allah may Himself punish them for their persecutions of them."

Some other commentators have regarded this verse as repealed. They say that this command was applicable only till the Muslims had not been permitted to fight. Then, when they were permitted to fight, this command became abrogated. But a careful study of the words of the verse shows that the claim about abrogation is not correct. The word "pardon" is never used in the sense that when a person is not able to retaliate upon another for the latter's excesses, he should pardon him, but on such an occasion the usual words are patience and forbearance. Instead of them, when the word "pardon" has been used here, it by itself gives the meaning that the believers, in spite of their ability for retaliation, should refrain from retaliating upon the people for their excesses, whom fearlessness of God has made to transgress all limits of morality and humanity. This commad does not contradict those verses in which the Muslims have been permitted to fight. Permission to fight pertains to the condition when the Muslim government has a reasonable ground for taking military action against an unbelieving people, and the command concerning forgiveness and pardon pertains to the common conditions in which the believers have to live in contact with a people who are fearless of God and have to suffer persecutions by them in different ways. The object of this command is that the Muslims should keep their moral superiority and should not stoop to the level of the morally inferior people by indulging in disputes and wranglings with them and resort to retaliation for every frivolity. As long as it is possible to respond to an accusation or objection gently and rationally, or to defend oneself against an excess, one should not refrain from this, but when things seem to be crossing these limits, one should hold one's peace and entrust the matter to Allah. If the Muslims themselves become involved in a fight or quarrel with them, Allah will leave them alone to deal with them; but if they pardon and forbear, Allah will Himself deal with the wicked people and reward the oppressed ones for their patience.

20. *Hukm* (judgement) implies three things: (1) Knowledge and understanding of the Book and Religion; (2) wisdom to act according to the intention of the Book; and (3) capability to give right decisions in disputes.

21. It does not mean that they were given preference over all the people of the world for ever, rather it means: Allah had chosen the children of Israel from among all the contemporary nations of the world for the service that they should hold fast to the Divine Book and should rise as the standard-bearers of God-worship in the world.

22. For explanation, see Al-Baqarah: 213, Āl-'Imrān: 19 and E.N.'s 22, 23 of Ash-Shūrā.

23. It means: "The mission that had been entrusted to the children of Israel before you has now been entrusted to you. They, in spite of receiving knowledge, created such differences in religion out of selfish motives and stirred up such divisions among themselves that they became disqualified to call the people to God's way. Now you have been set upon the clear highway of Religion so that you may perform the service which the children of Israel have failed to perform and become disqualified to perform it." (For further explanation, see Ash-Shūrā: 13-15 and E.N.'s 20 to 26).

24. That is, "If you make any changes in Allah's Religion only to please them, they will not be able to save you from Allah's accountability and punishment."

25. That is, "This Book and this *Shari'ah* present such a light for all the people of the world, which distinguishes the truth from falsehood, but only such people receive any guidance from it who believe in its truth; for them only it is a mercy."

26. After the invitation to *Tauhīd*, the discourse now turns to the theme of the Hereafter.

27. This is the moral reasoning for the truth of the Hereafter. The difference of good and evil in morals and of goodness and wickedness in deeds necessarily demands that the good and the evil people should not meet with one and the same end, but the good should be rewarded for their good and the wicked punished for their evil deeds. Otherwise, if the good and the evil end up similarly, the distinction of virtue and vice in morals becomes meaningless and God becomes unjust. The people who follow evil ways in the world do want that there should be no accountability and no rewards and punishments, for this concept goes against their enjoyment of life, but it is against the justice and wisdom of the Lord of the worlds that He should treat the good and the evil alike, and should not care to see how the righteous believer has lived his life in the world and how the sinful

unbeliever has been enjoying it. One of them kept himself subjected to moral restrictions all his life, rendered the rights of those to whom they were due, restrained himself from the unlawful benefits and pleasures, and continued to incur losses for the sake of the truth; the other fulfilled his desires in every possible way: neither recognized the rights of God nor hesitated from violating the rights of the people, but went on collecting benefits and good things of life in every possible way. Can it be expected of God that He would overlook the difference between the lives of the two kinds of men? If the end of both be the same, no greater injustice could be conceived. (For further explanation, see Yūnus: 4, Hūd: 106, An-Naḥl: 38 39, Al-Ḥajj: E N. 9, An-Naml: E,N. 86, Ar-Rūm: 7-8, Suād: 28 and E.N. 30 on it).

28. That is, "Allah has not created the earth and the heavens for mere sport, but it is a wise system with a purpose. In this system it is absolutely unimaginable that the people who may have accomplished good deeds by the right use of the powers and means and resouces granted by Allah and the people who may have spread mischief and wickedness by their wrong use, should end up ultimately in the dust after death, and there should be no life hereafter in which their good and bad deeds should lead to good or bad results according to justice. If this were so, this universe would be the plaything of a thoughtless being, and not a purposeful system devised by a Wise Being." (For further explanation, see Al-An'am: 73, Yūnus: 5-6, Ibrahim: 19, An-Naḥl: 3, Al-'Ankabūt: 44 and E.N.'s 75, 76; Ar-Rūm: 8 and E.N. 6 on it).

29. In this context the sentence clearly means: "If the good people are not rewarded for their goodness, and the wicked are not punished for their wickedness, and the grievances of the oppressed are not redressed, it would be injustice. There cannot be such an injustice in the Kingdom of God. Likewise, there cannot also be the other kind of injustice that a good man be given a lesser reward than what is due to him, or a bad man given a greater punishment than what he deserves."

30. "To make one's lust one's god" implies that one should become a slave of one's lusts and desires: one should do whatever one likes whether God has forbidden it, and should not do what one dislikes, whether God has made it obligatory. When a man starts obeying somebody like this, it means that his deity is not God but the one whom he is obeying without question, no matter whether he calls him his lord (with the tongue) or not, and carves out an image of him and worships him or not. For when he has worshipped him directly without question, it is enough to make him a deity and after this practical *shirk* one cannot be absolved from the guilt of *shirk* only because one did not call the object of one's worship one's deity with the tongue, nor prostrated oneself before it. The other major commentators also have given the same commentary of this verse. Ibn Jarīr says:

إِلَّا الدَّهْرُ ۚ وَمَا لَهُمْ بِذٰلِكَ مِنْ عِلْمٍ ۚ إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِمْ
آيَاتُنَا بَيِّنَاتٍ مَا كَانَ حُجَّتَهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوا ائْتُوا بِآبَائِنَا إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾
قُلِ اللَّهُ يُحْيِيكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يَجْمَعُكُمْ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهِ وَ
لٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ
السَّاعَةُ يَوْمَئِذٍ يَخْسَرُ الْمُبْطِلُونَ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَتَرَىٰ كُلَّ أُمَّةٍ جَاثِيَةً ۚ كُلُّ أُمَّةٍ تُدْعَىٰ
إِلَىٰ كِتٰبِهَا ۚ الْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾ هٰذَا كِتٰبُنَا يَنْطِقُ عَلَيْكُمْ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ
إِنَّا كُنَّا نَسْتَنْسِخُ مَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ
فَيُدْخِلُهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ فِي رَحْمَتِهِ ۚ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٣٠﴾ وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۖ
أَفَلَمْ تَكُنْ آيَاتِي تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ فَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ وَكُنْتُمْ قَوْمًا مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ وَإِذَا قِيلَ
إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَالسَّاعَةُ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا قُلْتُمْ مَا نَدْرِي مَا السَّاعَةُ ۙ إِنْ
نَظُنُّ إِلَّا ظَنًّا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُسْتَيْقِنِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾ وَبَدَا لَهُمْ سَيِّئَاتُ مَا عَمِلُوا وَحَاقَ
بِهِمْ مَا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِئُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَقِيلَ الْيَوْمَ نَنْسٰكُمْ كَمَا نَسِيتُمْ لِقَاءَ يَوْمِكُمْ
هٰذَا وَمَأْوٰكُمُ النَّارُ وَمَا لَكُمْ مِنْ نّٰصِرِينَ ﴿٣٤﴾ ذٰلِكُمْ بِأَنَّكُمُ اتَّخَذْتُمْ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ
هُزُوًا وَغَرَّتْكُمُ الْحَيٰوةُ الدُّنْيَا ۚ فَالْيَوْمَ لَا يُخْرَجُونَ مِنْهَا وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾
فَلِلَّهِ الْحَمْدُ رَبِّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَرَبِّ الْأَرْضِ رَبِّ الْعٰلَمِينَ ﴿٣٦﴾ وَلَهُ الْكِبْرِيَاءُ
فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣٧﴾

They say, "Life is only this worldly life of ours. Here we shall 24-27
die and live and nothing but the change of time destroys us." In fact, they have no knowledge concerning this: they merely guess.[34] And when Our clear Revelations are recited to them,[35] their only argument is that they say, "Bring back our forefathers if you are truthful."[36] O Prophet, say to them, "It is Allah Who gives you life, then He it is Who causes your death,[37] then He it is Who will gather you together on the Day of Resurrection, which is sure to come,[38] but most people do not know.[39] To Allah belongs the Sovereignty of the heavens and the earth,[40] and the Day the Hour of Resurrection arrives, the worshippers of falsehood on that Day shall be doomed to loss."

At that time you will see every nation on their knees.[41] Each 28-35
nation will be summoned to see its record. It will be said to them, "Today you shall be rewarded for what you have done. This is a record which We have prepared: it gives true evidence against you. We were recording all your deeds."[42] Then, those who had believed and done righteous deeds, their Lord shall admit them to His mercy; this is the manifest success! And to those who had disbelieved, it will be said: "Were not My Revelations recited to you? But you showed arrogance[43] and became criminals. And when it was said, 'Allah's promise is true and there is no doubt about the coming of Resurrection', you used to say, 'We do not know what Resurrection is: we do only guess: we are not certain.'"[44] The evils of their deeds then will become manifest to them[45] and they will be encompassed by the same that they used to mock. It will be said to them, "We will today forget you even as you yourselves had forgotten the meeting of this Day. Your abode now is Hell and there is none to help you. You have met this fate because you took Allah's Revelations in jest, and the life of the world deluded you. Therefore, neither shall they be taken out of Hell today, nor shall they be asked to make amends and please their Lord."[46]

So, praise is for Allah alone, Who is the Lord of the heavens 36-37
and the earth and the Lord of all the worlds. To Him belongs Greatness in the heavens and the earth, and He alone is the All-Mighty, the All-Wise.

Contd. from p.635]

the forbidden things by Allah as forbidden, nor regarded the things made lawful by Him as lawful." Abū Bakr al-Jaṣṣaṣ gives this meaning: "He obeys his lusts as one should obey one's God." Zamakhshari explains it, thus: "He is obedient to the lusts of his self: He follows his self wherever it beckons him, as if he serves him as one should serve one's God." (For further explanation, see E.N. 56 of Al-Furqān, E.N. 63 of Sabā, E N. 53 of Yā Sīn, and E.N. 38 of Ash-Shūrā).

31. The words *adalla hullā-hu 'alā 'ilm-in* may either mean: "The person in spite of being knowledgeable was driven astray by Allah, for he had become a slave of his lusts ;" or "Allah, by virtue of His knowledge that he had made his lusts his god, drove him astray."

32. For the commentary of letting a person go astray and setting a seal upon his heart and ears and a covering on his eyes, see Al-Baqarah: 7, 18, Al-An'ām:25 and E.N. 28, Al-A'rāf: 100, At-Taubah: 87, 93, Yūnus: 74 and E.N. 73, Ar-Ra'd: 27, Ibrahīm: 4, 27, An-Naḥl: 108, Banī Isrā'īl: 46, Ar-Rūm; 59, Fajir: 8 and E.N.'s 16, 17, and E.N. 54 of Al-Mu'minūn).

33. From the context in which this verse occurs, it becomes obvious that only those people deny the Hereafter, who want to serve their lusts and who regard belief in the Hereafter as an obstacle to their freedom. Then, once they have denied the Hereafter, their servitude of the self goes on increasing and they go on wandering further into deviation. They commit every kind of evil without feeling any qualms; they do not hesitate to usurp the rights of others; they cannot be expected to restrain themselves when there is an opportunity for them to commit an excess or injustice only because of a regard for justice and truth in their hearts. The events and incidents that can serve as a warning for a man, are witnessed by them too, but they draw the wrong conclusion that whatever they are doing is right and they should do the same. No word of advice moves them; no argument, which can stop a man from evil, appeals to them; but they go on devising and furnishing more and more arguments to justify their unbridled freedom, and their minds remain day and night engaged only in devising ways and means of fulfilling their own interests and desires in every possible way instead of engaging in a good thought. This is an express proof of the fact that the denial of the Hereafter is destructive for human morals. The only thing that can restrain man within the bounds of humanity is the feeling that man is not irresponsible but has to render an account of his deeds before God. Being devoid of this feeling even if a person is highly learned, he cannot help adopting an attitude and behaviour worse than that of the animals.

34. This is, "There is no means of knowledge by which they might have known with certainty that after this life there is no other life for man, and that man's soul is not seized by the Command of God, but he dies and perishes merely in the course of time. The deniers of the Hereafter say these things not on the basis of any knowledge but on mere conjecture. The maximum that they could say scientifically is: "We do not know whether there is any life after death or not;" but they cannot say: "We know that there is no other life after this life." Likewise, they cannot make the claim of knowing scientifically that man's soul is not seized by God's Command but he perishes after death just like a watch which suddenly stops functioning. The most they can say is just this: "We do not know what exactly happens in either case." Now the question is: When to the extent of the means of human knowledge there is an equal possibility of there being life after death or there being no life after death, and the soul's being seized by Allah's Command, or man's dying of himself in the course of time, what is the reason that these people abandon the probability of the possibility of the Hereafter and give their judgement in favour of its denial? Do they have any other reason than this that they, in fact, decide this question on the basis of their desire and not by any argument? As they do not like that there should be any life after death and death should mean total annihilation and not seizure of the soul by Allah's Command, they make their heart's desire their creed and deny the other probability."

35. "Our clear Revelations": the Revelations in which strong arguments have been given for the possibility of the Hereafter and in which it has been stated that its occurrence is the demand of both wisdom and justice, and its non-occurrence renders the whole system of the universe meaningless and absurd.

36. In other words, what they meant to say was: When somebody tells them that there is life after death, he must raise a dead person from the grave and present him before them. And if this is not done, they cannot believe that the dead would ever be raised to life once again at some time in the future, whereas nobody ever told them that the dead would be raised to life in this world as and when required separately, but what was said was: On the Day of Resurrection Allah will raise all human beings to life simultaneously and will subject them to accountability and punish and reward them accordingly.

37. This is the answer to their saying that death comes to man automatically in the course of time. It means: "Neither you get life accidentally nor your death occurs automatically. It is God Who gives you life and it is He Who takes it away."

38. This is the answer to their demand: "Bring back our forefathers if you are truthful." To this it has been said: "This will not happen now separately for individuals, but a Day has been fixed for gathering all mankind together."

39. That is, "It is lack of knowledge and right understanding which is the real cause of the people's denying the Hereafter; otherwise it is not its coming but its not coming which is against reason. If a person reflects rightly on the system of the universe and on his own self, he will himself realize that there can be no doubt about the coming of the Hereafter."

40. In view of the context, this sentence by itself gives the meaning that it is not at all beyond the power of God Who is ruling over this great and marvellous universe that He should bring the human beings whom He has created in the first instance back into existence once again.

41. That is, the dread and terror of the Plain of Resurrection and the awe of the Divine Court will be such that it will break the stubbornness of the most arrogant and boastful people, and everyone will be found fallen on his knees humbly.

42. The only possible way of getting a thing recorded is not by means of the pen and paper only. Man himself has discovered in this world several other forms of recording human words and actions and reproducing them exactly and accurately; and we cannot even imagine what other possibilities of it lie yet undiscovered, which man himself will discover and exploit in the future. Now, who can know how and by what means is Allah getting recorded man's every word, his every movement and action, even his hidden intentions and motives and desires and ideas, and how He will place before every man and every group and every nation his or its whole lifework accurately and exactly ?

43 That is, "You thought it was below your dignity to believe in Allah's Revelations and submit to them, and considered yourselves to be above subjection and servitude."

44. The people mentioned in verse 24 above were those who denied the Hereafter openly and absolutey, here those who are not sure of it although they do not deny its possibility because of conjecture. Apparently there is a vast difference between the two groups in that one of them denies the Hereafter absolutely and the other regards it as possible on the basis of conjecture. But as for the result and final end, there is no difference between them, for the moral consequences of the denial of the Hereafter and of lack of the faith in it are the same. A person whether he disbelieves in the Hereafter or lacks faith in it, will in either case be inevitably devoid of the feeling of accountability before God, and this lack of feeling will necessarily involve him in the error and deviation of thought and

action. Only faith and belief in the Hereafter can keep a man on the right track in the world. In the absence of it, both doubt and denial give him a similar attitude of irresponsibility, and since this same attitude of irresponsibility is the real cause of man's being doomed in the Hereafter, therefore neither the denier of it can escape Hell nor the one who lacks faith in it.

45. That is, "There they will come to know that their ways of behaviour, their practices and manners, and their actions and pastimes, which they regarded as very good in the world were, in fact, very bad: they had committed a basic mistake in thinking that they were not answerable to anyone, and this had rendered their whole lifework fruitless and vain."

46. This last sentence depicts the manner of a master who after rebuking some of his servants turns to others and says: "Well, these wretched people now deserve such and such punishment!"



XLVI

AL-AḤQĀF

الاحقاف

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

XLVI
AL-AḤQĀF

الاحقاف

INTRODUCTION

Name

It is derived from the sentence *idh andhara qauma-hū bil Aḥqāf-i* of verse 21.

Period of Revelation

It is determined by an historical event that has been mentioned in vv. 29-32. This incident of the visit of the jinn and their going back after listening to the Qur'ān had occurred, according to agreed traditions of the *Ḥadith* and biographical literature, at the time when the Holy

Prophet had halted at Nakhlah during his return journey from Ṭā'if to Makkah. And according to all authentic historical traditions he had gone to Tā'if three years before the *Hijrah;* therefore it is determined that this Sūrah was sent down towards the end of the 10th year or in the early part of the 11th year of the Prophethood.

Historical Background

The 10th year of the Prophethood was a year of extreme persecution and distress in the Holy Prophet's life. The Quraish and the other tribes had continued their boycott of the Bani Ḥāshim and the Muslims for three years and the Holy Prophet and the people of his family and Companions lay besieged in Shi'b Abi Ṭālib.[1] The Quraish had blocked up this locality from every side so that no supplies of any kind could reach the besieged people. Only during the Ḥajj season they were allowed to come out and buy some articles of necessity. But even at that time whenever Abu Lahab noticed any of them approaching the market place or a trading caravan he would call out to the merchants exhorting them to announce forbidding rates of their articles for them, and would pledge that he himself would buy those articles so that they did not suffer any loss. This boycott which continued un-interrupted for three years had broken the back of the Muslims and the Bani Hāshim; so much so that at times they were even forced to eat grass and the leaves of trees.

At last, when the siege was lifted, Abu Ṭālib, the Holy Prophet's uncle, who had been shielding him for ten long years, died, and hardly a month later his wife, Ḥaḍrat Khadijah, who had been a source of peace and consolation for him ever since the beginning of the call, also passed away. Because of these tragic incidents, which closely followed each other, the Holy Prophet used to refer to this year as the year of sorrow and grief.

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1. Shi'b Abi Ṭālib was a locality of Makkah inhabited by the Bani Hāshim. As it was located in one of the ravines of the Mount Abū Qubais and Abū Ṭālib was the chief of the Banī Hāshim, it was called Shi'b Abi Tālib. It lay by the house which according to local tradition is well known as the birthplace of the Holy Prophet in Makkah. Now it is called Shi'b 'Alī or Shi'b Banī Hāshim.

After the death of Ḥaḍart Khadījah and Abu Ṭālib the disbelievers of Makkah became even bolder against the Holy Prophet. They started treating him even more harshly. So much so that it became difficult for him to step out of his house. Of these days Ibn Hishām has related the incident that a Quraish scoundrel one day threw dust at him openly in the street.

At last, the Holy Prophet left for Ṭā'if with the intention that he should invite the Banī Ṭhaqīf to Islam, for even if they did not accept Islam, they might at least be persuaded to allow him to work for his mission peacefully. He did not have the facility of any conveyance at that time, and travelled all the way to Ṭā'if on foot. According to some traditions, he had gone there alone, but according to others, he was accompanied by Zaid bin Ḥārithah. He stayed at Ṭā'if for a few days, and approached each of the chiefs and nobles of the Banī Ṭhaqīf and talked to him about his mission. But not only they refused to listen to him, but plainly gave him the notice that he should leave their city, for they feared that his preaching might "spoil" their younger generation. Thus, he was compelled to leave Ṭā'if. When he was leaving the city, the chiefs of Thaqīf set their slaves and scoundrels behind him, who went on crying at him, abusing him and pelting him with stones for a long way from either side of the road till he became broken down with wounds and his shoes were filled with blood. Wearied and exhausted he took shelter in the shade of the wall of a garden outside Ṭā'if, and prayed:

"O God, to Thee I complain of my weakness, little resource, and lowliness before men. O Most Merciful, Thou art the Lord of the weak, and Thou art my Lord. To whom wilt Thou confide me? To one afar who will misuse me? Or to an enemy to whom Thou hast given power over me? If Thou art not angry with me I care not. Thy favour is more wide for me. I take refuge in the light of Thy countenance by which the darkness is illumined, and the things of this world and the next are rightly ordered, lest Thy anger descend upon me or Thy wrath light upon me. It is for Thee to be satisfied until Thou art well pleased. There is no power and no might save in Thee." (Ibn Hishām: A. Guillaume's Translation, p. 193).

Grieved and heart-broken when he returned and reached near Qarn al-Manāzil, he felt as though the sky was overcast by clouds. He looked up and saw Gabriel in front of him, who called out: "Allah has heard the way your people have responded. He has, therefore, sent this angel incharge of the mountains. You may command him as you please." Then the angel of the mountains greeted him and submitted: "If you like I would overturn the mountains from either side upon these people." The Holy Prophet replied: "No, but I expect that Allah will create from their seed those who will worship none but Allah, the One." (Bukhāri, *Dhikr al Malā'ikah;* Muslim: *Kitāb al-Maghazi;* Nasa'i: *Al Ba'ūth).*

After this he went to stay for a few days at Nakhlah, perplexed as to how he would face the people of Makkah, who, he thought, would be still further emboldened against him after hearing what had happened at Tā'if. It was here that one night when he was reciting the Qur'ān in the Prayer, a group of the jinn happened to pass by and listened to the Qur'ān, believed in it, and returned to their people to preach Islam. Thus, Allah gave His Prophet the good news that if the men were running away from his invitation, there were many of the jinn, who had become its believers, and they were spreading his message among their own kind.

Subject-Matter and Topics

Such were the conditions when this Sūrah was sent down. Anyone who keeps this background in view, on the one hand, and studies this Sūrah, on the other, will have no doubt left in his mind that this is not at all the composition of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace), but "a Revelation from the All-Mighty, All-Wise Allah." For nowhere in this Sūrah, from the beginning to the end, does one find even a tinge of the human feelings and reactions, which are naturally produced in a man who is passing through such hard conditions. Had it been the word of Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) whom the occurrence of personal griefs one after the other and the countless and the recent bitter experience at Ṭā'if had caused extreme anguish and distress, it would have reflected in some degree the state of the mind of the man who was the subject of these afflictions and griefs. Consider the prayer that we have cited above: it contains his own language: its every

word is saturated with the feelings that he had at the time. But this Sūrah which was sent down precisely in the same period and was recited even by him under the same conditions, is absolutely free from every sign or trace of the time.

The subject-matter of the Sūrah is to warn the disbelivers of the errors in which they were involved, and also persisted arrogantly, and were condemning the man who was trying to redeem them. They regarded the world as a useless and purposeless place where they were not answerable to anyone. They thought that invitation to *Tauḥīd* was false and stuck to the belief that their own deities were actually the associates of Allah. They were not inclined to believe that the Qur'ān was the Word of the Lord of the worlds. They had a strange erroneous concept of apostleship on the basis of which they were proposing strange criteria of judging the Holy Prophet's claim to it. In their estimation one great proof of Islam's not being based on the truth was that their elders and important chiefs of the tribes and so called leaders of their nation were not accepting it and only a few young men, and some poor folks and some slaves had affirmed faith in it. They thought that Resurrection and life after death and the rewards and punishments of the Hereafter were fabrications whose occurrence was absolutely out of the question.

In this Sūrah each of these misconceptions has been refuted in a brief but rational way, and the disbelievers have been warned that if they would reject the invitation of the Qur'ān and the Prophethood of the Prophet Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) by prejudice and stubbornness instead of trying to understand its truth rationally, they would only be preparing for their own doom.

سُوْرَةُ الْاَحْقَافِ مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

حٰمٓ ۚ تَنْزِيْلُ الْكِتٰبِ مِنَ اللّٰهِ الْعَزِيْزِ الْحَكِيْمِ ۚ مَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَالْاَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَآ اِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَاَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۭ وَالَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا عَمَّآ
اُنْذِرُوْا مُعْرِضُوْنَ ۝ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ مَّا تَدْعُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ ۭ اَرُوْنِيْ مَاذَا
خَلَقُوْا مِنَ الْاَرْضِ اَمْ لَهُمْ شِرْكٌ فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ ۭ ائْتُوْنِيْ بِكِتٰبٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِ هٰذَآ
اَوْ اَثٰرَةٍ مِّنْ عِلْمٍ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ صٰدِقِيْنَ ۝ وَمَنْ اَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ يَّدْعُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِ
اللّٰهِ مَنْ لَّا يَسْتَجِيْبُ لَهٗٓ اِلٰى يَوْمِ الْقِيٰمَةِ وَهُمْ عَنْ دُعَاۗىِٕهِمْ غٰفِلُوْنَ ۝ وَ
اِذَا حُشِرَ النَّاسُ كَانُوْا لَهُمْ اَعْدَاۗءً وَّكَانُوْا بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ كٰفِرِيْنَ ۝ وَاِذَا تُتْلٰى
عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتُنَا بَيِّنٰتٍ قَالَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا لِلْحَقِّ لَمَّا جَاۗءَهُمْ ۙ هٰذَا سِحْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝
اَمْ يَقُوْلُوْنَ افْتَرٰىهُ ۭ قُلْ اِنِ افْتَرَيْتُهٗ فَلَا تَمْلِكُوْنَ لِيْ مِنَ اللّٰهِ شَيْـــًٔا ۭ هُوَ
اَعْلَمُ بِمَا تُفِيْضُوْنَ فِيْهِ ۭ كَفٰى بِهٖ شَهِيْدًۢا بَيْنِيْ وَبَيْنَكُمْ ۭ وَهُوَ الْغَفُوْرُ
الرَّحِيْمُ ۝ قُلْ مَا كُنْتُ بِدْعًا مِّنَ الرُّسُلِ وَمَآ اَدْرِيْ مَا يُفْعَلُ بِيْ وَلَا بِكُمْ ۭ
اِنْ اَتَّبِعُ اِلَّا مَا يُوْحٰٓى اِلَيَّ وَمَآ اَنَا اِلَّا نَذِيْرٌ مُّبِيْنٌ ۝ قُلْ اَرَءَيْتُمْ اِنْ كَانَ
مِنْ عِنْدِ اللّٰهِ وَكَفَرْتُمْ بِهٖ وَشَهِدَ شَاهِدٌ مِّنْ بَنِيْٓ اِسْرَاۗءِيْلَ عَلٰي مِثْلِهٖ
فَاٰمَنَ وَاسْتَكْبَرْتُمْ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ ۝ وَقَالَ الَّذِيْنَ
كَفَرُوْا لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَوْ كَانَ خَيْرًا مَّا سَبَقُوْنَآ اِلَيْهِ ۭ وَاِذْ لَمْ يَهْتَدُوْا بِهٖ
فَسَيَقُوْلُوْنَ هٰذَآ اِفْكٌ قَدِيْمٌ ۝ وَمِنْ قَبْلِهٖ كِتٰبُ مُوْسٰٓى اِمَامًا وَّرَحْمَةً ۭ
وَهٰذَا كِتٰبٌ مُّصَدِّقٌ لِّسَانًا عَرَبِيًّا لِّيُنْذِرَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا ۠ وَبُشْرٰى

XLVI
AL AḤQĀF

الاحقاف

Verses: 35 *Revealed at Makkah*

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

Hā-Mīm. The revelation of this Book is from the All-Mighty, All-Wise Allah. 1-2

We have created the heavens and the earth and all that lies between them with the truth and to last for an appointed term,[2] but the disbelievers are turning away from the reality of which they have been warned.[3] 3

O Prophet, say to them, "Have you ever seen with open eyes those whom you invoke instead of Allah? Show me what they have created in the world, or, have they any share in the creation and control of the heavens? Bring me a Book revealed before this, or produce some remnant of knowledge (in support of your beliefs) if you are truthful."[4] And who could be further astray than the one who invokes, instead of Allah, those who cannot answer him till the Day of Resurrection?[5] Nay, they are even unaware that they are being invoked.[6] And when all mankind shall be gathered together, they will become enemies of those who invoked them and will disown their worship.[7] 4-6

Whenever Our clear Revelations are recited to them and the Truth comes before them, the disbelievers say, "This is plain magic."[8] Do they mean to say that the Messenger himself has fabricated it?[9] Say to them, "If I have fabricated it myself, you will not be able to do anything to save me from Allah's punishment. Allah knows full well whatever you utter. He is enough as a witness between me and you ;[10] and He is the All-Forgiving, the All-Merciful."[11] 7-8

Say to them, "I am not a novel Messenger, I do not know what shall befall you tomorrow nor what shall befall me. I only follow that 9-10

which is revealed to me, and I am no more than a warner."[12] O Prophet, say to them, "Have you ever considered that if this (Qur'ān) were really from Allah, and yet you denied it, (what would be your end)?[13] And a witness from among the children of Israel has already borne witness to the like of it; he believed while you showed arrogance.[14] Allah does not show guidance to such wrongdoers."

11-12 Those who have refused to believe say with regard to those who have believed, "If it had been any good to believe in this Book, they would not have believed in it before us."[15] As they have not received any guidance from it, they will surely say, "This is an ancient falsehood."[16] Yet before it there has come the Book of Moses as a guide and a mercy, and this Book has been revealed to confirm it in the Arabic tongue so as to warn the wrongdoers[17] and to give good news to those who have adopted the righteous conduct.

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1. For explanation, see E. N. 1 of Sūrah Az-Zumar, E. N. 1 of Al-Jāthiyah and also E. N. 1 of As-Sajdah for understanding the true spirit of this introduction.

2. For explanation, see Al-An'ām: 73, Yūnus: 5-6, Ibrāhīm: 19, Al-Hijr: 85, An-Nahl: 3, Al-Anbiyā,: 16-18. Al-Mu'minūn: 115, Al-'Ankabūt: 44, Ar-Rūm: 8 and the corresponding E.N.'s.

3. That is, "The actual fact is that this universe is not a purposeless plaything but a purposeful, wise system in which the decisions regarding the good and the bad, the oppressor and the oppressed, will necessarily be based on justice; and the present system of the universe is not permanent and eternal, but it has a fixed term appointed for it on the expiry of which it will inevitably come to an end. For the Court of Allah also there is a settled time and it will certainly be established when the time for it reaches its term. But the people who have refused to believe in Allah's Prophet and His Book, have an aversion to these truths. They are least mindful of this that a time has to come when they will have to render an account of their deeds. They think that the Messenger of Allah has done them a great wrong by warning them of these truths, whereas he has done them a great good by fore-warning them not only of the time when they will be subjected to accountability but also of what they will be questioned at that time so that they may prepare themselves accordingly."

To understand the following discourse it should be borne in mind that man's basic error is the one that he commits with regard to determining his belief about God. In this regard, the adoption of a creed carelessly on the basis of mere

hearsay, without any serious and deep thought and investigation, is a stupendous folly, which vitiates man's whole attitude to life in the world and ruins his destiny for ever afterwards. But the reason why man becomes involved in this dangerous kind of heedlessness is that he regards himself as irresponsible and un-answerable and develops the misunderstanding that whatever creed he may adopt about God, it would make no difference, because either there is no life after death in which he might have to face accountability, or if there is any such life and he is also called to account, the beings of whom he is a devotee, will save him from any evil fate. This same lack of the sense of responsibility renders him frivolous in the selection of a religious creed, and on the basis of the same he fabricates all sorts of absurd creeds, from atheism to every form of polytheism, or adopts the creeds fabricated by others.

4. As the addresses are a polytheistic people they are being told the reality of the irrational creed in which they persisted carelessly due to lack of the sense of responsibility. Along with acknowledging Allah as the Creator of the universe they had made many other beings their deities: they invoked them, regarded them as fulfillers of their needs and removers of hardships: prostrated themselves and made offerings before them, and thought they had the powers of making and un-making of their destinies. About the same beings, they are being asked: "On what basis have you made them your deities ?" Obviously, there can be only two bases for regarding someone as an associate in worship along with Allah: either man himself should know through some means of knowledge that his deity too has a share in making the earth and heavens, or Allah Himself may have stated that so-and-so also is His associate in the functions of Godhead. Now, if a polytheist can neither make the claim that he possesses direct knowledge of his deity's being an associate of God, nor he can show in a Book sent by God that God Himself has appointed somebody as His associate, his creed would inevitably be baseless.

In this verse, "a Book revealed before this" implies a Book sent by Allah before the Qur'ān, and "some remnant" of knowledge implies some part of the teachings of the Prophets and righteous men of the ancient times, which may have reached the later generations reliably. There is no tinge of *shirk* in whatever man has received through these two means. All the heavenly Books unanimously present the same *Tauḥīd* to which the Qur'ān invites the people, and no existing remnant of the ancient lore bears evidence to this that some Prophet or saint or righteous man might have taught the people to serve and worship any other than God. Even if we do not take a Book to mean a Divine Book and remnant of knowledge the knowledge bequeathed by the Prophets and righteous men, no authentic book or the research made by a scholar of religious or secular lore has pointed out that such and such a thing in the earth or the heavens has been created by such and such a saint or god, or a certain blessing of the blessings of life which

man is benefiting from in the universe has been created by such and such a deity instead of God.

5. "Cannot answer him": Cannot answer the supplications of any one. That is, these gods do not possess the powers by virtue of which they could give decisions on the prayers and petitions of their devotees. (For further explanation, see E.N. 33 of Az-Zumar).

"Till the Day of Resurrection" means that as long as the world lasts they will get no answer to their supplications and prayers from their deities, but when Resurrection will have taken place, the deities will turn hostile to their worshippers themselves, as becomes explicit from the next verse.

6. That is, "they do not even hear the supplications of the supplicants, neither through their own ears nor through any other means." This thing can be elaborated like this: The being whom the polytheists the world over have been invoking are divided into three categories: (1) Lifeless and inanimate creation; (2) the pious men who have passed away; and (3) the wicked men who had themselves gone astray, and who misled others and passed away. As for the first category of the deities they will naturally remain unaware of the supplications of their worshippers. As for the deities of the second kind, who were favourites with their God, there are two reasons of their remaining unaware: (a) They are in the presence of Allah in a state where human voices cannot reach them directly; and (b) even Allah and His angels do not inform them that the people whom they had been teaching to invoke Allah alone in the world, were invoking them instead, for no information could cause them a greater shock than this, and Allah does not at all like to vex the souls of His righteous servants. Now if we consider the case of the third kind of the deities, we shall see that there are two reasons also of their remaining unaware: (a) That they have been placed in confinement as the accused, and no voice from the world can reach them; and (b) that even Allah and His angels do not convey to them the news that their mission is flourishing in the world, and the people have set them up as deities, for this news would be a happy news for them, and Allah does not like to make the wicked people happy.

In this connection, one should also understand that Allah conveys to His righteous servants the greetings of peace and prayers of mercy from the people of the world, for these things are a source of joy and pleasure for them; likewise, He informs the culprits of the curses, censures and condemnations of the people of the world, as the disbelievers killed in the Battle of Badr were made to hear the curse of the Holy Prophet according to a *Hadith*, for it is a cause of anguish for them. But anything which might cause distress to the righteous people and joy to the culprits is not conveyed to them. This explanation makes the truth about the question of hearing by the dead plain and easy to understand.

7. That is, they will say: "We had neither told the people to invoke us for help, nor are we aware that they used to invoke us. They themselves had presumed that we could fulfil their needs and so had started invoking us."

8. It means: When the Revelations of the Qur'ān were recited before the disbelievers of Makkah, they realized that the Qur'ān was far superior to human speech. The compositions of their greatest poets, orators and literary men were no match with the un-paralleled eloquence, enchanting oratory, sublime themes and heart-moving style of the Qur'ān. Above all, even the Holy Prophet's own words and speech were not comparable with the discourses that were being sent down to him by God. Those who had known him since childhood knew full well the vast difference that was there between his language and words and the words of the Qur'ān, and it was not possible for them to believe that a man who had been living day and night among them for forty years would suddenly one day forge a speech whose diction and style would bear no resemblance with his familiar and known manner of speech and style. This thing made the truth plain before them, but since they were bent upon denial, they would say: "This is plain magic," instead of acknowledging it as Divine Word after witnessing this manifest Sign. (They regarded the Qur'ān as magic from another aspect also, which we have explained in our commentary of Al-Anbiyā' :3 and E:.N. 5 of Sūrah Suād).

9. This interrogative tone expresses great surprise and amazement. It means to say: "Are these people so shameless that they accuse Muhammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) of fabricating the Qur'ān himself? Whereas they know that it cannot be his word; and their calling it magic is by itself an express proof that they regard it as an extraordinary word, which cannot be of human composition even according to themselves."

10. As it was quite evident that their accusation was baseless and motivated by stubbornness, there was no need to present arguments to refute it. Therefore, only this much was regarded as a sufficient response: "If I have really fabricated something and committed a grave crime by imputing it to Allah, as you accuse me of, you will not be able to rescue me from Allah's punishment. But if it is really Allah's Word, and you are rejecting it by bringing false accusations, Allah Himself will deal with you. For the reality is not hidden from Allah, and He is sufficient to decide between the truth and falsehood. If the whole world calls some one a liar, although he is truthful in Allah's knowledge, the final decision will be in his favour. On the country: if the whole world regards some one as truthful, though he is a liar in the knowledge of Allah, he will be regarded as a liar in the final judgement. Therefore, do not confuse things but pay heed to your final end."

11. Here, this sentence gives two meanings: (1) "It is in fact Allah's mercy and His forbearance that these people are surviving in the world, although they have no hesitation in declaring Allah's Word as falsehood; otherwise if a merciless and cruel god had been the master of this universe, he would not have allowed such insolent people to live even for a moment in the world." (2) "O unjust people, if you give up your stubbornness even now, the door of God's mercy is still open for you, and whatever misdeeds you may have committed heretofore can be forgiven."

12. Its background is this: When the Holy Prophet presented himself as Allah's Messenger, the people of Makkah raised different kinds of objections against it. They said: "what kind of a Messenger he is who has a family, who moves about in the streets, eats and drinks and lives a common man's life. There is nothing special about him, which might distinguish him above the other people and therefore we may know that Allah has specially made this man His Messenger." Then they said: "Had he been appointed a Messenger by God, He would have sent an angel as an attendant with him who would have announced that he was God's Messenger, and would have punished with a scourge every such person who had behaved insolently towards him. How strange that God should appoint a person as His Messenger and then should leave him alone to roam the streets of Makkah and suffer every kind of humiliation. If nothing else Allah should at least have created a magnificent palace and a blooming garden for His Messenger. He should not have been left to depend on his wife's resources so that when they exhausted the Messenger should be forced to go without food and should not even afford a conveyance to Ṭā'if." Besides, these people demanded different kinds of miracles from him and asked news of the unseen. They thought that a person's being God's Messenger meant that he should possess supernatural powers so that mountains should move at his bidding and deserts at once turn into green fields; he should have the knowledge of the past and the future events and of everything hidden from others.

An answer to the same has been given in these sentences, and each sentence contains a world of meaning.

First, it is said: "Tell them: I am not a novel Messenger." That is, "My being appointed as a Messenger is not a novel event of its kind in the world so that you may have some confusion about the characteristics of a Messenger. Many Messengers have come to the world before me, and I am not any different from them. Never has a Messenger come, who did not have a family, who did not eat and drink, or who did not live a common man's life. Never has an angel descended as an attendant with a Messenger, heralding his prophethood and carrying a whip before him. Never have gardens and palaces been created for a Messenger and never has a Messenger been spared of the hardships which I am

suffering. Never has a Messenger shown a mircle by his own power, or known everything by his own knowledge. Then, how is it that you are bringing forth these strange criteria only to judge my Prophethood?"

Then it is said: Tell them also : "I do not know what shall befall you tomorrow nor what shall befall me. I only follow that which is revealed to me." That is, "I am not a knower of the unseen so that everything of the past and present and future should be known to me, and I should have the knowledge of everything in the world. Not to speak of your future, I do not even know my own future. I only know that of which I am given knowledge by revelation. More than that I have never claimed to know, nor has there ever been a Messenger in the world, who made that claim. It is not a Messenger's job to tell the whereabouts of the lost articles, or tell whether a pregnant woman will deliver a boy or a girl, or whether a sick patient will live or die."

In conclusion, it is said: "Say to them: I am no more than a plain warner." That is, "I do not possess Divine powers so that I may show you the wonderful miracles that you demand from me every next day. My only mission is that I should present the right way before the people, and should warn of an evil end those who do not accept it."

13. This same theme has been expressed in another way in Sūrah Ḥa-Mīm As-Sajdah: 62 above. For explanation, see E.N. 69 of the said Sūrah.

14. A large number of the commentators have taken this "witness" to imply Hadrat 'Abdullah bin Salām, who was a famous Jewish scholar of Madīnah, and who believed in the Holy Prophet after the migration. As this thing happened in Madīnah, these commentators say that this verse was revealed at Madīnah. This commentary is based on a statement of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Abi Waqqaṣ according to which this verse was sent down in respect of Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Salām (Bukhārī, Muslim, Nasā'ī Ibn Jarīr); and on the same basis have several major commentators like Ibn 'Abbas, Mujāhid, Qatādah, Ḍaḥḥāk, Ibn Sīrīn, Ḥasan Baṣri, Ibn Zaid and 'Auf bin Mālik al-Ashja'ī accepted this commentary. But, on the other hand, 'Ikrimah and Sha'bī and Masrūq say that this verse cannot be about 'Abdullah bin Salām (may Allah be pleased with him) for this entire Sūrah was sent down at Makkah. Ibn Jarīr Ṭabarī also has preferred this view. He says: The whole previous discourse is an address directed to the pagans of Makkah and the following discourse also is directed to them. In this context it is not conceivable that a verse revealed at Madīnah was inserted here. The later commentators who have accepted this second version, do not reject the tradition of Ḥaḍrat Sa'd bin Abī Waqqaṣ, but have opined that as this verse also applies to Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Salām's affirmation of the faith, Ḥaḍrat Sa'd expressed the opinion, in the

[Contd. on p. 660

لِلْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿١٣﴾ اِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْا رَبُّنَا اللّٰهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوْا فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا
هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ ﴿١٤﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصْحٰبُ الْجَنَّةِ خٰلِدِيْنَ فِيْهَا جَزَآءًۢ بِمَا كَانُوْا
يَعْمَلُوْنَ ﴿١٥﴾ وَوَصَّيْنَا الْاِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ اِحْسٰنًا حَمَلَتْهُ اُمُّهٗ كُرْهًا وَّوَضَعَتْهُ
كُرْهًا وَحَمْلُهٗ وَفِصٰلُهٗ ثَلٰثُوْنَ شَهْرًا حَتّٰٓى اِذَا بَلَغَ اَشُدَّهٗ وَبَلَغَ اَرْبَعِيْنَ
سَنَةً قَالَ رَبِّ اَوْزِعْنِيْٓ اَنْ اَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِيْٓ اَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلٰى
وَالِدَيَّ وَاَنْ اَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضٰىهُ وَاَصْلِحْ لِيْ فِيْ ذُرِّيَّتِيْ اِنِّيْ تُبْتُ
اِلَيْكَ وَاِنِّيْ مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ﴿١٦﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ نَتَقَبَّلُ عَنْهُمْ اَحْسَنَ مَا عَمِلُوْا
وَنَتَجَاوَزُ عَنْ سَيِّاٰتِهِمْ فِيْٓ اَصْحٰبِ الْجَنَّةِ وَعْدَ الصِّدْقِ الَّذِيْ كَانُوْا
يُوْعَدُوْنَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَالَّذِيْ قَالَ لِوَالِدَيْهِ اُفٍّ لَّكُمَآ اَتَعِدٰنِنِيْٓ اَنْ اُخْرَجَ وَقَدْ خَلَتِ
الْقُرُوْنُ مِنْ قَبْلِيْ وَهُمَا يَسْتَغِيْثٰنِ اللّٰهَ وَيْلَكَ اٰمِنْ اِنَّ وَعْدَ اللّٰهِ حَقٌّ
فَيَقُوْلُ مَا هٰذَآ اِلَّآ اَسَاطِيْرُ الْاَوَّلِيْنَ ﴿١٨﴾ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيْنَ حَقَّ عَلَيْهِمُ الْقَوْلُ
فِيْٓ اُمَمٍ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْاِنْسِ اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا خٰسِرِيْنَ ﴿١٩﴾
وَلِكُلٍّ دَرَجٰتٌ مِّمَّا عَمِلُوْا وَلِيُوَفِّيَهُمْ اَعْمَالَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَا يُظْلَمُوْنَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَيَوْمَ
يُعْرَضُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا عَلَى النَّارِ اَذْهَبْتُمْ طَيِّبٰتِكُمْ فِيْ حَيَاتِكُمُ الدُّنْيَا وَ
اسْتَمْتَعْتُمْ بِهَا فَالْيَوْمَ تُجْزَوْنَ عَذَابَ الْهُوْنِ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَسْتَكْبِرُوْنَ فِي
الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَفْسُقُوْنَ ﴿٢١﴾ وَاذْكُرْ اَخَا عَادٍ اِذْ اَنْذَرَ قَوْمَهٗ
بِالْاَحْقَافِ وَقَدْ خَلَتِ النُّذُرُ مِنْۢ بَيْنِ يَدَيْهِ وَمِنْ خَلْفِهٖٓ اَلَّا تَعْبُدُوْٓا اِلَّا
اللّٰهَ اِنِّيْٓ اَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيْمٍ ﴿٢٢﴾ قَالُوْٓا اَجِئْتَنَا لِتَاْفِكَنَا عَنْ اٰلِهَتِنَا
فَاْتِنَا بِمَا تَعِدُنَآ اِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قَالَ اِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَ

Indeed, those who said, "Allah alone is our Lord," then remained steadfast, they shall neither neither have anything to fear nor shall they grieve.[18] They all shall go to Paradise wherein they shall live for ever, a reward for the deeds they did in the world. 13-14

We have enjoined man to treat his parents with kindness. His mother bore him with hardship and she gave him birth with hardship, and his bearing and his weaning took thirty months,[19] until when he attained to his full strength and became forty years old, he said, "O my Lord, grant me the grace that I may thank You for the favours You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I should do such good works as may please You,[20] and make my children also good to comfort me. I turn to You in penitence and I am of those who have surrendered to You (as Muslims)." From such people We accept the best of their deeds and overlook their evils.[21] They will be among the dwellers of Paradise according to the true promise that has been made to them (here). But the one who said to his parents, "Fie upon you! what, do you frighten me with this that I shall be taken out of the grave after death? whereas many a generation has passed away before me (and none has risen from among them). The mother and father cry for Allah's help and say, "Believe, O wretch! Allah's promise is true." But he says, "These are nothing but tales of the ancient times." Such are the people against whom the decision of torment has already been decreed. They will also join those hosts of the jinns and men (of their own kind) who have passed away before them. Indeed, they are the losers.[22] Each one of the two groups will have their ranks according to their deeds so that Allah may reward them fully for what they have done, and they shall not be wronged at all.[23] When the disbelievers are mustered at the Fire, it will be said to them, "You have exhausted your share of the good things in your life of the world and you enjoyed them fully. Today you shall be punished with a torment of disgrace in consequence of the arrogance that you showed on the earth, without any right, and the transgressions that you committed."[24] 15-20

And relate to them the story of the brother of 'Ād (Hūd), when he warned his people in Aḥqāf[25]—and such warners had preceded as well as followed him—saying, "Worship none but Allah. I fear for you the torment of a dreadful day." They said, "Have you come to seduce us away from our own gods ? Well, bring down your torment with 21-23

which you threaten us, if you are really truthful." He said, "The knowledge of this is with Allah.[26] I am only conveying to you the message with which I have been sent. But I see that you are a people sunk in ignorance."[27]

Contd. from p. 657]

tradition of the ancients, that it was sent down with regard to him. This does not, however, mean that when he believed, it was revealed then about him only, but that this verse precisely applied to him and his acceptance of Islam.

Apparently, this second view seems to be more correct and reasonable. Now, the question that remains to be answered is: Who is implied by this "witness?" Some of the commentators who have accepted the second view say that it implies the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him), but the following sentence: "He believed while you showed arrogance", bears no relevance to this explanation. What seems to be nearer the truth is that which the commentator Nisabūrī and Ibn Kathīr have stated. They say: Here, by "a witness" is not meant any particular person but a common Israelite. The meaning is this; "The teachings that the Qur'ān is presenting before you are not new so that you could deny them by offering the excuse that they were novel teachings which had never been presented before man in the past. Before this these very teachings have been similarly revealed and exist with the Israelites in the form of the Torah and other scriptures, and a common Israelite has already believed in them, and also admitted that Allah's Revelation is a means of the coming down of these teachings. Therefore, you cannot make the claim that Revelation and these teachings are incomprehensible. The only thing that hinders you from believing is your arrogance and baseless conceit."

15. This is one of those arguments that the chiefs of the Quraish employed to beguile and mislead the common people against the Holy Prophet. They said: If the Qur'ān were really based on the truth and Muḥammad (upon whom be Allah's peace) were inviting towards a right thing, the chiefs and the elders and the noblemen of the community would have been in the forefront to accept it. How could it be that a few young boys and mean slaves only should accept a reasonable thing but the distinguished men of the nation, who are wise and experienced, and who have been held as reliable by others, would reject it? This was the deceptive reasoning by which they tried to make the common people believe that there was something wrong with the new message; that is why the elders of the people were not believing it; therefore, they also should avoid it.

16. That is, "They regard themselves as a criterion of the truth and falsehood. They think that whatever (guidance) they reject must be falsehood. But

they cannot dare call it a "new falsehood" for before it also the Prophets have been presenting the same teachings, and all the heavenly scriptures which the followers of the previous Books possess, are full of the same beliefs and instructions. Therefore, they call it an "ancient falsehood." In other words, they seem to think that all those people who have been presenting these truths and those accepting them since thousands of years also were devoid of wisdom and knowledge, and the whole wisdom has now become these people's monopoly."

17. "To warn the wrongdoers :" To warn of the evil end those who are being unjust to themselves and to the truth itself by disbelieving in Allah and serving others than Allah, and are involved because of this deviation of theirs in the evils of morals and deeds, which have filled human society with every kind of wickedness and injustice.

18. For explanation, see E.N.'s 33 to 35 of Ḥā-Mīm As-Sajdah.

19. This verse tells that although the children should serve both the mother and the father, the mother's right is greater in importance, on the ground that she undergoes greater hardships for the sake of the children. The same is borne out by a *Ḥadith*, which has been related with a little variation in wording in Bukhāri, Muslim, Abu Dā'ūd, Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah, Musnad Aḥmad, and in *Adab al-Mufrad* of Imam Bukhāri, to the effect that a person asked the Holy Prophet: "Who has got a greater right to my service? The Holy Prophet replied: Your mother. He asked: Who after her? He replied: Your mother. He asked: Who after her? He replied: Your mother. He asked: Who after her? He replied: Your father." This *Ḥadith* precisely explains this verse, for in it also allusion has been made to the triple right of the mother: His mother bore him with hardship; (2) she gave him birth with hardship; and (3) his bearing and his weaning took thirty months.

Another legal point also is derived from this verse and verse 14 of Sūrah Luqmān and verse 233 of Al-Baqarah, which was pointed out by Ḥaḍrat 'Alī and Ḥaḍrat Ibn 'Abbās in a law case and made Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān change his decision. The story goes that during the caliphate of Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān (may Allah be pleased with him) a person married a woman from the Juhainah tribe, and just six months after the marriage she gave birth to a healthy and sound child. The man took the case before Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān, who declared the woman to be an adultress and ordered that she be stoned to death. On hearing this Ḥaḍrat 'Alī immediately came to Ḥaḍrat 'Uthman and asked: What sort of a decision have you given ? He replied: She has given birth to a sound child six months after marriage. Is it not a clear proof of her being an adultress? Ḥaḍrat 'Alī did not agree, and recited the three above mentioned verses in their sequence. In Sūrah Al-Baqarah Allah says: "The mothers shall suckle their children for two whole inyears, if the fathers

desire the suckling to be completed." In Sūrah Luqman it is said: "And his weaning took two years," and in Sūrah Al-Aḥqāf: "And his bearing and his weaning took thirty months." Now, if two years of suckling are taken away from 30 months, six months of bearing remain. This shows that the minimum period of pregnancy in which a sound child can be born is six months. Therefore, the woman who has given birth to a child six months after the marriage cannot be declared an adultress. On hearing this reasoning of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī, Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān admitted that he had not considered that thing at all. Then he recalled the woman and changed his decision. According to another tradition, Ibn 'Abbas also supported the reasoning of Ḥaḍrat 'Alī; and then Ḥaḍrat 'Uthmān changed his decision. (Ibn Jarīr, *Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* by al-Jassās Ibn Kathīr).

The following legal injunctions are derived from the three verses when they are read together:

(1) The woman who gives birth to a sound and complete child in less than six months after marriage (i.e. in a proper delivery and not abortion) will be declared an adultress and her child's lineage from her husband will not be established.

(2) The woman who delivers a sound and complete child six months or more after marriage, cannot be accused of adultery only on the basis of the child birth, nor can her husband have the right to slander her, nor can he refuse to acknowledge fatherhood of the child; the child will certainly be recognized as his, and the woman will not be punished.

(3) The maximum period for fosterage is two years. If a woman has suckled a child after this age, she will not be regarded as his foster mother, nor will the injunctions pertaining to fosterage (An-Nisa: 23) be applicable to her. In this regard, Imām Abu Ḥanīfah has out of caution proposed the period of two and a half years instead of two years so that there remains no chance of error in a delicate matter like the prohibition of the foster relations. (For explanation, see E N. 23 of Sūrah Luqmān).

Here, it would be useful to know that according to the latest medical research a child needs at least 28 weeks to remain in the mother's womb to be developed and delivered as a living baby. This period amounts to a little more than 6 months. The Islamic law has allowed a concession of about half a month, because a woman's being declared an adultress and a child's being deprived of lineage is a grave matter, and its gravity demands that maximum period be allowed to save both the mother and the child from its legal consequences. Furthermore, no physician and no judge, not even the pregnant woman herself and the man impregnating her, can know as to when exactly did the conception take

place. This thing also demands that a few more days be allowed in determining the minimum legal period of pregnancy.

20. That is, "O Lord, grant me the grace of such righteous deeds as may conform to Your Law in the apparent form as well as be acceptable to You in their actual worth." If an action, however good in the sight of the people, does not conform to obedience to Allah's Law, it cannot have any value in the sight of Allah, no matter how highly it is praised by the people. On the contrary, another action which conforms to the *Shari'ah* exactly and has no flaw or deficiency in its apparent form, becomes hollow from within, on account of an evil intention, conceit, arrogance and greed of the world, and so worthless in the sight of Allah.

21. That is, "Their ranks in the Hereafter will be determined by the best deeds they would have done in the world, and their lapses and weaknesses and errors will be overlooked. It is just like a generous and appreciative master who determines the worth of his loyal and obedient servant not by the petty services that he renders but by some work of merit that he might accomplish or a feat of devotion and dedication that he might perform. He will not call his servant to account for his minor shortcomings and overlook his major services."

22. Here, two types of the charactor have been placed side by side and the listeners asked the silent question as to which of them is better. At that time both these types of charactor practically existed in the society, and it was not at all difficult for the people to know where they could find the first type of the character and where the second. This is the answer to this saying of the chiefs of the Quraish: "If it had been any good to believe in this Book, these few youngsters and slaves would not have believed in it before they did." In the light of this answer everyone could see for himself as to what was the character of the believers and what of the unbelievers.

23. That is, "Neither will the good deeds and sacrifices of the good people be lost, nor the evildoers awarded a greater punishment than what they will actually deserve. If a good man is deprived of his reward and receives a lesser reward than what is actually his due, it is injustice. Likewise, if an evildoer is not punished appropriately for his evil deeds, or receives a greater punishment than deserved, it is also injustice."

24. "A torment of disgrace", because of the arrogance that they showed. They thought they were big people and it was below their dignity to believe in the Messenger and join the group of the poor and indigent believers. They were involved in the false pride that if the big people like them would believe in a thing which a few slaves and poor men had believed in, they would incur infamy. That is why Allah will disgrace them in the Hereafter and will destroy their pride.

[Contd. on p.666

أُبَلِّغُكُمْ مَّآ أُرْسِلْتُ بِهٖ وَلٰكِنِّيْٓ أَرٰىكُمْ قَوْمًا تَجْهَلُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾ فَلَمَّا رَأَوْهُ عَارِضًا
مُّسْتَقْبِلَ أَوْدِيَتِهِمْ ۙ قَالُوْا هٰذَا عَارِضٌ مُّمْطِرُنَا ۭ بَلْ هُوَ مَا اسْتَعْجَلْتُمْ بِهٖ ۭ
رِيْحٌ فِيْهَا عَذَابٌ أَلِيْمٌ ﴿٢٤﴾ تُدَمِّرُ كُلَّ شَيْءٍۢ بِأَمْرِ رَبِّهَا فَأَصْبَحُوْا لَا يُرٰٓى
إِلَّا مَسٰكِنُهُمْ ۭ كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الْقَوْمَ الْمُجْرِمِيْنَ ﴿٢٥﴾ وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنّٰهُمْ فِيْمَآ إِنْ
مَّكَّنّٰكُمْ فِيْهِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ سَمْعًا وَّأَبْصَارًا وَّأَفْـِٕدَةً ۖ فَمَآ أَغْنٰى عَنْهُمْ
سَمْعُهُمْ وَلَآ أَبْصَارُهُمْ وَلَآ أَفْـِٕدَتُهُمْ مِّنْ شَيْءٍ ۖ إِذْ كَانُوْا يَجْحَدُوْنَ بِاٰيٰتِ
اللّٰهِ وَحَاقَ بِهِمْ مَّا كَانُوْا بِهٖ يَسْتَهْزِءُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ أَهْلَكْنَا مَا حَوْلَكُمْ مِّنَ
الْقُرٰى وَصَرَّفْنَا الْأٰيٰتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾ فَلَوْلَا نَصَرَهُمُ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّخَذُوْا
مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ قُرْبَانًا اٰلِهَةً ۭ بَلْ ضَلُّوْا عَنْهُمْ ۚ وَذٰلِكَ إِفْكُهُمْ وَمَا كَانُوْا
يَفْتَرُوْنَ ﴿٢٨﴾ وَإِذْ صَرَفْنَآ إِلَيْكَ نَفَرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ يَسْتَمِعُوْنَ الْقُرْاٰنَ ۚ فَلَمَّا
حَضَرُوْهُ قَالُوْٓا أَنْصِتُوْا ۚ فَلَمَّا قُضِيَ وَلَّوْا إِلٰى قَوْمِهِمْ مُّنْذِرِيْنَ ﴿٢٩﴾ قَالُوْا يٰقَوْمَنَآ
إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا كِتٰبًا أُنْزِلَ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ مُوْسٰى مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ يَهْدِيْٓ إِلَى
الْحَقِّ وَإِلٰى طَرِيْقٍ مُّسْتَقِيْمٍ ﴿٣٠﴾ يٰقَوْمَنَآ أَجِيْبُوْا دَاعِيَ اللّٰهِ وَاٰمِنُوْا بِهٖ يَغْفِرْ
لَكُمْ مِّنْ ذُنُوْبِكُمْ وَيُجِرْكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيْمٍ ﴿٣١﴾ وَمَنْ لَّا يُجِبْ دَاعِيَ اللّٰهِ
فَلَيْسَ بِمُعْجِزٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَيْسَ لَهٗ مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ أَوْلِيَآءُ ۭ أُولٰٓئِكَ فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ
مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٣٢﴾ أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللّٰهَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَلَمْ يَعْيَ
بِخَلْقِهِنَّ بِقٰدِرٍ عَلٰٓى أَنْ يُّحْيِۦَ الْمَوْتٰى ۭ بَلٰٓى إِنَّهٗ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ﴿٣٣﴾ وَ
يَوْمَ يُعْرَضُ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا عَلَى النَّارِ ۭ أَلَيْسَ هٰذَا بِالْحَقِّ ۭ قَالُوْا بَلٰى وَرَبِّنَا ۭ
قَالَ فَذُوْقُوا الْعَذَابَ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْفُرُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾ فَاصْبِرْ كَمَا صَبَرَ أُولُوا الْعَزْمِ

Then, when they saw the torment coming towards their valleys, they said, "This is a cloud that will give us much rain."—Nay,[28] but this is the same thing which you asked to be hastened. This is a storm of wind bringing a painful torment. It will destroy everything by the Command of its Lord. Consequently, there remained nothing to be seen except their (empty) dwelling places. Thus do We recompense the culprits.[29] We had given them that which We have not given you,[30] We had given them ears and eyes and hearts, but nothing did their ears and their eyes and their hearts avail them, because they denied the Revelations of Allah,[31] and they were encompassed by the same thing that they mocked. 25-26

We have destroyed many habitations around you. We sent Our Revelations to them over and over again in various ways that they might desist (from wrongdoing). Then, why did not those beings help them whom they had made their gods instead of Allah, and regarded them as a means of attaining nearness to Him?[32] Nay, they were lost from them: and this was the end of their lies and their false beliefs that they had invented. 27-28

(And recall the event) when We brought to you a group of jinns so that they might listen to the Qur'ān.[33] When they reached the place (where you were reciting it), they said to one another, "Be silent." When the recitation was over, they returned to their people as warners. They said to them, "O our people! We have just listened to a Book that has been sent down after Moses. It contains the Books that came before it and it guides to the Truth and to a Straight Way.[34] O our people! Accept the invitation of the one calling to Allah and believe in him. Allah will forgive you your sins and will save you from a painful torment."[35] And[36] he who does not answer the one calling to Allah neither possesses any power in the earth to make Allah helpless nor has any protector and guardian to save him from Allah. Such people are involved in manifest error. 29-32

Do they not see that God Who created the heavens and the earth and was not wearied by their creation, has surely the power to raise the dead to life! Why not! Surely He has power over everything. The Day the disbelievers are mustered at the Fire, they will be asked, "Is not this the Truth?" They will say, "Yes, by our Lord (this is the very 33-34

Truth!)." Allah will say, "Well, then taste the torment in consequence of your denying the Truth (in the world)."

[Contd. on p. 663]

25. As the chiefs of the Quraish had a false pride of their superiority and exulted in their wealth and prosperity, the story of 'Ād is being related to them about whom it was well known that they had been the mightiest people in Arabia.

Literally, *Aḥqāf* (pl. of *ḥiqf*) are long dunes of sand less in height than mountains, but technically it is a name given to the southern-western part of the Arabian desert *(Ar-Rub'ul-khāli)* which is wholly un-inhabited. Please see the map on page 672.

Ibn Isḥāq says that the territory of 'Ād extended from 'Omān to Yaman, and the Qur'ān tells us that they actually belonged to Al-Aḥqāf from where they spread to the adjoining lands and subdued weak nations. 125 miles to the north of the present day city of Makkah there is a place in Ḥaḍramaut, where the people have built a tomb to the Prophet Hūd, and the place is well known as the Grave of Hūd. A religious festival is held there on the 15th of Sha'bān and thousands of people from different parts of Arabia gather there annually. Although it is not historically established, the grave's being built there and the southern Arabs' visiting it in large numbers is at least a proof that local tradition regards this very territory as the land of 'Ād. Besides, there are several ruins in Hadramaut which the natives still call by the name of *Dār-'Ād* (Abode of 'Ād).

From the present condition of Al-Aḥqāf no one can even imagine that this land might have been the home of a mighty people boasting of magnificent civilization. Probably it was a green and fertile land thousands of years ago, and then the change of climate might have turned it into a sandy desert. Today it is a vast, wind swept desert, and no one can dare go into its interior. In 1843 A.D. a Bavarian soldier was able to reach its southern edge. He says that if one looks down from the northern plateau of Ḥaḍramaut one can see this desert about a thousand feet in the depression. Here and there in it there are white areas where if a thing falls it goes on sinking into the sand and decays. The Arab Beduins fear this land and are never willing to step into it at any cost. Once when the Bedouins were not ready to take him there, he went by himself. He says that the sand there is very fine powder, and when he threw a plummet into it from a distance, it sank into it within five minutes and the end of the line to which it was attached, also decayed.

For detailed information, see:

Arabia and The Isles, Harold Ingrams, London, 1946.

The Unveiling of Arabia, R H. Kiman, London, 1937.

The Empty Quarter, Philby, London, 1933.

26. That is, "Allah alone knows as to when the torment will descend on you and for how long you will be granted respite."

27. That is, "You are taking my warning as a joke in your ignorance and are demanding the torment for fun. You have no idea of how dreadful is God's torment and how near at hand it might have approached because of your misdeeds."

28. Here, there is no indication as to who gave them this answer. However, the style shows explicitly that this was the answer they were given by the existing conditions. They thought it was a cloud which was coming to give rain to their valleys, but in reality it was a windstorm that was coming on to completely exterminate them.

29. For the details of the story of 'Ād, see Al-A'rāf: 65-72; Hūd: 50-60, Al-Mu'minūn: 31-41, Ash-Shu'arā: 123-140, Al-'Ankabūt: 40, Ḥā-Mīm As-Sajdah: 15-16 and the corresponding E.N.'s.

30. That is, "You are no match for them as far as wealth, power, authority and other things are concerned; your sphere of authority is restricted to the bounds of the city of Makkah, but they had dominated a large part of the earth."

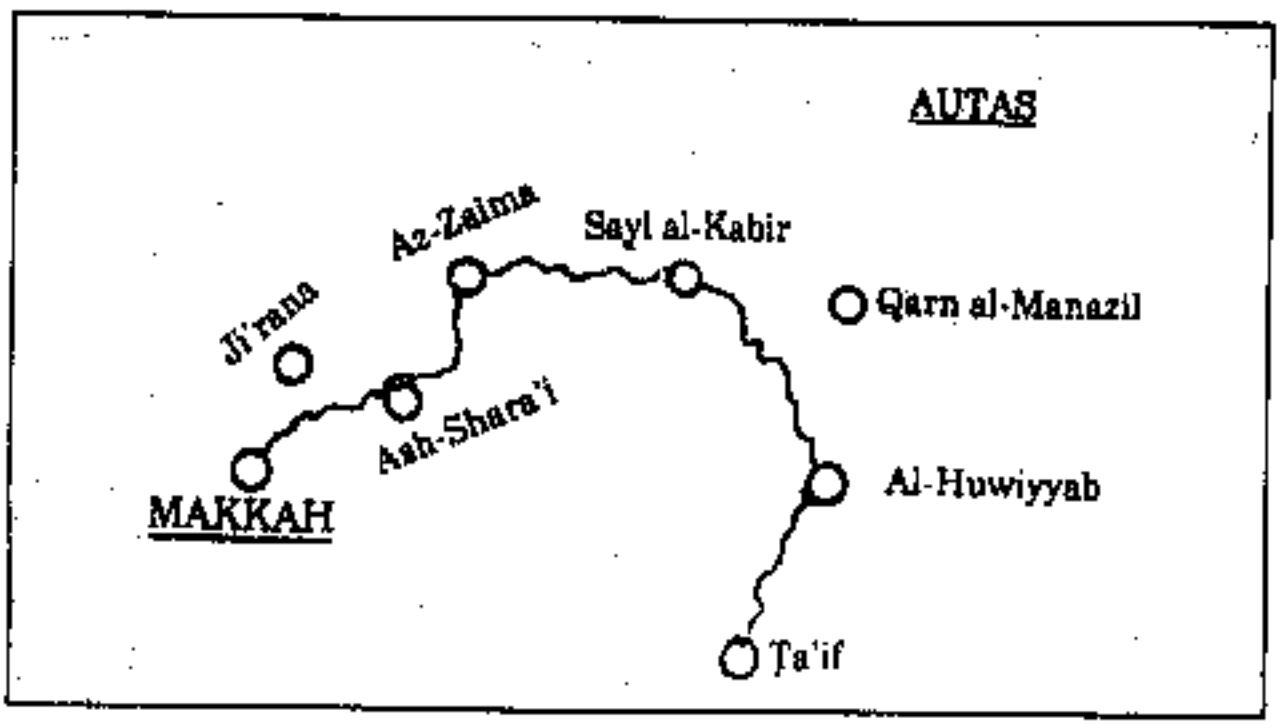
31. An important truth has been stated in this brief sentence. It is only the Revelations of Allah which give the right knowledge and understanding of the truth and reality to man. If man has this understanding and knowledge he sees the right thing with his eyes, hears the right thing with his ears, thinks the right thing with his mind and intellect and takes the right decisions. But when he refuses to believe in the Revelations of Allah, he fails to see the truth in spite of the eyes, becomes deaf to every word of admonition in spite of the ears, and misuses the blessings of the mind and intellect that God has granted him, and goes on drawing wrong conclusions one after the other; so much so that he starts using all his capabilities for his own destruction.

32. That is, "They had put faith in those things in the beginning with the idea that they were favourite servants of God and through them they would attain nearness to Him, but then gradually they made them their gods. They started invoking them for help; they formed the belief that they had the powers to change their destinies and could answer their prayers and remove their hardships." To deliver them from this error Allah sent His Revelations through His Messengers over and over again in different ways to bring them to the right path, but they persisted in the worship of their false gods, and continued to insist that they would

still invoke them instead of Allah. Now consider this: When the torment of Allah visited these polytheists because of their deviation, where had their redressers of grievances and removers of hardships disappeared? Why didn't they come to their rescue at the time of affliction?

33. The traditions that have been related from Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd, Ḥaḍrat Zubair, Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, Ḥasan Baṣrī, Sa'īd bin Jubair, Zarr bin Ḥubaish, Mujāhid, 'Ikrimah and others in connection with the commentary of this verse concur that this incident of the first visit of the jinns, which has been mentioned in this verse, had occurred in the valley of Nakhlah. And according to Ibn Isḥāq, Abū Nu'aim Iṣfahāni and Wāqidi, this incident occurred during the Holy Prophet's return journey from Ṭā'if to Makkah. On the way, when he halted at Nakhlah, and was reciting the Qur'ān in the 'Ishā' or the Fajr or the Tahajjud Prayer, a group of the jinns happened to pass by and stopped to listen to him. In this connection, all the traditions agree that on this occasion the jinns did not appear before the Holy Prophet, nor did he feel their presence, but Allah informed him afterwards by revelation that they had come and listened to the Qur'anic recitation.

The place where this incident took place was either Az-Zaimah or As-Sayl-ul-Kabīr, for both these places are situated in the valley of Nakhlah and at both water is available and are green; if the travellers from Ṭā'if have to halt in this valley, they can halt at either of the places. Please see the map for the location of these places.



34. This shows that these jinns had already had faith in the Prophet Moses and in the Divine Books. After hearing the Qur'ān they felt that it gave the same teachings as the former Prophets had been preaching. Therefore, they believed in this Book forthwith and also in the Holy prophet who had brought it.

مِنَ الرُّسُلِ وَلَا تَسْتَعْجِلْ لَّهُمْ ۚ كَأَنَّهُمْ يَوْمَ يَرَوْنَ مَا يُوعَدُونَ لَمْ يَلْبَثُوٓا
إِلَّا سَاعَةً مِّن نَّهَارٍ ۚ بَلَٰغٌ ۚ فَهَلْ يُهْلَكُ إِلَّا الْقَوْمُ الْفَاسِقُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

Therefore, endure with patience, O Prophet, as did the 35
Messengers endowed with the firmness of purpose,[37] and do not be in haste concerning them.[38] The day these people see that with which they are being threatened, it will so appear to them that they did not stay in the world for more than an hour of a day. The Message has been conveyed. Now, shall any other than the disobedient people be destroyed?

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35. Authentic traditions show that after this several deputations of the jinns visited the Holy Prophet, one after the other, and met him face to face. When all the traditions related in the collections of *Ḥadīth* on this subject are read together, it appears that at least six deputations had visited him in Makkah before the Hijrah.

About one of these deputations Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd relates: "One day the Holy Prophet remained missing from Makkah for the whole night. We could not know his whereabouts and feared he might have been attacked by somebody. Early in the morning we saw him coming from the direction of Ḥirā'. On enquiring he said that a jinn had come to invite him and he had accompanied him and recited the Qur'ān to a gathering of them there." (Muslim, Musnad Aḥmad, Tirmidhi, Abū Da'ūd).

Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd has related another tradition, saying: "Once the Holy Prophet asked his Companions in Makkah as to which of them would accompany him that night to meet the jinns. I became ready to go with him. At a place in the upper quarters of Makkah the Holy Prophet drew a line and told me not to cross it. Then he went forward and stood and began to recite the Qur'ān. I saw that a number of the people had gathered around him and they stood between me and him." (Ibn Jarīr, Baihaqī: *Dalā'il an-Nubuwwat;* Abū Nu'aim Iṣfahāni: *Dalā'il an-Nubuwwat).*

On another occasion also during the night Ḥaḍrat 'Abdullah bin Mas'ūd was with the Holy Prophet and he decided a case of the jinns at Ḥajūn in Makkah. Many years later Ibn Mas'ūd saw a group of the villagers at Kūfa and said that the group of the jinns he had seen at Ḥajūn closely resembled those people. (Ibn Jarīr).

36. This sentence might also be a part of the saying of the jinns, or it might be an addition by Allah to their saying. In view of the context the second view seems to be more reasonable.

37. That is, "Just as the Prophets before you went on enduring with patience and ceaseless struggle the indifference, opposition, resistance and persecutions of their people for years on end, so should you also do the same, and do not entertain the idea that either the people should believe in you immediately or, if they do not believe, Allah should visit them with His torment."

